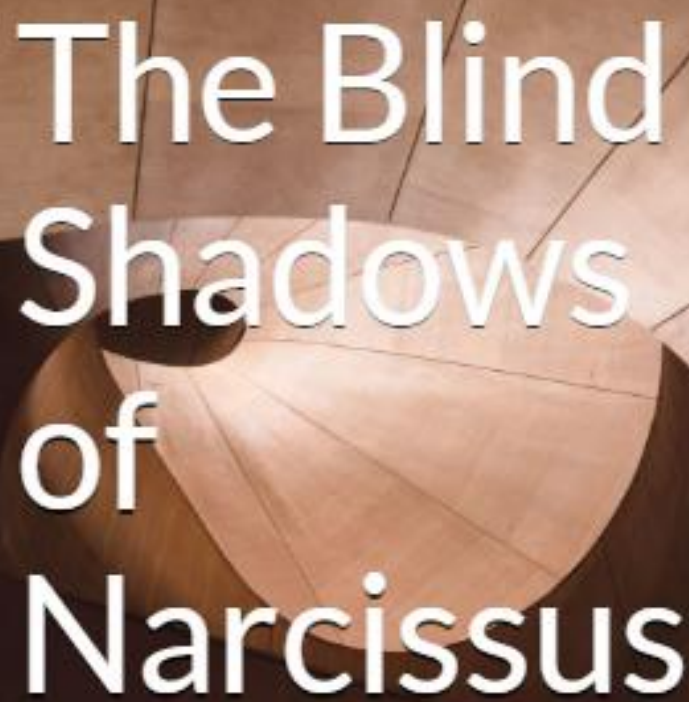# Roberto Arruda

The Blind Shadows of Narcissus

a psychosocial study on collective imaginary

THE BLIND SHADOWS OF NARCISSUS

(a psychosocial study on collective imaginary)

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2020

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MARKETING AND CULTURE

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OTHER WORKS BY THE AUTHOR

(i)   *"Introdução à Ciência do Direito"* (Introduction to the Law Science)– 1st Ed. 1972 - Edit. Juriscredi- SP; 2nd Ed. 1987 – Ed. Leud – SP. 434 pages - (preface by Prof. Washington de Barros Monteiro – University of São Paulo- (Portuguese editions).

(ii) *"Processo das Falências e Concordatas"* (Bankruptcy Procedures)– 2 volumes - 1st Ed. 1971 – Edit. Juriscredi- SP; 2nd Ed. 1972 - Edit. Juriscredi-SP. 691 pages. (Portuguese editions)

(iii) *"O Direito de Alimentos"* (Alimony Rights)– 1st Ed. 1981 – Ed. Leud – SP; 2nd Ed. 1986 – Ed. Leud – SP. 265 pages. (Portuguese editions)

(iv) *"Arbeitsrecht in Brasilien"* - (Labour Law in Brazil) – Schriften der Deutsch-Brasilianischen Juristenvereinigung. Ed. Peter Lang – Frankfurt – 1990. ISBN 3-631-42376-4. Common authorship with Prof. Dr. José Rubens Costa, Prof. Dr. Fernando Vieira de Figueiredo, Prof. Dr. Octávio Bueno Magano; Prof. Dr. Antônio Álvares da Silva, Dr. Werner Würtele (German edition).

(v)   *"Moral Archetypes – Ethics in Prehistory"* - KDP/Amazon Edition – Nov.2019. edition). ISBN 10:1698168292; ISBN 13: 978 –1698168296 - 146 pages. (English edition).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To all the intelligence existing in the Universe.

To Glória, ever and again.

To Prof. Scott Plous, for his admirable effort in favor of the Social Psychology.

To my brother, Fernando Mourão Flora, a living disciple of Lacan.

"Whatever you do will be insignificant, but it is very important that you do it"

(Mahatma Ghandi, 1896 – 1948)

REMARKS

We will adopt the MHRA (Modern Humanities Research Association Referencing Guide) Style 3rd edition[1], concerning quotations and citations contained in this work. Exceptionally, in some citations, we may apply the APA (American Psychological Association) Style.

All formatting features of this paper will follow the corresponding guidelines of the majority of the European and North American Universities, complemented, when necessary, by the ABNT-NBR rule #14724.

We will use in this work, both American and British English language vocabulary, spelling, grammar, and semantics without restrictions or preference.

Since this study is research-based, in-text block quotes are often employed to understand referred theories and doctrines better. Irrespective of such need, we looked at all times to strictly observe the corresponding guidelines and limits recommended by The American Psychological Association (APA)- 2019.

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[1] MHRA Style Guide - Modern Humanities Research Association- 1 January 2013•120pp - ISBN: 978-1-781880-09-8

ABSTRACT

In this work, we will approach some of the essential questions about the collective imaginary and their relations with reality and truth. We should face this subject in a conceptual framework, followed by the corresponding factual analysis of demonstrable behavioral realities.

We will adopt not only the methodology, but mostly the tenets and propositions of the analytic philosophy, which for sure will be apparent throughout the study, and may be identified by the features described by Perez[2]:

> *Rabossi (1975) defends the idea that analytic philosophy can be identified by considering certain family resemblances. He suggests the following family traits: a positive attitude toward scientific knowledge; a cautious attitude toward metaphysics; a conception of philosophy as a conceptual task, which takes conceptual analysis as a method; a close relationship between language*

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[2] Perez, Diana Ines, "Analytic Philosophy in Latin America", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2020 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2020/entries/latin-american-analytic/ (retrieved on May,29,2020.)

and philosophy; a concern with seeking argumentative answers to philosophical problems; search for conceptual clarity

These core concepts involve cultural, social, religious, scientific, philosophic, moral, and political contents, belonging to the individual and collective existence of each one of us.

In this paper, we will not debate nor demonstrate. Our purpose is not to systematically methodize, criticize, or bring to evidence anything, anyhow.

The present work grounds itself on analytical reflection. We will just speculate the most comprehensive and profound way we can and express the results of our thoughts. Notwithstanding the multidisciplinary nature of the subject and the methodological openness for accepting contributions from any field of science, this work belongs to the aim of psychology and ontology or, in other terms, social and ontological psychology.

The free methodology guiding such reflections embraces and takes into account everything approaching coherence with the philosophical and psychological epistemology. This methodology does not pursue reaching evidence but just looks for the interrelation among already existing evidence, of any nature and magnitude, inferring a coherent meaning to the real things.

Many of the great thinkers at any time never searched for demonstrations, theorizations, or systematizations.

These thinkers just thought, meditated, and with the enlightenment of their humility could approach the truth.

They will be our reference and the example to be followed. For sure, we will not find the truth, but we may be sure about something: in many moments, we will get close to the truth, and in all moments, we will be retreating from untruth and lie.

The main scope of this paper is to observe how some of the essential evolutionary attributes of humankind, like creativity, imagination, and association, can become a hazardous sickness, sheltered in the misty shadows of the intelligence.

TITLE I

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

(on which grounds we will think)

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

REASONING, BIASES, AND BELIEFS

"We have all had the experience of finding that our reactions, and perhaps even our deeds, have denied beliefs we thought were ours."

(James Baldwin, 1924 – 1987)

We are in the face of a multidisciplinary study and will be at all times surrounded by three core concepts: **reality, truth, and the imaginary.** First of all, we must hold the proper epistemological tools to conceptualize each of them at the proper time.

This conceptualization means selecting from the innumerous existing studies and theories coherent foundations, able to attribute acceptable cogency to our claims and conclusions, the same way that it means disregarding many other ideas and concepts, whatsoever.

This cognitive triangle means the confluence of the

most debated and not consensual meanings on humanities, an intriguing, perilous, and very inviting road.

Any living human dives into this unknown sea of uncertainties any single day of his existence, each one by his proper nature and situation. These concepts are not the expression of something belonging to the phenomenology surrounding humans, but intrinsic properties of the being itself, sometimes resulting in rational or mental activity, emotional statuses, and some others triggering behavioral patterns.

Epistemology metaphysics, psychology, neurosciences, and history will help us with the intrinsic elements of these conceptualizations, as independent and, at the same time, interrelated matters.

Mellone, S.H ([3]) analyzed the methodological approach that we will adopt:

> *Frequently it is pointed out that the habit of isolating and abstracting one inquiry from others within the "magic sphere" of philosophy is a fruitful source of error and confusion.*
> *Philosophy, like Wordsworth Cloud,*

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[3] S. H. Malone - Psychology, Epistemology, Ontology, Compared and Distinguished – *Mind*-New Series, Vol. 3, No. 12 (Oct., 1894), pp. 474-490 - Published by: Oxford University Press on behalf of the Mind Association" - https://www.jstor.org/stable/2247848 - retrieved on Apr. 27, 2020.

moves all together: we cannot isolate and come to a final conclusion upon one problem without thereby prejudicing our conclusions about others.

Without denying this, it is just important to remember that philosophy, unlike the cloud, must be a whole of parts that can be intelligibly distinguishable just because they are related or connected together.

The author sees these interrelations as structurally aggregate to the method, and sustains that "The parts of philosophy are not unrelated inquiries but differences of the method within the One inquiry."

Thus, our first challenge is always keeping consistent and coherent interrelated reasoning, guided as long as possible by critical thinking.

Justine M. Kingsbury and Tracy A. Bowell, [4] both from the University of Waikato, approached this central cognitive problem, implicating all of us, in a paper published in 2016.

Both authors consider that in our every day and

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[4] Kingsbury, Justine M. and Bowell, Tracy A. "Thinking critically about beliefs it's hard to think critically about" – (2016) – at University of Windsor, OSSA Conference Archive. Retrieved in Apr.28, 2020 from https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2255&context=oss aarchive

superficial perceptions, it is usual to have in mind that anyone should impartially submit his perceptions and understandings of reality to a comparison with the evidence. Subsequently, from the correspondence or incoherencies arising from this comparison, they should confirm or modify their content. In other terms, we should, in general, expect from persons the practice of at least a basic and straightforward concept of critical thinking in their lives and behavior.

However, this attribute of critical thinking faces many barriers, often prevailing on the rational analysis, "even when the beliefs in question are every day and inconsequential." (op.cit). The authors were focusing on the cognitive process and critical thinking of individuals and social groups, and referring to the most significant "barriers." These "barriers" are our "old fellows" in social psychology and epistemology: **the biases and the beliefs**. Indeed, keeping personal biases and beliefs apart from critical thinking is not a simple or easy task, and, from a realistic standpoint, we could understand this as a wish, or scope, rather than an available and accountable reality. Anyhow, to achieve the desired consistency in our reasonings, we should mostly accept this challenge of placing away from our methodology all our biases and beliefs, whichsoever. The reason is not that biases and beliefs could be wrong or write, but just because, primarily, they belong to the realm of the unique properties of each self or social group, and, being so, they are part of the scope of our inquiries and not a cognitive element of our methodology.

An extensive analysis of the human biases and beliefs is not the purpose of this work and would not fit in this brief introductory Chapter. Anyhow, taking into account the progress of the study, we should bring back to memory, as close as possible, those selected as the more commonly occurring in the contexts that we will analyze ahead. The researches corresponding to each one of them may be found in the references.

The Individual Biases have been the subject of uncountable studies and experiences, mostly from 1960 on, conducted with rigorous phenomenological methodologies, and revealed the origin of many deconstructions of the individual cognitive processes, and the enormous difficulties in coherently conducting perception and reasoning.

a) The Confirmation Bias: preferentially noticing and over-rating the significance of evidence in favor of our current belief - Wason, P. C &Johnson-Laird, P. N. (1972) ([5]) -(Koriat, Lichtenstein, & Fischhoff, 1980)[6],

b) The Dunning-Kruger Effect (also known as the superiority illusion): arising from one's inability to perceive his personal lack of skills or capacities and from an external misperception in people of high

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[5] Wason, P. C., & Johnson-Laird, P. N. (1972)." Psychology of reasoning: Structure and content. Harvard U. Press." – at Apa PsycNet – retrieved from https://psycnet.apa.org/record/1973-08484-000

[6] Koriat, Asher & Lichtenstein, Sarah & Fischhoff, Baruch. (1980). Reasons for Confidence. Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Learning and Memory. 6. 107-118. 10.1037/0278-7393.6.2.107.

ability (Kruger, Justin Dunning, David (1999) [7].

c) The Belief Perseverance: the persistence of a belief, although evidence had denied the reasons for keeping on holding it. (Ross, Lepper, & Hubbard, 1975)[8],

d) The "my-side" and "one-side" bias: the tendencies to give higher evaluations to arguments that support one's opinions than those that refuted his prior positions, as well as to prefer a one-sided to a balanced argument (Keith E. Stanovich & Richard F. West- 2008)[9].

e) The causal attribution (Attribution Theory): - the process of someone making an inference about the causes of people's mental states or behaviors.

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[7] Kruger, Justin;Dunning, David(1999). "Unskilled and Unaware of It: How Difficulties in Recognizing One's Own Incompetence Lead to Inflated Self-Assessments".Journal of Personality and Social Psychology.77(6):11211134CiteSeerX*10.1.1.64.2655*.doi:10.1037/002235 14.77.6.1121.PMID10626367

[8] Ross, L., Lepper, M. R., & Hubbard, M. (1975). Perseverance in self-perception and social perception:
Biased attributional processes in the debriefing paradigm Journal of Personality and Social Psychology,
32(5), 880–892.https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.32.5.880

[9] Keith E. Stanovich & Richard F. West (2008) "On the failure of cognitive ability to predict my side and one-sided thinking biases,Thinking & Reasoning,14:2,129167,DOI:10.1080/13546780701679764

(Mehmet Eskin – 2013)[10] (Heider, F., 1958)[11].

f) The Misperceptions and misunderstandings in the individual psychological or social construction of reality (Viviane Burr, 1995)[12]

g) The Ambiguity effect: the resistance to understand and accept alternatives which results are still unsafe or unknown. (J. Baron 1994)[13]

h) The Continued influence effect: the tendency to prioritize misinformation in memory that has already been corrected, disregarding such corrections. (H.M.Johnson, C.M.Seifert 1994)[14]

i) The anthropocentric bias: the tendency to use human properties and nature as a basis for reasoning

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[10] Eskin, Mehmet (2013)– "Problem Solving Therapy in the Clinical Practice" (2013)– Elsevier - ISBN 978-0-12-398455-5 – DOI https://doi.org/10.1016/C2011-0-07817-1

[11] Heider, F (1958) "The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations". N.York: Wiley.

[12] Burr, Vivien (1995). "An Introduction to Social Constructionism". Journal of French and Francophone Philosophy; Vol 7, No 3 (1995); 267-267. 7. 10.5195/jffp.1995.375

[13] Baron J (1994)." Thinking and deciding". Cambridge University Press.ISBN978-0-521-43732-5

[14] Johnson HM, Seifert CM (November 1994). "Sources of the continued influence effect: When misinformation in memory affects later inferences".Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition. 1420–1436.doi:10.1037/0278-7393.20.6.1420

about unknown or unfamiliar phenomena. (Ben Mylius 2018).[15]

 j) The Anchoring Bias: the tendency to rely on initial information, which works as an "anchor' to the formulation of subsequent

The Social Biases are those affecting the interactive perception and reasoning of determined groups in a determined situation, causing deconstructions in the collective perception. Unlike the individual biases, the social ones constitute an influence coming from the group to the individual, affecting his cognitive processes.

a) The Ingroup Bias: the tendency to behave in favor of others belonging to the same group as the agent – irrational "esprit de corps" (MB Brewer – 1979),[16]

b) The Group Attribution Error: the tendency to understand that the collective decisions prevail over the individual opinions, even when these outcomes

[15] Mylius, Ben (2018) – "Three Types of Anthropocentrism" - https://doi.org/10.5840/envirophil20184564 Retrived on Apr.29, 2020

[16]. Brewer, MB (1979) – "In-group bias in the minimal intergroup situation: A cognitive-motivational analysis."- American Psychological Association Psychological Bulletin 86 (2), 307 - https://psycnet.apa.org/record/1979-25967-001

underestimate available information or evidence (Scott T. Allison and David M. Messick – 1985),[17]

c) The Crowd Effects:　a behavioral disturbance induced by the anonymity of the group, provoking the individuals in the crowd to lose their sense of individual self and personal responsibility. (Gustav Le Bon- 1895)[18] and (Jaap van Ginneken – 1992)[19],

d) The Authority Bias: the tendency to the obedience of any orders given by someone considered as an authority, even though they believe that there is something wrong with those orders, and even when there would not be a penalty for defying them (Milgram, 1963)[20],

e) The Cheerleader Effect: a belief of holding stronger personal attractivity when acting in a group than when acting alone (Walker D 2014)[21]

f) False Consensus Effect: the situational pervasive cognitive bias in social inferences, when people tend

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[17] Allison, Scott T and Messick, David M. – (1985) "The Group Attribution Error" – Journal of Experimental Social Psychology 21(6): 563-579

[18] Le Bon, Gustav (1895)" Psychology of Crowds." Sparkling Books edition. Sparkling Books, (2009).

[19] van Ginneken, Jaap (1992) "Crowds, psychology and politics" (1992). Reviews: history cooperative journals 99-3; Cambridge Journals Abstract 2942744

[20] Milgram S (October 1963). "Behavioral Study of Obedience."Journal of Abnormal Psychology. 67(4): 371–8.doi: 10.1037/h0040525.PMID 14049516

[21] Walker D, Vul E (January 2014). "Hierarchical encoding makes individuals in a group seem more attractive". Psychological Science.25(1): 230–5.doi: 10.1177/0956797613497969.PMID 24163333

wrongly to see their own behavioral choices and judgments as relatively usual and appropriate to existing circumstances (Marks and Miller – 1987),[22]

g) The System Justification Theory (or status rationalization): the adoption by individuals of the belief that the justification of the status quo may assure and satisfy many underlying needs, albeit the system could be disadvantageous to others (Jost, J. T., & van der Toorn, J. - 2012)[23],

h) Self-serving bias: the self-serving bias is the tendency to attribute all positive events to their own character and attribute adverse events to external causes and factors (White & Plous – 1995),[24]

All these cognitive accidents affect, in one or other ways, the content and conclusions of our study, and many of them are causal or determinant relative to the facts and contexts we should analyze.
Among all of them, we highlight one as being relevant to the understanding of some collective behaviors, which are subjects of the factual analysis we will

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[22] Marks G, Miller N (1987). "Ten years of research on the false-consensus effect: An empirical and theoretical review."Psychological Bulletin.102(1): 72–90.doi:10.1037/0033-2909.102.1.72

[23] Jost, J. T., & van der Toorn, J. (2012). System justification theory. In P. A. M. Van Lange, A. W. Kruglanski, & E. T. Higgins (Eds.), Handbook of theories of social psychology (p. 313–343). Sage Publications Ltd.https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446249222.n42

[24] White, Jonathan & Plous, Scott. (1995). – "Self-Enhancement and Social Responsibility: On Caring More, but Doing Less, Than Others". Journal of Applied Social Psychology. 25. 1297 - 1318. 10.1111/j.1559-1816. 1995.tb02619. x.

consider in Part II.

We are referring to the **long-held belief bias**, firstly referred by Ross, Lepper, & Hubbard in1975 as the "believe perseverance bias," and recently researched in a profound study conducted by Geoffrey L. Cohen[25] from Stanford University on the social psychology of identity and belief.

Besides his own discoveries, one of the findings of his research confirms other already researched bias and extends their conclusion referring to many social constructs:

> *People often persist in long-held beliefs even in the face of that invalidates them. In a classic study, opponents and proponents of capital punishment reviewed the same mixed scientific evidence concerning the ability of the death penalty to deter would-be murderers. Each side saw that evidence as, on the whole, confirming their prior*

> *beliefs (Lord, Ross, & Lepper, 1979). They tended to accept the research that supported their prior beliefs and to denigrate the research that contradicted those beliefs. As a consequence, they*

[25] Cohen, Geoffrey L. Stanford University –"Identity, Belief, and Bias" https://ed.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/cohen_chap_hanson.pdf - (to appear in J. Hanson Ed., "Ideology, Psychology, and Law") – retrieved on May,29,2020.

reported that the evidence made them even more extreme in their beliefs. The tendency to evaluate new information through the prism of pre-existing beliefs, known as assimilation bias, is robust and pervasive (Kahan, 2010; Pronin, Gilovich, & Ross, 2004; Tetlock, 2005; cf. Gerber & Green, 1999)

.
Biases are always situational and causational elements of the incoherence of individual or social cognitive processes. Unlike this, beliefs are not situational, albeit often subject to the outcomings of such inconsistencies. Contrastingly, beliefs can be a coherent product of evidence and critical thinking, as well as an expression of the absurd. Therefore, biases always contain mistakes or improprieties, and beliefs are not theoretically value- attributable "per se."

From our biases come all our flawed beliefs and ignorance, and from evidence and critical thinking born all our knowledge and coherent beliefs. Both follow the same process, growing, however, from very different seeds. The fertility and coexistence of these opposite grounds of consciousness are a part of the dialectic human paradox.

