

Transcendental Morality and Organizational Leadership

Transcendentale moraliteit en leiderschap in organisaties

Thesis

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For Marja, the Love of my life

Acknowledgements	vii
Preface	viii

Chapter 1: US Financial crisis 2008, and the difficulty of regulating ideologies.	1
<i>Introduction</i>	1
1.0 The historical development to modern free and prosperous nations.	1
1.1 Freedom needs responsibility	4
1.2 Major causes of the 2008 global financial crisis	6
1.3 Is capitalism right?	8
1.3.1 Healthy vs. unhealthy greed	9
1.4 The route of regulations	10
1.4.1 Regulating and obstructing regulations	11
1.5 Easy regulations are 'value free' or support the prevailing culture	13
1.6 The frustration to hope for morality	14
1.7 Contemporary Aristocracy	16

Chapter 2: Research goal and questions	19
<i>Introduction</i>	19
2.1 Research goal	19
2.1.1 Research questions	19
2.1.2 Sub questions	20

Chapter 3: The veil of Ignorance and the search for a full impartial mind	22
<i>Introduction</i>	22
3.0 The fragile veil of ignorance in the social domain	22
3.1 The impartial mind	25
3.1.1 Husserl's most general subjectivity	26
3.1.2 Husserl's method: The Transcendental Phenomenological Reduction or epoché	28
3.1.2.1 Practical concern	29
3.2 Psychology versus Transpersonal psychology	30
3.2.1 Transpersonal psychology	31

Chapter 4: Categories	34
<i>Introduction</i>	34
4.0 To categorize	34
4.1 Science needs "classical" categories	34
4.2 Husserl's way to detect essentials	36
4.3 Prototype theory	36
4.3.1 Prototypes are not about meaning	37
4.3.2 Prototypes and the (possible) marginalization of category members	38
4.4 Strange and impossible categories	38
4.5 Categories and culture	39
4.6 Inconsistent categories rules	40
 Chapter 5: Autopoiesis and Objectivity	 41
<i>Introduction</i>	41
5.0 The 'impossibility' of autopoiesis to fit in mainstream science	41
5.1 Autopoiesis	42
5.2 No transfer of information	43
5.3 No observers, no environment	45
5.4 Cause and effect I, a functional construction	46
5.4.1 Cause and effect II, no time difference	47
5.5 Organization and Structure	49
5.6 Structural coupling I	50
5.6.1 'Having no meaning' is a basic property of matter	52
5.6.2 Structural Coupling II	52
5.7 Internal Dynamics I, circularity and categories	54
5.8 Internal Equilibrium	57
5.8.1 Internal Dynamics II, external perturbations are internally experienced	58
5.9 Organizational Closure, (Operationally Closed)	58
5.9.1 Organizational Closure and the nervous system	61
5.10 Abstract thinking and projection	61
5.11 The function of the senses	63
5.12 The niche of clones and automatic objectivity	64
5.13 Different biological 'objectivities'	65
5.14 Objectivity and Kant (1724-1804)	66

5.15.	Intersubjectivity	70
5.15.1	Paradigms and categories	73
5.16	Individuality, the rise of	74
5.16.1	Human's unique identity and organizational closure	77
5.17.	Human individuality and objectivity	78
5.17.1	What is exactly human 'objectivity' I	79
5.17.2	Human 'objectivity' II, objectivity as a linguistic construct, a regulative idea	80
5.17.3	Defining individual human objectivity III	81
5.18	Submissive Objectivity: Objectivity as a relationship	82
5.19	Independent Objectivity: alienation	82
Chapter 6: Subjectivity, meaning and autopoiesis		85
	<i>Introduction</i>	85
6.1	Subjectivity and verifiability	86
6.2	No senses for subjectivity, no natural balance	87
6.3	Contemporary methodological approaches towards subjectivity	88
6.4	To be a neutral 'researcher of subjectivity'	89
6.4.1	Looking for the meaningless in qualitative research	90
6.4.2	How to "reach" meaningfulness as-if Love: "Rapprochement method"	91
6.5	Meaning	93
6.6	Properties of meaning and meaning in language	94
6.6.1	The tiger, Circular Logic against Observers 'logic	95
6.7	The peculiarities of meaning	96
6.8	The vulnerability and strength of meaning	98
6.9	The freedom of meaning, constraints and freedom of choice	98
6.10	Bakhtin's god concept	99
6.11	Language and organizational closure	100
6.12	The inability to see freely	102
Chapter 7: Husserl and the Inner Life World		104
	<i>Introduction</i>	104
7.0	The 'unconscious' and the non-existence of independent strangers	104
7.1	Working preliminary definition of the unconscious	105
7.1.1	Illogicality as forgotten logicality, a story	106

7.2	“I am no longer interested in my own existence”, and the notion of time	107
7.3	Realized illusions are real	109
7.4	Rational and ‘irrational thinking’ as conscious and unconscious thinking	110
Chapter 8: What is ego?		111
	<i>Introduction</i>	111
8.0	What is 'contemporary' ego?	112
8.1	Ego, how can "consciousness" make the [objective] world and confirms it?	114
8.2	The compliant ego	115
8.3	The function of ego	116
8.4	The making of ego is making the world and vice versa	118
8.5	The asymmetrical relation	120
8.5.1	Ego accepts itself as one third of what he is	122
8.6	Something is missing	123
Chapter 9: Emotions and Morality		125
	<i>Introduction</i>	125
9.0	To intend Transcendental Consciousness beyond itself	125
9.1	Hans Christian Andersen (1805-1875), "The Ugly Duckling"	126
9.2	The morality of babies	127
9.3	Morality and emotions	128
9.4.	Emotions and Circular logic	130
9.5	Transcendental Source of Emotions	133
Chapter 10: Internal communication		136
	<i>Introduction</i>	136
10.0	The possibility of consciousness to communicate with ego	136
10.1	"The Colours of your Mind"	138
10.2	The unconscious “roots” of the ego	141
10.3	Voice dialogue	142

Chapter 11: The veil of innocence method	144
<i>Introduction</i>	144
11.0 11.0 Regulative ideas about the unconscious	144
11.1 Method layout	145
11.1.1 Interview layout Phase 1	146
11.1.1.1 Interview layout Phase 1, part 2: the contract	147
11.1.2 Interview layout Phase 2, making contact and the nature of the questions	147
11.1.3 Interview layout Phase 3	149
11.2 Method illustration and its (pre) conditions	149
11.2.1 Preparation interview phase 1	149
11.2.1.1 Interview phase one: repeating the preparation home exercise	149
11.2.1.2 Interview phase one: Explanation phase	152
11.2.1.3 Interview phase one: preparation phase	153
11.2.2 Interview phase two: interview within	154
11.2.3 Interview phase three: plenary interview	156
11.3 Who qualifies for the interviews?	156
Chapter 12: Raw findings 157	
<i>Introduction</i>	157
12.1 Findings, Phase one part one and two	157
12.2 Findings, Phase two	157
12.2.1 Findings	158
12.3 Findings, Phase three	159
12.3.1 Trigger test 1	159
12.3.1.1 Trigger test 2	160
12.3.2 Morality and moral leadership	161
Chapter 13: Conclusions and Discussion	162
<i>Introduction</i>	162
13.0 Answering the sub questions	162
13.1 What are categories? How are they defined?	162
13.2 What is objectivity and subjectivity? Is their difference proven or set? Are they related?	163
13.3 Could there be a possible third domain, sharing properties of both?	164
13.4 If such a third domain exists, which methodology could	

	appropriate that domain?	165
13.5	Sub question's conclusions	134
13.6	Research questions	167
13.7	Research question one	167
13.7.1	The unexpected thing	168
13.7.2	Doing good beyond subjectivity, a balanced plural view	168
13.7.3	"Ich und Du", the incompleteness of Transcendental Consciousness as Being	171
13.7.4	Totalité et Infini: essai sur l'extériorité	175
13.7.5	Levinas resists Buber	179
13.7.6	Desire and Goodness	180
13.7.7	Conclusion so far	181
13.8	Research question one, second part	183
13.8.1	Authority and treason	185
13.8.2	Universal moral conduct cannot personally exist	187
13.8.3	The illusion of guilt and supportive morality	189
14.0	Research question two	191
14.1	The identification with one's organizational function is not a good thing	194
14.2	The MBA Oath and the Global Financial Crisis	196
	Literature index	197
	Samenvatting (<i>Dutch summary</i>)	205
	Curriculum Vitae	213

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Preface

The overall and first goal of the thesis is about finding if possible, a true (most) general ground of morality basically relying on impartial arguments independent of time (history), culture and personal values and interest. The belief is that morality will acquire more convincing authority if its narrative could rely upon such a ground. Philosophically diverse approaches has been done before, especially by using the hypothetical conception of a '*veil of ignorance*', a method to assure an impartial position. Impartiality is needed for the fair selection or development of principles of morality. David Hume (judicious spectator) and Adam Smith (impartial spectator) are classic examples who used the impartial position for their moral theories. A more modern version of the veil is Rawls' impartial position as a first starting point to envisage a just society. Impartial arguments however will gain stronger authority when based not alone on hypothetical, but also on *empirical grounds*. I fully realize that a true impartial and thus 'universal' or 'most general' property of morality, but based on empirical grounds, not on hypothetical grounds is hard to find.

The thesis has three goals, which are linked. The second goal of the research is to search for a new qualitative method of inquiry to gather verifiable and true *impartial* information from respondents, with a method that to the best of my knowledge has not been done before. What was needed for the developing of a new method was to delve (within relevance for the thesis), into a diversity of topics which in the end are related and linked. Topics like the sometimes paradoxical nature of categories (Rosch), objectivity (e.g. Kant; Husserl; Dow) versus (inter) subjectivity (e.g. Popper; Kuhn,), causality (Hume; e.g. Russell; Popper), language (e.g. Maturana; Bakhtin), meaning (e.g. Maturana; Jackson, Carter) and emotions (e.g. Lazarus; Eysenck; Gross & Barrett). Especially Husserl's Transcendental Consciousness, autopoiesis (Maturana & Varela) and its biology of organisms, and the fundamental difference of Circular Logic and observer's logic turned out to be indispensable for the search. The chapters 3 and further build upon each other and *need* each other in the search for a non-hypothetical impartial position.

If a method can be developed to gather true impartial information and a plausible universal basic property of morality can be deduced or witnessed, the third goal will be how the findings will affect moral leadership actions in organizations.

One of the many complex factors causing the 2008 financial crisis gave occasion to the thesis although the thesis is not about the crisis. A main factor next to the many conditional factors appears to be the questionable behavior of many managers and leaders in the financial industry, in the end fully exploiting asymmetric information.

My hope is when a plausible universal property of morality can be found it will help a percentage of leaders to be *intrinsically* motivated to express themselves naturally, matching a moral code of conduct which has not been imposed.

To impose regulations in order to safeguard a system as good as possible from internal errors is the logical first choice for more 'technical' systems. To impose regulations in the 'social domain' of economics however is not only depending on technical insight, but depends more so on political and ideological values, which makes "safeguarding" suddenly a much more difficult and complex process.

Chapter 1: US Financial crisis 2008, and the difficulty of regulating ideologies.

Introduction

In the modern world, a major structure that keeps societies together is the financial system *as a support system* of the economic system. Both systems overlap and are deeply intertwined. It is safe to say that economic / financial systems which rely existentially on transactions *need trust* and are based on trust. Some may argue that political systems or even military systems are the major forces behind modern societies. But history shows otherwise (Hirschman 1977, section 1.0).

The 2008 global financial crisis displayed how deeply financial systems are embedded and intertwined in the core of modern societies and it is imperative that such a deep crisis should be avoided in the future.

But what has history shown and how do the historical findings influence possible solutions in order to avoid the next global crisis? How do the relevant historical findings relate to possible external regulations and to morality, which is of interest for the thesis? The first section begins with the historical development of nations, trying to illustrate how much they form the background of the contemporary struggle between different points of view on how to solve the causes of the last global financial crisis. It paves the way to the following section, where the major causes of the 2008 global financial crisis will briefly be surveyed.

1.0 The historical development towards modern free and prosperous nations.

Hirschman, in his book “The Passions and the Interests” (1977), does not present a new theory but a thorough account of the historical development (from the Middle Ages to the 19th century) of ideas about what kind of state would be most beneficial for itself and for its citizens. The development of these ideas rests on the basic assumption that human agents have ‘passions’, and ‘passions’ need to be neutralized. Passions (*passiones*), a word deriving from the Latin *pati*, “to suffer or undergo”, refer in this context to our primitive urges, our “vices” centered on “egoism”. Anarchy would give free reign to these passions and it can be argued that an anarchic “society” would fall apart. If anarchy, in the sense of no state, is not an option, then what kind of state is an option?

To “control” man's passions two different approaches are possible. The first is the “inner” approach, in which man himself voluntarily takes care of his passions by way of disciplined reasoning or by subscribing to certain “virtues” and living by them. The second approach involves “external control”, where the state controls man's passions through law and regulations. The latter approach assumes that too much individual freedom can lead to abuse, violence or politically problematic ideas. A more subtle version of “outer control” refers to the individual's

identification with the rules and values of a certain group to which the individual (wants to) belong.

Theoretically, the most obvious options for a state to contain “vices”, the use of force and coercion, became philosophically unacceptable as early as the 17th century. During that time, philosophers and other thinkers understood that the suppression of “...misery and havoc...” is based on the *wishing away* of these and not on the solving of “...the very difficulties that had been discovered” (Hirschman, 1977 p.16). Already then, the existence of a rather fundamental difference between causes and symptoms (effects) was recognized. Slowly, from 1600 onwards, certain passions were named “interests” and were no longer simply regarded as “vices”.

A new idea developed in which the passion of (self)-interest was seen as counteracting other passions with positive results. Self-interest accepts its dependence on the need of others. To *fulfill the need of others* for services and/or products is recognized as providing opportunities for the self. The expectation is that self-interest incorporates prudence towards the “commercial” medium that it needs to express itself. It was especially this prudent part that turned self-interest into a counteracting passion. Strangely, during those centuries, the meaning of the word “interest” developed towards referring to the personal pursuit of material, *economic* advantage. Hirschman quoted Adam Smith (1723-1790) as a possible explanation of this shift towards an economic meaning of “interest”: “An augmentation of fortune is the means by which the greater part of men propose and wish to better their condition...” (Hirschman 1977 p.39). The idea that self-interest, under the new economic meaning, would counteract the passions is worded literally by Keynes (1883-1946):

“Moreover, dangerous human proclivities can be canalised into comparatively harmless channels by the existence of opportunities for money-making and private wealth, which, if they cannot be satisfied in this way, may find their outlet in cruelty, the reckless pursuit of personal power and authority, and other forms of self-aggrandisement. It is better that a man should tyrannise over his bank balance than over his fellow-citizens; and whilst the former is sometimes denounced as being but a means to the latter, sometimes at least it is an alternative” (Keynes, 1935/2002 p. 37).

Smith claimed in his “Wealth of Nations” (1776/1904, III.4.4 p.26) that “...the rise of commerce and manufacturers gradually introduced order and good government and with them, the liberty and security of individuals”. Smith did not mean that a better society emerged only out of the wish for material or financial gain. He was particularly referring to non-economic and non-consumptionist motives, which stood central behind the struggle for economic advance. Long before Smith wrote his “Wealth of Nations”, he published his book “The Theory of Moral Sentiments” (1759), where he was very aware of prudence as a virtue. In his description, prudence includes *honesty, sincerity* and *avoidance* of any disgrace and falsehood (VI.I.8). He speaks of “superior prudence” in which prudence is joined with greater virtues: “It is the *best head joined to the best heart.*” (VI.I.16, italics added).

Related to the above, McCloskey gives a compelling argument that there is nothing wrong with capitalism; on the contrary, “capitalism has not corrupted our souls. It has improved them” (McCloskey 2006 p.23). She describes how states *have learned to adopt* the “bourgeois values” of the middle class (manufacturers, merchants), leading to the development of their citizens’ freedom, safety and prosperity. She shows how these values seem to be *existential* for the development of free modern states and for a good working capitalism. Pinker (2011) has argued that over the centuries, as part of civilizing processes, there is a relation between the spread of commerce and the decline of the abuse of power (violence) in societies.

If for some reason the state does not absorb the values of the bourgeoisie, the reverse can be noticed, as happened for centuries in late empirical China (Qing period 1644-1911). Merchants—except for the richest and most powerful, who identified themselves with the political elite and were accepted by them—found themselves in a very unsafe society. They lacked a trustworthy regulatory environment, suffered a corrupt justice system as court decisions could be “bought” through bribery, faced high criminality and intense competition. By *adapting* to the existing emperor's ideology, the merchants could at least determine their own fate. By being prudent and pragmatic, merchants relied *on personal relations* and local markets and hesitated to invest in production (Lufrano 1997). It was only after 1979, when “autocratic” China, in the form of the China Communist Party, decided to reform (gradually) to a modern market configuration. This was done by supporting the transformation of state-owned enterprises; the promotion of private enterprises; and the establishment of the rule of law. Since then, the middle classes gradually began to have increased opportunities for education, more rights (social security), a growth in their economic (although not political freedom and less corruption. To achieve all that, the China Communist Party abandoned, over time, the idea of central control and planning, a core value for communist ideology. Eventually, they allowed and then supported increased private ownership of enterprises and established increased security to protect participants in the market. Already the first phase, between 1979 and 1993, was a big success:

“... it generated high growth, dramatically improved people's living standards, and eliminated shortage, the common symptom of all planned economies. For example, an average Chinese consumer increased his/her consumption about three times for edible vegetable oil, pork, and eggs. The per person living space has doubled in urban areas and more than doubled in rural areas, and total household bank deposits, measured against the GDP, increased from less than 6 percent in 1978 to more than 40 percent in 1993” (Quian and Wu 2000).

A gradual and parallel reform, not openly mentioned in Chinese papers, has to do with judiciary independence. This obviously would need a parallel and proportional political reform to be effective. China is not a modern free democratic state, but if the convincing accounts of Hirschman and McCloskey are right, eventually China will become one, based of course on Chinese culture and history.

From a historical point of view, a free market economy in the form of a system of merchants and (merchant driven) producers motivated by interest also needs financial, legal and political systems to support it. In return, they appear to gradually transform autocratic nations into modern, safe and relatively prosperous democracies.

The principle of self-interest as the main drive behind markets is also linked to Adam Smith's theory of "the invisible hand". An instructive essay was published by economist Leonard Read, which aptly explains the invisible hand with a metaphor:

"I, Pencil, the creation of a pencil am a complex combination of miracles: a tree, zinc, copper, graphite and so on. But to these miracles which manifest themselves in Nature an even more extraordinary miracle has been added: the configuration of *creative* human energies – millions of tiny knows-how configuring *naturally and spontaneously* in response to human necessity and desire, all *in the absence* of any human masterminding!" (Read L. 1958) italics added by author.

How critical is freedom in terms of enhancing *natural and spontaneous creativity*? How important is the *lack* of "any human masterminding"? The answers to both these questions offer an inherent aversion to regulation. Commerce based on outsmarting the competition to fulfil the needs of markets requires creativity and self-interest, which on their own terms require freedom of expression. That makes the financial crisis of 2008 more than just a financial crisis. It was, in a way, an existential crisis regarding how to use freedom, as freedom apparently requires responsibility to be handled.

1.1 Freedom needs responsibility

The middle class needs freedom to develop and grow and to enrich the state. Freedom is the observable "mechanism", but it's deeply and structurally linked to (much) less observable, more complex class values: *middle class values*. It is values that lie behind such warnings:

"...[when] the taste of material enjoyments develops more rapidly than the enlightenments and habits of liberty...[and] preoccupied by the sole concern to make a fortune, they no longer notice the close bond that unites the particular fortune of each one of them to the prosperity of all." (Tocqueville 1840/2010 CH 14 a)

And:

"These people think they follow the doctrine of interest, but they have only a crude idea of what it is, and, to watch the better over what they call their business, they neglect the principal part of it which is to remain their own masters" (Tocqueville, cited by Hirschman 1977 p.123).

The implicit warnings suggest that, when too many participants (reaching a critical mass) lose sight of the prosperity of all, and when uncontrolled passions for incentives take over, then the close bond Tocqueville mentioned is denied and the system may crash. Tocqueville raises the idea that self-interest alone (in the new

economic sense) is not enough to safeguard a just society, which refers to prosperity for all. Principally, man needs to learn to be his own master but this has to occur in parallel to the existence of *prudence*, a conclusion underlined by many modern articles (e.g. Weitzner and Darroch, McCloskey). Also, Smith speaks of prudence in his “Wealth of Nations”; as mentioned before, he sees prudence as an enriched virtue which includes *honesty*, *sincerity* and *avoidance of any disgrace and falsehood* (1759 VI.I.8).

There is an implicit warning in McCloskey’s (2006) book too, a deeper, more revealing warning than Tocqueville’s. A number of “bourgeois values” (middle class values) exist and as a whole, they are much more complex than self-interest alone. “Man mastering himself” can be seen as the combined outcome of these values depending on the situation at hand. The prudence that exists within self-interest is one amongst many bourgeois virtues. McCloskey’s understanding about many combined values suggests that the sole drive for material gain behind capitalism governed by prudence alone is insufficient and incomplete. The notion of self-interest alone cannot keep capitalist/economic systems from going astray, a lesson learned by Alan Greenspan and relevant to many present-day situations, such as the exploitation of Bangladeshi / Chinese / African workers and illegal immigrants in Western countries.

The necessity of bourgeois values and its virtue ethics produce a table of *seven* virtues which are understood to foster commerce and capitalism in order to fulfil their promise and to keep them on the “right” track. McCloskey defends those seven virtues as a “pool” that is complete for every imaginable context. Sometimes, depending on the context, one virtue may be sufficient; other times, in a more complex situation, a combination may be required. But a single virtue on its own—prudence—cannot form the basis for a modern society, not only for economics or capitalism. Behind the mastery of “self-interest” more complex virtues are hidden and ‘at work’, making mastery possible.

“We need to defend a defensible capitalism. We citizens of the bourgeois towns [middle class] need to rethink our **love** and **courage**. We need to nourish the commercial versions of **temperance**, **justice**, and **prudence** that were admired during the eighteenth century by some in the commercial societies of northwestern Europe, and by at least the merchants themselves in Japan. And we need to find a safe home for our **faith** and **hope**..... If we can do all this ethical reinvestment, we can avoid repeating the slaughters and lesser sadnesses of the twentieth century” (McCloskey, 2006 p.32, bold added).

This resonates with Smith’s “superior prudence” and Tocqueville’s indication that capitalism can only work with participants who are able to restrain themselves and not to see themselves as apart from others unbridled self-interest cannot be a system property of a stable economic system. Freedom should not be abused. The invisible hand needs freedom too, now not only regarded as an existential part of a functioning economy, but also as one of the foundations of democratic and stable

nations. The latter suggests the importance of being *very* careful in tampering the freedom market mechanisms need. It may seem easy to defend the idea that clever regulations might work. The danger is not the introduction of a regulation by itself, but the slippery slope of the idea that state-controlled regulation, in the context of free markets and commerce, is ideologically right. Once on this road, it is practically certain that the mindset of administrators and civil servants, over time, will lead them to push continuously for more (micro)-regulations, which all (out of sight) add up, with various unintended and in the end maybe grave consequences.

1.2 Major causes of the 2008 global financial crisis

The major causes of the 2008 global financial crisis will be briefly surveyed here. A lot has already been written about this topic. The subject of the thesis concerns morality, but morality may stand central in the development of a future capitalism if we extend the narratives that originate from Tocqueville, Smith, McCloskey and from modern research (see section 1.3). It is plausible to link morality to the responsible handling of the existential freedom that modern capitalism is based upon and needs.

The 2008 global financial crisis became global because nowadays, with the existing fast digital connections, global distances are eradicated. Therefore, all financial (national) markets *are only virtually separated*. The source of the crisis started in the USA and rapidly had a devastating systemic, global effect on the financial industry and, eventually, on many national societies.

The many interrelated and complex causes of this crisis can be roughly divided between *manmade* and *system made* causes. System made causes are, for instance, some wrong economical models based on *representative agent* theories (Juselius and Franchi 2007 p.35) as well as the rise of complicated mathematical risk and derivatives models which “promised” “...more stability and risk sharing than was actually present.” (Colander, Goldberg, Haas, Juselius, Kirman, Lux, Sloth 2009 p.49) Next, there is the issue of slow changes over decades in the financial system, as a result of political and ideological decisions, which led to *an accumulation of freedom*. Financial structures became less and less submissive to regulating agencies and/or to the law. This began as a change in policy in the mid-eighties Reagan administration. As a result of this freedom, the human factor to handle this freedom became more central, playing a role in the downfall of trust. The growing political climate was sympathetic to *deregulation* of the existing regulations, historically based on the financial crisis of the 1930s, and thus made possible the gradual rise of largely unregulated *opaque* institutions and vehicles concerning credit facilities and risk transfer (Gorton, Metrick 2010).

The gradual lessening of regulations enlarged freedom but at the same time shifted the moral assumptions behind those early regulations to the “players” in the industry:

“It is critical for management scholars concerned about ethics to understand the implications of the structural changes in the financial sector and to

further understand that in many cases the only safeguard is the moral character of the financiers." (Weitzner and Darroch 2009 p.9)

The free and largely unregulated system (shadow banking system) provided new avenues for uncontrolled risk taking (gambling) and thus provided a context for maximizing incentives (Partnoy 2010, Weitzner and Darroch 2009). The development of risky and *questionable* derivative models, leading to opaque security products (*information asymmetry* between sellers and buyers), happened within a growing "systemic culture of greed" (Partnoy 2010). This had been noted in 2002, six years before the global financial crisis, by Alan Greenspan, Chairman (between 1987-2006) of the US Federal Reserve:

"An infectious greed seemed to grip much of our business community. Our historical guardians of financial information were overwhelmed... It is not that humans have become any more greedy than in generations past. It is that the avenues to express greed had grown so enormously." (Greenspan A., testimony before the Senate banking Committee, July 16 2002)

Unethical attitudes endanger a financial system that is based on *trust*, particularly when such attitudes multiply and become part of a growing *group think*, thus contaminating the overall financial (Anglo-Saxon, Asian) culture. The millions of individuals working in the financial industry cannot be blamed; they have to adapt or leave their job (Luyendijk 2015). But their unethical organizational culture, tolerated or reinforced by chief executives, forms part of a major man-made cause, parallel to other systemic technical causes behind the 2008 financial crisis.

Transparency, financial reporting and competition ("old-fashioned" banking principles) were important pre-1985 factors that could inhibit or severely hinder information asymmetry and market manipulation. The rise of the "shadow banking system" contributed to less transparency and openness for many products and led to *information asymmetry* blending in, more than it ever had. The implicit warning of Alan Greenspan in 2002 did not seem to have any effect. Therefore, greed, together with the other aforementioned factors, led to the 2008 global financial crisis, six years after Greenspan's warning.

To summarize, the causes of the 2008 financial crisis are complex and interrelated; they took decades to develop. Also, the technical advances in computer hardware enlarged the decision dependence of buying and selling on complicated software, which pretended to foresee the future and in too many cases failed. Negative effects became rapidly "worldly", given that financial markets are internationally and intrinsically connected through intra- and inter-net. *Nevertheless, the human factor appeared to play a crucial and negative role and can be legitimately lifted out of the many other factors as the one which is of most relevance to the thesis.* It is argued that trust is the existential foundation behind financial and business transactions. When trust starts to falter, because of unethical cultures and/or too much personal misconduct, it must be restored. But can trust be restored?

1.3 Is capitalism right?

People may believe that free capitalism itself is unjust (survival of the fittest, winner takes all) and that it is, at heart, not social (exploiting employees within the boundaries of the law, maximization of profit and shareholders' interest as primary goals, extreme incentives for top functions). It has also been argued that capitalism *is not democratic*. The 2008 crisis fit well within such a line of argument. Since the rise of capitalism, merchants and producers, driven by interest alone, have exploited others for profit, while losing sight of the rights of those they exploit. A modern example is shown in a September 2013 BBC documentary, "Dying for a Bargain", in which Bangladeshi workers are shown to be locked in the factory where they work for 19-hour shifts. In this case, "locked in" must be taken literally, as the front gate of the factory building was shown to be locked with a key by a guard, only to be opened to "release" the workers after their shift.

This is not only a Bangladesh affair. A customer of that factory "...Edinburgh Woolen Mill [a UK based company] still denies its clothes were made at that factory, but now says it has offered financial assistance." (BBC Sept. 2013) Time magazine published the following in March 2013, in its Business and Money section:

"A growing dossier of evidence suggests that he [Karl Marx] may have been right. ... A September [2012] study from the Economic Policy Institute (EPI) in Washington noted that the median annual earnings of a full-time, male worker in the U.S. in 2011, at \$48,202, were smaller than in 1973. Between 1983 and 2010, 74% of the gains in wealth in the U.S. went to the richest 5%, while the bottom 60% suffered a decline, the EPI calculated. No wonder some have given the 19th century German philosopher a second look. ... That's not to say Marx was entirely correct... But the consequence of this widening inequality is just what Marx had predicted: class struggle is back" (Shuman 2013).

Growing income inequality is not just a contemporary American phenomenon. In 2012, the rise of capitalism in China showed a gini index of 0.61, as reported by the Chinese Household Finance Survey Center of Chengdu's Southwestern University of Finance and Economics, set up by the Finance Research Institute of the People's Bank of China. A gini index statistically measures the income distribution within a country; 0 represents perfect equality and 1 represents perfect inequality. The Netherlands, for instance, showed a gini index of 0.25 for 2011 (source: Eurostat 2013). China's income inequality "...is way above a risk level for social unrest underscoring new Communist Party chief Xi Jinping's warning that corruption may endanger its rule." (Bloomberg 2012-12-09) In Brazil, the poorest 10% gained a little over 1% of national income while the richest 10% gained over 50% of national income (source: UNDP Annual HDI reports for 2000 to 2009). Similar reports can be found in India, South Africa and other countries.

In October 2009, in the UK, the Royal Bank of Scotland was revived after a bailout of £45.5 billion. The bank's chairman of the global banking and markets

department (GBM), received, in 2010, a lifetime ban from any managerial work in the financial sector, due to the role he played in the bank's collapse. In 2013, he appeared before the Banking Commission of MPs and peers to elaborate his role in the Libor rate-rigging scandal:

“[He] ...insisted he tried to instill the right values in his employees but argued *‘you can’t impose moral standards on people who don’t wish to be moral’* (Salmon, J. 2013, italics by author).

In May 2013, in *Science* magazine, an article was published entitled “Morals and Markets”. In this article, the authors Falk and Szech present controlled experimental evidence regarding the way that market interaction changes moral values. They come to the conclusion that “...market interaction erodes moral values, relative to individually stated preferences” (Falk and Szech 2013 p.707). Many years after the Global Financial crisis, the *present* (2014) corporate culture of the banking industry was the topic of a scientific report published in the journal “*Nature*”. It concluded: “Our results thus suggest that the prevailing business culture in the banking industry weakens and undermines the honesty norm...” (Cohn, Fehr & Maréchal 2014). It cannot be denied that people and not machines stand in the center of financial systems and in the end all behavior has to do with personal choice and responsibility. Also, organizational groupthink (culture) falls under the responsibility of *top management and CEOs*, if we take into account contemporary leadership theories that have developed since the eighties. (Local) law and custom can make personal responsibility disappear, only to be replaced by anonymous corporate responsibility, *but it cannot change leadership theories and their power over organizational cultures*.

1.3.1 Healthy vs. unhealthy greed

Arguably, one of the major causes of the 2008 global financial crisis is unhealthy, unethical greed. This must be differentiated from “healthy greed”, whereby most if not all players in the market try to fulfil their personal needs (just like in sports), but—and this is a very big **bold but**—under the same, *transparent* rules of the game, *equally valid* for all who play the game. Everybody enjoys watching some form of sports, whereby the players or the team try to “crush” the other team’s aims in order to win the game.

Unethical greed, on the other hand, is destructive, disregarding Tocqueville's, Smith's and McCloskey's warnings without understanding. It is eventually capable of destabilizing the interrelated system(s) in which it participates. The *covert* use of asymmetrical information between buyers and sellers is a tool that is positioned on the wrong side of greed. As a tool, it relies on opaqueness, on lack of transparency; it is blind to “... the close bond that unites the particular fortune of each one of them to the prosperity of all.” (Tocqueville 1840/2010 CH 14 a)

Does this justify the conclusion that free (unregulated) capitalism is wrong (unjust) and needs (strong) regulation under central governmental control in order to contain its “abuse of freedom”? Considering what to regulate and how far to go

with regulation are not only technical questions, but also social ones, as politics and ideology enter the debate. A principal property of ideologies, however, is their apparent “stubbornness” in accepting counter-ideological arguments. Besides, it is important to take into account that for national regulations to be effective, international agreements and regulations are needed too, since many national versions of the shadow banking system are globally, tightly interlinked.

1.4 The route of regulations

To avoid systemic, large crises in the future means to avoid the mistakes and wrongdoings of the past. If one were to imagine metaphorically that the 2008 financial crash was like an annually reoccurring large number of deaths (regarded as one problem) amongst innocent bystanders of a Nigerian (but Shell supervised) oil refinery, what would be the solution to prevent future casualties? It is easier to focus on regulations, as they are empirically verifiable and easy to defend as rational and necessary. But the internal Shell investigation found a different reason. The employees had a good knowledge of the strict rules and procedures of Shell's high western standards of safety. They were however at least lackluster when it came to abiding by these rules. Further investigation revealed that the Nigerian majority of employees who were working there at that time participated in a culture in which safety was regarded as non-masculine, even womanly and was experienced as 'weak', not only in the organization, but also back at home by wife and neighbors (source: Shell C2 management course, training presentation 1984). The idea behind this attitude was something like this: a good man is a brave man, originally a hunter or warrior; he laughs in the face of danger.

Now regulations sank beneath their aim and tried to regulate an ideology. In most cases, employees subject to rules and regulations are not involved in their making; regulations are already in place and imposed. Supposing, in the Nigerian example, that management were to introduce real democracy: then employees would be able to choose representatives with equal power as their supervisors in determining their personal and environmental safety. Shell management wants to lower the figure from four, five deaths a year to an average of less than one death a year, as was the case in Europe and in the US. This would put numerical and technical safety criteria against culturally determined identity, at the same table. What results could be expected in such a situation, with the political power between the two groups more in balance?

Regulating an ideology sounds problematic; still, this seems to be what needs to be done in the US in order to avoid a future systemic financial crisis. The US is a democracy basically based on two parties, where typically neither achieves a strong majority over the other. The Republican Party (GOP) consists of 71% of conservatives including libertarians (Gallup research 2011). The GOP explained their core values under “OUR HISTORY”:

“It all started with people ... who bristled at the notion that men *had any right to oppress their fellow man*. In the early 1850’s, these anti-slavery

activists found commonality with rugged individuals looking to settle in western lands, *free of government charges*. Republicans believe individuals, *not government*, can make the best decisions; *all people are entitled to equal rights*; and decisions are best made close to home ...With a *core belief in the primacy of individuals*, the Republican Party, since its inception, has been at the forefront of the *fight for individuals' rights in opposition to a large, intrusive government*"... (GOP 2013, italics added).

The italics refer to the existential values of the GOP. The GOP is not against a small government and shares this belief with classical liberals who accept the delegation of power away from individuals toward a minimal government. This would be a government that knows what its primary and existential role should be: to protect the rights of individuals, its citizens (personal liberty, private property, safety, contractual rights and so on) and under strict conditions to help the disabled, who are unable to use their liberal rights to participate in society.

Modern liberals with a more social ('leftish') view on what role a government should take are represented by the Democratic Party, which accepts a bigger, more spending-oriented government, also placing importance on fulfilling its social responsibilities. In "The Charter & the Bylaws of The Democratic Party of The United States", the party states:

"What we seek for our Nation, we hope for all people: individual freedom in the framework of a *just* society..."; also found on the party's website is: "Democrats believe that we're greater *together* than we are on our own" (2013 democrats.org, italic and bold added).

In the same way that *individual freedom* stands central in the foundational text of the GOP, so does the idea of a *just society* stand central in the ideology of the Democratic Party. Democrats accept a bigger, more "intruding" government, but this must be understood in relation to the views of the GOP. Nowadays, even among Democrats, 38% believe that the federal government has too much power; this number is growing (Gallup poll Sept. 23 2013). However, a big ideological difference can still be found between the two parties, in regards to what the primary role of the government should be.

1.4.1 Regulating and obstructing regulations

Against this political background we find the debate regarding what to change as a result of the 2008 financial crisis. Focusing on regulation is easy as this is something that is empirically verifiable and can be monitored. Given that all regulation reduces individual freedom of decision making, and taking into account that freedom is an indispensable property of a free market and a core "American Dream" value of both parties, strong ideology enters the debate.

A survey of the latest news publications, five years after the financial crisis, shows that powerful political resistance exists in implementing even those regulations that would deal with the major factors which led to the crisis and its effects. After the unprecedented bailouts of the so-called "too big to fail" banks, in

the autumn of 2008, the public climate was ripe for politicians and regulators to work on, and finally enact (two years later) the Dodd-Frank regulatory overhaul, but which was not finished and needed further elaboration. With a narrow margin, this law passed. But since its inception it has met with severe opposition from the GOP and from Wall Street firms, resulting in its further elaboration being delayed, and also resulting in not been touched upon content of 60% (Markovich, S. J., 2013). The Dodd-Frank law, in any case, does not address the big banks, which are still considered “too big to fail”. The risk is real, in any next crisis, for another string of expensive bail-outs, as society is seen as not able to afford being suddenly without the integrated “assets” of big banks.

In June 2013, a bill was introduced by GOP lawmakers, revising and possibly annulling the implementation of a major part of the Dodd-Frank law, aiming to curtail the funding of financial regulatory agencies.

A big overall belief still seems to hold: this is the idea that unregulated financial markets are essential and that the self-interest of bankers will eventually lead to the improvement of society and to widespread prosperity. Johnson and Kwak (2013) argue that by the late 1990s, the conventional wisdom in Washington was along the lines of: “what is good for Wall Street is good for America”. This belief hadn’t changed in 2013. The main beneficiaries of this widespread idea are (Wall Street) bankers, who succeeded in persuading politicians that an essential and effective free market equals an unregulated market.

“More remarkable, the responses of both the Bush and Obama administrations to the crisis—bailing out the megabanks on generous terms, without securing any meaningful reform—demonstrate the lasting political power of Wall Street. The largest banks have become more powerful and more emphatically “too big to fail,” [TBTF] with no incentive to change their behavior in the future” (13bankers.com 2013, underlying added by author).

In June 2013, the US’s ten biggest banks grew by 28%, as compared to 2008 (LA Times, 09-17-1013). According to the study of Johnson and Kwak, the lobby of the thirteen most powerful banks in the USA is so successful that one can speak of it having “political power”. In the author's eyes, this power presents a threat to the “spirit” behind a democratic nation.

Democrats, on the other hand, believe that the existing new rules don't go far enough. The existing rules try to prevent the banks from entering another crisis. But if such a crisis does occur, the banks will still need expensive bail-outs. The Democrats therefore want the government to have the authority to downsize megabanks. If *not-too-big-banks* still fail in spite of new regulations, it is argued that they don't need bail-outs at the expense of tax-payers’ money. At the same time, “most Republicans agree that the problem of too-big-to-fail institutions has become worse. But they don't blame the banks and don't want to force them to shrink.” (LA times, 09-17-1013). Many more examples can be found, not only in terms of withstanding new regulations, but also in terms of softening or annulling the existing regulations

that have been made since 2008. It is not only the GOP, but also the Democratic Party that makes these arguments, hesitating to “curb business”, although the Democratic Party does this less than the GOP.

1.5 Easy regulations are “value free” or support the prevailing culture

The immense difficulty in regulating important processes, under influence of opposing values and ideologies, should logically disappear when the proposed regulations are value-free and ideology-free. In a sense, such regulations would come from an *accepted impartial stance*. There are numerous examples of such regulations, widely accepted. Value-free regulations are in fact not really value-free; they merely do not interfere with the underlying values of those operating within the regulated conditions. Ideally, such regulations are experienced as technical aids that only help in doing the job in a better or safer way, and are not experienced as a sacrifice of personal freedom or worse, as disrespectful to personally held values and beliefs.

Going back to the example of the Nigerian oil refinery, the question now becomes, not what kind of regulations must be implemented or changed, but what can we do about the in-company culture (regarding safety)? Culture is not the sum of all its rules and regulations; in fact, the reverse is true (e.g. Schein, Hofstede). Culture expresses itself through laws and regulations, but is much more than these, as it expresses itself also in many other ways. Culture, of course, does not really exist as an empirical entity, similarly to all reifications; but on its own, culture is a different kind of aggregation, an aggregation of values and norms. In reality, values, even when shared, *are only individually real*: values exist *within* a sole individual; the remainder refers to interpretations of artefacts, has to do with linguistics and is part of the reification. In the oil refinery example, a different approach could help: a contextual reframing of the “Nigerian Hero” for most or all of the relevant employees. The historical Nigerian hero gets an extra identity: the in-company hero. When “Danger” sends his active foes openly, they will still be crushed by the hero's bravery. It is not the laughing in the tiger's face that will defeat the tiger, but laughing is a brave attitude when entering the fight. Now the “classical” hero also becomes the in-company hero, who cleverly discovers that “Danger” has a hidden, darker side. In the machines, the tall stairs, in the heavy equipment and the pipes, the power lines and the oil on the floor and in many other ways, the hidden side of “Danger” 'lurks and throws accidents to take the hero's life. The weapons for its defeat are not hero's ancient spears or swords, but technical regulations, rules and procedures. It is a story of values, but built upon important national or tribal ones. Whatever story is told it will be part of an *educational process* with the sole aim to reach and help each and every individual in class to transform (enrich) his values. Alternative to the regulative approach is the education and development of values, or in other words the idea of changing the culture.

Tocqueville's and McCloskey's warning regarding the “need to rethink” values are also connected to education. Education ideally should start at home and at

primary schools. What starts in the privacy of home and local community could safely be regarded as the “cradle” of values; but there is no clear account of how a government can successfully impose values in the private domain, and that is a good thing. What happens in (primary) schools is a different matter, though. Additionally, business schools and universities could incorporate ethics in their curriculums or emphasize ethics more, although, when it comes to values, focusing on education cannot aim at short term results.

An apparent downside exists when it comes to education that focuses on moral values: the low contemporary societal status of morality.

1.6 The frustration to hope for morality

Sadly, morality, although highly supported in the linguistic domain, seems to have in practice a rather low status, which in one way is theoretically defensible. The mechanism of the renaissance, which ended ideology (religion) as the prime method of understanding and analyzing reality, at the same time severely weakened morality’s authority, by mercilessly highlighting its apparent metaphysical nature.

As a spontaneous reaction to the 2008 crisis, more than 2,500 MBAs and business students in Harvard Business School's class of 2009, drafted and disseminated “The MBA Oath”, based on a brief code of ethics. Obviously, the need was felt by these young men and women to highlight the importance of business ethics, in spite of the fact that their university already, even before 2008, incorporated ethics in their business curriculum. But, while the teaching of ethics was already part of the Harvard MBA programs (similarly to many other universities), the drafting of the “MBA Oath” *showed that such programs apparently lack the moral authority to sufficiently commit their allegiance*. “The MBA Oath” transformed into a book, costing a little over 20 US dollars. Its commercial value, notwithstanding its fine ethical and practical content, soon dropped. The book can now (October 2013) be bought new for 1.87 dollars (on Amazon.com and other similar online sellers).

Not everyone is convinced by McCloskey's compelling account for a universally applicable table of Bourgeois Virtues that would help free capitalism from abuse: “McCloskey probably won’t sway many readers who do not already share her convictions.” (Holt 2006)

MacIntyre, who analyzed the history of Western moral philosophy in depth, comes to the conclusion that moral philosophy *lacks any compelling argumentative authority* (MacIntyre, 1984 pp. 8-11; and 2007 pp. 9-13). Contemporary participants in the debate on morality assume that their arguments are based on impersonal or objective criteria. But what seems to be a moral experience for one could easily be a bad experience for someone else. Even when contradictory positions are rationally explained, conflict often arises. MacIntyre considers *rational but moral explanations a grave mistake*. The used assumed criteria make rational approaches seem possible, but they all lead in the end to moral inconsistencies, creating disagreements that go on indefinitely: “...they [the

disagreements] apparently can find no terminus” (MacIntyre, 1984 p.6). He considers modern western states in their liberal development, as morally blank. This sounds rather harsh, but his conclusion actually is an inevitable outcome. Morality has lost its previous *authoritative* sources, be it God during the Middle Ages or faith in the true “nature of man” as it was in Aristotelian ethics. The authority which Aristotle accepts in his arguments came from his version of what man truly is, based on his (metaphysical) biology. Aristotle sees man as a “rational animal”, with a universal purpose in accordance with his specific nature, a nature that demands and strives for the “good”. What is therefore good for man is his purpose. Good does not equal money, honor or pleasure:

“..He [Aristotle] gives it [good] the name of eudaimonia- as so often there is a difficulty in translation: blessedness, happiness, prosperity. It is the state of being well and doing well in being well ... and in relation to the divine” (MacIntyre 1984 p.148).

In this view, doing well is a core property within man's natural state and it is man's proper function to do well, to express something beyond himself. Aristotle explains the relationship between happiness, purpose and the nature of man:

“To call happiness the highest good is perhaps a little trite, and a clearer account of what it is, is still required. Perhaps this is best done by first ascertaining the *proper function* of man. For just as the goodness and performance of a flute player, a sculptor, or any kind of expert, and generally of anyone who fulfills some function or performs some actions, are thought to reside in whatever is his proper function, so the goodness of man would seem to reside in whatever is his proper function. Is it then possible that while a carpenter and shoemaker have their own proper functions and spheres of action, man as man has none, but was left by nature a good-for-nothing without a function? ... The proper function of man, then, consists in an activity of the soul in conformity with a rational principle or, at least, not without it.” (*Ethica Nicomachea; Ostwald 1962 p.16*)

A modern version of Aristotle-like morality comes from Taylor:

“Virtually everyone feels these [moral] demands and they have been and are acknowledged in all human societies.... We are dealing here with moral intuitions, which are uncommonly deep, powerful and universal... We have a sense of who we are through our sense of where we stand to the [universal] good” (Taylor C. 1989 pp. 4,105).

The belief in God, who demands “good” from man or the belief in man's good soul or intuition, demanding the same (not necessarily the same good), *did* provide authority back then to moral arguments. But modern *post-renaissance* (Western) man cannot accept that reasoning anymore. As a source of authority, God or the soul or intuition are replaced nowadays by science and rationality, based on *empirical* grounds. MacIntyre therefore argues that morality is in need of finding a new status, which will make the appeal to morality rational. Rational in this context boils down to the use of true *impartial* arguments that provide authority to morality.

Otherwise, morality will “...indeed appear as a mere instrument of individual desire and will” (MacIntyre, 1984 p. 62, italics added). His warning still stands in the 2007 edition of his book. Individual desire and will do not mean that moral theories are always individualistic; millions can agree and accept a certain (group) view and as a result “produce” the many different schools of morality. MacIntyre does not mean that Kant already found the new “rational status” by providing a pure rational approach for morality. Also, Kant failed in the end (MacIntyre, 1984 pp.43-47, 56). So, in order to acquire authority, moral arguments need to be rational, based on truly impartial arguments.

MacIntyre suggests that such moral arguments are (very) hard to find; his book offers no solution. The discussion is not finished, he says: “...but I do not pretend to have embarked upon it [a solution] on this present book. My negative and positive evaluations of particular arguments do indeed *presuppose* a systematic, although here unstated, account of rationality” (1984, p.260).

However, not all approaches that defend morality are only based upon “...individual desire and will”. McCloskey's account of virtue ethics is not just based on beliefs and personal assumptions. Her account includes a historical exploration of the rise of middle class values, leading to modern nations supporting the account of Hirschman. For contemporary modern nations, which are the outcome of such historical processes as explained earlier under section 1.0, virtue ethics are maybe more “rational” in the words of MacIntyre than, for instance, ethics based on social consequentialism (utilitarianism).

1.7 Contemporary Aristocracy

A final warning is in place. The historical roots behind free, safe, democratic and (relatively) prosperous nations, according to the study of Hirschman and McCloskey and suggested by Tocqueville, Smith and others (e.g. Quian and Wu 2000), refer to the state's absorption of *middle class values*. The powerful elite—the aristocracy, the military and the church—and the peasants do not have or express those values as a class, because they don't need them to uphold their position and status in society, be it as top dog or underdog. Only the members of the middle class, as entrepreneurs, with no military, political or religious power, learned to survive through their bourgeois values and by maneuvering between powers. *Merchants are not fearless fighters or rebels*, but as entrepreneurs they are assertive, willing to take risks, proactively exploring opportunities. The “personality” of the traditional middle class is not out for power, meaning they are not power driven. Their markets were initially small local markets with networks of relations, in which often there were personal links between them, their customers and suppliers. This enriches their values beyond being just prudent. In this context, the idea of the bourgeois values makes sense. When small businesses flourish, more labor was generated, but always at a scale incomparably smaller compared to modern economics. For instance, McCloskey named the Dutch as one of the first examples of a rising middle class, getting more freedom because of the state, but one has to

take into account the small scale of that time and the time previous to it. Close to 1800, in 1795, the total population of the Netherlands was 2.087 million (Kossmann 1986).

Global capitalistic economy is altogether something new, and when profit is not primarily based anymore on the added value of labor, but on finance (making money with money), only self-interest seems sufficient. This (existentially) changes the rules of the historical evolutionary “game”. Making money with capital which, principally, is not directed towards adding value to the middle class but, for instance, is based on speculation in order to raise more money, will, when a certain threshold of “volume” is crossed, lead to gross income inequality and instability. This is Piketty’s warning in “Capital in the Twenty-First Century” (2014). Not only income inequality, but also the rules of the game leading to it, *do not match* the existential historical mechanisms on which free economics and stable nations are based upon. The rise of “big capital” is the rise of a new class with their own values. A class, which historically can be compared not to the bourgeoisie or the middle class, but to the former *aristocracy*. This is a class, which historically protect its own needs and status often at the expense of the middle and working class, when necessary. The “personality” of the aristocracy is very different from the middle class and relies on power and/or status, values which are not principal for the middle class, but more importantly did not contribute in the historical rise of contemporary free states.

It is outside the scope of this thesis to explore Piketty’s work further. History has proven, however, that the accumulation of wealth at the former aristocracies *does not trickle down* towards a (further) development of the middle class. To hope for that, in order to further allow the development of big capital, may be risky and may lead, in the end, to systemic consequences that nobody wants. It may be a good idea *to make an existential (as understood historically) distinction* between capitalism that serves contemporary aristocracy and capitalism that expresses middle class values; there is a danger in naively regarding them as one and the same. But what is the modern middle class? In the first place, the rise of democracies is made possible by the political absorption of bourgeois values and **not** by the existence of the middle class itself, as the example of Quian and Wu have shown. Nowadays, because of the processes of globalization, the traditional middle class has become marginalized. Small local businesses in the neighborhood have mostly disappeared; or, when successful, they are often absorbed by big multinational and transnational corporations.

These corporations do provide en masse labor (still) to the working class, which the middle class used to do. *But do these big business corporations also represent the bourgeois values of the traditional middle class?* The answer must be no, as the contexts within which the traditional middle classes operate are not of those big corporations. Of course, prudence and self-interest will stay and are important; but the top executives do not own their business, they are just employees, often with (some) entrepreneurial traits, but with a status of the modern aristocracy, because of the (immense) negotiating power of their global corporations. Gradually, modern

politics are also less and less linked to the traditional values of the middle class, but tend to be more linked to Wall Street (Johnson and Kwak, 2013) and to multinationals. The EU's political willingness, under the persuasion of the US, to allow foreign transnational companies to meddle officially in national politics is a sign on the wall. The EU is in the process (in 2015) of allowing the acceptance of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA). Part of the deal (TTIP chapter 11) would be to incorporate through the Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) the procedure for transnational companies (in practice big multinationals) to meet public authorities anywhere and at any level, even governments in a specialized litigation court to complain about (democratically obtained) policy, which may hamper or frustrate their *profit expectations* (Poirier 2003). The opposition to chapter eleven of the TTIP, comes for numerous (global) civil organizations and (not yet) from mainstream politics.

Chapter 2: Research goal and questions

Introduction

The previous chapter described the main causes of the global 2008 financial crisis. The abuse of freedom was shown to be one of the major causes, leading to the use of asymmetrical information and towards the wrong side of greed. What was also discussed was the difficulty to find and apply regulations when different ideologies “contaminate” the political debate. Furthermore, the ways that existential freedom rose out of the shadows of history to found the development of free plural modern capitalistic nations was explored as was the way that freedom comes hand in hand with responsibilities. Regulating “existential” freedom may introduce a slippery slope leading potentially to gradual proliferation of regulations, which in their totality may severely endanger it.

A different approach centers upon the education of moral values in schools and/or business schools, an approach however which entails a severe handicap: this is the contemporary low status of morality, due to its lack of argumentative authority. Morality misses an impartial (universal) ground which would provide it with argumentative authority.

2.1 Research goal

The research goal of the thesis is to contribute to the ability of morality to become more appealing, on the basis of rational impartial grounds, which would give morality back its authority, making it more valid when applied to organizational settings.

2.1.1 Research questions

Research question 1

What constitutes a verifiable qualitative method for conducting interviews in order to enable respondents to enter a non-hypothetical true impartial state of mind (Husserlian Transcendental Consciousness), to explore “its” substance in order to possibly find a rational and impartial (universal) ground for morality.

Research question 2

How does a moral, rational and impartial ground affect moral leadership in organizations?

The assumption of the existence of a “universal” foundation for morality, which might give it more authority, may be at odds with the division of the categories objectivity vs. subjectivity. Objectivity in science claims not only universality and verifiability, which all will be covered in separate sections, but also that all those are based on empirical findings. So certain questions may arise. The division

between the categories objective vs. subjective may become blurred if something has fundamental properties that are both subjective *and* objective, simultaneously. For instance, where does “universal subjectivity” belong, if such a phenomenon appears to exist? Universality is principally a typical ideal of objectivity. Also the division made between subjectivity and objectivity *cannot be taken for granted*. What are the undeniable, if any, factual ground rules for the categories objective and subjective? But before that question can be answered, what are the scientific rules in making divisions, or in other words what defines categories?

2.1.2 Sub-questions

Some fundamental “sub-questions” therefore come up, to which answers must be sought first, to help order the research process before finding the answers to the first research question.

These sub-questions are:

- 1) *What is Husserlian Transcendental Consciousness and how is it relevant to the thesis?*
- 2) *What are categories? How are they constructed and/or defined?*
- 3) *What is the foundation of objectivity and subjectivity? Are these foundations proven or are they arbitrary?*
- 4) *Could there be a possible third domain, sharing fundamental properties of objectivity and subjectivity?*
- 5) *If such a third domain exists, which methodology could appropriate that domain?*

Sub-question 3, with respect to objectivity, has been extensively investigated by important philosophers (e.g. Descartes, Hume, Kant, Husserl). The perspective chosen for this research is to build upon their work to the extent that their theories are relevant to the concepts of objectivity, subjectivity and impartiality (Husserl), and not in terms of their overall positions, including on morality, in their wider theories. MacIntyre has already ascertained (1984/2007) that all the different contemporary versions or “schools” of morality can only be in the end subjective constructions, relevant to certain cultures in certain contexts. The concept of inter-subjectivity, as an important cornerstone of the acceptance of (scientific) objectivity will be reviewed as well.

In order to answer all of the above sub-questions, the perspective of autopoiesis from Maturana and Varela (1980) will be used. Why is autopoiesis, a biological theory of the Living, relevant for the thesis? It is relevant because it is a biological theory, which clearly explains “biological principles / laws” in the form of unescapable internal structural relations defining the workings of neural processes in CNS and (human) brains and the ways that these structures explain but also determine the nature of human cognition and experience.

The theoretical relevance of the research is based on the development of an empirically verifiable method to explore the inner world of humans and to support a morality based on true impartial arguments.

The practical relevance of the research is based on findings, which may help to support the development of a moral stance applicable to leadership in organizations.

The nature of the research is twofold. First, it aims to find a new qualitative method different from existing methods, which will make it possible to acquire from subjects *de-subjectified information*, which is difficult to name “objective” but which is not influenced by personal opinions. Secondly, the nature of this research is exploratory, as it aims to explore and describe an internal, impartial yet unknown, domain in the expectation that an impersonal ground for morality can be found.

Chapter 3: The veil of Ignorance and the search for a full impartial mind

Introduction

As chapter one showed, finding regulations in a field of contradicting ideologies, as well as developing “internal, moral” regulations through upbringing and education, meet their own difficulties. The most important difficulty is the contemporary low status of morality because of lacking *impartial authority*. This chapter will introduce Rawls’ (1971) “veil of ignorance”, a contemporary attempt on *hypothetical grounds* to give morality impartial authority, in the context of a “just society”. An older finding from Edmund Husserl (1927) suggests that “most general subjectivity”, not related to morality, also leads to impartiality, but true impartiality, not a hypothetical one.

The different method of explanation chosen for the upcoming chapters is a more story-like approach, when appropriate illustrated with real-life examples, or following a narrative infused with academic knowledge, form and style. The downside of this choice is that it may give the thesis an impressionistic style.

3.0 The fragile veil of ignorance in the social domain

The existence of impartial-like rational arguments relevant to morality (roughly referring to “doing good”, being just) can indirectly be inferred from observations of human behavior in its different contexts or even from the development of free plural prosperous democratic states. But these very indirect, general facts cannot speak for themselves authoritatively. As arguments cannot be directly observed, but are made by observers, objective arguments suggest they do not explain the observers. Within the natural sciences, this is not a suggestion, but something that is already accomplished, as scientists find themselves in the relatively luxurious (and sometimes taken for granted) position of the facts speaking for themselves, mostly in a loud, clear way, making the subjectivity of the observer almost irrelevant. The outcome of measurements, even fragile and inconclusive, is full of authority and demands further empirical investigation when inconclusive. That makes arguments rational and impartial, leading to universally valid theories that explain natural laws, which principally do not tolerate exceptions.

As soon as a truly verifiable exception occurs, it speaks with the same “authoritative voice” and claims further investigation for a changed or altogether new theory. When new investigations are (temporarily) not possible, the gathered data cannot lead anymore to an explanation that presumes full authority, because their incompleteness leaves a space that can be filled by the researcher’s interpretations. When this more subjective way of interpreting data is mostly or always the case, we enter the social and economic sciences.

Social and economic theories are fragmented, and universal laws do not exist, as for every important generalized finding there are some or even numerous exceptions. In the end, social and economic sciences are concerned with humans and their behavior. Many important explanatory human properties are not observable and cannot be measured or some can only be measured very indirectly. Those superficial or indirect facts or abstract facts (aggregated models) do not speak in a “thundering loud” way, like data in the natural sciences do. If they speak loudly at all; they require the researcher’s reading to become articulate. The very indirect nature of unempirical dynamic facts (emotions, motivation, meaning, unconscious assumptions, changing drives, culture and more) require, too often, an interpretation, something which (unwillingly) may lead to subjectivity. Making sense of people and their behavior in the most neutral possible way is challenging, especially in understanding sub-cultures that seem foreign or strange to the researcher. But even in the extreme case of “subjective immersion”, the scientist claims to be objective (in order to produce acceptable academic conclusions).

“Even cultural anthropologists, who have usually thought of themselves as “participant observers” and who have deliberately set out to achieve a degree of subjective immersion in the cultures they study still claim to be able to maintain their scientific objectivity”. (Cole, 1983, p. 50; Wolcott, 1995, p. 66)...

“Failure to do so would mean that they had “gone native”, with their work consequently rendered suspect as scientific data” (Pelto & Pelto, 1978 p.69)...