Human beliefs are one of the most intriguing subjects of sciences and philosophy, and could be seen as something comparable to the bones relatively to our physical bodies: beliefs are the skeleton of the self.

The whole intricate and delicate web of psychological, neuronal, and behavioral elements of a human being's identity exists around the pillars of his beliefs. In this meaning, beliefs are causal when understood as a system, as we later will assume.

If we could use Occam's Razor strictly, we should say just the following:

"Beliefs are a memorized system of situational value attributions outcoming from one's experience."

Nevertheless, as we do not have Occam's abilities, we should observe this subject more extensively.

There are different standpoints for the analysis of beliefs. When we observe them as a process, we start from the finding that each individual, in daily life, attributes values to absolutely everything related to his phenomenological experience. Psychological and neuronal processes determine this attribution, occurring since the individual is born.

These attributions are kept in memory and will rest there forever, or until a new and different experience eventually could come and modify the corresponding attributional register. Pure sensations and ideas like warm, cold, beautiful, ugly, cheap, expensive, tedious, exciting, many, few, starts the value attribution process. Everything related to everything that one has experienced feeds an immense unique individual databank.

By saying "everything that has been experienced," we

mean that the cognitive contents feeding the attributional register we are talking about are not limited to the factual, empirical experience, yet also contain all the attributions coming from the imaginary and the collective unconscious. Contexts and representations like imaginary or alternative worlds or entities, and projection of revolutionary ideas, may assume the forms of a belief system. Likewise, many of our core beliefs are not a consequence of a rational and analytical process but are the heritage from collective experiences, and uncritically accepted (Richard – 1993).[26]

These uncountable registers do not exist in isolation but embody a notably complex system of continuing interrelated and comparative information, from which outcomes a specific value attribution about any situation involving the individual perceptive processes.

These outcoming value attributions are called beliefs, and they command referentially everything in human behavior. They are the skeleton of the self.

Lewis[27] emphasizes the evaluative and directional nature of such outcomes:

[26] Richard W. Paul "The Logic of Creative and Critical Thinking " First Published September 1, 1993 Research Article
https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764293037001004 - retrieved on May,05,2020
[27] Lewis,Ralph M.D. Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre Toronto
https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/experts/ralph-lewis-md retrieved in May, 03, 2020

Beliefs are our brain's way of making sense of and navigating our complex world. They are mental representations of the ways our brains expect things in our environment to behave, and how things should be related to each other—the patterns our brain expects the world conform to. Beliefs are templates for efficient learning and are often essential for survival.

The belief formation process called the attention of neurosciences in the last decades, triggering many pieces of research in humans and primates. These studies brought to evidence that the belief formation corresponds to fundamental brain processes of attribution of affective meaning to reality, able to capacitate individuals to elaborate on their choices, and make decisions.

From the same researches emerged the conclusion that the outcomes of these neural processes can have an empirical, relational, or conceptual nature, as exposed by Rüdiger & Angel:[28]

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[28] "Belief formation – a driving force for brain evolution" - Rüdiger J.Seitzab & Angel, Hans-Ferdinand https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bandc.2020.105548
Retrieved from
https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0278262619303860 on May, 03,2020

> *Empirical beliefs are about objects, and relational beliefs are about events as in tool use and in interactions between subjects that develop below the level of awareness and are updated dynamically Conceptual beliefs are more complex being based on narratives and participation in ritual acts. As neural processes are known to require computational space in the brain, the formation of increasingly complex beliefs demands extra neural resources. Here, we argue that the evolution of human beliefs is related to the phylogenetic enlargement of the brain, including the parietal and medial frontal cortex in humans.*

The findings of these studies bring the beliefs, while a neural process, to the realm of the biological factors influencing the human brain evolution, in an extension still undeciphered.

A corollary of all these features of the process is the assumption that our behavioral contexts are dynamic in the face of a continuously changing phenomenology, because of the inseverable interdependency among the sides of the triangle *experience- reasoning- beliefs* (Usó-Domenech &

Nescolarde-Selva – 2016)[29].

Due to the interdependency among these causal elements, we can have several different combinations in the origin of any belief.

When we analyze the variable upshots of the process, we can observe that they contain inescapable "connecting dots" and "filling-in gaps."

These processual "holes" are filled up by other elements existing in the human cognitive structure, such as extrapolations, biased assumptions, and similarities to previously recognized patterns, not necessarily coherent with reality. In our neural processes, no space can be left empty, and where emptiness occurs, our brain fills it with supposedly similar contents.

These core features are a way to understand the imperfection or loss of accuracy of our beliefs as they are resulting from a process prone to error. (Lewis – 2018)[30].

Observing the systems drifting from beliefs' interrelations dynamic, we adopt the following concept proposed by Usó-Doménech, J.L., & Nescolarde-Selva, J:

> "*Belief Systems are structures of norms that are interrelated and that vary mainly in the*

[29] Usó-Doménech, J.L., Nescolarde-Selva, J.-"What are Belief Systems?" - Found Sci 1,147–152 (2016). https://doi.org/10.1007/s10699-015-9409-z
[30] Lewis, Ralph- (2018)- "Why We Care Even If the Universe Doesn't"- Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books.

degree in which they are systemic. What is systemic in the Belief System is the interrelation between several beliefs.

Belief systems are the stories we tell ourselves to define our personal sense of reality. Every human being has a belief system that they utilize, and it is through this mechanism that we individually, 'make sense' of the world around us."[31]

Jim Logan32, from UC Santa Barbara (2016), referring to Noah E. Friedkin's paper "Underlying Beliefs Change," contributes with several approaches we should take into account.

We understand A group or collective belief system as being a dynamic model setting a collection of attitudes, opinions, certainties, or cognitive orientation towards a person or statement, which is influenced by related and pre-existing beliefs in other issues. "There is an underlying cognitive consistency that links multiple beliefs."

In this direction, UC Sant Barbara led an extensive study with interdisciplinary and international collaboration, reaching mathematical models focusing two

[31] Usó-Doménech, J.L., Nescolarde-Selva, J.- "What are Belief Systems?". Found Sci21,147–152 (2016). https://doi.org/10.1007/s10699-015-9409-z - retrieved on May,3rd, 2020

[32] Logan, Jim – "Understanding Human Belief" https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/news/understanding-human-belief - retrieved on May,05,2020

processes: one is the interpersonal influence system modeling one's beliefs, and the other relates to the process of belief changes.

We should add to the author's reasoning and models a core element of these processes: the assertion that belief systems existence do not depend entirely on their committed believers. "*The believers do not wholly contain the belief-system; in fact, they are unlikely to be aware of more than a small part of it and, knowingly or unknowingly, they must take the rest of the belief system on faith.*" (Usó-Doménech, & Nescolarde-Selva – op.cit.)

In the same direction, many studies arose to the conclusion that some logical inferences about beliefs are possible if we are aware of other related beliefs held by the same individual or group. This underlined consistency and its proper dynamic are core elements to understand the whole system, mostly when we are talking about social institutions such as religion, politics, and economy.

When we analyze the frequent and continued conflicts of these central human organizational systems, we will perceive the presence of such underlying. All conflicts between groups historically registered such as war, cultural and religious strife, and revolutions are:

> "*A battle between belief systems. Symbols emerge strongly in such conflicts: they may be revered objects*

like stones, writings, buildings, flags, or badges; whatever they may be, they may symbolize the central core of belief system. When people become symbols, the real person may become obscured behind the projected symbolic image or person." (Usó-Doménech & Nescolarde-Selva -op.cit)
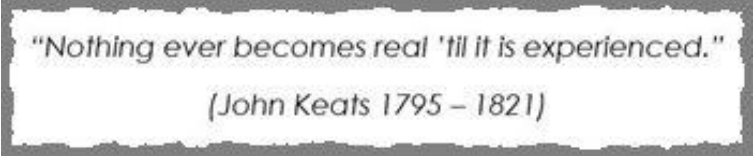
The concepts exposed in this Chapter are among the reasons because we may consider the individual human identity as the unique construct of each subject, instead of a pre-existing and abstract "essence." The identity arises from the psycho-neural processing of all our logical and perceptive consistencies, inconsistencies, experiences, and inherited cultural references.

Nowadays, this assertion is consistent phenomenological evidence, rather than only a postulate of existentialism, as it has been at the corresponding times of Kierkegaard, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Heidegger, and Jean-Paul Sartre.

In principle, these are the crucial elements and "pitfalls" being processed and acting in our minds, which we will confront when facing, ahead, the endless question: "What, at last, could mean reality?"

CHAPTER II

REALITY

"Nothing ever becomes real 'til it is experienced."

(John Keats 1795 – 1821)

Social psychology offers the analytical and experimental knowledge of our biases, beliefs, and interactive situational behavior. In doing so, qualitative attributes such as "wrong, "false," "misunderstood," "illusionary," and "real" designate the output of experiments and reasonings.

We will consider, however, that (i) These attributes do not belong to the sphere of psychology. They are metaphysical subjects, and only the proper philosophic thinking and methods can treat their contents. (ii) All these subjects integrate a vast labyrinth of philosophical studies, discussions, trends, and conceptualizations, and do not have any universal meaning indistinctly appliable to all sciences and humanities.

In the Kantian metaphysics, the **reality** is taken into account as a category distinguished from but closely related to another category: the **actuality** (or existence)[33]

As widely known in metaphysics, categories are indivisible in essence but, observing a category from the side of their entities. It is possible to analyze its content in distinct ways. From the cosmologic side, we will have an understanding that is not precisely the same that we will have when observing from the side of the human individual. It means just a subtle, perceptive variation, and the category is still the same.

Despite being the same category, the perception of reality from different angles is favorable to the incorporation of its signification to different scientific and philosophical issues.

This fact explains why in psychology, we can frequently find references to the inner (or interior) reality distinguished from the outer (or external) reality. In principle, we should not care too much about the use of this dichotomy because it is not a denial of the unicity of the category, but just a handy methodological tool, allowing many inputs to the study of reality coming from distinct scientific approaches. However, we should keep our attention to the several meanings given to such conceptual dualism, mostly by

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[33] Warren, Daniel (2013)- "Reality and Impenetrability in Kant's Philosophy of Nature" –Routledge

psychoanalysis, once some misunderstandings are possible.

The dawn of the psychoanalytic ideas started with Sigmund Freud's (1856 – 1939) studies and the exposure of concepts of the mechanisms of mental processes working as a psychological construct of reality. The ideas of a "psychological reality" and a "physical reality" occupied a relevant position in psychology and philosophy from then on, taking into account each of these concepts as separate orders.

In 1891 Freud's "On Aphasia: A Critical Study "proposed the theory of the connection between these two orders: the "thing presentations" and the "world presentations."

Psychoanalysis focused on the "three layers" topological concept of mind and the complex constructs arising from the unconscious as containing only "thing presentations": *a continuous phantasy-life which acts to defend against or to fulfill in imagination our basic instinctual desires."*[34]

In "Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning" (1911), Freud asserted that in the earliest stages of life, the subject is dominated by the pleasure principle and hallucinatory satisfaction. The failure in obtaining such satisfaction forces the infant to "represent for itself the real state of the external world."

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[34] Casey, Edwards (1972) – "Freuds Theory of Reality: A critical Account" – Review of Metaphysics. 25(4):659-690

Originally unconscious thought is split: one part remains under the control of the pleasure principle and constructs fantasies; the other part, with language, becomes conscious and capable of judging whether a representation belongs to internal, psychic reality or the external reality of the world.[35]Conflicts between philosophy

and psychanalysis was an expected effect in the face of Freud's ideas.

Anteceding Freud, since the pre-Socratic period, philosophy has always sustained and justified the structure of the reality category as *Physis* and its core elements, such as "being," "absolute," form," and "mind." Therefore, the modern ground of Scientific Realism became the understanding that the world demonstrated by science is the real one, irrespective of what we think it could be

Some Freud's inconsistencies in his approaches to concepts of reality motivated strong rejections related to his theories' incursions in metaphysics:

> *Freud never mentions the fact that he has taken a number of contradictory epistemological positions; each position is presented as though it were the only one to which he had ever subscribed. From*

Freud's inconsistent treatment of the subject of reality, two conclusions are drawn. Firs, that Freud was unable to arrive at a firm decision regarding the ability of the human mind to know reality; second, that psychoanalysis is not competent to resolve philosophical problems[36].

As a matter of fact, what arises from the many discussions deriving from the psychoanalytic approaches on reality is the finding that these theories anyhow melted categorical philosophical concepts with individual causalities of perception – what does not make sense at all.

Anyhow, psychoanalytic ideas evolved to more elaborate forms under the modern theories of the psychological construct of reality, as the theory of the three levels of reality, based on the hypothesis that" any ontologically different level has its proper form of causality." Each one of these levels is called a "stratum of reality," generating new categorical "series" (or sub-categories) expressing three different strata: the psychological, social, and the material.

However, as it happened with the psychoanalytic ideas, the "theories of the level of reality" return to the

[36] Reines Alvin J. "Freud's Concepts of Reality and God:A Text Study" Hebrew Union College Annual.Vol. 61 (1990), pp. 219-270. https://www.jstor.org/stable/23508177-Page Count: 52 – retrieved on May,08,2020.

same inconsistency of Freud's thinking: melting individual causalities of perception with the category itself. Poli (2006)[37] expresses justified attention to this subject:

> *To avoid misunderstandings, it is convenient to start from the distinction between levels of reality and levels of interpretation.*
>
> *[…]*
>
> *The problem of the levels of reality should be kept as separate as possible from the problem of the levels of interpretation. Although confusion between the two is not infrequent, trading one for the other is to blur or confound ontological dimensions with epistemological ones. Whatever the relationships between ontology and epistemology may be of opposition, connection, inclusion, or anything else, they are replicated in the difference between (levels of) description and (levels of) reality.*

Thus, the expression "psychological construction of reality" should be carefully interpreted because it may

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[37] Poli, Roberto (2006) – "Levels of Reality and the Psychological Stratum" - Revue internationale de philosophie 2006/2 (#236), pages 163 - 180

contain a hidden misunderstanding.

The human mind, through its psychological and cognitive functions, is a structure that is able not only to interpret reality, accurately or not, but also to project yet inexistent but possible realities, as well as constructs that never could be a part of reality.

Therefore, what exists is a "psychological construction of the perception of reality," which does not ever mean a causal element of the category reality.

In this process, language plays a core function as the cognitive-linguistic suggests. Starting with Avram Noam Chomsky(1928) findings and later with George Lakoff (1941), Mark Johnson (1949), and other notable studies from several cognitive psychologists, the perceptive processes of reality become better understandable from their essential semantic grounds.

On the other hand, if we insist in the assumption that our mind is a causal element of reality, and take this concept to its logical extremes, we can arise to some simpleton and pseudo-philosophical assumptions often repeated in our literature, as follows:

a) "Only what I perceive is real. What I do not perceive does not exist." In other terms: "The existence of the Cosmos could depend on what is going on in the brain of the individuals, it does not matter if these brains are in a skull or a Vat,"

b) "Everything that I psychologically construct is real." In other terms: "We could have so many different realities and universes as human individuals."

The study of reality cannot despise our psychological constructs as well as misunderstand them as something they are not. More important than these psychological concepts are the contributions of Quantum Physics to our notions of reality.

In 1803, a notable scientific study, known as the "Young Experiment" (Thomas Young, 1773-1829), determined a crucial turn on the history of science, with the demonstration that the light structure is not made of particles, but instead of waves.

Young's experiment has been followed, completed, and amplified during the subsequent one hundred and fifty years by many scientists with different studies and experiments in the same direction, as Michael Faraday; Gustav Kirchhoff, Ludwig Boltzmann, Heinrich Hertz, Max Planck, and Albert Einstein. In 1924 Max Born used for the first time the name of "Quantum Physics" to denominate these theoretical bases, and in 1926 Max Plank's hypothesis that light itself is made of tiny, indivisible units, or quanta, of energy started to be called "photons" by Gilbert Lewis.

From then on, the new scientific findings grounded in these theories grown exponentially and changed, in a short lapse of time, many core concepts related to almost everything we knew before. Sciences and philosophy suffered a strong impact as far as their structural conceptualizations are related. We should start again all our questions about the structure of matter, the idea of continuity of matter, the still unknown functions of our brain, the human cognitive processes, the cosmological interrelations between bodies and energy particles, the notions of time-space

relations, and many others. This subject is quite endless.

What we should take into account in our study are the influence of quantum physics in the subjects sustaining our assertions about reality: the physical world, the matter and the findings in neurosciences affecting our notions of mind, cognition, and psychological constructs.

Everything we know about reality comes from the philosophical approaches existing up to present, and available "state-of-science" evidence. Quantum mechanics fundamentals imposed an entirely new sight of what we understand as being the category of reality, and many of the resulting revisional questions still do not have an answer.

Thus, everything we already considered about this subject refers to the reality "as we could apprehend it to the present," what looks as being much few in comparison with the elements of the quantum universe to be known. Michael Epperson[38] observes the nature of reality through the lenses of the relational realism imposed by the quantum structures:

> *Reality is no longer merely the object of local measurement, but also its product.Thus, any coherent, ontological*

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[38] Epperson, Michael (2020) – "Relational Realism and the Ontogenetic Universe" – Angelaki - doi: 10.1080/0969725X.2020.1754029 - https://doi.org/10.1080/0969725X.2020.1754029 - retrieved on May,20,2020

interpretation of quantum theory must include a conceptual framework by which objectivity and subjectivity, actuality and potentiality, global and local, being and becoming, individuated fact and process of individuation, are no longer understood as merely epistemic, mutually exclusive category pairs descriptive of an already extant, closed reality – but rather as mutually implicative ontological categories explicative of an ontogenetic, open reality-in-process.

Some scholars overstated their first reactions, as we were in the front of an entirely unknown and overwhelming reality, where everything that we knew should be thrown away, drowned in an ocean of photons, gravitons, quarks, and hadrons.

Critical thinking and logical analysis have shown, however, that we are in the same old world, immersed in the same reality, and just facing many things that we did not know before, what imposes the revision of a number of our assertions and beliefs. The universe changes continuously by itself, and not because of our knowledge or ignorance of quantum mechanics. What has changed is our abilities for a better apprehension.

Ananthaswamy[39] (2018) comments the repercussion of these findings:

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[39] Ananthaswamy, Anil 2018In "Scientific American"
https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/observations/what-does-quantum-theory-actually-tell-us-about-reality

If nothing else, these experiments are showing that we cannot yet make any claims about the nature of reality, even if the claims are well-motivated mathematically or philosophically. And given that neuroscientists and philosophers of mind don't agree on the nature of consciousness claims that it collapses wave functions are premature at best and misleading and wrong at worst.

Fundamental physics theories intended to be as real as local. The quantum mechanics contain nonlocal correlations that we did not know, and this indicates that constructions of reality cannot be limited to deterministic and straightforward projections from physical perceptions.

Some authors attributed to quantum mechanics this kind of problem, but fundamental physics is much more consistent and demonstrative when taking into account not only the macrocosm we knew before but also the microcosm we are starting to explore. The reality did not change. We live the same reality that we ever lived. Our perception changed and turned some part of the unknown reality into demonstrated reality, as Peter Rowlands annotates:[40]

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[40] Rowlands, Peter - "Are there alternatives to our present theories of physical reality?" Department of Physics, University of Liverpool, - Inhttps://arxiv.org/pdf/0912.3433 – retrieved on May,09,2020.

Many people would say that current physical theories give us problems in defining the meaning of physical reality. However, it may be that we are effectively looking through the wrong end of a telescope. We are treating our sophisticated 'high level' theories as to the fundamental language, rather than looking at the more basic elements from which they are constructed.

The position, expressed by most authors, indicates that a recommended epistemic stance in the front of our models and theories is the adoption of the characteristics of the world and the reality as the sciences propose them, could these models be observable or not.

All these theories and approaches to reality, sometimes divergent or opposed, offer essential elements working as the start point to our reflection. In its majority, the core concepts of the studies reviewed in this Chapter are related to reality as a unique, stable, and permanent category: the full reality, the reality in its ontological integrity.

This belief is the inheritance of our traditions, where reality is a closed concept, not admitting different measures or degrees, as containing the nature of an absolute category. The logical dichotomy, so frequentin our traditions, however, is a surpassed and

in our traditions, however, is a surpassed and insufficient formula in the face of the contemporary critical thinking.

The evolution of science slowly corroded this trend to the absolute and the immutable, the "or-or" thinking, bringing to evidence the variable and unstable nature of everything.

Our observation of the world inevitably ends up revealing that everything can be variable, changeable, imperfect, approximate, and most relative. What is really at the moment "A" can be differently real, relatively real, or unreal at the moment, "B." Everything in the Universe has this potentiality to changes and virtuality.

Thus, to understand the world we live in, we need to achieve concepts of reality teleologically oriented. In other terms, we should adopt concepts of values and categories, such as reality, with the perception of their finalities relative to our existence. The reality, as well as any other category or entity, is something finalist, and when it does not achieve this quality, it becomes just abstraction.

This standpoint is called "**open reality**," as explained by Ropolyi[41]

The openness means that a being is

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[41] Ropolyi, László – "Virtuality and Reality—Toward a Representation Ontology" -*Philosophies* 2016, *1*, 40–54; doi:10.3390/philosophies1010040

considered not only as actuality but as actuality together with its potentialities. This means that an open reality can be considered as a complex of the reality in full and its numerous potential versions (of course, this is a very Aristotelian idea).

Consequently, we propose adopting a position sustaining a **model of demonstrable open-reality**, where science and philosophy should jointly endorse everything that we understand for evidence and coherence.

There is no natural cognitive division of reality, as we have seen before, but Inkpen & Wilson (2013) admit the use of classification frames as a logic tool for analytical reasoning:

Division of Reality is undertaken by researchers working with a unique interpretative context with associated versions of kinds and entities. The above discussion suggests that these kinds and entities do not correspond to reality as it is but rather to reality as a useful framework for the researcher. Classification practices reflect this view of reality. Classification is based o usefulness to a researcher rather than determining the absolute structure of reality. Classification of Reality, therefore, became a mean to serve the researcher or group of researchers' ends. A classification is a research tool, like any other: it is an aid to interpretation, rather

than an absolute statement about the nature of reality. (Inkpen & Wilson – 2013)[42]

Thus, for their teleologic purposes, we assume that social psychology may adopt the following classification of reality, envisaging a better and more analytic construction of its experiments and conclusions:

We can take reality as the system aggregating all the existing known and unknown entities, bodies, particles, energies, vibrations, properties, assertions, and phenomena of any nature that are or could be reasonably demonstrated by experience or other coherent and cogent cognitive processes.

Existence and demonstrability: these are the core properties of the category "reality."

For methodological purposes we will adopt the following glossary:

1) Known Reality:

Everything that is reasonably demonstrated by experience or other coherent and cogent cognitive processes, including conclusive theories and mathematical formulations and models.

2) Unknown Reality (or Latent Reality):

Everything that might exist and could be reasonably

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[42] Inkpen, Robert & Wilson,Graham – "Science, Philosophy and Physical Geography"-Routledge, 2013

demonstrated by experience or other coherent and cogent cognitive processes not yet proceeded.

3)Unreality:

a) Essential unreality: everything whose existence, possibility, or probability can be denied by experience or other coherent and cogent cognitive processes (the Popper's falsification principle).

b) Circumstantial unreality: a constructive mental projection of something which existence can be denied, but which possibility and probability cannot be denied. This is the realm of the coherent imaginary, such as consistent hypothesis and creative projections.

c) Accidental unreality: some specific types of essential unreality that can be distinguished for their unique characteristics.

c.1) Error or illusion: a false assumption of reality caused by cognitive defects.

c.2) Fantasy: a constructed and projected mirror stage of perception that is phenomenologically inexistent.

c.3) Lie: an intentional forgery of reality

b.4) Delirium and hallucination: are disruptive mental constructs caused by severe disturbances in attention, consciousness, and cognition, precluding logical association

between the elements of reality.

In this paper, we will use these words strictly with the meaning given in this Chapter.

CHAPTER III
THE IMAGINARY

"Imagine there's no heaven
It's easy if you try
No hell below us
Above us only sky
Imagine all the people
Living for today... Aha-ah...

Imagine there's no countries
It isn't hard to do
Nothing to kill or die for
And no religion, too
Imagine all the people
Living life in peace..."

[43]

CONCEPTUALIZATION

"Mundus Imaginalis": the realm of the imaginary, belonging to the universe of the "circumstantial unreality" or, not so correctly, a sort of meta-reality, is a vast subject to be explored. We must face this challenge, attempting to attain acceptable concepts

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[43] Excerpt from the lyrics of the song "Imagine"- (1971) John Lennon, (1940 - 1980) & Yoko Ono (1933) – Retrieved from https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/johnlennon/imagine.html on May,13,2020.

that are indispensable to ground the numerous questions about social constructs that we will face ahead. There are no social constructs without reality, the imaginary, and their intriguing relations.

In a very simplified and introductory approach, we should say that the imaginary is constructive, modifying, cognitive and emotional mental process, starting from perceptions of the existing reality, and generating a new projected and reflective image, different from the elements applied in the process.

To better understand this intricate web, we should take into consideration several different approaches, coming from diverse standpoints, disclosing substantial features of this subject. Each one of these approaches is a substantial contribution to the efficient learning of what the imaginary means. The noticeable difference among these assumptions should not mean an excluding opposition, but rather a complementary conceptualizations. In such an expansive cognitive universe, there is not a proper place to "philosophical schools of thought."

In Cartesian thinking, imagination is the encounter between the essence and the body, the "res cogitans" and the "res extensa." This concept is implicit in Descartes' "mind-body" understanding of reality.

Because of his dualistic concept of imagination, and some comparative references to their qualities expressed in his works, Descartes has been often misunderstood, and taken as someone that minimized the qualities of imagination or, at least, that left it by the

side of his thinking.

Indeed, some of his assertions could sustain this conclusion. *"I consider that this power of imagining which is in me, inasmuch as it differs from the force of understanding, is not required for the essence of myself, that is, of my mind," he said.[44]*

Lyons D. J[45] corrects this inappropriate interpretation:

> *For Descartes, the difference between external reality and the idea we have of it is not routinely described in favor of the external world. The mind can, in a more affirmative sense, produce ideas not only of the external world as it exists but as such a world might exist, and thus opens towards possibilities and towards the future.*

Anyhow, the Cartesian thinking did not shelter a perception of dynamic integrative and constructive processes between the elements of his dualistic interpretation of human cognition.

This discussion became effective with Hegel's (1770 – 1831) theories.

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[44] René Descartes – "Meditation" 6, AT VII 73

[45] Lyons, John D. "Descartes and Modern Imagination "-Philosophy and Literature, vol. 23 no. 2, 1999, p. 302-312.Project MUSE, doi:10.1353/phl.1999.0043.

Hegel understands the imaginary as being a mental activity or process starting from the concept of "image," and from this central assertion came not only the contemporary name of the process, as well as the foundation of almost all studies and theories related to the theme.

Hegel argues, as Descartes did, that this cognitive activity uses two different elements:" the thing of the external world" and the "internal content of the mind. "However, for Hegel, both elements are diverse versions of the object: the first one is the sensorial comprehension of the object and its features as they exist in the world, and the second one

means the internal content of the mind, composed of many subjective ingredients. These two elements are initially an idealization in their independent determinacy but, through their dialectic interaction in mind, lose their particularity, resulting from this process, a new and idealized synthesis of the heterogeneous elements.

This idealized synthesis is the image (*das Bild*), and the imaginary is everything related to it.

Theories of the imaginary attained a remarkable increment with the first edition, in 1940, of the French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre's (1905-1980) "The Imaginary"[46] Jonathan Webber states: *"Sartre's The*

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[46] Sartre, Jean Paul "The Imaginary- a phenomenological psychology of the imagination" – Routledge London, 2004.

Imaginary'' is the most sustained and detailed account of the nature of imagination in the Western philosophical literature.''[47]

Wulf, C (2019)[48] describes the outcomes of this process, focusing its content:

> *This can be understood as a materialized world of images, sounds, touch, smell, and taste. It is the precondition that people perceive the world in a historically and culturally influenced manner. The imagination remembers and creates, combines, and projects images. It creates reality. At the same time, reality helps the imagination to create images. The images of the imagination have a dynamic character structuring the perception, memory, and future.*

The French philosopher spent more than ten years of researches and studies to achieve the foundations of his theories. Elaborate profoundly and analytically, under a rigorous methodological structure, his work carries many virtues.

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[47] Webber, Jonathan – Philosophical introduction to 2004 Routledge edition of "The Imaginary".

[48] C. Wulf (2019) "The mimetic creation of the Imaginary". Aisthesis 12(1): 5-14. doi: 10.13128/Aisthesis-25617

One of these virtues is the fact that Sartre succeeded in aggregating many valid but still sparse concepts and ideas coming from several philosophers, straightening them interactively in a logical structure, able to sustain his ideas in an extensive and composite theory. He gave coherence and logical unicity to several fragmented approaches and reinforcing the essential relation between psychology and metaphysics, as Bergson (1854 - 1941)[49] did before.

Sartre's statement that "Someone who, in the act of reflection, becomes conscious of having an image, cannot be mistaken" is affirmative that remits to Descartes' "cogito": I can be mistaken about the existence of everything; however, I can be sure that I exist since I think."[50]

His theory starts with the assumption that the apprehension of reality occurs in the form of images: the apprehended objects lose their proper meaning and particularity and become a synthesis in a new form, and no more exist in a free state.

In this reasoning, the presence of Hegel's theories is manifest, giving to Sartre's thinking an undeniable dialectical nature.

Sartre also accepted Edmund Husserl's (1859 - 1938)[51] phenomenological philosophy and their corresponding concepts of cognition. For the German philosopher, all consciousness is the consciousness of something and has an intentional structure. Perception, imagination, and cognition voluntarily focus on something exterior to the subject, unlike being captures of the reality. Such is the materiality and phenomenological particularity of consciousness, the principle from which derives one of the essential axioms of modern psychology: **consciousness is a situational act**.

Grounded in these ideas, Sartre structured his theory of imaginary. **Perception**, **conception**, and **imagination** are the forms of consciousness given to an object in our minds.

In our cognitive processes, elements of the phenomenological environment offer the material content of our experiences, as from the form will be given by knowledge, purposes, expectations, and emotions, which we understand as attitude. The interaction of all these elements will set the reflected image, offering the definite form and meaning of the object. As so, the image is a **reflected structure**.

The theory insists on underlying the several differences between perception and imagination, not only by the fact of being them two diverse elements of the mental process in the face of phenomenology,

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but also because of their contents and results

Emphasizing these distinctions, Sartre indicates that: a) In a perceptive process, the knowledge of the object occurs as a result of the experience. Experience precedes knowledge. In the imagination, experience succeeds the knowledge.

b) Perception supposes the observation of all the elements of the perceivable object, unlike imagination, that is possible with just a "quasi observation" based on only some of their elements or properties.

c) The perceptive process establishes a linear relation among the objects, irrespective of any kind of knowledge by the subject. Imagination is characterized by its constructive nature, in which the only relations among the objects are those determined by the subject, as they are imagined to be.

d) Imagination differs from perception because of its feeling of spontaneity.

e) In imagination, there is not necessary that the experienced object has a meaning "per se" since it is possible obtaining this meaning, or part of it, from other objects.

In reflecting on Sartre's theory, we should keep in mind that the numerous references he makes to the" knowledge" do not have the epistemological content that we often suppose. When using this term, Sartre is mainly referring to beliefs and opinions, which implicitly aggregates the axiological concept of values to the structure of the imaginary. Such an assumption

 indicates by itself the need for a substantial study in parallel.

Finally, we should also consider that the Sartrian imaginary structure is not limited to these cognitive and emotional elements, but aggregates sensorial and kinaesthetic dynamics, what links the imaginary realm to his Theory of Aesthetic Appreciation, and offers an understanding to the semiotic of perception.

The observation of the imaginary through other lenses, not strictly ontological, sends us to outstanding contributions given by psychologists Sigmund Freud (1856 – 1939) and Jacques-Marie Émile Lacan (1901 — 1981)

For sure, Psychoanalysis is not the best way to understand the social and ontological dynamics of the imaginary. However, as we have learned from Sartre, the theories of the imaginary send us to the theories of value, as we will discuss ahead. As far as the process of imaginary involves opinions, desires, wishes, affects, and emotions, it will be inevitable to question the structure of these elements, mostly when, in the attribution of values to the imaginary, questions as emotional disorders, illusion, insanity, delirium, and hallucination may arise.

Precisely for this reason, the contribution of psychoanalysis is essential.

Freud approached the imaginary in his book" The Interpretation of Dreams (Die Traumdeutung)," written

in 1899, and firstly published in 1900.[52]

Freud approached the imaginary in his book" The Interpretation of Dreams (Die Traumdeutung)," written in 1899, and firstly published in 1900.[53]

The author grounded his understanding of imagination and dream symbolism in the general ambit of his Theory of the Unconscious, from which the Theory of the Oedipus Complex would later emerge.

Initially, the Freudian theory held the assumption that the content and form of any dream is the result of a "wish fulfillment" – the involuntary satisfaction of a desire through mental processes.

Under such understanding, imagination does not start strictly from the observation of an existing object or experience (the manifest content), but also from many unconscious symbols and representations used to express this hidden desire (the latent content).

Later on, Freud agreed that the causal element of dreams was not only the wish of the fulfillment of desires, but that other symbolic contents could play the same role, as he exposed in his essay "Beyond the Pleasure Principle" (Enseits des Lustprinzips) -1920[54]

With this step ahead in his theory, Freud agreed that

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[52] Freud, Sigmund –"Interpretation of Dreams" - 1994 - Barnes & Noble ISBN 1566195764

[53] Freud, Sigmund –"Interpretation of Dreams" - 1994 - Barnes & Noble ISBN 1566195764

[54]Freud, Sigmund -."Beyond the Pleasure Principle*" (The Standard Edition)*. Trans. James Strachey. New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1961.

every dream in its origin is somehow linked to the phenomenological reality, as well as the particular experiences of the subject in the face of such reality.

The dreamer could select any part of his experience in the elaboration of a dream. The theory considers four possible sources: a)Experiences that are mentally significant, b)A mental construct of the combination of several recent and significant experiences, c)A recent and not significant experience which represents in the process other recent and significant ones, d) A recent and not significant experience which represents, in the process, the internal, memorized, and significant experiences.

When Freud assumes a distinction between "image building" and "analytic activities," the first one as an internal constructive process, and the second one as external interpretative activity, he connects his theories to de foundations of ontology and critical thinking, achieving the maturity of his ideas.

Later, the philosopher's theory has been criticized, mostly because the corresponding research lacks scientific rigor, and because many ideas were not sustainable by current research. However, even though some of these criticisms could be proceeding, the importance of his work is still the same, and his theories integrate modern psychology as fundamental tenets. We may find this integration in Lacan's notable works on the imaginary.[55]

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[55] Julien, Philippe – "Jacques Lacan's Return to Freud: The Real, the Symbolic, and the Imaginary"- NYU Press (1994) ISBN-10:0814741983 ISBN-13:978-0814741986.

The French psychologist understood that it is possible to divide the psyche into three structures corresponding to different orders (or layers) of psychosexual development: the real, the imaginary, and the symbolic.

The **Real (R)** order is a state of nature which content is exclusively the **need**. In this state, we only need and look for the satisfaction of our needs without the perception of the differences between ourselves and the external reality

This state exists only in the early infancy and persists until the linguistic abilities start. This moment determines the definite separation of the person from the state of nature, albeit it will continue playing an influential role for the rest of the life.

The **imaginary (I)** is the order starting from the perception by the individual that his body is different from the external reality and different from his mother's body. The primal need is gradually replaced by the **demand**, which causes sensations of anxiety and loss of the natural order.

In what the author calls "the mirror stage," the demand and the beginning of the linguistic abilities determine the difficulty to the individual to recognize his own image as a definite and complete self. Such difficulty is the reason because the image of the self is a fantasy that the individual creates, as compensation to his losses. Lacan designates this image as "ideal ego," the **fundamental narcissism** of an individual creating the fantasy image of himself, as well as his object of desire.

Initially, Lacan used the term "imaginary" closer to the idea of illusion and referring almost exclusively to the relation between the ego and its specular image as something inconsequential. Only in 1953, he conceptualized the imaginary as one of the three orders, meaning the formation of the ego in the mirror stage.

For the purpose of our study, it is interesting to note that Lacan's imaginary, is not substituted or undone by the following order (the symbolic), despite it being an intermediate state. On the contrary, the imaginary persists for all the life of the individual and intervenes constant and consequentially in the psychological activity. This brings the Lacanian concept near to Sartre's ideas about the processes of imagination. In the same direction, the definition of the mirror stage, as well, keeps some harmony with the Sartrian concept of reflexive image.

These similitudes, however, are just "sparse touching points" of very different approaches, as Dylan Evans[56] explains:

> *Lacan has a Cartesian mistrust of the imagination as a cognitive tool. He insists, like Descartes, on the supremacy of pure*

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[56] Evans, Dylan "An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis,", London: Routledge, 1996.-Retrieved from," Order." http://timothyquigley.net/vcs/lacan-orders.pdf on May 19,2020.

> *intellection, without dependence on images, as the only way of arriving at certain knowledge. It is this that lies behind Lacan's use of topological figures, which cannot be represented in the imagination, to explore the structure of the unconscious.*
>
> *This mistrust of the imagination and the senses puts Lacan firmly on the side of rationalism rather than empiricism.*

The **Symbolic(S)** order contains the transformation of the demand in desire**,** structurally tied to the **language** and the and narrative, to which existence the narcissism of the Imaginary is also essential.

Language has both symbolic and imaginary aspects. The signified and signification are a part of the imaginary order, but their semantic and semiotic functions belong to the symbolic structure.

Here the social interrelation starts. When the subject enters into language and relates himself with the rules and behaviors of society, actions and reactions take place in the psychodynamic structure, defining his actions. Language, behavioral rules, social, power, and kinship relations, definitively encircles and controls the subject, his images, desires, and satisfaction, his agreements and disagreements, his acceptances and rejections.

Lacan Used a Borromean knot[57] to explain the relationships among the three orders of the psyche. Mathematically, the Borromean knot consists of three topological circles that are non-transitively linked, in a cyclic ternary, in such a way that removing any one of them will leave the other two unconnected.
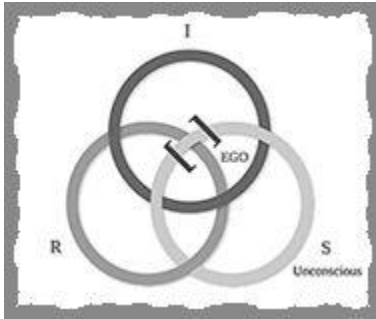
Using this famous mathematical construct to explain his tripartite topological theory of the psyche, he offered a reading of the object-oriented ontological description of his ideas.

The three orders (R –I -S -) are connected to construct the psyche as a unity, but they are not directly tied one to the other, and the absence of any one of these orders would immediately undo the whole construct. Lacan has a Cartesian mistrust of the imagination as a cognitive tool. He insists, like Descartes, on the supremacy of pure intellection, without dependence on images, as the only way of arriving at specific knowledge. It is this that lies behind Lacan's use of topological figures, which cannot be represented in the imagination, to explore the structure of the unconscious. (Carey, Craig – Lacan-Mirror-and-Imaginary" http://www.craigcarey.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Lacan-Mirror-and-Imaginary.pdf)

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[57] Hoedemaekers, Casper. (2008)." Toward a Sinthomatology of Organization?". Ephemera. 8.

This mistrust of the imagination and the senses puts Lacan firmly on the side of rationalism rather than empiricism

If we intended to find a concept or feature of the imaginary that could be taken into account as acceptable to the majority of philosophers and psychologists, for sure, this would be the assumption that the imaginary is a creative and constructive process.

However, even being a common assumption, the nature of the creational attributes of human imagination is still seen from diverging angles, as Glen Dayton[58] considered:

> *Freudian psychologists prefer to see creativity in reductive terms, as a discharge of pent-up conflicting emotions, usually in some form of ego regression. Humanistic psychologists, on the other hand, view creative behavior not as regression to earlier primary process thought, but on the contrary as a deliberate, open encounter between the aware self and its surrounding environment.*

[58]Dayton Glenn C., "Perceptual Creativity: Where Inner and Outer Reality Come Together" - First published: December 1976
https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2162-6057.1976.tb00147. Retrieved on May, 19,2020

Inna Kucherenko[59] alleges that also the contemporary Russian philosophy tends to understand imagination and creativity grounded in a phenomenological interpretation, and that *"to say 'imagination' means to say' creativity (Katrechko, 1999)"*. This approach, states the author, *"can be traced in the work of B. P. Vysheslavtsev (2010), J. Golosovker (1987), A. F. Losev (2003), S. Borchikov (in Katrechko, 1999). S. Borchikov and defines imagination as the mental capacity of sense-consciousness that has the content, form, an embodiment of the object, and the corresponding epistemological functions"*.

Finally, referring to the conceptualization of the imaginary, it is interesting to consider that modernly the "reflective nature of the image" pursuant the phenomenologists, or the "mirror stage" of its development, as per the more idealist psychologists, are understood as components of a **mimetic process** as exposed by Wulf[60], which is intentional and projective: **a creative act.** :

> *In mimetic processes, the outside world becomes the inner world, and the inner world becomes the outside world. The imaginary is developed, and the imaginary develops ways of relating to the*

> *outside world. Again in a mimetic loop, this, in turn, affects the inner world of the imaginary. These processes are sensory and governed by desire. All the senses are involved, which means that the imaginary has multiple layers. Since there is an intermingling of images, emotions, and language, these processes are rooted in the body and at the same time transcend the body as they become part of the imaginary (Wulf [2014]; Hüppauf, Wulf [2009]; Paragrana [2016])*

In this reasoning, we found the conceptualization of the imaginary realm that we will adopt.

THE COLLECTIVE IMAGINARY

Beforehand, here we have a semantic question to be solved.