“The achievement of the delicate balance between participation and observation remains the ideal of anthropologists (Stocking, 1983b, p.8), even though it is no longer “fetishized” (Gupta & Ferguson, 1996c, p. 37). Objectivity remains central to the self-images of most practitioners of the social and sciences.”(Angrosino M.V. and Mays de Pérez K.A., 2000 p.674)

The long quote emphasizes that the study of human beings is almost the opposite of the natural sciences, where arguments do have impartial rational characteristics, which are hard to find in the social sciences. It is even harder to find impartial arguments when it comes to morality. Empirical evidence in terms of trying to make morality rational are missing to such a degree that one cannot speak of a science of morality. Morality, therefore, became part of philosophy when science and philosophy separated.

The use of impartial arguments in defense of morality is to apply the use of an impartial position (free from personal interest) where the arguments come from. Impartiality is pursued on a daily basis by judges, referees, arbiters, mediators, in all those contexts where people expect fair and honest judgments, where opposing parties have (often strong) personal interests. In all these cases, *just* rulings are required. If, for instance, a soccer referee appeared to have a bias towards one team, this would create severe problems. To defend a *biased* theory of morality could equally lead to fierce opposition from those who do not share this particular bias.

But how can true impartial arguments be found, stemming ideally from a verifiably impartial position? If a real person could be imagined to be ignorant of all his personal interests, as if forgetting them all, then they would temporarily become irrelevant, making the person impartial. At least that is the theory.

The reality is different. John Rawls (1971/2009), in his book “A Theory of Justice”, advocates a theory for just income distribution. The theory he presents has a “golden lining”, as it is not based on his personal view, but on a kind of *universal* view obtained under a *hypothetical* meeting of different people under what he calls “the veil of ignorance”:

“I assume that the parties are situated behind a veil of ignorance...First of all, no one knows his place in society...social status...fortune—abilities, his intelligence and strength...his conception of the good...special features of his psychology...particular circumstances of their own societies—...It is taken for granted, however, that they know general facts about human society... [known] principles of economy theory;.. laws of human psychology” (Rawls 1971 p.136-137).

Immediately after the publication of his book, it attracted both praise and criticism. The praise came from liberal minded readers, and severe criticism came from the libertarians and communitarians (Kukathas and Pettit 1990). Rawls’ attempt was partly successful, as soon one forgets “his place in society...social status...fortune—abilities, his intelligence and strength...his conception of the good...” and even one’s own personality traits, and it becomes plausible that one’s position will be close to or equal to a truly impartial one.

But looking closely under the veil, Rawls allowed general (universal) knowledge regarding “facts about human society”, “principles of economic theory” and “laws of human psychology”. These are three complex (even when generalized) topics in which, until today, there is no accepted universal theory. For example, the GOP and the democrats in the US have a very different view in regards to the “facts of society”; also, the question of human psychology invites many conflicting theories (e.g. McGregor’s X vs. Y theory, nurture vs. nature theories, fragmented or conflicting theories about emotions and mind). Finally, the principles of economy invite incompatible views too (e.g. Keynesian Economic Theory versus Friedman’s Chicago School Economic Theory).

The idea, therefore, that a veil of ignorance can end up generalizing many contradicting theories into a unified one is too much to ask. Rawls is clearly a “modern liberal”, his ideology not unlike that of the US Democratic Party, acknowledging the state’s social responsibility, including an emphasis on poverty, the lack of housing, the importance of education and health care, but at the expense of a degree of individual liberty and property rights. Already the very aim of Rawls’ book, to explore impartial ways towards a *just* society in terms of income distribution, resonates with the ideology of the Democratic Party.

Writers such as Nozick strongly object to Rawls’ theory of justice, from a libertarian point of view, according to which people are primarily responsible of

taking care of themselves, rather than the state being responsible for them, provided there are state-protected individual rights. Rawls' conclusion, according to which the redistribution of income is defended as “universally just” is felt by Nozick to be a form of “stealing” from the rich to give to the poor, and thus a violation of individual (sacred) rights (Kukathas and Petit 1990).

Clearly, the concept of the veil of ignorance was not universally accepted. The conclusion is that Rawls' veil of ignorance cannot be truly impartial, as the basic theories allowed under his veil cannot be acknowledged as universal or impartial. Still, the procedure to “produce” impartiality appears valid and may be of some help for the arguments of the thesis.

Such a veil is not needed in order to accept the theories of the natural sciences, such as those deriving from physics or biology. The theories of the natural sciences get their universal authority directly from the empirical data. The need for a veil immediately discloses that this is not the case for social theories. Which theories need the veil apart from those theories which clearly lack sufficient universal empirical data? If the data is too unclear or too fragmented, then interpretation might give rise to disagreements. When theories lack sufficient explanatory empirical data to begin with, they also lack universal rational authority. How, then, can those theories be saved by a veil? The veil can only use truly objective empirical facts and/or universally accepted impartial theories as building blocks for an impartial outcome. But in that case, the veil is not needed when trying to authorize the logical extensions of these theories into new theories, in a similar way to how the veil is not needed for the natural sciences. Thus, in a sense, when a *hypothetical* veil becomes necessary, something to really validate its conclusion will be missing almost by definition.

To avoid the associated difficulties of a hypothetical veil of ignorance, a different kind of veil is needed. Still, Rawls' idea is a promising start as he clearly has shown how subjectivity in any form, having to do with one's status, position, knowledge—including self-knowledge and personality—stands in the way of true impartiality. Therefore, the thesis will search for a *non-hypothetical* veil. Under such a veil *no* knowledge is allowed, and for the rest obeys the criteria of Rawls' veil of ignorance. We can presume that, when nothing known personally is allowed in, true impartiality must be the result. The name “veil of innocence” is chosen to distinguish it from the hypothetical “veil of ignorance”.

3.1 The impartial mind

An important challenge is how to acquire data from respondents, through interviews, whereby their subjectivity in one way or another is fully *withheld* from the acquired data. The full separation of subjectivity from the data is crucial. *But how is it possible that data can fully be separated from subjectivity?* This may sound unrealistic or even impossible to be achieved.

All qualitative interview methods are based on the premise that individuals have personalities, formed by their unique personal history. Their personal history is

linked to gender, race, and the private intersubjective contexts of family, local community, town and nation. Existing academic methodological approaches are designed in a way that allows them to be open and respectful to such differences. If diversity, minority voices, dissenting views or forbidden opinions exist in subcultures within mainstream culture, then academic methodologies should be entirely able, if applied well, to find those diversities in and between the stories that people tell. Qualitative interviews should thus be shaped in a way that creates freedom for any voice, for any kind of personal opinion.

The “freedom for any voice”, however, eliminates any chance to successfully find a universal foundation for morality. The search will be to find only *one voice* that represents true impartiality amongst the chaos of ego’s many voices. In a way it can only be one voice. If multiple voices are perfectly impartial they will all say the same thing. That *one voice* cannot be of the ego, but must be beyond it, in the sense that it must be fully transcendental in terms of to the narrative we call our “Self”. If we are “full of our self”, then the single voice must be somewhere in the “emptiness” beyond all knowledge of self.

To silence the many voices, a new qualitative method is needed. This would be a method that would make all knowledge and opinions irrelevant, in the sense that it would have no role in determining any occurring outcomes. The question then becomes: “Who is interviewed under the new method, when all meaning and knowledge stand outside the metaphorical veil”?

The obvious first question would be how to find such a method, but the nature of that question is too open ended, if the second question—“who will be the impartial interviewee under the veil of innocence”—is not answered first. How can a specific method be developed to reach an unspecified goal? Defining a goal in terms of what-it-is-not (it is not subjective, it is not ego and so on) seems unfulfilling. Suppose the “veil” is in place and the one invited to speak under the veil can be contacted, who and what might he be? We know nothing about him except what he is not or what he does not have.

3.1.1 Husserl's most general subjectivity

To know more about the unknown and impartial interviewee, Edmund Husserl¹ (1859-1938), becomes particularly important.

Edmund Husserl, mathematician and philosopher, wondered how the human mind, regarded as the altar of subjectivity, creates the division between subjective and objective, between subject and object. Husserl, for a large part of his professional life, wondered about the grounds on which the sciences rest their methods of objective (impartial) research (epistemology). In the end, Husserl found that the foundation of any epistemology is its maker. He described his experience of the existence of a true impartial being of pure consciousness. In a later chapter, Husserl's theory, and particularly the way it relates to the pure impartial position

¹ I am very grateful to Professor Heather Hopfl who pointed me to Husserl.

(state of consciousness), will be covered in depth. But for now, a small introductory explanation will be presented.

Husserl named the experience of his impartial state of consciousness “Transcendental Consciousness”. He also described it as: “...**the most general, subjectivity**, which makes the world and its “souls,” and confirms them.” Husserl (1927 p.8 bold added). “Most general subjectivity” can easily be replaced by “most *universal* subjectivity”.

The “most general” or universal indicates that Transcendental Consciousness is not a subjective property of Husserl himself, like the color of his eyes or his opinions about science. Husserlian Transcendental Consciousness is a consciousness that theoretically exists in everyone, like Kant's *a priori* concepts (no reference to empirical experience), which make the experience of the world possible and which are also assumed to exist in everyone. It is very likely that, not by accident, Husserl avoids the word “universal”. He accepts, like Kant did, that the concept of objectivity belongs to that which appears before the senses (appears in sensibility) and “universality” is exclusively restricted to empirical objectivity.

Husserl succeeded with his method and shifted into an “empty” and impartial state. Husserl suggests with:

“I, as reflecting philosophically, no longer keep in effect the natural believing in existence involved in experiencing the world” (Husserl, 1950 p.59).

This is made stronger with:

“... The transcendental phenomenologist reduces the already psychologically purified to the transcendental, the most general, subjectivity, which makes the world and its “souls,” and confirms them” (Husserl, 1927 p.8, bolds and underlining added).

In both remarks, there is no *as-if* proposition, which is included in Husserl’s method (epoché) to reach that state. This suggests that once in that state, it is not experienced as an as-if state anymore².

What Husserl created is a slightly different veil of ignorance than that of Rawls, but with an important difference. Rawls needed some general knowledge allowed in under the veil, not realizing that he allowed in his own subjectivity, while Husserl allowed nothing in and left even “Husserl” outside. What Husserl experienced is a state of “pure” consciousness, which theoretically is truly an *impartial* and *universal state of mind*, just as universal as Kant’s findings, leading to the possibility of perceiving an objective world.

Husserl realized that Transcendental Consciousness is not only the maker of “the world and its souls”, but also the maker of himself (ego), as he intimately knew and experienced himself. Husserl thus succeeded in bracketing Husserl too. However, what proved impossible to bracket was the person doing the bracketing. In a way, this resembles the rational doubt of Descartes, but with a big difference. In the terms

² Husserl’s method will be addressed in the next session 3.1.2.

of Husserl, Descartes also bracketed the whole world that he knew, but there was no need for Descartes to bracket himself out. Transcendental Consciousness is the one that purports to be free from *all* knowledge be it subjective or objective. Husserl was convinced he reached and experienced the ultimate state, a kind of dead end, a final state that could not be investigated further. That particular state of consciousness is not a topic of interest in traditional or contemporary psychology and cannot be reached with existing psychological methods. Husserl says:

“Scientific discipline for us is not that of the psychologist. ... By the same token, we are not concerned here with any scientific psychology and its problems. For the latter, the world, presupposed by it as unquestionably existing, **is the ground**; and it is precisely this ground that the epoché (method) to reach the state has taken from us”. (1970 p. 53, bold added)

Since then, mainstream psychology still centers on the understanding of the subject in relation to its interactions with the world.

3.1.2 Husserl’s method: The Transcendental Phenomenological Reduction or epoché

Husserl’s method to reach Transcendental Consciousness is named “The Transcendental Phenomenological Reduction” or epoché. As a mathematician, Husserl used the notion of brackets, but did not fill them with numbers but rather with meaning and knowledge about the self and the world. Husserl’s method, now primarily regarded as one that “tunes into” a full impartial consciousness, does not only aim at bracketing meaning and knowledge. He also fully distanced himself from the brackets while being aware of their content, by considering their content as if their status still awaits any validity in order to be real.

About the method, he says the following:

“...whereas this dimension [of Transcendental Consciousness] can be made accessible to scientific understanding, through a method of disclosure appropriate to it, as a realm of experiential and theoretical self-evidence (§32) ... there is no way of documenting it empirically in a sense analogous to what is done in the objective sphere through inductive experience” (Husserl 1970 §52).

It is possible, however, according to the above statement, to document interviews done with respondents as data for scientific understanding. To arrive at this state, Schmitt (1959) made notes from Husserl’s diverse publications about his method:

“What exactly is this new attitude ... transcendental-phenomenological reduction? Here Husserl provides “: I no longer attach any validity to the ‘natural belief in the existence of what I experience’... I ‘bracket the objective world’... In performing the reduction, the phenomenologist establishes himself as a ‘disinterested spectator’ and changes his practical aims. The result of this change of attitude is a change in my experience. Previously experienced reality now becomes “mere phenomenon”. This Kantian term is here used in a new sense; any object of experience becomes

“phenomenon” for the observer who recognizes the object’s claim to reality, but *reserves decision on the validity of that claim*” (Schmitt R. 1959 p.239, italics added).

In total, Husserl's reduction resembles an overall general piece of advice to put all truth claims temporarily “on hold”; the way of thinking obviously worked for Husserl's (disciplined) mind set. But somehow, it does not seem convincing, as a framework, in enabling ‘naïve’ respondents in the context of a single interview to reach the state of Husserlian Transcendental Consciousness by following the method of the epoché.

3.1.2.1 Practical concern

A major concern might be the following: people can make an intellectual choice to no longer attach any validity to any previously held “truth-claims”. But it is conceivable that on a deeper unconscious level, the meaning intertwined in the now “detached knowledge”, may still be dominant, but in a dormant way, vulnerable to activation by the right trigger, if it’s strong enough. For instance, people who fear flying and thus have to discipline themselves in order to step into an airplane, demonstrate with the discipline they have consciously detached themselves from their natural meaning/knowledge which is that “flying is dangerous”. Yet, the “dormant”, unconscious and now dissociated part of themselves, awakened by the corresponding trigger (the seeing of the airplane, hearing the noise it makes etc.), simply ignores the “intellectual detachment” that discipline needs. The fear of flying is fully felt, resists or better ignores the intellectual detachment and forces the actual stepping into the plane by way of discipline. Triggers may unwillingly cause detached knowledge or subjectivity to emerge, from their “unnatural” brackets into experience. Something similar may also happen with the respondents. During the interview, there may be information or beliefs in brackets, equally vulnerable to (internal) triggers, such as a thought. If such a triggering thought or internal experience comes up, that particular “bracket” might break and its contents may contaminate the purity of “Transcendental Consciousness” and the responses it would elicit. To imagine Husserl practicing his “reduction technique” and succeeding in it, is also assuming he did the exercise in solitude, away from most, if not all, distracting triggers. On top of that, being in the state of Transcendental Consciousness is, for Husserl, his end goal: the goal of the Transcendental Phenomenological Reduction itself, a very tranquil place to be, without being challenged by immediate processes or context.

With the respondents, that particular state is *the beginning state*, not the end goal. The exploration of whether an impartial ground for morality is possible may well lead to a road with unexpected triggers, which may or may not introduce or automatically trigger a deviation from the impartial (transcendental) state. Minimizing that possibility will be insufficient for the research; a method is necessary whereby zero tolerance to contamination is required.

The first four preliminary pilot interviews, based on Husserl's method, failed. Contamination was found to be easy to trigger. The choice was then made to develop a different method. There is a small department in psychology which is also interested in beyond-ego states: Transpersonal psychology. Maybe they might offer a relevant method?

3.2 Psychology versus Transpersonal psychology

The development of psychology, in becoming a science, started around 1879 when Wilhelm Wundt (1832-1920) conducted psychological enquiries, mostly with students, in his laboratory. On a voluntary basis, the students were allowed to answer questions regarding aspects of what happened in their minds, in terms of their emotions and thought processes. Wundt was trying to examine how these thought processes might be interlinked with triggers from the outside world.

Even when Wundt's methods followed a positivistic framework in as strict as possible a way, to ensure that the research was of good quality (as similar as possible to the research principles of natural sciences), still, at those early days of psychology, Wundt was denounced:

“... Wundt’s central concepts of voluntarism, value, and psychic causality were rejected as metaphysical...Behaviorism represents a logical development of this point of view” (Kurt Danziger 1979, p.205).

Rejecting Wundt’s reliance on what were seen as vague inner concepts, and substituting those for material phenomena, which at least could be observed and measured, the early days of psychology developed a “new psychology”, even more based on positivism. Similarly to physics or biology, psychology needed to start with the empirical facts of “human objects”. But the old division of body and mind hindered Külpe, the founder of scientific psychology, as body and mind could easily be rephrased into object and subject. In order to purify psychology from any “subjectivity”:

“Külpe now takes the critical step of rejecting unequivocally the ‘psychical individual’ as an explanatory principle for scientific psychology and opts instead for the ‘corporeal individual’” (Kurt Danziger 1979, p.209).

The decision to denounce Wundt's findings steered psychology away from the inner, subjective world towards behavior, in its relevant worldly context, whereas both (world and behavior) can be observed and measured. The discipline of behaviorism followed, leading, over time, to a psychological school of thought which tries to be as empirical as possible by concentrating on what can be measured. Behaviorism accepts the psyche, in the form of thinking and feeling, as an existing, real factor, but assumes that all behaviors are acquired through conditioning. According to the theory (e.g. Kirk and Miller 1986; Michell J. 2003) it is only through the interaction between the individual and his environment that conditioning occurs. The interaction can be studied, quantified and measured in a systematic and observable manner, whereby internal mental states, although real, are regarded as scientifically irrelevant.

After 1970, cognitive psychology became gradually more widespread, partly as a rejection of behaviorism's point of view which was perceived as too strict, but partly as a theory that was in fact complementary to behaviorism. Cognitive psychology considers the act of knowing as central. It therefore studies human activities related to knowledge, linking up to neurobiology, artificial intelligence (AI) and other relevant theories. It shares with behaviorism its reliance on objective methods, measuring behavior (e.g. memory and reaction time) and allows as little introspection as possible to be considered (e.g. Galotti, K 1994; Neisser U. 2009).

Although in line with the rejection of Wundt's view in accepting introspection, today's mainstream psychology has gradually allowed, in the last two decades, more publications based on qualitative research. Yet, in the US a study about publications of The American Psychological Association (APA)—which is the major and dominating academic psychology institution in the US—revealed:

“APA Journal Analysis: Overall, the results (1,3%) indicate that qualitative research is rarely seen in APA journals”. (Kidd, S. 2002 p.131). The positivist approach intended to close the door to possible psychological findings based on anything “transcendental”. Consequently, it was now only philosophers, not psychologists, who allowed the examination of alternative psychic domains, such as those suggested by Kant, Husserl and others.

3.2.1 Transpersonal psychology

A small branch exists, at the periphery of psychology, which focuses on that which “lies-beyond-ego”. In 1969, deriving from a humanistic background, a group including Abraham Maslow, Stanislav Grof and Anthony Sutich, launched the Association of Transpersonal Psychology. The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology soon followed. The group extended humanistic psychology, by including a spiritual dimension, which they felt was fully missing within the contemporary dominant branches of psychology.

The new branch of psychology incorporates spiritual concepts, deriving from many diverse sources. They refer to “peak experiences” (nirvana), wholeness, non-duality, beyond-ego states of consciousness, self-transformation, cosmic unity and so on.

The methods of transpersonal psychology complement standard scientific methods, using meditation, various rituals and other aids (excluding drugs) to enter these states. Transpersonal psychology's aims are to integrate psychology into a “holistic psychology”, enriching the definition of what a human being is and gathering knowledge which will “help in expanding experiences of “self-actualization” (Hartelius, Caplan and Rardin 2007; Davis J. 2003).

There has been criticism against transpersonal psychology, centering upon the charge that it does not really help psychology in its current preoccupations which concern the daily ordinary experiences of human beings, for example problems such as depression. It has been argued that Transpersonal Psychology omits common experiences and focuses on “top” performances involving for example super

athletes or people who in various contexts experience altered states of consciousness. Many of Transpersonal Psychology's methods and conclusions are also seen as being at odds with conventional science and have been seen as sometimes moving towards the metaphysical.

The academic literature of Transpersonal Psychology is small. Their articles often involve "holistic" meta-theories or hypotheses with little data that is backed up by empirical research, and that is relatively free from interpretation. Many of their theories are seen as being in harmony with ancient mystique, for example:

"... tripartite synopsis of self-integration through integral yoga: psychic integration (harmonious development of personality facilitated by the discovery of a higher self), cosmic integration (integral relatedness to society and environment), and existential integration (spiritual unfoldment toward the integration of psyche and cosmos, time and eternity, nature and spirit). Though it is based on the viewpoint of a single individual, this Aurobindonian perspective on an integral approach to human psychology has much in common with the three major themes of transpersonal psychology" (Hartelius, Caplan and Rardin MA 2007).

Transpersonal Psychology does focus on inner transcendental domains, which mainstream psychology avoids. In the US, the American Psychological Association (APA), which is the world's largest association of psychologists, have not yet (2015) approved Transpersonal Psychology as a mature psychological science. But in 1997, the British Psychological Society (the British equivalent of APA) did approve an academic Transpersonal Psychology section, 30 years after the field's birth. A related section of Consciousness and Experiential Psychology was approved as well.

Transpersonal Psychology cannot be found in Dutch academic offerings of psychology. In 2013, there were, worldwide, two non-US universities offering Transpersonal Psychology courses (registered with the Association of Transpersonal Psychology, atpweb.org). These courses offer a Master of Arts degree, one being in Canada and one in Sweden. There are, however, numerous non-degree Transpersonal Psychology courses that are offered by schools and private institutions. A single exception is an MSc program in Transpersonal Psychology offered by the University of Northampton in England.

Almost half a century earlier, before the birth of Transpersonal Psychology, Husserl had found a way, with his reductionist method, to "enter" a transcendental state of consciousness. Husserl called his method the "epoché" or the "transcendental phenomenological reduction" (1927). The method "moves" in an *experiential* way towards awareness which leads to the state of Transcendental Consciousness, a state of consciousness that doesn't however match the beyond-ego criteria of Transpersonal Psychology. There are however some Transpersonal Psychology articles which do mention Husserl's phenomenological psychology. The reverse is not true:

“None of this is meant to imply in any way that existentialists or phenomenologists in general are inadvertent or closet mystics—not at all. The vast majority of existentialists and phenomenologists have not been concerned with transpersonal issues. Few phenomenologists have been interested in the transcendental aspect of phenomenology even though Husserl considered that facet to be the most important” (Cairns, 1976; Spiegelberg, 1982 and Hanna 1993 p.182).

Transpersonal Psychology does accept a number of different unspecified “beyond-ego” states, associated with spiritual or mystic altered states of consciousness. They do not resemble Husserl’s findings though. Husserl found an *existing* impartial transcendental state of consciousness apodictically described—a beyond ego state—but *directed towards the world*, defined by Husserl as the final maker or source of all psychological constructions, making the world and others and the self (ego). Husserlian Transcendental Consciousness—“an sich”—is accepted by the philosophy community.

Transpersonal Psychology does not appear, to have a model or method suitable for the thesis that would assist in teaching respondents in a single meeting, to reach Husserlian Transcendental Consciousness.

Chapter 4: Categories: the very first approach to reality

Introduction

In the previous chapter, different approaches were reviewed in order to reach a truly impartial position, which is difficult. Most approaches are partly impersonal and are very context-bound, or “pseudo-complete”. The aim of Husserl’s epoché is to theoretically be able to produce a different impartiality, not tainted by previous knowledge or subjectivity. The full epoché, when successfully “executed”, makes the participant able to enter or identify with Transcendental Consciousness: it refers to a pure de-subjectified state of mind; as a method for the thesis, however, in terms of working with respondents, that method is impractical. An alternative would be to find a new method: named *the veil of innocence*, with the aim to produce full impartiality.

In order to survey deeper into the alternative approach, to reach Husserlian Transcendental Consciousness, *one must know exactly as possible* what should be placed (temporarily) outside the veil of innocence, as a non-hypothetical (not-as-if) veil in the sense that such a veil (being a metaphor) will “produce” real and full impartiality.

Subjectivity and objectivity are regarded as fundamentally different *categories*. It may well be that what would work for one category to be placed outside the veil might *not* work as effectively for the other category. So, in order to design a different method than Husserl’s epoché, the critical difference between the two categories needs to be known. But first, what are categories *exactly*? What is the methodology of categorizing? The major dictionaries or encyclopedias mention that the forming of categories *is the most basic and primary functioning of knowing*, including aspects such as awareness, perception, reasoning, and judgment.

The chapter will survey what categories are and how they are formed.

4.0 To categorize

What does it mean to categorize?

“Categorization is the mental operation by which the brain classifies objects and events. The operation is the basis for the construction of our knowledge of the world. It is the most basic phenomenon of cognition...” (Cohen and Lefebvre 2005 p. 643)

The above more or less states that our “fabric of reality”, our paradigm as we understand and experience it, is the sum of all categories. To be able to make categorizations might be the very first thing biology demands from animals to do. In order to stay alive, there has to be an acknowledgement of what is safe and what is unsafe, food has to be distinguished from non-edible things, and finally itself from what is not-itself. Some categories are innate, like colors or warm versus cold (perceptual categories,) since in those cases the physical structure determines the sensory experience (see for example Maturana and Varela 1980; Marler 1982;

Mandler 2000). More abstract categories are, for instance, the aforementioned category of safe-unsafe. Categories free mind from investigating literally every particular it encounters again and again, as if it has no memory. To remember a single particular encounter lays the basis to start generalizing its main properties towards new but similar encounters. When that happens a category is born.

“According to the classical [Aristotelian] theory, a category is defined in terms of a set of properties, or features, and an entity is a member of the category if it exhibits each of the features. Each of the features is necessary, jointly they are sufficient. The classical theory captures the ‘essence’ of a category in contrast to the ‘accidental’ properties of category members” (Taylor 2011 p. 643).

Still a “hidden”, more basic assumption is needed before categories can be formed. In order to be able to categorize, *expectations* are necessary. Hume made clear that the notion of causality (which refers to the idea that a cause predicts its own necessary and identical future effect) is founded on the acceptance that the essential properties of a 'thing' are reliable, and even *fixed* in time. What are experienced as properties in the past will be, under the same circumstances, faithfully repeated in the future. This is also a necessity for the first single particular before it can be generalized over other similar (future) encounters, for instance the generalizing of the refrigerator in the kitchen into the future. Tomorrow or when coming home from a vacation, the refrigerator will be (must be!) as remembered; all its versions in the future will retain the essential properties, which have been 'projected' to all those versions from their past. In a sense to expect *is* to project memory into the future. Expectations, therefore, form the basis of categorizations. Then “objects of intentions” also stay, when categorized, in their respective categories (this makes the categorization of people more than a bit questionable). What is within one category is accepted as ‘sufficiently known’ and does not need full investigation anymore when met next time. The infinite world is thus reduced to manageable chunks of information (cognitive economy). The reduction is not the only benefit of categories; they also sort a complex reality in a *distinguishable neat order*.

4.1 Science needs “classical” categories

Science normally accepts or takes for granted the classical meta-beliefs behind processes of categorization. It is sufficient that the “how to categorize” (tool level) meets approved methodological criteria. The objective status of categories for science can be deduced from the very existence of the categories “objective” and “subjective”. Both categories are equally objective and valid in reference to their content.

Rosch (1973) focused in her work on two rational conclusions of classical categorization theory: no member of a given category is better equipped than another member to be in that category as it is only what they share that authorizes their membership within that category. Another conclusion has to do with the fact that, as categories are defined exclusively by the shared (structural) properties of

their members, they are regarded as “objective”, independent of their “observers”. This is exactly what science needs. Observers “just” bring objective order to complexity by means of categories and, when possible, in terms of understanding underlying relations.

4.2 Husserl's way to detect essentials

A category is defined by a 'set' of shared essential characteristics. But what is an “essential” characteristic? Essentials cannot be missed; when missed or altered it changes the characteristics of the particular in such a way that the particular identity loses its ontological status. What is/are the essential(s) of a car? Husserl (1927 p. 4-5) conceived of the *eidetic reduction* method to filter out non-essentials from essentials. For instance, we could understand if we were to reduce or alter (in imagination) the properties of a car in such a way that its essence was changed and it wasn't a car anymore. Then what could be reduced or changed of a “car” until one would have to refuse to acknowledge it as being a car? In this case, an essential is found by removing it, for instance the number of wheels cannot be reduced to fewer than three; also, the car needs an engine to be driven. What is left is a set of minimal essentials which, together, form the identity “Car”. The identity is also the name of the category. This seems rather straightforward, but can be very complex. What is left, for instance, after the eidetic reduction of “Friendship”?

Going back to biology, it immediately becomes clear that an animal is not a neutral (objective) librarian, categorizing nature. Categorization is a necessary biological tool of survival, but is not objective. Categories determine the behaviors that animals do in the world. It is elementary school knowledge that different natures (species, identities) exhibit different survival strategies and categorize the world differently. That makes categorizations submissive to their ultimate goal: the preservation of that particular organism (identity). Or, in other words, categories are colored by the identity of the species. In more than one sense, categories extend the identity of organisms into their environment.

An interesting question could be “Are humans free of the biological preservation of identity?” If the answer is “no” then the category “objectivity” deserves critical attention. The idea that categories since Aristotle are objective and are merely waiting for their discovery, has “only” recently (1973) been challenged by SGCS (Second Generation Cognitive Science).

4.3 Prototype theory

Second Generation Cognitive Science (SGCS) has shown that the classic explanation of what categories are is sufficient for ordinary purposes but *fundamentally* wrong in its overt simplicity. SGCS introduced a new theory of categorization: **Prototype Theory**. Experimental studies done by Labov (1973/2004) showed that the use and function of some object categories is at least as important as the independent (physical) properties of that “object”. This strangely introduces “invisible” threads to members of another category. Strangely, because

the classical definition of categories is explicitly grounded by the content and independence of the categories and the implicitly puts a boundary between categories and what they-are-not: other categories. Without taking use and function into account, Labov found, the object's properties alone cannot any more reliably match the membership criteria of the category. The result is that members of neighboring categories "invade" the category.

His example is the "cup". The category "cup" becomes blurred at its boundaries and can incorporate mug, bowl or even vase, based on form and measures alone at the overlap of their categories. Objective clear-cut boundaries cannot solely be made based on the physical properties of the cup. A similar example is a table salt mill; some of them can equally function as peppermills.

Empirical research by Rosch (1973) and Rosch, Mervis, Gray, Johnson and Boyes-Braem (1976), investigating the characteristics and use of categories, conclude that some members *are better* "equipped" to be in a category (defying the logic behind classical categories) and as such they are "recognized" by humans as better examples for that category. Experiments found that when respondents were asked to name examples of the category "caring parent", they tended to refer more to the mother than to the father. Likewise, penguins or ostriches are less frequently named before swallows when it comes to being members of the category "birds". In addition, "table" is more frequently named as an example of "furniture" than is a stool. Also, in language, the saying "prime example" refers unknowingly to prototypes.

4.3.1 Prototypes are not about meaning

Prototypes are time-dependent. The linguistic name of the category can be fixed in time, but not necessarily its prototype. The prototype of the category "bicycles", during 1800-1879, was not chain-driven. Still the meaning of "bicycles", referring to the category name and identity, did not change. The categories "dogs" or "cats" have a prototype, which has four legs, two eyes etc. But a dog with three legs at birth or after an accident is still considered a dog by everyone. Pure prototype does not really take the meaning of the word "dog" into account, which language (linguistic categories) does. So, a three-legged dog is not part of the category prototype, but is included in the linguistic meaning of the word "dog". The category "dogs" refers to dogs. The category bicycle, however, is less clear. Similarly to dogs, it refers to bicycles, but invisibly intertwined with that is their function. The chainless bicycle is included in the prototype (time-dependent) while the function of the bicycle stays untouched. So a future prototype of "bicycle" may lose the chain again.

In Prototype Theory category members "circle" around their prototype in the center of a category. A pure prototype does not exist in real life; it is the minimum "pure" set of characteristics that members approximate; it is a kind of ideal and exists only in the human mind (Rosch, et al. 1976; Rosch 1999). The more members approximate the prototype, the more they are named as examples of the category.

Another property of categories next to their cognitive economy is the perceivable distinction between categories.

4.3.2 Prototypes and the (possible) marginalization of category members

Consensual understanding of a (social) category can be based on its prototype too much. The more category members are “distanced” from their prototype, the more they are vulnerable to be marginalized from it or even denied membership to it. In fact, *all* marginalized voices prove, not that they belong to an inferior category, but that *as* members of a category they are too distant from the prototype. The very notion of being marginalized could not exist otherwise. Employees of the Phillips organization, for instance, cannot be considered marginalized when they are not heard or when they are even denied any participation in decision-making processes within the Sony Corporation.

4.4 Strange and impossible categories

Not so hidden in the classical view is the assumption that a set of shared and essential properties produce a category with a neat and clear boundary. But also in the time of Aristotle the category “family” could have no boundaries except in terms of reification. How far back does common ancestry go? If there is no real objective rule for it, then at least one of our shared ancestors is the “...mammal-like [tetrapod] *Therapsid* because it initiated the eventual transition to the mammals” (Kemp 2005).

Another category which can only exist because of its prototype is “poison”. How can poisonous properties exist as features of their category members *independent* of the world outside the category? Why is clean “water” not a member of the category poison?

“A Sacramento jury today awarded \$16 million to the family of a woman who died during a 2007 radio station contest gone awry...a mother of three from suburban Rancho Cordova, died of apparent water intoxication hours after a failed attempt to win [who drinks the most water in a set time] a Nintendo Wii video game system for her children in a promotion [broadcasted by radio]” (LA Times 2009)

In fact, “poisonous” as a property of (material) objects is a non-existing essential property. At best, it is a relational property to an organism outside its category. Still, even then, this can never satisfy the making of a category as principally *nothing* is non-poisonous when taken in at too big a quantity. If everything is potentially poisonous, then the category “poison” does not have a boundary. The category poison is therefore not defined by its members, but an *extension* of the vulnerability of the human or organism's body, members of a very different category. Only the prototype “invents” the category, while in the case the prototype is a prime example of a 100% extension (construct) of the “observer” and 0% describes the properties of the category's members. Still, even though it is an “impossible” category, it is a very useful category.

When categories cannot get rid of their fuzzy boundaries, it means there are “neighboring” categories with fuzzy boundaries too. Prototypes have the advantage that, in those cases, they *suggest* a clearly defined category with a clear boundary and transform “fuzzy categories” such as “poison” experientially into more robust ones.

A very fuzzy category with a robust status within the very basic perceptual domain of colors is the color “grey”. “Fifty Shades of Grey” is not just a romance novel; its title signifies the beginning of an (almost) infinite bigger category of a multitude of nuances of grey. It is in fact quite hard to even define a sub-category “dark grey” as “dark grey” still has numerous variations within its perfect fuzzy boundaries and towards its neighboring sub-categories. Humans, under optimal conditions, can detect 1000 JND (Just Notable Differences) in shades of grey (Kimpe and Tuytschaever 2007).

A common category which plays havoc with the classical theory of categories is the category “[five] senses”. What properties do the five senses have in common? Even for Prototype Theory, the prototype of the category is not determined anymore by any individual (structural) property, but the overall abstract function of its members. What it is, is irrelevant for the category and what it specifically gathers is irrelevant too. Not a single property of their structure or of what they specifically do or what they specifically gather is shared. The only thing that is shared is where it gets its information from (a condition outside the category). The property—that they all are connected to the brain and transport information—is shared with many members of other bodily categories and cannot be essential to why they are members of the “senses”. Other internal organs (kidney, liver, muscles, teeth) with nerve tissue transport information temperature, glucose levels to the brain (afferent nerve fibers) etc. The member criteria for “senses” are the *perfect* opposite of the member criteria of the categories “cars” or “trees”, and are more similar to the category “poison”.

4.5 Categories and culture

The influence of culture was implied in the studies of Labov, whereby the function of the category members implicitly plays a role in the boundaries of certain categories. The influence of culture seems unlimited and may in some cases take over the category altogether. An example is a (19th) century hard wood, dark patina door functioning as a door in Timor (ceremonial) houses, but exclusively regarded as “primitive art” in Western art galleries, mostly to be hung on the wall. The two different cultures also determine two wholly different contexts, where the door will be placed. In the example, the two categories of the same door are different because of the different cultural points of view of the category “user”. The “door” becomes three different doors, belonging to three different categories for three different “users” of the door—the Timor man, the art collector and the scientist. Although the door is a member of three different categories, this is very different from the principle that “objects” can be a member of different “horizontal” categories, like a

“tree” can be a member of the categories “trees”, “forest”, “garden”, or “park”. In the case of the “tree”, it is still the same tree fitting the categories “trees” in all the other possible larger categories.

4.6 Inconsistent categories rules

Although accepted as categories, the category “trees”, “Timor doors”, “poison” and “[five] senses” do not share or even perfectly oppose the classical definition of what a category actually is. To play “at will” with or allow contradicting criteria to define a “category” is not an example of objective coherent methodology. Borges, in his 1942 essay “The analytical language of John Wilkins”, presented an ancient Chinese encyclopedia, named *Celestial Emporium of Benevolent Knowledge*, which classified the animal kingdom in categories that would be mind boggling even to contemporary biologists.

To name a few of the fourteen (in total) listed categories of animals: “Those that belong to the emperor, Embalmed ones...Stray dogs... Those that, at a distance, resemble flies” (Borges 1942/2001). Though Borges suggested that the list was in fact a real ancient list, discovered by a translator, the consensus is that the list does not refer to a once-existing list, but was made up by Borges to illustrate his ideas about language and categories.

The point that Borges tries to make is the idea that a human being can arrogantly order in language, by way of classifications (categories), the infinite world, which is full of numerous unknowns. He says: “it is clear that there is no classification of the Universe [world] not being arbitrary and full of conjectures” (Borges 1942/2001 p. 231).

Contemporary Prototype Theory concludes:

“...human categorization is essentially a matter of both human experience and imagination—of perception, motor activity, and culture on one hand, and of metaphor, metonym, and mental imagery on the other... categorization that do fit the classical theory are special cases of a general theory of cognitive models, one that permits us to characterize the experiential and imaginative aspects of reason as well.” (Lakoff 1987:8-9)

Chapter 5 Autopoiesis and Objectivity

Introduction

Why is autopoiesis necessary for the thesis? It is a theory, which fully *opposes* or better reverse the default handling of causal reasoning used by (scientific) observers to understand the empirical world. The default method, which “produces” for instance natural laws and satellites around the earth, is fit for purpose and useful when applied to the non-living world. However, in order to understand the structural principles of living organisms (including humans and their psychological domain) and the ways in which these principles explain how they determine human cognition and thinking, default reasoning is inappropriate.

The theory of autopoiesis is indispensable for the development of the thesis because it offers a different way of reasoning, not primarily based on the descriptions of observers.

5.0 The impossibility of autopoiesis to fit in mainstream science

Autopoiesis determines the human attitude to what is named the empirical. The question is how? Autopoiesis, 53 years (2015) after its conception, remains for many a controversial theory; researchers and academics love it or hate it, while most ignore it.

Autopoiesis, as a biological theory, is not aimed specifically at biologists. The theory is written in such a way that non-biologists can read and understand it. The theory also lends itself to applications beyond pure biology, as it governs human thinking and human behavior. Because the concept of autopoiesis is rather extensive and abstract, it allows theoretical development over a wide range of disciplines, including evolutionary biology, epistemology, the cognitive sciences, the environmental sciences, business administration, sociology and many other disciplines (see Razeto-Barry, 2012). There are also those who consider the theory invalid, inappropriate or even “fancy” (e.g. Hall 2011 p.2 & Razeto-Barry 2012 p.545). This sort of criticism is a logical result of “reality-foundations” that do not match. Already, in the very first sentences in the editorial preface of the book: “*Autopoiesis and Cognition: The Realization of the Living*” (Maturana et al. 1980), there is a hardly disguised warning:

“This [autopoiesis] is a bold, brilliant, *provocative* and *puzzling* work. It *demands* a *radical shift* in standpoint, an almost *paradoxical* posture in which living systems are described in terms of what lies outside the domain of descriptions” (Cohen and Wartofsky 1980 p. vi, italics added).

And:

“...a *new* language to talk about the phenomena of perception and cognition. The first consequence required that the question: 'How does the organism obtain information about its environment?' *be changed* to: 'How does it happen that the organism has the structure that permits it to operate

adequately in the medium in which it exists’?” (Maturana and Varela 1980 p. xvi, italics added).

The “*almost paradoxical posture*” of autopoiesis, in order to understand life, is not based on choice; it is a necessity.

The first question: “*How does the organism obtain information about its environment?*” is just as unfounded as the question: “What happened before the Big Bang”? The latter question—exploring what may have caused the Big Bang—is considered invalid as time originated with the initiation of the Big Bang and cannot possibly exist before it. Already, with Maturana's disqualification of their initial, rational and even “innocent” question, much more than is suggested at first glance is also disqualified as all answers and theories, which are directly or indirectly dependent on the answering of that natural but invalid question, are simultaneously disqualified.

Nonetheless, especially the notion of full self-referentiality and its maintenance and the consequences of “observer's logic” (e.g. see section 5.6; 6.6.1) related to the invalid question, are topics that can be easily misunderstood. Most criticism centers on the “too easy” application of the theory to the human social domain (e.g. Biggiero 2012, Brocklesby 2004). As a response to criticism, Hall (2011 p.2) mentioned: “... significant misunderstandings of Maturana and Varela’s original proposal”. Razeto-Barry comments: “the concept has not been subject [by the critics] to sufficient conceptual analysis” (2012 p.546) and Brocklesby (2004 p.656) added: “It [autopoiesis] requires a degree of cross-referencing and mental agility that many readers will find extremely difficult”. In spite of the criticisms against it, but also despite the various defenses of the theory, which address mainly the use of autopoiesis in the (macro) social domain (outside the scope of the thesis), it does offer helpful and essential insights that are relevant to the thesis. Autopoiesis is not just a theory. It is a theory in the way that “when you open your eyes you will see things” is a theory. It is fair to say that the core concepts of autopoiesis involve the full spectrum of the human condition.

Still, autopoiesis is vast and complex, almost unreadable when presented as objective scientific texts and jargon. The different method of explanation chosen as mentioned previously is a more story-like approach, based on real-life examples, or following a narrative infused with academic knowledge, form and style where appropriate. The downside of this choice is that it may give the thesis an impressionistic style.

5.1 Autopoiesis

So, what does autopoiesis convey? All explanations that follow, unless specified, are based on the book: “*Autopoiesis and Cognition: The Realization of the Living*” (Maturana et al. 1980). It is the original book (there hasn’t been a revised edition), and it is the purest work on the topic. Other writers (e.g. Mingers, Temeer, Twist, Hall et al.) all refer (extensively) to the above book.

The book offers the answer of two neuro-biologists, Maturana and (later) Varela, to the old philosophical question: “What is Life?” Soon, this question was refined by them, becoming more nuanced and thus turning into two questions: “What is the organization of the living?” and “What takes place in the phenomenon of perception?” (Maturana and Varela 1980, p. xii-xiv). Maturana and Varela’s search, methodology and answers to the above questions were first published in 1972, in their book “*De máquinas y seres vivos, autopoiesis de la organización de lo vivo*”, translated in English in 1980, published as “Autopoiesis and Cognition: The Realization of the Living”, which is the book referred to in the thesis.

Autopoiesis theory tilts relations above the properties of structural components, which “relate”. Components do not have as their sole function the contribution to the whole, in the way that all of the components of a car do for the whole car. The “functions” to the “Living” are the dynamic relations between the components and not the components themselves. This “small” shift is true for all biological structures and brings big shifts when answering the sub-questions, compared to contemporary views, leading for instance to a whole new definition of the “ego”.

Only those parts of autopoiesis that are directly or indirectly relevant to the thesis’ topic will be reviewed here. Autopoiesis is a biological theory and no link is assumed between biology and morality. Still, autopoiesis has proven to be indispensable in trying to find out the difference between objective and subjective, and how it determines the origins of categories. One of the basic and difficult to understand consequences of autopoiesis is the impossibility to transfer information between living entities.

5.2 No transfer of information

According to Maturana and his colleague Varela, the transfer of information between two entities or two human beings is not possible. This makes the theory hard to comprehend and goes some way in explaining its negligible position in public awareness and its infrequent use in science, and almost zero use in psychology.

“For such [living] systems, all apparent informational exchanges with its environment will be, and can only be, treated as perturbations within the processes that define its closure, and thus no ‘instructions’ or ‘programming’ can possibly exist.” (Varela, 1979)

This statement is not easy to understand, “closure” (a short for organizational closure; section 5.9) refers to the impossibility of organisms and specifically neural systems to react to anything, but to themselves. At first this seemed odd to me, until I understood that Varela was referring, in a *practical* way, to “meaningful information”, although he means it also literally, acknowledging Kant in the idea that we can never know “the-things-in-themselves” as we cannot access true information about all that we encounter in our environment (Kant 1929). If we reframe information into *meaningful information*, then Varela’s remark becomes

easy to grasp. So in a practical way Varela states that the transfer of meaningful information is not possible.

The concept of meaninglessness is not automatically part of the definition of information by anyone. It is, rather, the opposite. The tiniest bit of meaning is not meaningless; as a result the tiniest bit of meaning to exchange or to *transfer* between people or organisms is not possible. And meaningless information cannot be experienced. Pirsig, in his “Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance” (1974), talked about the impossibility of looking (or perceiving) without meaning at objects as they truly appear, before they are subjectified. Without meaning (meaninglessness) cannot be recognized. If meaning out of all possible choices is not made (yet) for that particular “event” or “object”, the first meaning stays untouched: a version of “I have no clue what it is”. *The first basic meaning is a question mark*. In the theory of autopoiesis, event information is regarded as “trigger(s)” because it / they may or may not trigger the organism to find or have preprogrammed / memorized meaning for it. A question mark refers to the question “What is it?” but it conceals the real question underneath it: “What is it for me?” as the question is always raised by a “me”.

Accurately speaking, any kind of information that is part of the world “out there”, reaching people (or organisms), is not transferable as Varela literally stated. “Information” by itself is dimensionless; it is not a unity consisting of mass, length, electromagnetic fields or anything else. Information is made by observers only, not carried into observers. Important as this is, there are no senses that can pick up information. However Kant solved this problem and under his accepted conditions human made information can be regarded as objective (section 5.14).

“If we add to the concept of the subject of a judgment the limitation under which the judgment is made, the judgment is then unconditionally valid” [objective] (Kant 1929 p. 73).

As a practical working model it will suffice. Varela's statement is a consequence of how life began, 3.8 billion years ago (e.g. Schidlowski 2008) and how systems have evolved since then, without being able to escape their structure; organisms can only execute and extend themselves. In executing themselves, they are bound to the basic and central principles explicated by the theory of autopoiesis.

In understanding autopoiesis, it is very helpful to temporarily leave behind the human way of accepting reality and its logic. Life, as it originated in single primitive one-cell organisms, obviously didn't start in the form of human beings. The beginning of life on earth did not try to support future human reasoning or scientific standards. Life started with the use of strategies and tactics to cope and survive with *zero intelligence and environmental awareness*. All this happened and still happens for a lot of organisms within pitch-black, complete solitude. By itself this would not be that relevant for the thesis, were it not for the fact that these basic core “strategies” (*circularity, self-referentiality and autonomy*) of one-cell organisms, are still the same core strategies of all modern complex life-systems including humans. Life, since its origins, has not abandoned those early “strategies”, but

repeats and sustains them, not unlike the way a hologram repeats the tiniest into the sizeable, to realize the full gestalt.

“..Living systems in general, and their nervous system in particular, *are not made to handle a medium*, although it has been through the evolution of their handling of their medium that they have become what they are, such that we can say what we can say about them” (Maturana and Varela 1980 p.56, italic added).

“...Not made to handle a medium...”, but very well *appear* to handle a medium, how can this be? How does a single cell, since its origin with no awareness of its surroundings and probably not of itself either, interact with its surroundings in such a way that it survives not only as a member of but also as a species, against all odds?

The idea that Life needs favorable conditions is biologically a euphemism. In the real world, biologically favorable conditions equal conditions that are between barely favorable and unfavorable, to the point of almost lethal. Even today, plants favor a CO₂ percentage of 1,000–1,300 parts per million which is far above the present 350 ppm ambient level. Plants get (only) one quarter to one third of what they need to flourish optimally. To have one third, at best, of what is really needed to live fully is hardly favorable (Ontario 2002).

This is equally true for the animal world, where, except for the few “top”, elite predators, life is a never-ending war zone. The environment is neither Life's companion nor its nurse. It cannot even be perfectly neutral because sustaining goes against the ever-present and pervasive impact of entropy, described in the fundamental second law of thermodynamics. Every living system which does not get its energy from a source *outside* itself strives for and will reach equilibrium belonging to its *lowest* total energy, which cannot be used anymore by that system. Then the system will stop functioning and it will reach its final end-phase of maximum entropy, maximum disorder and when alive, death (Baranger 2000). This irreversible process happens for 60 seconds in each minute and eventually will stop our sun, the universe and all that exists within it. Life decreases the entropy of the system by increasing order (organization), which is a struggle against entropy. This struggle for resources to counteract entropy, forces processes of life to be active and circular. What is built up will eventually decay, and must be built up again; depleted energy must be restored.

What follows (5.5 – 5.9) is an account about basic concepts of the theory, leading to the core idea of *organizational closure*, which is important for the thesis.

5.3 No observers, no environment

Life's environment clearly did not exist in experience from the beginning of life. Still, in order to be better equipped in finding resources, by handling more effectively an environment, which the organism does not know about, a next step evolved: the evolutionary development of a primitive method to move (protozoa). Now, organisms became able to avoid conditions that were too unfavorable and/or

move to find food or to find a better context within their “non-experiential” environment.

Actually, the word “environment” shouldn't be used here, as the organisms were fully unaware of it and lacked the ability to detect it. Still, in explaining what was going on, the word is used for us readers as-if we observe these organisms. This put us in the role of the observer of organisms in their medium, that is, in what we acknowledge is their environment, while they do not, making our acknowledgement not part of any of their properties. What we, as observers, recognize or distinguish is called, by the authors of autopoiesis, *the meta-domain of descriptions*, belonging to the domain of observers.

The movement of at first the one-cells must not therefore be understood as movement as organisms don't know of any environment for them to move in, and so “movement” does not involve relocation or reaching a different place in “space”. The movement of organisms (in the eyes of their future observers) must be regarded as an “accidental” aftereffect of internal processes, serving a pre-programmed goal: *the restoration or maintenance* of an internal self-set equilibrium: a set referential state. For instance, low sugar levels as an internally generated perturbation of a set state, or, externally, a too-sudden environmental temperature change can be a “cause” for being internally off-balance triggering a process to restore it.

The environmental cause / effect reasoning of observers to understand phenomena in their environment however is fully invalid for Maturana and Varela when it comes to knowing “the organization of the Living”. Cause and effect reasoning obscures the understanding of what makes life work:

“However, I made a concession which I have always regretted. I ... talked about causal relations when speaking about the circular organization of living systems. To do this was both inadequate and misleading. It was inadequate because the notion of causality is a notion that pertains to the domain of descriptions, and as such it is relevant only in the meta-domain in which the observer makes his commentaries and cannot be deemed to be operative in the phenomenal domain, the object of the description.” (Maturana, Varela 1980 p. xviii, underlining added).

5.4 Cause and effect I, a functional construction

Hume deconstructed the validity of cause and effect reasoning to human expectations, which makes causality a model only justified in the mind (the future should behave like the past, see *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1772, Hackett Publ. Co. 1993; Section 4). Hume's question was about scientifically valid certainty. Many have concluded that a solution to Hume's induction problem cannot be found (e.g. Kuhn 1983, Howson 2000, Popper 2005). Cause and effect is not a scientific topic, but a philosophical one; there are many “schools” of thought or approaches to the problem of causation (e.g. Regularity theories, Counterfactual theories, Non-Humean theories). More or less, all these theories basically accept the existence of a cause and its effect.

But there is another obvious way to deny—outside the problem of inductive reasoning—the idea that A is able to reliably cause an effect B on X, even if perfect certainty of the effect is observed or assumed. When a cold wintery night destroys the fragile orchard blossom in spring, or a bullet shatters the glass window, what does “cause” literally mean? In a dozen different dictionaries, there is agreement and a similar explanation, whereby the cause precedes its effect in time. In scientific articles, cause is also used in that fashion. A encounters X and causes—is responsible for—effect B on X under specific conditions Y. In scientific realms, the effect(s) should always be the same for X under the conditions Y. The effect B is a determined consequence in X by A. A and B are necessarily linked, whereby A precedes B in time. This mode of thinking is so infused *as if real* that even the *lack* of an event or substance (A) is also accepted in logic to cause an effect. Something that did not exist in that place and time caused an effect on X... this is the same logic that accepts for instance the ‘senses’ or poison as a valid scientific category.

The impossibility of this idea is that “to-cause” equals “to-determine”. Also, in common language, it is accepted that fired bullets *do* shatter wine glasses or *do* kill humans when fired for instance in their heart. This kind of logic is deeply embedded in human thinking since Aristotle and presumably earlier than that. While in reality (at least on the “macro-atomic level” and upwards) this is never the case, as causes cannot determine effects, so they cannot be cause. Cause and effect are *separate* events and can only happen *simultaneously*, and most of all causes and effect are not causally linked, there is no causal connection. How can this be?

Strike a match and it lights, but sometimes it does not. A bullet shatters a glass window, but the next bullet from the same gun does not shatter the steel door. The wintery night destroyed 80% of the blossom, but not the remaining 20% of the same orchard. In all cases, the cause leads or may lead to mixed results. But the mixed results are secondary. Primary is what actually happened: zero determination by causes with their effects on all systems X. This also means that effects cannot be (necessarily) linked to their causes. Strictly speaking, causes do not exist as nothing can be caused. Even with the clause that A *only* gives the effect B under (strict) conditions to a specific system X, the clause cannot reverse reality; even then A does not cause or determine anything in X, but in *reality*; in the human mind, “causes” do “cause”. It is a very functional construction from the perspective of an observer. If causes cannot cause or determine effects, then what happens instead when it seems it does?

5.4.1 Cause and effect II, no time difference

How is the strike not “responsible for the lighting of the match”? If two systems meet each other, one becomes an external condition for the other. The bullet is an external (brief and local) condition of the glass and (part) of the door, like the cold night is for the blossom. So are the match and the “raw” side of its box. Systems, objects or organisms have essential (structural) properties of their own, constituting their nature or their identity. When properties are expressed, *simultaneously other*

properties stay hidden as potentials, waiting for the right (external) conditions to be manifested. These expressed and non-expressed (potential) properties **only-together** are the properties defining the system's identity. When observers perceive an "object" or phenomenon in relation with its environmental "state", *only the incomplete* can be perceived, but which is denied in the observation. The "objects" intended in their perceivable completeness *still* carry "within" them the sum (hidden) of all their possible "interactions", which cannot simultaneously be expressed.

For instance, there are many basic (living) objects that can be solid, liquid or in gas form or for the living, for instance brain processes in between delta and beta waveforms, but not simultaneously (except for some categories of objects at the so-called phase boundaries under certain conditions). A being that appears healthy may obscure his "illness" (invisible for an observer) that suddenly shows itself under the right conditions. The virus though, that has severely affected that being and seen as the cause of his sickness, was practically "ignored" by the systems of the others and did cause "nothing".. External conditions do not determine what happens in or with the system. All changes or transition points are classified as system properties, *not* as properties of "what-they-are-not" i.e. their environment. The cold wintery night happened to a large part of the country for a million plus "systems", apart from the orchard. Each underwent the cold night in his or her own way determined by their state and properties. All those systems and particular unities just expressed — relevant to the condition of the cold night— one out of their many potential properties. The night did not determine anything for all of them, but served as a *trigger* to systems to express their properties under the triggering condition. The match, also, is carefully designed to ignite under specific conditions. The bare side of the match rubbed against the box will not produce a flame. The rubbing is just such a condition. But what is designed in the match stays as a property of the match. The rough side of the box cannot determine or cause any flames for the match.

What makes a trigger a trigger? Infrared lights (700 nm - 1mm) from the sun fall on the skin and the effect is the sensation of warmth. The infrared lights thus trigger the experience of warmth. The same electromagnetic waves, however—but a bit shorter in wavelength (+/-650 nm)—fall onto the same skin and trigger nothing, as 650nm is not a trigger for skins. Falling into the eye however, it becomes a trigger for the color red. The group of infrared wavelengths, which warm the skin, also fall into the eye, but trigger no sensation, (nor red, nor warmth) as *all environmental triggers cannot even determine their ability to trigger as a property of themselves*. A trigger (what will be a trigger) can only be defined by the system encountering the condition(s), *not* by the condition which seems to trigger. *Causality perfectly assumes it does, but it does not*. System X denies the old logic of causal relationships by determining both what will be cause and what will be effect. What "will be" is a property of X "set in stone" and is information wise truly unrelated to A being part of system X's environment. When an observer perceives A to trigger something in X, A just happens to match the internal information of X, which is still a property

of X. Although in X cause and effect are both internally determined “as one”, the moment they are initiated (the when) *is* (for the greatest part) externally triggered for the more primitive living systems. Finally, cause A does not precede B. When system A meets X, X meets A simultaneously and none of the systems is first time-wise. Both systems A and X, simultaneously, will express their (hidden) properties, when one or both are triggered, but apart from each other. The suggestion that A precedes its effects solely depends on the mental choice of an observer.

Karl Pearson (1856 – 1936) is generally known to have established mathematical statistics. He did not name cause or the notion of causation *once*, he used the word “correlation”; Bertrand Russell (1872–1970) made havoc with the concept of cause and effect in “On the notion of cause”:

“... I wish, first, to maintain that the word “cause” is so inextricably bound up with misleading associations as to make its complete extrusion from the philosophical vocabulary desirable; secondly, to inquire what principle, if any, is employed in science in place of the supposed “law of causality” which philosophers imagine to be employed; thirdly, to exhibit certain confusion is, especially in regard to teleology and *determinism*, which appear to me to be connected with erroneous notions as to causality” (Russell 1912 p. 01, italics added).

Cause and effect thinking is very practical and indispensable for the human mind to order things and to make sense of himself and the world. Assumed causality focuses on the relation between A and X. If that relation repeats itself reliably, as it does often in the natural sciences, it is safe to speak of causality, leading to valid *verifiable* laws. But relations and laws both are true reifications and constructs of the human mind.

In the social domain, cause and effect relationships are often problematic and may produce surrogate solutions and worsen problems. As causal thinking is practically embedded in the stance of all observers, the logic of observers needs to be deconstructed (see section 6.6.1). In autopoiesis, the notion of “triggers” is essential in order to grasp the organization and cognition of the living. Triggers are also essential for the living, as without them Life cannot express itself.

5.5 Organization and Structure

In autopoiesis theory, species differ from one another because they have a different structure based on a different basic design. Autopoiesis names the design: “organization”. The organization of a system is like a “blueprint”, which determines the components and their relations. It tells the system to do “things” in a circular way. The way is circular because it builds and maintains itself in an autonomous manner, it organizes itself. It produces, and is produced by nothing other than itself. Even its design, its organization is self-made.

“...such a system is ... defined by relations of production of components that generate these relations and define it as a unity in a given space...” (Maturana et al. 1980, p.108)

Living systems and all their modes of conduct are truly self-referential:

“[Living systems] *separated distinctive* from systems that could only be characterized with reference to a context.” (Maturana et al. 1980, p. xiii, italics added)

Organization in autopoiesis theory has a label, a name to identify it as that species' class. The name is its identity and it is the name of the generalization of that species. This is similar to how tigers and rabbits are the identities of their species and their identity gives away their nature.