Our academic literature offers thousands of titles related to the **social imaginary**.

"Social imaginary" is a term used in sociology since the prominent sociologist Cornelius Castoriadis (1975)[61] introduced the concept in sociological studies.

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[61] Castoriadis, Cornelius (1975) - "The Imaginary of Society -" The MIT Press (1998) - ISBN-10:0262531550 - ISBN-13:978-0262531559

Afterward, its' use has been consolidated by Charles Taylor (2007)[62] in his widely known "Secular Age."

Taylor defines social imaginaries as "*The way in which people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations which are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images which underlie these expectations."(op.cit).* Under this definition, it is possible to understand the meaning of social imaginary as mainly sheltering the social structure and its forms, generally describing several internal elements of the society as a whole, without any considerable element able to offer an ontological apprehension.

Pursuant Herbrik and Schlechtriemen (2019)[63]," *The social imaginary appears only at the fringes of sociological debate. It does not belong to the canon of sociological concepts and is accordingly not included in introductions to or dictionaries of sociology (cf., for instance, Farzin and Jordan 2008)."*

Thus, for sociology, this is a secondary and somehow vague concept, albeit being referenced by many authors. Indeed, sociology lacks an ontological concept of the imaginary, even because in the face of

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[62]Taylor, Charles, (2007) "A Secular Age"- Harvard University Press; Kindle Edition ASIN: B002KFZLK2

[63] Herbrik, Regine and Schlechtriemen, Tobias - ·Editorial for the special issue "Scopes of the Social Imaginary in Sociology" in the ÖZS - https://doi.org/10.1007/s11614-019-00370-3

its' material object, it is not the appropriate scientific field for such a task.

Numerous sociologists expressed their concerns about this apparent vagueness of some proper core concepts in contemporary sociology, which reduces the accuracy of its methodologies[64].

Another designation we should pay attention to is "**collective behavior.**"

> *The expression collective behavior was first used by Franklin Henry Giddings (1908) and employed later by Robert E. Park and Burgess (1921), Herbert Blumer (1939), Ralph Turner and Lewis Killian (1957), and Neil Smelser (1962) to refer to social processes and events which do not reflect existing social structure (laws, conventions, and institutions), but which emerge in a "spontaneous" way. Use of the term has been expanded to include reference to cells, social animals like birds and fish, and insects, including ants (Gordon 2014). Collective behavior takes many forms but generally violates societal norms (Miller 2000; Locher 2002).*

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[64] Cole, Stephen (Editor) "What's Wrong with Sociology"? Transaction Publishers; 1 edition (2001) ISBN-10:076580039X ISBN-13:78-0765800398

Collective behavior can be tremendously destructive, as with riots or mob violence, silly as with fads, or anywhere in between. Collective behavior is always driven by group dynamics, encouraging people to engage in acts they might consider unthinkable under typical social circumstances (Locher 2002)[65].

A third very commonly used expression with sociological meanings is "**collective imagination**." Peter Murphy (2012)[66] introduced this expression, which focuses on the rational, critical, or ideological media of oppositional creativity. The opposition historically shapes social institutions and projects reactions and movements envisaging social, political, or economic changes. We can compare Murphy's concepts with those exposed by Castoriadis.

Besides these sociological contents, the expression is also more popularly used in marketing researches and similar works as a synonym of consumers' expectations referring to products.Many other terms like "social change," "group behavior," "social creativity," and "social imagination" are in current use in diversified literature, without any ontological content.

Misplacing these many terms and expressions in

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[65] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collective_behavior - retrieved on May 22,2020.
[66] Murphy, Peter – "The Collective Imagination: The Creative Spirit of Free Societies "–2012 – Routledge - ISBN-10:140942135X - ISBN-13:978-1409421351

academic works could mean an unacceptable lack of coherence and consistency, which must be anyhow averted.

In this study, we are not talking about any of these concepts, contents, or ideas. Here we are circumscribed to the environment of social and ontological psychology concepts and methodologies.

We shall attain the psychosocial and ontological conceptualization of **collective imaginary**, which grounds are in the theories of personality, behavior, belief, and experimental findings on the situational interactions among individuals. Unlike a general social structure, it means the output of the dialectic interaction among multiple and specific systems of belief, acting as a behavioral determinative element.

Hence, diversely from sociology, we will focus on how the belief systems are collectively formed, and not what formed belief systems can determine specific social structures, institutions, or other external elements.

Furthermore, we claim that since Freud, Yung, and Lacan's "collective imaginary" is a designation emerging from concepts minted in the psychological studies and literature. Scholars and researchers should employ this designation exclusively with its ontological signification given by psychology, avoiding misplacements.

As we have assumed before, each human individual carries his own and unmistakable system of beliefs. The use of the word "system" derives from the assumption that anyone has uncountable beliefs, experiences, and

emotions related to himself and the surrounding environment. All these elements are linked to each other, molding an extraordinarily complex and structured web, which supposes an internal hierarchy based on attributions of values by the subject.

The content of any individual system of beliefs aggregates not only phenomenological and experimental contents but also all the imaginary universe of the subject.

Because of our nature of "zoón politicum" and "animalis socialis," all the individual systems of beliefs interrelate in the social net surrounding the subject.

Therefore, the imaginary is not limited to the individual cognitive and emotional, mental processes, but also a social phenomenon. Everything occurring in our mind has a social layer, as Freud considered, or a symbolic order, as Lacan states. Communication among individuals through many means, from the physical touch to the abstract symbolism, language, and uncountable semiotic elements, is essentially a shared experience

In the realm of our shared existence, all interactive activity transports the full content of our individual belief system, and its immanent elements as our imaginary, and value-attributive hierarchy.

Like it happens with the individual ontogenesis of the imaginary, the construction of the collective imaginary means a dialectic process through which different individual belief systems are processed as antithetic constitutive. This theoretical opposition results in a

synthesis of the processed elements, which will be a new projected and reflective image, differing from all the individual systems.

Since the individual identity cannot exist without a belief system containing the subject's imaginary, also the human society is impossible without the collective imaginary.

Thus, it is reasonable to assume that the collective imaginary does not correspond to the sum or coincidence of the content of two or more individual belief systems. Unlike this, it is the result of a dialectic process of opposition and transformation: **a collective act of creation**, in Sartre's language.

Such a creative and reflective image is the layer of our evolutionary process and is characterized by three intrinsic attributes: being **experimental**, **unstable**, and **continued**. For experimental, we mean that, in the ontological root of the collective imaginary, all the experiences of humans with the external environment are present. For unstable, we understand that all human experiences are subject to continuous changes and different outputs, imposing constant variation in the constructive process of the collective imagination. For continuity, we mean that the collective imaginary is a continuous process of creation and transformation, acquiring the properties of historicity and transmissibility to different time-space situations.

When we focus these attributes given to the collective imaginary, it is possible to understand more precisely

what Carl Yung[67] meant for the "collective unconscious" and its archetypes, as well as the Lacanian Symbolic Order and concept of desire. In the collective imaginary, expectation replaces the desire and, despite several particularities, plays the same role. The expectation may have many forms of expression, from the physical to the symbolic ones, and due to its cultural consistency, it is not limited to the empiric experience of the group. When the constructive process meets a lack of experimental elements, which are essential to its consolidation, it aggregates other unreal images, related to but not belonging to the expectation itself. In this way, the collective imaginary builds the image of the future, since it is a projective process, overwhelming the present experience.

A consistent idea of the mechanism of the relation between expectation and experience as a cultural process is science fiction:

> *Jasanoff (2015b, p. 337) refers to science fiction as a "repository of sociotechnical imaginaries, visions that integrate futures of growing knowledge and technological mastery with normative assessments of what such futures could and should mean for present-day societies." Similarly, Miller*

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and Bennett (Miller and Bennett, 2008) argue that the narrative-based stories of science fiction offer useful tools for long-term thinking about technology and constructing futures. This points to a potentially powerful and, so far, not well-understood source of novelty when it comes to the political imagination. Art and cultural phenomena can provide important inputs to or triggers for political imagination processes[68]

Beyond its fictional resources to construct the image of a future, the imaginary offers the foundations to anything else that we understand as social identification elements, such as language, culture, politics, and religion, as a response to the collective expectation

VALUES OF THE IMAGINARY

In ontological terms, the collective imaginary is not valuing attributable, because it is as an attribute in itself, and not an object or being.

The elements engaged by individuals in the process of its construction, in their turn, can be qualified and can transmit their qualities to the resulting images.

Absolutely everything related to the human existence and evolution is related to the imaginary, in one way or another, since it is a **constitutional attribute** of our species. The same way that birds fly, viruses constantly change their genetic codes, and some mimetic bugs pretend to be a leaf, men imagine and link their imaginary structure to the others' and continuously change their patterns of knowledge, feeling, living, being, and believing.

Civilization, culture, society, religion, art, history, intellect, science, philosophy, aesthetic, technology, present and past, space and time, me and them, mine and yours, evil and good, hope and despair, love and hate, heaven and hell, yes or no, and any forms of human life, are direct or indirect products of the collective imaginary.

From the most sublime chords of a perfect symphony to the most horrendous cruelties of a stupid war, everything is the product of imagination. Ignorance and hallucination are sons of imagination, in the same measure as wisdom and critical thinking.

When we attribute values to anything, we are not qualifying the imaginary from where it comes, but its products. We attribute values to the law, rules, moral

codes, and behavioral principles coming from our imaginary because they are only objects or external entities resulting from the process.

The experience and choice in the imaginary precede any attribution of value, as the existence precedes essence. We imagine, thus, we become. "I imagine; therefore, I am, and I am as I imagine."

Nevertheless, everything we commented in this Chapter, and the referred writers said about the imaginary, is timidly superficial. All we have are empirical observation and inferential interpretation of behavioral results of mental processes, whose elements and features we vaguely know as being facts externally unobservable.

We have been talking about the shadows on the wall in our Platonic Cave, with some feeling that science has abandoned us. The traditional belief, coming from the Greeks, about the independence of philosophy, gradually looks like an obstinate refuge to our blindness.

However, some images are slowly coming from our "outer world."

Recently, neurosciences took the human brain structure and activities as a core subject to face the millenary mysteries of the problem of the body-mind relation.

Despite being a relative determinist, cognitive and ontological neuroscientist Peter Ulric Tse(2015)[69], from Dartmouth College, assumed that physics provides evidence for ontological indeterminism and criterial causation among neurons.

Once physics provides evidence for ontological indeterminism, a physical basis for a strong free will is possible. *"Neuronal Criterial causation permits a degree of self-determination that meets the high standards, without permitting, of course, a 'causa sui' free will, which is impossible." (op.cit)*

We may follow the author's reasoning and surprising conclusion:

> *I argue that the core circuits underlying free choice involve **frontoparietal circuits** that facilitate deliberation among options that are represented and manipulated in executive working memory areas. Playing out scenarios internally as virtual experience allows a suprathreshold option to be chosen before specific motoric actions are planned. The chosen option can best meet criteria held in working memory, constrained by conditions of various evaluative circuits, including reward, emotional and cognitive circuits. This process also harnesses synaptic and,*

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[69]Tse, Peter Ulric ": The Neural Basis of Free Will: Criterial Causation" (2015) The MIT Press (1602) ASIN: B015X3Y176

ultimately, atomic level randomness to foster the generation of novel and unforeseeable satisfaction of those criteria. Once criteria are met, executive circuits can alter synaptic weights on other circuits that will implement a planned operation or action.

[…]

However, given a set of such innate parameters, the brain can generate and playout options, then select an option that adequately meets criteria, or generates further options. This process is closely tied to voluntary attentional manipulation in working memory, **more commonly thought of as deliberation or imagination. Imagination is where the action is in free will**. (emphasis ours)

Assuming that the neuronal process of the human imagination is the nativity of our free will, Tse can provoke all sorts of grumblings of many radical determinists living in their nutshells of deep science.

Anyhow, radical determinism is undoubtedly all that science, philosophy, psychology, and humanity do not need.

CHAPTER IV

THE GRADIENT PROPERTY OF TRUTH

"If you would be a real seeker after truth, it is necessary that at least once in your life you doubt, as far as possible, all things."

(René Descartes, 1596 – 1650)

In philosophy, truth is a **property attributable to cognitive processes.** Irrespective of being a noun, the truth, in its logical content, transports a quality attributable to another noun because it does not exist "per Ipsum," or in the abstract.

This property is mostly related to the category of reality, and this relation occurs in two interdependent directions: ontologically, no object or entity attains to be a part of reality without being able to be true. Similarly, truth does not exist as attributable property without an object or entity belonging to reality. This is not a conflict or paradox, but just the attainment of the existence of two ontological layers when the quality belongs to the essence of the being: the real object or entity cannot exist without the quality, and the quality does not exist without the object to be qualified by attribution. In this way, we define the nature of **essential**

 properties. Truth is one of them.

Traditionally, the study of truth offered three cognitive tracks: philosophy, sciences, and religion. In the philosophical studies, this subject has been dissected by epistemology and ontology for millennia, promoted by the concepts of reality, correspondence, and coherence. In sciences, truth is the material tenet of realism, expressed by the demonstration of equivalence. In religion, truth is the belief in a mirror of the wishes and voices of gods, materialized in all the forms of revelation.

In this study, we should take into account the philosophical and psychological conceptualization of truth, sheltering all the existing influences of scientific evidence.

Until some decades ago, a scheme of philosophical study on truth was relatively easy to propose. All the theories were widely known, and the literature was prolific as long as criticism, reviews, comparisons, oppositions, and debates are concerned. Many scholars contributed with didactical analysis and interpretations envisaging to facilitate the understanding of more hermetical texts or theories.

Initially, we will adopt this traditional scheme, through a brief visit to the prominent existing theories. We argue that all of them offer valuable concepts, insights, and standpoints, making possible a profitable study of truth. Furthermore, we argue that these theories are not reciprocally opposite nor excluding: they are just different references and standpoints of the knowledge

about the same things.

We should put aside the frequent and vicious tendency to the philosophical sectarianism, the most sterile demonstration of intellectual narcissism. In our personal opinion, philosophical "isms" are a sophisticated form of obscurity. In the first moment, they are used to distinguish methodologically one concept or theory from the other, but very soon, they become personal beliefs and convictions, and what before was debate becomes a competition, and what once has been questioning becomes aggression. We should say that, when we start reading a philosophical text containing evidence of sectarianism, polarization, or intentional hermetical language, we immediately put it aside. They can teach us very few.

Our philosophical tradition considered the property of truth under the concepts of primordial and widely known theories: the **correspondence**, the **coherence**, the **semantic**, the **deflationary**, and the **pragmatic theories**.

The correspondence theory has been vaguely referred to in the Greek philosophy by Plato and Aristotle in his *Metaphysics.*

The first modern empiricists sustained the basic ideas of this theory, which, in its origins, was founded on a strict and inflexible dichotomy, stating the identity between the proposition and the fact. It was known as the *identity theory of truth*. When a proposition is true, it is identical to a fact, and a belief in that proposition is correct (Moore -1899; 1902 and Russell - 1904).

Later, after 1910, both philosophers changed some fundamental elements of their theory. The most important came from the adoption of the idea of belief replacing the concept of a proposition.

"A belief is true if and only if it *corresponds to a fact*" was the fundamental claim that sustained the theory, whose designation changed to *the correspondence theory of truth*. Some critics of the theory questioned the

nature of "fact," taken as an essential element of the correspondence concept. Dowden[70] raises the question:

 Dowden[71] raises the question:

> *And what are facts? The notion of a fact as some sort of ontological entity was first stated explicitly in the second half of the nineteenth century. The Correspondence Theory does permit facts to be mind-dependent entities. McTaggart, and perhaps Kant, held such Correspondence Theories. The Correspondence theories o*

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[70] Dowden,Bradley - Internet Enyclopedia of Phylosophy - https://www.iep.utm.edu/truth/-retrieved on May,27,2020.
[71] Dowden,Bradley - Internet Enyclopedia of Phylosophy - https://www.iep.utm.edu/truth/-retrieved on May,27,2020.

> *f Russell, Wittgenstein and Austin all
> consider facts to be mind-independent.*

Both conceptions of the empiricist theories are centered in the object of the property and not in the property itself. Despite this feature, however, the correspondence theories are undoubtedly ontological structures insofar a fact (an object or entity belonging to reality) must exist to establish the relation of correspondence.

Glanzberg,M (2018)[72] appends that:

> *The modern form of the correspondence
> theory seeks to round out the explanation
> of correspondence by appeal to
> propositions. Indeed, it is common to base
> a correspondence theory of truth upon
> the notion of a structured proposition.
> Propositions are again cast as the
> contents of beliefs and assertions, and
> propositions have structure which at least
> roughly corresponds to the structure of
> sentences.*

A significant assertion of the modern correspondence theory indicates that this property, in its nature, consists

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[72] Glanzberg, Michael, "Truth", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2018 Edition), Edward N. Zalta(ed.), Retrieved on May,27,2020 https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2018/entries/truth/

of a **degree** of correspondence in the relation between object-proposition or object-belief.

The theory accepts that the human mind, through observation and experimental refinement, holds the ability to acquire consciousness of the objects and entities. These core ideas deviate the theory from absolute or pure concepts of truth and open our research to the analysis of truth empirical relativity.

The coherence theory is a monistic idealist conception of truth, opposed to the dualistic ontological structures of the empiricism, which has been proposed by Harold Henry Joachim (1868—1938) in his book *The Nature of Truth: An Essay* (1906)[73].

"Truth in its essential nature is that systematic coherence which is the character of a significant whole," stated the author (op.cit).

Joachim always claimed that truth has this monistic nature: what is true is the whole, complete truth, as an indivisible and unique property. Beliefs and variable attributions or judgments cannot achieve the complete sense of truth: they are just fragmented approaches.

Thus, the truth of a proposition results from its interaction with other propositions. Beliefs in themselves mean independent systems, comparable in their qualities. One belief can only be coherent if it belongs to a

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coherent system of beliefs.

Joachim did not explain accurately what is the meaning of his idea of "systematic coherence," which he distinguished from mere "consistency." Later, other philosophers argued that coherence is a property demanding at least logical consistency. For some rationalist metaphysicians, this logical consistency means that a proposition is true if and only if it "is consistent with all other true propositions" (Bradley, op.cit). In the neo-classicism, the coherence theory ideas, emphasize that truth is not a content-world relation. It is exclusively a belief-to-belief relation.

Charles Henly[74] analysis of this theory indicates how it moves away from any empirical or experimental notion of the objects and entities:

> *In effect the coherence theory abandons objects as they actually are as the ground of truth for objects as they are constructed or constituted by the belief and theory investments that govern their observation and the way in which they are experienced by observers. The mind must, as a matter of psychological and*

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[74] Hanly, Charles, 'The Concept of Truth in Psychoanalysis'. http://www.psychomedia.it/rapaport-klein/hanly91.htm - retrieved on May,28,2020

epistemological inevitability, subject the objects which it seeks to know to the conditions under which it is able to know them.

Tarski's Semantic Theory - The semantic theory of truth started in the first half of the Twentieth Century with the works of the Polish philosopher and mathematician Alfred Tarski[75].

His multidisciplinary theory contains an audacious and profound incursion starting in first logic, and growing with philosophical, linguistic, semiotic, and mathematical structures and theoretical inter-related constructions. On the one hand, his work conceives a model theory, on the grounds of mathematical logic. On the other hand, he brings a unique philosophical approach to the ontology of truth.

In reason of the extension and complexity of the

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[75] Tarski, A. 1936, Über den Begriff der logischen Folgerung. In Actes du Congrès international de philosophie scientifique, Paris 1935, fasc. 7: Logique, Paris, Herman, p. 1–11; Eng. tr. in Tarski 1956, 409–420.
Tarski, A. 1944, The Semantic Conception of Truth and the Foundations of Semantics., Philosophy and Phenomenological Research 4, 341-395; reprinted in Tarski 1 Collected Papers, v. 2, Birkhäuser, Basel, pp. 665¬–699.
Tarski, A. 1956, Logic, Semantics, Metamathematics. Papers of 1923 to 1938, Oxford, Clarendon Press; 2nd ed., Hackett Publishing Company, Indianapolis,
Tarski, A., 1956a, The Concept of Truth in Formalized Languages. In Tarski 1956, 152–278 [Eng. tr. of Tarski 1935].
Tarski, A., 1969. Truth and Proof. L'age de la Science 1, 279–301; reprinted in Tarski 1986, v. 4, 399–422.
Tarski, A., 1986, Collected Papers, v. 1–4, Basel, Birkhäuser

semantic theory, only a brief glance on it fits in the limits of this study, moreover because any informal presentation of Tarski's theory would not succeed. To get appropriately involved with the semantic conception of truth, we recommend consulting the references of this Chapter.

In this summary, we may say that one of the core concepts of the theory is the idea of semantic **satisfaction**. The argument considers that a language carries a truth definition in its expressions and constructs. Such content should satisfy or fulfill with the property of truth the relation between an object or entity and a predicate function. Furthermore, this satisfaction should be mathematically demonstrable and accurate. The strength of the language, in its turn, is a relevant element to make semantic a truth bearer. The philosopher intended to reduce semantic concepts to physical concepts envisaging the configuration of semantics as a scientific subject. In order to justify this reduction, Tarsky refers to the property of compositionality, meaning the exclusion of any contextuality of a statement, since the truth can only emerge from its constituent parts. Lumpkin gives an approach to this conceptualization[76]:

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[76]Lumpkin, Jonathan, "A Semantic Conception of Truth" (2014). *Senior Honors Theses.*   Paper 60.https://scholarworks.uno.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1057&context=honors_theses – retrieved on May,28,2020

In "The Semantic Conception of Truth and the Foundations of Semantics," Alfred Tarski's purpose is to identify the necessary and sufficient conditions for a sentence to be true, and to ground semantics in logical notions. Semantics is not a panacea for philosophical problems à la Wittgenstein, but a "modest science" concerning the relation between linguistic entities and the world. By defining semantic concepts in logic, we can be more convinced that our language can be the best mirror to the world possible; we would not inadvertently build our sciences upon meaningless linguistic concepts.

Hodges [77] explains that "*Tarski's definition of satisfaction is compositional, meaning that the class of assignments which satisfy a compound formula FF is determined solely by (1) the syntactic rule used to construct FF from its immediate constituents and (2) the classes of assignments that satisfy these immediate constituents.*"

Indeed, Tarski insists with the assertion that the concept of satisfaction, usually applied in mathematics, is an efficient tool in defining truth.

To better understand the semantic theory of truth in its

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[77] Hodges, Wilfrid, "Tarski's Truth Definitions", The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2018 Edition), Edward N. Zalta(ed.), URL = https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2018/entries/tarski-truth/

mathematical contents and features, we suggest a comprehensive study, involving the following items, as exposed by Wolensky[78]

(A) Truth as a property of sentences;

(B) Relations between truth and meaning;

(C) Diagnosis of semantic paradoxes;

(D) Resolution of semantic paradoxes;

(E) Relativization to languages;

(F) T-scheme (A is true if and only if A);

(G) The principle BI of bivalence;

(H) Material and formal adequacy of a truth-definition;(I) Conditions

imposed on a metalanguage in order to obtain a proper truth-definition;

(J) The relation between language and metalanguage;

(K) The truth-definition itself;

(L) Maximality of the set of truths in a given language;

(M) The indefinability theorem.

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[78] Woleński, Jan – "The Semantic Theory pf Truth", in https://www.iep.utm.edu/s-truth/ (University of Information Technology, Management and Technology Poland) - retrieved on May,01,2020

The Deflationary Theory of Truth emerged during the Twentieth Century with Frege, G[79]. (19180 "Thoughts," and followed with the works of many other philosophers, such as Quine, W.V. O[80]. (1970), Ramsey, F.P.[81](1927), and Ayer, A.J.[82](1935).

In its core, the theory houses an emphatic denial of the existence of the property named "truth." The deflationary concept understands that all traditional theories initially suffer a distortion by the assumption of grounds which do not exist at all. Searching for truth is an attempt to discuss something that is not there, or anywhere. Everything about truth tends to a useless theory about nothing.

In its structure, the deflationary theory manages several syntactic and semantic linguistic elements, through several sentential and propositional discussions, concluding that the assertion **that a statement is true is just to assert the statement itself.** The reasoning considers that the proposition "I smell the scent of violets" is the same as the sentence "it is true that I smell the scent of violets', bringing into evidence that the attribution of the property "truth" did not add anything to the semantic context (Ferge, op.cit.).

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[79] Frege, G., 1918. 'Thoughts', in his Logical Investigations, Oxford: Blackwell, 1977.
[80] Quine, W.V.O., 1970. Philosophy of Logic, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.
[81] Ramsey, F.P., 1927. 'Facts and Propositions', Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, 7 (Supplementary): 153–170.

[82] Ayer, A.J., 1935. 'The Criterion of Truth', Analysis, 3: 28–32

The binomial truth-falsity, according to deflationary ideas, is treated as something originated from propositions that are deniable or demonstrable independent of the implicit presence or absence of any linguistic attribution of the property.

In their modern presentations, the deflationary theory applies numerous methodological tools. One of the most important is the "equivalence schema," as explained by Stoljar and Damnjanovic:[83]

> *In recent times, however, the deflationary theory has most often been presented with the help of a schema, which is sometimes called the equivalence schema:*
>
> *(ES) <p> is true if and only if p.*
>
> *In this schema, angle brackets indicate an appropriate name-forming device, e.g., quotation marks or 'the proposition that …', and occurrences of 'p' are replaced with sentences to yield instances of the schema. With the help of (ES), we can formulate deflationism as the view, roughly, that the instances of this schema*

[83] Stoljar, Daniel and Damnjanovic, Nic, "The Deflationary Theory of Truth", The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2014 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2014/entries/truth-deflationary/ - retrieved on May, 05,2020

capture everything significant that can be said about truth. Theories that depart from deflationism deny that the equivalence schema tells us the whole truth about truth. Since such theories add to the equivalence schema, they are often called inflationary theories of truth.

Many derivations of the deflationary thinking emerged during the last decades, in such a way that the theory somehow had its unicity crumbled in endless and polarized discussions. Anyhow, some beacons have been preserved or became acceptable for the majority of the theory's variations. Thus, besides the "equivalence schema," other methodological elements have been aggregated to most of the several presentations of the deflationary argument, as the theory of Meaning, The Disquotation Thesis, The infinite Conjunction Thesis, The Generalization Thesis, The Truth Predicate, and The Connection Thesis.

The fact is that the deflationary theory of truth looked initially like a very trivial theory or an inconsistent construct of ideas and opinions. However, it slowly awakened a crescent number of oppositions from the traditional theorists, as well as composed discrepancies among the many presentations of its content, in order to become one of the most endless and polarized discussions and conflicts of the modern philosophy.

It is duly impossible to enter profoundly in the labyrinth of such debates in our study, and for this reason, our

choice is to adopt a generalized and understandable critique, able to contribute efficiently to our reflection, such as that circumspectly exposed by Anil Gupta[84]:

> *Deflationists think that truth is a simple concept, one that has a simple analysis. The analysis the deflationists offer is simple, but, unfortunately, it makes truth far too complicated—it attributes to truth a vast ideology. We examined several attempts to get around this problem, but none resulted in a plausible account of the meaning of 'true.' Now we are left with questions: What does our understanding of 'true' consist of? How can one explain the meaning of 'true using a limited ideology? It is a fact that we understand truth attributions even when truth is attributed to a sentence (or thought or representation) that lies beyond our conceptual resources. JYñai, do we understand by such attributions? We seem to grasp something general about what it is for a sentence (or thought or representation) to be true. But what is it that we understand? Once we overcome the spell of deflationism, we are no longer*

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[84] Anil Gupta "A Critique of Deflationism"- PhilosophicaL Topics- vow. 21 NO. 2, SPRING 1993. https://cpb-us-w2.wpmucdn.com/voices.uchicago.edu/dist/9/177/files/2010/10/A-Critique-of Deflationism.pdf.Retrieved on May,.29,2020.

inclined to brush these questions aside with simple answers. We regain our original sense that there is something very mysterious about truth and that an exploration of this mystery may illuminate the nature of our thought and our language.

PRAGMATIC THEORIES OF TRUTH

"Truth of a belief is determined by evaluating how well the belief satisfies the whole of human nature over a long period of time: how well does it work?"[85]

This principle summarizes the pragmatic central approach to the truth

The denomination of this philosophical approach came from the GreeK "pragmatikós" (meaning practical) and started to be employed in our literature from 1580 on.

Pragmatism started with the "Metaphysic Club," an ironic denomination given by the mathematician and logicist Charles Sanders Peirce (1839 -1914)[86], the psychologist William James (1842-1910)[87] , and the

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[85]   Truth   -   Queensborough   Community   College. https://www.qcc.cuny.edu/SocialSciences/ppecorino/INTRO_TEXT/Chapter%205%20Epistemology/Truth.htm- retrieved on Jun,01,2020

[86] Peirce, Charles Sanders "Reasoning and the Logic of Things" (1898). Edited by Kenneth Laine Ketner (1992)/" Pragmatism as a Principle and Method of Right Thinking" (1903) Harvard "Lectures on Pragmatism" in a study edition - Edited by Patricia Ann Turisi, 1997

[87] James, William. Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking. New York: Longman Green and Co., 1907.

jurist Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. (1841 – 1935)[88] to their group of philosophical studies, at the end of XIX Century.

The proposers of pragmatism, and many of their followers, did not formulate something structured as a theory. Unlike this, they preferred to define a concept or criteria of truth, that should express "clarity." Around this central idea, everything about pragmatism has been proposed, elaborate and discussed, by many contemporary philosophers who added their significant contribution to the numerous studies, consolidating the meanings of pragmatism, like John Dewey (1859 -1952)[89] and Richard Rorty (1931 - 2007)[90]

Pragmatism has been understood in different ways, considering the history of its formulation: as an attitude of mind, as a method of investigation, and as a theory of truth. Indeed, pragmatism is all three things.

As an attitude and a method of investigation, pragmatism resembles some tenets of analytic philosophy:

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[88] Holmes, Oliver Wendell (1995). The Collected Works of Justice Holmes (S. Novick, ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.ISBN 0226349667.

[89] Dewey, John -- "Collected Works of John Dewey, Index 1882 – 1953" Edited by Jo Ann Boydston - South Illinois University Press. 978-0-8093-1728-8 11/26/1991

[90] Rorty, Richard- "Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature". Princeton University Press, (1979). / "Consequences of Pragmatism."- Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, (1982) / "Objectivity, Relativism and Truth": Philosophical Papers I. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991

"Conceptual analysis as a method; a close relationship between language and philosophy; a concern with seeking argumentative answers to philosophical problems; search for conceptual clarity."[91]

As a theory, pragmatism claims that truth is not a category attributable to any object or entity than our beliefs. Therefore, there is no such "ultimate truth" or any other meaning for truth before or beyond our beliefs, its semantic structure, and its effects. In any case, truth outcomes from our beliefs. Truth cannot, anyhow, became transcendental; only our beliefs are truth-bearers.

Belief is a rule for **action**; thus, it works as an original starting point for our thoughts. The content of our beliefs means the configuration of habits, in such a way that, by the particularities of each belief, we can distinguish several modes of emerging actions.

"True is the name for whatever proves itself to be good in the way of belief, and good, too, for definite, assignable reasons" (James. op.cit). The implicit value of truth is its usefulness, the feature of having a useful (pragmatic) application in the world

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[91] Perez, Diana Ines, "Analytic Philosophy in Latin America", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2020 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2020/entries/latin-american-analytic/ (retrieved on May,29,2020.)

Three core components help to observe how truth can qualify our beliefs: the **inquiry**, the **satisfaction**, and the **agreement with subsequent experience**. Notedly, Ramsey (1903 – 1930)[92] links truth to human inquiry.

The inquiry corresponds to the content of our belief and means the only truth bearer. The inquiry corresponds to the semantic of our beliefs and experiences, as well as the only manner of expressing its meaning:

> *The inquiry is a special case of semiosis, a process that transforms signs into signs while maintaining a specific relationship to an object, which object may be located outside the trajectory of signs or else be found at the end of it. The inquiry includes all forms of belief revision and logical inference, including scientific method[93] - (Pierce, op.cit)*

"The satisfaction of an inquiry is the end of truth," assumption that introduces a concept of correlation or identity to the property. However, this understanding cannot be misused with the conceptions of correspondence with the reality, as formulated by the

traditional theories. Here, the correspondence of truth is established exclusively with the belief itself.

The satisfaction signifies the experimental fulfillment of a belief.

The confrontation between the inquiry and its results (or between the belief and the experience) aims mostly to resolve the doubts and concerns in mind, which nature is being inquisitor. From this process, the belief arises and, lastly, the knowledge, envisaging the practical belief and the establishment of habits of future cognitive behavior.[94]

From there, we can deduce that, in its essence, the pragmatic theory of truth depends on sheltering in its structure a theory of learning, as well.

The principle of satisfaction sculpts the widely known maxim of pragmatism: *"it is useful because it is true" or "that it is true because it is useful'*. Truth is what satisfies the intellect. In truth, the intellect finds rest and contentment that is its own good or end."[95]

Sometimes, the nuclear content of these maxims is misunderstood and seen in similarity with utilitarian

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[94] Dazzani, Maria Virgínia Machado "O Pragmatismo de Peirce como Teoria do Conhecimento e da Aprendizagem" – UFBA – Caderno Digital Ano 14 – nº 10 – V10- (UFBA) – Jul/Dez 2008, ISSN 1806-9142 – Free translation by the author.

[95] Pragmatic Theory - an overview | ScienceDirect Topics. https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/computer-science/pragmatic-theory. Rertrieved on Jun,01,2020

ideas, resulting in a false perception. Utilitarianism is a moral-ethical system based on objective behavioral utility; pragmatism is a system based on normative truth.

The agreement with subsequent experience, in turn, is the element indicating that the configuration of truth is not a subtle and isolated result of our beliefs. A time-related process of our experience determines truth. Pragmatism sustains the quest of "truth itself," and rejects the idea of objective certitude. For this reason, the truth of our beliefs arises from a process involving not only the prompt fulfillment of our beliefs but also our future experiences and actions.

William James assumed that the pragmatic theory intends a convergence of our beliefs to consolidated scientific evidence related to successful results for human action, and this is the critical concept to understand the traditional epistemology of pragmatism.

The submission of truth to a time-related process involves two concepts: the fallibilism and the naturalism. With the fallibilism, pragmatic theory accepts the cognitive problems and related limitations, and naturalism refers to the observation of our biological and social elements.

With[96] the denial of an "objective, concrete truth," the pragmatist epistemology takes truth as a possibility. In

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[96] Capps, J. A Common-Sense Pragmatic Theory of Truth. *Philosophia* 48, 463–481 (2020). https://doi.org/10.1007/s11406-019-00099-z

this direction, Susan Haacs (1993)[97] sustains that justification comes in degrees according to the pragmatic theory.

With its features, pragmatic epistemology, in its numerous versions, influenced the modern jurisprudential, economic, psychological linguistic and learning theories.

The meeting point of these theories, and many others, is one of the central ideas of the pragmatic epistemology: the notion of "common sense," resulting from our experiences, which have been able to preserve its contents throughout the expositions to new experiences, occurring in subsequent times. "They form one great stage of equilibrium in the human mind's development, the stage of common sense."

Many pragmatic concepts are spread around in philosophy and sciences, could it be expressively or implicitly, and irrespective of the structure or nature of the corresponding objects. In the present, it is challenging to say accurately which elements are, or are not, pragmatic in philosophy and sciences.

CONCLUSIONS OF THIS CHAPTER.

These are the theories that can help us in our reflection on the "mystery of truth, "as Anil Gupta said (op.cit.). None exhausts the subject, and never will. For this reason, we will not strictly or entirely adopt any of them.

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[97] Haack,Susan –"Evidence and Inquiry" Oxford: Blackwell, 1993.

On the other hand, we will not deny or discredit anyone as well, because, if we observe all these theories from a compatibilist and not reductionist standpoint, we will readily perceive that all of them have something to tell us. Any of these theories, however subtle it may be, offers an assumption, a concept, an attempt to a demonstration, a comparison, a belief, or a simple fragment, depicting a reasonable, coherent proposition. It does not matter if these chosen elements or fragments could be considered as trivial by theorists, mostly because no one of them is able to demonstrate that trivial reasonings cannot express the truth, nor that hermetic, composed, and elaborate theories can always tell us what truth is.

From our analytic position, we should not be afraid about how to employ these elements methodologically, or how to arrange them in a system, because we are not constructing any theory, nor proposing theorems, formulas, dogmas, or demonstrating something unknown from science or philosophy. We are just looking at all the elements that we have, in a critical, analytical, and coherent way, searching our best understanding of reality. All the assertions, beliefs, and theoretical contents which will be put aside in our analysis should not be understood as denied, but just not considered as the best element for that specific proposition we are affirming.

Resulting from the analysis of all these cognitive treasures offered by our philosophical literature, our assumptions about truth are the following:

1 – We conceptualize truth as **a conventional property**

given by common sense to the degree of proximity with the reality, attributable to any cognitive mind process.

2 – We argue that any essential property is subordinate to the nature and substance of its corresponding object or entity. This is the reason because reality subordinates the truth.

3 - We argue that pure truth does not exist in a natural, cognitive, rational, or social form. Pure truth only exists while a theory. In the realm of our mind, pure truth cannot be proved. What we know as truth is only a relative attribution.

4 – We argue that, since we accepted the arguments that we exist in an open reality and that truth is subordinate to reality, through the same assumption, we are declaring that truth is unstable and subject to variations. Reality is situational, time-space relative, and can change abruptly.

Irrespective of the fact that this assertion starts an endless debate, the assumption of the relativity of truth is not new. Jack W. Meiland (1977)[98] comments how this concept was considered, for instance, by Husserl:

> *The notion of "relative truth" became especially prominent in German thought in the later nineteenth-century when "historicism" and "relativism" flourished as*

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[98] Meiland, Jack W. - "Concepts of Relative Truth" - The Monist 60 (4):568-582 (1977) https://philpapers.org/rec/MEICOR

a paradoxical consequence of the work of Kant and Hegel (paradoxical since both Kant and Hegel are themselves "absolutists"). This notion was employed by theoreticians in the fields of metaphilosophy, philosophy of history, and the philosophy of logic. Thus, Edmund Husserl felt obliged to examine the concept of relative truth in his critique of psychologism in logic.

Husserl understood that modern and recent philosophy leans strongly to specific relativism, involving the notions of relative truth.

5 - We argue that **truth can exist in theory, but not in the abstract**. We can theorize the truth because, in theories, we use concepts and ideas related to reality, which may be material or not, like numbers. In pure abstraction, the construction takes into account only logical principles with no reference to any object belonging to reality.

We cannot think about truth without thinking about a referential and real object or entity, even though this reference could be vague or not explicit in our reasoning, or considered in its most generalization.

In abstraction, objects are non-mental and non-sensible, lacking any features of paradigmatic structures which are necessary to the attribution of qualitative properties.

6 – We argue that truth is **conventional and not**

conceptual.

Any **ontological concept of truth**, surpassing the content of a simple convention, takes us to the challenge of solving numerous and complex problems, because the truth bearer, in any case, must fulfill the criteria of demonstrability, coherence, probability, and reasonability of its content.

Scientific evidence of the bearer is needed to fulfill the criterion of demonstrability.

We should investigate the logical structure of the bearer As far as we take **coherence** in consideration, involving, as the case could be, its mathematical validity, and all its intrinsic elements with progressive and regressive methods, including its historic grounds.

The determination of the **probability** of the bearer demands, in each case, the development of the adequate mathematical models and corresponding analysis and critique.

The **reasonability** of the bearer depends on its cogency with all the available knowledge about its context, which means a very composed critical task.

Without the fulfillment of all those criteria, any attribution of truth, surpassing the content of a convention, is reduced to simple suppositions. Such fulfillment imposes grading and accurately determining all these essential components and its exponential combinations. A truth bearer can demonstrate different and variable degrees (or intensities) of each of the criteria (possibility, probability,

reasonability, and coherence), so that any conceivable mathematical model, intending to solve these variants, would suppose the processing of billions of inputs for any single output. Moreover, in logical terms, these uncountable models would certainly arise to a relative output, in any case.

It is quite evident that this is an impossible task to be proposed in the realm of our mind, mostly related do our everyday experience and the corresponding brain and mental states. The achievement of any ontological concept of truth, beyond the idea of a convention, is just a challenge to artificial intelligence projects, in no way related to our ordinary existence.

7 – We argue that what we understand by truth is the result of a convention grounded in **common sense**.

In the face of the impossibility of a conceptual construct of truth in the realm of our minds, instead of adopting any concept of ontological property, we establish a variable attribution of value to the elements of reality, emerging from the pillars of our experience. This attribution is a social convention, in the same way as the legal norm and the moral tenets are, which we understand as the generalized acceptance of attribution of value resulting from the consciousness that we may sustain with science, philosophy, history, and most the experience.

Like many other mental and cognitive constructs, what we call attribution of truth occurs intuitively and with a considerable margin of error.

Everything we have for this attribution is a distorted

image of truth, an approximation, a vague idea intensively influenced by bias, expectations, and beliefs. That is the reason for so many shades of truth in the human experience. Truth is **a variable and gradient property**.

Our conventions on truth are a continuous cognitive process determining uninterrupted inclusions and exclusions of inputs and outputs coming from the interaction of individual and social experience, which result is the **common sense**, a systemic, analytical, and critical construct.