Structure stands for material (internal components and cell-wall as component) and chemical physical processes. The actual living entity with all its physical characteristics is a *structural* manifestation of its organization (class / species, class = a biological category). Structure includes components and their *actual* dynamical *processes* taking place within and between the components (what is going on in physiology). Similar manifestations (particular structures) of a single organization can be recognized as belonging to a particular class (category). So every rabbit is not an identical clone (structure) of other rabbits, but is a rabbit very much specified by the organization, which in a generalized way they share. Many, if not all, McDonalds shops selling hamburgers follow the same basic organization, but do not need to be identical in structure. Organization then is not primarily about “structures” but mainly about the internal relations between the structures. All the functional movements of the people who work at McDonalds, including the inner workings of the ovens and refrigerators, are called “structures”. What the structures maintain or change (bring forth) are the processes.

“...the **relations** that define the system as a unity, and determine the dynamics of [internal] interactions and transformations which it may undergo as such a unity, constitute the organization of the system.” (Maturana et al. 1980 p.137, bold added)

Organization is shared between members of its kind:

“The organization of a system, then, specifies the class identity of a system, and must remain invariant for the class identity of the system...” (Maturana et al. 1980, p. xx)

5.6 Structural coupling I

The following pages may seem a long way from the concept of morality but they will shed light on the applicability or non-applicability of the mainstream use of observer's logic to fit or not fit the aims of the thesis. It may well be that the doctrine of observer's logic, since the origin of mankind, prohibited, for instance, the finding of a plausible, rational, full and impartial foundation for morality.

An organism finds itself physically in its immediate environment, which is a multitude of different structures, incl. other organisms, earth and rock, water, air, sun etc. The structural world is what can be distinguished empirically by an observer. Interacting structures are (temporarily) *coupled* with each other (often recursively) in an *open* way. The “mechanical” coupling of the “body” of organisms

and their physical surroundings in autopoiesis is named “structural coupling” and has two sides. One is the (material structure) organism; the other side is that part of the environment that it is coupled with. Both happen at the same time. Structural coupling is literally the *physical* interactions—passive (sunlight warms up the lizard) or active (behavior)—between the physical structure(s) of an organism and the material world (Maturana et al. 1980, p. xx-xxviii). Structural coupling as it can be observed is also in all cases meaningless. The void of meaninglessness of the observed will be filled (mostly immediately) by the meaning observers give to their observations.

What *cannot* be taken for granted is that this explanation or knowledge comes from an observer’s point of view. When an interaction occurs between the object intended and a part of its environment, the observer will take it as trivial; he acknowledges both as he observes them.

For instance an observer (a biologist) observes how a rain worm in his back garden wriggles out of a plastic box (which has fallen on the ground from the BBQ table); the worm then hides under a big green leaf. The biologist / observer distinguishes within his garden another “garden”, the habitat of the rain worm, which is the soil and underneath the fallen leaves and not the plastic box or the BBQ table. With the convincing distinction between the “two” gardens (human garden and worm’s habitat) by the biologist, he forgets he represents the standpoint of a different *higher order*, more evolved observer, with a bigger, more complex habitat than the organism observed. This is what makes it possible for the biologist to distinguish the rain worm’s habitat from his own. The rain worm cannot make that distinction. There is only one garden for him, that is, the whole garden, including the plastic cup and the legs of the BBQ table, with reduced “meaning” which the little creature can “apprehend”. Still, what in a reduced way is within the experience of the rain worm is excluded in its habitat by the biologist.

“The environment is defined by the classes of interactions into which the *observer* can enter and which he treats as a context for his interactions with the observed organism” (Maturana et al. 1980, p.10).

“Hidden” in that statement is what the observer can enter cannot be a property of the environment; and:

“Accordingly, as for the observer the niche appears as part of the environment, for the observed organism the niche constitutes its entire domain of interactions, and as such it *cannot* be part of the environment that *lies exclusively* in the cognitive domain of the observer” (Maturana et al. 1980 p.10, italics added).

The rain worm is incapable of knowing that there is an external environment different from his internal instincts (descriptions) about it determining his interactions (niche). Also, the rain worm does not even distinguish an environment. The creature is blind, but can make the distinction between light and dark (as it avoids light); it is deaf, but senses touch and vibrations, even if not knowing what triggers them. Finally, it senses chemicals (food) which it likes or not (McKenzie,

1997). If the rain worm's miniscule brain is removed, it does not die, but it cannot stop moving. The rain worm, in this way, is robot-like. Thousands of species even today are programmed biological robots e.g. insects, primitive fishes lizards. An external observer's reasoning would be erroneous to assume he/she knows the rain worm in such a way that its autopoiesis, its organizational closure (section 5.9) could be understood.

5.6.1 “Having no meaning” is a basic property of matter

At the brink that Life broke through 3.8 billion years ago and manifested itself, it encountered an eternal meaningless world, which may sound “depressive”, but is an actual blessing. “Having no meaning” as a basic property of matter is a sacred one. This is not poetic exaggeration and must be taken literally. The existence of the rain worm's habitat, precisely, discovered by the observer, is the knowledge that the whole garden plus the biologist cannot determine even for a powerless rain worm and even for a brief second what will be meaningful to it. What is meaningful for the rain worm is fully *determined* by the rain worm's organization, not by the garden or the human observer nor the whole galaxy around it. This gives Life unlimited *freedom* to express itself in diversity. If already a quantum part of the garden could have deterministic powers over the rain worm, then matter itself would have deterministic powers over Life and all its evolved creatures including humans. It would be for mathematicians to prove that Life under those conditions might not have developed from the beginning.

What does not belong to the rain worm garden does not exist for the rain worm, but does exist for the biologist. If the biologist picks up the rain worm and puts it in front of a book, the book does not exist as a description for the rain worm, but will be reduced to a property that the rain worm innately knows. So the book becomes part of its “habitat ”, but not, again, in the eyes of the observer. Books are not classified as elements of a rain worm's habitat.

5.6.2 Structural Coupling II

Niche, for mainstream biologists and for all dictionaries, is the organism's *relevant* external environment (habitat). In autopoiesis, niche has a very different meaning, it is defined as its total domain of *interactions*:

“The niche is defined by the [sum of all] classes of *interactions* into which an organism can enter” (Maturana et al. 1980, p.10, italics added).

The *sum* of all classes of interactions can never be observed (by an observer) or even experienced by the organism itself. Autopoietic niche is knowledge. It also cannot be part of the environment. Niche as the sum of all internal categorical descriptions of measurable behavior directly extends and is the consequence of the *internal sum* of all possible classes of *external triggers descriptions*, but including their meaning* for the organism. Behavior does not describe external triggers but is rationally linked to trigger descriptions. Autopoiesis does not name the sum of all possible trigger descriptions which define how to operate in the external contexts of

triggers. In the thesis, it is named *internal niche* or i-niche. There is no difference from a first-person perspective's experience between an activated internal trigger description and the experience of the external trigger, which activated it. The actual external trigger is Kant's inaccessible "the things-in-themselves". But without "the things-in-themselves", these internal descriptions cannot be primarily experienced. Both are needed in experience.

*Meaning is used indirectly here as an observer would use it. Observers do experience meaning in the observed, which immediately will determine how they handle the observed. But within the workings of nervous systems, this is not the case. The classification of meaning is a cognitive construct and belongs to the meta-domain of descriptions of observers, even when they observe themselves (in memory mostly), but meaning is not a property of how CNS and brain works. An example (toy car) will be given in section 5.9 which functions (flawlessly) within its own specifications with its environment, while having no internal meaning for itself. The toy-car just executes itself without self-knowledge. The example is similar for rain worms, drosophila, herrings, apes and very small human children, which fully associates with their experiences, having no language and no self-reflection. In that case the experience just is as it comes and the experience as a whole determines the experience-as-a-whole.

Meaning between organism and its habitat is excluded in the observation as meaning cannot be observed unless as a projection. What can be observed is the meaningless part: structural coupling (interactions). Structural coupling can be perfectly recorded by a video camera, because of its very meaninglessness.

Structural coupling example. The video recording shows a number of persons (4) sitting at a table having a conversation about the weather while in the background a radio plays music from to time interrupted by a speaker. What is exactly structural coupling? All what the recording can record and nothing else. Or in other words all that the recording device is "aware" of, or structurally "knows" about, which are light patterns and shifts, electromagnetic wave lengths and differences and the movements of air molecules and the location of their source. That is all there is. No knowledge at all about humans, table, room, differences between music and spoken word, be it from the radio or from people's mouth. All what can be picked up is meaningless. In the example kinesthetic information is left out, but also in that domain meaning cannot travel outside into the apparatus or organism.

As soon as the video camera is replaced by a (scientific) observer, the "dumb" camera is replaced by just as "dumb" eyes, which equal to the camera can only perceive the meaninglessness of material triggers. Immediately meaninglessness of structural coupling from the standpoint of an observer is replaced by his knowledge or question marks, which both are properties of the observer. Interactions as (recursive) relations between organism and environment are determined by the properties of the organism as the environment in practice and in logic (see section 3.1.2) cannot determine the relation. I use the word relation as it is a good word, but it is also a reification, a human construction of observers: relations cannot be

observed, because the understanding of the observer is intertwined in it, while structural coupling can be fully observed. In the coupling, the organism is a (set of) trigger(s) for that part of the environment, which interacts.

The environment is rather large and (infinitely) complex. Internal niche, (sum of all trigger descriptions) which can only partly express itself in an interaction, works with categories. Within i-niche there are “category (class) trigger-descriptions” of the environment, dividing the environment in what is relevant and not relevant (and thus ignored) for the organism. The last sentence is valid for observers and works to explain things, for instance to make sense of a toy car or an animal, but it is *not* valid for the toy-car or animal itself. Full irrelevance equals full meaninglessness. But what is meaningful for one species is free to be ignored by another species. A consequence of the meaninglessness of all triggers is the freedom it offers to the development of species. This *material* meaninglessness is the environmental condition of the structure of Life. I-niche is an innately *meaningful internal* domain, not the *meaningless external* (triggers) domain. For now, simple creatures without an evolved brain, like the rain worm, have no awareness of an environment, but seem to have it from the point of view of the biologist.

Next to the meaninglessness of “structures”, “an sich” a second basic property of “structural coupling”, is its “openness”. Structural coupling is open because structures of systems cannot be closed in relation to each other. Even far away galaxies are (shifted in time) in an open relation with the planet earth and with our sun, under the principle “if I can see you, you can see me”. Systems stand structurally in open relation towards one another, which can be manifested through structural interactions (Mingers, 1995 p.33).

5.7 Internal Dynamics I, categories and circularity

While structural coupling can be observed, not observable from the outside is everything that happens inside. The theory of autopoiesis regards internal processes as “*internal dynamics*”. Internal dynamics refer to “circular physiological processes” and their circular internal consequences.

“... internal dynamics, its physiology—that is all the molecular processes that constitute the realisation of the living” (Maturana, 2001).

The very first principle of processes that “constitute the living” is their *circularity*. Physiology is always circular and in motion. The very effect of entropy forces the system to build up energy in a cyclical way. Components and their building blocks are made and maintained; they decay and are built up again. Every output of a component becomes an input of another component, in order to produce and maintain those components in a repeated way; there is no further input or output, except basic chemicals (input) and waste products.

“Thus, the circular organization implies the prediction that an interaction that took place once will take place again” (Maturana et al. 1980 p.10).

For simple zero-intelligence organisms (bacteria or simple multicellular organisms, like a hydra or a rain worm or a mussel), everything that they are and do is

explainable through their structure. Their particular blueprint genetically determines all structures, their relations and structural processes. They *do not have a choice*; they are determined in all that they do, which is sufficient in simple predictable mediums. Their niche (sum of behavior) is the effect of pre-programmed trigger descriptions with pre-programmed meaning. “Determined” does not mean that all processes, when active, are determined by their source (genes) to be active; to be active they need to be activated. Some processes are sleeping or are potential; they do not happen but need something external to their source to awaken or to develop. Our senses (eyes) don't have a choice either, similar to those primitive organisms. When we see a tomato, the color red is determined by the structure of the human brain, but when the tomato is green, we don't have the freedom to see it as red. The color red is structurally determined, but *when* the internal process “red” becomes active (experienced in seeing) is not structurally determined; it is triggered by the structural coupling with (an) external trigger(s).

In order to know for organisms what to do when they lack the ability to learn, their behavior is genetically *pre-determined*: this is referred to as *instinctive behavior*. A consequence of instincts is that they are fixed to triggers and cannot change. The environment, like all possible trigger descriptions (relevant for the organism), is a priori *predicted*. Instinctive knowledge is based on predictions of environmental triggers and as explained earlier, not of particular events but of categories of events. What is not internally predicted (coded) does not exist for the organism as it cannot interact outside its code. Its code is functional. This does not automatically mean that what exists beyond the code magically disappears from the organism's awareness. Although a book is outside the code of a rain worm, still, as a book, when reduced to impenetrable matter, it is within the rain worm's internal niche (total sum of categorical trigger descriptions). What exists will be reduced to what is known within the code if the encounter is a fact (unavoidable).

But when, for instance, insects near Chernobyl live under gamma-ray conditions, autopoiesis does not provide any internal code to detect gamma rays and thus it is not possible to reduce it to a detectable trigger, usable for the insects' autopoiesis. But underneath the chemical processes of the Living, general atomic structures exist, which detect gamma rays as triggers, hampering or stopping chemical autopoietic processes and/or influencing, through mutations the Living (mostly in negative ways). In such conditions, some species die while others don't, although they may become malformed, with reduced effectiveness (e.g. Hesse-Honegger and Wallimann, 2008; Møller and Mousseau, 2009).

Still, what is not internally coded cannot be expressed in interactions, in behavior. This is equally valid for humans. For instance, a man called “Hank” walked past a big black poster, which he had never seen before; this poster was hanging on a canteen's wall and had a bright white text, saying: “Thank you Hank, you are THE employee of the month, have a free lunch”. Hank briefly looked up, didn't react and continued his walk towards his colleagues, who all had a similarly indifferent reaction to the new poster in the canteen. The image was artfully in

handwritten Sanskrit, a 10.000 year old Indian language that nobody in the canteen could read or even recognize as a language. What this meant was that the writing on the poster, like the worm's relation to the book, was reduced to an abstract drawing (object) which was within recognition, not unlike the way that 22 kinds of visible rock for a geologist might only be five kinds for the average tourist looking at the same scenery.

The fundamental circularity of the internal dynamics is only able to produce *circular predictions* (of the outside world) which it interacts with. *What is predicted must repeat itself to become valid.*

Internal circularity (grey) also extends over processes, which need an interaction with an outside trigger to proceed to the next internal phase (a-c). The reoccurrences of these processes *need* the reoccurrences of the external (A - C) triggers (the outgoing arrows are interactions).

See Fig. 1:

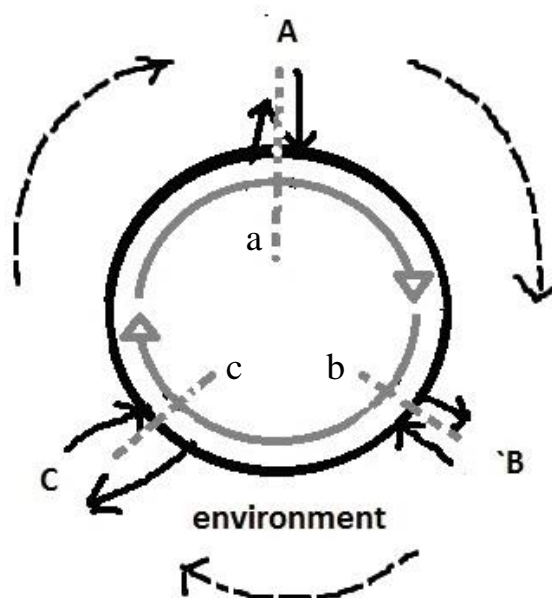


Fig.1 Internal circularity demands external circularity

“Thus, the circular organization implies the prediction that an interaction that took place once will take place again... In a continuously changing environment, these predictions can only be successful if the environment does not change in that which is predicted. Accordingly, the predictions implied in the organization of the living system are not predictions of particular events, but of classes of interactions. Every interaction is a particular interaction, but every prediction is a prediction of a *class of interactions*” (Maturana et al. 1980 p.10, underlining added).

Predictions are not a luxury; only those predictions exist which the organism needs in order to be that organism. And every prediction made already belongs to a category. An interaction is an interaction based on triggers(s). The triggers must be

recognized as triggers first. The analogy with categories is relevant here, named “classes” by biologists, in the way that Hume also conceptualized assumptions, which form the basis of classes and causality: the future should be like the past, another extension of Life's circularity.

Very simple organisms have classes of predictions, with no clue what the predictions are about. The above sentence “...are not predictions of particular events, but of classes of interactions” describes that categories of interactions, although one-on-one structurally coupled to their respective environmental triggers, are not yet categories of *external triggers*. Triggers are environmental, but the organism does not know yet. One could call them proto-categories, as categories are a direct consequence of these internal classes.

“...Thus for every living system its organization implies a prediction of a niche, and the niche thus predicted as a domain of *classes* of interactions constitutes its entire cognitive reality” (Maturana et al. 1980, p.11, italics added).

The only reality that the organism knows about is the internal one. Cognition, as defined here, includes internal distinctions. When the rain worm tries to escape a human made artefact in the garden, it has no idea it is moving in its habitat or environment as it only reacts to internal perturbations to maintain or strive for internal equilibrium.

Proto-categories or categories for organisms that recognize classes of triggers as external serve and are the result of internal circularity. The existential circularity of internal processes is automatically reflected in the construction of external categories. The remark:

“Categorization is the mental operation.... It is the most basic phenomenon of cognition...” (Cohen and Lefebvre 2005, p. 643).

...is not only valid, it is biologically an existential one, as we will see later in more detail (section on the ego). Categories constitute the identity of the category maker.

5.8 Internal Equilibrium

Through evolutionary processes, the system has learned how to maintain from within a (cyclical / dynamic) self-referential equilibrium, a state of wellbeing.

“In terms of their functional organization, living systems do not have inputs and outputs, although under perturbations they maintain constant their *set states*...” (Maturana et al. 1980 p.51, italics added).

Off-balance is not a preferred state to be in, wellbeing in balance is. Processes that disturb this internal equilibrium (internal experienced perturbations) are countered with other internal operations until equilibrium is restored. This equilibrium, which is essential, obeys its organization by maintaining and supporting it, by keeping its manifestation alive. The way equilibrium is restored depends naturally on the nature of the system. Internal equilibrium is also the internal reference that governs niche (total sum of potential interactive behavior).

5.8.1 Internal Dynamics II, external perturbations are internally experienced

In mediums (environments) with too much or too intense perturbations to handle—relevant for an organism—the organism dies. The biologist sees the perturbation external to the organism; for instance, he sees a dead snail in a cup of water, or a bee dead on the windowsill in the kitchen. Both the cup and the closed windows were a problem that couldn't be conquered for the organism, similar to poison or meeting a too dangerous predator.

But in actual reality, the struggle for life is always a battle *inside* the organism. One side gives internal alarming off-balance experiences that are not pleasant. Another internal side controls the equilibrium, programs to restore it and thus experiences relief. The two sides are very different from each other and use different internal (afferent=from senses / efferent=towards for instance muscles) neural pathways. If relevant, it initiates behavior. The behavior is a byproduct for species which do not yet distinguish internally-generated triggers from externally-generated ones. This is not about behavior, it is about what the organism tries to achieve with it internally, that counts.

The internal domain of all possible interactions (niche) is explored to ease any experienced tension and to restore equilibrium. When this “restoring” does not happen, the same attempt will be repeated within the constriction of niche, but in vain; and when the inner perturbation is too serious, the organism will die. Obviously, its internal niche (referring to internal descriptions of external triggers and their meaning) could not cope with the threats, apparently the internal descriptions reduced too much the complexities of the external triggers.

For organisms to “handle” or “control” external systems, their internal flexibility expressed in behavior that handles external systems must be equal to or preferably greater than the variety of states of those external systems that will be handled / controlled: this is the *Law of Requisite Variety* (Ashby 1956). Evolutionary biology shows that evolution indeed *did*, and still *does* increase the internal complexity of species, resulting in their greater flexibility to handle more complex mediums. A landmark for greater flexibility and a much faster response time were neural processes belonging to the development of nerve tissues, later a central nervous system (CNS) and eventually a “central information processor”: that is, a brain.

5.9 Organizational Closure, (Operationally Closed)

Organizational closure is the main reason why autopoiesis is part of the thesis, since it governs the working of our Central Nervous System (CNS). Organizational closure provides an answer to the meaninglessness of triggers. The reality of organizational closure defines external triggers always as internal ones. The real external triggers as things-in-themselves stay external beyond knowledge and beyond (human) experience, but as triggers —described, constructed and experienced— they are internal. External triggers seem to be perfectly suggested outside, which will be covered in chapter 8. A clear example is hearing sounds while

sounds are triggered (structural coupling) by eternal silent triggers: vibration of matter (e.g. air molecules).

Hunger, as an internally generated perturbation, is not complex to understand in terms of being an internal trigger. But to realize that external triggers are also generated internally is highly uncommon for observers and fully taken for granted as its opposite. A modern example is the aforementioned rain worm or bee. What hasn't been explained yet is: "What exactly is the basis of a domain of all possible interactions (niche) when the environment is unknown to the organism?" The answer has to do with organizational closure.

The ability, determined by the organization of the Living that it can only react to itself is called "organizational closure" or "operationally closed".

"A system is *organizationally closed* if all its possible states of activity must always lead to or generate further activity within itself... and *have no inputs and outputs*" (Mingers 1995, p.32-33).

The idea that the nervous system has an "input" by ways of its senses is a construct and not real. Best is to begin with how life evolved. Regard simple organisms, unable to acknowledge an outside world, as biological versions of a mechanical toy-car. But not just any car: a car that reverses and changes direction when it bounces against the walls or furniture. Like similar primitive organisms, the toy-car has no awareness of its surroundings—it is not even alive—but manages very well to eventually find the room's open door when it is programmed to fill its battery in the corridor. What the toy is "aware" of or—to formulate it better—is capable of, is reacting to its own mechanical perturbations, triggered by collisions, without obviously knowing the external origin of triggers; it doesn't need to know. In its internal domain of all possible interactions it does not have any way to notice walls or furniture. It only reacts to its own mechanical structure, thus to itself. Every bounce becomes a direct—different but internal—condition compared to a "non-bounce". The bounce and its absence offer possibilities for the system to show a different, but logically linked property (changing direction) out of its repertoire of "all possible interactions". For the car, it can be said, knows only one internal trigger: when it bounces to a chair or wall (seeing this from the perspective of the observer. A piece of flexible metal strip is then mechanically forced to make an internal electrical connection, which is the first out of only *two* triggers that the car picks up. It cannot even pick up the bending of the metal strip. The organization of this type of car, structures the car into reverse and simultaneously makes an angle with its front wheels for a second; then it continues forwards in a straight line. The two operations (reverse and angling) are linked as one.

If the car's "species" has a more complex organization, including the ability to find food in the corridor (battery charger), it gets an extra internal category; an extra predictive description of a possible environmental trigger. Now it "knows" to distinguish four triggers; in this case, it detects, when it bumps to a voltage contact with an external charger, an extra voltage at its own sensors, (it does not detect the actual external voltage *contacts*) and when it detects voltage it stops and holds its

position until its battery is full (third internal trigger). When the battery gets too low in voltage (fourth trigger) it “seeks” the recharging station. Its internal repertoire of all possible interactions is quadrupled, compared to its simplest version of bouncing, reversing and continuing to drive until its batteries are depleted.

But the ability of a toy-car that is not even alive to eventually find within its environment its “food” (charging station) is possible because **it is well “coded” to react to itself**. This is the core of organizational closure. The car does react to the electricity within itself only. Electricity and what electricity means (the specific sub-system meaning) is what the car reacts to. A naïve observer would have the opposite experience. It sees very well how the car is “aware” of its environment and interacts accordingly.

Why and how do children like sugar / candy? In fact they don't actually like sugar. Children like its sweetness and structure in their mouth, but sweetness has never been and never is a property of sugar. Also the *sensation* of its structure and its texture in the mouth is not a property of sugar.

Sugar has no (human sensed) property of itself. The clever mammal body has learned that it makes “sense” to recognize because it favors high-energy molecules of food and knows how to appreciate them. Thus, the organisms (e.g. birds, humans) “projects” out of itself “sweetness” to these desirable triggers, when such molecules trigger the tongue. Reacting to the sweetness of sugar is the tongue’s reaction to its own experiential clever coded properties (taste sensations) albeit triggered in time by the sugar molecules.

Carefully mimicking the external molecular form of sugar produces extremely low-calorie sugar substitutes. The sugar is, analogically, identical to the stranger standing in front of the house ringing the front door bell. No one in his right mind would consider the doorbell’s sound to be a property of the stranger; but this is something we do naturally with sugar and all that we taste. Being in the kitchen and moving to the front door is therefore not reacting to the man in front of the house but, rather, reacting to a property (doorbell) of the house itself, triggered in time by the man.

Organizational closure itself is a given; it is not free choice, but it offers free choice. The *unconditional* faithfulness of an organism to itself, because of closure, offers freedom to determine the nature of the outside world, according to and as an extension of its own organization. Closure in biology means all living systems can only react within themselves to themselves, in the way they themselves determine, according to their nature. For simple organisms, their nature is fully determined by their genetically determined organization. The freedom of only being determined by oneself is the freedom of the rain worm to be a rain worm and the freedom of a bird and a bear to be a bird and a bear.

What is relevant for the thesis is not how the human body and its components work, but how organizational closure governs the brain and its five senses, as well as the next level up beyond molecules and physical structures: cognition and

thinking. A prime example of organizational closure is the working of the nervous system (Maturana et al. 1980 p.22, 23, 26).

5.9.1 Organizational Closure and the nervous system

Briefly, it was mentioned that children do not like sugar, but they like their own sweetness sensation, projected to sugar and thus becoming its property. The experiences of sweet or sour as body-made constructions are a direct consequence of organizational closure and valid for all properties of light, dark—auditory and tactile sensations such as touch, warmth or cold. Our “sixth sense”, the vestibular organ, gives us every millisecond a sensation of being in a 3D world, reigned by gravity, like a blind man experiencing “space” around him. These sensations are self-made and obviously not a property of gravitational and mass related forces, which only trigger the self-made sensations.

“In other words, the new approach required us to treat seriously the activity of the nervous system as determined by the nervous system itself, *and not by the external world*; thus the external world would only have a triggering role [in time] in the release of the internally-determined activity of the nervous system” (Maturana et al. 1980, p. xv, italics added).

Maturana and Varela's findings are a nuanced and better explained version of what was hinted at by the anatomist and physiologist Johannes Peter Müller (1801-1858) who examined neural pathways. Müller realized, through his studies of nervous systems of many different animals, that the *same* external triggers affect different nerves in different ways and thus nerves *are not passive messengers* of external stimuli:

“Die Sinnesempfindung ist nicht die Leitung einer Qualität oder eines Zustandes der äusseren Körper zum Bewusstsein, sondern die Leitung einer Qualität, eines Zustandes eines Sinnesnerven zum Bewusstsein veranlasst durch eine äussere Ursache”

“Perception is *not* the directing to awareness of a quality or condition *external to the body*, but the directing to our consciousness of a quality or condition of our nerves triggered by an external cause”... (Müller, 1837 p.254) italics added by author

The representation of the world, as Müller noted, reflects the structure of our nervous system in the first place. Intuitively, the experiences of the senses by the nature of projection *perfectly* denies the organizational closure properties of *its* CNS.

5.10 Abstract thinking and projection

More evolved organisms develop external awareness, when the complexity of their neural system makes it possible:

“A nervous system that is capable of treating its internally generated states of activity as different from its externally generated states, that is, of

distinguishing their origin, is capable of abstract thinking...” (Maturana et al. 1980, p.25)

The word “abstract” is added when triggers are recognized as they are perceived in the external world. It is not unlikely that—especially the eyes more than other sensors—helped to make the distinction between inner and outer triggers much easier. Seeing distant objects, which internal dynamics cannot control, makes it eventually acceptable to regard the outside as independent, being “not part of the controller”, *even when “this” all happens as neural processes within the CNS, but projected outside:*

“A nervous system capable of recursively interacting with its own states, **as if these were independent entities**...requires an anatomical and functional internal *reflection* so that the internal organization of the nervous system can project itself onto itself...The linguistic domain, the observer and self-consciousness are each possible because they result as different domains of interactions of the nervous system with its own states in circumstances in which these states represent different modalities of interactions of the organism” (Maturana et al. 1980, p. 29, bold and italics added).

All seeing and hearing or sensing of the world is an internal experience projected outside. Touch, smell and taste are also projected outside the brain, but to the periphery of the CNS: the physical place itself of the sensors.

The peculiarity of an independent world is internal niche. It fully determines the total behavior of the organism, expressing its nature by behavior, while the expression is fully based on the internal descriptions of what are perceivable triggers and thus fully based on what specifically the organism *cannot* be: its environment. And still, the inseparability of that which cannot be known and that which is projected—be it instinctive or learned—is a critical condition in order to realize the nature of the individual. They are in fact two sides of the same coin.

Because projections cannot be detected, the consequence is that all observers have their own version of the external world, unless observers are perfect clones. A world as it is *perceived* is enslaved by projection, but simultaneously it is *experienced* as the opposite: a world *imposed*.

Projection makes the world turn around towards us as perfectly convincing and “objective”, as Kant argued. Although beyond experience, the projection of the internal descriptions of triggers as part of the internal “class” of all possible trigger descriptions give triggers a face: this face is the outside world as we know it. Internal niche explodes into external habitat. Still, all there is, is internal niche, apart from the abstract level of inaccessible external triggers. What stays true is that triggers are not from i-niche, but are described and are made known by i-niche. Also outside the domain of projection of the interacting organism but within the projection of observers is structural coupling (section 5.6; 5.6.2).

Triggers have a *double* face: a real face, the thing-in-themselves “face”, independent from and forever hidden for observers behind their variable second face: a mask projected by and reflecting the internal niche of any observer of any

kind capable of “abstract thinking”. This autopoietic conclusion could be opposed by some, as it seems to deny the independence of triggers towards the organism. The dependence of the organism is on structural coupling *only*. The internal creation of trigger-descriptions, including meaning, is independent of the world and fully determined by the nature of the organism. The organisms discussed for which the toy car is a good metaphor, do not create meaning but innately inherit it from their genes, which pass through their organization. If the *experience* of the world is a mirror of the organism, and “designed” by it, what is more powerful? What determines freedom of the organism and what is its freedom?

Questions such as the above belong to the abstract domain of an observer’s descriptions. The observer is entitled to these questions, which will be discussed later on (section 6.9).

5.11 The function of the senses

The experience of an outside world is based on a common belief: the five senses (six in their completeness) are designed or developed to know an outside world, independent from the observer, letting the world arrive from outside in. Even within Kant's constraint—that we as humans perceive the world in a human way but within that constraint gather objective perceptions and so acquire objective knowledge—follows the common belief that the senses are primarily evolved in order to know an outside world. The human experience of an independent world as it is given implicates the experience of the independence of observer’s towards that same world. Both are suggested to be independent of each other. Most if not all people will consider this a blessing. The independence of the senses to their content is easiest to understand as “passive”. A transparent (or maybe slightly colored) lens of a camera (the human conformation) is perfectly passive to its streaming content. It does not interfere and is not able to “subjectify” the image on its way to the film plate.

Objectivity is the suggestion in the experience of seeing (perceiving). Autopoiesis makes clear that the human perception of a world is *determined* by its organization. Senses are the peripheral extensions of the nervous system and follow the “logic” of its CNS, which is perfectly organizationally closed and self-referential. The reference behind organizational closure is the reaching of and maintenance of internal equilibrium.

The tension which exists for more than a billion years in the internal dynamics of the organism, between equilibrium and (negative) perturbations is a cyclical, intimate and fundamental relationship. It is the relationship that determines life or death for the organism. To enlarge internal flexibility in order to counteract *internal* (negative) perturbations (externally or internally triggered) requires more variety and is the drive for hundreds of millions of years behind the evolution to more complexity, that is, a CNS, the brain and later the senses.

Primitive senses did already exist more than 600 million years ago, in very simple organisms. One of the oldest eyes with a lens is found in the Cambrian era,

550 million years ago (Lamb 2013, p.56). Probably because of that, the CNS and the brain evolved rapidly in complexity, as the eyes opened a new portal, with an explosion of carefully selected triggers. Or, in other words, eyes are not designed to see but to primarily serve the reference of well-being by giving the organism more flexibility to handle / control internal perturbations, albeit triggered by outside structural coupling processes. The first primitive organisms with eyes are still robotic like with no abstract thinking.

When a species, through processes of mutation, develops eyesight, it can hunt or flee for predators in a much more effective way. But hunting is an interaction that is based on an internal perturbation, such as hunger. If the interaction does not occur, equilibrium cannot be restored. Hunting becomes much more effective and possible with the addition of eyesight, which greatly *enlarges* the pool of niche. The richer the niche becomes, the more the law of requisite variety of Ashby (see section 3.1.7.2) predicts that the organism will be able to handle or even control parts, which with a less rich niche would not have been possible. So what the eyes do is what a video camera can do for the toy-car, which is to offer the possibility of more interactions with the environment, provided that visual triggers and class descriptions are added to niche.

5.12 The niche of clones and automatic objectivity

Within their class, one-cells (unicellular organisms) are real or practically real clones of each other; there are also numerous modern multicellular species that are much more evolved, which are still practically clones within their class. This also means they share the following:

1. a same “identical” internal-niche, which includes
2. the same instinctive a priori categorized descriptions of environmental triggers, which
3. determine thus the same detection of external triggers and their meaning for the organisms *as experienced*, which
4. determine same or similar interactive behavior in those particular environments which are described.

Number 3 in the list informs the particular organism on how to act in order to reach its internal references, albeit shared with its entire clone class. Numbers 1-4 in the list refer to the maintenance of the being of that particular member of the species. This mechanism does not explain or express the environment. It purely expresses the organism. This is not so strange, when that is exactly the biological drive of the species: to maintain and organize itself in a dynamic cyclical way, within the constraints of its organization, or in short, to live its life according to its own but shared nature.

“Clones” is another way of saying that members of a class lack particular properties, *not* determined by their organization, that gives them a distinct individuality. There is no freedom of choice to determine meaning. If One considers a simple fish or a fruit fly, then all within their sub-class are known;

their respective, individual domain of all possible interactions is practically identical, but does not need identical structures. The amount of freedom to deviate from other members of the species is for non-essential structural changes, which do not interfere with common i-niche, Stepping in the shoes of a couple of fruit flies would be like experiencing, every time, the same “person” finding themselves in a similar, well known territory. If objectivity is based on the shared and the verifiable, then clone-like organisms will perfectly see and share the same objectivity; all fruit flies will thus objectively experience the same “*Drosophila melanogaster* world”. Paradoxically, this is an a priori objectivity. There is no subjectivity yet, unless the strange term *universal subjectivity* is used; but then there is no objectivity. Actually both do not exist as polarities and the concepts lose their meaning.

The point to make, which will be explored further in a later section, is the paradox of the fact that instinctive, a priori knowledge conforms well to the definition of objectivity, if we apply human reasoning to the world of clones. A clone here represents the species with a pure nature, a nature which is totally determined by the overall organization of the species.

What is “nature”? “Nature of” or “by 'nature” is a result of inborn or innate properties, but expressed in behavior or through traits (e.g. the property of long life, immunity to something etc.) Nature does not refer to structure, but for clones is determined by structure. Nature, in this sense, coincides with the internal class of all possible trigger descriptions (i-niche, see section 3.1.6) which immediately define a world mirroring i-niche.

Stepping in the shoes of pure but different species will lead to very different objectivities as the reference of objectivity is not determined by the senses, but by i-niche. *It is not that i-niche supports the world; it is the other way around, the world supports i-niche:*

“... since the domain of interactions of the organism is defined by its structure, and since this structure implies a prediction of a niche [i-niche], the relations with which the nervous system [including senses as the periphery of nervous systems] interacts are defined by this prediction and arise in the domain of interactions of the organism” (Maturana et al. 1980, p.21).

The above quote, which more or less says that the CNS (and thus the brain) determines the meaning of the outside world according to its nature, is valid for all life, all species and not only clones. Clones were used as a straightforward example of a first principle of Life, as life existed during the first billions of years only in the form of clones or clone-like species. Still, if true objectivity for clones can be assumed (were we to apply human reasoning into their world), how can this be true for professionals, especially scientists who need objectivity?

5.13 Different biological “objectivities”

Apparently, animals do and must categorize, but obviously not with the help of language. Categorization studies have used animals many times (e.g. pigeons,

chimpanzees) but the use of language by animals, as we humans know and use it, has never been demonstrated. This makes the concept of “categories” older than categories of language.

It is obvious that rabbits categorize phenomena in the meadow where they live in a fundamentally different way than a weasel or a squirrel who visit the same meadow. Fundamental differences in behavior must be predicted, as the animals are so unlike each other. What is grass or a mouse for one will not be the same for another. Even accepting that the same image falls on their retina, the way they handle the same phenomenon proves that the same objective image “an sich”, cannot explain their different (or even opposite) behavior towards that same “object”.

The seemingly neutral question “What do I see, what is it?” is biologically important, but not possible; it is turned into the subjective question: “What do I see, what does it mean to me?” This appears to be the only question that can be answered. Of course, animals do not present that question in language; they act it out in behavior by investigating. They basically express their interest as determined by their respective natures.

Three different species of animals therefore will have no idea that, relative to each other, they see the same meadow very differently. It is their biological make-up that makes it so (organizational closure). So far the objective question “What is it”, is identical to the subjective question: “What does it mean to me?” Meaning explains behavior very well, while facts do not. Sense-making processes are literally what they say: how does what I see, feel, hear etc. make sense? To make sense is to make an indistinguishable bond between sense (what is seen etc.) and the personal experience of judging what is sensed / seen. Then when “sense” is made, it will be part of what is sensed. But how does it become part of it?

5.14 Objectivity and Kant (1724-1804)

So what is objectivity and how does it lead to knowledge? What is really not touched by subjectivity? These are old questions, posed even before Aristotle and Plato and also thousands of years before that in the East (Upanishads). Kant (1724-1804) made a breakthrough in exploring these questions and paved the way to the development of scientific objectivity.

Knowledge is produced by a human mind; in fact, the structure of knowledge is the knowledge structure of the human mind. Given that human minds exist before they observe, these structures are in place a-priori to observations that are made, and likewise these a-priory structures cannot be falsified by observations.

This also means that the perceivable world cannot determine the nature of knowledge structures as they are self-referential and independent of the world. The knowledge structures must also be necessary because, without them, we could not possibly have sensory experiences the way we do. Kant regards these a-priori knowledge structures as extremely important and absolutely necessary:

“Any knowledge that professes to hold a priori lays claim to be regarded as absolutely necessary. This applies still more to any determination of all pure a priori knowledge, since such determination has to serve as the measure, and therefore as the [supreme] example, of all apodictic (philosophical) certainty” (Kant, CPR 1929 p. 12).

With this reversal, Kant opens up the possibility of a-priori structures leading in the end to scientific knowledge, but with an important and integral condition. Knowledge becomes relative (“...must conform...”) to the human mind; it loses its absolute character which Hume was after, but could not find. If we add to the concept of a judgment’s subject the limitation under which the judgment is made, the judgment is then unconditionally valid (CPR 1929 p. 73).

If a man swears with all his might that he has really seen and spoken to a flying purple elephant, not many will believe him. But if he discloses the very conditions (limitations) under which he made the judgment (the encounter happened in a dream), then maybe many will have no problem in believing him. Should he really be believed? That depends on the relevant community (“intersubjectivity”) that should believe him to give the judgment the status of real.

As Kant’s a-priori knowledge of space and time is not linked to the topic of this thesis, I will not go further into it. What is relevant is the notion of knowledge and that of objectivity as possible contrasts to ego and subjectivity; all knowledge and subjectivity have to be “moved” outside the veil of innocence, but before that recognized for what it is.

Kant begins with:

“If intuition must conform to the constitution of the objects, I do not see how we could know anything of the latter a priori; but if the **object** (as object of the senses) **must conform** to the constitution of our faculty of intuition [faculty of awareness in relation to the perceived], I have no difficulty in conceiving such a possibility” (Kant 1929 p. 22, bold added).

When referring to sensibility, Kant means the receptivity of the mind in terms of being affected by objects as they represent themselves (as they are presented in sensibility) (CPR 1929). The object as it “is given” (perceived) is accepted by Kant as a humanized version of external reality (conforming to the constitution of our faculty of intuition) and not a true representation as existing beyond the humanized version. Kant repeats (warns), more than once, that human perceptions do not disclose what truly exists in the world: *the things-in-themselves*. They are inaccessible and cannot be known and also fully coincide with autopoiesis where the true face of triggers is forever behind the human mask of projection (section 4.0).

Kant gives a thorough account regarding the fact that everybody can access objects in sensibility and become aware of them in an objective way. Kant states that “objective knowledge” is experienced in “intuition”. But what do we see before “knowing” what it is, before having a thought about it?

“The effect of an object upon the faculty of representation, so far as we are affected by the said object, is sensation. That sort of intuition which relates to an object by means of sensation is called an empirical intuition. The undetermined object of an empirical intuition is called phenomenon.” (CPR 1929 p. 43)

Thus “naked intuitions” are called “empirical intuitions” and are the experiences of “sensations”. Sensations are not (yet) knowledge but are phenomena of the eternal unknown, but not the “things in themselves” even though relating to them. Empirical intuitions are the foundation that leads to objective knowledge. Knowledge can only exist for Kant in the form of language, in the form of thoughts; but thoughts of understanding (in the form of knowledge) are not empty as they relate to content, the content of intuitions.

“..Thoughts without content are void; intuitions without conceptions, blind. Understanding cannot intuit, and the sensuous faculty cannot think; in no other way than from the united operation of both, can knowledge arise”. (CPR 1929 p. 64)

In the context of Kant's theory, what is given through the senses (sensibility) is thus by definition objective, but is not knowledge yet. Knowledge is based on thought (understanding). In the above context of what is intuited, Kant states that thoughts which make sense are connected to the senses. Kant's words strictly divide understanding / knowledge / judgment from the experience of intuitions.

Schopenhauer, who gives Kant full credit for his a-priori findings, critiques him for considering the actual, intuitive, perceptual knowledge the same as the abstract, discursive, conceptual, derivation of blind intuitions otherwise according to Kant, sensations do not make sense, they are in a way blind. But before and without thinking, without conceptions, perceptions do not need to be blind sensations. Schopenhauer accepts direct, intuitive knowledge of perceptions well before thinking (in language) occurs (The World as Will and Representation / Appendix of Volume I 1844).

Not distinguished in Kant's text is that realizing does not need understanding but experience (like many people use their TV but don't understand how it works). Understanding needs thinking in language. Realizing doesn't need much thinking or needs no thinking at all, but needs the repetition of experience or single trauma. For example:

“...there are a lot of people who know smoking is dangerous or flying is safe as they accept that knowledge or even understand it. Nevertheless they continue smoking or avoid flying. The knowledge of dangerous cigarettes (“intellectual knowledge”) does not influence or motivate smokers to quit smoking, not really. Until a bad morning they cough up things, which shouldn't be there, clearly spoiling the morning and the colors of their handkerchief. Now, most of them realize in that moment what they have already known for a long time.” (Goosseff 2014 p. 707)

The new realization does not even require the previous knowledge that had been known already, for a long time. Realizing is a kind of “Ur-Lernen”, a primal learning coming out of the “core” of experiencing. This would explain how higher animals with room for sense-making processes (realizing presupposes sense-making processes) manage to survive instead of blindly dwelling in their “sensations”, as Kant theory would suggest. This critique would probably not have happened if Schopenhauer and Kant had met each other and talked about it as Kant also knew that animals do not dwell blind in their empirical intuitions. Mostly, the critique doesn’t regard the theory provided, but its textual manifestations which—especially when the author is not around—may become a limitation and give rise to ambiguity.

Kant’s ideas do not explain Kant, but are valid for everybody else. Everyone can verify Kant’s conclusions for himself: it is a *universal way*. This idea fits the organization conditions of autopoiesis. All humans are submissive to the same human organization. This verification however can only repeat what Kant did. It is a conscious verification within cognitive awareness. Reality, conforming to human sensibility happens for Kant in the domain of the *conscious mind*. A-priori knowledge structures are used by the part of the mind that “observes”, thinks, uses its logic and believes its conclusions: *the conscious mind*.

What Kant does not say is what role the unconscious mind plays in this. It is assumed, but not mentioned, that any other role that does not refer to the conscious mind does not interfere or contaminate the objectivity given in sensibility.

Husserl disagrees with how Kant accepts objective perceptions. According to Husserl, Kant seems to accept fragmented sensory sense data too automatically as a gestalt, but they are still a multitude of fragmented data in the sense of bits and pieces (components) of the object intuited and not the gestalt as the object suggests itself, as we perceive it, as it is given.

“...these objects of experience point to a **hidden** mental accomplishment and to the problem of what kind of an accomplishment this can be. From the very start, after all, it must be a kind which enables the objects...to be knowable with objective validity, i.e., with a necessity which can be accepted by and is binding for everyone” (Husserl 1970, §25, italics / underlining added).

Seeing a chair is a gestalt, but it is immediately built up by—or consists of—many different components. It may seem a bit like nitpicking, but we have other senses that make this more apparent. For instance, hearing a melody (the gestalt) is not hearing the particular notes (the components), even though we can only hear the particular notes. In order to see a gestalt or hear a melody something must actively take care of (construct) that possibility. The Rorschach test is fully based on the mind’s ability to construct a gestalt out of bits and pieces. But the test also makes clear the variable influence subjectivity has in that construction

“...of reason constantly functioning **in concealment**, reason ceaselessly rationalizing sense-data and always having them as already rationalized. Its

objective result is the sensibly intuited world of objects” (Husserl 1970 p. §25:94, bold added).

I wonder if conscious reasoning can do that, that fast, but Husserl's objection doesn't seem fair. Kant was aware that unconscious representations play a role in acquiring the “given” and “intuitions”, but he classified them as “physiological” and not a topic for philosophy (Kitcher 2012 p.14). Still, Kant noticed that his categories of understanding were incomplete and he later added the concept of “transcendental object”:

“Speaking of ‘the transcendental object of sense intuition’ (das transscendentale Object der sinnlichen Anschauung), Kant says in Reflection 5554: ‘This is no real object or given thing, but a concept in relation to which appearances have unity’ (Dieses ist aber kein reales object oder gegeben Ding, sondern ein Begriff, auf den in Beziehung Erscheinungen Einheit haben.—Ak 18 p.230)” (Torretti 2008, p.84). Husserl and Kant both noticed that seeing / perceiving is not just a simple “being aware of” what automatically presents in the mind's sensibility. Unconscious processes or, on a structural level, physiology also influence, in a major way, how an object is given. Still, both Kant and Husserl concluded that the ability of the mind to detect objectivity, as a result of “...which [empirical objects] can be accepted by and is binding for everyone” (see p. 45).

Kant's explanation, but also Husserl's added nuances, fully support the perception of an object (projected by autopoietic processes) as if projection can happen *without contamination* of subjectivity: If so, then all persons are able to project the same “object” objectively as it is given in sensibility. Also, Kant and Husserl knew that in the social world people may often react subjectively—and thus very differently—to the same events. It is not only beauty that is in the eye of the beholder. Still, especially scientists or people in impartial positions are known to be able to see and act in a relatively neutral and objective way. Or, to translate this in autopoietic terms, the human niche determined by the human organization in such impartial functions, suggest thus important universal properties too even for a species with unique identities like humans. But before turning our attention to how human niche can coincide with the experience of objectivity, another important topic must be noted, which is fundamental for *scientific* objectivity. This refers to its acceptance by the scientific community: *intersubjectivity*.

5.15. Intersubjectivity

Objectivity does not guarantee the truth. This is because all tests can be fallible, observations are theory-laden and perfect scientists do not exist. The truth (descriptions of truth) however can be approximated and “*inter-subjectively*” approved. The accepted “truth” remains valid until a better theory comes along, as all human assertions are in principle open to revision (e.g. Popper K.; Bhaskar R.). Still, a warning is embedded in the concept of intersubjectivity: intersubjectivity is by definition not an *absence* of subjectivity, a theme which Thomas Kuhn, amongst others, is interested in. How do we reach the status of objectivity and universality

with conventional scientific findings? Karl Popper, in explaining scientific objectivity, builds on Kant:

“The touchstone whereby we decide whether holding a thing to be true is conviction or persuasion is therefore external. It must be possible to communicate it and find it valid for all human reason...We have to test validity against the understanding of others” (CPR Kant A821 B849).

And:

“...I shall therefore say that the objectivity of scientific statements lies in the fact that they can be inter-subjectively tested...but I agree that scientific statements, since they must be inter-subjectively testable, must always have the character of universal hypotheses” (Popper K. 1959 Ch. 8 p. 22-23).

The final judgment of statements to be scientifically objective lies in their consensual acceptance, formalized in a shared linguistic domain. Not a single person can declare a finding as true and objective unless he represents a body. Ideally, the scientific community should be independent of the overall culture it is embedded in, as culture needs no conditions of “objectivity” to exist and cultures as a “systems of groupthink” accept hard facts as true and equally valid as the vaguest metaphysical concepts, depending on the content of the respective cultures.

The role of the scientific community with its own rhetorically constituted “intersubjectivity” is not small. Fundamental followers of Thomas Kuhn's theory (The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, 1962, 1970) regarding the determining influence of the prevailing paradigm on the scientific community, go so far as to believe that the community itself determines, primarily, valid theories rather than the objective phenomena under scrutiny. Topics or observed *anomalies*, which are considered as metaphysics (falling wholly outside the contemporary scientific paradigm) or “simply” considered as not possible, will equally simply not be investigated and preliminary facts will be ignored. Anomalies which are seen as “too” distanced from the current paradigm of knowledge will not initiate curiosity.

“Normal science, for example, often suppresses fundamental novelties because they are necessarily subversive of its basic commitments” (Kuhn 1970 p. 5).

The “Climategate” is an example of how “scientific intersubjectivity” is vulnerable to ideological and media influence. Much has already been written about it. Another example has to do with the influence of a scientific paradigm on what occurred not so long ago, in 2011. CERN, a European particle physics laboratory near Geneva in Switzerland, fired thousands of neutrinos under the earth to “Laboratori Nazionali del Gran Sasso” a particle physics laboratory of the INFN (National Institute for Nuclear Physics), close to the Gran Sasso mountain in Italy (Cho 2011; Phys.org 2012). Those neutrinos were not sent at once, but over a period of three years, spread over 400 reruns of the same experiment. All those experiments were not aimed to acknowledge something new, but aimed to produce *failure*.

The first “innocent” experiment of sending the neutrinos to Italy revealed the impossible finding that they arrived 60 nanoseconds too early, showing that they

could travel faster than light. Under the current paradigm, this is impossible; if true, it would ruin Einstein's theory of special relativity.

The first dozens of reruns that followed confirmed the impossible first finding; the next three years were used in the hope of finding a different outcome *under* the speed of light to confirm the trusted old theory of relativity and to find the error in creating the many “faulty” measurements.

Three years and hundreds of reruns later, the 160-member team gave up and made their findings public, but not in order to proudly claim a Nobel Prize worthy achievement. In a humble way, they asked the scientific community for help—“what could have been *wrong*?”—as they couldn’t find any error in the way they conducted the experiments. To try repeating the same experiment over and over again, over three years in a row, in order to falsify the outcome, is more than Popper would ever have asked for. This really shows how motivated the team was, in terms of holding on to dominating view in particle physics. In the end, a secure looking fiber optic cable was discovered to be loose, and one could imagine that this discovery was met with relief.

Science, in Kuhn's view, is a puzzle-solving tool (not a problem-solving tool), aimed at topics unresolved, but fitting within the established paradigm. Kuhn named science which follows an established “culture” “*normal science*”. In a sense, normal science is not the maker and master, but the slave of its paradigm, unwillingly following rare stubborn reoccurring anomalies, which refuse to go away. Anomalies are not defined by their rare or stubborn character, but by showing no allegiance to the dominant theories intersubjectively accepted.

These anomalies eventually force the community to revolutionize its thinking, in order to find a new vision of “reality”, forming a new paradigm which invalidates the old. After some time, a next generation of scientists cannot anymore comprehend the old way of “seeing”, fashioned by previous generations of scientists. At least this is Kuhn’s statement of how a change of paradigms effects generations of scientists.

A clear example he refers to has to do with the incompatibility between the Newtonian physics paradigm and the Aristotelian view of mechanics. Much less separated is the difference between Newtonian and Einstein’s relativity theories and although their respective paradigms are *fundamentally* different, contemporary students are still taught Newtonian physics and understand them.

Criticism of Kuhn’s theories centers on his conclusions which have been perceived as exaggerated. Kuhn's underlining of the scientific community's captivity by their paradigm fitted the cultural revolution of the sixties, which opposed the then rather rigid conventional “law and order” culture, where the theorems and authority of the political and scientific establishment were beyond question. “The Structure of Scientific Revolutions” was hailed by intellectuals and by many in the social sciences, but not by many in the natural sciences. Although the radical interpretations by Kuhn’s most devoted—and extreme—followers did not exactly express what Kuhn himself meant, he did nevertheless alienate science

by *denying* that scientific progress was based on an innate curiosity to explore and discover the unknown, to seek the “holy grail of truth” and “to boldly go where no man has gone before” (ST 1966), in spite of any paradigm.

“Kuhn conceded that he was partly to blame for some of the anti-science interpretations of his model. After all, in *Structure* he did call scientists committed to a paradigm “addicts”; he also compared them to the brainwashed characters in Orwell’s *1984*.” (Horgan, 2012)

The criticism of his theory by the same community that had initially, when his book had come out, “hailed” him for decades, increased since his death in 1996, leading to academic communities even “feeling cheated by Kuhn” (Mirowsky, 2003 p. 229). However, Mirowsky in all honesty does not blame Kuhn, but the naive attitudes of his (social) academic colleagues and himself, who, as he saw it, had too uncritically welcomed Kuhn for relativizing the self-made crown of positivist science. Modern criticism does not mean that Kuhn was completely wrong, but that perhaps he overemphasized his conclusions.

5.15.1 Paradigms and categories

A new paradigm, which is seen as revolutionary from the viewpoint of the previous one, is not only formed by new theories or formulas explaining new (anomalies) empirical findings. Very often definitions and tautologies about formerly known topics need to change as well, incorporating redefined categories of the previous paradigm.

“Laws are often corrigible piecemeal, but definitions, being tautologies, are not. For example, part of what the acceptance of Ohm’s Law demanded was a redefinition of both [categories] ‘current’ and ‘resistance’; if those terms had continued to mean what they had meant before, Ohm’s Law could not have been right; that is why it was so strenuously opposed” (Kuhn 1970 p. 183).

When science progresses, categories progress too. The classic Niels Bohr rather mechanical models of atoms, whereby electrons follow their fixed stable orbits around the nucleus, had to be fully replaced by dynamic versions, whereby no static orbits exist and the probability remains that an electron may even be situated on the nucleus. This drastically changed the properties of electrons in their category. The difference between Bohr’s view and the modern quantum physics’ view is comparable to the difference between the views of Newton and Einstein on mechanics, although the redefinitions of electrons is not necessarily (publicly) recognized as a revolution. Steady progress or “evolution” does not attract headlines in major papers. “The Structure of Scientific Revolutions” pointed out however that scientific paradigms do exist and that probably the “mother of all paradigms” is intersubjectivity.

The notion of “objectivity” is connected to intersubjectivity, but principally not to paradigms. Paradigms and cultures have a common resistance to change. The resistance is not only natural, but a wise and even necessary property to protect and

maintain the “identity” of institutions, organizations, groups and—finally the place where it all stems from—the precious identity of the individual. To be open to new things which do not support “old foundations” is not a common trait of this “protection program” by way of resisting change. This protection program has an autopoietic foundation (organizational closure) and is addressed in section 5.9. Objectivity does *not require* an open mind in science, but is connected much more to the use of accepted and valid methodologies to safeguard objective conclusions and theories.

Even when the community acknowledges objectivity, how can this be when humans are not clones? Can the organization of the human species have a unique internal-niche which allows interactions based on objectivity?

5.16 The rise of individuality

Identity, as the name of the autopoietic organization of species, is an abstract in the domain of language, the domain of the observer. Class identity not only gives a name, but also gives away the nature of that species. The names 'fruit fly', 'goose' or 'horse' do not only inform us about what each species looks like; their total sum of interactions (behavior) is suggested with it, making their nature “voiced” too. The link between organization and the nature of the species is thus clear.

However, already the concept of species is a human abstraction, an observer’s construct. Only particular organisms have existed and can exist. Class species is a generalization, and generalizations can be constructed, but not observed. In fact, even the autopoietic concept “organization” which is so important in the theory of autopoiesis is a non-existing “thing”: it is a reification and like all reifications it is a “tool” of thought, just like all categories are. All autopoietic mechanisms and processes are factual and particular and happens in the realms of a single unity. While “organization” does determine the species, the more individual particular members become, the less “organization” can determine the nature of that particular member. On the other hand, applying the notion of organization as a given, the evolutionary development of species from pure clones towards, finally, unique individual members of species, also results in the evolution of their organization.

Evolving species gradually lose over the millennia their a-priori knowledge (instincts, gene-related data) about how and which triggers (environment) to detect and what they mean. The evolutionary detachment of a priori environmental “knowledge” makes room for individual learning (sense-making processes), replacing the instincts and adding new and enriched dynamic meaning to new sets of triggers.

Sense-making processes are necessary in order to fill the void that the withdrawal of instincts leaves behind. Instincts are not a luxury; when they withdraw in time, the necessity of their particular functions stay. Instincts must be replaced by learning, which obeys the same function and handles the same or replaced classes of triggers. Learning is also able to add nuances to or to widen the meaning and significance of triggers. Sense-making processes are also necessary

for the new triggers that were never seen or met before, or more likely never activated before by instincts. Many triggers at home (e.g. the parents' belongings) do not make sense yet for very young children, who thus don't care about many of them. Sense-making processes, in later years, drastically enlarge the domain of structural coupling and the children's variety of ways to respond the old classes of previously ignored triggers. Simple fixed habitats do not ask for more than instincts alone which describe an ancient and apparently unchanging "world". The soil of our gardens, in which rain worms live instinctively with gene-related information from 20-30 millions of years ago, must be quite similar to soil conditions back then. In such stable habitats, the rain worm is "perfect" enough to maintain its autopoiesis, while being practically a clone of other rain worms. As clone-like organisms do not have an individual nature, it would not make sense to give observed rain worms individual names. Biologists, however, do give names when they observe (for weeks) a family of Hominidae (great apes) in the wild or when they observe a group of dolphins.

Structural coupling interactions (see section 3.2.1) are dynamic in the here-and-now and every here-and-now is unique in more than one way. Instincts do not have room for more triggers to handle than they are programmed for. Add complex social environments to habitats, whereby animals react dynamically to their own kind within herds or family groups, and instincts become unable to readjust to new diverse complexities, which can emerge at a moment's notice. Learning to make sense of complex triggers, in contrast to instinctive behavior, needs a more evolved and complex CNS and brain (Barash 1977 p.42; Johnston 1981 p.86).

Learning does not produce a different "product" than an instinct does. Instinct is one word for two things, the source and its product: categorical information. Learning also has two grounds, the process of learning and what is learned: information, which in the end is also "class" (category) oriented. Even specific learnings about a single person, that are only valid for that specific person only, is a category with one member only (singular category). The essential of the category is not that it should be filled with at least two members. The first essential property of a category is its validity over time and into the future. It is its *circularity* that defines it as a category. In the case of having a single member, a person, the category generalizes its behavior in just as many generalized (future) contexts.

When instincts are replaced by sense-making, the members of those changing species lose their clone character very fast. With brains, which gradually develop into more complex sense-making "coordinators", organization-determined "members" move, just as gradually, towards a more unique individuality. Learning processes change the organizationally determined nature of the organism; the individual particular organism starts to "program" itself to incorporate *present* dynamic circumstances. The "organization" of the species delegates gradually its determining powers over the "nature" of its species to its members themselves. Or, in other words, the more individuality is free-formed, the less its common

organization (its species) is able to determine and predict the nature of that particular member of its class in a specific context.

With organisms evolved to a more particular identity, a question of prediction how they will behave in a certain context can only be answered with: “It depends...” Before cat meets dog, can it be predicted what that *particular* cat (or dog) will do? This is in full opposition to the metaphor earlier used about McDonald’s, which has an “organization” complexity comparable to a single cell. The “organization” of McDonald’s outlets does not determine how a particular outlet is (superficially) structured, but it fully determines the nature of each outlet: the essential hardware and layout of processes, the methodology of food preparation and customer handling, its quality and type of products; all these can be predicted and must meet the “organization” standard.

Unique identities *greatly* enlarge the diversity and flexibility of their class to better deal with contingencies. They are still bound to the shared instincts they have left, determined by their organization. The less the amount of the shared instincts, the more freedom the animal has not only to be different but to automatically create a partly distinguishable different habitat than other members of its class. The difference in habitats of members of a same class can only be proven by an observer by observing their different handling of the same external structures (structures=triggers, structural coupling processes). If two cats react in opposite ways to a dog, it could justifiably be concluded that the same trigger (dog) led internally to a different predictive description in the respective domains of all possible interactions of the two cats. The shared part of particular habitats is determined by common (enough) learnings and/or remaining instincts typical for that class. Shared (same) environments does not refer to shared triggers as habitat, although triggers maybe shared. The differences between individual habitats, as an extension of the uniqueness of particular identities, are disparate and may even become incommensurable. A wildish dog (abandoned by the culture of the people) in the streets of Faisalabad (Pakistan) may very well describe people in his i-niche as being the opposite of the description of another dog of the same breed, living in Amsterdam with a caring owner.

To summarize, when instincts fully control interactive behavior, it is safe to assume that all organisms of a class are practically clones in precisely those areas of their nature that distinguishes them from other classes or species. When more evolved brains become capable of reasoning and of learning, the species develop distinct individual identities. The effect of varying individual identities also varies in terms of individual niches and their habitats. There is no difference in experience between the internal niche and the external habitat. External habitat *is* internal niche projected outwards as soon as abstract thinking is developed. The shift from instincts to personal learning equals the shift from an organization’s (species) determined nature (class identity) towards an individual determined nature (personal identity). The overall organization of such species then is left to determine

structures which provide a morphology and physiology as essential conditions to bring forth more free-formed personal, but still autopoietic, identities.

5.16.1 Human's unique identity and organizational closure

The biological processes of the withdrawal of instincts seems to come to an end with the organism “homo sapiens”, as there are no more shared human instincts left. The organization of the human species has lost its biological nature completely³, but still determines morphological structures (forms) and physiology within the organizationally allowed morphological variety. The human organization lost its nature when it reached the phase of having no more instincts which were *specifically* needed to define humans. There are some basic instincts, such as the “instinctive” fear for sudden, loud noises, but this fear is shared as those conditions scare practically all animals. Humans are instinct-free, except for gender-determined instincts (not human but mammal determined). And for more than a few these basic instincts give the impression to not even exist. Cats, dogs, horses, chimpanzees and dolphins already show a remarkable and growing strong personal identity; but with the human species, the personal internal niche of the individual, its personal domain of all possible descriptions, shows the (relative) *emptiness* of the human organization to determine human nature. In other words, the autopoietic *organization* of the human species does not anymore determine unique individualities (personalities). Theoretically at least, the human “i-niche” has become completely independent of its genetic source. I-niche, as stated earlier, contains the descriptions of triggers integrated with meaning⁴, in such a way that the internal coupling with the possible accompanying behavior serves the organism's wellbeing (equilibrium). The organization of the human species is still a blueprint of the bodily structures, including the senses.

Accepting that the organization of homo sapiens, compared to other species, has no or the least amount of power over its members to determine an individual (i-)niche, the universal nature of man as a species becomes obscure as if nonexistent or lost in metaphysics. The enormous freedom the human organization gives to members' ability in forming a unique personal ego produces a rich and boundless

³ Many will object to the idea that humans are instinct-free. Babies do not start with an empty 'slate', as Lock suggested. Still, a scientific debate regarding the nature of the individual exists between “nurture and nature”. The still existing debate itself tells us that a scientific answer that would end the debate has not been found yet. Babies, after a couple of days, may already show personal characteristics, very different from one baby to another, as most mothers would say. The assumption that *only* genes could cause these differences is scientifically supported by interpretive arguments of empirical observers. But genes in a way *are the law*; they pre-program structural features (like eye and skin color) which actually cannot be changed psychologically. If however personal character traits do change through psychic traumas or through psychotherapy, genes then become an odd explanation of the previous behavior and psychological makeup. .

⁴ meaning in the descriptive domain of (self-)observers (see section 6.5)

variety of personalities, *maximizing the species' variety to cope with contingencies*, but also maximizing the room for error. That a reference gets lost in the freedom of the human organization is suggested in the importance of religion and morality. Both in a stubborn way keep on existing through the millennia, in spite of their lack of empirical proof. Their existence however seems to persist and is locally determined by arbitrarily set visions, rules and justifications.

5.17. Human individuality and objectivity

What do clone species share in autopoiesis has been discussed in section 5.12. Next we can find their opposite: the most individual species: humans. Clone species share the following:

- 1) an identical internal niche, which is
- 2) the shared instinctive predictions of environment, but
- 3) separated in many categories, not particular events of environments
- 4) describing a-priori categorized external triggers leading to
- 5) interactive behavior in those particular environments which are described (Maturana et al. 1980 p. 10).

For humans this changes to:

- H1) there are no fixed identical niches, only individual ones, which are
- H2) uniquely learned non instinctive predictions of environment, but
- H3) separated in many personal categories, not particular events of environments
- H4) describing experienced categorized external triggers leading to
- H5) interactive behavior in those particular environments which are described.

Objectivity, leading to objective descriptions, can only follow H2-H5, but in billions of years these steps have a very specific function. A function which still determines present experiences of any species: the *maintenance and sustaining of* a particular member of a class according to its *individual nature*. This is irrespective of whether the internal information is gene-based or learned. Objectivity as real would ask for an impersonal nature within a class and that brings us back to clone-like organisms.

Can H2 produce objective information? Theoretically it cannot. This is because H2 is intertwined in personal niche and niche is a code made for (potential) interactions. The internal coupling between descriptions and interaction is the billion year old function of internal niche. And interactions only secondarily serve triggers, and always primarily serve the organism. Non-instinctive internal information is based on experience. What is shown is that the CNS with its organizational closure is not developed to objectively know a shared human version of the world, but is developed functionally to support and sustain the particular individual only.

(Scientific) objectivity cannot be experienced also because of the impossibility in recognizing and experiencing the meaninglessness of triggers. Even an unknown trigger evoking a full “?” is full of meaning and a significant meaning too. A question mark may point to a yet undisclosed important meaning. Most people find

it very hard to neglect the doorbell or the phone ringing. However, with digital phones that have caller recognition, things change, but only once one notices who the caller is.

Impartial functions such as those of judges or referees do not provide neutral or objective experiences. Impartial functions are functional conditions that provide officials in the jobs to exercise their ability to suppress or “contain” their “subjectivity”.

5.17.1 What exactly is human “objectivity” 1

The first example is regarding a neural component in the human brain; the second example derives from an article (Goosseff, 2014); the third example is an individual test for the reader to conduct. What Kant could not know that representations “as given” at the very moment they appear in the form of “appearances” in the mind (sensibility), are in a “hidden” way personally “edited”.

“...of reason constantly functioning **in concealment**... reason ceaselessly rationalizing sense-data and always having them as already rationalized. *Its objective result is the sensibly intuited world of objects*” (Husserl 1970, §25:94), bold and italics and strikethrough added.

Autopoiesis theory will fully agree and support the above statement of Husserl, but not its conclusion leading to objectivity. “... Reason constantly functioning in concealment” goes much further than was assumed in those days.

The eye is not an objective performer

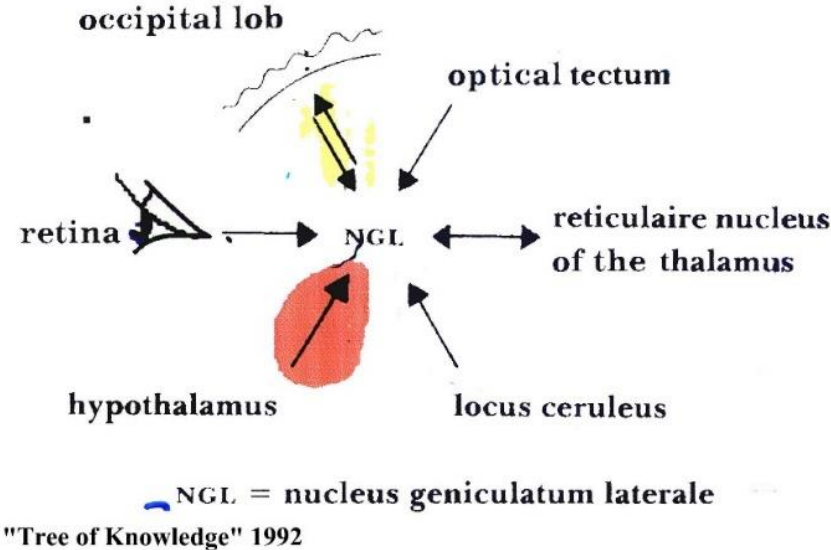


Fig 2 The eye is not an objective performer

What can be derived from the above figure from the “Tree of Knowledge”, Maturana and Varela (1987 p. 162) is Maturana and Varela’s conclusion that the

image we perceive as a representation of an object, as it is given, is *edited*, but this is done on the part of subjectivity. The editing has the sole reason to obey and maintain personal identity. We see that there is no direct connection between the eye and the “occipital lobe” at the back side of the brain where primarily (in hardware) the image is built up; a direct connection *structurally does not exist*. The ganglion NGL is a kind of “traffic roundabout”, including relay and control stations, that allows all kinds of non-visual signals coming from other parts of the brain to influence and literally “manipulate” the “pure” visual signals coming from the eye. This happens inside the NGL before the image is built some six inches further, at the back side of the brain (occipital lobe). The occipital lobe constructs a picture as if the influenced signal comes directly from the eye. The structure of the ganglion is incapable of ‘tagging’ in its output “what “comes from “where”. Although this is a perfectly legitimate process within the domain of operational closure, it completely *destroys* any objective property the eye in theory may have had. The hypothalamus influences the signal according to the state of the body (body temperature, hunger, thirst, fatigue, sleep), while the locus ceruleus is linked to the regulation of emotions, which according to the majority of emotional theories are linked to meaning. All their influences are a-priori to the observations made in consciousness. This process of “inter-mixing” is also true for the other senses.

“Thus, the LGN is not simply a relay station for retinal projections to the cerebral cortex, since many fibers from other parts of the brain converge upon it and influence whatever comes out of it toward the visual cortex. This is shown [in Fig 2]... It is enough to contemplate this structure of the nervous system ... *to be convinced that the effect of projecting an image on the retina is not like an incoming telephone line*. Rather, it is like a voice (perturbation) added to many voices during a hectic family discussion (relations of activity among all incoming convergent connections) in which the consensus of actions reached will not depend on what *any* particular member of the family says.” (Maturana and Varela 1987 p. 162-163, italics and underlining added)

5.17.2 Human “objectivity” 2, objectivity as a linguistic construct, a regulative idea

We all have experienced the fact of different personalities and it is not hard to accept that in the end we all are unique, similarly to our fingerprints. Our uniqueness is not our shared ability to be aware of the world. It is how we experience “this being aware of the world” that makes each of us unique.

For instance, two boys encounter the same dog or hear the same proposition, but get an opposite experience of that event, while being aware of each other’s different reactions too. Objectively, the two boys perceive the same dog. This is logically an odd beginning. Who sees the same dog when each observer can see only his own version of the dog? The only same thing about the dog is the trigger “dog”, but not the perceivable trigger “dog”. Once the dog is perceived, it is already personal.

Still, how do the boys handle the same trigger, “dog”, from the first-person perspective of a (scientific) observer? What determines their behavior? Any knowledge or the objective (apodictic) description of that dog cannot on its own explain or reliably predict the boy’s actual reaction. What the dog personally means to them, the meaning within the boys, not within the dog, determines how they will respond. We may intellectually know that our meanings of the world are subjective, internal constructs and indirectly express our identity. (E.g. Bannister, Fransella 1986, Iglesias, Bonet 2012), *but we are unable to experience that knowledge*. Meaning, like the colors we see, is integrated, intertwined, “etched” by projection into the thing perceived. That makes that meaning is not only detached from the perceiver, but is also an external property of the perceived, just like the colors we see are properties of the perceived. The boys are only able to experience their own version of the “*objective truth*” of that dog as there is *no other version for anyone to witness*.

If a third (scientific) observer, standing “neutral” to the dog, acknowledges for himself that the two boys react to the *same* dog, he is referring to the dog *he experiences*, but ignoring his version of the dog is not of those of the boys. Still, on some level, all observers of the dog observe the same dog. But, on what level is this? For the boys, seconds later, memories are already forming and are translated into internal narratives when reflected. What do these narratives convey?

What are true objective accounts of the dog? If a scientist asks the boys: “Give me an objective description of the dog you see” they cannot say: “I see a nice dog” or “... a dangerous dog”. Those adjectives are scientifically subjective and unacceptable; they destroy the possibility of objectivity. Still, such adjectives, better than anything else, convey precisely the structure and nature of empirical experience. When the boys banish these adjectives in order to be “scientists”, they in fact sacrifice the dog they have witnessed and don’t describe what happened to them. All neutral (objective) language originally had adjectives attached to it (unspoken or under the threshold of awareness), as all empirical descriptions originate from experience. *It is safe to say that experience without meaning cannot exist and language without adjectives cannot describe experience.* That makes (scientific) objectivity a *linguistic construct*, a regulative idea. With a wink to Kant: “But, on the other hand, they [constructs of objectivity] are capable of an admirable and indispensably necessary application to humanity as regulative ideas, directing the understanding to a certain aim” (a lá Kant CPR 1929: 395; Goosseff 2014). Factually the “same dog” the two boys and the scientist see together only exist as an abstract linguistic reduction referring to an inaccessible but real trigger: Kant’s “thing-in-itself”.

5.17.3 Defining individual human objectivity 3

Objectivity, standing outside human experience, but firmly inside language, is not an empirical human experience of reality, but a very handy and indispensable tool of thought.

Meanings can seem absent in experience and therefore as not perceived. This suggests the possibility of objective perceptions. Still, the meanings are there, but they are under the threshold of awareness. This can be tested by looking for a few seconds, but sequentially, at one out of two similar, but insignificant and not identical objects. For instance, two similar pebble stones or the same object in two different states (e.g. an open vs. a closed scissor). By remembering the unanalyzed nameless inner state-response from watching one of those objects *separately* from each other, the difference in meaning between the two internal responses comes into awareness. A (slightly) felt preference for one of the two objects or states / positions can be detected. Even insignificant triggers evoke personal meaning, but they fall normally under the threshold of awareness. Being focused and in a relaxed state makes it easier to detect more subtle changes.

5.18 Submissive Objectivity: Objectivity as a relationship

What objectivity needs in order to exist is the sacrifice of the particular human experience, as a reduced experience in language, which is beyond experience. Still, objectivity as a linguistic reduction is in countless contexts a practical *necessity*, for instance in the context of analyzing or producing. Like for the patient who is invisible under a green blanket, while his body is reduced to a visible part through a 12x12-inch-square hole when operated upon by the surgeon. A very positivist surgeon, who indeed cannot see the patient as a whole. He only observes a particular 12x12 inch physical structure of flesh and bone, but in the full awareness that he is not primarily serving the content of the 12"x12". *He knows and never forgets that he is truly serving what is beyond the reduction*, even when this knowledge is beyond his perception. That makes applied objectivity secondary to its primary, that what it needs to serve and is connected to. The surgeon's reduction of his patient is only temporarily accepted *as-if* true; its temporal as-if-validity will never have any status above or beyond the "total" human being that it is serving. The temporal validity of the reduction although seen as real keeps it, from the start, connected to "humanity", never kept apart. This is quite the opposite of science's use of "objectivity", as there is no "whole patient" and the reduction is fully accepted as "perfect" and complete and not temporarily as-if complete, *making its virtual character disappear beyond awareness*. Is there a price to be paid?

5.19 Independent Objectivity: alienation

A paradigm founded on the basis of the digital split between "objectivity" and "subjectivity", while making them equally true and valid as if each other's opposite, leads to the alienation of science from humanity, described already by Husserl in 1935 in "The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology" (1970). This alienation can be reworded as the alienation between the human condition and the mechanical "meaninglessness"—the latter being true professional objectivity. Even contemporary psychology as a science still avoids entering

subjectivity “en masse”; it strongly prefers the logic of observation, quantitative rather than qualitative methods and measurable phenomena.

As true objective data or scientific knowledge is made as free as humanly possible from subjectivity, it is freed from humanity itself. This also leads to that science cannot and **should not** purport to lead societies towards a better future. Leadership leads its followers to a future, because true leadership is a bridge between the realizations of futures and “humans”. The open “secret” of true leadership is based on *relation* and meaning (e.g. Schein 2010; Levy & Merry 1986; Waugh & Streib 2006), very much that which science keeps ideologically out of its paradigm. Objectivity has never been part of meaning or relation, but it’s opposite: independence. Societies who naively follow science are following a blind leader with no vision.

To accept the reduced as real, demands a price to be paid. Scientific objectivity is not real but is a tool of thought and like all “tools”, it finds itself having the properties of tools regardless of its recognition as a tool. And like the knife does not favor the surgeon’s hands over those of the mass murderer, so objectivity stands apart from the ‘good’ and the ‘bad’ and exists in a moral void.

The problem doesn’t have to do with tools. A tool is typically recognized as a tool, and its “moral indifference” to tasks and goals is fully understood, accepted and appreciated. The problem with scientific objectivity is the belief in its realness, replacing its tool like nature. Or in other words the problem with tool-like mental constructs is their accepted “realness”; obscuring their “constructed” status. Most if not all people truly believe that tomorrow exists.

People have no problem to identify themselves with what they accept as real. For instance, in order to be a real politician, a real journalist or a real administrator, people being faithful to their job gradually identify themselves with the main criteria of their job. They become their function at least within their organizational context. When the “real” is however virtual and incomplete, what can be expected? To identify with objectivity, as the personal interpretation of what the daily job demands, simultaneously demands the loss of identification with its opposite: humanness. The professional freedom of artists is also the professional freedom of scientists, but only artists’ freedom is innocent. Scientific freedom is not innocent, as it is dehumanized by design. Science demands from its society freedom as a logical necessity in order to explore the unknown, *any* unknown. As science by itself fundamentally and ideologically misses an internal reference, it will lack and avoid regulations to restrain itself. Science’s freedom will explore avenues leading to “anything at all”. Theoretically, scientists can bring forth that it is not their duty to curb professional freedom from within science.

So how far will the scientist go with his “legal” de-identification of his humanness, in order to be a truly objective scientist? That will heavily depend on the culture of the research organization. There are many cutting edge research institutes all over the world and because of their cutting edge quality they are historically linked to national interest and security. National interest and security

gratefully embrace the professional freedom of scientists to explore “anything at all”.

Science as an institution, however bound by its belief that objectivity is real, is doomed to being without vision. What is already happening, guided by modern science, is the trend of nations that are gliding exponentially towards electronically regulated big-brother-is-watching-you kind of societies, that in their hearts nobody longs for. Modern societies following contemporary science emphasize body oriented life extension, but not life quality; with ongoing loss of personal privacy, a point might be reached that is near zero personal privacy.

As the products of science were so successfully applied first in Western societies, philosophy lost its classical primary status to science, as the resource *that guides humanity*. That void was thus filled by science.

“While we would no doubt not want to do without the useful results of science, these do not in and of themselves tell us how to shape our lives. In other words, the paradigm of science is a narrowly construed pragmatics, one not sufficient as a guide to action. In that sense, science does nothing to help us and the rise of science can be seen as tantamount to the loss of [human] value”. (Tito J. M. 1990 p.xxx)

Chapter 6 Subjectivity, meaning and autopoiesis

Introduction

The notion of subjectivity is, in the classical sense, valid as a contrast to or the opposite of objectivity, as if they are each other's "perfect" polarities. In the autopoietic sense, comparing objectivity—as a valid contender to be compared with subjectivity—is logically odd and factually not possible. A comparison of pebble stones versus locomotives could be done, as both are subordinate to a higher common category (objects). But a comparison of friendship with submarines would be peculiar. They do not share a higher common category. "Subjectivity" falls under the category of human experience. What is the category "objectivity" falls under? It is a category, which cannot be experienced. Logically, objectivity cannot be compared with subjectivity, given that subjectivity is all there is. Dian M. Hosking, from a philosophical point of view, reaches a similar conclusion:

"..These involve practical acceptance of

(a) actors as part of—rather than apart from—reality constructions

(b) a world of multiple realities—as *ontologies*,

(c) realities that might best be treated as non-consistent and non-comparable (and *not as multiple subjectivities*)" (Hosking 2002, p. 3, italics added).

For the sake of matching common human language and way of thinking, the thesis will use the classic distinctions between the categories "objective" and "subjective", as-if falling under a common category. Still, when there is an apparent experience of objectivity this is in fact an experience of subjectivity under the threshold of awareness.

The search for a (plausibly) universal moral foundation is not the search for a subjective opinion about it. Even were one to do a thousand interviews, when 90% of respondents agree on a certain view or hold a similar value, the conclusion would be that that 90% share a similar view or value. Multiplying subjectivity does not lead to objectivity. The aim of this thesis is not to collect a number of subjective opinions, as what is it then that will be collected? A viewpoint based on contemporary science would find it hard to conclude that data gathered by interviews alone could produce "objective content". The aim to do just that means that one would be replacing the adjective "objective" with "impartial" or "neutral" or even "universal". But this "impartiality" must be gathered out of "classic subjectivity".

Autopoiesis makes clear that a vital part of subjectivity involves meaning, whereby meaning is based on what is relevant for the organism. The meaning of data is experienced and operational; *it is not the data that is reduced from meaning*. Meaning is bound to each individual and is thus subjective, and at the same time it is the most important property in awareness. Meaning fills experience in a life-like way. Meaningless experiences (meanings which fall under the threshold of awareness) feel (very) neutral, are easily forgotten and do not (really) motivate the

individual, unless it is to escape such experiences in order to replace them with more meaningful ones.

Meaning is a core property of language too, but in a very different way (section 6.11). Language becomes important for the thesis when contrasting autopoiesis with ideas of meaning. It is, however, outside the scope of the research to really delve into the question of linguistics or semiotics, deriving from the work of structuralists such as Saussure or Chomsky as they do not add directly or indirectly to the goal of the thesis

The chapter explores the concept of subjectivity, which covers a very large domain as the “borders” of questions around it, or the definitions around it, appear to be vague or fuzzy. In developing a way for respondents to temporarily put aside their subjectivity, it must be separated, in some way, from the natural workings of the human mind. One important way to deconstruct subjectivity is by applying the autopoiesis theory of Maturana and Varela (1980).

Subjective material objects can arbitrarily not exist. Subjectivity is a category of information, regarding the question of what happens in the mind of self and others, but also the experience of “cold” facts. “What is “subjectivity?” is the same as the question: “What is personal?” What is personal, but also shared (ideas and views) often remain subjective when facts are missing to support the shared views. Subjectivity and meaning will more deeply be addressed in chapter 7, looking at questions about internal life, in particular in relation to the concept of “ego”.

6.1 Subjectivity and verifiability

Facts that are not verifiable for a community do exist, so they stay subjective. Examples of this are facts about the self (e.g. feelings of pain or emotions, feelings of love), but also empirical facts (witnessing a crime which is then not believed). Subjectivity is not only based on metaphysical beliefs or errors, but on all that is not verifiable or not believed by a (sub)-community (intersubjectivity). Following this straightforward thinking, where can the strict demarcation between objectivity and subjectivity come from, other than from verifiability? Perceivable phenomena that happen in the world are verifiable, but then there are non-perceivable individual phenomena which are not verifiable for a community. If “objectivity” were to be re-defined in a way that would be relevant to science, separating it as a category out of “subjectivity”, it would only need the criteria verifiability versus non-verifiability and nothing else. In other words, respecting the autopoietic conclusion that classic objectivity cannot be experienced, then the “new” objectivity encompasses everything that is verifiable. It is for the community to decide if indirect-verifiability is valid enough to name the conclusions objective.

For instance, the strict protocol that guides physicians when “interviewing” patients to analyze symptoms such as pain is an example of the fact that indirect verifiability is accepted as objective (enough) to be a basis for administering medication. The opinion of one doctor—the physician as researcher in a “single case study”—becomes ideally the opinion of all doctors. Universality is also the

ideal of medical research methodologies with their strict protocols. The “dissolving” of the bond between empirical facts and “objectivity” can also be found in:

“The words ‘objective’ and ‘subjective’ are philosophical terms heavily burdened with a heritage of contradictory usages and of inconclusive and interminable discussions. My use of the terms ‘objective’ and ‘subjective’ is not unlike Kant’s. He uses the word ‘objective’ to indicate that scientific knowledge should be justifiable, independently of anybody’s whim: a justification is ‘objective’ if in principle it can be tested and understood by anybody. ‘If something is valid’, he writes, ‘for anybody in possession of his reason, then its grounds are objective and sufficient’” (Popper 1959 p. 22).

6.2 No senses for subjectivity, no natural balance

Although the world is infinitely vast and complex, to acquire knowledge about it can be seen as relatively simple compared to acquiring knowledge about subjectivity. Biology makes it possible for creatures (including humans) to explore in a way the outside world by offering relevant tools. Refusal to use these tools, e.g. by putting aside the five senses, will quickly end the creature’s life.

Senses that facilitate probing, in the same easy and natural way the internal world are biologically not needed and so for economic reasons have not biologically been developed. For example, salamanders who live in dark caves, but as species have managed to survive, have lost the function of sight as their degenerated eyes became blind. That was for an economical reason. Why use-up energy which is “always” scarce in something useless? (Packard 1894)

Next to these “economical” considerations, it is likely that a fish or a bird that have inner senses to probe “within” just as easily as to probe “without” will get lost and fall asleep, becoming prey to nearby predators. Therefore, retrospection or self-reflection may not be a tool for most (if not all) of the animal kingdom; but these qualities are tools for humans. The ability to probe inside, to self-reflect, may even be the fundamental difference between animals and humans. Consciousness, which is able “to fold upon itself”, is, according to some, what is meant to be created in God's Image (Genesis1:27). But even for human beings, self-reflection, however useful, is not such a common trait, given the many times it is referred to as something to aspire to in learning workshops, trainings, coaching meetings and of course in counseling.

Our mammal ancestors did not develop self-reflection strategies, but what was developed instead (the ability to perceive the environment) is well developed and structured in the CNS and the brain. Our five senses reign in awareness; they don't suggest. Senses lack however a natural biological “counter-structure in the mind” to keep them “in check”, consequently there is no balance in awareness, like there is balance (equilibrium) on a physiological level. The “sensory powers” to intent consciousness to the world is so intense, that what is detected “inside” becomes simply connected and “submissive” to the external world. *Literally speaking*, what

is not connected through the senses, “does not make sense”; (or in Latin): “Nihil est in intellectu quod non prius fuerit in sensu”, “Nothing is in the intellect which was not first in sense” (Aquinas: q. 2 a. 3 arg. 19). Aquinas adopted the ideas of Aristotle on this and although most contemporary philosophers do not support that idea anymore, this idea is still present in the English expression “it does not make sense”.

6.3 Contemporary methodological approaches towards subjectivity

The subjective domain of others cannot be observed or measured by researchers in the same way that it is possible to review the empirical. Subjective data is hard or even, sometimes, impossible to be objectified; that is because it refers to the world of the subject, the world of subjective experience. To research subjectivity in a “rich” way is to try to understand the personal domain of individuals as “rich” as possible within the constraints of the research goal. These personal experiences (perception, thought, emotions, beliefs) cannot do without adjectives and express themselves in stories and narratives, grounded in language. This domain, in order to best be understood, requires qualitative enquiry (e.g. Denzin, Lincoln, 2000; Alvesson, Sköldbberg, 2000; H. & I. Rubin 2005; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Similarly to other qualitative methods, narrative methodology relies on criteria other than validity, reliability, and generalizability (Connelly and Clandinin 1990, p. 2-14). The “truth” of qualitative findings cannot be guaranteed as qualitative enquiry does not objectify subjectivity. Even in cases where findings seem truthful enough for the reader or listener, it is impossible to know what each respondent’s truth was as-experienced. Thereby, qualitative enquiry thereby often needs interpretation for the unavoidably ambiguous parts (Strauss, Corbin. 1998, Ziebland & McPherson, 2006, Patton, 2002). In the end, interviews collect linguistic data, and are the best possible way to collect personal opinions (personal in the broadest sense of the word).

Over the last decade, within contemporary psychology, there is more interest in qualitative methods. We can now speak of the field of “qualitative psychology” (Smith, 2008 pp. 1-3). There are different viewpoints in terms of what qualitative research can do, can be. For instance, on one end of the spectrum, there is “Qualitative Data Analysis” by Miles and Huberman (1994) where researchers seek, as much as possible, to follow the epistemological position of “empiricism”, in order to strengthen the validity of the research outcomes. They use models, tables and matrixes applied over large amounts of texts, especially in larger scale qualitative research (Henwood and Pidgeon 1994 p. 229).

Qualitative methodology is true to the adjective “qualitative”. It does not try to reduce complex social reality to numbers that can be statistically processed. The idea behind qualitative methodology in the social domain is to guard the reliability and quality of the richness of the respondents’ human experience in order to truly understand it. Already a century ago, understood that in order to help clients (then patients), the unique meaning that each “client” brings with their material needs to be well enough understood, in the way that *this individual person* understands it

(already a deviation from observer's logic), to have a chance for a successful intervention (Freud, S., & Rothgeb, C. L. (1953).

However, in qualitative inquiry, a true understanding of the respondents' material is at risk of distortion by the values and norms / meanings that the researcher (unwillingly) espouses, as what is literally heard or seen is by definition indirect and can only be represented by partial indicators such as signs and symbols. This makes qualitative research dangerous, in a way, compared to the positivist / conventional construct of "good science".

Qualitative methods usually explore language (interviews, texts) to derive meaning from them. Even so, the ideal of qualitative science is to be able to have as much "objectivity" as possible when it comes to the researchers. Still there are qualitative researchers who in their role of "interactive evaluators" don't strive anymore for objectivity but for interactive dialogue and participation among stakeholders (Abma and Widershoven 2011).

6.4 To be a neutral "researcher of subjectivity"

Interpreting other's texts or conducting interviews is based on the idea that it is possible for the interpreter to control or contain his identity (subjectivity) in order to "copy" or reconstruct, as faithfully as possible, the other's intention. This can possibly be done by becoming a kind of "disinterested observer" or "uninvolved observer", as a preemptive attitude of the researcher (Schultz, 1962 referred to by Schwandt T. A., 2000 p. 193-195).

Can this be done correctly? Every meaning that is "found", "copied" or "reconstructed" by the researcher is generated under real-life internal limitations within and is linked to a construct of the researcher's ego. Echoes of this can be found:

"...in the act of interpreting ("taking something as something"), socio-historically inherited bias or prejudice is not regarded as a characteristic or attribute that an interpreter must strive to get rid of or manage in order to come to "clear" understanding" (Schwandt T. A. 2000 p. 194).

According to this point of view, the uninterested, distanced or uninvolved observer is a theoretical illusion: "tradition is a living force that enters into all understanding" (Gallagher (1992 p. 87, quoted by Schwandt 2000 p. 194).

Gallagher suggests that stepping outside your own history is really like stepping outside your own skin, so how can this ever be done? Schwandt concludes that understanding requires the engagement of one's biases and not their rejection. But how does this not become an open invitation to completely leave behind the objective self-image that most practitioners of the social and behavioral sciences strive for? Schwandt clarifies that the solution lies in only putting aside some of one's biases:

"...to examine our historically inherited and unreflectively held prejudices and alter those that disable our efforts to understand others and ourselves" (Garrison, 1996 p. 434, quoted by Schwandt 2000 p. 195).

There are two approaches in terms of conducting interviews as impartially as possible. The standard approach is to try to nullify one's own "ego" (history) as researcher in order to be as objective as possible, which according to those who postulate the second approach that will now be described, is not possible. The second approach states that, in order to make sense of data you will take your history into account: this includes a previous knowledge of self, of others and the world. This approach is to maintain one's own history, but nullify those aspects that stand, in the way of understanding the respondents in an impartial way.

In my opinion, the first approach may be easier than the second, which still needs a detached neutral observer. This neutral observer needs to be not only neutral to the respondent, but also to oneself. To distinguish between what needs to be "altered" (to be "nullified") and what not requires an honest and neutral person who can make this distinction; who will ponder what needs altering while interviewing (!). Since the knowledge of being this honest internal observer is already presumed, why not apply it directly to the respondents(s), by following standard interpretative directions?

6.4.1 Looking for the meaningless in qualitative research

The organization of the living makes it clear that every living organism, including humans, is an autopoietic organizational closed system, self-referential and fundamentally cyclic. How does this translate to the subjectivity of the human mind?

Looking for the meaningless *helas* plays no conscious role in science. This will force the researchers unintentionally to seek for meaning in the process of both data collection and data analysis. This will maintain and even reinforce the influence of the subjectivity of the researcher.

To minimize this, qualitative interpretative methodology has developed an array of "safety" procedures, such as member checks of interviews, peer reviews (intersubjectivity), neutral observations, thick descriptions, and awareness of self-prejudices (e.g. Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Bryman & Bell, 2007, Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2000). These authors all suggest ways that might help the researcher to "contain", as much as possible, his / her personal views in order to approximate the "ideal" of the transparent, objective, researcher deriving from conventional science, but with the addition of empathy.

However, it would possibly be easier for the researcher to minimize the interference from his / her unique personality if these qualitative methods also were to mention their "hidden" but true goal, which is *to keep the gathered data totally meaningless in order to give it maximum validity*. The intrusion of meaning will be much easier for the researcher to detect in experience (by the intrusion of a slight emotion) and thus to disregard its influence than it will be to accept the meaningful and to try, from within this domain, to distinguish between (blurred) meaning of self and of other and to keep them apart. But how to do it as easily as possible?

6.4.2 How to “reach” meaninglessness as-if Love: rapprochement method

To fully “reach” meaninglessness (impartiality) as a researcher cannot be done; but strangely, it can be theoretically approached with unconditional love. The expression “Les extrêmes se touchent” can be applied here. Meaninglessness and unconditional love are very near to each other. Unconditional love, as an attitude, never says “...yes, **but** under the condition of...” It is a peculiar form of pure impartiality towards the other. Yet, unconditional love is not a topic for the thesis or a topic that can really be explored in science. But meaninglessness is relevant and can be explored. The *rapprochement* method, which will be explained below, is sufficient to gather data without personal contamination for the interviewer and is easier and provides a more practical attitude towards respondents.

Interference also will inevitably occur during the analysis of interviews / conversations done by others, for example when in the interview something is said by the interviewee that the interviewer, on some level, agrees with or disagrees with on some level (important enough to create emotional interference) in terms of his / her own values. For instance, in interviewing a “dissident voice”, the interviewer can agree with (and thus match) or disagree with (and thus mismatch) the opinions expressed. In both cases, distortion may still arise in further questioning. When agreeing, the researcher may leave out further exploratory questions that would facilitate the deeper structures of meaning to really build up, as the experience of the interviewer is “I already understand”. A “linguistic match” may actually be superficial, with the researcher not really understanding, so validation by further questioning could still be needed.

In cases where there is a mismatch of values or opinions, judgments may unconsciously contaminate unwillingly the interviewing process and lead to efforts of persuasion or manipulation of the “data stream”. Later, after the interview has been conducted, the researcher may, in good faith, reinterpret what is in fact “ambivalent” into something which more closely resembles the researcher’s understanding or chosen meaning.

On the other hand, when the interviewer’s attitude is based on respect for and *gratitude* towards the respondent, regardless of the level of seeming agreement or disagreement, he / she has acknowledged the following as-if it’s true, for the duration of the interview and prior to the interview:

What I will hear from the interviewees is true and important to them, they identify themselves with their stories, making their stories part of their lived identity. It does not matter at all how right or wrong they are, how I may agree or disagree; for him or her it is the truth that they experience and that they are sharing with me. That by itself deserves my respect and my gratitude.

The addition “it does not matter at all how right or wrong they are” means that it does not matter how right or wrong they are *according to me, the interviewer*. Without the distinctions true or false, right or wrong, the personal meaning (values of the researcher) cannot be “projected” to the triggers anymore as their

meaninglessness is now acknowledged and accepted. This will stop possible interference as “I-as-me” cannot connect to the meaningless and will find something else instead to connect to. This something else instead is *the person behind the story and not the story itself*. By making other peoples’ stories meaningless, as described above, the listener connects with the person in an unconditional way. This “unconditional” way will let the meaning in their stories remain undisturbed. Making stories meaningless does not equal making the story-teller meaningless. It is the best impartial way to handle the acquired data. Alienation does not occur, as in doing so, humanity is immediately restored for the person by giving the respondents respect, freedom and in some cases even gratitude.

Is it hard to respect people *behind* their stories, their values, whatever points of view they may have? *Will it be hard to become a scientist?* For some yes, for some maybe. The alternative is to open the floodgates of subjectivity, inviting participating scientists to “go native” or, worse, to turn into artists, extending themselves in the realities they research and co-create.

It is the rational faculty of the researcher that has to take the lead towards further understanding in the domain of meaningless data. For instance, when the question would be how things—social or mechanical—fit together, this refers finding the “causal” relationships between the elements or phenomena in question, relative to the researcher’s goal, while the meaning of those phenomena’s content does not play a role.

The nature of the research question determines how “deep” the researcher needs to ask in the interview and how to handle possible incongruities in the interviewee’s stories. If the researcher challenges, in a respectful way, the suggested or apparent incongruities in the story and the respondent still acknowledges them but not as incongruities, this shows non-interference on the part of the researcher, when he accepts them. It is the therapist’s task to challenge incongruities, in order to help the client help himself, not the researcher’s. Challenging at all times is an “intervention”, and will further undermine the (theoretically) objective status of the scientific researcher. While an engineer may safely identify him or herself as a creator of realities, it is in my opinion questionable when scientists choose to do so. In a different context, organizational consultants who are hired to *solve* a problem in an organization may already intervene during the data gathering stage. Naturally, a thing or two depends on the research question too. Nevertheless:

“...there seems to be an emerging consensus that all inquiry reflects the standpoint of the inquirer, that all observation is theory laden and that there is no possibility of theory-free knowledge. We can no longer think of ourselves as neutral spectators of the social world” (Denzin N. K., Lincoln Y. S. 2000 p. 872).

Of course this is true, but it is only true within the realms of meaning.

What I propose is that in the inquiry of qualitative data, particularly during observations and interviews, we can adopt a pre-interview attitude whereas it does not matter if the opinions of the interviewees are true or false, right or wrong, in the

same way that it does not matter for the microphone towards where it is directed. That makes the microphone neutral and objective. For obvious reasons this “detachment” of true and false must coincide with respect and empathy, which it is fully in accord with. Such an attitude of the interviewer will transcend the interview, beyond the serious remarks of Denzin and Lincoln.

6.5 Meaning

Autopoietically, meaning is not present in the relational chemical processes of neurons, even when meaning and relevance play a fundamental role in the higher levels of human cognitive processes. Autopoietic processes from within do not work with meaning. To act out what is meaningful (from the perspective of the observer), does not need understanding or even awareness. Biologically programmed organisms are perfectly meaningful as opposed to internal chaos. The internal relations between components have internal relevance and coherence. Without the capability of self-consciousness and reflection, meaning is the nature of an internal *instruction* linking perception of triggers through internal dynamics with (potential) behavior in the context of those triggers. The whole process will internally generate an experience which may or may not generate behavior and emotions.

“No consideration of meaning enters into such a notion ... and [is] not in the mechanisms of the genesis of conduct. Association in terms of representations related by meaning lies in the cognitive domain of the observer exclusively.” (Maturana et al. 1980 p. 43)

While genes are the carriers of the autopoietic organization (identity) of the (primitive) organism, meaning is not part of it; but important is, the sum of all relational instructions in physiology produces the nature, the identity of that organism, anchored in its internal equilibrium determining the direction of all internal processes:

“In fact, any local change that would lead to the synthesis of a modified conduct by the organism, must be immediately accompanied by other changes arising through the adjustments that this must undergo in the process of *maintaining constant its internal relations* under its changed behavior” (Maturana et al. 1980 p. 44, italics added).

And:

“The nervous system in turn has evolved as a system structurally and *functionally subservient to the basic circularity of the living organization*, and hence, embodies *an inescapable logic*: that logic which allows for a match between the organization of the living system and the interactions into which it can enter *without losing its identity*” (Maturana et al. 1980 p. 39, italics added).

Before humans, life was still existent for a very long time; but meaning (as part of understanding, describing a functional explanation) was not part of life. That makes meaning a meta-concept of rather intelligent observers with language. In that fashion, in many cases it can perfectly explain things like—for instance—the

analysis of the toy-car. All possible answers regarding the question of how the toy-car works are meaningful, but from the point of view of the observer. As the toy-car has no logic or understanding, a mismatch is hard to make as there can be no further comparison of logics. When the observer observes himself (self-reflection, Maturana et al. 1980 p. 25-29) he can describe meaning of / for himself and although it is still language, it may perfectly describes the experience under attention.

As an experience meaning is *felt*. It would be outside the scope of the thesis to explain more in depth that an observer of self can still make an error in the way meaning is found; as all meaning found is his present meaning as observer / analyzer and may not necessarily be the meaning of his former self in the act of its former doing.

“Neither information nor truth should be confused with meaning. Meaning is the understanding that is generated within us, *whatever the originator of the symbol [in language] intends...*Information is neutral, meaning is affective, that is, involves emotion” (Jackson N., Carter P. 2000 p. 21, italics and underlining added).

Although the concept of meaning is widely and rightly used in the social sciences as properties of interactive intersubjective concepts and history, these do not deny the individual construction of meaning in the end. As part of internal dynamics, meaning cannot leave or enter its source.

6.6 Properties of meaning and meaning in language

Meanings are mirrored by triggers shifted in time. One fundamental principle of the Living is prediction, a consequence of Life's internal circularity (Fig. 1). Only instincts existed in the distant past for all organisms, for countless generations. Sense-making processes needed for constructing beliefs replace gradually instincts for many species, but like instincts follow principle of “fixing” the past. Still sense-making processes do away with the ancient fixed knowledge of instincts by replacing it with (dynamic) knowledge acquired between a single lifetime and a “split second”.

Human behavior is not based on what is actually present in the here and now; it is only on a triggering level that this is so. Present triggers, when perceived, cannot trigger the present on the level of meaning, but do trigger the experience of the “present”. Any trigger we know presents itself immediately as some form of meaning. Any meaning of the external that is experienced gives away the “status” of the creator of meaning as he once was, *but always as a present condition*. Meaning “freezes” the system in time and is therefore practically always expressing the past. The experiencing of meanings is different and does not suggest the past but a present condition.

An example may verify this. Our personal identity (more covered in depth in section 5.16, chapter 8) sees and knows the world (including making sense) not in its trillions of sub-components making up the whole gestalt of what is perceived. The brain must reduce the world into categories as earlier mentioned. This process

however becomes a major factor in the forming of our self-image. Everything we perceive is, when known, a member of a known category. All categories are cyclical in nature, which by itself gives away that categories are past oriented. Essential properties, which define the identity of categories—be it functional properties, relational or structural properties—are fixed and should not change in order to stay in the category. What once was should reoccur. It is this very past orientation which gives identity reliability and predictability. I would not, for example, be able to recognize even my wife as I think she is, were I to meet a new or different *essential* property of her, which I never would have thought possible. She may stop being my wife or I would need to drastically enrich my understanding of her identity.

6.6.1 The tiger, Circular Logic against Observer's logic

Autopoietic circular logic or reflexive logic is the opposite of “observer's logic”. Circular logic, tilted above the logic of the “body” is the logic of meaning experienced from a first person perspective, that is to say, within organizational closure.

At the zoo, in front of a tiger cage, father and son watch the tiger within. Where is the tiger the father experiences, in time? It looks like an idiotic question, the answer of which would be: “...where else then is the tiger: in the present?” But how can this be as the senses do not dictate or determine behavior or the experience of sight? Only meaning does. But where does meaning come from, other than from the past, when meaning was formed, then “stored in memory”* to be integrated by projection in the perceptions of the present?

**Memory, as “stored” information, is part of a neural network just as any other part of the network. All parts have a function in the same present. For an observer the meaning of the “memory” part is to “remember” the past, but this is not the case for the neural network. If a page describes the future and the next page describes the past, for the book all pages are equally part of the same present, supporting the existence of the pages forming the identity of the book. Also, all sentences and letters and the paper carrying them are all properties of the present. Only the reader projects his meaning of time in a very inconsistent way. Looking from the book to the bookcase upstairs, he does not experience his 5-year old IKEA book case as the past but as a property of the present, but he may well consider his 500-year old bookcase in the living room, bought at Sotheby's, as a beautiful property of hundreds of years ago. Certainly looking at a picture in which he is 20 years younger, when the picture was literally made, he will see it as the past. Even cleverly defining the past as language or symbol descriptions [pictures] referring to the past is odd, because the past is only the language referring to itself; beyond those signifiers there is nothing to refer to: the signified does not exist and never did.*

To put memories in a “time-line” will reinforce the acceptance of the past as something real. But how can symbols refer to themselves, in order to create something beyond them, unless the past factually does not exist and never did? But the human mind can construct time just like “objectivity” as a valuable and precious

but *hidden* tool. Within autopoiesis, the descriptions in niche to detect triggers are always past based, but only for observers. The descriptions in memory (programmed protein structures) are real and present and always stay in the present. The function of descriptions has nothing to do with the past, but refers to handling the present with interactive behavior showing the *present* identity of the actor.

In every finished description there is an “integrated” possible instruction on how to handle the topic of the description. In other words every description (categorical) is linked to potential interactive behavior. That is the autopoietic reason for descriptions or in the logic of the observer, for memory. A series of collected memories, which even humans make secondary to their function as primary, are the many lessons that lead to a developed capability. For instance lessons on how to drive that end up with a driver’s license. The present capability of driving is not recognized as the cumulative collections of past memories, but is recognized as a present property. For the CNS and the brain, *all* memories have that same function: to provide in i-niche descriptions and to link them with classes of interactions to support and maintain identity in the existing *present* context.

Back at the zoo, father and tiger are in the same time as objects only. The present tiger as an “objective” trigger, triggers different tigers for different visitors in the zoo. Every tiger seen reflects the i-niche, a core part of the personality of a single visitor. In telling his young son that “tigers are dangerous animals”, the father does not explain anything about the tiger, but reveals himself: “I don’t know how to guarantee our safety when I meet a tiger”. The tiger may respond indignantly with: “How can *I* be based on what *you* cannot guarantee?” This is true for *all* meaning. “I have met nice people” versus “I have met bad people”, a description on the basis of observer’s logic, becomes in circular logic: “I have met people, who I think *I am able to get along with*” versus “... people who *I don’t know how to handle* in a harmonious way.

Circular logic circles back to the observer; it is like a boomerang that returns back home, but empowering the sender. Circular logic makes it clear that the ancient purpose of meaning (survival) solely serves the autopoiesis of the perceiver. Autopoietically everything is in the eye of the beholder, including beauty. Circular logic, although more truthful to the inner realities of being, cannot replace however observer’s logic in explaining most events. Even describing or explaining Circular logic, needs the infusion of observer’s logic. Both are needed to comprehend human realities.

6.7 The peculiarities of meaning

Build into meaning are two peculiarities. The first peculiarity is the projection which has to do with the aforementioned example, dealing with the question of whether the danger is about the tiger. The second, more hidden, peculiarity refers to the acceptance of the past being a reliable representative of the present. Both peculiarities disappear in experience in autopoiesis. Meanings *protect the past* by freezing the old internal status of so many times ago, when the meaning was formed,

but serving the basic circularity of the Living. Protecting the past is the ancient equivalent of protecting present identity because physiology knows of no past as it can only operate in the present.

All visitors to the zoo, at that time in front of the tigers' area, *do not see*, but are triggered by the same tiger-*as-trigger* in the same time moment. Inevitably, all, at the same time, observe their own version of the tiger according to their own individual meaning; plus his cage, the buildings, the weather, the other visitors and all the rest, based on how they all make sense in the visitors personal history.

The consequence is that most if not all meanings *block* the “present” or obscure the present out of awareness. This has a serious and strange aftereffect. People tend to assume that what makes sense to them is shared; that the world they *experience is a common world*, while in fact only the triggers as they-are-in-themselves are shared and inaccessible at the same time. We know from Kant that they are inaccessible. So intersubjectively, a common world *is* established which all at the same time resemble the unique individual one experienced

From the meta-level of autopoiesis, when people share triggers in the present, but experience a variation of their unique past as properties of the perceived triggers, they automatically, naturally and unconsciously will assume that *their* meaningfulness or lack of it as perceived in the event, is objective and shared as well as long as the others are silent about it. By assuming this, on a deeper level, the taken for granted “normality” of their individual history and personality is generalized over the experience of others. Not the particular events they have lived through, but the meaningful conclusions leading to their generalizations and categories. As in the end, after transderivational search, all meaning is fully private and fully settled in subjectivity (Muran and DiGiuseppe 1990 p. 75) and thus the experienced world is truly personal and experienced as shared.

Any difference in “world-experience” that forces itself to be known as a disagreement in the appreciation of a shared event cannot yet determine what follows. For all involved, the disagreement that occurs will be a next meaningless trigger giving freedom to all present, to express once again their own version of what it means. Generally however, big differences in the appreciation of events can potentially become a source of conflict.

A special note must be added to the perceived newness of meaning, contradicting that meaning is old. Meaning, as previously explained, is literally the reflection of inner niche based on inner predictions of environmental triggers. But next (i-)niche is more complex: it is the total sum of all possible descriptions and interactions. All possible interactions are an answer to all possible events in the world that fall *within* the individual's capacity to make sense of. Suppose a system's i-niche has a mere ten basic meaning / trigger predictions. That gives much more than 10, that is 10! (10*9*8*7...) ≥3.6 million possible combinations if all 10 are involved. Every combination as a “single” gestalt of those ten triggers looks like a new, but complex trigger, when first met, but the new cannot deny one of those basic ten. If a gestalt of 9! next or apart from the 10! is experienced in the structural coupling 9! >360k

possible combinations are possible. It is safe to say that the human range of old previous meaning is varied enough to handle 99,999+ % of all possible future events. Also, in practice, combinations fall outside awareness (overflow of information) and as there are always hierarchies of meanings, more complex combinations which contradict an already established, but higher meaning will mostly be denied or not seen (psychological factors). Thereby (cognitive economy) makes us perceive under the “control” of categories, which reduces the infinite to what can be perceived.

6.8 The vulnerability and strength of meaning

The precious differences in human personalities are for the greatest part, if not all, created by meaning and meaning is vulnerable as meaning can be changed. Talents do not determine as in a way they are internal triggers evoking meaning to their owners. The vulnerability of meaning and its consequential defenses has proven itself myriads of times through history, in all conflicts, war and in periods characterized by resistance to change.

Vulnerability and its protection are both existential. Meaning has a paradoxical purpose. It must, once formed, be rock-solid to give strength to identity and to keep at bay, as much as possible, the ensuing chaos and insecurity in experiencing the world. Protection is also the maintenance of the person’s identity. There are scarcely any people who wake up every morning with the idea: “*What can I do or think today to prove that I am wrong?*” Such an attitude would eventually lead to a form of “psychological suicide”. So we do the reverse in order to maintain our identity.

On the other hand, meanings unwillingly based on important, but *incomplete* information—wrong information or “sloppy” logic—are faulty. Faulty meanings determine faulty sight and all its consequences and are at the very least, not helpful in personal growth and development. At worst they can lead to death of the self and/or of others.

So, meanings do need their ability to transform, and preferably fast in the case of important mistakes. In parallel to being as solid as a mountain, meaning should be as weak as butterflies. Genetic information does not need protection as it cannot be changed by cognitive sense-making processes. Although meaning is experienced as true (enough), the mind does have freedom over i-niche, against meaning and instinct to “block” the automatic coupling between description and behavior. It needs discipline and self-control to do so.

6.9 The freedom of meaning, constraints and freedom of choice

Triggers cannot determine meaning, but they do bring freedom and lack of interference to their receivers to construct meaning in compliance with the receivers structural and mental properties. Freedom does not refer to realizing desires or longings. Happiness is certainly linked to realized wishes, but the experience of desires / wishes is not linked to freedom. Where “will” [I “will” this] is involved, there is no freedom of choice. There is freedom to choose what to do with the will.

Freedom is determined by important properties of the system. Some people may object to the word freedom. What is one's freedom of choice under gunpoint, after all? The shift that these objecting views have not yet made is to recognize that freedom of choice cannot go beyond the constraining properties of "I / me" as a system: that is, physical properties and mental properties.

A system's freedom of choice is contained *not* by external triggers, but by the constricting properties of it-self. Sometimes the constraints are severe, especially the structural ones (in the case of violence or potential violence), in the domain of structural coupling. They show natural or unnatural (structural) properties of the system's weakness. It is true; they will all die when the waves throw the fishes too far on land. All possible interactions in fish's niche to maintain its autopoiesis cannot handle being thrown onto land.

The structural limits of a system are also the limits of all its possible interactions with the world, but limits naturally bring about the existing limits of identity, the nature of the system. It is unrealistic to define freedom beyond structural constraints. But the system's constraints are not by definition structural, especially not for humans. Free-floating mental constraints, which do not have a physical (CNS) origin, but are based on constrained meanings, do add to a further limitation of overall identity. It is also unfair to define personal freedom beyond constrained meanings. But if properties of the system develop or change over time and become stronger, old constraints or "threats" (not their triggers) change with them and/or disappear, for individuals and for nations as well (Tunisia revolution 2011).

To accept the power of "triggers" in the psychological domain is the consequence of observer's logic, but cannot exist within autopoietic logic. What triggers cannot do, meanings do. Meanings are very deterministic and normative for the one who created them. The freedom that triggers bring to humans in expressing faithfulness to their freedom of choice disappears the moment meaning is formed. Once formed, triggers and meaning become one. The deterministic powers of meaning now become the deterministic powers of triggers. After the constitution of meaning, the world will be reversed. Now, suddenly, triggers determine "sight" and above all perfectly suggest in experience that they are capable of transferring *their* meaning to their beholders.

In the introduction of this chapter it is already said: "As objectivity in experience is in fact subjectivity, but under the threshold of awareness... ", both subjectivity and objectivity are equally perfectly suggested in the reversed experiencing of the world.

6.10 Bakhtin's god concept

The next part is partly based on an earlier article (Goosseff 2011).

In conversations with other people, we do not experience that we are only in a dialogue with our own meaning; we also truly experience being in dialogue with others' meaning, as if meaning is transferable. What we actually do when we

experience “external meaning” in conversations, is experiencing them in the form of Bakhtin’s “superaddressee”.

“If there is something like a god concept in Bakhtin, it is surely the superaddressee, for without faith that we will be understood somehow, sometimes, by somebody, we would not speak at all. Or if we did, it would be babbling. And babble, as Dostoevsky shows in his short story “Bobok”, is the language of the dead” (introduction, Holquist, M.; Bakhtin, 1986 p. xviii).

And:

“But in addition to this addressee (the second party), the author of the utterance, with a greater or lesser awareness, presupposes a higher superaddressee (third), whose absolutely just responsive understanding is presumed” (Bakhtin 1986 p. 26).

It is not the real person in front of us who listens, in our experience, but the “higher superaddressee”, an internally-generated addressee within the speaker, projected outside over the “second party”, which defines the external second party.

Maturana’s view of communication states this similarly, but also in a somewhat different way:

“If it appears acceptable to talk about transmission of information in ordinary parlance, this is so because the speaker tacitly presumes the listener to be identical with him and hence as having the same cognitive domain (which is never the case)” (Maturana et al. 1980 p. 32-33).

A good example of this is when in Paris a person (as the actor) asks for directions in his best French; the other person excuses himself in English, saying he doesn’t speak French. Briefly, one encounters a major mismatch here between superaddressee and real addressee, between internal and external cognitive domains. Still, it is the superaddressee who starts, continues and ends in terms of the actor’s participation in any conversation. It is certain that in the field of psychotherapy many examples could be found of cases where an observer of a conversation interprets the all too clear signs of the other party, indicating that he / she wants to end the conversation, while the person keeps talking, seeming to completely miss those signs. Learning more about the other is a kind of “readjustment” of the internal superaddressee.

6.11 Language and organizational closure

“Thus, however complex the motor and sensory coordinations of speech may be, the peculiarity of linguistic behavior does not lie in the complexity or nature of the series of effector and receptor states that constitute it, but in the relevance that such behavior acquires for the maintenance of the basic circularity of the interacting organisms through the development of the consensual domain of orienting interactions [language]. Speaking, walking, or music-making do not differ in the nature of the coordinated neuronal processes which specify them but in the sub-domains of interactions in

which they acquire their relevance” (Maturana et al. p. 34, underlining added).

Having in mind that language is behavior and that the CNS does not consider language different from walking, plus having in mind that all behavior is determined by organizational closure that serves the individual’s identity, what can be said about language? An object, like a tree or a rock, as a perceivable structure, is not a sign; it refers “an sich” only to itself. In the non-autopoietic realm, the tree is truly “objective”, with an autonomous independent identity. One, if not the most important aspect of autonomous “identities”, is their absence of having a “force” to determine meaning beyond themselves.

Text and spoken language play exactly the opposite role. Primary school knowledge dictates that signs by definition refer to meaning beyond themselves. The referred meaning is not free. That makes the signs by the same rules, but outside autopoiesis theory meaningless “an sich”. As perceivable objects in the external world, language becomes dependent of their observers like trees do not. Trees and signs (texts) “are equally given” in sensibility, but trees are trees and signs are only “spots” or blobs of ink on paper or screen.

That is not however how they appear to present themselves. Both trees and texts appear to be, in sensibility, equally objective and independent. Still, 'spots' on this paper or screen are by definition carefully designed as information to be 100% incomplete by themselves; in fact, they are maximally incomplete information. The missing part of symbols’ existence is delegated out of its structure to the mind of the observer, where it should exist as “shared” meaning. But any link to this delegated meaning is *also missing*. The missing link to meaning must be learned in parallel to the meaning itself, as both do not exist structurally on any level of the sign, be it visually or auditory.

J. Essers (Erasmus university) commented (in a personal conversation): “About the necessary incompleteness of language as a system of meaning, we agree: any symbolic order is based on self-legitimization, therein precisely lies its subjectivity; but that does not force the claim that meaning is private for an individual. We would not be able to invent it”. He pointed to thinkers like Wittgenstein and Zizek, who conclude that language is radical, intersubjective, completely beyond the control of any individual and therefore not private. “As a result”, Essers concludes, “we speak the language we can never really know, it is literally beyond us”.

This view, which is shared by the public, as well as by mainstream science, articulates the rationalizations of observers not about environmental structures, but of environmental reifications. Leaving the observer's logic aside, what is within the individual's control is the only operational unit of language. The individual operation within i-niche of creating meaning to support personal identity *includes* the operational unit of language. That is the main message of the above quote of Maturana.