For this study, we adopt the concept of common sense as proposed by Capps (2020)[99]:

> *By "common sense," I don't mean to refer to a specific philosophical position, such as Scottish common-sense realism, Peirce's critical common-sensism, or Moore's position in "A Defence of Common Sense" (thanks to a reviewer for raising this question). I take common sense in a non-theoretical (common sense?) way: "common" in the sense of widely shared, or, as argued below, a generally accepted baseline. But also "common" in*

the sense of "ordinary," hence the connection with ordinary language philosophy. (In this sense one could argue that ordinary language philosophy is a post-linguistic turn version of common-sense philosophy.),
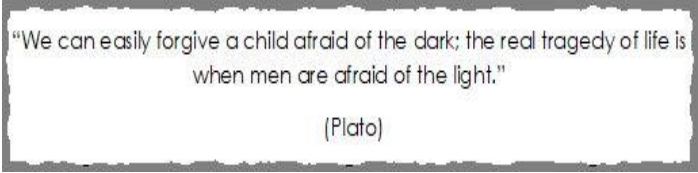
8) And, finally, we argue that, theoretically, if we could attribute real values to reality and bearers under any logical scale, we would find the truth as a determined point in a simple slope gradient formula,

$$m = \frac{y_2 - y_1}{x_2 - x_1} = \frac{\Delta Y}{\Delta X}$$

where m= the grade of truth, y= the reality according to common sense, and x= the bearer.

CHAPTER V

THE BLIND SHADOWS OF NARCISSUS

"We can easily forgive a child afraid of the dark; the real tragedy of life is when men are afraid of the light."

(Plato)

INTRODUCTION, CONCEPT, AND NATURE

The blind imaginary is as ancient as humankind, and since Plato has been observed by philosophy. Many different names have been given to this subject, not so usually discussed as a construct, as we intend to do in this study.

Like reality, the imaginary shows some patterns, some repeated and very similar effects in the presence of the same causes. When we start reflecting on these persevering effects in the human behavior and come across their probable causational origins, we perceive the existence of many distinct entities, that carry a proper identity, and intrinsic organization, despite being composed of the same substance of many other entities. If we observe a galaxy with a telescope, we will see their solar systems as detached points or areas seemingly independent, to which we attribute an identity. This perception is just an illusion because they are only stars, planets, and asteroids floating in the immensity - but we call them solar systems, and give

proper names to them when we understand that they are linked in a unique and proper organized structure.

Everything related to human behavior is linked to the imaginary, in one way or another. Observing its interior and substances, we can perceive unique organized structures and constructs with a proper nature or identity, in the same way that we see the solar systems.

One of these structures of the imaginary calls our attention to being in the center of all the subjects explored in the factual analysis of this study. We can give any name we wish to this structure, but here we will call it "**the blind imaginary**."

We should understand the blind imaginary as meaning the **attitude** of denial of conventional truth and reality, the scorn of evidence, the disdain

of science, knowledge, and demonstration, as well as the desertion of intelligence and critical thinking **in favor of a convenient and meaningless imaginary**.

Considering its ingredients, we shall see that the blind imaginary is not a category, nor a quality like truth is. In the same way, it is not a lie, because the lie is an act of forgery of truth, as much as blinding imaginary is not the opposite of the truth since this opposite should be an attribute, what is not the case. We are talking about an attitudinal structure capable of determining behavior; **it is a systemic action and a primal behavioral model.**

We use the word "systemic" here because the structural framework of this behavioral model contains the hierarchically organized interrelation of all the

elements of our experience, our emotions, cognition, mind, and neuronal states, as well as all our biases, desires and beliefs. All the qualities of these elements will reflect in the model, like the sufficiency of our cognition and its coherence or absurd, our fears, desires and neurosis, the degree of mental and psychological sanity, the neural and neuronic dysfunctions, besides uncountable situational ingredients.

On the other hand, such systemic action involves value attributions.

In all attributive processes that we can find in social psychology, the attribution of truth is solely objective: it refers exclusively to a particular object, external to the subject, that is qualified. Unlike this, in the blind imaginary, the objective attribution is preceded by and grounded in a subjective attribution of value **given to the subject by himself, affording him the power to determine by his own discretion the values attributable to anything.**

The subject, in himself, becomes the meta-reality.

It follows that, with this narcissistic structure of the critical process, the objective attribution loses its logic meaning and importance, as long as it will not express anymore an analytic content related to equivalence, demonstrability, or coherence of the object in the face of reality.

While holding his self-attributed power of

attribution, the subject ceases to be submitted to evidence, science, and critical knowledge whatsoever and, immersed in his imaginary, elaborates the reflexive image of reality **that better satisfies his desires, anxieties, and fears**.

It is quite evident that everything related to the cognitive blindness shelters both conscious and unconscious elements described by Lacan in the conceptualization of the second order (or second ring) of the psyche: the imaginary. We should look to this universe with a multidisciplinary and flexible inspiration.

The flaw projected image of reality sustaining the model does not admit the methodic doubt or logical criticism, and becomes a subjective dogma, in an existential layer where the cognitive blindness enshrouds the intelligence. The result is the most vulnerable mind state that a subject can offer to the mechanisms and processes of social domination, as we will discuss ahead. Domination flourishes in ignorance.

We should consider, also, some specific components of the structural framework of the behavioral model to widen our understanding of its nature.

One of these components is our mental and psychological capacity and intuition for the **illusion,** which has been extensively researched by social psychology as an influential element of the information processing, not only as a cognitive disfiguration or psychological interference but also as a phenomenon

depending on neurological functions which should be adequately studied, as Myers[100] commented:

> *Social psychologists have explored not only our error-prone hindsight judgments but also our capacity for illusion – for perceptual misinterpretations, fantasies, and constructed beliefs. Michael Gazzaniga (1992,1998, 2008) reports that patients whose brain hemispheres have been surgically separated will instantly fabricate - and believe - explanations of their own puzzling behaviors.*

In the structural framework of the behavioral model of the blind imaginary, another core component is the presence of **significant discomfort** in the subject's emotional state. This discomfort will be the **starter** of the forthcoming formulation of the model. For sure, the starter may vary indefinitely, but in most cases are resumed to anxiety caused by unsatisfied desires, or fear for existing or expected pain imposed by elements of the reality.

The subject's psyche, responding to the presence of the starter, will unconsciously betake two primary processes: a **defense mechanism**, and the stimulation

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of the **narcissism**. Both processes are bearers of our most primal instincts, which have been denominated by Freud as Eros and Thanatos.

The **defense mechanisms** of the self are the first primary process. They have been exhaustively studied since the last decade of the XIXth Century, when Sigmund Freud, in the dawn of psychoanalytic theory, published the article "Psychoneurosis of Defense" (1894), starting one the most extensive and controversial theoretical grounds of the modern psychology. The fact was his (and anyone's) first scientific approach to the defense of the ego, which has been followed by many changes and revisions by Freud himself and many of his followers, mostly his daughter Anna Freud (1895 – 1982). In the present, the theories of defense do not retain some parts of Freud's first ideas, but surely there is no defense theory without the Freudian background.

The modern understanding of the defense mechanisms is not so focused on its psychoneurotic origins but offers aggregate functional and teleological sights to the matter.

Rui C Campos (2018)[101], in his work "The Definition of Defense Mechanisms and their Assessment: Some Contributions," explains the different interpretations given by those who came after Freud:

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[101] Campos, Rui C. "The Definition of Defense Mechanisms and their Assessment: Some Contributions"- Revista Iberoamericana de Diagnóstico y Evaluación – e Avaliação Psicológica. RIDEP · Nº50 · Vol.1 · 149 -161 – https://doi.org/10.21865/RIDER50.1.12

a) Anna Freud (1946;1965) understood that all the identified defense mechanisms could represent useful forms of adaptation, since moderately used, helping individuals to manage the requirements and challenges of their reality.

b) Unlike this opinion, Haan (1963) sustained that all the known defense mechanisms of the self, under any circumstances, were associated with pathological states of the personality, acting as mismeasured responses of the individual.

c) With some variations, Vaillant (19781;1977), and Cramer (1998;2000;2006), claim that some of those mechanisms can be primitive, immature and pathologic, while others could be mature and adaptative.

Vaillant (cit.) took the care of classifying them into four levels: a) the pathological, where the subject is distancing from reality in such a degree that other persons start considering him as insane; b) the immature, identified as causing behavioral patterns more frequently observed in adolescents; c) the neurotic ones, as those exposing behavioral patterns coinciding with the clinical description of neurosis; d) the mature mechanisms, as being those with a constructive intention of a problem- solving.

Objectively, the defense mechanisms have the purpose of protecting the individual from excessive anxiety, and the self from direct aggression.
This opinion is an intermediate position, balancing Anna Freud's and Haan's assumptions.

d) Finally, Campos considers that, from a proper teleologic standpoint, Ihilevich and Gleser (1969)[102] sustain that the defense mechanisms can distort or manipulate reality. The distortion happens when the personal resources of the subject are insufficient to manage internal conflicts, or external threatens as soon as the perception identifies painful experiences that could be imposed on him. We call these perceptions "starters," as we said before.

The most critical shapes of the defense mechanisms of the self, to our study, are those classified as **psychodynamic**. They are many, and continuously the psychoanalytic literature aggregates more specific types and descriptions.

We will keep our attention only on seven of these mechanisms, listed in the following table because they are sufficient for our analytical purposes.

[102]Gleser, G. C., & Ihilevich, D. (1969). An objective instrument for measuring defense mechanisms. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 33*(1), 51–60.https://doi.org/10.1037/h0027381

TABLE 1 – PSYCHODYNAMIC EGO DEFENSE MECHANISMS

REPRESSION	is the withdrawal from consciousness of an unwanted idea, affect, or desire by pushing it down, or repressing it, into the unconscious part of the mind
REACTION FORMATION	Is the fixation in consciousness of an idea, affect, or desire that is opposite to a feared unconscious impulse. A mother who bears an unwanted child, for example, may react to her.
PROJECTION	Is a form of defense in which unwanted feelings are displaced onto another person, where they then appear as a threat from the external world
REGRESSION	is a return to earlier stages of development and abandoned forms of gratification belonging to them, prompted by dangers or conflicts arising at one of the later stages
SUBLIMATION	Is the diversion or deflection of instinctual drives, usually sexual ones, into noninstinctual channels. Psychoanalytic theory holds that the energy invested in sexual impulses can be shifted to the pursuit of more acceptable and even socially valuable achievements, such as artistic or scientific endeavors
DENIAL	is the conscious refusal to perceive that painful facts exist. In denying latent feelings of homosexuality or hostility, or mental defects in one's child, an individual can escape intolerable thoughts, feelings, or events
RATIONALIZATION	is the substitution of a safe and reasonable explanation for the true (but threatening) cause of behavior.

the challenge to analyze some behavioral patterns still unknown until 1974, but repeated in various events occurring in the following decades: the widely known "Syndrome of Stockholm." Initially, researchers interpreted the syndrome as a new defensive mechanism of the ego because of its features

Studies identified this behavioral pattern as a psychological response of a captive individual that starts to establish an empathic relation with his captors, their ideas, and desires. In other terms, a full act of adhesion, an identification with the aggressor.

The first researches on this pattern understood that the behavioral model contained at least three layers: a) the captor actively threatens the captive's life; b) after the situation "a" the captor demonstrates that he had reconsidered his intention of killing the captive, and decided preserving his life; c) the relief of the captive's extreme fear and anxiety is transposed into feelings of gratitude toward the captor, establishing the empathic relation.[103]

However, the literature and methodological research and experiments related to this pattern are still very scarce. Most of the information referring to the facts and behaviors come from the mediatic literature, and cannot be useful to psychological research.

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[103] Namnyak M, Tufton N, Szekely R, Toal M, Worboys S,

Sampson EL. (2007)[104] accept that "*This suggests an identifiable pattern of experience and behavior may exist amongst victims described by the media.*" Nevertheless, on the other hand, they state that the available material is few:

> *There is little published academic research on 'Stockholm syndrome,' although a study of media reports reveals similarities between well-publicized cases. This may be due to reporting and publication bias.*
>
> *[…]We did not identify any validated diagnostic criteria for Stockholm syndrome in any of the papers reviewed inthis study, although a few papers offer suggestions for potential criteria (2,12,13. A large discrepancy regarding the definition of Stockholm syndrome exists between the papers reviewed.*

Summarizing, irrespective the many possibilities of the existence of still unresearched forms of defensive mechanisms of the self (and the Stockholm syndrome could be one them), for all methodological purposes

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[104] Namnyak, M & Tufton, Nicola & Szekely, R & Toal, M & Worboys, S & Sampson, Elizabeth. (2008). 'Stockholm syndrome': Psychiatric diagnosis or urban myth? Acta psychiatrica Scandinavica. 117. 4-11. 10.1111/j.1600-0447.2007.01112. x.

we will consider only the seven forms contained in our Table

It becomes apparent, in the face of their descriptions, that any one of the mechanisms of defense can play a determinant role in the formulation of the behavioral model, resulting in blind imaginary constructions.

Narcissism is the second primary process taking place in the construction of the blind imaginary model.

Narcissism is often referred to in many trivial forms because of its relation with many typical behaviors widely known in the interpersonal relations of the daily life of each one of us. Therefore, we can find hundreds of superficial understandings about narcissism in the literature and any dialogue in our social lives.

In our reflection, what matters most is understanding the content and structure of the narcissism, rather than the academic elaboration of all possible conceptualizations. For us, "how" it is and works is more relevant than "what" it is, or could be.

Our first notions of narcissism came from psychoanalytic thinking.

Freud (1914)[105] proposed two interrelated notions of narcissism: The *primary narcissism*, originated in the early infancy, and the *secondary narcissism*, resulting from the adaptation of the primary one to the external conditions. In Freud's words (op.cit.)

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[105] Freud, Sigmund, "On Narcissism: An Introduction", (*1914)* - 1925 C.P., 4, 30-59. (Tr. C. M. Baines.

> *I may point out that we are bound to suppose that a unity comparable to the ego cannot exist in the individual from the start; the ego has to be developed. The auto-erotic instincts, however, are there from the very first; so there must be something added to auto-erotism—a new psychical action—in order to bring about narcissism.*

Freud understood that the child is born without a notion of individuality, which would mean the *ego*. Hewitson (2010)[106] explains the context of this period,

> *Primary narcissism is a first state, prior to the constitution of the ego and therefore auto-erotic, through which the infant sees his own person as the object of exclusive love – a state that precedes his ability to turn towards external objects. From this ensues the constitution of the ideal ego.*

Laplanche and Pontalis (2004)[107] synthesize the Freudian concept assuming that "*primary narcissism denotes an early state in which the child cathects its own self with the whole of its libido.*" The *secondary narcissism* corresponds to the following state, beginning with the first interactions of the child

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[106]Hewitson, Owen -What Does Lacan Say About the Mirror Stage? – Part I https://www.lacanonline.com/2010/09/what-does-lacan-say-about-the-mirror-stage-part-i/ retrieved on Jun,09,2020

[107] Laplanche and Pontalis, "The Language of Psycho-Analysis", London: Karnac, 2004

with the outside reality. When this happens, the ideal ego experiments the exposition to the external objects and stimulus. The auto-erotic ego losers this condition, staring to be related to the elements of sociability of the outer world and acquiring the content of individuality. In this stage, the subject creates an image of the *ideal self,* which returns to the ego as something to be pursued and achieved. By this process, the *ideal ego* converts into the *ego ideal*.

In a comparison between these two concepts, we can assume that their relationship is a mirror of the representation between reality and its idealization. As Lacan argued in the analysis of what he called "first order," the initial stage of the personality occurs without relation to the outer world. In this layer, called "reality," the subject experiments a kind of perfect state in which he is the center of his self and the non-relational universe, having his needs naturally satisfied. In the following order, Lacanian "the imaginary," the *ideal ego* gains an interrelated structure in which the *ideal ego* seems forever lost. Revisiting Freud's "On Narcissism: an Introduction, Sophie de Mijolla-Mellor (2020)[108] glosses:

> *The person, as Freud wrote, seeks to regain the narcissistic perfection of its infancy under the new form of the ego ideal,*

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[108] Mijolla-Mellor,Sophie de Mijolla-Mellor - https://www.encyclopedia.com/psychology/dictionaries-thesauruses-pictures-and-press-releases/ego-idealideal-ego - retrieved on Jun,10,2020

which is deferred as a goal to be attained in the future. Thus, the ideal ego could be seen as the nostalgic survival of a lost narcissism, while the ego ideal appears to be the dynamic formation that sustains ambitions towards progress.

The Freudian dichotomic idea of narcissism has been relatively kept aside by the subsequent studies, which focused on an integrated interpretation. Melanie Klein (1882-1960) abandoned the idea, and many others definitively questioned its content, arguing that, once based on an auto-erotic situation, the primary narcissism cannot be accepted appropriately as narcissism at all.

Philippe Julien (1995)[109] argues that when Lacan formulated his mirror stage theory (the imaginary), he unified the understanding of the narcissism in the following way:

In the mirror stage, Lacan compressed the two phases into one. At the very moment, when the ego is formed by the image of the other, narcissism and aggressivity a correlative. Narcissism, in which the image

of one's own body is sustained by the image of the other, in fact, introduces a tension: the other in his image both attracts and rejects me

Narcissism constitutes a causal element of many personality disorders, named "NPD" (Heinz Kohutin 1968)[110]. Several following psychopathic and sociopathic states become a part of the diversified taxonomies brought by studies and experiments in several fields. Given to abundance of this material, a complete classification of its content is a need in the present. Aaron L Pincus, Mark R Lukowitsky (2010) [111] sustain that the criterion about pathological narcissism and its phenotypic themes (narcissistic grandiosity and narcissistic vulnerability) should be classified *"into revised diagnostic criteria and assessment instruments, elimination of references to overt and covert narcissism that reify these modes of expression as distinct narcissistic types, and determination of the appropriate structure for pathological narcissism."(op.cit)*

These pathological configurations of narcissism are precisely those interesting to our reflection at most,

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[110] Kohut, Heinz (1968). "The Psychoanalytic Treatment of Narcissistic Personality Disorders: Outline of a Systematic Approach".The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child. London, England: Taylor & Francis.
[111] Aaron L Pincus, Mark R Lukowitsky - "Pathological Narcissism and Narcissistic Personality Disorder" -Annu Rev Clin Psychol..2010;6:421-46 - doi: 10.1146/annurev.clinpsy.121208.131215.PMID: 20001728

given their ability to provoke severe distortions of critical thinking, what is a condition to formulate any blind imaginary content.

In the present, pathological narcissism expresses two phenotypic themes: the *grandiose narcissism*, and the *vulnerability narcissism*. These are technical concepts, not belonging to social psychology, and we should follow them literally.

Stathis Grapsas, Eddie Brummelman, Mitja D. Back, and Jaap J. A. Denissen (2020)[112], explain ythe *grandiose narcissism:*

> *Grandiose narcissism (hereafter: narcissism) is a personality trait marked by beliefs of personal superiority and a sense of entitlement to special treatment (Krizan & Herlache, 2018; Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001). Narcissists (i.e., individuals with relatively high levels of grandiose narcissism) tend to go out of their way to impress others: They often groom their appearance to grasp others' attention (Back, Schmukle, & Egloff, 2010), brag about themselves (Buss & Chiodo, 1991), and showcase their talents and abilities in*

> *front of others (Wallace & Baumeister, 2002). At the same time, narcissists are often combative toward others. In such instances, they are often perceived as confrontational, insulting, belittling, and intimidating (Holtzman, Vazire, & Mehl, 2010; Morf & Rhodewalt, 1993; Reijntjes et al., 2016).*

The understanding of *vulnerable narcissism* we took from Czarna, A.Z., Zajenkowski, M., Maciantowicz, O. (2019)[113]:

> *Vulnerable narcissism, rooted in a brittle sense of self, is associated with low self-esteem and reflects defensiveness and insecurity. It involves feelings of inadequacy, incompetence, and negative affect (Cain et al. 2008; Campbell and Miller 2011; Miller et al. 2011; Pincus and Lukowitsky 2010). While arrogance and open displays of dominance and grandiosity characterize grandiose narcissism, the vulnerable form is described by self-reported feelings of*

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inferiority, depression, depletion, shame-proneness, and high reactivity to evaluative events (Kaufman et al. 2018). Vulnerable narcissists' social behavior is marked by hostility, arrogance, social avoidance, and a lack of empathy (Dickinson and Pincus 2003; Hendin and Cheek 1997). narcissistic grandiosity and vulnerability together (Krizan and Herlache, 2018).

Looking for the relation between narcissism and critical thinking processing, evincing its influence on the formulation of the blind imaginary, a meaningful correspondence with the concepts of emotional intelligence (EI) has been established by Zajenkowski Marcin, Maciantowicz Oliwia, Szymaniak Kinga, Urban Paweł (2018),[114]who conducted an accurate experiment arising to meaningful results.

In the first step, the authors define the connection between emotional intelligence (EI) and critical thinking:

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[114] Zajenkowski Marcin, Maciantowicz Oliwia, Szymaniak Kinga, Urban Paweł "Vulnerable and Grandiose Narcissism Are Differentially Associated With Ability and Trait Emotional Intelligence" Frontiers in Psychology-VOLUME 9 - 2018 https://www.frontiersin.org/article/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01606 - DOI=10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01606 ISSN=1664-1078 Retrieved on Jun,10,2020.