Also, language like any other internal “operation” is controlled by and submissive to the autopoiesis of that particular individual. Or, in other words, the

use of language (behavior) and all that it means cannot escape the organizational closure of the speaker. This is because objectivity is a linguistic construct that makes it able to be shared by the deletion of adjectives (section 5.17.2), which makes objectivity a property of language. Language itself, as a construct, is autopoietically shared the same way as objectivity is shared. Also, the meaning of words and sentences is assumed to be free of personal adjectives—because of their neutrality they can be shared—but only because the always existing adjectives are not mentioned. The word “coffee” refers to the drink coffee. But everyone reading or hearing the word “coffee” will immediately experience his or her personal version of the meaning of “coffee”, which will determine the missing adjective. This fact is so deeply accepted in any culture and it is the reason why many ask their visitors: “Do you want coffee or tea?” If the answer is “coffee”, it is not the “coffee” in the question which determined the answer, but the unpronounced adjective belonging to it, which belongs to the visitor only. In a sense even coffee has its “superaddressee”. The answer is already embedded in the visitor's adjective added to the word “coffee”, before the question was raised.

That makes both objectivity and the neutrality of language fall outside human experience, but inside knowledge as a constructed (linguistic) assumption. Happily, the demand of objectivity and language to delete personal adjectives is very easy to accomplish. Experience-wise, the rule for objectivity or language is a superficial paper thin rule; because of organizational closure, the rule can never be obeyed. In scientific texts it is easy to delete adjectives; they were not deleted in the original experience of the scientists and also not in his memory. Still the existence of objectivity and of language's neutrality, *as-if true*, makes them the best virtual tools we have when communicating. Yet, not unlike the millions of misunderstandings which daily happen in the world, (and the many more unnoticed ones), language is sufficient to keep the world going, but it cannot do more than that.

6.12 The inability to see freely

It has been argued that the observer's environmental logic creates logical objective conclusions, omitting the projection of the observer's meaning. A good example of this has to do with texts. How can one objectively look at texts, unless he / she forgets his or her *internal* descriptions? Even the slightest infinitesimal link to meaning is fully missing from the primary and physical structures of language. There is a semi-logical but consistent overall structure of grammar, but grammar has no meaning of its own. As all meaning is missing, it should be relatively easy to see the signs for what they structurally are here on paper or on the screen: constructions of ink only. But the opposite is actually true.

What *are* the black letters on the white page or the brief “sounds” of talking in the air? This page, which a reader can read, is structurally not a “meaningful text” “out-there”; however, it is experienced as one. When we experience a tree, there is a tree out there for everybody to experience. But text is not for everybody to experience.



Fig. 3 Both are not B

To be able to freely see a text structure for what it means, is to see no *principle* difference between the two “objects” in figure 3. *Both* are not B when B is the meaning of the structure “B”.

It is only when the reader can look at the B and not recognize the letter “B”, that is to say when the reader cannot experience what the B stands for, seeing it like the sign next to it only a bit different, then the observer has learned to withdraw his projection out of the visible structure of “B”. Then the “object” shows itself as a kind of form as it would be seen, for example, by a Chinese child in a faraway rural village not influenced by non-Chinese culture. The meaning of letters and words (in context) has become such a foundational part of internal niche

But if projections of meaning could land on paper like this and on any known text so perfectly, as is suggested by the text itself, then language would exist outside the mind truthfully and reliably, based on prescribed meaning. Those shared meanings would not be private and with them language would not be private. It would exist as an uncontrollable, unknowable multi-dynamic and very powerful semi-entity of its own. Such a language with its determining powers would completely destroy our identity as we could not anymore reinterpret and disobey it. In Autopoiesis, language is connotative and grounded in private meaning (Maturana, Varela. 1980 p. 30-33).

“Just as it is mistaken to believe that the nervous system operates by manipulating the environment. It is equally mistaken to view language as denotative, that is, as objectively indicating and pointing to an external world. Linguistic behavior is connotative” (Mingers 1995 p.77).

Chapter 7: Husserl and the Inner Life World

Introduction

Subjectivity (also true for the concepts of objectivity and autopoiesis) is so all-encompassing that it is very hard to find the best linear approach to describe it. In fact it has been hard to approach it here too, which will have its “fragmented” influence in this chapter, partly resolved with the many “(section x)” additions.

A condition for the thesis is to guide the respondents to redirect their unconscious and their inner life world, not unlike what Husserl did, in a way. What could this “inner life world” be?

“No objective science, no psychology—which, after all, sought to become the universal science of the subjective—and no philosophy has ever made thematic and thereby actually discovered this realm of the subjective—not even the Kantian philosophy ... *It is a realm of something subjective which is completely closed off within itself, existing in its own way, functioning in all experiencing, all thinking, all life, thus everywhere inseparably involved; yet it has never been held in view, never been grasped and understood*”... (Husserl E. 1970 §29, italics added).

Maturana and Varela would agree with Husserl on the operationally closed-off character of the unconscious (“...closed off within itself...”). Husserl speaks about the realm of the subjective.

7.0 The unconscious and the non-existence of independent strangers

About the inner life world, Husserl once said: “...yet it has never been held in view, never been grasped and understood”. But that was then, how is it now?

“The concept of unconscious knowledge is fundamental for an understanding of human thought processes and mentation in general; however, the *psychological* community at large is not familiar with it.” (Augusto 2010, italics added)

It appears, at least scientifically, that very little is known about unconscious knowledge. Science's contemporary knowledge of emotions is conflicting and essentially incomplete (e.g. Brabeck & Gorman 1992, Griffiths 2004, Solomon 2008). Also, knowledge regarding consciousness or transcendental consciousness in psychology is minimal; it is more a topic of philosophy.

On the other hand, when trying to understand psychic phenomena, it would be paradoxical to approach them with the environmental logic of (scientific) observers. Observer's logic is theoretically unfit when trying to understand autopoiesis and consequently is equally unfit when trying to understand the psyche. There is a strong and increasing contemporary tendency in science, encouraged by the pharmaceutical industry, to understand the psyche with the help of neurobiology and neurochemistry, an approach that tries to extend observer's logic into the domain of unobservable consciousness. Insofar as consciousness or the psyche are

sub-domains of the Living or are themselves the Living, observer's logic may be the wrong tool to understand the psyche and/or consciousness.

The inner life world, as unconscious, is by definition not the domain of the conscious mind. The conscious mind is mostly unaware (unconscious) of the workings of this “other mind”, named “the unconscious” as a perfect projection of its own lack of knowledge.

A similar projection would be to name someone a “stranger” and to handle him as such. Thus the stranger would bear the name of his beholder. In reality, a stranger can never be a stranger and the unconscious can never be unconscious. “Faults” like this become real and full of impact when they are not acknowledged for what they are. As soon as it is acknowledged that the stranger is not a stranger to himself, to his beloved ones and his friends, his “strangeness” becomes not part of him, in fact has *nothing* to say about him. When that happens, dominant observer's logic is gently corrected by circular logic and the fault disappears.

7.1 Working preliminary definition of the unconscious

In order to find the simplest model with which to start, I have chosen the practical definitions of John Bargh and Carl Jung which complement each other:

“...in which the higher mental processes such as judgment and social behavior could be triggered and then operate in the absence of conscious intent and guidance...Those aspects which trigger and operate judgment and behavior (normally aspects of the conscious) in the absence however of conscious awareness are called the unconscious” (Bargh et al, 2008 p. 74).

And:

“The unconscious is defined as the sum of all those psychic events that are not intense enough to enter into consciousness” (Jung 1972 p. 203).

Bargh chooses to define the unconscious by its effects in the conscious domain, but without conscious awareness. He does not define how the unconscious itself operates conceptually or functionally, how it could or would be like. An example would be something like the following: when driving in a certain part of a city one suddenly realizes—“I am already here”?—and notices how unaware he / she was about that part of the journey that brought them “here”.

Carl Jung extended Freud’s theory in a comprehensive way and came to the conclusion that what *is* in the unconscious, once *was* in consciousness, with the possible exception of the collective consciousness, which is not of interest here (Jung 1981, p. 3). Jung makes a very broad definition, overall, of what the unconscious is. I need to slightly broaden both definitions (including the definition of Bargh), making the point that even when the “conscious” is aware of a certain something-else influencing it, this certain something-else can still be called the unconscious.

The wider questions of consciousness or awareness of data that derives from the unconscious (or the lack of awareness of it when it operates) are not relevant for the thesis or for the definition of the unconscious. What is relevant is the *relational*

function of the unconscious to the conscious mind and to identity in particular. If it must be categorized, it must be a category of function. To be conscious of the effects of the unconscious does not make it a conscious property. Emotions, which appear in consciousness, still do not derive from consciousness. Emotions derive fully from the unconscious, as in the following example of a woman who fears bridges. Also, this definition of the unconscious is slightly broad and does not explain any property of the unconscious, except the fact that it influences the conscious, with or without its knowledge, with or without its understanding.

7.1.1 Illogicality as forgotten logicity, a story

Jung posits a forgotten content of the unconscious as once being in consciousness (Jung 1981). With some effort, or with the application of different remembering techniques, forgotten or repressed information can be remembered again. If one becomes very cautious of electricity because he remembers having a harsh electrical shock some years ago, he will not speak of unconscious influences when carefully repairing a power connector in the present. He will remember all too well what had happened, and he will accept his current more developed *skill* as fully rational and not as an “unconscious influence”.

But what about the case of a cheerful woman (24 years old) who gradually developed, during the last two years, a fear of crossing bridges in Leiden, a medieval city in the Netherlands, a fear which she never had before? The woman lived in the middle of a neighborhood full of bridges. Gradually, within a year, she felt too uncomfortable driving her old car when crossing the bridges that she had to cross in order to leave her quarter. Her fear grew to the point that only strong conscious control (self-discipline) and the aid of a friend sitting next to her could make her leave the city to visit friends and family and to come (towards the end of this period) to meetings with me after asking for help. She, her family and everybody who knew her could not explain her fear for bridges. It was something seen as irrational by all of them. Her fear seemed factually true, exhibited by her internal experiences and her behavior of trying to avoid bridges as much as possible. In the end, it became apparent that it was her growing fear of water under the bridge that made her afraid of crossing. It was as if one irrational fear was replaced by another, equally irrational, fear.

“Irrationality” is the label, in this case, that is easily projected onto this behavior by the rational observer, that is, the one who does not understand. This woman knew she always had a fear of water, but that had never stopped her from crossing bridges before. She did not know why she feared water so much, but she experienced this fear nevertheless, which had been easy to conceal from others. Examples of this fear were that she never took a bath, only showers; she had avoided swimming lessons even at primary school, using various excuses to do so. As a child, she had played at the beach or in shallow water rather than in the sea. Her fear was not about water per se, but had to do with the idea of water being deep, at the time the depth (length) of her sister who was two years younger than her.

When this woman was four years old, she was present when her sister drowned in the river near their house. Her father, who came too late to rescue her sister, shouted out in deep grief and he saw the four year old as to blame for her sister's death. Consciously, that night in bed, while crying inconsolably, the girl came to the logical conclusion that something like this would never happen to her again and that she would avoid deep, deadly water at all costs.

The coming year the girl became severely depressed and full of guilt, and came to somehow repress the drowning episode, to the point that it came to be fully out of her consciousness. Consequently, her problems could from then onwards be seen as the result of the workings of the unconscious.

When eventually, as an adult now, this woman corrected the meaning which she had made that night of the accident, she regained her freedom, but not based on any falsification of "the facts" that had taken place that day. In autopoietic "language" one would say: "The triggers stayed the same, but she learned to give them new but this time self-supportive meanings at the expense of the old self-inhibiting ones". The full disconnection between "facts" and meaning proves yet again the lack of deterministic power that triggers have, when they rise out of "the-thing-in-themselves" (events). It is altogether possible that another girl of that age in that same very difficult context would not have developed a phobia of water, but might have found another alternative meaning (hopefully more supporting of self-growth and development) to fill in the meaning-void of what had happened.

In the above example, the forgotten "cause" of the young woman's fear had once been conscious, but had later become part of the realm that was "*closed off within itself...never been held in view*", a realm, which for a great part defined her character.

This "realm", personal and unique to each person, is crystallized in our private name and conveys our nature. Our name, as it is for ourselves, tells us who we are. What is within, closed-off does not reveal its logic in the present time and becomes irrational and opaque for the logic of (self) observers.

7.2 "I am no longer interested in my own existence", and the notion of time

Husserl directs us to especially consider the part(s) which other philosophers that came before him left out: that which has "*never been held in view*". According to Husserl, self-reflection can be practiced on every experience, making it possible to observe the inner workings of one's own mind. That is of course what many philosophers / thinkers have done; but it is not unlikely that most of them have taken it for granted that the one who reflects is also reflecting under his own name. Husserl must have started reflecting under his name as well; but he reached a point where he realized that his name and all that it represented was a hindrance in finding out what is true and what is constructed. His name and what he was stood in the way of his deep search in trying to find a secure grounding for all sciences, finding his way through the categories objective and subjective. The existential meaning of his own

name [identity] disappeared by understanding what it actually was, not existence but construction.

“I learn to survey transcendental experience. I am no longer interested in my own existence.... The transcendental problem is eidetic. My psychological experiences, perceptions, imaginations and the like remain in form and content what they were, but I see them as “structures” now, for I am face to face at last with the ultimate structure of consciousness [identity]” (Husserl, 1927 p. 8).

Husserl's Transcendental Consciousness equals *real* and not hypothetical impartiality, the first portal to find a “universal” grounding for morality.

“I am no longer interested in my own existence” in the Husserlian context is the same as saying: “I am no longer interested *in my own name*”. If we are not interested in our name and what it stands for, then there must be something else, much more important, which must interests us. Losing one’s name equals to an experience of being completely detached, disinterested, and dissociated from one’s own ego or identity. But, leaving place “A” will shift consciousness to a different place “B”. So, beyond the ego, there is another level (Transcendental Consciousness) which is experienced by observing its ultimate construction: ego. This may sound theoretical, but everybody does this naturally, maybe partly and not continuously. It is called retrospection or self-reflection. But the one who does the self-reflection is partly still the same ego, but in the present. If “John” literally looks back on what he did yesterday by looking at himself in memory, he is still John, but in the present. The ego reflects back on a particle of itself:

“The ego which is present now, thus temporalized, has contact with its past ego, even though the latter is precisely no longer present: **it can have a dialogue with it** and criticize it, as it can others” (Husserl 1970 §50 p. 72, bold added).

The potential of dialogue does not necessarily mean a dialogue with a past ego, also a present ego can be contacted (Archer 2007). But Transcendental Consciousness is not normal self-reflection. Husserl did something altogether different with this idea. He managed to step back out of *all ego-in-the-present*. This is a very unnatural state for consciousness to be in; Husserl named this state “Transcendental Consciousness” or “Transcendental Ego” (with capital letters). This is a very different Transcendental Consciousness when compared to Kant’s transcendental consciousness, which refers to the thinker, the as-if objective observer. Husserl found that the ego, including its intellectual reasoning, was a mere *vehicle*, a construct made by a hidden, but higher Transcendental Self, which by identifying (associating) with its construct forgets its own existence and becomes ego.

What conclusions can be made? In the first place that an “I-as-me” in the center of awareness can have an inner dialogue with a part of his personality or ego. What settles experience, so that in experience it becomes possible to “talk with oneself no matter where this oneself is in time”? We have to remember that time or memory

does autopoietically not exist (section 6.6.1). All memories of time exist at the same time and are all open for consciousness to identify with or to interact with.

7.3 Realized illusions are real

To understand ego in the following chapter, the next point of view is needed in order to build upon Husserl's statement that Transcendental Consciousness makes and maintains "the world" (section 3.1.1).

It seems elementary and natural when one views and enjoys the sunset or a purple orchid. The enjoyment is fully an experience, which is felt as an emotion. The beauty, the majesty and other possible meanings of the sunset are all obviously part of the sunset, not of its spectator. This is so trivial, but let us as be the observers of the spectators of the next event and see how real it is. Replace the sunset and observe an event in Cape Canaveral during which tens of thousands of Americans watched, in awe, the space rocket which, with its deep thundering flames, will bring the astronauts into orbit. The "realness" of the event is complete, including the division between subjective and objective. Nobody, including the observers / spectators, will doubt how the realness of the sunset or the rockets is, intertwined with the realness of the people observing them and their experiences. Reality is true and beyond question and as such will be described in stories and narratives, be it the "objective side" or the "subjective" side of it. What is questionable is the use of "observer's logic" to explain from an observer's point of view what reality is for "people in their natural surroundings". If we do not apply observer's logic, the next event we observe would be equally "normal" and true and real as the examples above. If we discern a difference, it is because we have applied observer's logic between the above and the below example.

Another example: a big man, weighing over a hundred kilos, makes bold gestures with his hand and refuses to enter a kitchen when someone invites him in for a cup of coffee. The kitchen is a dangerous place. The fresh smell of coffee and the sunlight of the morning falling through the open windows cannot hide what the man fears. Under the kitchen table, near the edge of a dark shadow where it could easily disappear, the man sees a young and dangerous bumblebee. The fact that the humblebee is dehydrated and dying, is not noticed by him. Autopoietically, we know the big man literally does not see the same bumblebee; it is not, for him, the small creature that it would be for most. Triggers reflecting projections imply that the projections are the properties of triggers. Emotions do respond to where the meaning is. Consequently, perceived and dressed up triggers do not only trigger emotions, but also their perceived *justification*. In all the above three examples, the justifications are the same, there is no difference. Several reasons come together, indicating that the aim of the organization of the Living is not world-orientation but self-orientation.

Biological self-orientation or self-referentiality seems to have no limits. Organizational closure "protects" by design the self-referentiality of humans; it means that all projections obey autopoiesis (for humans including the maintenance

and protection of personality: identity) and all personal experiences are individually *equally justified*. Every trigger is able to carry *any* meaning, or in other words, triggers have no limits in their capacity to accept any meaning projected onto them. The meaninglessness of triggers cannot correct projected meaning to themselves. The most fragile triggers can become threatening, the most innocent can appear guilty and so on. As most triggers perceived are real external events (except in drug-induced cases), they make every meaning *just as real* reflected back to their beholders. Illusory meaning and real triggers are equally real as one, but not necessarily for third-party observers. This makes illusory meanings not as-if true but as true and “solid” as the triggers themselves. Consequently, the intended outside world as a pool of triggers serve in a rather perfect way any individual autopoiesis, making the nature (ego) of each individual felt as real. One could ponder that for some reason the objective, but triggering world, unconditionally accepts every subjective role it has to play in the way that every beholder demands of it. There is a price to pay with “unrealistic” meaning notwithstanding the plasticity of the human mind, which surpasses by far the limits of the human body.

7.4 Rational and “irrational” thinking as conscious and unconscious “thinking”

Going back to the lady who feared bridges, her friends and family considered her fear irrational. And as the word ‘irrational’ implies, rational thinking or logical thinking could not lead to a acceptable explanation that would explain her fear.

What is considered “rational thinking” behind judgments typically describes the thinking of observers, but who take their meaning projections for granted. For the natural sciences to find valid explanations this is mostly not a hindrance, for the social sciences this approach mostly is questionable. The observer wants to understand how the observed makes “sense” to him, even when it comes to observing him or herself. The Taliban (and now Isis / DAIISH), who have destroyed hundreds of ancient monuments, do not make sense for modern (Western) observers; but what they do, make sense to them. They have their rational explanation, just like the man fearing the one little bumblebee, an explanation that appears irrational for most others.

The woman with the fear for bridges, did not understand her fears. Even from her own point of view, her fears were irrational, but as an aspect of her unconscious mind, as we have seen, they were actually rational. The “memory”, as a present instruction, to handle water-based triggers, still held on to the then rationally “programmed” experience of the little child. Unconscious subjectivities do not think, but follow programs in internal niche; the unconscious mind just accepts, in some *unconditional* way, the programs. These programs were in most cases rational for the conscious mind when made, but in the past. Repeating thought processes over and over since then is not thinking, but executing (old) programs. The unconscious function is not responsible for defining judgement or reality. That important function is delegated to the conscious mind.

Chapter 8: What is ego?

Introduction

It appears that all knowledge and subjectivity are submissive to the autopoiesis of the individual: the maintenance of its unique identity (and then body).

The route from triggers to organisms' organizational closure, from meaning to behavior and to language, and from organization to unique individualities, gives a broad platform to analyze the ego. In order to combine one and the other, short summaries of previous theories cannot be avoided, so some repetition will occur. In the context of the research, the ego and the personality of the respondents will be just as they were for Husserl: a deviation from “purity”, and for the thesis a deviation from full impartiality. Husserl also named Transcendental Consciousness “Pure Ego”. This purity equals pure impartiality, disconnected from history and meaning. So to distance oneself from his total ego in order to become “pure”, in order to be able to do that, but differently from Husserl, the question of what the ego is must be answered. What exactly is the ego, how does it function, what does it need in order to function?

The ego is scientifically not defined precisely, and when it is it is defined in conflicting ways. In terms of definition, the ego is a product of mainstream observer's logic. Predictably, any definitions of this kind might be autopoietically problematic in terms of knowing the *living* properties of a system. Turning interest towards the question of the ego is necessary because, as mentioned briefly before, Husserl's method of the epoché would not work for naive respondents in a single first meeting

Husserl opens interesting avenues in terms of exploring the notion of ego. He, Maturana and Varela were, although apart from each other, seeking similar answers. The difference between autopoiesis and the work of Husserl has to do with the huge difference in their point of departure, in terms of answering the questions that they each pose in quite a similar way. The biologists started their survey with single-cell organisms which started existing billions of years ago; the philosopher at the 'present' 'side of time started investigating his own present human self. The contrast could not be greater. The biological questions: “What is the organization of the living?” and “What takes place in the phenomenon of perception?” quickly become centered on the question: “How does it happen that the organism has the structure that permits it to operate adequately in the medium in which it exists?” (Maturana and Varela 1980, p. xvi).

Roughly, the question states: “How does a living organism exist in the world?” while Husserl's question roughly can be reframed as: “How does the world exist in me”? Both questions are more or less two sides of the same coin. Husserl gave himself the difficult task of finding the bridge between subjectivity and objectivity, as it is rather impossible to believe that within subjectivity, within man, both categories are neurologically divided for the sake of conventional science. The

objective world and the subjective world, as they are fully experienced, do exist independently “outside” and are felt to be apart, but in the end do exist as a relation within, serving organizational closure.

8.0 What is “contemporary” ego?

What is meant by the term ego in academic writings? There seems to be a definition of ego which is taken for granted; this is such as general definition that most articles about the ego do not define what is meant by it. For example, in an eleven-page article (Loevinger 1966) the concept ego is mentioned dozens of times, yet there is no definition given. Apparently, the concept is not defined as it is either too unknown or too *well* known.

What follows are ten different or similar definitions of ego. According to some online sources (Free Dictionary, Webster, ARD dictionary and Oxford dictionary) but also according to the way the term is used in some scientific articles, the ego is:

1. The self, especially as contrasted with another self or the world
2. One of the psyche’s three divisions in psychoanalytic theory, the ego serving as the organized conscious mediator between the person and reality
3. The self as the conscious subject
4. In psychoanalysis, the ego refers to the conscious mind, based on perception of the environment from birth onwards
5. The conscious and permanent subject of all psychic experiences, whether held to be directly known or the product of reflective thought
6. One’s own consciousness of their identity [“self-image”]
7. In psychoanalysis, the ego is the part of the mind that mediates between the conscious and the unconscious and is responsible for reality testing and for the sense of personal identity.
- 8 For philosophy (in metaphysics) the ego refers to a conscious thinking subject
9. The ego might refer to a person's sense of self-esteem, self-image or even self-importance

According to one type of definition (type 1, referred to in 2, 7 and 8), the ego falls within the cognitive domain of being able to be aware, to be “conscious of”, in a neutral (objective) way, for instance as the mediator or in being conscious of information: about one’s own identity. Considering at least the mediator is meant to be in the definition a neutral mediator.

Emotions and meaning are fully left out of this definition; they fall under the things which the ego can think of or be aware of. The unconscious itself, from which emotions or their possible influences come from, is also left out of this type of definition. The definitions by themselves are not precise.

Type 2 explanations (4, 5,) contaminate consciousness with subjectivity. “The conscious mind, but based on...*from birth on*”; “conscious *and* permanent subject of *all* *psychical* *experiences*”. But it is altogether possible that “The self (1), the mediator in (2), (3) and (7) are also meant subjective consciousness and not neutral. Number 9 is unclear; is it about self-importance or *in* self-importance? Definitions

divide ego in a neutral awareness or in a subjective awareness they can refer to the “objective” thinker or the influenced subjective thinker. The ego, as defined by some psychoanalytic approaches, resembles a kind of “little” psychoanalyst (the mediator). The philosophical definition suggests that the ego resembles a kind of “little philosopher”, the objective thinker; the subject does not refer to subjectivity but to the division between subject and object.

Above definitions seem more or less alike, but they are not. The two divisions are so different that they may be regarded as each other’s opposites. Consciousness dissociated from subjectivity, as in type 1, or associated to subjectivity, as in type 2, are not in any way the same. The differences explain the viewpoint of the diverse approaches to the “ego” and are similar to the different approaches to defining the unconscious, another scientifically unclear topic.

“These and other difficulties with the monolithic, all-or-nothing division of mental processes, into either conscious or unconscious, have resulted today in different “flavors” of the unconscious—different operational definitions that lead to **dramatically** different conclusions about the power and scope of the unconscious (John A. Bargh J. A. & Morsella E. 2008 p. 74, bold added).

For Husserl, the term ego refers to different things, but mostly he takes up the cognitive definition. “Ego”, “I” “Self”, “Consciousness” are all the same and can be mutually exchanged for Husserl. Husserl (and most thinkers) prefer to talk about “ego” or “consciousness”. The differences are found in their use and in their adjectives such as in “(psychological) ego”, “Pure Ego”, “Transcendental Ego”, “knowing ego”, “apodictic ego”, “me, the individual ego”, “identity” and so on. (I am omitting here the definitions of ego by thinkers previous to Husserl as it is Husserl’s view which is relevant to this thesis).

To be conscious of something, for instance in order to investigate it, we have to focus upon it so that it can become the intended object, an object of attention.

“...and the word “intentional” has been borrowed from the scholastic to denote the essential “reference” character of the phenomena. *All consciousness is “intentional.”* In unreflective consciousness we are “directed” upon objects, we “intend” them; Each phenomenon has its own intentional structure...” (Husserl 1927 p. 3, italics added)

Husserl states very clear that consciousness can only exist in experience by functioning: that is, to be conscious of when there is a something to be conscious of (“*for every cogitatio has its cogitatum*” (Husserl 1970 p. 82). How can an “eye” or an “ear” become aware of its existence (not itself, which is different) without sight or sound? Husserl underlines that consciousness can only be experienced as a *relation*. As practically all internal ideas or images are directly or indirectly linked to the senses, Husserl coincides with the notion of i-niche in autopoiesis when saying that the ego always indirectly implies an object and therefore needs that *relationship* to be aware of itself. What this actually states is that the ego cannot experience itself without what is conventionally defined as objectivity. So in order

to be (in experience) as subject, an object is immediately necessary, be it primary (in sensibility, similar to Kant's empirical ego) or secondary (in memory of in thought). However, the idea that consciousness can only be experienced as a relation may not be true and is not something everybody can agree with.

Consciousness-as-an-relation is named "Relative Consciousness" in the book *"The Philosophy of Consciousness Without an Object"* by Franklin Merrel-Wolf (1973 p. 31) He explains how relative consciousness is a practical *construct* and by its construction unwillingly obtains properties that lead to the impossibility to reflect on its Constructor. Also the analogy between "eye" or senses in general and "consciousness", being aware of itself in experience, suggests that the "tool-like" function of the senses may also be true for what Merrel-Wolf names "relative consciousness" or much more used by the notion of "the ego". Relative consciousness as a construct is the most experienced kind of consciousness as it accepts sensory perceptions as a reference to itself. This acceptance, as we will see later on, constitutes the "ego" and simultaneously explains *the necessity of observer's logic to maintain the ego, to maintain the construction.*

8.1 Ego, how can "consciousness" make the [objective] world and confirm it?

Husserl accepts Kant's existence of an objective independent world that accommodates itself to human perception; Husserl accepted the experience of this world being part of human subjectivity, within human brains. People tend to forget the world as they know and experience it is by design a *projected*-experience which cannot leave their brains.

"But let once this general world, make its "appearance" in consciousness as "the" world, it is thenceforth related to the subjective, and all its existence and the manner of it, assumes a new dimension, becoming "incompletely intelligible, "questionable." (Husserl 1927 p. 7)

Husserl goes on to say that the appearance of this world inside, with all its clear cut properties, but projected outside, is:

"We may call the world "internal" because it is related to consciousness ... this quite "general" world, whose "immanent" being is as shadowy as the consciousness wherein it "exists"..." (Husserl 1927 p. 7)

He found: "And no existence, or manner of existence, is less wholly intelligible than ourselves" (Husserl 1927 p. 6). How can it be otherwise? What is interesting for the thesis is that Husserl concluded that the objective world is "...thenceforth *related to the subjective, and all its existence and the manner of it.*" This is not an innocent, "light" conclusion to arrive to. Husserl deducted that objectivity and subjectivity are in relation to each other in some way. He could not know then that he was referring directly to internal niche in autopoiesis, where subject and object are indeed directly in relation, but *subservient to and controlled* by the rest of autopoiesis. Husserl also turned away from observer's logic to find answers within. Since knowledge of the CNS and the structures of neural pathways were primitive

at that time and inadequate in shedding light on his endeavor, Husserl could only turn to the “shadow of consciousness” itself to find answers.

“...We that are, indeed, men, spiritual and bodily, existing in the world, are, therefore, “appearances” unto ourselves, parcel of what “we” have constituted. Pieces of significance “we” have made. The “I” and “we,” which we apprehend, presuppose a hidden “I” and “we” to whom they are “present” (Husserl 1927 p.7).

Husserl names Transcendental Consciousness the “most general subjectivity” (see section 3.1.1). This is a play of language. He could have said: The most ‘objective subjectivity’, but the definition of objectivity would forbid that. Nevertheless, Husserl states this in a strange way. He says: “... subjectivity, *which makes the world and its “souls,” and confirms them.*” This does not sound very passive, but rather active; it very much echoes circular logic. To allow objectivity to enter the mind suggests a form of passivity. Still, Husserl does not mean to say that the making of the world is subjective; it is—even when made by Consciousness—an objective world. But that Consciousness can only be a very special one: Transcendental Consciousness.

“...the motif of inquiring back into the *ultimate source* of all the formations of knowledge, the motif of the knower’s reflecting upon himself and his knowing life in which all the scientific structures that are valid for him occur purposefully, are stored up as acquisitions, and have and continue to become freely available” (Husserl 1970 p. 97-98, italics added).

Transcendental Consciousness is not subjective in a “personal sense” and not naturally given and needs a certain kind of reflection (*epoché*) to be experienced. Husserl is very aware that the human experience of “objectivity” as a state happens within, albeit is projected outside. He has his questions regarding how the two are connected internally. In memory, looking back at interactions with the world, there is an implication that it is memory itself that bridges subject and object; the second bridge is the internal awareness of the memory.

8.2 The compliant ego

Observer's logic *cannot* be used. Setting subjectivity apart from objectivity *cannot* be used. But if observer's logic is set aside, projections lose their concealing properties and are revealed for what they are: *firstly, an a priori construction (not mentioned as such) by Kant for the possibility of experiencing an external world.* Some would say that the senses do this. But without projection, we would experience what we see situated in our eyes and we would hear the sources of sounds deep in our ears. Projections from the sender as projector create a perfect world outside us to be experienced as such. When circular logic is used as a resort, it “only” brings back projections to the sender, but on the level of meaning. Circular logic does not deny the basic projections of the senses, such as colors, sounds, 3D space and so on. Circular logic only shows that the world on any level of meaning (which means total experience) is a projection of self.

The easiest reminder of the true foundation of projection is for us to remember: *every witnessed event is an internal event, and only internal events can be experienced*. The only reason to accept this knowledge except for once finding out, is as a start for the “repair” or “correction” of hindering or not helping meanings, which would otherwise be hard or even impossible to change or to detect. That makes Circular logic a tool too, just like observer's logic is; but Circular logic has a different aim. For now Circular logic is necessary in order to find the ego's truest function. Husserl:

“We have to recognize that relativity to consciousness is not only an actual quality of our world, but, from eidetic necessity, *the quality of every conceivable world. ... but we are obliged with the world to vary ourselves also, and ourselves we cannot vary except within the limits prescribed to us by the nature of subjectivity*” (Husserl 1927 p. 8, italics, added).

An excerpt such as the above can easily get lost amongst the thousands of pages that Husserl wrote, even when this truly explains the truth of any experience. What Husserl states here is as close as he could have come within the limits of Kant's doctrine: he is referring to true organizational closure. As experience so easily suggests, when no emotions are felt, objective perceptions are possible and do exist. Thus in experience there is no antidote to the experience of an intuited object in sensibility as-it-is-given which is defined as objectivity itself. Husserl's rational belief in objectivity, like Kant before him and like the vast majority of present world inhabitants, made it impossible for Husserl to write his conclusion autopoietically such as this:

“We have to recognize that relativity to consciousness is not only an actual quality of our world, but, from eidetic necessity, the quality of every perceivable world...but the world is obliged to me to vary itself also, through the forces within the limits prescribed to us by the nature of subjectivity” (à la Husserl 1927 p. 8).

An important conclusion must be made: *Every world “made”, makes the maker simultaneously a congruent and compliant inhabitant of that very same world he made*. Herein lies the promise of finding a true description of the ego.

Note: To “make worlds” is not to make the triggers behind them. The things-in-themselves stay “untouched” in their inaccessibility. For instance behind the “the structures of (any) flesh and bones” are the real inaccessible properties of the things-in-themselves expressed in structural constraints independent of any meaning projected to them.

So how is the ego made, what does it do, what does it require and why does it need to exist?

8.3 The function of the ego

Normally the ego is regarded and regards itself as an independent “stand-alone” entity, making the world which is experienced also independently from the ego as observer. But there is a hindering philosophical abstraction in the concept of the

world. *No organism including humans can experience the world except in extremely small parts in real time.* The rest of the world is outside experience. That makes the ego as an overall entity an abstract concept, a kind of reification as-if it is “context-less”. A person can only find him or herself in one context at a time out of that part of ego relevant to it, even when all possible contexts including the one in real time are internally and *categorically* described in i-niche. There is no general context encompassing *all* possible contexts. This makes a general ego nonexistent, except as an abstract tool of thought suggested by an existing body which seems to appear the same in all contexts.

On a nice warm morning, an eight-year old girl sits in the garden on the grass, humming softly and counting wild daisies. Her hands dance like daffodils over the grass and the little flowers. Suddenly she shifts her attention when she sees something different. Before that moment she picked up a dry leaf fallen from a nearby tree in the form of a heart. She could become interested for a short time, even put it aside to take it home or she could put it aside after a few seconds and ignore it. There is no law-like prescription to distinguish the borders between different parts of the ego because of different contexts, but I would say that the girl is still in that part of herself that enjoys the sunny morning, counting flowers irrespective of her choice to pick the leaf up or not. Autopoietically the sun, the garden, the flowers, but also the fallen leaf and more, all belong to one categorical description of the event. If the leaf had the form of a doll or a dog, something that would make it unfit to the event-category, that would be different.

But now she does see something different, very different for her. Whatever it is, it becomes a trigger, that does not fit the overall category. The trigger *will* awaken meaning. If the meaning is important enough and not related to the morning event, the existing context will slip into a new one, and therefore the girl’s experienced world will change (different category). She now sees a big rusty key lying in the grass, partly in the ground. She looks startled and immediately she stands up and stops humming. She forgets the daisies, the garden and the lovely morning and runs to the house, leaving the key behind.

If something like this happens, the key triggers a different part of her, like every context (trigger) —if it’s *different and important enough*—will trigger the compliant ego part. This happens at the (temporary) expense of the previous ego-part which is not compliant to the new trigger.

Meeting or observing someone, is “only” experiencing a very small part of his “total being”, which as a totality does exist inside, but is inaccessible both to the observers and to the person observed. The observer can only perceive the incomplete (see section 5.4.1). The ego, as a unity, consists of many parts; every part is related to its relevant (categorical) part of the world in order to function. In psychology, the ego can have different roles (e.g. Block 1961, Schwartz 1987). So the personality of a human, or his ego, or his identity, is like a multi-faceted diamond. Each facet relates to a certain group of triggers, forming together a reference context for that part of the diamond. A reference context is like the

prototype of a category. It is the prototype generalization of a context which triggers the accompanying ego part that belongs to it and which is functional to it. Specific, or particular, ego parts outside their normal contexts become meaningless.

For instance: a man, who is a rally driver and also a good cook, has won prizes in local contexts with his gourmet recipes and has also won many races. But what is being a good cook worth when he is behind his car's steering wheel? What value can be given to his "driver-part" when he is in the kitchen? So, theoretically, only one facet of the "diamond" can be observed or experienced at a time: when it actually operates. This is so even when many different facets can be remembered and may add meaning to a single facet. This may complicate things when contamination occurs. The functionality of the ego is the functionality of internal niche. The functionality of internal niche is to define interactive behavior. The functionality of interactive behavior is to maintain identity which at least for humans is mostly defined by the content (belief systems / programs) described by internal niche and so circularity is restored. Only from this perspective life is meaningless in the sense there is no "plan", no goal, no purpose. Humans, who can only individually and personally make sense of the world, make a very personal ego and in normal self-reflection people get some awareness of their own "general" ego, but always incomplete and fundamentally reversed when circular logic is not used.

The practical function of the ego is to determine how to interact and therefore how *to be* in the world, one context at a time.

What is needed for consciousness to "construct" ego and to maintain its programs is faith—often blind faith—and the ego's "webs of interrelated meaning" gets (blind) faith in abundance from its maker. Faith alone in one's own meaning(s) is all that is needed for consciousness to **identify** with or associate with its own descriptions and to become ego and acting it out. Faith always exists; even the most insecure people are precisely insecure because of their (blind) faith in all the knowledge they have that keeps them insecure. Even Descartes' doubt was not *about* his doubt, as the end-result of his reasoning, his doubt was rock solid.

Another angle concerning the awakening of the ego is seeing ego as a self-created narrative (or script), but acted out context by context, like a very good actor, which by associating with the script makes the projected script on screen fully alive and believable. The difference makes ego's script starts at birth or even before whereby actor and scriptwriter change places all the time. The science that studies ego (psychology) is indispensably connected to the world. Behavior is the real empirical proof that egos exist.

8.4 The making of the ego makes the world and vice versa

In making *delicious* bread or a *dangerous* tiger, the maker inescapably also defines him or herself (compliant ego). Triggers do not define him / her, but he / she defines the experience of triggers according to his / her present self. This present self is dynamic and not fixed, as the constant dance between meaning-maker and triggers cannot be fixed with evolutionary retreatment of practically all fixed instincts.

Earlier it was stated (as an example) that the tiger and the zoo and any other phenomenon cannot be “made” without the experience of adjectives. Adjectives best explain the nature of the relation between subject and object (section 5.17.2). When it comes to the tiger, when determining what it is for an observer (maker), he *simultaneously creates a new self*, a new ego-part, which is only valid in that context. The creation of the tiger (“what does it mean to me”) and (that part) of the ego *happens at the same time*, but although these two things happen as if they were one (one relation) they will not be experienced as such. In the making, the intention of awareness is towards the tiger and the simultaneous creation of a compliant ego is, in most or all cases, outside awareness. A successful Las Vegas tiger-trainer will have a different ego part related to tigers than most people. What must be taken into account is that the relation of *Ego* is a categorical relation. If a person before meeting or hearing a tiger for the first time already possesses the category and its sub categories “dangerous animals” —which is compliantly linked to a “weak” ability of the ego to ensure its safety— “making the tiger” “only” means adding a new member to an already existing sub category. In that case a really new compliant ego part is not created as it already exist. As Husserl has implied, every “world” will have its own inhabitant, determined within the limits imposed by itself (his or her own sense-making). The formation of meaning can happen at once (trauma or its positive similitude) or gradually over the years or even over a lifetime. This is common knowledge, only slightly rewritten. People do not need to “meet” tigers in order to “make” them. In the end, yes, inevitably someone has met a tiger, but personally tigers can be made without meeting one. People can accept the tiger as it is made (meaning) by the ones they love or trust, so they transform (interpret) the narratives or text of others into their own meaning. By taking the narratives of others seriously, they form and enriched or they devaluate their own ego. *It is impossible to make meaning of subject and object apart, independently from each other.* Only projection suggests this. Meaning-making (humans) is a direct core effect of a truly symmetrical organizational closure process, but asymmetrical in terms of the external. As was explained earlier, animals obey the same process without being aware of meaning. Meaning is invisible in the “instructions” for behavior but becomes “visible” in the understanding of observers.

In order to understand the functionality of the ego, the simplistic model of internal descriptions of triggers—faithful to autopoietic internal reference defining its particular nature—linked to interactive behavior meant for the context of those triggers, needs refinement. While meaning is a core functional property of i-niche, it is more complex than may be suggested at first glance. It directly connects internal descriptions of external triggers (including adjectives) to *prescriptions* of behavior, in “default” or normal mode.

Yet there is a third link, “perpendicular” to the link between meaning-of-trigger (i-niche) and behavior (niche), which embeds niche in and makes it part of the rest of the internal (psychological) dynamics of the person. This connects the internal niche- niche link to the “*running*” internal “*state of affairs*” of the system at that

moment. Mood, energy level, hunger and many possible other states, all prior to the detection of the external “trigger”, may or may not influence niche in terms of going into action (or not). I-niche determines behavior when it occurs, but does not determine whether it will occur. The earlier model of ego parts, as a logical conclusion of (i-) niche, appears to be multi-layered, something which influences niche in a different way. For instance, the ego part which is afraid of flying has (in this case when someone still steps onto the airplane) a competing part in exactly the same external context (following the same triggers): this is the strong ego part which overrides the inhibiting meaning “flying is dangerous” and uses *discipline* to step onto the plane. Obviously, that part considers flying safe enough. That shows that in i-niche there is at least a double level, two parts which conflict with each other when triggered by the same trigger(s). While the default part (in the unconscious) feels the emotion but “lives” in the past, the pure cognitive conflicting part (in the conscious), that isn’t limited to an emotional response, has or may have a more realistic meaning of flying, by delegating (control) capabilities to the trusted pilot and by having faith in the capabilities of airplane designers and manufacturers. Yet, the use of discipline cannot guarantee a fast transfer of meaning between the two parts or that a transfer will ever happen so discipline will still be needed a next time

8.5 The asymmetrical relation

Meaning, as it is defined by humans, defines on its terms the perceived world, the relation towards this world and simultaneously meaning defines the definer. Meaning is an internal triplet, like a coin: it has two sides (subject-object) and a joining side (relation by two compliant adjectives). Meaning connects and what is connected cannot do without and serves by maintaining the relation. Meaning answers the question: “What is it for me?” while questions like “What is it?” cannot exist in experience, there is always a “me” when a question is raised. What-is-it-for-me, when answered, describes the object (that part of the world) accommodated to the subject, and simultaneously answers “How do I handle it, interact with it?” whereby not-handling is also handling, both giving away properties of this “me”. Thus, meaning descriptions inside i-niche are descriptions of an accommodated world and simultaneously a prescription of behavior. The question “How do I handle this?” serves the existential question underneath it: “What am I in this context, who am I?” Triggers are necessary to raise and answer questions of ontology, but not the ontology of the world. The internal relation of world and subject is the opposite of a neutral relation between subject and object. The relation is, in the first place, a meaning relation. *All* meanings serve *only* the nature of the person (personality). There is no equality in the relation, since the relation cannot serve the world; it serves the internal equilibrium within the organizational closure of the individual. The internal equilibrium inside is the “emperor”. All deviations from the equilibrium, trigger above a certain threshold restoration processes which induces motivation. The nature of the “emperor within humans” depends therefore on the *content* of meaning.

Human organization in the autopoietic sense of the word determines structurally important things, such as components, their interrelationships and the blueprint of the CNS and the senses. The human “organization” might determine how projections occur. The organization part mixes the basic properties of sense sensations, like colors, pitch, tactile sensations and so on, projected outwards with meaning. Both types of projections of meaning and sensations intertwine seamlessly in order to construct the holistic experience of a world wrapped around the “invisible” unknown and independent nature of the-things-in-themselves. In i-niche, trigger-meanings and self-meanings are intertwined and interrelated and where afferent neural pathways coming from the senses meet efferent neural pathways towards the muscles, they pass through a “corridor of meaning”.

The total internal ego of the system cannot be projected, experienced or applied. That would be asking for the impossible experience of all context meaning + descriptions simultaneously. Projection does not imply that anything observed can leave the observer’s CNS to inhabit an independent objective world and leave the “subjective”, the “me” behind. It only seems so perfectly in experience. *A choice made in the thesis is that, for nearly everyone, other humans are the most important phenomena of the external world, be it positive or negative.*

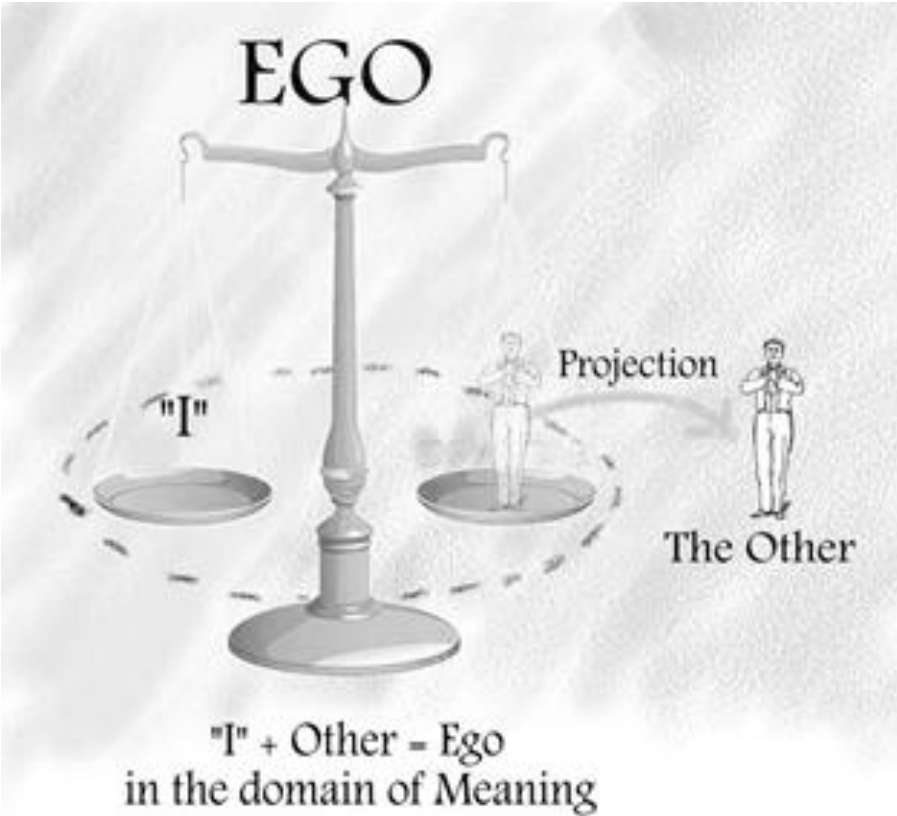


Fig. 4 The relation between I and Other is Ego

In Fig 4, the “other” is hereby the representative of the external world. Internally, world- and self-meaning maintain each other to sustain their relation. Apparently, the relation itself is the interactive part of expressing and maintaining self-referentiality. The relation is or fully determined by instincts and or a mix between learned and instincts for animals, but practically only by “learned” for humans. A great part is also one’s own sum of potentials or talents and they differ from person to person, but they don’t interfere with the functional mechanism of the ego. They more influence the content towards personal equilibrium. The relation changes when descriptions of self or world triggers changes on a categorical level. When one of the two changes, both changes and the reference is then changed.

In other words a definition of the Ego has to do with the relation between self and other (and the world around it). Or, put differently, the ego *is* the relation between one’s internal subject-side and one’s internal object-side, the ego is not being the subject side of the relation. It *is* the relation itself. To distinguish this definition from contemporary definitions it will be spelled *Ego* with an *E*. In contexts where it is necessary to emphasize its relational foundation it will be named *Ego*. In all other cases, even when ego is seen as a relation, it will still be named ego.

The relation between subject and object is also an *asymmetrical* one (see section 8.5). This relation within *defines* the nature of the individual. The sum of all relations is the full *identity* of the individual and is the total sum of all meanings made. Or, to be more precise, all meanings are within, embedded in systems of beliefs and all beliefs are about something experienced in personal reality and economically ordered in respective categories. Behavior is the real empirical proof that egos are different from each other. But why is the relation between the classical notions of subject and object asymmetrical? Organizational closure, the very “law” of living organisms, does not care about the world. The internal object side of the relation and all their categorical descriptions do not serve the world, even adaptation to the world is serving the self as it experiences itself as it beliefs itself to be.

The Ego as a relation, will not experience itself accordingly, but as its opposite: ego in the common sense is a being apart and in certain ways independent from what stands outside as “not-me”. The knowledge of “I-am” needs the knowledge of “what-I-am-not”. There is much more to say about *Ego* (values and functions hierarchy) and its almost infinite possibilities for nuance and complexity, its strange relation with “truth” and “untruth”, growth and development, but all these ideas are outside the scope of the thesis, unless aspects of them emerge and become relevant for morality. In that case, these aspects will be discussed in further texts.

8.5.1 Ego accepts itself as one third of what it is.

Identity, as the internal relationship between self and world, accepts itself very differently. Ego does *not* consider itself to be a relationship. At best, within the domain of friendship and love, ego acknowledges having or worse possessing a relationship. Factually a relations can only truthfully be acknowledged in the

description “I am the relationship”. Organizational closure leaves no room for something else. The ego—following observer’s logic— recognizes itself as an independent whole, a complete unity, and only needs a bathroom mirror to remind himself of this. As for the rest: the relation and his internal “object side”—the world—is fully missing in the mirror’s reflection.

A magical mirror would reflect a full *Ego*: the ego with all the adjective categories of people and important objects. The people that are most important to the ego, or that are unique, may fill a singular category (one member inhabitant, section 5.16) all by themselves, but that is because they are special. Categories of people and objects have their own hierarchy and the magical mirror will increasingly show less important people and objects in the background, until they fade away. That mirror would reflect ego as it is fully entitled to, a richly vibrating, dynamic relational identity, which the body upholds and protects. Belief in the normal mirror makes the ego rip the relation apart and illuminate itself as one side of the coin only. Now the ego becomes—and experiences as real—a standalone subject alone, amidst a close to infinite large and independent world *not of its making*.

Obviously, following the suggestions of the senses is practical, but the price to be paid is a consciousness separated from its own creations. With a reversed, disconnected world, a reversed and disconnected ego will occur too. Not only disconnected from the world projected out, but mainly from itself. For the ego to recognize itself for what it truly is, one just has to say: “*I am only my relation with the world.*” But the world is big and includes, for instance, things such as pebble stones. Saying: “I am my relation with a pebble stone” does not really disclose an autopoietic truth, but saying: “I am my relation with the other”, does.

In spite of observer’s logic, projections do not change a thing. The projected world (for practical purposes, on the level of meaning) is a perfect copy of an internal world, which exists only submissive to the ancient autopoietic strategies, goals and processes unchanged by projection itself; the ancient functions are only obscured. What if all external meanings (*not* triggers) were to be recognized as self-made, serving the old existential autopoietic goals: to maintain, support and develop self-growth and development? For the human species, the goals are to fulfill the almost unlimited human potential and to thus achieve the most wellbeing. Then something else may be needed too, in terms of what kind of “animal” human beings are, what is the nature of these “special” organisms? What will be served by the ancient autopoietic goals of the human species?

8.6 Something is missing

Earlier was mentioned that triggers are necessary in order to raise and answer questions of ontology, but not the ontology of the world. The internal relation of world and subject is the opposite of a neutral relation. There is no equality in the relation, as the relation cannot serve the trigger, but must and will serve internal equilibrium determined by self referentiality. *This alone will rule out any external*

reasons for morality, as no trigger in the world could possibly break organizational closure and equalize the relation between subject and object. Biology and the physiology of bodies and their neural systems cannot rationally provide *any* basis for morality. Even the existence of species' members fully depending on the complex (mechanical / social) interactions with others that involve cooperation—for example interactions e.g. in groups of insects (more mechanical than social) such as bees or within herds of cattle, do not require morality. The existence of cooperation within the species' members—is not based on ethics but on self- or species preservation. Also, all kinds of symbiosis occur between thousands of different species already, fulfilling the autopoiesis of the participating unities (e.g. Smith, D. C., & Douglas, A. E. (1987).

As humans generate ethical behavior which is not response-oriented (that is, needs nothing in return) and also mostly behave ethically since ancient times, something is fully missing in the autopoietic domain in terms of explaining morality. The thesis chooses to assume that the nature of internal equilibrium may be *existentially multi-layered*. As all human behavior is meaning-driven and all meaning comes from within, and as the “organization” of the human species gives maximum plasticity to its members to decide their own meaning, the self-referentiality of humans is fully determined (to start with) by the one doing the sense making: that is, by Husserlian Transcendental Consciousness.

Freedom to make meaning also invites error and mistakes, which autopoiesis cannot correct or even detect. Its function is to maintain internal references, not to correct them. So a “paradox” exists, which has to do with the fact that autopoietic “forces” maintain and “protect” a “false” relation with the world, which may end in the premature death of self's and other(s)'.

Chapter: 9 Emotions and Morality

Introduction

Having found a practical definition of *Ego to work*”, which complies with the virtual character of objectivity and complies with autopoiesis’ mechanisms of i-niche and niche under the control / influence of internal states of equilibrium or “internal state of affairs”, (section 8.4), still is unclear where to start to find an avenue leading to morality. Human autopoiesis rather excludes than includes a valid source for humanity, which is not constructed. Apart from finding a new method which is different to Husserl’s “epoché” that would facilitate the respondents in acquiring Transcendental Consciousness, there is another challenge. Husserl accepted Transcendental Consciousness as a final state, impossible to investigate further. In fact, Transcendental Consciousness is in a way “the last man standing”, the final nameless and impartial observer / investigator with no knowledge at all and unable to intent itself, in the same way the eye cannot see itself. If there would still be some knowledge left, lingering in the background of the mind, the first action would be to finish the epoché and to put this last knowledge also in brackets to be pushed away as “irrelevant”. But when the respondent finds himself in this state, how can we proceed further? Which questions could be asked, if any, that would lead to impartial moral arguments? *Where* would possible answers come from?

9.0 To intend Transcendental Consciousness beyond itself

Accepting the possibility whereas the respondents find themselves in “Husserlian Transcendental Consciousness” (for the moment called “Consciousness” with a capital C), what questions should be asked by the interviewer? A question such as “what is, according to you, a basic foundation for morality?” doesn’t seem logical. The “*veil of innocence*” is a context which makes the manifestation of true impartiality possible, a state of consciousness that experiences all knowledge and personal facts standing apart from him, as if its validity is unproven or as-if belonging to someone else.

Having no “stored” knowledge of itself does not magically grant Consciousness universal wisdom. This follows from the fact Consciousness is only what it is: fully apart and detached from one's *Ego*. In addition, awareness (consciousness) needs “intentionality”, something-to-be-aware-of in order to function (Brentano, 1874/2009). Apart from the fact of whether it is true, the daily experience of awareness—in the form of “being aware of”—supports the idea. As all knowledge of the world and of the self, which one can be aware of, is part of the ego and contained by it, and as it is the entire ego which will be held outside the search of the thesis, then all this knowledge is excluded from answering any question. It is very hard, maybe practically impossible, for “Consciousness” to answer questions out of an “empty body of knowledge”. Even worse, now a condition is created

whereby the chance is enhanced for fabricated answers, in order to “help” the interviewer when questioned.

The idea is not to ask Consciousness any questions, but to “activate” it for what it is good at: becoming aware of what it intends. Husserl's Transcendental Consciousness *is not the end of the search, but the very beginning*. True Impartiality is a starting condition, in terms of probing deeper within. In practice, it means directing “Consciousness” towards something other than itself, which has to do with focusing awareness *beyond* itself, to a source of knowledge that is also under the same veil, making it also Transcendental.

The working hypothesis is that there will be two under the veil. Why two? Through the ages, a single universal thinker (source) has been accepted as the “maker” of concepts and thoughts. Kant named this “consciousness”, an ability to think (to construct ideas): this is referred to as “transcendental consciousness” (Kant, cited in Mohanty 1996 p. 23).

The first primary inhabitant of the veil of innocence is an impartial *cognitive consciousness* in the form of Husserlian Transcendental Consciousness: pure awareness, an ability to “cognize”. The “entity” awareness has been known for thousands of years; it is Kant's and Husserl's main point of departure too. The other transcendental inhabitant of the veil that is assumed to exist does not have a name yet and has never been mentioned before in philosophy or science. It is something else than Consciousness, but what Consciousness can intent, and what is not of his making. For some reason, a single Transcendental Source of Emotions *is never mentioned in science or philosophy*. For the thesis it is simply named “Source”. A working hypothesis is made, that this Source which is in the transcendental domain, is the second inhabitant of the veil. The Source cannot be a part of the ego as the ego is a thought-construct in the domain of descriptions. Emotions are a fully different matter and are not part of the domain of descriptions or of the cognitive domain. That makes the Source independent from the ego or its maker, although the Source and Consciousness must be functionally linked. There is a parallel between the Source and the story of Hans Christian Andersen, also showing the independence of the Source from the cognitive domain.

9.1 Hans Christian Andersen (1805-1875), “The Ugly Duckling”

When searching for a particular “something”, criteria are needed to distinct it (to know how to look for it) in order to intent it when found. What could be beyond Transcendental Consciousness, but also Transcendental? Going back to the veil of innocence, we know the method “only functions to exclude all knowledge about self and about the world. Everything else (within the Living)—being not knowledge— stays within the veil.

So what does the knowledge mean, apart from being a big set of descriptions referring to what it describes? In an ideal world in the case of self-knowledge, there should be a perfect match between the true self and one's knowledge about it. Happily, self-knowledge does not exclude the possibility that one's own ideas are

partly faulty and thus incomplete. Only predetermined, biologically programmed life-systems, such as plants and primitive organisms, follow their impeccable path of self-development from “birth”. There appears to be a perfect match between programmed descriptions and what the primitive life system truly or really is.

Take the example of a rose: a rose-seed that is put in the ground will develop under the right external conditions faultlessly into an equally perfect rosebush, with beautiful roses. A rose has many properties, but freedom of choice in terms of making mistakes is not one of them. Human beings (selves) do however have free choice and therefore *are* entitled to and will make mistakes. It is inescapable that some important properties of the human “self”, although existing or underdeveloped, are unknown to oneself and thus are *not included* in man's self-knowledge or self-image, but as part of being are however included in his unconscious. All self-knowledge can only be incomplete. It is *this* incompleteness that fuels the drive for self-development and growth in the psychological domain. Beyond awareness, hidden behind “the mistake-as-truth” (false belief system), is the suppressed part of true being, waiting to be included in a richer self-knowledge. It lies dormant or it (partly) operates in the unconscious.

A most famous metaphor about a non-matching self-description, based on an important mistake, is a children’s story by Hans Christian Andersen: “*The Ugly Duckling*”. In the story, an unhappy duckling, faithful to his mistaken self-image, discovers later on that he is in fact a swan. By re-claiming his true identity (rewriting or reprogramming self-knowledge), he becomes happy again by becoming more of his real self.

In order to understand the story, it is important to keep in mind that underneath the wrong idea of who he is, the duckling’s true identity being a swan stays *unaltered* as if it were untouched by the error. Still the true identity remains *outside* his awareness and therefore outside his experience. Swanlike properties and their “rationale” still exist within the protagonist of the story, irrespective of his own ignorance of it as well as the ignorance of his social context. In truth, a real swan does not need a correct description to exist. But in terms of awareness of more evolved beings like humans there needs to be a correct description in order to *experience* itself for what one truly is. This is logically true for humans as the importance for a “right” upbringing shows.

The existence of a “true-identity” is assumed for the thesis and is somehow linked to the second inhabitant of the veil of innocence. To find out what it might be is what the research is about.

9.2 The morality of babies

The possibility of finding impartial grounds for morality, valid for all, free from subjectivity and from personal, cultural and historical reasons, can only exist if we assume that morality is innate in human beings, that it is part of us from birth, in some way. If morality is innate, then babies are not only sweet and innocent, but have the social ability to innately prefer the “good”, not only for themselves, but

also for others, in a non-economical way. That is to say, not as a trade-off in order to gain something, but as a gift: the gift of empathy. Research has found that this is indeed the case.

“The current study replicates and extends the finding (Hamlin, Wynn & Bloom, 2007) that infants prefer individuals who act prosocially toward **unrelated third parties** over those who act anti-socially. Using different stimuli from those used by Hamlin et al. (2007), with somewhat younger subjects and two additional social scenarios, we replicated the findings that (a) infants prefer those who behave prosocially versus antisocially, and (b) these preferences are based on the social nature of the actions...” (Hamlin & Wynn 2011, bold and underline added).

Hamlin and Wynn’s research found that babies of nine, six and even three months old preferred “helpers”, who helped the protagonist of the scenarios (a puppet) to reach its goal. The babies tended to dislike and avoid puppets that prevented the protagonist's success. Biologists might say that this may not be the beginnings of morality; they might argue that third order autopoietic organisms (such as a herd or groups) learn that helping each other favors the group to cope and survive better under the doctrine of the survival of the fittest. The puppets used in the experiment were a dog, a cat and a rabbit. To feel empathetic towards other species, in this case animals does not fit that reasoning. It is unlikely that babies at that early age have a well-developed “mechanics” of reasoning; more likely they felt *intuitively* something about how to value the puppets’ social or anti-social behavior *irrespective* about the nature of the puppets.

9.3 Morality and emotions

There are ideas that connect, albeit in a “fuzzy” way, the “system of emotions” to morality. A similar statement comes from Carroll Izard:

“Perhaps all the emotions play some part, directly or indirectly, in the development of conscience and morality.” (Izard, 1977 p. 421)

Comparable suggestions have been made by many (e.g. Brabeck and Gorman 1992; Weiner 2006; Turiel & Killen 2010). Haidt (2003) and Wilson (1993) go further and speak about “moral emotions”.

How would emotions help the thesis? What is the scientific status of a theory of emotions? To connect morality to emotions does not make morality more rational or easier to understand if a theory of emotions lacks the same authority which is missing for morality. Kant developed a pure rational system of morality, devoid of emotions. But in the end, he made a teleological choice (MacIntyre, 1984 p. 56). Most theories of morality, in one way or another, do allow a relevant link to emotions and infuse unwillingly the very unclear scientific status of emotions into the theory of morality:

“There have been no adequate theories of emotion to guide investigations” (Plutchik 1980)... “It appears that the only belief held in common by psychologists of emotions is a conviction that emotions exist and that they exert an influence on human beings.” (Brabeck and Gorman 1992 p. 90)

And

“We describe a continuum of perspectives on emotion and highlight how different (*often* mutually incompatible) perspectives on emotion lead to different views” (Gross & Barrett 2011 p. 8, italics added)

An overall comprehensive explanatory theory of emotions does not exist yet. Solomon (1993) went so far as to speak of a *philosophy of emotions*. Present theories of emotions are very fragmented, although some meet more consensus than others. James-Lange-based theories are out of fashion; these theories state that the body is primarily responsible for emotions. We feel fear for a tiger not because we assess it to be dangerous, but because we feel fear and goose bumps. Then, once we experience the fear, then we judge the tiger as dangerous. Modern neurobiological schools of thought, which assume that bodily factors *primarily* influence the properties of emotions, give new life to these theories.

Cognitive theories accept the opposite view; they claim that emotions have “intentionality”, meaning that emotions are *about something*. In this view, the nature of emotions is based on cognitive judgments. The intentionality of emotions also connects emotions, directly or indirectly, to the world. And in that sense, the ground of emotions is the ground of psychology: that is, the world, just like Husserl noticed a long time ago.

There are however too many exceptions to this theory; for instance an object / event is judged as safe (e.g. tigers in movies) and may still arise fear in terms of seeing tigers on the screen. The very effect of experiencing fear in perfectly safe environments is the reason behind the huge popularity of horror movies. Also the assessment of a dangerous situation (in this case, a real tiger) may not evoke fear for a minority of people (for instance a tiger dompteur in a circus). Also, cognitive theories do not explain well the fear people may have for non-existent “things” like zombies or vampires. Despite the many theories on emotion, the most popular ones tend to center on the appraisal theories of emotions (e.g. Lazarus, 1991; Scherer, Schorr & Johnstone, 2001).

“Cognitive processes clearly play some role in determining *when* we experience emotional states...Numerous theorists have argued that the most important cognitive processes involve appraisal of the situation.” (Eysenck, 2010 p. 572)

One of the newer theories—“*Integrative embodiment theory of emotions*” (Newen & Barlassina 2013)—*incorporates* bodily origins next to the cognitive element (assessments or judgments).

“While all feeling theories of emotion overlook the intentional object as an essential part of the emotion, the cognitive theories do tend to forget the feeling dimension of the emotion. Only the integrative embodiment theory takes all these components into account as constitutive of the emotion” (PR, Ruhr-Universität Bochum June 2013).

The way how the two systems—body and mind, seemingly apart but together—constitute an emotion is unknown. In the press release of the theory of Newen &

Barlassina, an emotion is mentioned “...as a separate kind of mental state, namely an emotion that we conceive as a complex pattern of distinctive characteristics”. Complex, in this context, equals however Griffiths' “complex”, denoting “how little we know about [emotions]” (Griffiths 2004 p. 237).

Feelings are important inner experiences. Any knowledge or interpretation about emotions, however, as it is in the domain of descriptions (observer's logic), is based on personal understanding and forms part of our ego, so is not helpful for the research. All knowledge of emotions must be put to one side as-if irrelevant, and their content won't be used. As expected, the unresolved and fragmented theories of emotions do not help the research to give morality a more rational and clear authority.

9.4. Emotions and Circular logic

The difficulty of psychology in researching emotions has to do with the use of observer's logic. What could be more intrinsically embedded in the living than emotions? Emotions possibly exist even before the development of rationality and autopoietically deserve to be approached with Circular logic.

One of the major problems with appraisal theories of emotions is that, in “observer's logic” mode, different people react emotionally differently to the same event. Most examples can be rationally explained and support the appraisal theory. After interviewing, most of the different reactions are indeed based on different appraisals of the same event. A problem occurs when the appraisals are similar and the experienced emotions are not. For instance, two friends both acknowledge that flying is safe, but one feels safe and the other feels fear and needs to discipline himself in order to step into the airplane. Another example, mentioned earlier, is about people who are too afraid to see horror movies or leave the cinema because the werewolves or the vampires are too threatening. Also, there are judgments or appraisals of situations, which are considered very dangerous, and yet fear is not felt or the danger even attracts people. It is likely that all people know bungee jumping, under controlled conditions, it *is* as perfectly safe as flying, but most will refuse a free ride into the air anyway.

Emotions are feeling experiences. For instance, we feel joy or sadness or anger. But where do emotions come from, is there a source, what are their functions? They originate in us, but from where and more importantly, why? In relation to Kant's question—what makes the experience of the world possible—when attempting to better understand a possible link between emotions and morality, the question here is: “What makes the experience of emotions possible?”, “*What exists a priori to emotions*”?

Suppose emotions are like the colors of the light falling on the floor when the light enters the house through the colored window panes. The one inside, amidst the colors, sees the world through what is etched on the window panes. The inscriptions tell him what he detects outside and control the properties of the panes, which also control the passing colors. Too bad when (near) identical inscriptions on the window

panes of other houses do not necessarily pass through the same colors. What is the role of the sun in all of this? Is the sun a neutral source?

What is missed by appraisal theories, following Circular logic, is the fact that emotions are *not* about any *appraisals of world events*. They are strictly a response to *Ego* as the *asymmetrical relation* between subject and object within (section 8.5). Projection obscures the relation between two meanings **as one**. The relation between subject and object determines the emotions, but under the condition that object meaning does not primarily and objectively serve the object (the trigger), but reflects the meaning of subject in relation to that context. The subject does not adapt to the world but *uses* the world serving its goal: self-maintenance. The goal adapts the world as it is known and experienced to itself (subject) making it a compliant world. This diametrically opposes the conclusions of observer's logic. Contemporary appraisal theories of emotions focus on the appraisal of the “object” side or as a separate exercise focus on the appraisal of the subject side. That cannot explain emotions. Strictly speaking, emotions are not responses towards the meaning of triggers, *emotions do not respond to the world at all and never did*.

Example 1: Driving on a B-road means regularly meeting an oncoming vehicle which then passes by, mostly within one meter (often less), side mirror to side mirror. This also means passing death itself that kills faster than a Grizzly bear. Nonetheless, most drivers experience this as something completely safe, safer even than lighting their BBQ with alcohol on a hot summer day

Example 2: Two people, a native and a tourist, both admit that rattlesnakes are quick and deadly animals. Both approach a rattlesnake lying in the desert sand, between some small rocks. The task is to earn one hundred dollars, by catching the snake with bare hands and then putting the animal into a bag, unharmed. One person declines and says: “Not me”. While watching the rattle snake, even the thought of it evokes a big fear in him. The other person is focused; he observes the snake for ten seconds in a relaxed way. He says “OK, I’ll do it”. He circles around the snake and manage to quickly grab the snake by its end (tail). He then rapidly holds his arm stretched out in front of him, while bending his upper body away from the snake. He puts the snake into the bag. The other man asks him: “Wow... were you not afraid?” The man answers with a big smile: “I have done this before.” Further questioning reveals that the man without fear showed even more respect for the deadly properties of the snake than the tourist.

Example 3: There are some teenagers who feel uncomfortable at parties or in student bars; they don’t find it easy to make contact with others. They look up to the others, who share conviviality and joy. They really would like to join but can’t. Somehow an inhibiting fear resist their wish of actively joining in. The fear is based on a sort of mind-reading, having to do with the idea that the “other” will turn them down. The “why?” of the turning down has already been accepted as a fact, before the possibility of such an event actually happening, and is a part of their self-image.

As mentioned above, “passing death” so many times, by the hundreds on the road is not the same thing as having an unwanted appointment with one of them.

Both drivers, approaching each other, have sufficient faith in both each other's *capabilities in handling* oncoming traffic. Fear is thus not felt and instead peace or even boredom are experienced. The latter could actually become dangerous. Still, the hard facts are that death always "travels" on busy roads with every encounter. Those who object to such descriptions and regard such a metaphor as an exaggeration just have to imagine replacing oncoming cars with speeding bullets. There is no major difference between cars and bullets, but there is a big difference in the skill of most "drivers" in avoiding them.

Emotional states are not responses to bullets or cars, to snakes or to teenagers at parties; they cannot be in spite of the sometimes overwhelming appraisals locked to the events, really "making clear" emotions are valid responses to the external. The emotional states in the case of the example "fear" of the driver, the native man, the tourists or the teenagers are internal response to what their awareness of what they are capable of.

All fear or lack of fear is a response to the unconscious question "Do I accept, do I know that I am fully *capable* of handling the situation?" This has to do with an evaluation of internal niche, evaluating thus the relation between internal descriptions and the linked interactive behavior (see section 5.6.2). When the answer is yes, fear is replaced by concentration, supported by adrenaline when relevant. If shy teenagers knew beforehand and believed that they could hold the interest of others in a mutually positive and memorable way, their inner insecurity in that context would fade away fast. Yet, not all emotions are linked to capabilities; but fear as a very basic and natural emotion is coupled to the first property that biology requires from the Living: the maintenance of physical safety. People who refuse to do a Bungee jump or leave the cinema in the middle of a "scary" movie, react to their underdeveloped capability to handle fear "an sich". It is the fear for the fear that drives them out of perfectly safe places. To feel fear or joy or other emotions in the safe environment of for instance a cinema or hearing a convincing narrative has a reason. Narratives and stories and their visual expressions in movies trigger emotions as the listeners and watchers relate themselves with the stories as if the perceived is real (enough). Identifying oneself with the realness of (visual) narratives and their protagonists, naturally triggers meaning and emotions compliant to the narratives. Identifying with the protagonist and or context of the movie, severely degrades the real present context of the safe theater

Emotions are also responses to a "matched" equilibrium (a state of being), which does not demand active behavior: enjoying the warmth of the sun, the smile of another person, looking at something beautiful or listening to music, *if* "the internal state of affairs" (section 8.4) allows it.

A state of being (e.g. triggered by the loss of a beloved) may involve sadness or even depression, which has lost interest in "smiles of others" or in enjoying the morning sun. The then present "internal state of affairs" has the power to override the natural content in i-meaning linked to the real present triggers (see section 8.3). If present triggers cannot "reach" a person, they are literary overridden by the past

of a different context absorbed in its meaning sometimes as-if that meaning concerns the present. One of the most efficient ways to stay locked in the past is to let negative feelings stay in the present. Much more can be autopoietically deduced about the workings of the very rich and important domain of emotions. All emotions could very well be faultless, while errors in judgments do abundantly exist. It would be outside the scope of the thesis to delve into theories of emotions more, as a theory of emotions is not directly part of the thesis.

9.5 Transcendental Source of Emotions

What might be some clues or cues that would lead to the possible existence of a Transcendental Source of Emotions? The concept “Transcendental Source of Emotions” (with “quotes”) produces only one “hit” in a Google search (and other online searches as of 7/19/2015). The search “source of emotions” produces 110 million Google “hits”. The large number of “hits” for the latter search can be explained by the fact that most schools of thoughts if not all accept emotions, as a response to worldly events or to appraisals about them, matching the popular appraisal theories of emotions in psychology. Other sources for emotions among the hits vary creatively, from God, the body to arts and movies as important sources.

The one Google “hit” to “Transcendental Source of Emotions” refers to a question I posted in a philosophy forum. To find a new lead, common knowledge about emotions is differently interpreted. The following points, A-E, may not all necessarily be true, but will explain the route of thought followed in order to synthesize the possibility of the existence of a Transcendental Source of Emotions. Important clues are that emotions are of primary importance in determining “quality of life” as experienced and at the same time there is *zero* freedom to choose emotions. Many might disagree with both points though, especially the latter.

A: What is the proof of a good, joyful life or its opposite? There are two possible answers: to think and believe “I am happy” (or not), or to feel it. I personally have only known one person who believed that he was happy and who answered the question with: “Because I think so”. So I asked him “If you think that you are happy and believe it every day and you wake up every day feeling bad or depressed, would...” to which he interrupted, “Hell no, then I would not be happy”.

Most—if not all—people would agree that the real proof of a good life is to feel a good life. There may still be many who disagree, as for instance they may project happiness belonging to a *future state* of achieving set goals as a label to the present route of reaching them in spite of how they actually feel in the present.

B: (1) If everybody could design a house to live in for the rest of their life (or delegate this designing to others), who would opt for a cold, moist, draughty house, unless convinced that they need penance to somehow “straighten things out”? In this latter situation, wouldn’t it be proven that such a house was pure punishment? If humans could design or choose their daily feelings, who would still choose to be depressed, suicidal or even simply unhappy? The principle cannot be that we create or choose our feelings, in the same way that we choose and prepare our breakfast;

such an idea is disrespectful to all who feel depressed and require help. We do *accept* our feelings however not as blind coincidences, but as naturally linked to our appraisals.

(2) Appraisal theories also point to a kind of mechanism, albeit not fully understood, which would hold that in order to change emotions, cognitive appraisals do play a role. As said before (section 9.4), emotions respond to the asymmetrical internal relation between subject and object and not just to “objects”. Autopoiesis states that all processes serve an internal equilibrium, or a “set state” as the internal reference (Maturana et al. 1980 p. 26, 51. Yet, an internal reference does not automatically trigger positive emotions. For example, people who experienced difficulties in their childhood tend to prolong their unhappiness in adult life, which autopoietically fully makes sense. The biological nature of circular logic protects the internal set of internal descriptions regardless of what sets them once (instincts or learnings), and when once set, it is accepted and protected by the very process of organizational closure itself regardless of how they feel.

C: (B1) and (B2) together sheds a different light on the use of emotions. In spite of the fact that one knows he cannot make his emotions, we accept them to be linked to personal descriptions (opinions, meaning), which are under the control and responsibility of the conscious mind. Descriptions are personally accepted as true *irrespective* of how they feel. Some truths feel bad, some truths feel good is the resulted logic behind it. This irrespective-ness leads to the conclusion that in the possible rational domain of descriptions, emotions being positive or negative *are not linked* to the logic behind opinions and meaning and thus not linked to the (supposed) truth value of the logic applied. Still the opposite is happening as-if emotions are linked to truth. With irrational beliefs only emotions —because of the realness of how they are experienced—make (irrational) beliefs equally real by the intensity of what is felt. This is true for sound rational ideas too, but those ideas also proof their right to exist by being also logically right in the eyes of supporting observers. Still there is another equally important proof to uphold, maintain and defend personal opinions and meaning in spite of being rational or not or in spite of how they feel. Meanings as subjective as they may be, have proven to be *also* real as they are experienced as (projected) properties of the perceived and not as meaning. Projection is the cause of the proof (section 5.17-5.17.3). Thus meanings have a triple foundation of their truthfulness. The triple bind to the reality of “realness” of personal beliefs / meanings makes it natural to defend them against opposing logics in spite of how they feel. The natural habit to protect personal meanings, if it must against all odds, is fully backed up by the organizational closure of Autopoiesis.

D: It was clear to René Descartes that everything is doubtful except “being aware” of the doubt itself. It is even possible to “be aware” of the fact that one is aware. Experiences, as such, are in the first person and thus universally self-verifying. Being doubtful, or having the experience of the “deepest” uncertainty, is one of the infinite experiences of proof of one's own existence. This does not have

to do with knowledge or certainty. How can one experience his non-existence? The conclusion must be granted that everyone is entitled to say: “My existence itself must be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth including this statement”

This sentence has immediately consequences. Something that exists must have true properties. So every man and woman may also conclude: “*I, who do exist, must have true properties even when unknown to me or all mankind*”.

E: Handled in chapter 8, for an individual “identity” to exist as the total sum of constructed meanings, the true, partly true or seriously wrong meanings compared to the real or true self (the unknown true properties) need to be faithfully accepted as true. In a way autopoiesis forbids instinctive knowledge to be replaced by disbelief, but accepts false knowledge when believed. Descriptions based on disbelief are not accepted in i-niche, all constructions must be right for its maker. Sometimes right is not based on understanding but on trust, which is also the opposite of disbelief. The constructions fall in a natural way under the responsibility and competence of Consciousness, who made them. *This is not true* for emotions. Emotions linked to meaning cannot be changed without changing the meaning. Although feelings / emotions are a serious part of human experiences, they do not fall under the responsibility and competence of Consciousness. The *experience* of having an identity is thus determined by two “players” both Transcendental (a priori), whereby their relationship needs meaning in order to function. One player is Consciousness, a priori to meaning, the other a priori to emotions with properties unknown. All of the above combined make it not inconceivable that the other player a priori to emotions, gives an internal emotional FB loop to guide the development of internal descriptions of identity (making up an *Ego*) “true to itself”. A simple metaphor of this conjecture is Hans Christian Andersen's story “The Ugly Duckling”, described above. This emotional FB loop is also a trigger, be it an internal one and obeys like all triggers its meaninglessness it offers to its perceiver.

Chapter 10: Internal communication

Introduction

All theories covered so far do not produce a method different enough from Husserl's epoché (section 3.1.2) to guide respondents in how to become truly impartial. What the theories do support is that the brain, from a biological as well from a philosophical point of view, is able to allow the realization of the state of Transcendental Consciousness as a pure impartial being.

It is now time to seek practical, applicable theories that would make the veil of innocence possible as a method. Except from unusable methods, such as Eastern meditation methods, which takes a lot of time and perseverance or Husserl's epoché, a different existing method to reach Transcendental Consciousness or ego-free Consciousness could not be found or likely does not exist yet. The goal would be to make sure that the ego and thus *Ego* is "at the sidelines" when the important part of the interview begins. *Ego*, practically defined as the influence of meaning to the pure biological metaphors (e.g. colors being a metaphor of electromagnetic wavelengths) of sensed triggers is best seen psychologically as the total sum of all meaning, be it about self or about the world. *Ego*, as the sum of meaning constructions (interrelated web of meanings), perfectly explains personal differences in emotions and different individual behaviors about and in the same context. So, how would it be possible to put the ego aside taking into account that it is in fact impossible for an overall central ego to exist (otherwise named a "context-less ego", see section 8.3)?

10.0 The possibility of consciousness to communicate with the ego

The ego was earlier compared to a script; this is a useful comparison. Convincing movie stars do not play their roles as if they are following a script; it is amateurs who seem to be playing out scripts. Great actors from Hollywood, Bollywood or Tokyo *become* the script they play, transforming the illusion of the character into a convincing real person on the screen or on the stage. The well-known secret is to fully identify with the protagonist in the script. The process of identification is the merging of consciousness and information into "one". The criteria for this sort of identification are different for actors from common man. Actors do not need to believe that the script is based on the truth. For consciousness to become the ego, *that belief that the "script" one is involved in is based on the truth, is crucial*. The ego is not after all the same as the conscious mind; that is why the conscious mind can fully detach itself from the ego and communicate with it as part of the unconscious mind.

"The ability of the nervous system [neo-cortex] to **interact with its own states**, *as if these were independent entities...*" (Maturana et al. 1980 p. 25-26, bold, italics added)

And:

“Furthermore: ...an observer through orienting behavior can orient himself towards himself, and then **generate communicative descriptions** that orient him towards his description of this self-orientation ...” (Maturana et al. 1980 p. 29, bold added)

And from Husserl:

“The ego which is present now, thus temporalized, has contact with its past ego, even though the latter is precisely no longer present: **it can have a dialogue with it** and criticize it, as it can others (Husserl 1970 §50 p. 72, bold added).

Accepting Husserl’s remark or the studies of Archer (2007) supported by autopoiesis, one can contact and communicate internally. To regard that the unconscious plays an important part of one’s personality is commonly accepted by nearly everyone and by most schools of psychology. The role of the human unconscious is not making decisions, it is holding information, not constructing it. The content of internal descriptions and niche as the sum of all interactive behavior is—once determined by the human consciousness—held in the unconscious and mostly executed with no resistance of the conscious. All ego’s information is hold in memory but autopoietically memory is a present structure and does not describe the past. As said before memory is a label made by observer’s logic. What is not found in science is that the unconscious has a kind of identity of its own with important properties of the conscious, which makes it communicable. To communicate with the unconscious *as-if being another* [consciousness] (with a wholly different function compared to the conscious) is generally not accepted and mostly seen as auditory hallucinations in psychology. Most studies research “patients” with hearing voices and they are categorized under “AVH” (Auditory Verbal Hallucinations). A lot of further study is still necessary (e.g. Larøi, F., Sommer, I. E., Blom, J. D., Fernyhough, C., Hugdahl, K., Johns, L. C., ... & Waters, F. (2012). Archer (e.g. 2007) brings forth the “normality” of hearing internal voices and having internal discussions and so she places them outside the psychopathology of contemporary mainstream (clinical) psychology and psychiatry.

The conscious “I-as-ego” considers himself as independent and in control, as the “captain of the ship”, with oneself as the only crew. Therefore, the possibility to interview important “sub-parts” of the self, on an equal basis of being, may sound to some as strange, impossible or worse as something completely illusionary.

But where is the ego when detached from I-Consciousness? By definition it must be in the unconscious with all the rest of what it might hold. The unconscious holds the sum of all information which forms the ego, while the conscious “occupies” only a *fraction* of that sum, depending on context (triggers) or disciplined will. The unconscious also consists of much more than just what was once in consciousness. The unconscious includes emotions and their source and most importantly it includes all information regarding the Self and it’s still to be developed potentials / talents, which would be experienced with the right [allowing] belief-systems. *The*

swan – duck tale shows metaphorically that not what one truly is, is experienced, but one’s descriptions about self, determine experience.

Detachment from the ego not in terms of “controlling” it but in terms of respectfully helping it by giving it more choices still needs “will”, but not using it *against* the ego. The will here, does not comply with discipline. Although internal detachment is often linked to some form of disagreement, detachment in friendship is something that happens very often socially. Many parents or friends are able to be detached from the stories of those close to them, in order to help and guide them. To *offer* ego detachment as a “gift”, in the form of a choice, is to delegate the power of detachment to the ego and away from consciousness. The idea is when ego voluntarily withdraws, it withdraws from Husserlian Transcendental Consciousness, its maker. So how to construct this different method? Such a method is fully the *reversal* of all known methods in terms of reaching an “ego-less” state and almost guarantees cooperation under certain conditions, which normally are troublesome. So what more is needed to develop such a method?

10.1 “The Colours of your Mind”

Meanings also imply a hierarchy. There is a fine hierarchy in meaning. The higher the meaning is, the more it controls “lower order” meaning. Also, even though a group of triggers is accepted as a distinctive unity by an observer and so in some form is recognized by categorization, the recognition will still leave out a considerable numbers of triggers that are irrelevant for the intended category, but are part of the larger context that is perceived. But external triggers do not only awaken meaning about the triggers. In the first instance they do; but the trigger meaning may is also supervised by one or more higher level meta-meaning, which may intervene and apparently this is always the case. For example, people in a room listening to an interesting and important presentation will quickly lose interest if smoke appears under the door, quickly spreading through the room. The smoke triggers a “safety-part” of the ego, overriding the part which is interested in the presentation. Did the trigger awaken the safety part or is the safety part always there, lingering in the background, continuously alert even if outside awareness? If that is the case, the trigger (in this case the smoke) does not awaken the safety-part, but triggers it to intervene. The consequential loss of interest in the presentation can be replaced by (any) other overriding meaning, for instance the shift in the presentation to a different ideology hostile to the audience.

A publication by Jerry Rhodes and Sue Thame (1988), based on empirical research done at Philips in Eindhoven in the eighties, found three important functional categories turning out to be *the* three main master divisions of the ego. Their aim was to help businesses (Philips) in finding an excellent decision-making strategy when juggling important variables such as “Best Quality of product” against “Time” and against “Acceptability for others”, which includes for instance, costs.

They developed a model of “thinking” dividing thinking in three modes:

1. The Creative Mind which got the color Green
2. The Realist mind which got the color Red
3. The Critical / judgmental Mind which got the color Blue

“Everything you can possibly intend to do with your thinking is found within the one simple picture in Figure 3...**Green** is the code for the unknown, the as yet unrealized future...Green thinking is the fountain of creativity ...**Red** is the code for what is true, what is already known...this is the thinking that finds out, seeks out information...It collects facts and figures...**Blue** is the code for coming to judgment, it requires personal values and beliefs” (Rhodes and Thame 1988 p. 38, bold added).

As a model it is still crude and two-dimensional, but fully suited for the goals of the thesis. I now leave the color naming of Rhodes and Thame behind as it was chosen politically by the authors to avoid stereotyping amongst people. Their book does not speak of “parts” but of *modes* of thinking, assuming a different role for the thinker behind it. Looking at these three fully different thinking functions in the ego, a first thinker can be identified: the *Realist*. The Realist is practically not the objective researcher, which can be approximated. It is the individual observer who mostly intimately cooperates with the critical part, which adds the adjectives.

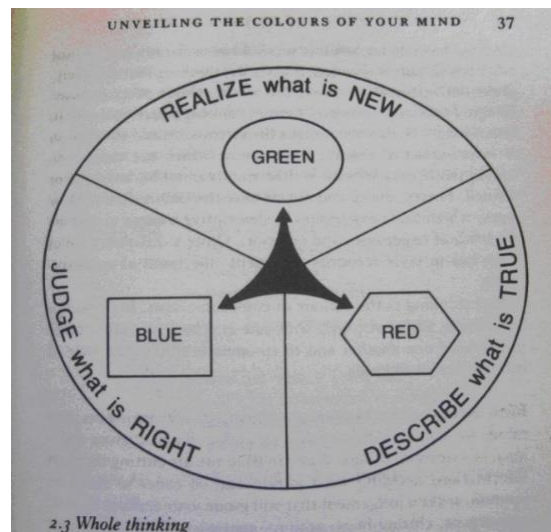


Fig 3 The Colours of your mind

- The *Realist* is the first inspector and uses all its intelligence to distinguish between true and false, what is real and what is unreal. The Realist’s concern is “*Is it true 'for me', does it exist?*” using his five senses and its logic. It does not necessarily mean it is free; it is heavily under the control of the Critic. This is not unlike the way that a rabbit and a squid will have different criteria in defining what is real for them and/or important enough to investigate. For humans, the Realist more or less resembles the theoretically “neutral” investigator, but within the ego’s “naïve” natural position unless neutrality violates personal conviction, then the

Realist is easily contaminated by the next part. The time orientation of the realist is the present.

- *The Critic's* concerns follow primarily the concerns of the Realist, by accepting all of the Realist's conclusions of what "exists to be true (enough)". It does not contradict the Realists, as it is wholly not his function to do so. The Critic's functionality hovers over all processes, including those of the Realist; it guards internal equilibrium and meaning. The Critic needs to first separate safety from danger, important from unimportant, and it also needs to determine "*What is good or bad for me?*" These are all meaning-values, fully dependent on the organism's biological nature and depending on the nature of personal identity, when it comes to humans. The "motor" behind the ego is the Critic, as it is the critic who protects identity. The Critic's orientation has to do with the foundations of its references: these have to do with the past.

- *The Creative* has to do with questions such as "*What is new*", and is presumably linked to a relatively new part in biology; it is difficult or even impossible to discern creativity in more "simple" animals. Most animals do not necessarily need a creative part in order to maintain and live life. Only in despair, when the Realist and the Critic cannot fall back to old learnings and to a routine in order to escape danger, the creative part is required, if it has developed in that particular animal. For example, the call for a *non-routine* escape was possibly created over time using creativity as a property. Because the ego's main foundation is the Critic, which is (cyclically) past-oriented, its ancient attitude to the really "new" is the "fear of the unknown"; this does not view its Creative sibling favorably. The time orientation of the Creative is the future.

Rhodes and Thame added this extra remark to the Creative:

"It [creative thinking] is...odd, upsetting convention, disturbing habits and the status quo [read: which is in the hands of the real powers in ego: Realist and Critic] and so unfortunately...can be misunderstood and suppressed" (Rhodes and Thame 1988 p. 37).

This model can be applied in a broader context. For example, a monk who has lived his whole life in a monastery could have a highly developed Critic with great spiritual values, but a less developed Realist. If the monk were to leave the protected monastery for the city, he might find it very hard to support his economy. On the other hand, a man with a less developed Critic but a highly developed Realist could become a clever bank robber, successfully avoiding guards' patterns and disarming complex security systems (when referring to "high" and "low" this refers to having (or not) conscience and moral values). The usability of the color model solves the question of how to handle the ego. A central *Ego* cannot exist apart from a linguistic general overall "label" as a self-image. But *Ego* as a management board of three can be considered. The question now is how? What else is needed?

10.2 The unconscious “roots” of the ego

The unconscious is an “entity” within all of us; it holds our drives, longings, emotions, memory, our talents, potential, intuitions, dreams and further unknowns. But above all else, the unconscious is a very *living*, very human entity. Also, an unspecified connection exists between pure bodily structures and processes (e.g. the immune system) and the unconscious psyche, a connection which expresses itself, for instance, through the phenomenon of the “placebo effect”.

An important part of the unconscious is the storage and maintenance of Identity (Ego section 8.5) and its reduced self-image, named “the ego”. The ego on a functional level can be considered to be of the three “operators”: Realist, Critic and Creative. The classic way to become (temporarily) ego-less, in a controlled way is to ignore the ego, making it redundant or putting all its criteria in brackets. But with these methods the fundamental relational nature of Identity is ignored. In Eastern mysticism and spiritual theories the ego has a bad name, as if it is the “enemy” or a “monkey”:

“We know only one thing, that our minds [ego] are like monkeys, restless, chattering, up and down, everlastingly moving, moving, moving, thinking, worrying. How can such a mind look? Obviously it cannot. Then we say, ‘How am I to train it to be quiet?’ We spend years in training it to be quiet, and then it becomes another kind of monkey. (Laughter.) This is not a joke. Please do not laugh.” (Krishnamurti 1966)

The spiritual (consciousness) and worldly ego seem to be on opposite sides of the spectrum of human nature. Generally, it takes a long time, even years, to shift from the ego to an temporal ego-less state. This long time may be just because of a fully non-cooperating ego during the process of de-identification. The unconscious does not rectify deeply felt opinions and it turns beliefs into experience as they are believed. The practically infinite plasticity of the unconscious can however be used to the veil of innocence’s advantage.

To strive towards and finally reach an ego-less state is not by definition a demotion of the ego, but can be reframed as its opposite: *honoring the ego*. What helps is the realization that consciousness, be it the conscious or the unconscious, and information (ideas, beliefs, meaning, descriptions) are best regarded as two fully separate and conceptually incompatible domains. It is only when consciousness identifies itself with information that the separation can disappear and the information can be applied and expressed. To address the ego as a living part is fully possible by addressing it as a “him” an alive being. Also, a past ego—for instance in memories—is incomplete as even that resembles more or less a small part of the total sum of interactions and their accompanied webs of meaning as they were *at that time*. Offering this past ego new content or new contexts will trigger some covert aspects of it to come into view.

The method described is a full reversal of all known methods in terms of reaching an ego-less state and almost guarantees cooperation under conditions, which normally would be troublesome. What is necessary yet is method of contact.

10.3 Voice dialogue

Autopoiesis, as well as the theories of Husserl, open up the possibility of contacting parts of the ego: “The ego...it can have a *dialogue* with it [past ego]” (section 7.2) A dialogue with the present “ego” might be possible, as long as the one making the contact is fully dissociated from it. A “discipline” specialized in (linguistically) making contact with “inner parts” is the “Voice Dialogue”, a technique developed by Stone & Stone and described in “Psychology of Selves” (1989). Stone & Stone found that the ego, as a single unity, cannot reliably be expressed in one voice. Their conclusion supports the “autopoietic but fragmented nature” of the ego coming out of internal niche. Although the ego considers itself to be a unity, comforted by seeing the same single person in the mirror plus the experiencing a single “I”, the *Ego* is based on *many* internal relationships, expressed in a multitude of contexts (section 8.3). A person can be truly assertive on the work place, but can be a “softy” with his wife and children; he can be a true hero on his ship, but afraid to fly; he can be an authoritative king in the kitchen but a humble person in other contexts, and so on. What voice dialogue shows is that important voices, belonging to important sub-egos, can always be detected. It is therefore possible to bring a voice to the foreground with the rest of ego in the background.

“Voice Dialogue provides direct access to the sub-personalities ... It offers the opportunity to separate them from the total personality and deal with them as independent, interacting psychic units or energy systems. Each sub-personality is a distinct energy pattern and animates our physical body with its particular energies.” (Stone and Stone, 1989 p. 49)

The option that the ego can be contacted by approaching one of its sub-parts is practical and doable. However, the concept of sub-personality parts somehow suggests being part of an overall single or master ego, which cannot exist in a single context unless the context is (temporarily) made meaningless, but in that case we speak of Consciousness and not ego anymore. I have avoided to use Husserl’s name “Pure Ego” for it, as Husserl did not take into account the contextual *foundation* of ego’s function. All biological substrates, structures and strategies form a support base for a multitude of separate operations, “waiting” for the right triggers to be activated. The ego as defined in the thesis is a construct of original Transcendental Consciousness, it is hard to see the rise of a central contextless ego unless as a gross generalization or as an abstract idea over a multitude of contexts. This must be taken seriously. The ego is a multilayered, universally applicable “tool”. It would be better to regard the ego as the blue steel tool kit or as a “vehicle” to enter contexts one by one. Consciousness becomes also a tool when it associates or identifies with the tool (the ego-part linked to contextual triggers) in its context. Consciousness itself is not divided in parts and it always assumes the notion and experience of “being one”, being a single “I”. The “single I” experience is mostly unbroken when the ego “slips” from the triggered sub-part into the next during wake time as oppose to dream time. For instance: some minutes ago, I was in my concentrated “writer-part” sitting behind my keyboard, when suddenly my beloved Afghan hound entered the

room and pushed his nose against my elbow. I turned to him and immediately was filled with loving feelings. I lowered my head until I could feel his hair against mine. I smiled and returned to my desktop. Immediately, my mood changed and I once again became the anonymous writer. During this shift away and back I definitely changed ego parts but experienced myself as a “whole unity” all the time. It would be illogical to speak of that “I as ego” which shifted from ego part to ego part. One could rather speak of: “I as Transcendental Consciousness shifted from ego part to ego part”. So the ego parts are the biological autopoietic necessities to interact in the world. The automatic and natural process of identification is trigger-bound and fully obscures Transcendental Consciousness as an entity that can be experienced as a standalone unity, with the ability to identify.

Chapter 11: The veil of innocence method

Introduction

The following aspects of the veil have been found:

- The *first* aspect is that subjectivity and objectivity are both components of subjectivity as internal relations for the *Ego*. Objectivity as a construct of reduced subjectivity, exists in language only. So, the two categories, subjective versus objective cannot exist as separate realities next to each other as one is virtual and the other is real. To put the subjective outside the veil includes the objective.
- The *second* practical aspect is to use the rapprochement method during the whole interview.
- The *third* aspect is to replace the idea of a central master-ego with a different mode of approaching ego: the *functional* ego as the result of cooperation between three specialist functions, a Realist, a Critic and a Creative function, something like a Management Board of three which represent the whole “ego-organization”.

An important aspect, which the veil as a method needs is the communicative ability of “The Board”, which can be approached with a method similar to voice dialogue. As said before the *internal* communicative abilities between Consciousness and “ego” has been supported by different authors e.g. Maturana et al., Husserl and Archer.

The “tone” of previous texts, from the preface to this chapter, although concerning a diverse range of topics is still in line with the dominant reality of “adult” consciousness. The rule for scientific contexts in particular is to use “mature”, objective and impersonal—and sometimes even abstract—language, not unlike the tone of financial reports and legal articles. Yet, the reality concepts of the conscious are not the same as those of the unconscious. It is safe to say that they are practically each other’s opposite. A clear example is how odd dream realities can be for the conscious as they are natural for the unconscious. This does *not* make the unconscious irrational or incomprehensible. Still, the veil of ignorance operates on the unconscious level and therefore must match the “language” and in a way the culture of the unconscious, even when they are not generally known.

11.0 Regulative ideas about the unconscious

The following assumptions are not necessarily true, but function as a form of 'regulative ideas'. Yet, the ideas are true enough to distill principles that make the veil method work under the conditions that are set for the thesis. The world of the unconscious is fully independent of the world outside; they are practically disconnected. Autopoiesis, in describing organizational closure and all that it entails, comes closest to revealing the workings of the unconscious. The human unconscious, as a psychic domain, has very little, if any at all, content *of itself that is linked to the world*. It is also autopoietic. This is a consequence of being Transcendental to the world. All Kant’s a priori findings are also not “content linked

to the world” although it is seductive to make the link. A priori properties of the mind are what is said, they are only of the mind, but give the mind certain capabilities, for instance to perceive / interpret the perceived lack or non-presence of objects as space, like the lack of light is seen as darkness. Kant could have named darkness another example of an a priori faculty of the mind, while colors linked to the world are not. In spite of its independence of the world, the unconscious as a system has obviously no problem in carrying and sustaining the worldly reality constructs of the conscious mind, which is a different thing than being connected to the events of the world.

The use of an attitude that is suitable in order to interact with objective, reasonable and mature adults may, in various ways, not be useful when communicating with the unconscious unless what is common between the conscious and the unconscious is being addressed.

For instance, persuasion techniques based on “facts” that may work in the “real” world may have little or no effect when it comes to interactions between the conscious and the unconscious. People can tell many times themselves that flying is very much safer than walking in your own house, to no avail for losing their fear of flying. The adult conscious communicative attitude is based mostly on interactions between adults, and in terms of humans, their egos are all practically sense and world oriented. Our unconscious is different enough to appreciate a different “nonprofessional” attitude, similarly to the way most adults intuitively use in communicating with young children. The aim when responding to the child of a stranger is to make the child feel safe, comfortable and in some cases even loved. Especially the last aim covers all possible others. In that case what is common between consciousness and unconsciousness is addressed: respect and maybe even love for Life itself as it is expressed, irrespective of any subjective content defining the personality or body of the child. The model that works best, that is even necessary, [in my experience], is to approach the unconscious too as a lovable “child”, while simultaneously accepting it is not a child, but something far beyond it.

Parts from a thick description will be used as an example to illustrate the method.

11.1 Method layout

To illustrate the explanation of the interview method in 11.3, a discussion of the method will be given, based on a real interview.

First purposeful sampling must be made in order to find the “right” respondent. Not unlike when interviews are done in English, the interviewer will only “sample” people who already speak English. This first filter is so natural that it is mostly taken for granted. From experience, I would say that two to three percent of respondents are not initially able to be in touch with their unconscious in a single meeting. It takes a number of sessions to teach them how to do that, which is outside the scope of the thesis. The unconscious has its own “tone”, and most, but not all, people are able to pick up this “language” very quickly *to make a dialogue become possible*.

To distinguish beforehand who is capable for this kind of interview, the respondents are sent a small exercise to be done at home. They can then post back their response to this exercise. They are not aware of the goal of this exercise, in order not to influence the outcome. If they pass, further arrangements are made, leading to the final interview. The goal of the home exercise explained in section 11.3.1.1 is to determine if the potential respondent is able to make contact with his unconscious. From the 27 interviews that have been conducted so far (the aim is to conduct more than 32), one respondent didn't succeed in the home exercise and therefore the interview with him wasn't carried out.

The interview itself consists of 3 phases:

- The *first phase* functions as a precondition that would make phase two possible. The goal of phase one is to help the respondent understand what the interview is about and what his role would be. In this preparatory phase, the respondent will offer a “contract” (11.2.2) to his ego to reach an “ego-less” state.
- In *phase two*, the respondent will contact, while being in an ego-less state, “his” Transcendental Source of Emotions and “interview” it.
- In the *third and last phase* (11.2.3) the respondent will come back to a normal ego-state and evaluate and share his experiences, while also answering some questions. Also, conducting “test” exercises are part of this phase, verifying, in a way, the answers given by the “source” to validate them.
- Finally, a link to morality, if found, will be formulated.
- An administrative part of (post)-phase 3 involves the written member check signed by the respondent. For all three phases the researcher will use the “*rapprochement* method” (see section 6.4.2).

11.1.1 Interview layout Phase1

After a welcoming, general introduction in phase 1, the home exercise is done, whereby the respondents will experience the existence of a Source of Emotions (henceforth called “Source”) and its ability to communicate, although that conclusion will generally not be made. One could ponder if such a contact can be made from the very beginning of the interview trajectory, why spend time and effort to develop an ego-less state? The answer has to do with safeguarding non-interference from the ego and thus from subjectivity. The home exercise will convince the respondent that he has a source of emotions which “react” to conscious communication. The repetition of the home exercise in the context of the interview will add the insight that any given response is a reaction to language. That makes the emotional source accessible and thus “interview-able”. Such an “interview” will not be common and precautions will need to be taken. Certain conditions must be fulfilled in order to have a trustworthy interview using the method.

In the first phase of the interview, the researcher will briefly explain Rhodes' et al. ideas about the three important parts of the ego. Next will be the explanation of Voice Dialogue and the possibility of contacting the “ego”. As soon as the respondent can understand the three major divisions of the ego and can appreciate

the fact that he or she must therefore have those parts within himself, the second and last part of phase 1 of the interview method will begin.

11.1.1.1 Interview layout Phase 1, part 2: the contract

To contact the three ego (master-) parts may still sound complex and/or difficult, but the opposite is actually true. It is as if the parts are “all the way” present in the unconscious, prepared to make contact with their conscious “sibling” at any time (see section 11.3).

When contact is made, the three parts will be offered a '*contract*'. When the contract begins with one of the parts of the ego, who is offering? It is the “I am” still associated with the other two parts. By subsequently approaching the three parts, the “I am” detaches itself from the ego (full dissociation) in a three-step process. Or better, the three ego parts withdraw from consciousness.

The contract between “I-am” and the ego serves as a condition to help or persuade the “ego” to understand the *necessity* to withdraw fully from the conscious as an interactive “power” and to stay distanced as-if uninterested.

This is fully the opposite of the approach of Eastern methods or Husserl's epoché, whereby Husserl is actively bracketing the ego making it meaningless in the sense of invalid. In return for the ego's voluntary withdrawal in the new method, he will receive all the knowledge obtained when the detachment ends. The new knowledge will be about the source of emotions, its possible reference and other “important things” which may be very interesting for the ego (or not). The ego, in the end, is given actually full power to determine and judge the information by its value, as he chooses it to be. The contract will make clear to the ego that there is nothing to lose as it is only information that will be gathered, which has been there all the time anyway, but now will be made known. All this knowledge will be owned by and will stay at the disposal of the ego, to serve him and only him. *The knowledge will not be imposed* by Consciousness; that is the deal.

Were it not for the contract, one or more of the ego's many parts may (unwillingly) influence or distort the processing and/or outcome of the data, making it “impure” and unreliable. All efforts will then be in vain. Another important advantage of the contract shows that it involves the ego in a respectful way, which greatly enhances the ego's cooperation.

11.1.2 Interview layout Phase 2, making contact and the nature of the questions

The “internal interview” between the respondent in an ego-less impartial state and his Source is not an ordinary interview. It is within one mind but also between agents “apart”, as-if independent from each other, as in a way they are. The Source is not under the control of consciousness (section 9.4). As a Transcendental Source, it is beyond the subjective content of the unconscious and even beyond the experience of emotions, which for the experiencer includes his meaning about the emotions influencing the experience.

How can a reliable contact be made? The Source's most important property is its ability to initiate emotions; *emotions themselves are its "primary language"*. Especially the distinctive division between positive and negative feelings can be applied to communicate beyond words. When interpretations seem necessary, they will be reflected back to the Source to be checked for their validity.

Preliminary test-interviews showed that the most reliable answers (internal responses) that were considered true for the respondents, in terms of finding the reference between positive and negative feelings, were those positive and negative feelings themselves. This can only happen with a minimal but clear set of *closed* questions, offering simultaneously the two opposites. A question such as "Do you agree when X happens?" will lose its slight influence in steering the respondent and will become more "open", as in: "Do you agree or disagree when X happens?"

In communication between people, next to the verbal part there is an important nonverbal part, which is, to a large degree, under unconscious "control", for instance a minimal twitch under the eye, a (slight) change in pitch or tone; or in other cases, it is completely obvious, such as blushing etc. In the case of the thesis interviews there is a "pure" interaction between Consciousness and Source. The nonverbal is replaced by subtle feelings, which are easy to detect, and which support the nature of the answers.

To find the content of the questions it was autopoiesis that led the way. In autopoiesis, the concepts of self-development, growth and survival are fundamental, under conditions of full self-referentiality, which is personal for humans. Taking that as a guide in dozens of interviews, conducted preliminary to the thesis, the central "existential theme" for the Source's main reference turned out to be the starting theme of self-development and growth, but towards its real nature. Although Consciousness constructs descriptions in the end about self, it is "only" information. There is no guarantee that the information is true / just to its real self. This is not unlike the children's tale of the Ugly Duckling, whereby the emotions supporting its "ugliness" transformed into joy when there was a realization in terms of its real nature: being a swan. The realization shifted internal set references.

This is very different from normal autopoietic self-referentiality as animals in the wild are not supposed to make an error in their identity, which originally came from the "organization" of their species. A, "organizational" reference, which practically dissolved for humans, to be replaced by individual choice in sense-making processes (section 5.16.1). In autopoiesis self-referentiality expressed in the world is nestled in the relation between internal meaning descriptions of triggers and interactive behavior descriptions, where in the end trigger description and interactive behavior meet. But self-referentiality of the Source is expected to be wholly different, it is fixed around a dynamical "true self", whatever that may be, compared to the many irregular, conflicting or even "impossible" references which are autopoietically accepted because they belong to the ego. Mental health institutions around the world do exist in finding out how to help egos with "wrong"

internal references which (severely) hinder themselves in being “happy” and interacting successfully in their society.

As this part of the research is purely exploratory, some questions may arise. Some respondents, the ones who were interviewed later on in the process, received one or two extra questions, which were not really necessary, but enriched the answers of earlier questions. In all cases, member-checks were used as recurring feedback loops during the interview.

11.1.3 Interview layout Phase 3

The last part is to interview the respondent—now fully back within his subjectivity (ego)—about his experience in phase 2. The answers gathered will lead to simple exercises in order to try out their validity. If the answers are true, predictions can be made for the experience of emotions in a given context (deductive investigations). These can be tested with the provision of the right triggers.

Finally, the respondent will be asked if s/he can possibly deduct a (major) link between the reference found and morality and moral leadership.

11.2 Method illustration and its (pre) conditions. (Real life example)

Because the method is new, an illustration will follow as a discussion of a typical application of the “veil of innocence”. The method may look strange or non-academic at first, and may even seem alien to some. The approach is not aimed at the conscious, of which the communicative paradigm and methods are so familiar. It is very precisely geared to get rapport with the unconscious.

11.2.1 Preparation interview phase 1

1) The first task of the researcher is to explain and prepare the respondent in terms of being his own “investigator”. This will not come as a surprise to the respondent, as in previous meetings this was mentioned; in fact, often this is precisely the reason for a respondent to become interested in participating in the research.

2) The first crucial and important condition that *must* be met is a safe and (preferably) “warm and harmonious” environment in which the interview will be conducted. A secluded table in the office canteen, for instance, will not be adequate. Even a separate room in the office will make it much harder or even impossible for some respondents to detach from his ego, as the office itself forms a multitude of strong triggers to keep the respondent (unwillingly) associated with his daily “professional” self. What would be much better is for the respondents to find themselves in a quiet, non-professional, inviting context, in which they have not been before.

11.2.1.1 Interview phase one: repeating the preparation home exercise

It is important for the respondents to feel at ease and experience functional rapport between interviewer and interviewee. The rapprochement method is perfect in enhancing rapport. Functional means *not* intimate or too personal. Functional

rapport mostly refers to the lack of hindering and negative relational aspects, which might negatively affect the interview.

Many interviews, under normal qualitative research conditions, will be directly influenced by the quality or lack of “rapport” between interviewer and interviewee(s). The validity and “completeness” of the gathered data increase greatly with established but *appropriate* rapport (e.g. Bogdan & Biklen 1982 p. 4; Seidman 2012 p. 98-101).

Rapport, as a condition for the interviews which are conducted under the veil of innocence, is a necessity. Necessary is that potential interviewers, *must* feel comfortable and peaceful by the idea that they will conduct interviews under the conditions of the veil of innocence method. The addition of “peaceful” is added so as not to confuse the needed rapport of the researcher with that of the comfortable feelings that people such as police investigators may have when they are interviewing their suspects.

In the introductory phase one, the interviewer explains what the aim of the interview is. It is for the respondent to get in touch with possible inner “sources”. In order to help them stay neutral, the more vaguely and generally the aim is described, the better. There is no help for respondents to infuse their own ideas with what will happen.

They learn that the interview has three phases: phase one, which is now, and which is a conversation between researcher and respondent; phase two, where the researcher shifts to the background, providing some verbal guidance through the posing of closed questions, and during which the respondents conduct their inner interview with eyes closed; and the last phase which is a kind of plenary review between respondent and researcher. The eyes closed are understood as a token of respect towards the inner world, shutting out the external world and its dominance.

In the beginning with open questions, the researcher offers some information about the home exercise and explores with the respondent how it was experienced. This exercise has already taken place, so all this leads to the establishment of even more rapport. [The home exercise will be repeated in this first phase and will be explained below].

When a person seems nervous or ill at ease, a short relaxation exercise may take place (e.g. Herbert Benson, M. D., & Klipper, M. Z. 1992). There are numerous similar short exercises, and the selection of which one is chosen is not important. In all the interviews conducted (as of 28 march 2015), an extra relaxation exercise didn’t prove necessary. Respondents who already seem at ease and relaxed do not need the exercise.

The repetition of the home exercise is to put the respondent more at ease and to give him confidence, as he has already successfully done it before. The goal here, in phase 1, is to further educate the respondent about the workings of his own unconscious. It goes as follows (part of a thick description):

R: “Peter, we will now repeat the home exercise, do you think you can do that?”

P: “Yes”

R: “Can you close your eyes and imagine an internal listener, at some inner place, where most people expect their feelings to be, somewhere between chest and stomach. You know the saying ‘butterflies in the stomach’?”

P: “Yes”

R: “Ok. Now, assume the internal listener to be somewhere there. Say to this internal listener something like, “Hi Peter, I have my eyes closed now, that means I am not interested in the room I sit in, I am not interested in any other person, only you”. There is another voice in the room, which helps me to make contact with you, so now you know. I come, but as a friend”.

The researcher watches Peter with his eyes closed and afterwards Peter gives a little nod to sign he has done that part.

R: “Say to this presumed inner listener something unpleasant; as if you were a harsh critic of something small that happened, for instance about forgetting once to brush your teeth. Criticize, with the wrong tone of voice, but you have to *mean* that tone of voice. As an instruction, I ask you to do-this-as-if-true. But when you do it, you do not play as-if. You act as “true”; you are harsh; but do not exaggerate too much, be mildly unpleasant, stay believable.

Remember your internal response to your harsh criticism, be it images or words or a feeling, or anything else that may change. Just observe it, *do not analyze it*, don’t name it. Give me a nod afterwards, while staying inside with your eyes closed”.

R watches Peter’s non-verbal behavior and waits for the nod. After the nod:

“Ok Peter, offer your apology now and say it was just an exercise, you didn’t mean it at all. Then say something nice, something you are proud of or that you truly acknowledge as positive; and of course you have to mean it too. Remember the response; don’t analyze it; say goodbye respectfully. Say that the goodbye will be for a short moment and that you will return. Then afterwards, still with your eyes closed, reflect on the two remembered internal responses and compare them, and after that open your eyes”.

...Peter opens his eyes.

R: “So, were the responses identical or different?”

P: “No, the first time I felt a pressure⁵, something negative; the second time I felt relief, more space.”

R: “Which was more positive to you”?

P: “The second response”.

R: “How did you experience the responses, were those responses by accident, at random, or did you experience them as direct responses to what you said?”

Peter accepted it was not a random response at all.

R: “Well Peter, if it is not at random, we must conclude that somehow your unconscious part that made those different responses understands the meaning of your mother language and responded to it? What do you think”?

⁵ Other respondents may say “I felt some sadness, anger, some defense... and the second time, a smile, joy, a good feeling”.

P: “Yes I agree, that is how I experienced it.”

R: “Well, if this inner listener can understand your language, we can have an interview with it, no?”

[Most respondents react in a surprised way and acknowledge that possibility.]

R: “But before we continue, I have to explain something to you first.”

The above first exercise is a repetition of the exercise they did at home: home exercise.

11.2.1.2 Interview phase one: Explanation phase

A. The researcher explains Rhodes’ et al. theory of the three “parts” of the mind, the three major internal sub-personality parts, which together form the personality or the ego.

After the respondent understands the theory and acknowledges that he himself must have these three categories too, the researcher asks him to provide examples of the three parts. The researcher, in his dialogue with the respondent, wants to be clear that the respondent truly realizes how important and functional these three parts are for him; *actually he cannot do without any of them*. As they are that important, they deserve full respect. The researcher explains the contract to the respondent (Section 11.2.1.3).

B. The researcher conducts the following dialogue: that, *for the sake of argument*, people experiencing freedom will not voluntarily obstruct or sabotage the fulfillment of their will or their property. For instance, if people in perfect freedom (also free from possible guilt or other freedom-obstructing meaning structures) could design and build their own house, the way they want it to be, in order to live in it, who would choose to live in a cold, damp and drafty house? Respondents will say something like nobody or “not me”.

R: “Ok. So if like the house you could make your own feelings (to live with), who then would still feel depressed or sad or unhappy?” The respondents will acknowledge that probably nobody would; the more critical respondents will acknowledge the same, after realizing the addition of the meaning of “free” and “freedom” in “if they would be free and have the freedom...”

The end conclusion will then roughly be that the *nature* of feelings, being positive or negative, is not under conscious control. The conscious can choose to block or allow its own feelings to be felt, but cannot change their nature while keeping the rest the same, the “rest” being the beliefs (meaning) or interpretations of reality linked to those feelings. The goal of the dialogue is to make clear to the respondent that while ideas, interpretation, beliefs and meaning are under the power and responsibility of the conscious or ego, feelings *may* not be under that power. Few respondents ask further questions, but reflection on some examples from their personal history will answer their questions as soon as *they realize emotions do not follow wishes, but (any) information held true* stored in the unconscious. If the respondents also realize that feelings prove much more than words can do, the

experienced quality of human lives (being happy or not, content or discontent and so on) they develop or acknowledge respect for this very important “emotional source”.

11.2.1.3 Interview phase two: preparation phase

R: “Ok Peter, can you go back to your unconscious and close your eyes” After seeing this happening, the researcher continues:

“Relax... say inside without focusing on a specific part of you: ‘Hi, I am back’ in your own words... and realize that you must have an inner Realist, like Rhodes described clearly. Now just address your Realist by just behaving *as-if he is there, listening to you*. Your as-if attitude is the tuning of the radio to a specific station, you intent to him. When you are in that phase, can you give me a little nod?”

After the nod:

R: “Remember your appreciation for this part and the Realist’s indispensability for you. Without him you wouldn’t be here but could find yourself in a mental hospital. Now tell him that, show him your respect and honor him. Tell him his indispensability for you, but say nothing that you don’t truly mean; after that, give me a nod.”

After the nod:

R: “Say to him you are going to do an exercise to learn how to make contact with a source where emotions come from. Tell him the exercise *does not have the slightest chance of success without his full cooperation*, he is too important not to be involved... Have you told him this?”

P: “Yes”

R: “Now offer him the contract. Ask him to fully abstain from the interview by remaining a disinterested observer until the end, like watching a movie, and allowing all that he sees and hears, regardless if he believes it or not. Does he understand that?”

P: “Yes”

R: “In exchange for his detachment, you offer him that all those answers given until the end of the interview don’t create a commitment to anything. He, as the Realist, is fully free to use them as he sees fit or to throw them in the dustbin if he wants to. Can you accept that?”

P “Yes”.

R: “Ok, offer him the contract then”.

...

P: “I did this and he accepts”.

R: “Ok, *thank him*”...

R: “OK, ask him now to move to a different ‘place’⁶ [where he normally is] and to sit a certain distance from you to symbolize his detachment and ask him to let

⁶ These detached places vary from respondent to respondent. Most respondents show some surprise or amusement when noticing an inner movement or a different place for the Realist to go to.

you “know” when he is there. Remember there is “infinite” space in your inner realms.”

The researcher asks the respondent to repeat the process with the Critic and the Creative part. After realizing that the contract is a win-win situation all respondents noticed their three major parts are willing to cooperate. Now, the respondent is in his “ego-less” state, as “the management board of three” are in three different places and have withdrawn from him. This new state is experienced as neutral and very peaceful and doesn’t feel strange; it feels comfortable. It is a real waiting state, a kind of beginning; it needs something to intent to or will go into meditation.

11.2.2 Interview phase two: interview within

Peter sits quietly with his eyes closed.

R: “OK, Peter can you remember the home exercise and the exercise we started here? Those internal responses were feeling-based and made you realize you have a “center”, which understands the meaning you express in language and which already is in touch with you, the thinking mind. Is this recap right?”

Peter agreed.

“Can you now address this place, you know, where the butterflies can be, and act as if there is this listening source? Can you tell him that you know now that he understands your meaning, and acknowledge the emotional power he has over how you feel. Give him the *respect he truly deserves* and if you feel some judgment emerging, gently remind your Critical part of the contract you just made with him.”

After the contact is made, the researcher keeps this uncommon and “odd” interview with the “heart of the unconscious” as simple and short as possible. From experience, I have found that the respondent’s ego does not want to stay too long in this “artificial” and “unnatural state” of detachment. Also, the average respondent in “Transcendental Consciousness” has no special knowledge or experience of this sort of state and thus no capabilities in handling this peculiar state. It is thus better to keep this phase of the interview short.