Emotional intelligence was defined by **Salovey and Mayer (1990, p.189)** *as the ability to monitor one's own and others' feeling and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions. In their model four branches have been distinguished: Perception of Emotions(the ability to identify one's emotions accurately, as well as to recognize emotions of other people based on various contextual cues), Using Emotions to Facilitate Thinking (the ability to use emotions and moods to support and guide intellectual processing), Understanding emotions (skills necessary to comprehend and label basic and complex emotions), Managing Emotions (the ability to monitor and modify own emotions in order to enhance emotional and intellectual growth). Within this approach, EI is measured similarly to cognitive intelligence via performance tests (Mayer et al., 2003).*

The experiments conducted by the authors demonstrate that both **phenotypic themes of narcissism** *(grandiose narcissism*, and the *vulnerability narcissism)* are highly associated with trait EI. On the other hand, trait EI and ability EI are correlated with weak links. The conclusion of the study is that: "*Our results are consistent with this view and indicate that*

the two types of narcissism are important correlates of trait EI. These findings suggest that narcissism may play a substantial role in understanding EI at both the conceptual and measurement level" (op.cit).

Hence, from all these studies and opinions, we can infer that narcissism can be a normal adaptative process of the self, as well as it can be a severe pathologic state of the personality. In its pathological and very usual state, narcissism is capable of interfering in the critical thinking of the subject, and provoke essential distortions of the processes of his imaginary psyche, and considerable impairment of his emotional intelligence (EI).

Besides the defense mechanisms of the self, our illusions, cognitive dysfunctions, biases, reflected images, beliefs, fears, desires, and many situational ingredients, the narcissism can become our guide to the blind imaginary or, in other terms, to "the blind shadows of Narcissus."

Emerging from all these questions, Christopher Herbert[115] assumes the existence of an open conflict between narcissism and science (or between knowledge and fantasy), as Freud declared since the beginning of the psychoanalytic thinking:

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[115] Herbert, *Christopher* " Science and Narcissism " - Modernism/modernity -Volume 3, Number 3, September 1996 -Johns Hopkins University Press – retrieved on Mai 03,2020

Freud portrays the history of science as a series of parallel revolutions, each in its own domain inflicting chastisement upon the retrograde influence of what he terms human "narcissism." The mandate of scientific thought, according to Freud, is to abolish all the fallacies that arise from anthropocentrism, from ascribing a privileged position in the natural world to human values or a human point of view. Copernican astronomy, Darwinian biology, and now psychoanalysis all give expression to this paramount motive of science, "the destruction of narcissistic illusion."[116]

COLLECTIVE BLIND IMAGINARY AND SOCIAL CONSTRUCTS

We have conceptualized the blind imaginary as a behavioral model resulting from primal processes. These processes can be individual or collective because life is, in all cases, a shared process. It is quite challenging the distinction of what is inherently individual in our lives, and what exists in our existence

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[116] Sigmund Freud, "A Difficulty in the Path of Psycho-Analysis," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud,* vol. 17, trans. and ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1955), 140.

that has been elaborated with others, from others, like others, for others, and even against others. We are ontologically relational and interdependent entities, virtual subjects. As entities or beings, we are a part of a system, which is as structured as movable, existing in continuous movement.

Hence, when we reflect on our behavioral models, we may have the illusion that we are thinking about our individual selves when, indeed, we are facing a collective object. Our individual identities are one of the most questioned matters of our current state of science, and under the lenses of the quantum physics and the theories of the continuous matter, even our biologic bodies have their reality under revision.

We are not stating that individuality does not exist. We are just questioning if it is what we ever thought it was when the evidence indicates that it is limited to the variables of some pieces of a system that, in principle, does not need anyhow to consider what we believe that our individuals are.

Therefore, we consider that the distinction between individual and collective behavioral models is semantically possible, but anyhow worthless.

On the other hand, the notions of social constructs are relevant as far as they represent the ontological systems where our existence occurs, and our behavioral models, working as causational elements of the human action. Thus, it is inside the social constructs that we can observe the meaning and effects of our models, such as the blind imaginary.

We adopt a constructivist position in this study. We agree with Albert Schutz (1889 – 1959)[117] in the assumption that society is a product of the interaction of human individuals through interpretive webs, where they create the world in which we live. In the same way, we accept the assumptions of Berger and Luckmann (1966)[118], sustaining that the foundations of social structure arise from the principle that society is a human product, and objective reality. We embrace Frederick Bartlett (1886–1969)[119] argument as how humans use prior knowledge to make sense of new phenomena: the pre-existing mental structures or *schemata*. Jean Piaget's (1896–1980) theory of intelligence is grounded in this concept when he states that "cognitive development is an adaptive process of schema correction employing assimilation and accommodation. We assimilate new information by fitting it within existing cognitive structures".[120]

Constructivism is a vast subject in sciences and humanities, but what matters to our study is the

[117] Wagner, H. R. (1983). Alfred Schutz: An Intellectual Biography. Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press.

[118] Berger Peter L. and Luckmann Thomas The Social Construction of Reality A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge – Penguin Books

[119] Bartlett, F. C. (1932). Remembering: A study in experimental and social psychology.Cambridge University Press.

[120] Mitcham Carl & Ryder Martin (2005) - Social Constructionism (2020) - Encyclopedia of Philosophy https://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences-and-law/sociology-and-social-reform/sociology-general-terms-and-concepts/social-constructionismRetrieved on Jun 14, 2020

underlying assumption that all our social reality is the consequence of our experience gathered in cognitive and behavioral models, in which the pre-existing mental structures are used to the interpretation of the current reality.

We will locate the object of our study, the blind imaginary, on this theoretical ground, as a behavioral model hypothetically related to a social construct. Since there are uncountable social constructs, it is quite logical looking for the most universal and primal one, taking into account that we assumed, earlier, that what we are discussing is a primal behavior system, starting from and acting through primal emotions. To establish the correlations between our behavior model and this referential primal construct, we should use the same ontological and epistemological structures, as spare pieces of the same puzzle. If all these parts fit together in a logical image, our reasoning should be true.

The structure of our reasoning shelters the following assertions:

The most universal and primal social construct we know is the collective unconscious, and situating our model in this construct, will show how it interacts and influence the whole construct itself.

To summarize our reasoning, we will take into account the original and straightforward Freud-Jungian conceptualization: the content of the collective imaginary is just instincts and archetypes. Instincts are

natural elements which cannot be modified, and archetypes express all our primal emotions and constructed knowledge, independently of any individual experience in the present.

In the collective human unconscious, we will find uncountable primal emotions and their own variations, which could mean an endless taxonomy to be deciphered by our study. On the other hand, it is logically possible gathering all these emotions in a few large groups, which permits its objective observation and adequate comparison with other entities.

Attempting to reach this atomic taxonomy, we assume that **the collective unconscious holds two main groups of primal emotions: the fears and the desires. Each of these two groups occupies different layers which are directly interactive.**

The first one is **the group of the fears**, gathering three core and universal emotions: the fear of mortality, the fear of the natural forces, and the fear of the unknown. We name the layer occupied by this group, **the layer of perception and emotions.**

All the three core universal emotions we call **"starters"** because they are the starting point to the complex dialectical process of formation of the collective unconscious social construct.

The second group is **the group of desires**, gathering

three core and universal emotions: the desire of immortality, the desire for domination, and the desire of knowledge. We name the layer occupied by this group, the **layer of the reason, the imaginary, and the creativity**.

All the three core universal emotions we call **"opponents"** because they are the rational and cognitive human reactions, or answers, in the face of the threat imposed by the "starters" and corresponding intense discomfort.

These two layers are interactive antagonists, corresponding to the thesis and the antithesis of the phenomenal dialectic process of formation of the collective imaginary social construct.

We call the third and last layer of the structure, the **layer of the synthesis** of human behavioral activity. From each dialectic confrontation among the "starters" and the "opponents," a synthesis will arrive in the form of corresponding human activity. The dynamic and continuous interactions of all the human activities resulting from the process will constitute the structure of the most basic and primal human social construct.

The same way we did with the starters, we may aggregate these syntheses in few huge groups, what permits its objective observation and adequate comparison with other entities: **the group of science and philosophy** (natural sciences and critical thinking), **the group of science and politics**(technology and humanities), and **the group of religion and myths**

(theology and theological cosmology). We give to this synthetic result the name of **the basic triangular social construct from the collective unconscious.**

Once here the structure of our reasoning is presented in its most succinct form, and its complete demonstration does not fit in the limits of this study, we elaborate a graphical explanation aiming to expose the most comprehensively as possible the foundations of our conclusions.
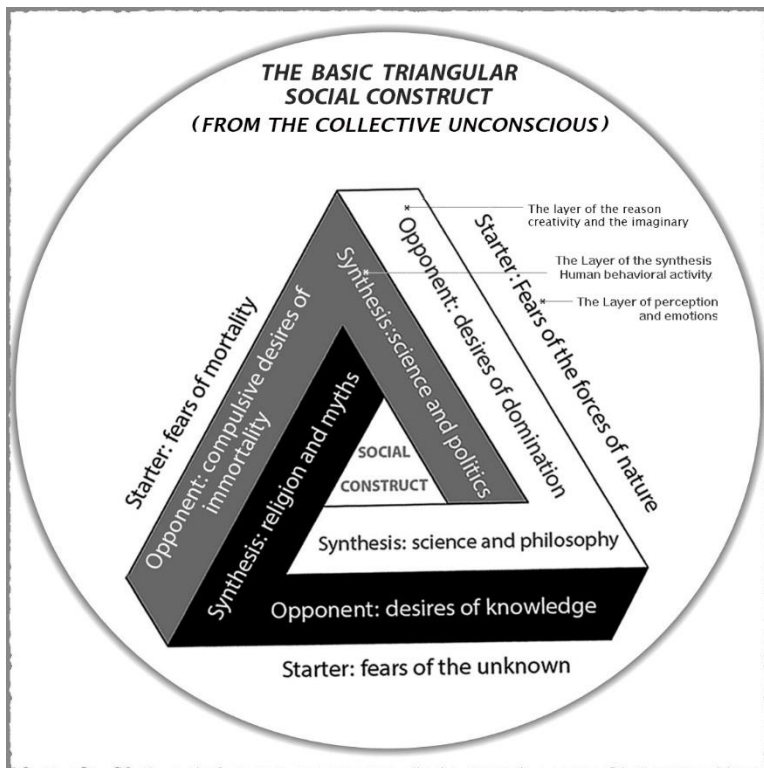
Observing our graphic representation, we may allege that:

a) In our cognitive, emotional, and behavioral processes, we can refer to all the elements and resources held by our basic social construct. All these elements are engraved and available in our collective unconscious in the form of a schema, the pre-existing mental structures (Bartlett, 1932).

b) In the mentioned processes, the schema may be preserved in full by the subject and directly determine his reasoning and action, as we can see from the graphical representation.

c) In the same way, the schema can be adapted by the subject to new information or emotional and cognitive statuses existing in the present. This means a correction of the schema, employing assimilation and accommodation. "We assimilate new information by fitting it within existing cognitive structures" (Piaget, op.cit.). The adaptation does not modify the schema as a pre-existing mental structure but aggregates new and compatible elements to its structure in the context of an individual mental process.

d)The schema can be influenced by the subject's cognitive, emotional, and behavioral processes not only for the assimilation and accommodation of new experiences, as Piaget mentions in his theory of intelligence. The influence can also happen to unconsciously reject, deny or arbitrarily neutralize some contents of the schema under the command of particular fears and desires.

In this case, occurs a distortion of the opponent basically offered by the collective unconscious, which is not related to any consistent, rational element. As a result of this adulteration, the opponent, on its respective layer, loses any cognitive and rational content linked to reality. The desires of knowledge are substituted by the images of the subject's imaginary, moving away from the discomfort of his fear or dissatisfaction.

In this unconscious act of substitution occurs the denial of science and logic, as well as the obstruction of the effective cognitive processes, because they cannot accommodate the subject's desire.

The adulteration of the opponent determines a flaw synthesis of the process: **the blind imaginary behavioral model.**

e) This model is an anti-social structure because it neglects the schema and will never become a part of a social construct, even resulting from collective behaviors. Furthermore, the model is evidence of a narcissistic context where the subject desires overcome all the existing experience and all the rational tools belonging to human activity.

f) Observing the graphical presentation, we can understand that the fear for mortality is the only one of the three starters which cannot evolve from

the opponent to a scientifically demonstrable synthesis. The synthesis of the confrontation of this starter with its opponent will ever remain in the context of the imaginary, and its expression in the human activity will be only the religion and the myths: the mystical-magical cultures.

For our graphical demonstration, we used the image of the "Penrose

Triangle" intentionally[121] for three reasons: a) the structure of our reasoning is tripartite, what means an ideal triangle; b) the Penrose triangle is a tridimensional image and, because of this feature can visually represent the dialectic interaction of the three different layers of the construct better than a plain image would permit; c) the Penrose triangle is physical and mathematically impossible (it is just an illusion and not a real figure), as our model of the basic social construct. Our model can be real only in theory because, in the real-world, uncountable distortions make impossible its existence in the pure form of our study.

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[121] 1)The Penrose triangle, also known as the Penrose tribar or the impossible tribar, is a triangular impossible object, an optical illusion consisting of an object which can be depicted in a perspective drawing, but cannot exist as a solid object. It was first created by the Swedish artist Oscar Reutersvärd in 1934. Independently from Reutersvärd, the triangle was devised and popularized in the 1950s by psychiatrist Lionel Penrose and his son, prominent mathematician Roger Penrose, who described it as "impossibility in its purest form". It is featured prominently in the works of artist M. C. Escher, whose earlier depictions of impossible objects partly inspired it. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Penrose_triangle - retrieved on Jun 15,2020
2) Penrose, L. S.; Penrose, R. (February 1958). "Impossible Objects: A Special Type of Visual Illusion". *British Journal of Psychology*. 491): 31–33. doi:10.1111/j.2044-8295.1958.tb00634.x.PMID13536303
3)Basic image credited to Tobias R. – Metoc - Own work, Public Domain, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=2520370

TITLE II

FACTUAL ANALYSIS

(facts expressing our concepts)

CHAPTER VI

PRIMAL CONSTRUCTS FROM THE BLIND IMAGINARY

ANIMISM AND DIVINIZATION

"Same old song, just a drop of water in an endless sea

All we do crumbles to the ground though we refuse to see

Dust in the wind

All we are is dust in the wind."

(Kerry Livgren, 1975)

[122]
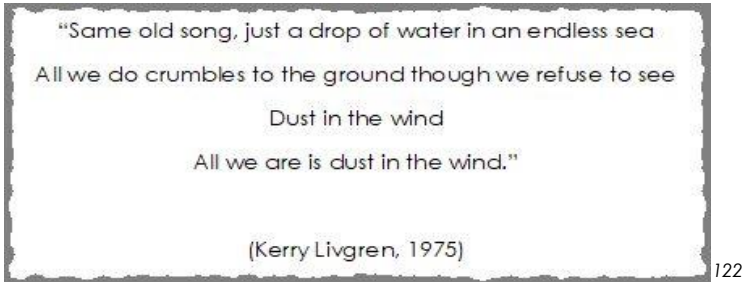
When our most remote ancestors observed themselves and the universe in its gigantic forces, from the baseline of their instincts and rudimentary knowledge and consciousness, three very painful fears started haunting their minds and feelings: the superiority of nature, the unknown, and the death. When they asked themselves for the first time: "Who are we, and why are we here?" they only could infer that they were a tiny piece of a scaring whole and that they were here just to breathe, to breed, and to bleed.

Uncountable millennia afterward, and in the realm of

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[122] Excerpt from the lyrics of the song "Dust in the Wind"

advanced scientific spatial researches, with sophisticated equipment reaching the limits of our solar system, these questions remain, as well as the fear and the pain. The three primal fears are amongst the archetypes that we can study in the modern archetypal psychology started by James Hillman[123] (1926 – 2011)and his followers.

The shadows of this original triangle reside forever in our collective unconscious.

For any sensation of fear invading our minds, we immediately react with the origination of a desire which content is capable of neutralizing, of overcoming, or at least to control the undesired discomfort. This instinctive reaction is one of the most primal defense mechanisms of the ego, which we can analyze in Chapter V with the help of our graphical model of the basic social construct from the collective unconscious.

The "defensive desire" is an automated and unconscious function of our imaginary, and can vary in many ways, as being fundamentally situational. For sure, the principle of pleasure is the object of our psyche, but the fears are the starters of many of our desires.

Factually, our ancestral reacted with a complex structure of desires imaginarily capable of facing these

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[123] James Hillman (1983) – "Archetypal Psychology" - Uniform Edition, Vol. 1 (Spring Publications, 2004. Original 1983.)

scaring realities. These desires were numerous and correlated in an imaginary system, which demanded an abstract baseline or platform for its stability: our first and metaphysical puzzle.

What our minds elaborated for this teleological finality is the abstract and vast concept of **transcendency**, weaving a concrete behavior model.

Transcendency, in philosophy and psychology, can be semantically understood as a property of excelling, surpassing, or going beyond the limits of the material experience. It means a state of being or existence above and beyond the borders of reality. The concept shelters a nuclear idea of superiority concerning what is being "transcended": elevation above truth, superior excellence, supereminence above apparent reality.
This imagined superiority intends to deviate the primal fears and unblock the mechanisms commanded by the principle of pleasure.

> *"It is of the essence of imaginative culture that it transcends the limits both of the naturally possible and of the morally acceptable.",* wrote Northrop Frye (1912 – 1991)[124]

The baseline of transcendency is the context originating all the mystical-magical cultures and actions known by human history, remaining up to

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[124]Sutton, Walter & Foster, Richard – "Modern Criticism, Theory and Practice. " – The Odyssey Print NY – 1963 – p.303

the modern cultures, in many forms. All our experiences, beliefs, desires, fears, language, religion, arts, and uncountable semiotic elements are engraved in our collective unconscious. It is our universe of symbols, replacing our conscious experience and perception of reality since it is inhabited exclusively by the projections of the imaginary.

Rejecting the limits of the naturally possible (Freye, op.cit.), any transcendental object or entity is not subject to the demonstration or submitted to evidence or necessary coherence. Transcendental objects are made exclusively of imaginary elements, emotions, desires, biases, and beliefs, often unconscious, in a state of being above and beyond the limits of material experience.

In its psychological texture, transcendency floats between ambivalent feelings, evidencing the inconsistency of its contents. On the one hand, a feeling of domination, of supereminence above apparent reality, is always present. On the other hand, as a mental process, transcendency is an act of submission to what an individual or group initially believes that is unattainable. This scenario configures a cognitive dissonance, in the meaning given by Festinger (1919 -1989)[125] in his theory. It is noticeable that this dissonance is the reason

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[125] Festinger, L (1964). - Conflict, decision, and dissonance (Vol. 3). Stanford University Press.
Festinger, L., & Carlsmith, J. M. (1959). Cognitive consequences of forced compliance. The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology.

why the idea of transcendency does not have the psychosomatic effect of eliminating the anxiety caused by its starter, but only limiting this anxiety to a tolerable level, in which other defense mechanisms can work.

For the purpose of factual analysis, the baseline of transcendency is the essential primal construct of the blind imaginary, in the extension that it is the conceptual condition to the existence of all the other imaginary structures, where our narcissism is not limited or controlled by reality.

The **animism** is the first substructure of transcendency and bears vast factual and phenomenological contents. In social psychology, we can understand it as an ontological concept, as well as a behavioral model.

The word "animism" (from Latin "animus" or "anima" = soul) entered to the modern literature vocabulary through the researches of Sir Edward Burnett Tylor (1832 – 1917)[126], meaning "*A belief in numerous personalized, supernatural beings endowed with reason, intelligence and/or volition, that inhabit both objects and living beings and govern their existence. More simply, it is the belief that 'everything is conscious' or that 'everything*

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[126] Tylor, Burnett E. – (1871) – "Primitive culture: researches into the development of mythology, philosophy, religion, art, and custom" -(l920) London, Ed. John Murray

has a soul.'"[127]

Conceptually the animistic thought is sustained by the belief of the existence of some transcendental conscious entities (such as souls or spirits) sheltered in everything in the surrounding world, irrespective of being living forms or inanimate objects, and expressed by its corresponding natural forces. The relations between humans and these entities come from their natural involvement by the shared universe to which they belong.

The teleological nature of animism is perceivable since the first researches. James Frazer. (1854 – 1941)[128] noted that animism looked to gain ascendancy over spiritual forces through the use of magic, in a certain way that the spirits could help in the solution of many kinds of problems, desires, and difficulties of the daily human life. In our terms, animism is one of the many expressions of the utilitarian idea of transcendency moved by the desire of domination of natural forces. A defense mechanism started with the fear of natural elements and a product of the blind imaginary.