These are the few closed questions, designed to minimize the involuntary temptation of the powerful Critic to influence the answers.

R: “Peter, address your emotional source and ask him the following question exactly as you hear it from me and tell me the answer”:

1. *“If I have a belief—regardless of what causes my conviction—which has a hindering and maybe even a temporal blocking effect on my development and growth, will you give me a positive or a negative feeling linked to this belief?”*

P: “I will get a negative feeling”

2. R: “Ok, Peter, now repeat the process with the next question”: –*“If I have a belief—regardless of what causes my conviction—which has a supportive and helping effect on my development and growth, will you give me a positive or a negative feeling linked to this belief?”*

P: “I will get a positive feeling”.

R: “Peter, can you verify the answers by repeating them to him and by asking 'him', did you invent them [the answers] in your head so to speak, or are these truly honest answers?”

P: “These are his answers”.

This is an important phase; Peter will give an internal summary of the answers given, as a kind of internal member-check, if these answers were fantasized or truly genuine answers of the emotional source. After confirmation of the genuineness, the next question is asked:

R: “Peter you know we also have feelings which are about other people, family, friends or strangers. Can you ask him, the following question”:

3. *“If I have a belief about somebody else—regardless of what causes my conviction—which intentionally through my behavior has a hindering and maybe even a temporal blocking effect on his development and growth, will you give me a positive or a negative feeling linked to this belief?”*

P: “I will have negative feelings”.

R: “And the next question”:

4. *“If I have a belief about somebody else, which intentionally through my behavior has a supportive and helping effect on his development and growth, will you give me a positive or a negative feeling linked to this belief?”*

P: “Then I will get positive feelings”

R: “Peter, his answers suggest that 'he' uses the *same* reference to determine your emotions, be it about ideas about yourself or about somebody else. Ask him if this conclusion is right”.

P: “Yes it is the same reference”.

R: “Ok, we are almost there, one last question. Ask him with the same words”:

5. *“I and almost everybody else make a principal and fundamental difference between “I” as “me” and the other or stranger outside of me...do you make or need to make that distinction too in order to determine which beliefs need to be linked to a positive or negative feeling?”*

Peter takes slightly more time before he answers: “No he does not make that distinction”.

R: “Are you sure that you heard this well?”

P: “Yes”.

R: “Still, Peter, can you verify his answers by reflecting them back to him and check these are really his answers?”

P: ... “They are the same answers he gave me”.

R: “Any doubt?”

P: “No”.

R: “Good. Peter can you thank him for his answers and his cooperation and tell him what you want to tell him and give him a respectful goodbye. After that, remember everything, but stay inside with your attention and just give me a nod when you have said good bye.”

After the nod, the researcher asks the respondent to thank his three ego parts and invite them back to their natural state in order to find himself back within trusted external reality when he opens his eyes.

This ends phase two of the interview.

11.2.3. Interview phase three: plenary interview

The last phase resembles a kind of plenary, a debriefing whereby the “classic” qualitative interview method is used (infused with the rapprochement method). The researcher asks how the respondents experienced the interview, especially the middle phase. Also, there is a question about whether the respondents can make a link between the answers of the Source and general morality and how this may affect leadership in organizations.

The answers form part of the chapter “Raw data” which will be given soon after. In the appendix (x) there are member checks of all the interviews signed by the respective respondents and one thick description which covers practically all the interviews. Also, in the raw data narrative, the more deductive tests (trigger tests) will be discussed, as the tests fully depend on the supplied answers.

11.3 Who qualifies for the interviews?

Finally, with this new method, who is suitable to be interviewed? The answer must be that it could principally be everybody, regardless of their gender, race, background, history, or any other subjectivity that makes people different from each other. The veil of innocence method pretends exactly to “annul” subjective differences, so the fact of different personalities should not make a difference. There is however a basic condition for possible respondents to fulfill: they must be able to make contact with their unconscious, which is the case when they can successfully finish the home exercise, designed to test that ability.

In practice, 98+% (estimation) of possible respondents are able to finish the exercise successfully

The respondents are preferably approached by their friends or their colleagues who has been asked to “spread the word” in terms of inviting people as different from themselves as they can find, together with an open invitation conducted in a large lecture room with 80-100 students present. The respondents who were interviewed consist of a mix of gender, nationality, religion, profession, age and so on. However, most were Dutch-speaking respondents and thus the majority of the interviews were done in Dutch

Chapter 12: Raw findings

Introduction

As the phases of the interviews are rather different from each other, the data found will be arranged along the same configuration. The data is presented as it is. No conclusion or analysis will be done in this chapter, in terms of attempting to answer the research questions. As the interviews are still going on, 28 respondents have so far been interviewed (as of March 2015). One respondent could not finish the home exercise and was therefore not interviewed. All findings are based on the conducted interviews and may change with further interviews. As more interviews will follow, this chapter will be updated accordingly. This chapter precedes the end chapter: “Conclusions and discussion”.

12.1 Findings, Phase one part one and two

All respondents who were interviewed were able during the “home exercise” to distinguish a positive / negative experiential difference, qualifying them for the interview. All were equally able to repeat the exercise in the first phase of the interview. All understood the explained theory of Rhodes et al. and were able to communicate the contract to the ego, letting it be accepted by it, as a management board of three. They all entered the second phase of the interview fluently.

12.2 Findings, Phase two

In phase two, all the respondents contacted a different ‘other’ inside themselves. Why an ‘other’? All respondents didn’t know beforehand about its existence as an “unconscious” able to communicate. This communication, although in language, is a bit different when communicating with another “real” person. Another person will accept the utterance and its accompanying nonverbal “carrier”, as the trigger to give its personal meaning. In the “inner world” this is not the case. The (emotional) Source itself does not react to triggers as they appear before the conscious mind in the form of thoughts or knowledge. The Source reacts directly to the meaning that the internal triggers carry. The impossibility to transfer meaning between the internal and external world is missing within. It is not only possible, but always perfect. For instance, when during an exam a student is solving a math problem, the source seems passive (emotions under threshold of awareness); but as soon as the student looks up and notices the clock at the wall, the source does not “see” the clock or react to what the student concretely is thinking. The student may think “it takes too long; I may not be able to complete the exam in time.” The student may start to feel fear or pressure (or not). Neither the image of the clock nor the sentence (the corresponding thought) is a trigger for the Source, but reacts depending on what it means to the student. If it means “I will fail and I must not fail”, he will feel fear. If it means “I am not good enough, I don’t belong here”, a form of sadness may be felt. If it means, “Ah well, I did my best, next time I will do better”, a kind of solace

may be felt. Just as autopoiesis found that it is not event-triggers, but what they mean that triggers i-niche, so this “mechanism” seems mirrored in the internal domain of consciousness and emotions.

12.2.1 Findings

All the respondents in their ego-less state experienced *the same identical answers* from their Source of Emotions. All of them could connect to the “Source”, which is not a difficult enterprise as “She”, seemingly deeply buried in the unconscious, is a very active part of Being and very alert to what the conscious mind is doing regarding its meaning structures.

(1) The first question was:

If I have a belief—regardless of what causes my conviction—which has a hindering and maybe even a temporal blocking effect on my development and growth, will you give me a positive or a negative feeling linked to this belief?

All respondents experienced in one way or another a negative feeling and/or a “negative” in language.

(2) The second question was:

If I have a belief—regardless of what causes my conviction—which has a supportive and helping effect on my development and growth, will you give me a positive or a negative feeling linked to this belief?

All respondents experienced in one way or another a positive feeling and/or a “positive” in language.

(3) The third question was:

If I have a belief about somebody else—regardless of what causes my conviction—which intentionally through my behavior has a hindering and maybe even a temporarily “blocking” effect on his development and growth, will you give me a positive or a negative feeling linked to this belief?

All respondents experienced in one way or another a negative feeling and/or “negative” in language.

(4) The fourth question was:

If I have a belief about somebody else—regardless of the cause of my conviction—which intentionally, through my behavior, has a supportive and helping effect on his development and growth, will you give me a positive or a negative feeling linked to this belief?

All respondents experienced in one way or another a positive feeling and/or a “positive” in language.

All of them presented, after the first four questions, a summary of the answers (a kind of internal member check) which was acknowledged and agreed upon by their “Source”.

(5) And the last question asked was:

I and almost everybody else make a principal and fundamental difference between “I” as “me” and the other or stranger outside of me...do you need or make that distinction too in order to determine which beliefs need to be linked or get a positive or negative feeling?

All of the respondents who got this question experienced in one way or another the answer: “No, I do not make any distinction”.

There was a sixth question, which was not part of every interview, but gives more insight in the nature of emotions:

The more the topic of my conviction is important to me, how does that affect the intensity of the emotions I get?

All of the respondents who got this question⁷ experienced in one way or another the answer: “They will increase”.

The last member check question was:

The answers I got, did I (involuntarily) made them up all by myself in my 'head' or are these truly your answers?

All respondents experienced in one way or another the answer: “These are my answers”.

After the last member check, where the above answers were affirmed by the “Source”, a respectful farewell followed. This ended Phase 2 and the respondents entered their “default” state of being back in normal ego.

12.3 Findings, Phase three

The following two exercises are something like experiments to test the reference given. As the reference is rather simple and straightforward, it should be easy to construct contexts to trigger emotions. All those who did experience the tests gave the same outcome and more or less made the reference work and supported the answers of the Source.

More than half of the respondents, because of what they experienced, wanted to know more about how the answers given could be applied or could guide actions, something which is outside the scope of the thesis. Still, they are easy to deduce.

12.3.1 Trigger test 1

The respondent is asked to look at an imagined world event of an almost insignificant level, where he can see himself. The insignificance is on purpose so as not to “disturb” the ego's possible (very) different reference in distinguishing between good and bad or positive and negative. The imagination is about:

R: “There is a big droning wasp in the kitchen while you [respondent] are preparing a meal. Option one. See yourself picking up a whisk and killing the wasp. Remember now your internal (feeling) response as an observer of yourself, don’t analyze it or give it a name, just remember it when you see yourself doing it.

Option two. Now see yourself in exactly the same circumstances, but see yourself picking up a glass and a piece of paper. You catch the wasp under the glass when it stands still on the kitchen table and you slide a piece of paper underneath the glass. See yourself maybe with some annoyance releasing the wasp through the open kitchen door or window. Remember your internal state as observer, don’t analyze it or give it a name, just remember it. Compare the two states, which feels better, more positive to you?”

All respondents who did the exercise chose the second option.

In the plenary after, this exercise is discussed; it doesn’t seem like a “big deal”, but it is reiterated that even then the experienced emotion is not “constructed” by will, but “out of itself shows itself”. The ego has the full freedom to decide what *meta-meaning* the exercise gets.

12.3.1.1 Trigger test 2

The respondent is a bit more accustomed now to “how it works” and receives a more “serious” example to imagine. The respondent is asked to watch an imaginary world event.

A murderer of a little child has been caught by an angry crowd. They have beaten him up severely, and they are searching for a big rope in order to hang him from a tree. One man stands apart from the intensely angry and shocked group of people, and you ask him: “I see a really angry crowd, full of bitterness and hate and I see a child murderer; what are your thoughts about this, as you look so calm and different from the others?”

The man says, while pointing at the guilty man who is on his knees, groggy and beaten, with the hands tied behind his back: “*I see a man, who made one of the biggest mistakes a man can make. I will never do such a thing as I am far further in my development as a human being than he is.*”

R: “Now repeat those words, believing them *as if they are your own*; feel those words on your lips *as if they are true*, while looking in your mind at this man on his knees. Then tell me, what do you feel?”

All respondents who did the exercise, felt *compassion*. Some, at first, called it pity, but when elaborating on that experience of pity, it turned out that what they meant was compassion. They all acknowledged the compassion they felt, did not deny the facts in any way. Two women who were not part of the respondents group but part of a much bigger audience during a lecture, strongly objected and were upset about their initial response of compassion; they found the reaction of the village crowd a much more appropriate one, but only when back in their normal ego. The as-if condition in making something appear true is all that is needed (in that context) to temporarily shift out of one’s ego into a newly constructed one.

In the plenary of this exercise, all respondents were quieter, as though the exercise took some energy. Some had thoughts about religion, which is outside the scope of the thesis.

12.3.2 Morality and moral leadership

It is notable that *all* the respondents came, using different words, to a similar conclusion. If CEOs or those in power were to respect and take into account the individual rights, needs and properties of, in particular, their clients and their employees and, more generally, the needs of their markets, environment and society, seeing these rights as equal and important as their own, they would follow the Source's code and would be considered moral leaders by the respondents. Similar examples were mentioned in a broader context, from the fields of world politics and nationalism, mentioning also leaders such as Gandhi or Mandela.

When the example of the 2008 GFC was mentioned, the respondents agreed the event would not have happened. Regulations wouldn't be called for and for instance regulations in another domain to protect the weak or minorities would not be needed. All respondents recognized as well that by being such a leader or politician, man would not primarily be faithful to his people but by his internal reference he would primarily be faithful to himself as he truly is.

Member checks of the interviews (emphasized phase 2) can be found in the Appendix (CD rom)

Chapter 13: Conclusions and Discussion

Introduction

This chapter will offer some answers to the research questions and sub-questions and discuss them. In the discussion, two new theories are introduced, which were chosen after the data emerged, as they were at that point seen as relevant. That is why Buber (1878-1965) and Levinas (1906-1995) were not addressed before. The sub-questions relevance are explained in section 2.1.1; 2.1.2

13.0 Answering the sub-questions

The following sub-questions address philosophical topics; they are:

1. What is Husserlian Transcendental Consciousness and how is it relevant to the thesis?
2. What are categories? How are they constructed and/or defined?
3. What is the foundation of objectivity and subjectivity? Are these foundations proven or are they arbitrary?
4. Could there be a possible third domain, sharing fundamental properties of objectivity and subjectivity?
5. If such a third domain exists, which methodology could appropriate that domain?

The *first* question's answer is: "Husserlian Transcendental Consciousness" is Husserl's name for what he found and experienced to be as theoretically the most pure impartial state of mind. The state of mind that is transcendental to the world, thoughts and any knowledge be it about the world or self. He describes it as a "pure" mindset (section 3.11; 7.2.1). Its relevance for the thesis is maximal. To find true impartial arguments for morality, and not hypothetical ones, one must start from a pure impartial position, which is not hypothetical too. Such a position is "Husserlian Transcendental Consciousness". By itself however it does not provide moral arguments as this state of mind has no knowledge. What it is able to however, is to intent to "something". This ability is used to intent a most pure impartial state of mind to another aspect of human beings: a transcendental (pure) Source of Emotions (section 9.4).

13.1 What are categories? How are they defined?

Life's circularity leads to the expectation that what once was must reoccur (section 5.7). In other words, what was experienced in the past involves valid descriptions of the future. This is an important property of all categories to give it reliability. The use of categories is millions of years old. Categories are, in the first place, cyclical. Working with categories is an essential necessity, in order to handle the endless bits of sensory information (cognitive economy); this was the case for organisms long before the development of the species *Homo sapiens*.

The autopoietic version of categories (named classes) is the class-link between internal niche and (external) niche (habitat), which is the link between the sum of all classes of trigger descriptions including meaning and the sum of all classes of interactive behavior descriptions linked to them. That means that categories, in the first place, serve the autopoiesis of the individual organism or human being (e.g. section 5.6.2; 5.10; 8.3).

Above question does not have a simple answer. It depends on the contexts categories are used for, as the question “How are they defined” leads to incompatible definitions, depending on what mode of thought is used. Still, categories are existentially necessary (cognitive economy, section 4) and originally stem from biology, where only one “mode of thought” is known, depending on whether the category “thought” is exclusively restricted to humans or not. When meaning is the central theme behind any utterance, something which is considered *primary*, then biology has its own primitive (non-verbal) language. Even a kind of abstract thinking is possible for non-humans (Maturana et al. 1980 p. 25). When biology has language, animals think and act through their *meaning experienced* and apply what the thesis names “circular logic”. Within circular logic (section 6.6.1), categories are personal tools, formed around personally subjective meaning (categories formed around prototypes) and categories define a relationship not only between its members, but also with its creator: the maker of the categories (section 4.3.1). Grass will be categorized differently by a weasel and by a rabbit, as categories are an essential part of internal niche (section 5.6.1). A human example of the imbedded relation between the identity of the category and its maker is the category “poison” or “stranger(s)” (section 4.4). Circular logic takes into account one’s own projection as personal and it is only projection, be it in awareness or not, that runs its cause for all living beings (e.g. section 5.1; 6.7; 8.4).

The opposite of circular logic is “observer’s logic” as if projection of meaning is disregarded or does not exist. Thus, strangers and poison have real properties of their own, which grant them membership in their respective category, *as-if* independent of the category maker. This is the classical view of categories, since Aristotle. Both definitions coexist, parallel to each other, depending on the level of awareness of the human being. In science, it is practically only observer's logic that is used, which is perfectly functional for the non-living. Observer’s logic produces objectivity.

13.2 What is objectivity and subjectivity? Is their difference proven or set? Are they related?

This question is an old philosophical one. Since Emanuel Kant, the principal foundation is accepted for objectivity. In the classic way (since Kant) objectivity exists before language as “something” appears in what Kant names human “sensibility” (a universal property of the mind), something, which provokes a question mark or a thought. What “is given” in sensibility and appears before “consciousness” is accepted as objective (section 5.14).

Kant restricted this idea of objectivity to the kind that only humans are capable of. It is a “between-humans-shareable-objectivity”, describing not the *real* truth but the human version of it. Since then, different schools emerged, but modern science more or less accepts the foundation of Kant's thinking, that what is given in sensibility (in front of our senses) is in principle an *objective* perception. Subjectivity, consequently, is a non-empirical domain with feelings, memories and thoughts which are personal.

The biological structure of brains, including the human central nervous system, is incompatible with the notion of Kant's objectivity or with contemporary scientific objectivity (section 5.17.1 -5.17.3). The concept of objectivity is virtual; it is a human, *linguistic construct* that in the end differs from person to person in terms of their experience.

That makes subjectivity the ground of all human experience including objectivity, from large experiences to insignificant small ones, from subjective to objective, whereby *objectivity is a subjective experience* reduced to *incomplete* language descriptions (without adjectives), describing *what is empirically experienced*. The existence of adjectives in language is the only truthful way to describe human experiences. Strict objectivity avoids adjectives in order to stay neutral and “universal”. However, it is safe to say that experience without meaning cannot exist and language without adjectives does not describe experience. In short, objectivity exists only in language and outside human experience. An analogy is the existence of an “objective” concept, like the notion of “tomorrow” or “yesterday”, which exist only as a linguistic construct of the mind, active or inactive, as a property of the present. Also, words such as chair, typewriter and numerous others, do not describe how they are experienced by their users with a missing corresponding adjective. **This makes the category “objectivity” a virtual category, which cannot be the opposite of subjectivity.** The existing category “subjectivity”, without a *real* counterpart, requires that its meaning be contrasted with a virtual category. The human mind, however, is “magical” enough to be able to accomplish that challenge.

13.3 Could there be a possible third domain, sharing properties of both?

The answer to this question could be yes, or it could be no. It depends on the point of view of the questioner. On the level of experience (and, after all, everything can only be experienced), objectivity does not exist, in the same way that it does not exist for animals. From that standpoint, that means that the polarity between subjective and objective is *false*.

This is a solid conclusion that derives from the theory of autopoiesis. It is not possible to detect anything objectively through the CNS (central nervous system, section 5.17.1). Still, accepting the necessity of objectivity in modern societies and science, but now recognized as a tool with its own constructed rules, a third domain can be considered to exist. This would be a domain that fulfills the criteria of subjectivity as non-empirical but that simultaneously fulfills the objective criteria

of being verifiable and universal, provided that the academic community accepts it. Even the strongest proof of facts evaporates under the pressures of intersubjectivity.

The solution lies in the method of *verifiability*. Science accepts for instance the existence of feelings and emotions as objective facts, not subjective, as literally everyone can individually verify their existence. Kant and Husserl also used personal “verifiability” as the basis of their theories, accessible for all who want to explore it. That makes their main theories intersubjectively accepted, as non-metaphysical theories.

13.4 If such a third domain exists, which methodology could appropriate that domain?

The objective status of Kant's “sensibility” or the existence of Husserl's “Transcendental Consciousness” was and still is only individually accessible. This has not changed in the methods used in the thesis for the interviews, which are appropriate in terms of “entering” a domain which shares the essential properties of subjectivity and universality. Also, the veil of innocence, as the method and answer to this sub-question, relies on personal verifiability.

The method of the veil is, however, different in one way. Previous methods to reach an “ego-less” state of mind require development (which may take years) of a skill, in order to be able to “escape from subjectivity”. The reason for this very long time in developing the skill might be as its development happens without the cooperation of the present ego. Therefore, the process may feel like a struggle that needs determination and perseverance in order to succeed. The veil of innocence can be realized in the time of a single interview, but requires a second person, a helper. This does not mean for a variety of reasons outside the scope of the thesis, that the veil of innocence will initiate the state of “Being” (spiritual) mediations all over the world try to accomplish. Pure Consciousness (ego-less state of mind) is an important but only first step to enter “different (spiritual) domains.

A secondary aspect of the veil of innocence is that it adds a kind of “intersubjective verifiability”, as in theory the respondents who have experienced the detachment of full ego can be grouped together and can share their experiences.

13.5 Sub-question’s conclusions

It is mainly the theory of autopoiesis which opened up a new attitude to approach or describe reality, faithful to how our brain functions in creating realities. It therefore provides a new platform that allows us to look again at topics that were addressed (centuries) earlier, and to deconstruct them.

Constructed realities within language and the use of impossible notions such as the “future” or “objectivity” are very helpful and even necessary constructs, but not part of a reality that can be experienced by a CNS, except in the form of thoughts. As objectivity as experience does not exist, but as a tool, what is the aim and function of autopoietic “organizations” (section 5.5) for bypassing objectivity? Evolutionary biology shows the development of species from the simplest

(biological machines fully determined by their structure) towards the freest species with minimal to no determination by their structure: that is, humans. But all living systems, from the simplest to humans, share some existential important basic properties. Not only in terms of being alive, but in terms of aiming to stay alive in a way that is determined by and expresses their nature [identity]; to develop and to interact as well as possible with an environment that fulfill their needs.

In order to even experience the possibility of life and self-expression, offspring is needed to make that possible for the next generation of the species. Interaction with the outside world always must and serve the “organization” of the species. This autopoietic conclusion is inescapable. A bear always has interactions which are “bear-like”, as rabbits act in a “rabbit-like” way. But what is *human like*? **Human like is, in one word, ego-like** and ego like is practically free from its biological “organization” which was once the main determination (section 5.16) for the nature of species. The fact that there is practically infinite freedom of human expression makes it as hard to define a universal human nature, as it is easy to define it for insects or bears.

The almost practical impossibility to define a universal human nature is caused by the freedom to construct the ego, which stands between Consciousness and the observed, be it others or the self. The ego not only subjectifies the opinions of others; it also subjectifies its personal opinion about itself. No logic (circular logic / observer's logic) can help the ego to find its true nature. This is something that has always been known, giving rise to equally ancient methods in an effort to deny the ego altogether or in terms of a modern version of Husserl's epoché, bypassing the ego to find truer answers than what the ego is able to find.

But Husserl ended his journey right there. His inquiry led to a truer relation between subjective and objective, not to delve further into the properties of the Transcendental domain of Being. He found and described the relation between world and ego on the one hand and the maker of world and ego: Transcendental Consciousness on the other hand. But he, similarly to Kant, accepted the all too convincing power of objects / phenomena given in sensibility, (the sensitivity of the mind as it is affected by sensory experience) to appear as being truly objective. A suggestion accepted without the possibility of knowing that sensory organs were never developed for that reason and no CNS is able to process objective information (section 5.11). The world of the senses, triggering meanings, which in turn create / maintain the ego in that context (chapter 8), is therefore unfit to establish the promise of a universal human nature, which as an extension of itself could express universal morality.

An appropriate method as described above is the veil of innocence to free the mind of ego constructions and to experience true impartiality. A kind of purity that theoretically should be universal, and a first beginning of finding (again theoretically) a universal human nature.

13.6 Research questions

The main research questions, as described in chapter four, are:

Research question one

What constitutes a verifiable method for conducting interviews to enable respondents to enter the state of Husserlian Transcendental Consciousness in order to explore its substance to possibly find a plausible, rational and impartial ground for morality?

The question is an integrated question that consists of two questions, as the development of a new method was first necessary in order to answer the second part of the integrated question.

Research question two

How does a moral, rational and impartial ground affect moral leadership in organizations?

13.7 Answering research question one

First part of research question one is about developing a suitable method.

The method found and already in depth explained in chapter 11 and summarized in section 13.4 is named the “*veil of innocence*”. The veil turned out not to be a forceful way to silence or to push out the ego, but a *contract* between the ego on the one hand and the “I am” on the other hand. By subsequently approaching the three main parts of the ego as a “management board of three” representing the totality of the ego, the ego detaches itself gently and consensually from the “I am” (chapter 10). This method avoids internal struggle, discipline and force and makes it possible for the respondents to reach a state of Husserlian Transcendental Consciousness within the time frame of a first interview.

The *second part* of the main research question one is:

“... What may possibly be a plausible rational and impartial ground for morality?”

The answer can only be given indirectly; its plausibility stands intersubjectively open.

To answer the second part of the main research question 1, *the thesis did not find a moral foundation as a separate foundation or “source” of its own*. Moral behavior appeared to be an extension of a moral being; the findings would have been better served by the question: “Is there a common moral being (nature) of human beings and what is it?” The respondents experienced a common “Source” of emotions with a reference, which grants morality also a common ground. The main findings that are valid for the respondents are:

1) Emotions exist as messengers, being responses to meaning only. Emotions exclusively express a single Source, which stands apart from and is fully independent (transcendental) of any perception and its meaning of the world.

- 2) The existential “Source” of the reference suggests having no particular identity by altogether disregarding identities or egos unless they serve its reference.
- 3) The reference is identical for self and other(s) as its “Source” does not make a distinction between self and others in “applying” the reference.
- 4) The reference meets the autopoietic criterion of self-referentiality; its self referentiality is absolute (cannot be tampered with)
- 5) The essential message of the reference is twofold and linked like the two sides of one coin are solidly linked. One is to guide sense making (meaning making) processes of the conscious to avoid personal errors in order to develop principally in a *state of wellbeing* (error free state) a true unique personal nature. This is in line with the maintenance of autopoiesis. The second supports the first but adds to self-development the essential truth that no other Being exists as less or more than self *as-if* all others and self are essentially connected *as-if* one. The faithfulness to both messages simultaneously can offer a glimpse into the universal nature of human beings.

The above points were not plausible for the respondents, but *became certain* because of what they experienced.

13.7.1 The unexpected thing

The unexpected thing about the Source “applying” its reference by reacting only to meaning is that although it disregards the sensory experiences of the world and of the egos in it, it intimately acknowledges the *extra* existence of others as not standing apart from itself. The acknowledgment is done, “*as-if*” and this is hypothetical, *the source is deeply related to itself as it exists in others*. In that case, it does not need sensory perceptions to know of the existence of others as apparently a transcendental connectedness seems to be the case. The reference for the experience of emotions turns out to be fully independent of the world (as triggers) and even independent of consciousness and (its) thoughts. Its self-referentiality fully bypasses observer's logic; however, it also fully escapes the hidden (theoretical) assumption of pure self referentiality: solipsism. The Source, by its reference, *denies* the biological borders of its “containment”: that is, the human body. It thus surpasses it.

Seemingly, the Source only depends on what it is, which is not further investigated in the thesis. Thus pure impartiality for the human observer, as an abstract concept, cannot exist: the most basic basis for existence is according to the reference beyond-ego-interconnectedness. Only within the domain of interconnectedness can impartiality exist in relation to ego-content.

13.7.2 Doing good beyond subjectivity, a balanced plural view

The reference of the Source basically refers to the fact that being “good” or doing “good” is exclusively linked to feeling good as a *relational*, but default property. Existence as it should be when it is honest to itself, according to the reference. Positive feelings (about context X) directly or indirectly show support for personal

development and growth (in context X), but cannot be—in awareness—at the expense of the development and growth of others. The “*in awareness*” is an obligatory condition needed to incorporate personal responsibility, reflection and learning, as these are the internal conditions which are “evaluated” by the Source. For instance, when a person is not aware of—or genuinely forgets—the ecological consequences of his decisions, he will not get feelings about that omission, except maybe afterwards in reflection. This important given will be further discussed in section 13.8.2.

The Source may be absolute in its reference, but with weak or even negligible power in consciousness. The power of the Source to determine decisions or behavior seems practically zero, which lies in the web of meaning of the ego. *As a note*, positive feelings are still positive when they are not negative. Feelings may fall under the threshold of awareness for the less valuable or important thoughts of the ego (section 5.17.3) and thus are not appreciated as positive feelings, while they still linger as taken for granted in the very background of consciousness. But even if not in awareness, not picked up positive feelings cannot define a negative experience. In that way, there can be two kinds of neutrality: a negative and a positive one.

The Source does not acknowledge the other as a stranger, as being less or more or different from self, but on the level of Being. This makes self-development only complete by *in-cluding* the equal rights of any experienced other for their development into well-being and development too, and by *ex-cluding* infringing contexts or ideas that hinder or make those rights invalid. The rights of others however are contained within the same limits.. The rights of others acknowledged cannot include the infringement upon what can be named “my rights”. This leads to a point of view which even though very liberal and plural, is immediately balanced by existential connectedness between all humans. Watching the other, in his / her circumstances, even in a passive way, will be personally and immediately evaluated by the Source, and its evaluation will be felt, or not when for different reasons these feelings exist under the threshold of awareness.

Why experienced other and not *all* others and those beyond the horizon? Doing well surely cannot be restricted by universal interconnectedness if we may believe the respondents findings? This is an important question and the answer comes from for whom are the messages of the Source intended? The answer is for the identity of the individual. In that case an ancient wisdom requires that individuals should not surpass personal competence by exceeding personal responsibility, which is primarily contained by personal power. To feel responsible for realities beyond personal power will immediately and rightly initiate personal feelings of being incapable and powerless, which according to the Source are linked to personal errors in meaning (overestimation of the ego). This changes for instance when being a Minister of State or having a similar function whereby because of the function, the power of the system one belongs to, drastically enhances personal power and responsibilities. This important given will impact in a later section the discussion about morality

Any *negative* feelings, including those under the threshold of awareness, indicate to the observer that his (projected meaning) is wrong or incomplete. This is a hard conclusion to accept, unless meaning is reframed. It also makes the reference seem close to “alien”, compared to historical and contemporary views on how to judge events. Deeper into the nature of emotions and meaning can be found in section 8.2; 8.5; 9.2-9.3.

But what meaning can be found in observing “sin” and not feeling negative? This is not a hard question to answer, but almost impossible to accept within the limits of the contemporary worldly view of what is “real”. What is “real”, in the paradigm of establishing knowledge, solely rests upon observer's logic. Sensory perceptions persuade the observer to accept in the social domain “What you see is what you get” as *understanding*, however the acceptance of “WYSIWYG” denies the impossibility of peripheral bodies to develop “insight”. Eyes and ears are structurally not even able to stream “skin-deep” information, but only information that is much more superficial than that. In most cases the depth of pure sensory information covers the length of some molecules. Only circular logic is able to *experience* over and above intellectual knowledge that all perceivable behavior follows the unperceivable “inside”. Projected meaning can only pretend to explain. The Transcendental domain is deeply buried under projection and constructed meanings and far beyond the senses to detect. As the Source is beyond subjectivity, it is also beyond psychology and its relatedness to the world and to the ego. That does make the Source’s reference also beyond the perceivable sin of the world, all perceivable sin. Although Source’s reference is not a luxury, but existential, as it *determines* the experience of dread and happiness and everything in between, it does not however aim to be *practical* in a material world with both material and psychological demands. The Source without subjectivity will strike the ego as absurd or at worst inhuman. The thought may be: what could be beyond himself (the ego), invisible, not of the world he knows so well and is also alien to the way he thinks? At best, while extending his existence by including knowledge about the Source, the ego will address the Source as a sub-human situation,. How can the ego recognize—even when true— his existence only as a *virtual tool* (a script), a vehicle of interaction / expression and not a Being? That the ego in spite of his own ideas is not a Being is easily demonstrated for instance by convincing movie actors, who change their identity by identifying with the descriptions about the protagonist in the script. A more profound example is the ability of personalities to change (drastically) by changing successfully their ideas and beliefs and or meanings. The tool like function of i-niche linked to interactive behavior is autopoietically proven and a life necessity. It is not demoting Ego, but pointing to the opposite of how the ego denies itself by regarding itself as an ontological being.

Thinking about the consequences of what the respondents revealed, one is met with many questions, one more interesting than the other. For example, there might be questions such as: “what are the various, deeper meanings of the different emotions”? Or in other words: “why is sadness so different from anger if both warn

about the same error of not being true to real self? Why is the Source so ‘inhuman’ in terms of allowing innocent children to feel unhappy or fearful? Or, put differently, why does the Source not make any distinction between adults and young children? What is the relationship (“meaningship”) between the Source and “sin”, between Source and ego, and finally between Source and Source? Some of these fall outside the scope of the thesis.

Within the constraints of the thesis, only a few of these questions will be addressed, offering an answer to the first research question about morality. If the findings could be true enough to be generalized widely, they may have been true since ancient times. Moving towards relatively modern times, I have chosen the theories of Martin Buber and Emanuel Levinas, both of whom deeply and intuitively understood the existence of what could not have been anything else than the Source. Their theories will be addressed in relation to the Source, but a warning might be useful. Both writers offer a philosophical, metaphysical narrative which in its ambiguity cannot escape any (my) interpretation.

13.7.3 "Ich und Du", the incompleteness of Transcendental Consciousness as Being

In his book “Ich und Du” (1923), later translated to “I and Thou” (1937), Martin Buber (1878-1965) presents his thoughts about what he truly believes to be the fundamental structure of human experience. He makes a primary distinction between two modes of human relating towards the world, and in particular, in terms of the way other humans are experienced. The two modes are incompatible and fully oppose each other on the level of meaning.

The *first* mode refers to the way the ego perceives the world (observer’s logic). The ego’s fabric of reality is a reflection of autopoiesis’ individual internal niche: a web of constructed but internal individual meaning-relations between an self-image (subject) and the world as object-designs, including others (chapter 8). The existing *intertwined* relation of meaning between I and “objects / phenomena” is for most beyond awareness and makes personal responsibility for the relation hard or impossible to accept.

It is the logical consequence, but a pitfall of projection. By projecting individual meaning it loses its subjectivity and becomes an “objective” property of the perceived “objects”. Then the “power-of-what-it-is” stands strongly apart and looms over the observer as said before in chapter eight.

To man the world is twofold, in accordance with his twofold attitude.

The attitude of man is twofold, in accordance with the twofold nature of the primary words which he speaks.

The primary words are not isolated words, but combined words.

The one primary word is the combination *I-Thou*.

The other primary word is the combination *I-It*; wherein, without a change in the primary word, one of the words *He* and *She* can replace *It*.

Hence the *I* of man is also twofold.

For the *I* of the primary word *I-Thou* is a different *I* from that of the primary word *I-It*.

★

Primary words do not signify things, but they intimate relations.

Primary words do not describe something that might exist independently of them, but being spoken they bring about existence.

Primary words are spoken from the being.

If *Thou* is said, the *I* of the combination *I-Thou* is said along with it.

If *It* is said, the *I* of the combination *I-It* is said along with it.

The primary word *I-Thou* can only be spoken with the whole being.

The primary word *I-It* can never be spoken with the whole being.

★

3

Fig. 5 *I-Thou* is an external relation, *I-It* is an internal relation

Ego with a cursive *E* is the internal relation between I-as-me (subject) and the world-as-object. Buber noticed when an external body is *defined as an "It"* the relation between I-as-observer will transform "I-as-me" into an "It" too. The relation then becomes an "I (as It)-it" relation. Autopoietically deduced internal niche **is material**

(it) based (sense and world oriented) since, although it only serves internal references (asymmetrical relation), it principally connects all its resources to interactive behavior aiming at the world (structural coupling section 5.6.2.) All structural coupling are *it*-based relationships, all in order to maintain or strive for internal equilibrium. Also *Ego* is settled in a relationship of compliance with the world it projects (section 8.2). One of the most basic identifications of consciousness to start the construction of the ego and to become Buber's *It*, is by framing itself *to being* a he or a she, to being tall or short, to being whatever the bathroom mirror or behavior shows.

Buber's *second* mode of regarding others is altogether different and is "completely" split from the first, but it is not its opposite as Transcendental Being (Buber's "whole being") has no opposite in its subjective reduction the ego..

"If I face a human being as my *Thou*, and say the primary word *I-Thou* to him, he is not a thing among things, and does not consist of things. This human being is not *He* or *She*, ... nor is he a nature able to be experienced and described, ... But with no neighbor, and whole in himself, he is *Thou*" (Buber 1937 p. 8).

The symmetrical relation *I - Thou* transforms *I* into a *Thou* too, which is then named "whole Being", beyond knowledge and subjectivity. Meeting in the form of experiencing a *Thou* is not a normal experience and cannot be compared to normal experience. The "meeting" is autopoietically not possible, *even when it happens*. The meeting rejects the borders of autopoiesis as it falls outside internal niche altogether (or bypasses it). *I*-niche can only work with categorical [thus reduced] descriptions. Still Buber says: "...nor is he a nature able to be experienced..." when what he means is:

"*Thou* cannot be appropriated, but I am brought up short against it. The characteristic situation is here one of meeting: I *meet* the Other. In the reality of this meeting, no reduction of the *I* or of the *Thou*, to experiencing subject and experienced object, is possible. So long as I remain in relation with my *Thou*, I cannot experience it, but can only know it in the relation itself (Buber 1937, p. vii; underlining added).

Buber defines "experience" in a perfectly autopoietic way, as something internal, even when experienced in a projected sense. Already in his early work, Buber mentions and confirms autopoietic main principles: "The man who experiences has no part in the world. For it is "in him", and not between him and the world, that the experience arises (Buber 1937 p. 5). *Experiencing* *Thou* as it is in normal parlance is named by Buber, *meeting Thou* in order to distinguish it from normal projected experience. The meeting is a *living relation manifested*, which cannot be reduced to a projection of an internal description belonging to any class / category. The relation, as a meeting, cannot be internalized back into the descriptions of the ego because Buber's *Thou*, being beyond descriptions, is trigger-less: it is not a trigger which can accept projected meaning. It can be remembered afterwards as an impoverished description as what can be remembered of the real (intense living)

meeting is beyond words, beyond any cognition, but with the domain of emotions. What emotionally happened can be fully remembered.

How is this "*Thou*" different from a normal "you" as *It*? Buber explains: "he is not a thing among things, and does not consist of things." Buber does not refer to the visible body or the invisible mind of the other as that is fully applicable to the ego as well. *Thou* is also not related to things; it is fully independent of things something which does not apply to the ego. When the ego is freed from subjectivity and of any descriptions of its body, it disappears and Consciousness takes over that becomes a *Thou* if it speaks the word *Thou*. Buber realized that *Thou* is in the present, similarly to all subjectivity is in the past (section 6.6.1). Autopoiesis confirms this with its notion of "circularity", which is also the mechanism behind the past-oriented character of all categories. Buber says:

“...he [I as It] lives in the past, and his moment has no present content. He has nothing but objects. But objects subsist in time that has been” (Buber 1937 p. 12).

All *I - It* relations are autopoietic, and indeed *not-between* the “I” and the world as it is in the here and now, as the relation stays firmly put within the biological boundaries of organizational closure. *Thou* oversteps biology and escapes organizational closure and its past. The meeting between *I and Thou* transcends both into the present and bypasses the limits of autopoiesis:

“Let no attempt be made to sap the strength from the meaning of the relation: relation is mutual” (Buber 1937, p. 8).

Thou is more than Husserl's Transcendental Consciousness. Buber: “No deception penetrates here; here [Thou] is the cradle of the Real Life” (Buber 1937 p. 9). Buber, in his poetic way, extended Husserl's Transcendental Consciousness, being the truly impartial one, free from any subjectivity, free from any ideas about all he knows, free from the ego, but *incomplete* as a total human being. Transcendental Consciousness is still a singularity, the conscious perceiver, analyzing and functioning in the domain of cognition, all else even his own feelings, triggers to intent to.

Buber names “the inborn *Thou*” that already exists in babies and children, the “a priori of relation” (Buber 1937 p. 26). Not the internal relations as the ego knows it, but relations as a meeting in the present, expressing the *true* “man”, of which he says:

“For I speak of nothing else but the real man, of you and of me ...not of an I, or a state of being, in itself alone. The real boundary for the actual man *cuts right across the world of ideas as well* (Buber 1937 p. 13, italics and bold added).

Cutting across all ideas points to the transcendental status of *Thou*. Meeting the other by meeting *Thou* in the other cannot be done through subjective channels. The Transcendental Being is Lovable. Only Love arises, which is not the love that the ego is able to give:

“Love does not cling to the *I* in such a way as to have the *Thou* only for its “content”, its object; but love is *between I and Thou*” [there is no content] (Buber 1937 p. 14).

The love which Buber talks about is not only the responsibility of an *I* for a *Thou*, but is without condition, cannot be bound to any given content or meaning, as *Thou*—in not being a thing—becomes boundless. What is referred to here is Unconditional Love, as all conditions are left behind. It is only after the meeting, in reflection, back in “experience” of being the ego again, that meaning arises or is constructed, possibly reprogramming the ego. This is not so strange, as meeting *Thou* is a dangerous and frightening encounter for *both* egos; this is because both egos, briefly “evaporate”, do not exist in the meeting. Voluntarily starting the process of *I–Thou*, especially with *Thou* in mind, for instance by looking into each other’s eyes indefinitely, will evoke resistances and quickly fear as soon as something unworldly happens. Finally, an important consequence of the existence of *Thou* arises, fully coinciding with the reference of the Source expressed in the aforementioned test (number three), referring to hanging a man from a tree:

“Good people and evil, wise and foolish, beautiful and ugly, become successively real to him; that is, set free they step forth in their singleness, and confront him as *Thou*” (Buber 1937 p. 15).

More similar to “Ich und Du” than Levinas is “willing” to admit, is Levinas’ theory about the “*absolutely other*”, representing innocence and humanity.

13.7.4 Totalité et Infini: essai sur l'extériorité (1961)

Emanuel Levinas (1906-1995) witnessed and experienced war; in his book “Totality and Infinite: an essay on exteriority” (1969), he explores his ideas about the impossible dance between “morality” (peace) and war, as if they are equal partners. He exclaims that they are not; one is real and infinite and the other is un-real and totalitarian. The latter is based on denial, concealed behind the mask of reason (real politics).

Levinas' philosophy, in his book, is his ultimate answer to the question “*How may mankind find ever lasting peace?*” He builds upon his earlier ideas, influenced by Husserl and Heidegger, which in a sense refer to a search in terms of understanding that human beings *are more* than any knowledge about them can describe. Knowledge, especially in the form of scientific descriptions, seeks to find and unconsciously sustain (Kuhn) through forces of organizational closure, the ideal universals (generalizations). Only these (systemic) universals can answer the ancient call for cognitive economy (section 4.0), a call for the reduction to “sameness”, serving categories coming from a deep drive out of the animal kingdom. It is this reduction of reality to sameness or to the past (generalizations, categories) that builds up a total paradigm (system) of (objective) knowledge or intersubjectively accepted knowledge of facts and norms, which can only be (unwillingly) sustained by feeding cycles of war and peace. In the social domain reductionism alienates what is reduced away. When a breaking point or saturation

point is reached, the “reduced” will resist. It is not that science causes this drive, but science is the most pure expression of reduction.

The danger that Levinas acknowledges in sameness doesn’t only have to do with generalizations or universals, but also includes polarities which conceal sameness. Similar to war and peace that are not true polarities of each other, but expressions of the same, belong to each other as sides of the same coin. The coin *needs* both sides in order to exist and becomes a higher “mechanism” which keeps both sides “alive”, sustaining the cycle between war and peace.

In his preface, which Levinas wrote after finishing the book, he says: “The peace of empires issued from war rests on war. It does not restore to the alienated beings their lost identity. For that a primordial and original relation with being is needed” (Levinas 1969 P. 22).

“But in the absolute the subject and the object would still be parts of the same system, would be enacted and revealed panoramically. Exteriority, or, if one prefers, alterity, would be converted into the same” (Levinas 1969 p. 290).

Although the authority of sameness is perfectly autopoietic, it is not able to encounter or make contact with the exterior world most in the form of other people and their values, given that others observed are existentially *different* in the presence of the observer from his knowledge about it. Reduced knowledge which also defines the observer in that context (compliant ego 8.2). The problem here is not knowledge about “dead / inanimate” objects and their relations. To reduce the inanimate with observer’s logic is innocent and worth-full. Existential criticism on sameness by Levinas is not aimed at conventional science like physics or biology to name a few. But, the totality of the (scientific) knowledge-producing-machine intending humans, animals and plants, *cannot distinct* objects from humans or from any other living objects as facts, because of the principal use of observer’s logic. The primary position of observers and scientific observers, is Buber's *I - It* relation, which is a logical consequence of autopoiesis and its CNS.

It is the route *not to use* observer’s logic as scientists that brought Maturana and Varela to their theory of autopoiesis. Levinas words it differently:

“For the things the work of ontology consists in apprehending the individual (which alone exists) not in its individuality but in its generality (of which alone there is science)” (Levinas 1969 p. 44).

And:

“Individuals are reduced... The meaning of individuals (invisible outside of this totality) is derived from the totality. **The unicity of each present is incessantly sacrificed...**” (Levinas 1969 p. 22, bold added).

Similarly to Buber, Levinas too, using different language, intuitively understands the workings of i-niche and what the ego is all about.

In order to leave war behind, Levinas’ solution lies in the acknowledgement of the other’s true and only real status, which can only happen in what he names *the ethical relation*. The foundation of that relation can be allowed into experience in

the face to face relation between I and the Other. The face of the Other demands (as a first): “*Thou* shall not commit murder” (Levinas 1969 p. 199). The face doesn’t refer to the mouth and the cheeks (etc.) but refers to the eyes as a first. The I – Other, for Levinas, is not a symmetrical relation, in the way that it is for Buber’s *I - Thou*. As a contrast, there are from three different perspectives regarding the other, three foundational possible relations.

- The first is the asymmetrical autopoietic relation: all meaning, including those others functionally and solely serves the ego (the observer) and not the other in the maintenance of “I as ego”. In nature it leads to the doctrine of the survival of the fittest. This ‘system also serves Levinas’ ”sameness” and its main game is power.
- The second relation is Buber’s symmetrical one: I become a Thou in “*I – Thou*” and the one in the meeting, is the innocent one without an *Ego*.
- The third relation is Levinas’ asymmetrical one: The demand on the part of the Other over me and is also egoless.

Levinas speaks about what the other demands. The demand is experienced within the relation itself. To obey the demand is not to follow rules, but involves the consequence of allowing something greater than the self [something beyond subjectivity] to emerge in the relation [a third party]. Levinas presents an important addition, something which Buber left out and perhaps took for granted. Buber’s essay is his “finale”, which involves the realizations of his experiences and insights, derived from studies of the “Good” in the Torah, in Zen Buddhism, in the Upanishads and in many other “holy” sources as well as includes experiences where “Good” cannot be made, but is allowed to be expressed as an extension of what is always real and always there.

Levinas, on the other hand, was also a soldier in war; he took daily notes about his war experiences in a military prisoner’s camp, after he was caught, in which he had been separated (as he was an officer) from the Jewish prisoners. The Nazis did not know he was a Jew. Levinas might have noticed that it was forbidden for Jews to look in the eyes of their tormentors, not unlike the way that the hood over the head of the convicted makes the last gaze between executioner and the condemned impossible. The hood keeps guilt dormant for the executioners left behind.

Levinas’ ethics is the road to establish the relation with the Other. He names ethics, on their own, “optics”, in terms of a way of seeing (Levinas 1969 p. 23). Levinas learned that in the eye contact, the (unwilling) power of demand over the ego becomes manifest as he experienced it:

“The eyes break through the mask—the language of the eyes, impossible to dissemble. The eye does not shine; it speaks.” (Levinas 1969 p. 66)

The eyes of the Other (*when* they break through subjectivity) transcends Buber’s “*I-it*” relation, that the whole body authoritatively dictates and which is easily accepted by executioners in their own *I-It* relation. But how do the eyes break through the mask and speak in the present?

“The infinite paralyses [ego's] power by its infinite resistance to murder, which, firm and insurmountable, gleams in the face of the Other, in *the total nudity of his defenceless eyes*, in the nudity of the absolute openness of the Transcendent”. (Levinas 1969 p. 199, italics added)

Can infinity be seen?

It is easier and more indirect to experience what the eyes show more directly:

“The epiphany of the face brings forth the possibility of gauging the infinity of the *temptation* to murder, not only as a temptation to total destruction, but also as the purely *ethical impossibility* of this temptation and attempt” (Levinas 1969 p. 199, italics added).

All that is good in the observer will resist murder and experience it relevant in context, as a temptation, not unlike pure lust is a temptation in a different context. All that is good in him is vulnerable to the *total nudity of defenseless eyes*. Defenseless means that autopoeitic resistance to death, frantically searching in fear for an escape, has been given up. At that moment the ego surrenders and in a way it “dies”; its i-niche is shut down and full de-identification of the ego is the result. What is left is a being that is free from the ego, transcended and now behind the eyes. “irreducible to phenomenality, understood as a reality without reality, is effectuated in the non-postponable urgency with which he requires a response” (Levinas 1969 p. 212).

The “irreducible to phenomenality” refers to what Levinas mentioned earlier:

“Here, *contrary to all the conditions for the visibility of objects*, a being is not placed in the light of another, but presents itself in the manifestation that should only announce it.” (Levinas 1969 p. 65, bold added).

It resonates strongly with Buber's “...he [*Thou*] is not a thing among things, and does not consist of things. This human being is not *He* or *She*... nor is he a nature able to be experienced and described... But with no neighbor, and whole in himself, he is *Thou*” (Buber 1937 p. 8). Levinas states that sensory organs only “announce” an experience which is far beyond them.

What is beyond the senses also means beyond the ego / self and its subjectivities. *Ego-free defenseless eyes cannot be ‘a’ trigger as it cannot accept the projection of ego-meaning*. Then “sameness” or any categorical reduction is shut down too. This is the “...reality without reality”. It brings the projection machine of the observer to a sudden halt, which just as suddenly, but not for long, releases the ego of the observer in the moment and transforms the experience beyond personal history, in an analogous way to Buber's *meeting*. Yet even when this happens for a first time it becomes a senseless trigger by itself, it will trigger a meta-meaning soon after its beginning or when the brief moment is over, in reflection, as if freedom of choice is more important than meeting the absolute Other or *Thou*. The meta meaning will be awakened next time and may vary between a welcomed one or its opposite. The freedom of forming meta-meaning is total and includes the possibility of accepting *Thou* as experienced or the denial of *Thou*, even when experienced.

13.7.5 Levinas resists Buber

Levinas gives Buber's *meeting* a slight twist. "Language as the presence of the face does not invite complicity with the preferred being, the self-sufficient "I-Thou" forgetful of the universe;" (Levinas 1969 p. 213). Buber's *I - Thou*, which Levinas obviously read, seems for him too noncommittal, in a sense too abstract, too far away from real politics and from society. It is not primarily about spirituality or God; it is about ending war and changing the taken for granted overwhelming power of the Totality of a human thought system that produces knowledge. The authorization of the face is *humanity* itself beyond the face, which is witness and which is already served by the Other who also stands in the world, as part of the universe.

"The epiphany of face qua face *opens* humanity...is a destituteness, a presence of the third party (that is, of the whole of humanity which looks at us), and a command that commands commanding" (Levinas 1969 p. 213, italics added).

Humanity here is not hypothetical but experienced. Presenting the essence of humanity as a reference to counter the alienation of Totality, resonates with Husserl's indictment of the alienation of science from humanity. In essence, Levinas understands that "knowledge is based on (gross) reduction". By generalizing (in fact categorizing) that one small part of perceived humans into personal knowledge will make it part of the *Ego*, but still a reduction. As we have seen, even the notion of causality is based on (gross) reduction considering that any observer can only perceive a small part of the total sum of properties, always partly expressed by interaction of any intended unity. For conventional science, it is a tool like approach; for the social sciences and practical naïve (political) categories outside science it produces Levinas' Totality and in the end war.

Humanity is not a choice, but "a logical consequence of what the experience of innocent eyes offer him." (Levinas 1969 p. 65) That makes the real identity of humans beyond the senses, beyond subjectivity, beyond categories, beyond phenomenology, and also beyond autopoiesis and finally beyond words. This does not mean that Levinas found the true autopoietic organization shared by all humans. The human biological organizational "blue print" is cyclical by nature and by cognitive economy needs categories.

Sameness for Levinas excludes the "Other" as something absolutely "not-me".

"Transcendence or goodness is produced as *pluralism*. The pluralism of being is not produced as a multiplicity of a constellation spread out before a possible gaze, for thus it would be already totalized, *joined into* [my] *entity*. Pluralism is accomplished in goodness proceeding from me to the other, in which *first* the other, as *absolutely other*, can be produced" (Levinas 1969 p. 305, italics added).

Buber's Thou can be regarded by Levinas still as a reduction, a kind of categorization, with no room for fundamental uniqueness. Sameness is, for Levinas, the opposite of true exteriority, the domain of the real, unique, absolutely other; and

previously to the theory of autopoiesis, Levinas already knew from Husserl that what humans experience as an outside world—how different this may be from “me” the observer, observing them—can only experience the observed as reflections of his own constructions: “Their alterity [the world and all in it] is thereby reabsorbed into my own identity... as possessor (Levinas 1969 p. 33). Levinas strongly avoids any kind of sameness as a solution against the mechanisms behind war. It is precisely the search for sameness, as reduction, which in the end produces war by denying plurality. All too often, differences before sameness provide a justification for conflict. The ideology of sameness takes its virtual reduction as real, not virtual. This error will make sameness like all virtual things considered as real, fragile. Its fragility therefore makes it vulnerable to perceived attacks, which in the end begs for its defense. Its defense, when grave, will regard sacrifices made as the ultimate proof of sameness true nature: not being a virtual ideology, but descriptions of *true* reality worth dying for. Especially death is its ultimate proof of its true value. Not particularly a strategy for Levinas to free a total system from producing war next to peace.

13.7.6 Desire and Goodness

“To posit being as Desire ...is to affirm that *to apprehend oneself from within*—to produce oneself as I—is to apprehend oneself with the same gesture that already turns toward the exterior to extra-vert and to manifest—to respond for what it apprehends—*to express*; it is to affirm that the becoming-conscious is already language, that the essence of language is goodness, or again, that the essence of language is friendship and hospitality”. (Levinas 1969 p.305)

Levinas adds language, but language, which lies in the extension of “Desire”. For Levinas, “Desire” (with a capital D) is the metaphysical desire of the ego for the *absolutely other*, always beyond his grasp and beyond his descriptions as the true one “not being me” (Levinas 1969 p. 33). Here Levinas "Desire" resonates with Buber: “Desire itself is transformed as it plunges [in the meeting] out of its dream into the appearance.” (Buber 1937 p.11-12). The other can never be grasped by knowledge. The longing for an absolutely other, but what the senses alone cannot offer, produces nostalgia on an existential level. “Levinas' Desire” is not based on and cannot be satisfied by triggers, which in the end only trigger the ego and all its internal categories, which is its foundation. Only unconditional love can do this as only such love can accept the absolute differences between individuals. Such a Love cannot be apprehended by ego, but apparently innate in Consciousness can be approximated by Ego's descriptions. Levinas uses language as language (unconsciously) presupposes a *real* other [beyond organizational closure]. Consciousness within ego intuitively understands deep inside, others out there are beyond all his reduced knowledge about them. Others are fundamentally not him and cannot be him—even when he “owns” them—and that *forces* language to exist. In the ego's naiveté, he forgets that their transcendence is exactly what he “Desires”

and what language rests upon. But once the ego realizes how absolutely *other* the other is, always beyond all his descriptions, he also realizes that the other cannot be controlled and that his power to redefine him is useless. Then the door to the other will be unlocked, but doesn't stand open yet to meet him. Once the ego also realizes and accepts how deeply and unconditionally he loves their transcendence, *by Being an unbreakable part of it*, the door opens and all language, starting with "the language of the face" shines through its origin, and becomes a language of goodness.

Finally, ever-lasting peace stands upon:

"Peace therefore cannot be identified with the end of combats that cease for want of combatants.... Peace must be *my* peace, in **a relation** that starts from an I and goes to the other, in desire and goodness, where the I *both* maintains itself and exists without egoism" (Levinas 1969 p. 306, bold and italic added).

Here Levinas underlines the absoluteness of the other when its uniqueness is sustained. That is the practical *must* in a society that wishes to leave the origins of war and peace behind. So, within the value of what humanity is, lies the inclusion of freedom in order *to allow the absence of sameness*, and to allow only sameness as an accepted but virtual tool to serve the essence of humanity, not unlike the surgeon who serves the whole patient that he cannot see.

13.7.7 Conclusion so far

What does the Source, as experienced by the respondents tell us, preceded by the ideas of Buber and Levinas, and in relation to their writings? A note. In order to explore in a deep way what the findings might mean, in relation to morality, may seem unscientific as it fully enters what has been defined as transcendence. Still, it is an analysis and discussion, constantly monitored by the findings of the respondents, which are validated by their member-checks.

What is found in the beyond ego Transcendental domain? Buber's *I as Thou*, Levinas' humanity, the Source of the respondents and also Husserl's Transcendental Consciousness, but not Levinas' absolutely other. What is part of the domain is the freedom to become an absolute other and the Goodness that is his inheritance. The deconstruction of Levinas' "humanity" and Buber's "Thou" ends in Transcendental Consciousness and Transcendental Source of Emotions, assumed to be present in all humans, but in this context with a "twist". In default, Consciousness and the Source operate in different functional domains. In experience they stand apart as thinking from feeling. Consciousness' essential task is to get rid of important question marks using inductive and deductive reasoning, in order to find and validate the answers with integrated meaning. Any answer found, be it about the world or the self, brings into experience an *Ego*, as a kind of vehicle to operate in the world by self-expression.

The Source does not know question marks. It uses itself as the reference for his Conscious part to evaluate the constructed meanings. The Source practically

defines: *“I am relation”*. The function of the Source apparently is to *guide* his Consciousness with feelings in the right direction of constructing *Ego*. Ego (in contemporary sense) merely acknowledges that all feelings, good or bad, are *his* feelings and that *he* possesses them. All emotions, from the ego’s perspective, give him always right, that his thinking is as real (“faultless”) as the accompanying feelings themselves are experienced. By default the ego only operates in the context of observer’s logic, unless a stubborn feeling resists the ego’s logics: *conscience*.

When observer’s logic considers meaning as a property of triggers, feelings become rational responses to triggers (section 5.17.2) and the FB-loop of emotions gets lost. Thereby the internal reference as a guide gets lost too. Sometimes conscience pops up (a direct relation with the Source) but misses rational authority. This may explain the stubborn existence of morality through the millennia.

It appears that the Source and the ideas of Buber refer to the same thing: an beyond autopoiesis interconnectedness. And on the level of Buber’s meeting it may very well be so. But Levinas is right too when he says that this knowledge is by far not enough, as ‘sameness’, the origin of ego, has no problem to contradict the transcendental truth out of its experience and replaces it with an *I-It* relation: an indispensable criterion for conflict and war. The freedom of choice (section 6.9) as an innate property of developed consciousness seems not developed or ‘given’ to Consciousness *for staying the same, to become fixed*. Accepting Buber is right, what which the Source appears to support, we were once copies or extensions of a Transcendental Sameness, which is not the same as Levinas’ “sameness”. Transcendental Sameness disappeared when we became unique individuals, at the moment that processes of always individual sense-making begin defining experience. Still, Transcendental Sameness can be experienced in Buber’s meeting or meeting Levinas’ innocent eyes.

Buber’s meeting or experiencing Levinas “innocent demanding eyes” *are not default states*, but rare exceptions. Although Source and Consciousness have sheer opposite functions, in these rare cases they become united as if they are one. Transcendental Consciousness identifies itself, in that context, with his Source. Levinas’ absolute other is not a meeting but a logical *consequence*, of the **transcendental freedom** of the other to realize his absolute unique experience of existence. He may not be unique in the Transcendental Domain, but to experience that domain as Transcendental Consciousness alone is already rare. To experience one’s own Oneness between Consciousness and Source is even rarer. Far more “natural” is to experience one’s own knowledge in the form of *Ego*, which makes everyone also truly unique. The command *thou shall not murder* means: grant me my innate absolute freedom to develop myself as a unique being.

Thou returns to a normal “you” when the Source withdraws from the eyes. The withdrawing is a necessity and it is the only way to honor and uphold the internal freedom of choice given to one’s own mind (Transcendental Consciousness). This refers to the freedom for the experiencer of *Thou* to identify with his past again, to become unique again and be once again part of and in the world. To be part of the

world and to accept oneself as a unique being is the only way to experience, to develop and to grow.

In terms of Being (Source + Transcendental Consciousness), I cannot see a principal difference between Levinas and Buber. Levinas has creatively defined sameness as a totalitarian system, but he cannot deny that a million different faces become one by the eyes, when they offer their innocence. Levinas' demands may not come from the Other as the purity of defenseless eyes offer also freedom of choice. The Other through his defenseless eyes, reflects—or better—gently reminds, not commands, the executioner of his own innocence. It is the observer, who feels the resonance within of his own innocence, a force to uphold his moral Being, which does command: “Don’t kill or hate your brother”.

To stay close to the respondents' findings, the thesis will not go into a possible—even more deeper and transcendental—origin of the Source and Being. Both Buber and Levinas conclude that awareness of the existence of Being in the other can only be done from within as a *gift*, standing outside time and outside the ego. Goodness is founded by the infinite space, which is freedom for “me to be me” and for the “other to be the other”, based on a relationship, which, when recognized, is established as the one that has always been “Desired”. The most basic *existential* nature of humans is revealed by the Source, with its reference expressing in short: “*I am (a) relation*” as a beyond-ego Being including “I am the sum of all possible relations” as *Ego*. The relation is a given, it is unconditional, it just *is* and makes any human a moral Being underneath his ‘subjectivity’. The Source’s only message appears to be, “*Develop towards your real self by learning to choose knowledge to allow yourself, so you will experience being a happy part of others as they are part of you.*” Freedom, plurality, and Goodness and even Love are all consequences or extensions of that message. In order not to get lost in the external world, full of numerous different dynamic phenomena, the Source acts as an emotional guide, offering only two roads of emotional travelling, whereby one is wanted and Desired and is as much as possible open to the present, the other road accumulates suffering and loneliness and holds on to the past.

13.8 Research question one, second part

The second part of the main research question one is:

... *What may possibly be a plausible rational and impartial ground for morality?*

All of the 27+ respondents, randomly selected, *belong* to Levinas’ humanity. If the Source is universal then we *all* belong to humanity as Levinas defined it. In that way we *all* are connected on an existential level with each other. To respect the Source’s message and uphold these existential relations with others respectfully defines a moral Being. All humans appear to have a Source with the same reference. The reference governs emotionally all routes of possible choices and their accompanying experiences. Individually matching the universal reference of the Source is matching Levinas’ humanity; and as mentioned before, the match leads to peace and happiness in a personal way. But what kind of morality is it?

If we delete the category “morality” of all contemporary content, while holding the name intact, what then remains intact? What are the absolutely minimal essentials? Whatever it is, it must be a universal fundamental description of human property. Humanity cannot impose the inhuman against itself as its purest value. Morality still being for the sake of argument an empty category, what does the Source fill in? What are the practical consequences of what the Source tells us about humanity? Morality does not “request” to appreciate, uphold, sustain, respect and help others in exchange for an anticipated response. It is not any economy. Take away the condition of a necessary response and true morality becomes unconditional.

Morality is normal and natural and merely passively describes attitudes and corresponding behavior of humankind, following its founding nature. In-Being oneself morality would be taken for granted and almost never mentioned, in the same way that daily showers are never mentioned in the papers. Only in the absence of truth, in the totality of an all-encompassing thought-system that reduces uniqueness out of experience, morality through the ages pushes in a stubborn way again and again against the inhuman. Buber, Levinas, the Source and other similar theories *concern only the Living*. Observer's logic or Buber's *I-It* relations are *perfectly adequate* to approach nonliving “*Its*,” as things do not necessitate morality, unless the non-living become conditional contexts for the living.

In order for the empty category of morality to be “filled”, the minimal (essential), but universal good qualifies. The reference of the Source perfectly matches that condition. How can it be more minimal, more universal, and more faithful to Levinas’ humanity? What can be more minimal than the foundational truth of Being “*I am a relation*”? A relation *which will determines* one’s own experience, if chosen wisely. A choice for happiness or a choice for its sad absence depends on the use of free choice, embedded in the untouchable and infinitely private sense-making processes. The Source’s reference as the guide to make the right choices is existentially rigid and *unavoidable* but offers equal freedom, to the same degree, to disagree. Disagreement can be chosen, but the truth cannot be changed, only its experience will be replaced for anything we actually do not want and do not “Desire”.

To think and behave morally or ethically, in the words of Levinas or Buber, or according to the Source, is the result of only being oneself as one just *is: a moral Being a priori to Ego*.

To integrate one’s own moral Being into *Ego*’s viewpoint to look at the world, will automatically also change the world accordingly as all world-experiences are compliant to their observers. Almost all—if not all—destructive behavior derives from, or is accompanied by, new or old (forgotten) negative feelings, perfectly corresponding to negative meaning projected to the objects intended because they are Buber’s “*Its*”. The feelings however are neither from the ego, nor by the ego and even *not directed to the ego*. The ego cannot possess his feelings, like he possesses his internal descriptions.

The possessor has owner's right to change his possessions, but emotions stand as true independent realities like unmovable mountains before him. They are not of him and cannot be changed by him like he cannot change the reference which emotions rest upon. They are the Source's messages to change his mind, but with the freedom not to. All misconstructions not expressing a moral Being, as different as they may be, have only one cause: *the misreading of one's own emotions for not knowing what they are*. Sin is not part of humanity but sinful behaviors as part of realized illusions in their abundance *deny humanity*. Illusions made real amply exist in the world. Illusions to exist for instance in the relation between two observers need blind faith by both that what they know is real. Still it is possible to detect what presents itself as real but is actually illusory. Circular logic is able to deny what is real by observer's logic (projected illusions are real when the projection is taken for granted). Feeling hateful or fearful by perceiving triggers can only be understood by Circular logic to be projections of one's own meaning. The Source adds to those feelings that they point to an important error. Nothing believed, belonging to and situates *within* the living system should obstruct its development and growth. All what is projected situates within. But mistakes *within* are recognized *outside* as real. That is how autopoiesis works to protect individual identity by the processes of organizational closure.

Note. What are not addressed are the plentiful feelings of joy, freedom, peace, or laughter, which also exist abundantly and even more in the world. When people are unaware of their Source, they can still believe (maybe sometimes for the wrong reasons) "truth" descriptions meeting the standards of the reference. Such descriptions produce joy, vitality or peace in those contexts; they do not hinder personal development and health, but maintain or enlighten it by allowing it for others.

13.8.1 Authority and treason

When error invades the mind, joy disappears, at best replaced by pleasure. Who opens the door for error? Why is that door so widely open to invite all mistakes? But mostly: why is that an *existential good thing*?

How can the eyes of the other remind me of my innocence, how can the Source remain his reference in the midst of terror, havoc and war, *unless* they are beyond sin and within innocence? Not innocence as the opposite of sin, as that cannot be, like light cannot be the opposite of darkness. But more important is the question: "Why did "Innocence" nota bene nestled in the foundation of any individual [if the Source or Buber or Levinas is right], *not block errors and obstruct their becoming with correction*?" Why does the (real) Swan internally not correct the becoming of the ugly duckling in Hans Christian Anderson's story? Levinas' Infinity, Buber's *Thou* as fundamental as they may be and the Source all stand passive to errors as if they are bound to a pledge of allegiance to non-intervention. What is it about errors, that in the highest schemes of things they are so "cherished" that the Wise do not interfere in principle and (modern) God (at least), when He exists, never?

Error then cannot be the enemy within the grandest scheme of things. It must be the “smoking gun”, *the* inevitable proof of all proofs, of the greatest imaginable *gift* given to humankind when biology released the species. The gift of *unconditional freedom of choice*. Love or the perfect outcome do not prove freedom, but perfect freedom proves unconditional Love by allowing *all* errors as a choice. A tree, a rose, a lovely sunset, all as beautiful as they may be, have neither chosen for their beauty nor their perfection. They are “fixed”, determined by their properties and---like leaves falling—abide any wind.

A complete lack of freedom can be found in trillion perfect things, and in the primitive of the Living. This stands in stark contrast to human development because of its internal relation of choice. Only then, when the mind (Consciousness as ego) accepts within free will his foundation is his gentle Source unconditionally loving him, his morality cannot be made, but returns. The bond does not need acknowledgement, but consciousness needs to know it to allow the bond *into experience*. Consciousness cannot make inner Truth but it is the perfect decision maker to create the experience of Truth. For *Ego* it does not really matter what is changed first, the meaning of subject or object, in order to change. Both form *Ego* equally simultaneously (Section 8.4-8.7).

The *authority of morality* is the authority of what a human being *is*, beyond its constructions of subjectivity or objectivity; that internal “phenomenon” which is more than flesh and bones: a moral Being. The innocent and lovable nature of every human being, but with such *unworldly*—literally a beyond the senses—standards. The reaching of the ego to allow what he really *is*, only needs the knowledge of *its* existence, which through the millennia could not be based or proven by anything the senses offer. The denial of this is the ego’s road back to treason of all that he holds dear. The treason is *unacknowledged* in the grandest scheme of things as if it never was, since the unreal cannot exist in the briefest moments of time. The nature of moral transcendence cannot be scientifically grasped, but a metaphor may touch upon it:

“Every night before going to bed, the mother did not need to set the clock at seven to awaken her little boy the next morning. The boy woke every morning, almost to the clock, and when awake he called for his mother. But not this morning. She heard him cry and sob and when she glanced at her watch, it was almost six o’clock.

She rushed to him anxiously and found him sitting upright in his bed. Something was not right. It was not his crying that upset her. Mothers intimately know the crying of their babies and toddlers. This crying didn’t involve something different in his tone of voice, but more something in his eyes. Or better, what she noticed was what was not in his eyes. As she had rushed into his room, he looked up to her. He quickly turned his face away, before she realized there was a trace of guilt on the boy’s face. She bent over and in tears he said:

“Please mummy, can you forgive me?” For a brief moment she was startled. She picked the toddler up and hugged him close to her.

“Oh my beloved one, I will always forgive you, but why?”

He said between his sobs: “I have... burned... the whole house down and... everyone is ...dead”. The poor little boy clearly was still “living” inside his dream. The mother comforted him, feeling relieved, soothed him and whispered in his ear:

“Nothing you experienced was real, my precious one. All these mistakes you imagine you made were dreamt and were not real. All the mistakes you will ever make are not yet realized by you, that you act out of a dream.

He looked up to her in wonder. She smiled, “My endless Love, you do not need to understand all this right now, how can I ask you to be more than you can realize?”

13.8.2 Universal morality cannot personally exist

The last sentence of the above metaphor is its core message. The respondents “de facto” showed one Source for one person to be experienced. The fact that thirty or— theoretically—six billion people have a Source with an identical reference cannot change the message of that last sentence. The reference of the Source becomes meaningless and out of function when it is regarded outside the personal context within it operates. The Source gives personal FB and this must be taken literally. The Source as a source of personal emotions needs personal descriptions of meaning out of *Ego* in order for ego to experience his feelings. That makes the messages of a universal Source and its morality, in practice *always personal*.

How can unique personalities, which also do not share the precise same phase of personal development, *identically experience* a context (considered identical in the descriptions of observers)? When offering the Source *different* webs of meaning—which may even include knowledge of the Source—about “identical” contexts, (slightly) different emotional responses will be the results.

Examples. A toddler in his curiosity innocently dissects a live little frog and while he feels good about it, his toddler friend is intuitively upset by watching it. In a burning house, the owner saves his dog first, then the content of his safe; afterwards, he has no time left to save his two cats. Nevertheless, all things considered he feels very positive about what he did. A man, under extreme conditions and while endangering his own life, rescues the life of his neighbor’s two children, but stops short of saving the other children. Another man, after saving his own children continues to try to save others, at great risk to himself. Despite this, the first man feels happy and is proud of himself *in a similar way that* the second man is. The occupying forces took revenge by appointing six civilians to be shot, out of a group of 100 villagers of varying ages. All six appointed were young men. At the very last moment, one person in his sixties asked permission regarding whether he could be swapped with the youngest. The request was granted and the man felt a deep peace. Another man had to choose, in a split second, whether to save his family of five at

the expense of not saving a bus full of passengers. He saved his family and was very happy about that decision for the rest of his life. And so on.

All behavior in the examples aimed at doing good (except the example involving dissecting the frog). All genuine moral behavior is equally moral from the point of view of the Source. Genuinely giving in to a moral Being inside can only be maximal. It is maximal but within the constraints of personal reality (Ego). The conclusion does not match the logic of observers, but follows Circular logic perfectly. If a boy and a man genuinely jump as high as possible, an observer immediately notices that the man jumps (much) higher than the boy. But from within, their effort was equally maximal, with exactly the same intention.

If a critic states that saving a hundred strangers is more moral than saving your family of five and if he is genuine, he is still wrong to judge the different choice to the one he would have made. It is important to remember that the dissecting toddler did not feel any guilt while exploring the little frog, not unlike the man, who also felt no guilt when he deeply offended a woman from another culture to his own, having no clue about this misunderstanding. The Source does not work with the opinions of others; they all have their own unconditional Source to do that. One may predict that the critic experiences some negative feelings when he states his judgment, meaning that he incorporates an error of his making.

What stays however across all egos is the core message of the Source, what feels negative points to an internal error in meaning and then, when an important error gets materialized in behavior, it does not make the error true because its expression can be observed. *Observations cannot distinguish in the social world what is real from realized illusions.*

Personal behavior based on free choice can be categorized in three different domains.

- 1) Genuinely doing harm to others, meaning hindering or stopping their development and growth directly or by supporting or creating contexts infringing the right of others for development and growth. Feelings: Negative.
- 2) Being indifferent or not helping others. Feelings: negative or positive (above or below the threshold of awareness)
- 3) Genuinely helping or supporting others in an active way. Feelings: positive.

Option 1 is wrong when the person feels negative or has learned not to feel it by suppressing it, but is also rightly wrong for observers, who have knowledge of the Source. Except in rare cases, this kind of behavior will be internally accompanied by negative feelings and even then (for instance the “positive” feelings after revenge) when deconstructing the experience it is still against the code of the Source. Behavior type 1) must be considered carefully. Stopping a burglar in the process of stealing is not hindering his growth and development into learning to express his moral Being, which he *is*, but not what he believes himself to be. Stopping the burglar is not stopping him from what he is. Beating him up *after* he is unable to continue stealing is “honoring” his mistake, the fact that he continues being a burglar, which he is not. Honoring mistakes is mirroring (copying) mistakes

internally, making illusions real, now from the point of view of the “righteous” observer. The stealing, but also the fact of doing harm after the “danger” is cancelled, belongs to category 1) and denies humanity.

Category 2) is more complex. It is a needed position in games and sports, because they are principally innocent entertainment for spectators. And in that context it is alright even preferred to identify with the game. Still, in sports, not helping the competition happens (guaranteed by a referee) principally in a respectful and ethical way. But what does indifference mean outside sports, e.g. in gaming in the broadest sense of the word?

There is a lot of “gaming” going on with “dangerous” identifications in politics, economics and finance, but in principle with few or no referees. Feelings guide (if the Source is known) the participants in worldly “gaming”, about whether their actions are just or not; but how will they be judged by society?

Category 3) is easy to recognize as just. This is Levinas’ humanity in a micro-context and does not need more words to be understood. Category 2) is much harder to evaluate for observers. How to detect right from wrong when observing or judging the passivity of others without imposing “observer’s morality”? How can observers make a better judgment than the Source of the observed?

Questions like this are rare and hardly necessary in a congruent, coherent, genuine form of society, such as that described by Levinas. But in that ideal world, imposing morality on others is not necessary anymore. Living in world that is not ideal needs a different model of morality: *supportive morality*.

13.8.3 The illusion of guilt and supportive morality

Morality cannot be understood along the criteria of guilt. Guilt expects from the self that it is able to act out an idea, which is still unknown to itself. The essence of guilt is a paradox. “I *should* have known”, “I *should* have done” is guilt’s illusionary tactic of blame, denying the actual reality that at that time it was not known, so it could not be avoided.

Blame does not make these distinctions, like the little biological machines of the senses cannot distinguish the relation between meaning, knowledge and behavior (capabilities). Blame also does not care in its accusations about any of these. Still every behavior is a logical, not irrational extension of meaning, while meaning can be highly irrational, *but never on purpose*. During the act, the highest description in power, relevant for that part of the ego, will always be served and any error at that level is not recognized by consciousness as a fault. The mother is truly right to say that it is an error to expect a child to jump higher than his developmental stage allows. Guilt assumes it is not; the child must be able before it is able.

The boundless nature of all *Thou* renders its potential also boundless, making all individuals children again in the grand scheme of their development. Most adults can easily forgive little children, as blame is blocked by their understanding. To blame a little child, saying things such as “You should have known”, in many cases makes no sense for the adult observer and for the child. The adult *understands* the

innocence of the child is preserved in spite of the child's mistake. The child cannot know or at least cannot yet realize what he knows; therefore he / she is granted the right by his adult observers to make mistakes. By accepting the innocence of the child, observers deny their preferred (default) observer's logic and replaced it without knowing with Circular logic. This returns morality within the personal limits of conscious reasoning and responsibility, it serves the Source. However to undo the blockage of blame and to reserve guilt for adults, rests upon the pretention of the observer that he now also understands. He knows why he, as the accuser, is entitled to blame, but he forgets the irrationality all blame needs to exist and he simultaneously denies his ability for Circular logic.

True justice can only individually be applied and True justice follows the Source. It is not a justice that can serve any "Totality" or any other group think, or contemporary society or even a society with the best intentions. Personal justice, "infinite" and real, follows the Source's reference serving *I - Thou* as a principle and includes Levinas' plurality. Total justice, even at its best, with good intentions, is an average, a generalization, a gross reduction in order to protect and uphold the state (the village or the tribe) as its first cause. So, if unavoidable, its justice will be at the expense of doing justice to the 'anonymous' individual.

The division between personal and systemic justice is noticeable in different schools of ethics, such as the virtue ethics who are closest to the "found reference" and deontological schools, which in fact protect the rulers of a (local) total system, and in which authority lies in the end in the hands of violence. The Taliban and Isis are modern examples of this, but also little villages with their strong local ethics are examples, which can only exist by avoiding or excluding strangers unless they fully comply. Simple totalitarian societies (and they are always simple) fully follow Total justice and could just as well replace all their judges by machines. Democracies feel intuitively the tension between Total and personal justice, which makes most verdicts doing *equal* justice to both, an impossible compromise and beyond what any future artificial intelligence can muster.

Totality founded by observer's logic existed in Levinas' time and fifty years later still exists today. Likely it will at best still exist some centuries further down the road. We don't live in an ideal world and law and order *is* necessary to uphold a society as a systemic external condition with a certain function. The most just function would be to respect the Source's message amidst billions who do not know or are not able yet to realize its messages. To help them grow, a supportive morality is needed. One which is unable to do *perfect* justice to humanity in the present; it will not fit Levinas' society yet. Such a morality needs judges and supportive politics with the knowledge that the best practical morality is a compromise between personal and systemic justice, but in service to protect the becoming of a society, which embraces humanity. A compromised justice, which keeps the idea intact valid in the presence that every suspect before court against all perceptions is-not an "It" and can never be one what the senses offer. In spite of all suspect's proven sins, WYSIWYG is existentially the opposite of what he is. To start from there, will

gradually end the blame game and will support the inescapable development to plural societies, which understand deeply that nobody falls, or are out of grace with themselves on purpose and that any kind of blame needs the blind faith of the accuser who is lost in his own righteousness. Just like modern democratic states did not develop out of a controlled and planned way, but allowed to be guided by an “invisible hand”, so hopefully a second hand, evolved out of the first, will guide existing states over the centuries to a kind of Levinas’ state.

14.0 Research question two

The addition of leadership has been chosen because leaders (as is well known) act willingly or unwillingly *as role models* and are often followed and copied by others, which will qualify them as followers, although they follow themselves. Leaders thus lead by example and influence culture much more than any those with fewer powers in the organization are able to, *without* the approval of “higher” authorities.

What is within the scope of the thesis to explore is a fraction of “supportive morality”, namely the answer of the second main research question:

“How does a moral impartial ground affect the properties of moral leadership in organizations”?

There are many theories regarding what good and moral leadership should be or could be. I choose only one here as one will do when it perfectly fits supportive morality for managers and leaders in business and strongly resonates with the findings of the research. The one found is the earlier mentioned “The MBA OATH”. The authors of the book “The MBA OATH” (Anderson and Escher 2010) understand that no words can fulfill the true nature of morality in relation to the complexity of the world; but they have offered something refreshing: *it is not necessary*. The oath acts as a reminder and makes it easier to awaken or better invite outside consciousness the deep, hidden knowledge of the Source in the unconscious. Once awakened, but accepted and maintained by the ego, it becomes possible for *ego* to be gradually rewritten and the compliant world will be rewritten as well in experience (section 8.2). The book is not a product of a gathering of old and wise professors and philosophers, but comes from a young generation of students from the year 2008/2009. As a spontaneous reaction to the 2008 Financial Global Crisis, more than 2,500 MBAs and business students in Harvard Business School's class of 2009, drafted and spread “The MBA Oath”, based on a brief code of ethics. The book begins with, and from thereon defends and explains:

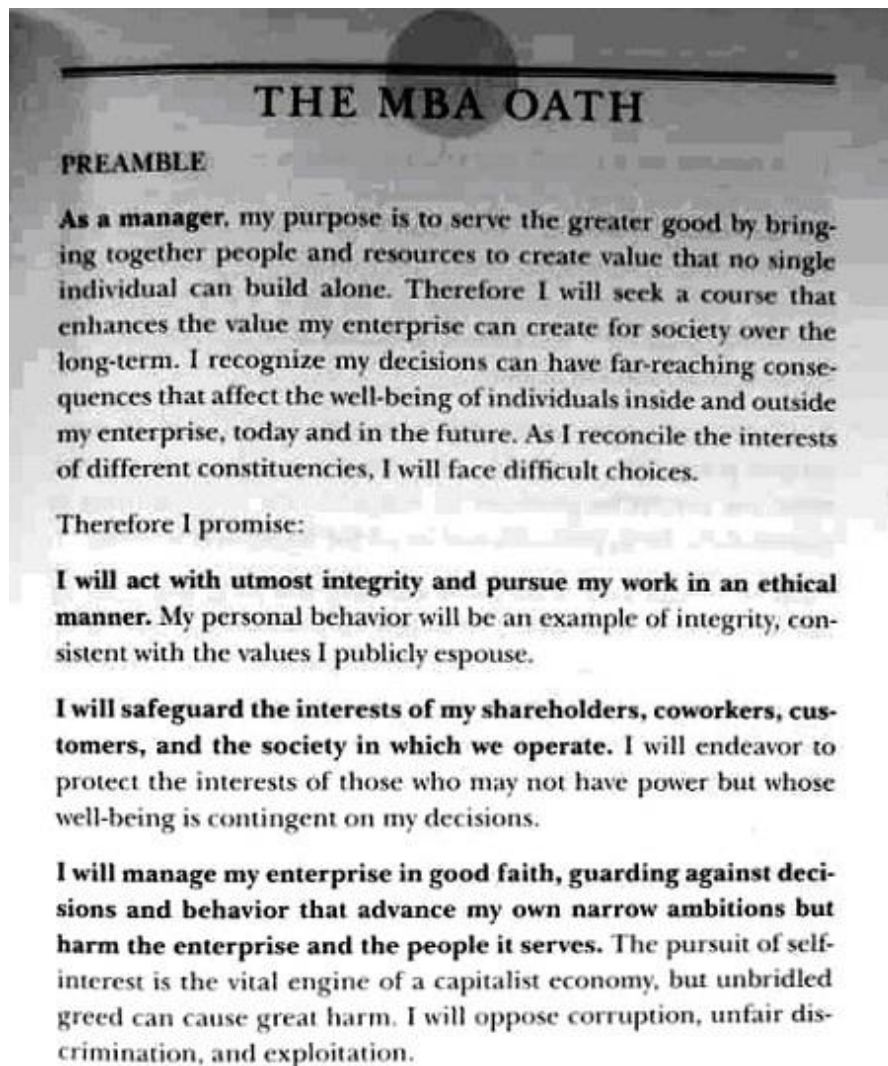


Fig. 7 The MBA Oath

“As a manager, my purpose is to serve the greater good by bringing together people and resources to create value that no single individual can build alone. Therefore I will seek a course that enhances the value my enterprise can create for society over the long-term. I recognize my decisions can have far-reaching consequences that affect the well-being of individuals inside and outside my enterprise, today and in the future. As I reconcile the interests of different constituencies. I will face difficult choices.

Therefore I promise:

I will act with utmost integrity and pursue my work in an ethical manner. My personal behavior will be an example of integrity, consistent with the values I publicly espouse.

I will safeguard the interests of my shareholders, coworkers, customers, and the society in which we operate. I will endeavor to protect the interests of those who may not have power but whose well-being is contingent on my decisions,

I will manage my enterprise in good faith, guarding against decisions and behavior that advance my own narrow ambitions but harm the enterprise and the people it serves. The pursuit of self-interest is the vital engine of a capitalist economy, but unbridled greed can cause great harm. I will oppose corruption, unfair discrimination, and exploitation.

I will understand and uphold, both in letter and in spirit, the laws and contracts governing my own conduct and that of my enterprise. If I find laws that are unjust, antiquated, or unhelpful I will not brazenly break, ignore, or avoid them: I will seek civil and acceptable means of reforming them.

I will take responsibility for my actions, and I will represent the performance and risks of my enterprise accurately and honestly. My aim will not be to distort the truth but to transparently explain it and help people understand how decisions that affects them are made.

I will develop both myself and other managers under my supervision so that the profession continues to grow and contribute to the well-being of society. I will consult colleagues and others who can help inform my judgment and will continually invest in staying abreast of the evolving knowledge in the field, always remaining open to innovation. I will mentor and look after the education of the next generation of leaders.

I will strive to create sustainable economic, social, and environmental prosperity worldwide. Sustainable prosperity is created when the enterprise produces an output in the long run that is greater than the opportunity cost of all the inputs it consumes.

I will be accountable to my peers and they will be accountable to me for living by this oath. I recognize that my stature and privileges as a professional stem from the respect and trust that the profession as a whole enjoys, and I accept my responsibility for embodying, protecting, and developing the standards of the management profession, so as to enhance that trust and respect.

This oath I make freely, and upon my honor." (Anderson and Asher 2010 p. xv-xvi)

The MBA Oath's aim is not to fully cover all possible contexts and decision points, which is neither possible nor necessary. They invite the Source, in difficult non routine contexts—within personal development, power and responsibility—to “stop whispering”. The Oath allows and invites the Source to answer out loud, when the question is asked: NOT “What should I do?”, but “*What is the best I can do in my / this job-context, that helps me to become more of my true self?*”

The question will not only honor man’s real nature and Being, but is the only valid question that can be asked in order to become genuinely human and to be recognized by others as genuinely human. The question opens the sum of all internal known resources in general and, in particular, pushes near developed ones into awareness. Any other question asks to deviate from personal growth and development. This is another important good thing about The MBA Oath, that it will block job identification.

14.1 The identification with one’s organizational function may not be a good thing

Before discussing role or job identification, there is a vast library of books and articles since the fifties about this topic, increasingly popular nowadays. Still, in academic theory there is no difference between the ego and personal identity. Academic identity theories are solely based on observer’s logic that first tries to categorize things in order to understand later with further analysis. An approach which leads to the classical ego or identity definitions as a model which autopoiesis cannot support.

The above question [*“What is the best I can do in this / my job-context, that helps me to become more of my [relational] true self?”*] to the Source and/or following the Oath will both block any unconscious motivation to identify oneself with the job. Job identification will reduce one’s own personality on the level of meaning and values, in order to fit in with the perceived demands of the job; once there and much more dangerously, this opens the door wide open to further identifying with the culture behind the job. Good people can become unethical when they identify with an unethical culture, which requires their “innocent” identification with their function, a process made clear by research (Falk and Szech 2013; Cohn, Fehr & Maréchal 2014). It is much better for executives and other role models in the organization, instead of role identification, to stay oneself in the role, while at the same time not denying their job responsibilities.

What the Oath will support is that a human stays a human in whatever job he is. It does not support the idea of the man becoming the job, but instead it looks at how the job can become humanized. The deconstruction of opposing logics only shows, in the end, the hidden alienation of their thought-system from humanity, caught in

an ideology of weakness maintained by fear. This may be fear that the job cannot be done right, or that moral decisions are against effectiveness or more profit, against professionalism; that moral decisions will weaken the cause. What causes can be weakened by morality, except the ones “we” should not want? It is against humanity as Levinas defined it and extremely arrogant of the ego to believe that his virtual thought systems to defend an unethical approach or way of doing, is superior to his own innocence and those of others.

The question to the Source “How can I answer this context with my real self” will be perfectly answered every time and will push one even further in becoming a better man, a better leader and a better professional, doing his (very) small part in developing a better world. Happily the answer that “intuitively” rises, as right as it may be, shares the autopoietic meaninglessness of all triggers. Also in this case “I-as-me” has the freedom to accept the answer or to push it aside or even silence the question. What meaning the answer or even the question will have is fully determined by free choice an often taken for granted unimaginable great gift out of the grandest scheme of evolution. When one finds himself in a wrong system, too far apart from humanity and ideologically bound by a “truth” which needs Levinas’ [cruel] Totality to survive, the answer from the Source might be: “Get out of here”.

On the other hand, logically organizations do not ask for unethical cultures, but they cannot defend themselves against the gradual [de-]formation of one as the unintentional result of the combined forces of job identification. What the nature of jobs is, is of course a major factor in this. But feeling responsible for the job being done successfully does not require any identification as all *jobs are only functional* for the organization, they are not entities, they are a collections of required verbs. Someone does not “become his car” when driving through the city and he, who drives does not become a driver either, he is still himself behind the steering wheel. He may be named a driver in the domain of descriptions, for clarification purposes. Neither the car nor driving itself are entities, needing identification. Verbs integrated as important aspects of capabilities can be learned and are in all cases tools. *To be human cannot be learned but can be allowed.* To become the tool is an error, to use the tool in human’s hands is to humanize the tool. Even with the best intentions to become the tool, is to dehumanize, which in extreme cases where utmost concentration is needed mostly hand eye and or eye body coordination (e.g. in sports, the surgeon) is innocent. Genuine trustworthy people, having their heart at the right place, do not even need to be charming, in order to be admired or followed or supported in organizations. They are admired not because they fulfill their job requirements. The latter is just a minimum condition. To admire or worship distanced leaders or public figures because of their (immense) successes or their created image, is far away from admiring them as a member from humanity.

The Source’s references, Buber’s Thou and Levinas’ humanity all welcome “The MBA Oath” as they are fully compatible with it. It lead to a leadership where

the leader does not only feels morally responsible for the corporate products / services of his organization or department but also feels equally responsible and accountable for the processes of their becoming and the possible effects it may have for environments and clients. Such leadership is announced in modern theories of leadership like e.g. transformational leadership (Avolio, B. J., Bass, B. M., Riggio, R. E., Orr, S. S., Ciulla, J. B., Krishnan, V. R., ... & Riggio, R. E. 2008) and more so in servant leadership (Van Dierendonck, D. (2011).

14.2 The MBA Oath and the previous Global Financial Crisis

Would the Oath have avoided the Global Financial Crisis if it was part of the culture of the financial industry? The answer can only be a *full yes*, if a sufficient number of executives had taken the Oath voluntarily. When a critical mass of executives is ethical, they will automatically transform the general financial culture that Alan Greenspan has spoken about, towards an ethical one.

“...my aim will not be to distort the truth but to transparently explain it and help people understand how decisions [products] that affects them are made.” (Anderson and Asher 2010 p. xv-xvi)

And

“I will strive to create sustainable economic, social, and environmental prosperity worldwide”, something which resonates with *“... notice the close bond that unites the particular fortune of each one of them to the prosperity of all”* (Tocqueville 1840/2010, ch. 14 a).

The above will end what is described as one of the major human factors causing the crisis: the wrong side of greed (section 1.4.1) whereby seller and buyer do not share the same information about products and services, while mostly buyers expect that they do. The *covert* use of asymmetrical information is the dark side of greed and violates all forms of even compromised morality.

The Oath however covers much more than the above and goes the extra mile to contribute in the development of a better world, starting with the idea of executives growing into humans who accept themselves being part of humanity. In the end, McCloskey's Bourgeois virtues appear just right. Every one of them fits personal development of the self and of the self with others, and gives richness to the MBA oath. The Source however critically *lifts* one of the seven virtues up to reign over the others to hold them in check: Love. If all human verbs directly or indirectly serve Love, the human species grant finally the freedom human autopoietic organization has given the species a long long time ago to leave behind its identification with his animal past.

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Samenvatting

Universeel acceptabele en rationele criteria voor het oplossen van morele geschillen schijnen niet te bestaan. Wat moreel acceptabel is in Amsterdam kan als verwerpelijk worden beschouwd in Peshawar (Pakistan). Om moraliteit zoveel mogelijk een onafhankelijk status te geven onafhankelijk van bijv. lokale culturen of persoonlijke voorkeuren, zijn er in de geschiedenis filosofisch uiteenlopende benaderingen ontwikkeld. Een echte onafhankelijke status berust echter op uitgangspunten, die vanuit een even echte onpartijdige positie komen. Een echte onpartijdige positie voor morele beginselen blijkt in de praktijk moeilijk haalbaar. Vandaar de ontwikkeling om “echte” onpartijdigheid te benaderen via methoden gebaseerd op veronderstellingen. David Hume (“judicious spectator”) en Adam Smith (“impartial spectator”) zijn klassieke voorbeelden, van het toepassen van een hypothetische onpartijdige positie (“veil of ignorance”), die nodig zijn voor de ontwikkeling van hun morele theorieën. Alhoewel morele theorieën daardoor voor velen aannemelijk wordt gemaakt, geldt dat niet voor (vele) anderen. Het is daarom niet vreemd dat moraliteit een filosofisch onderwerp is en geen wetenschappelijke. Dat verzwakt echter aanzienlijk de autoriteit van moraliteit en diens invloed over politieke en economische processen. MacIntyre (1986 p. 6-11) gaat zelfs zover door te zeggen dat sinds de klassieke oudheid de werkelijke grond van moraliteit het aan enige rationaliteit ontbreekt en dat diens autoriteit uiteindelijk terugvalt op de persoonlijke willekeur van het individu of de cultuur van de groep.

Het algehele doel van het proefschrift is het vinden of plausibel maken —door kwalitatief onderzoek—van een niet-hypothetische, rationele basis voor moraliteit. Dat wil zeggen dat de antwoorden via interviews verkregen, geheel onafhankelijk zijn van de persoonlijke historie, cultuur, waarden en belangen van de respondenten. Met zo’n basis kan moraliteit een beroep doen op echte onpartijdige argumenten. Allicht helpt dat moraliteit een geloofwaardiger autoriteit te verlenen in die contexten waar het nodig is, zoals bijv. in de huidige financiële industrie. Meerdere onderzoeken na de 2008 Global Financial Crisis hebben aangetoond dat naast systemische oorzaken van de crisis, de *cultuur* als medeveroorzaker van de financiële industrie gebaat zal zijn met de introductie en ontwikkeling van morele waarden (o.a. Partnoy 2010; Falk and Szech 2013; Cohn, Fehr & Maréchal 2014).

Wanneer het onderzoek een rationele en universele basis voor moraliteit plausibel heeft gemaakt, wordt verder onderzocht hoe zo’n basis effect kan hebben op leiderschap in organisaties. Maar eerst is het nodig een objectieve *methode* te vinden of te ontwikkelen, die geschikt is om een niet subjectieve basis voor moraliteit vast te stellen. Echter met welk aanknopingspunt te beginnen?

Moreel gedrag of het “juiste” doen of “goed doen” is meer dan wat zakelijk of politiek gezien is vereist. Goed doen onder de conditie van er iets voor terug willen is een transactie en komt bijv. via symbiose in de biologie al miljoenen jaren voor. Goed-doen volgens ethische normen houdt niet in een goed vakman zijn, die zijn “goed doen” achterlaat wanneer het aan het einde van de dag tijd is om naar huis te gaan. Volgens Aristoteles is goed-doen gedefinieerd als-goed-zijn als mens naar zijn medemens toe. Dat reikt verder dan de kwaliteit van goed vakmanschap. De thesis neemt de veronderstelling van Aristoteles over. Het-goede-doen in de morele context is zonder economische redenen; het is onbaatzuchtig. Maar de kwestie van het-goede-doen laat onmiddellijk het probleem zien: “Wie definieert wat juist of goed is en hoe doe je dat?”. De verklaring van de aanwezigheid van goed of juist gedrag (of gedrag in het algemeen) is immers niet te vinden in het gedrag zelf. De algemeen geldige vraag over alle culturen heen: “Waarom doe je dat?” is daarvoor nodig. De essentie van moreel gedrag vindt ergens plaats in het innerlijke domein van de mens.

De werkhypothese van het onderzoek gaat ervan uit dat moraliteit uiteindelijk niet gebaseerd is op persoonlijke of groepsvoorkeuren, maar op een bestaande maar (nog) onverkende innerlijke reden. Tegelijkertijd ontstaat de moeilijkheid zo’n basis in het innerlijk van de mens via een objectieve methode vast te stellen. De psychologische biedt in dit geval geen uitkomst. Wanneer een innerlijk gegeven onafhankelijk is van persoonlijke waarden en historie of met andere woorden onafhankelijk is van alle subjectiviteit, dan kan dat universele gegeven alleen aanwezig zijn in het transcendentale domein van de mens. Zo’n domein is vrij en onafhankelijk van de invloeden van het ego (persoonlijkheid) en bevindt zich gelijktijdig vooraf (a priori) aan de wereld en diens gebeurtenissen. Dat is juist niet het aandachtsgebied waar de psychologie en wetenschap zich mee bezig houden. Dat maakt het aantonen van een niet-subjectieve basis voor moraliteit op zijn minst vrij lastig. Het transcendentale domein van de menselijke geest is wel verkend, onderzocht en (gedeeltelijk) beschreven door o.a. Kant (e.g. CPR1781) en Husserl (Fenomenologie 1927).

Voor Husserl is onmisbaar voor de thesis vanwege zijn ontdekking van het bestaan van een “pure” (onpartijdige) menselijke geest, die in principe in iedereen aanwezig is. Ook Kant’s transcendentale eigenschappen van de menselijke geest om tot het ervaren van een wereld te komen zijn intersubjectief als universeel aanwezig aannemelijk gemaakt. Husserl’s “Transcendentale Bewustzijn” of “Pure Bewustzijn” vrij van kennis en subjectieve inhouden is een veelbelovend begin om het exploratieve onderzoek via interviews te beginnen. Echter, Husserl’s methode (epoché) om in zijn zuivere ego-vrije “state of mind” te komen blijkt niet geschikt te zijn om respondenten in die staat te brengen. In de context van één enkel interview lukt Husserl’s methode niet.

De eerste onderzoeksvraag leidt tot de opdracht om een andere kwalitatieve methode te vinden of er één te ontwikkelen die wel geschikt is. Een andere “epoché” methode geschikt voor het onderzoek is onbekend en is ook niet gevonden. Wetenschappelijke kwalitatieve interview methodes zijn ontworpen om juist de persoonlijke meningen en of kennis van de geïnterviewde zo ongekleurd mogelijk weer te geven.

Zoals eerder is vermeld is het algehele doel van het proefschrift het vinden of plausibel maken van een niet-hypothetische rationale basis voor moraliteit. Het toepassen van de nieuwe methode brengt de respondent echter alleen in een bewustzijn staat dat door Husserl is aangegeven als “Pure Bewustzijn”. Het is daarom nodig om vanuit die niet hypothetische, onpartijdige positie het Transcendentale Domein verder te verkennen om een algemeen aanwezige, begrijpelijk basis voor moraliteit te vinden. Wanneer zo’n basis is gevonden gaat de tweede onderzoeksvraag over welk praktisch effect zo’n basis logischerwijze kan hebben op leiderschap in organisaties.

De benadering om de onderzoeksvragen te beantwoorden is een exploratieve zoektocht. Daarvoor is de deconstructie methode gekozen, een methode die gehanteerde en voor de thesis relevante begrippen en definities kritisch uitkleedt tot op het laatst deelbare “component”. Dat blijkt echter niet voldoende te zijn. Het is nodig gebleken om de biologische theorie van Maturana en Varela “Autopoiesis” (1972/1980) als uitgangspunt te nemen. Ze hebben onderzocht met welk doel—sinds het ontstaan van het leven— de interne wisselwerking tussen het organisme en de wereld is ontstaan en hoe die plaats vindt. Wat centraal naar voren is gekomen en ook geldig is voor “mensen”, is het begrip “organisationele geslotenheid” (organisational closure). Organisationele geslotenheid determineert individuele zelf-referentie, individueel zelf-behoud en individueel zelf-onderhoud (waaronder het behoud van de species) onder het paraplubegrip zelforganisatie. Zelforganisatie kan alleen van de eigen informatie betekenissen uitgaan *omdat organismen niet in staat zijn externe informatie betekenissen in zich op te nemen*. Informatie is dimensie-loos en kan niet worden opgepakt door machines of zintuigen. De betekenis die de informatie heeft voor de ontvanger van zintuigelijke prikkels kan niet door de wereld “als zender” worden bepaald.

Dat is de harde kern van de autopoiesis theorie, wat anti-intuïtief overkomt. Doordat de soort “homo sapiens” door de natuur als het ware is “vrij” gegeven en dus niet meer via genetische overdracht (instincten) de wereld opgedrongen krijgt, is het principe van organisationele geslotenheid (voortaan “closure” genoemd) vooral voor het psychologische domein van de mens van belang. Individuele zelfreferentie houdt dan in dat alle streefwaarden en betekenissen, die individueel geldig zijn voor het bereiken of verstoren van een innerlijk evenwicht niet bepaald (gedetermineerd)

kunnen worden door externe gebeurtenissen. Door autopoiesis toe te passen op de deconstructie van de menselijke persoonlijkheid of het ego blijkt het ego niet een biologisch gegeven te zijn (wat voor sommige talenten en het lichaam wel het geval is). Het ego is een zelfgemaakte informatie *constructie*. Het is de som van alle *relaties* tussen de (dynamische) betekenissen van het “ik” en dat wat als niet-ik is gedefinieerd, wat over het algemeen de buitenwereld inhoudt. In de thesis is de relatie als *Ego* weergegeven. De relatie heeft zowel een ik-beschrijving (klassieke ego begrip) als wel een contextbeschrijving *nodig* en de één ontstaat automatisch uit de ander. De beschrijvingen zijn naar elkaar toegewend (compliant) omdat de neurologische relatie niet de wereldbeschrijving dient, maar uitsluitend de zelforganisatie van het eigen organisme. Dat maakt de wereld beschrijving ondergeschikt aan zelf-organisatie processen. Closure zorgt er letterlijk voor dat alleen de eigen beschrijvingen kunnen worden ervaren. Er is geen tweedeling tussen subject en object voor het zenuwstelsel. De relatie ertussen is de functionele eenheid die voor de overleving en “de aard van het beestje” nodig is. Een “ik”-idee apart van de relatie die het met de wereld heeft, en die de onafhankelijkheid van de wereld naar het ik toe suggereert, is niet alleen incompleet maar ook nog onjuist. Zelfs de veronderstelde onafhankelijkheid van de wereld bij het observeren ervan weerspiegelt nog steeds de geprojecteerde subjectieve betekenissen van de waarnemer. Dat maakt de ervaring van een wereld letterlijk tot een *weerspiegeling* van het persoonlijke karakter. Closure via de fysiologie en vooral de anatomie van het zenuwstelsel determineert dus de *onmogelijkheid* van het ervaren of het hebben van objectieve waarnemingen. Er is een eenvoudige oefening om dat aan te tonen. Wat door experts en wetenschappers onder objectiviteit wordt verstaan, is dan een *gereduceerde*, maar linguïstische versie van de ervaren werkelijkheid. Het is weliswaar niet te ervaren, maar als een virtueel taalconstruct is het een essentieel en onmisbaar instrument van beschrijving zoals de wortel van -1 onmisbaar is in de taal van de wiskunde. Objectieve beschrijvingen zijn gekoppeld aan het standpunt en de daarbij behorende *logica van waarnemers*, die echter de werking van hun eigen organisationele geslotenheid en de limieten van hun zenuwstelsel buiten beschouwing laten. Projectie-processen zorgen ervoor dat de betekenissen (subjectieve bijvoeglijke naamwoorden) van de waarnemer worden ervaren als waarneembare (objectieve) eigenschappen van het waargenomene. Dit is volkomen analoog aan een ander closure gegeven: de projectie van kleuren (of geluiden), waarbij kleuren en of geluiden ook alleen kunnen worden ervaren als objectieve eigenschappen van het waargenomene. Een wetenschappelijk voorbeeld van waarnemerslogica is de onderscheiding, die een waarnemer maakt —en die zintuigelijk opgedrongen wordt— tussen organisme en diens omgeving, als uitgangspunt te nemen om bijv. interne structuren of interactief gedrag van het organisme te verklaren. De benadering ontkent closure-processen en levert in

beginsel foutieve verklaringen op. De andere logica, “Circulaire logica” is meer een reflexieve meta-logica, die in de eerste plaats van projectie van betekenissen uitgaat en van daaruit tot verklaringen komt. Deze logica accepteert de essentiële relatie-identiteit van de waarnemer, vooralsnog gebaseerd op biologische autopoietische principes. Het accent van beide logica’s ligt in de verschillende benadering om ervaringen te verklaren. Beide logica’s hebben hun eigen aandachtsgebied waarbij praktisch iedereen waaronder professionals en wetenschappers, alleen waarnemers-logica gebruiken. De dominante logica in de wetenschap levert voor niet-levende fenomenen echter verhelderende en goed bruikbare resultaten op, maar voor het verklaren van levende organismen en psychologische fenomenen (moraliteit) is het feitelijk niet geschikt. Ook de ontwikkeling van autopoiesis als theorie kon pas een doorbraak krijgen toen hun onderzoekers Maturana en Varela (1972 / 1980) begrepen dat de causale logica van waarnemers storend is om bijv. de werking van zenuwstelsels en hersens te kunnen begrijpen.

“However, I made a concession which I have always regretted. I ... talked about causal relations when speaking about the circular organization of living systems. To do this was both inadequate and misleading. It was inadequate because the notion of causality is a notion that pertains to the domain of descriptions, and as such it is relevant only in the meta-domain in which the observer makes his commentaries and cannot be deemed to be operative in the phenomenal domain, the object of the description.” (Maturana, Varela 1980 p. xviii, underlining added)

Met de beginselen van autopoiesis begon de kritische deconstructie van de voor de thesis belangrijke begrippen als categorieën, causaliteit, objectiviteit, subjectiviteit, inter-subjectiviteit, betekenissen (taal), ego en tenslotte gedeeltelijk het bewuste versus het onbewuste waaronder de functie van emoties. Via vele ondersteunende conclusies, is de eindconclusie te maken dat ego de eerder beschreven relatie *Ego* is. Een andere onmisbare conclusie voor de thesis stelt, dat (pure) ego in staat is een interview met zich zelf te houden (Maturana et al. 1980; Husser 1927, Archer 2007). Met behulp van de theorieën van Stone en Stone (1989) en Rhodes en Thames (1988) is een methode ontwikkeld die in één enkel interview willekeurige respondenten in staat stelt in hun pure onpartijdige “state of mind” te komen. Een staat, die voldoet aan de criteria van Husserl’s Transcendentale Bewustzijn of “Pure Ego”. Van daaruit kon een verdere zoektocht beginnen, die echter niet direct naar moraliteit leidt omdat er geen aanknopingspunten zijn. Eerst was het nodig als werkhypothese de suggesties te accepteren van eerdere auteurs (bijv. Wilson (1993); Izard 1977; Haidt 2003) dat moraliteit verbonden kan zijn of is met emoties. Het deconstrueren van emoties via Circulaire logica levert een afwijkende theorie over emoties op met de hoofdconclusie dat emoties niet kunnen reageren op interne of externe prikkels, die via “denotatieve” taal principes beschreven zijn. Of in

andere woorden emoties kunnen niet op de buitenwereld reageren en zijn daar ook niet voor bestemd. Emoties reageren op het ego, ze verschijnen als een reactie op de interne relatie tussen subject en object en niet apart op de één of de ander wat in de huidige theorieën over emoties nog het geval is.

De voor de thesis gevolgde veronderstelling is dat een rationele onpartijdige basis voor moraliteit indirect gevonden kan worden via de functies of doelstelling van emoties.

Wanneer via de gevonden methode de respondent zich met zijn transcendentale domein heeft geïdentificeerd, is de volgende stap niet het zoeken naar allerlei “ethische emoties”, maar wat *transcendentiaal* aan emoties ligt. Kan door elke respondent een zelf evidente “Transcendental Source of Emotions” (Bron) individueel worden aangetoond? In de afgenomen interviews (30x; augustus 2015) is zo’n Source (Bron) gevonden en intern geïnterviewd door de respondenten in hun ego-loze onpartijdige staat. De antwoorden van de Bron zijn intern meerdere malen gecheckt met een zogenoemde “member check” om er zo zeker mogelijk van te zijn dat “ego” zich niet met het interne interview heeft bemoeid. De verkregen antwoorden waren voor alle respondenten identiek, wat logischerwijze ook te verwachten is als subjectieve verschillen en kennisovereenkomsten tussen de respondenten zijn komen te vervallen. De Bron gaf zijn interne referentie prijs: alle interne betekenissen (ongeacht hun (ir)rationele herkomst), die het individu helpt in zijn ontwikkeling en groei, voelt positief aan. Autopoietisch wil dat zeggen dat de interne betekenissen harmonisch zijn met de werkelijke aard van het eigen potentieel, dat op ontwikkeling wacht en die ook krijgt. Interne betekenissen die de eigen ontwikkeling storen of blokkeren voelen negatief aan. Die betekenissen zijn gebaseerd op een vergissing. Een vergissing is gedefinieerd als die informatie voor waar aannemen dat niet strookt of samenvalt met de juiste beschrijving van het te ontwikkelen eigen potentieel. Het sprookje van “Het lelijke eendje” van Andersen (1843) is een metaforisch, maar duidelijk voorbeeld van een interne beschrijvingsfout op (in dit geval) identiteitsniveau.

Echter moraliteit valt met deze verklaring van emoties ook indirect nog niet af te leiden.

Omdat ook emoties ontstaan bij het weten over of observeren van andere mensen —iemand anders krijgt een ongeluk of geeft geboorte aan een prachtige baby— is dat onderzocht. Welke referentie gebruikt de Bron bij ideeën over anderen? Het niet geanticiperde antwoord is voor de Bron hetzelfde antwoord. Elke overtuiging die ondersteunend is naar de eigen ontwikkeling of via het eigen gedrag naar die van een ander, voelt goed aan. Ideeën of overtuigingen, die tot gedrag leiden om de ander niet te helpen of zelfs zijn verdere ontwikkeling te verhinderen of onmogelijk te maken, levert een (flink) negatief gevoel op. De extra vraag werd toegevoegd:

“Mensen maken een essentieel verschil tussen het “ik” en de ander, maak jij dat onderscheid ook of niet?”

Het antwoord van alle geïnterviewden was, dat zo’n onderscheid door hun Bron *niet* wordt gemaakt. Het antwoord overstijgt de beperkingen van het biologische lichaam en diens autopoiesis. De mogelijkheid is er nu om een link met moraliteit te maken of een referentie te hebben om in zekere zin moreel gedrag te beschrijven of vast te stellen. Moraliteit blijkt geen aparte bron in het wezenlijke van de mens te hebben, de mens is essentieel een *moreel wezen*, dat wacht om toegelaten te worden, om beschreven te worden (ontwikkeling). Het kan niet worden geconstrueerd.

Theoretisch gezien, als de *essentie* van het persoonlijke zijn een relatie met de ander inhoudt, dan wordt de medemens —als een interne positief beschreven betekenis— onmisbaar voor het eigen welzijn. Het bewijs van welzijn is echter niet een beschrijving (idee) maar de daarbij verbonden gevoelservaring. Wat de Bron weergeeft, is dat binnen het transcendentale ego-vrije en dus foutloze domein, de Bron als referentie geen onderscheid maakt tussen het ik en de ander. Elke ontkenning van deze oeroude, maar altijd onbewijsbare wijsheid zal gepaard gaan met een negatieve emotie. De emotie is bedoeld als een *interne negatieve feedbacklus*, die verwijst naar een foute beschrijving. Het wel toelaten van verbondenheid tussen het ik en de ander is de meest kernachtige definitie van liefde, ontdaan van alle romantiek. Het is echter geen liefde, die gebaseerd kan zijn op voorkeuren of andere condities, die het ego kan opwerpen, het is immers een transcendentale onderstroom van Liefde. Verdere nuanceringsen en beantwoording van de voornaamste vragen komen in de thesis aan bod.

Uit de vele theorieën die perfect aansluiten bij de gevonden referenties van de Bron, zijn die van Martin Buber (“Ich und Du” 1923) en Emanuel Levinas (“Totalité et Infini 1961/1969) gekozen. Levinas’ ”humanity” en de manier hoe dat fenomeen zich aandient en Buber’s “*Thou*” geven weer hoe de Liefde in het Transcendentale Domein zich laat kennen via een wezenlijk te ervaren verbinding tussen het ik en de aanschouwde ander. Levinas probeert van daaruit een maatschappij te beschrijven, die het individuele unieke en de vrijheid die daarbij behoort om dat unieke (de absolute ander) tot ontplooiing te brengen, accepteert. Zijn maatschappij is gefundeerd op de kern van de mens, die alle mensen met elkaar verbindt en *gelijkwaardig* maakt. Die wezenlijke verbinding, die aan de wereld vooraf gaat, doet mensen onderdeel zijn van een prachtige mensheid met een *onverliesbare onschuld*. Ook een mensheid, die vanuit zijn wezen in staat is een ethische maatschappij te ontwikkelen waar de oeroude roep voor oorlog om verschillen te vereffenen, is verstild. De bril om zo naar de ander te kijken en te herkennen voor wat hij is, noemt Levinas moraliteit zelf: “Ethics is an optics. (Levinas 1969 p. 23 English translation). Transcendentale verbintenis betekent niet dat de informatie waar individuen zich noodzakelijkerwijze mee identificeren om zo een

persoonlijkheid te ervaren, ook gelijkwaardig aan elkaar zijn en evenveel respect verdienen. Per definitie maakt het ego naast liefdevolle beschrijvingen vergissingen over zichzelf en anderen en soms zijn de liefdevolle niet meer terug te vinden. Alle liefdevolle verbindingen van de bron, van Buber, van Levinas en de talloze anderen in de mystiek en sommige religies, slaan op een *wezenlijke* verbinding, die onafhankelijk is van gedrag of denken. Niemand kan dus zijn vergissing ook zijn, ongeacht de ernst van de vergissing.

In autopoiesis wordt die verbinding in *Ego* gemaakt, maar zonder de betekenis van de transcendentale referentie van de Bron af te dwingen. Zo blijft de vrijheid van interne betekenisprocessen (sense making processes) ook voor interne prikkels (emoties) gegarandeerd. Het ego wordt een moreel ego wanneer het zich als *Ego* (h)erkent. Om moraliteit zo praktisch mogelijk te maken verandert Transcendentiaal liefdevol zijn in respectvol zijn. Wat dat kan inhouden is onderdeel van de beantwoording van de laatste en tweede onderzoeksvraag.

De laatste onderzoeksvraag gaat over hoe de gevonden basis voor moraliteit effect heeft op leiderschap in organisaties. De gevonden basis voor moraliteit mag dan zijn aangetoond bij de respondenten, het is zeker niet nieuw. De gelijkwaardigheid van anderen naar het zelf toe en de onderlinge “onzichtbare”, maar wezenlijke verbintenis (liefde) tussen mensen is via mystiek, religies en filosofie al lang geleden verondersteld en beschreven. Uit de vele moderne teksten die er zijn over moreel leiderschap, heb ik die van Anderson en Escher (2010) gekozen omdat het direct praktisch is. De auteurs hebben, als reactie op de 2008 financiële wereldcrisis, hun boek “The MBA OATH” uitgebracht. Hun zienswijze en veronderstellingen sluiten op een zakelijke en praktische manier naadloos aan op de respect en transparantie die de Bron vraagt om aan medemensen te geven. De eed voor leiders (managers) is beschreven als een lange termijn ethische belofte aan eigen werknemers, de eigen organisatie en diens relevante functionele omgevingen, zoals de maatschappij en indirect de rest van de wereld. De eed belooft dat de leider zich houdt aan de negen regels die de eed uitmaakt. De eerste van de negen regels zijn: **“I will act with utmost integrity and pursue my work in an ethical manner. My personal behavior will be an example of integrity, consistent with the values I publicly espouse”** ., (Anderson and Asher 2010 p. xv-xvi)

Met de gehele Oath accepteert de manager of leider binnen de verantwoordelijkheid van zijn functie dat zijn persoonlijk welzijn niet boven het welzijn kan staan van alle relevante anderen, in zoverre de organisatie daar direct of indirect mee te maken heeft. Het gezamenlijke welzijn kan het best gediend worden met eerlijke transparante processen, en met respect voor de behoeften, rechten en bezittingen van anderen. De leider belooft ook dat hij op zijn gedrag kan worden aangesproken

De eed kan van een enkeling niet meer verwachten. De eed werkt voor het individu, die de eed herkent als een reflectie van zijn eigen wezen naar de wereld toe. Het helpt de organisatie wanneer voldoende leiders dat begrijpen, zodat de waarden erachter onderdeel van de cultuur zijn geworden.

Curriculum Vitae

Kyrill Alexandrowitch Goosseff (1948) has a bachelor degree in Biophysics (RU Leiden) and a master degree in 'Bedrijfskunde' (TU Delft). After working for five years for TNO he started a small company (S.H.I.O.) at the request of and with the help from the training department of Shell International to become part of a team to help Shell restructure three important management development programs and to aid the Troll Project in the first two years to create and develop a "just" culture. S.H.I.O. is in the field of aiding in the design process of a desired organizational vision about identity, leadership and culture, and instruments (trainings, workshops, coaching) to realize those visions. Other clients include e.g. ABN/AMRO, BNG, Bruna, Transport en Logistiek Nederland, Idresearch, Cistron (ISP). Aside from consultancy and training, he is also involved in teaching at academic institutions such as the RSM, Erasmus University, UvA, Master Hospitality Management (The Hague), SIOO (Utrecht) and others.

Apart from working for organizations he has coached and or mentored hundreds of managers, leaders and individuals with a very diverse range of topics. He has published 2 articles (2010, 2014) in JOCM, one about Autopoiesis and the other about the virtual nature of objectivity.

He is happily married with the love of his life, Marja, is blessed with two beautiful sons and two equally beautiful Afghan Hounds.