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[127] A History of Animism and Its Contemporary Examples - Edited by Matthew A. McIntosh https://brewminate.com/a-history-of-animism-and-its-contemporary-examples/ - Posted on *March 31, 2019 – retrieved on Jun 21,2020* - Originally published by *New World Encyclopedia*, 11.18.2016,

[128] Frazer, James G– (1890) "The Golden Bough; a Study in Magic and Religion"

Primally, the consciousness of the identity and singularity of the species was not as specialized and elaborate as it is in the present. Wulf (2019)[129] argues that:

> *In ancient times, people, animals, and the environment were part of living nature, the Physis. They were generally perceived as similar to each other. They were stimulated by the power, the dynamis of nature, the Physis*

In this assertion, we can detect the **mimetic nature of the animism,** resulting in the indistinction between species, elements, and natural accidents in the elaboration of the imaginary expressions of transcendency, and the attribution of power and abilities. The multimorphic appearance of animist objects was not only the extrapolation of reality but rather the miscegenation of their components as perceived by the primitive man. In natural history, the mimetic phenomena represent defensive mechanisms, as we can see in many animals and plants. In a certain way, probably

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these biological mechanisms are still engraved in our genome.

These creations of the imaginary have never been systematically organized by formal religions or doctrines, as the text edited by Matthew A. McIntosh[130] notices

> *While the term "animism" refers to a broad range of spiritual beliefs (many of which are still extant within human cultures today), it does not denote any particular religious creed or doctrine. The most common feature of animist religions is their attention to particulars, as evidenced by the number and variety of spirits they recognize. This can be strongly contrasted with the all-inclusive universalism of monotheistic, pantheistic and panentheistic traditions. Furthermore, animist spirituality is more focused on addressing practical exigencies (such as health, nourishment, and safety needs) than on solving abstract metaphysical quandaries. Animism recognizes that the universe is alive with spirits and that humans are interrelated with them.*

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[130] A History of Animism and Its Contemporary Examples - Edited by Matthew A. McIntosh https://brewminate.com/a-history-of-animism-and-its-contemporary-examples/ - Posted on *March 31, 2019 – retrieved on Jun 21,2020* - Originally published by *New World Encyclopedia*, 11.18.2016,

These imaginary creations survived from their primal origins up to the present days, in many forms and instances, engraved in religious, cultural, political, linguistic, and behavioral structures with the same original meaning of a defensive answer to the same fears and unsatisfied desires.

For sure, it is quite uncommon talking about modern animistic structured cultures, because other forms of social organization replaced them. However, on the other hand, we cannot find any western or eastern modern religion, culture, language, or social organization without the heritage of the animism and its original transcendent myths, that in the present correspond to the idea of "the sacred."

Paolo Bellini (2018)[131] commented Gérard Bouchard's work "The Mythification Process" (2017), where these elements are visible with the meaning that we mentioned:

> For Bouchard, the sacred is essentially synonymous with unquestionable, untouchable, intangible, inviolable and transcendent, so that it is juxtaposed to the profane both in the sense of referring to a supernatural divine order, which could be immanent and in the sense of

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identifying a mere transcendent dimension at large, which can be embodied in an ideology, in a philosophical conviction or in something that exceeds the limits of possible experience in a Kantian sense.

For this reason, all the existing traditional religions and cultures bear the imaginary image of sacred things as defensive mechanisms to express and preserve their beliefs, convictions, or ideologies. Therefore, in modern times we have places, living and dead persons, texts, words, objects, gestures, dances, rituals, animals, sounds, geometric forms, symbols, and even food, which symbolize sacred or transcendental entities or at least mean their materialized expression.

The borders between reality and imaginary transcendency have never changed.

Anthropology, philosophy, and ontological psychology ever considered animism with the core concepts that we discussed. These concepts prevail a dualistic model of mind-body, or matter and soul (anima), when we consider a direct relation between reality and imaginary.

Beyond this ambit, and based on the most recent findings in physics, Nick Herbert (2002) [132]proposed the idea of "quantum animism," once taking into account

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[132] Herbert, Nick (2002). "Holistic Physics – or – An Introduction to Quantum Tantra". https://southerncrossreview.org/16/herbert.essay.htm - retrieved on Jun 19,2020

that in his opinion, consciousness is an integral part of the physical world, which Is permeated by the mind in all its levels. The physicist argues that:

> *Many primitive peoples organized their lives around a doctrine we call "animism", the belief that every object possesses sentient "insides" like our own. The quantum consciousness assumption, which amounts to a kind of "quantum animism" likewise asserts that consciousness is an integral part of the physical world, not an emergent property of special biological or computational systems. Since everything in the world is on some level a quantum system, this assumption requires that everything be conscious on that level. If the world is truly quantum animated, then there is an immense amount of invisible inner experience going on all around us that is presently inaccessible to humans, because our own inner lives are imprisoned inside a small quantum system, isolated deep in the meat of an animal brain. We may not need to travel into outer space to inhabit entirely new worlds. New experiential worlds of inconceivable richness and variety may already be present "at our fingertips"--worlds made up of strangely intelligent minds that*

silently surround and interpenetrate our own modes of awareness.

Werner Krieglstein (2002)[133] explains that the quantum animism proposed by Herbert differs fundamentally from all ontological concepts and behavioral models sustaining by our traditions. We have ever understood that animism proposed that some kind of imaginary spirit inhabits a body or object, which i expresses the spirit by this dualism. In its turn, the quantum animism derives from the fact that every natural system has an inner life, a conscious center, from which it directs and observes its action.

Indeed, we should take into account these arguments in our analysis. However, for the purpose of this study, we must consider that, despite Herbert using the term "animism," as we do, we are talking about very different ideas. Our discussion lays on concepts of ordinary realism and employs the corresponding logic assumptions. If we transfer these concepts to the realm of the quantum reality, as Heisenberg proposed, they will become meaningless. In the same way, if we try to insert a quantum meaning of animism under an ordinary realistic formulation, we will not find any kind of reality.

Perhaps these different approaches could be

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[133] Krieglstein Werner J. "Compassion: a New Philosophy of the Other" 2002

somehow adjusted ahead, considering that both, in principle, reject the blind imaginary or the cognitive dissonance as bearers of reality.

The **divinization** is another factual context expressing the concepts that we discussed in the Chapters of Part I.

The roots of divinization are primal, and we can find uncountable expressions of the phenomenon in archeological remains of the Neolithic.

In the ancient philosophy the idea of divinization (or theosis) is repeatedly referred to in the Platonic tradition, and from the third century AD on has been adopted by the Christian tradition, with St. Athanasius Doctrine of Divinization, as resulting from the syllogism: *"For the Son of God became man so that we might become God" (St. Athanasius,* De inc., *54, 3: PG 25,* 192B). Such syllogism cannot be taken as a logical structure, once its premise is just an imaginary assumption.

As a religious idea, divinization has spread by many western and eastern cultures and traditions, remaining up to the present as a fundamental belief, or a dogma in some religions.

Out of its mystical nutshell, which we will not discuss in this work, divinization is a social phenomenon scientifically studied by history, social psychology, and psychoanalysis, being this our focus.

In the madness of our blind imaginary, creating gods is not enough. We create gods to become like them or

one of them. The inherent meaning of divinization is precisely this.

Divinization is a persistent myth resulting from a supreme expression of pathologic narcissism of grandiosity. It shelters the obsessive desire of power and domination, setting the historical meeting point of the political absurd with the raving religiosity. In human history, both walked side by side, ever since the very first civilizations. Ideology and the physical force of weaponry sustain the political form of divinization; dogmas, myths, and beliefs, are the weapons in the religious form. Both are mechanisms of control and domination, often existing in an association.

We can find uncountable examples of this delusional association, but few words expressed one of the most recent and insane: *"Our Führer is the intermediary between his people and the throne of God. Everything the Führer utters is religion in the highest sense"* (Paul Joseph Goebbels, Hitler's chief minister from 14 March 1933 to 30 April 1945, and chancellor of the Third Reich in its last days)[134]. On 1 May 1945, the author of this phrase, and his wife Magda, committed suicide, not without before killing their six children, aged 4 to 12 years old.

In this study, we are not discussing the insanity of a group of persons. This is just an example. We are

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[134] Winkler, Martin M. (2001). "Imperial Projections: Ancient Rome in Modern Popular Culture". Baltimore, United States and London, England: The Johns Hopkins University Press.. ISBN 0-8018-8268-0.

referring to the madness of humanity, powered by the blind individual and collective imaginary.

When we attempt to understand how an unthinkable scenario like the Nazi nightmare could happen, we often take the way of our biases and superficial observation and perceive it as something related to a specific historical situation, cultural and racial features of a determined race or people, or the madness of governors. The flaw result is that we acquire the belief that Nazism and the divinization of the horror are episodic things belonging to an external reality, very different and far from ours.

Contemporary sociopsychological experiments offer relevant information conducting to a deeper understanding of the phenomenon.

One of the principal elements of the Nazi tragedy was the **collective obedience to absurd commands**, which made possible the practice of one of the most horrendous genocides of history. Not only German soldiers and officers but also the people gathered in crowds manifested an unconditional acceptance of Hitler's divinization, as well as blind obedience to all his commands, irrespective of their sanity or morality.

When we watch available images of that period, all the characters look like being hypnotized and submerged in a fanatic trance of contemplation of their fake god.

A notable social psychologist from Yale University, called Stanley Milgram, a son of Jewish immigrants surviving from the holocaust, during many years looked

to answer these questions. He researched the behavior of German officers accused of genocide by the Nuremberg War Criminal Trials and perceived that they were unanimous in sustaining their defenses on the argument that they were only following orders from their superiors - what they declared as being their duty. Holding this evidence, Milgram wanted to investigate whether Germans were particularly obedient to authority figures, as this was a common explanation given before the court.

The psychologist's interest was researching how far supposed ordinary people would obey orders involving harming and pain to another person, and how easily they could accept committing meaningless atrocities.

Then, during the '60s, the psychologist conducted an experiment focusing on the conflict between obedience to authority and personal conscience, in order to understand the kind of obedience that was prevalent during the Hitlerism period.

Milgram looked for male candidates to take part in a study of learning at Yale University. They were 40 males, aged between 20 and 50, whose jobs ranged from unskilled to professional, from the New Haven area. The participants were involved in an experimental context in which they believed they were acting as teachers of a supposed student, who should be punished with electric shocks each time he gave wrong answers to the questions formulated by the participant. They were induced to believe that the experiment was related to the importance of punishment in learning systems. Each time the "student" committed a mistake, the

"teacher" should apply a progressive electric shock from 15 to 450 volts that he believed was real, and he could observe the "student's" crescent suffering and the screams of the victims.

In the case of refusal of the participant to administer a shock, the experimenter gave a series of orders to ensure they continued.

There were four commands, and if one was disobeyed, then the experimenter announced the next one: 1 Please continue, 2: The experiment requires you to continue, 3: It is absolutely essential that you continue, 4: You have no other choice but to continue.

The result was the following: all the participants took the punishment up to 300 volts, without the interference of the experimenter, and 65% continued the punishment to the highest level of 450 volts stimulated by the commands of the experimenter.

Saul McLeod summarized the conclusions arising from the experiment[135]:

> *Ordinary people are likely to follow orders given by an authority figure, even to the extent of killing an innocent human being. Obedience to authority is ingrained in us all from the way we are brought up.*

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[135] McLeod, S. A. (2017, Febuary 05)." The Milgram shock experiment". Simply Psychology. https://www.simplypsychology.org/milgram.html - retrieved on Jun. 24,2020.

People tend to obey orders from other people if they recognize their authority as morally right and/or legally based. This response to legitimate authority is learned in a variety of situations, for example in the family, school, and workplace.

Milgram summed up in the article "The Perils of Obedience" (Milgram 1974), writing:

'The legal and philosophic aspects of obedience are of enormous import, but they say very little about how most people behave in concrete situations.

I set up a simple experiment at Yale University to test how much pain an ordinary citizen would inflict on another person simply because he was ordered to by an experimental scientist.

Stark authority was pitted against the subjects' [participants'] strongest moral imperatives against hurting others, and, with the subjects' [participants'] ears ringing with the screams of the victims, authority won more often than not.

The extreme willingness of adults to go to almost any lengths on the command of an authority constitutes the chief finding of the study and the fact most urgently demanding an explanation.'

Despite many discussions arisen from Milgram's conclusions, we should concentrate on the experimentally demonstrated assumption that the severe madness of collective behavior, such as the divinization of the stupidity and obedience to absurd commands, is not a German episodic sickness. Indeed, it means a weakness of humanity, at any place and time, resulting in the disruption of the consciousness by the action of the blind imaginary in attributing divinity, superiority, and domination to persons, groups, and objects.

Other meaningful sociopsychological experiments and theories confirmed this conclusion, as the phenomenon of **deindividuation**, as explained by Tom Postmes and Felicity M.Turner.[136] , as well as many other pieces of research *on "extreme forms of mass violence and human suffering have shown how previously ordinary and reasonable people can commit atrocious acts of cruelty and violence The question of how this transition occurs has been documented by a number of theorists." [137]*.

Besides Milgram's and other experiments, contemporary history has shown us that we did not

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[136] Postmes,Tom & Turner, Felicity M., "Psychology of Deindividuation" in International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences (Second Edition), 2015

[137] Bick James Hardie- (2020)" MassViolence and the Continuum of Destruction:A study of C. P.Taylor's Good" (art) - Int J Semiot Law https://doi.org/10.1007/s11196-020-09718- - retrieved on Jun 28, 2020

have one sole recent holocaust. Our history collects horrors like the Red Khmer, the Albanian Genocide, Kosovo and Sarajevo, the tribal and religious wars in Africa, and, earlier, the coward massacre of the native population in North and South American colonization.

What Milgram and subsequent studies have dramatically shown is that we do not need to wear a Nazi uniform with an iron cross on the chest to become monsters. The monstrosity needs our narcissism to exist, and no one is free from this anathema – mostly if divinizing banalities and aberration.

Beyond these universal political-religious mechanisms, we can find the divinized narcissism anywhere, at any time, and situational context of our daily life trivialized under individual or collective configurations. The obsessive and unconscious desire of resemblance with the imaginary divinity dictates the semiotic codes of reference to all humans. Anyone going far from the mediocrity and reaching personal performances, understood as unachievable by common sense, is symbolically divinized by the collective imaginary, in a sort of "bias of divinity." We do not need to look for them in the books of history. We can find them next door.

Very beautiful persons, athletes, billionaires, fighters, movie and TV stars, jet-set characters, politicians, and "heroes" of any nature are taken away from their human conditions and conducted to their divine thrones with the graces and rituals of the fame and the offering

of welfare thousands of times higher than a common man could ever attain. Every divinity should receive offerings, and the counterpart is the determination that they will never be humans again: they are condemned to be beautiful, rich, powerful, and dominant forever. They will not be accepted as humans anymore, and for this reason, they should build up an *alter ego* corresponding to their divinity and live under its domain. We need them to construct the mirror images of our narcissism, to avoid the tragedy of facing our ontological insignificance. Without our myths to be desired, we are just ourselves, which means a very undesirable task.

We can change our myths very quickly, but we cannot live without them. For the same reason, from many angles, the divinized persons are not the dominant ones, because they are reflected slaves of our narcissism.

Changing our myths is something driven by the same needs and feelings, and it means a process of diversification of our emotions.

We created the polytheism in our ancient social organization inspired by this need of expressional diversification, so we could invent a divinity to each core necessity which we could have.

Hence, the subsequent advent of monotheism had not been any conceptual or structural change, but rather just a hegemonistic process

to enforce and assure religious consistency and domination through the unification of several beliefs.

During the 4th century BCE, the territorial domination of Alexandre the great introduced notable cultural miscegenation and fusion of cultures, favorable to a tendency toward religious syncretism. With the development and influence of the Jewish-Christian traditions on cultures in western civilization, this syncretism finally converted into monotheism.

However, the seeds of our primal imaginary structures, related to animism and polytheism, survived in our collective unconscious, and, in the present technological civilization, our imaginary consciously expresses the same needs and feelings through "superheroes" and other characters of science fiction literature.

The significant difference with our primal polytheistic heritage is the fact that now this is a conscious product of our creative imaginary, and no more a deep blind belief in divinity. We know that our heroes or polymorphic gods are not real: they do not exist. However, despite their unreality, our minds need them to express our fears and desires, our hope and despair, without the submission to any kind of belief.

In this layer of mature fantasy (employing Anna Freud's expression), we do not want to believe in the reality of our heroes; we just want to express through them that we hold a definitive desire to keep our hope that our limits are not those that we know. This is an evolutionary

feeling engraved in our genome.

Divinity does not need to be a reality, or perhaps, in our minds, it should not be; it can be just a projective representation of our fantasies, which is possible only under the conscious creation of our imaginary. Without such consciousness of reality, divinization cannot mean a symbolic expression of rationality; it becomes only a madness.

THE IMMORTALITY

> "Would you not think him an utter fool who wept because he was not alive a thousand years ago? And is he not just as much a fool who weeps because he will not be alive a thousand years from now? It is all the same; you will not be and you were not. Neither of these periods of time belongs to you".
>
> (Seneca -4 BCE – 65 CE)
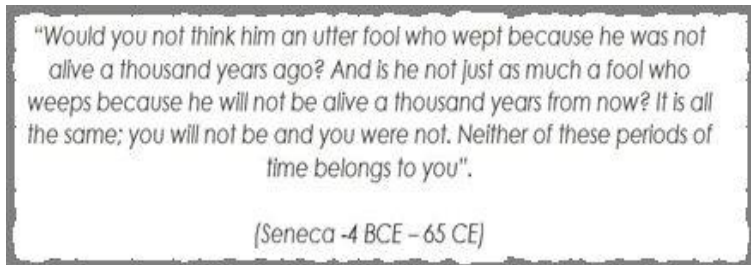
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138 Seneca "On Taking One's Own Life." In *Epistulae Morales* II (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), p. 175."apud" Sherefkin, Jack; Schwarzman, Stephen A. (2016) - Immortality and the Fear of Death - New York Public Library. - https://www.nypl.org/blog/2016/02/04/immortality-fear-death - retrieved on Jun 26,2020

In Jungian thinking, immortality is not really to be discussed. In a commentary on "The Secret of the Golden Flower" he wrote:

> *As a doctor, I make every effort to strengthen the belief in immortality, especially with older patients, when such questions come threateningly close. For, seen in correct psychological perspective, death is not an end, but a goal and life's inclination towards death begins as soon as the meridian is past [139]*

We can better understand this pragmatic argument as expressed by the young French philosopher Blaise Pascal (1623 – 1662)[140]

> *The belief in the God of Christianity—and accordingly in the immortality of the soul—is justified on practical grounds by the fact that one who believes has everything to gain if he is right and nothing to lose if he is wrong, while one who does not believe has*

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[139] Jung, C.G.- Yates, Jenny (Introduction) – (1999) "Jung on death and immortality" - Princeton University Press - Princeton, New Jersey
[140] Pascal, Blaise, and T. S. Eliot".Pascal's Pensées". New York: E.P. Dutton, 1958.

> *everything to lose if he is wrong and nothing to gain if he is right.*

These pragmatic understandings about mortality result from the perception that the fear of death has ever been taken as something unbearable. For Saint Augustine, fear of death makes a happy life impossible. The meaning of an authentic life includes eternity and happiness. Hence, we must confront the fear of death to allow achieving happiness. Nevertheless, how could we face it?

Pascal suggests the most straightforward solution: just adopt a dogmatic **religious belief** in immortality, yet because it is harmless: the believer has nothing to lose and much to gain. Once absent a religious belief in immortality, **denial** is the most common way of treating the fear of death. In the words of Pascal, *"To be happy he would have to make himself immortal, but not being able to do so, it has occurred to him to prevent himself from thinking of death."*[141]. Jung's pragmatic approach also means an implicit denial. Besides the simple denial, we can find other ways of confrontation with the fear of death. In ancient philosophy, the Stoicism, Epicureanism, and Skepticism treated this fear as something irrational; the therapeutic properties of

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[141] Sherefkin, Jack; Schwarzman, Stephen A. (2016) - Immortality and the Fear of Death - New York Public Library. - https://www.nypl.org/blog/2016/02/04/immortality-fear-death - retrieved on Jun 26,2020

philosophy could neutralize that. The foundation of this proposal was the assertion that the fear of death results from false beliefs that could be removed by rational reasoning. Lucretius (99 BC – 56 BC), a Seneca's predecessor, sustained that if we do not hold any fear of our past, referring to any time before our birth, the fear of the absence of a future life after death becomes absurd because both are the same thing. This reasoning became known as the **"symmetry argument,"** which we can find in modern philosophy through the works of Arthur Schopenhauer (1788 — 1860) and David Hume (1711 –1776).

What we deduce from our short outing to the Western philosophic traditions is the fact that death and immortality have always been approached by irrational beliefs, pragmatic behaviors, or mental processes imagined to be efficient in controlling its psychologic effects, such as fear, unhappiness, and anxiety. "Do not discuss it," "Just forget it," "This is not your business," "Believe strongly on the contrary," "Deny it."

However, the contemporary philosophy, and at most the modern psychology, cannot be blind or simply "therapeutic" in the face of one of the most relevant human ontological questions: "Are we immortal? "Will we live another life after death?

The answer is no. We will not. We are mortals, definitively mortals. Such is our nature, our beauty, our meaning, and our tragedy.

We can start uncountable researches and the broadest studies, employing all the aggregate human knowledge, all the millennia of scientific and philosophical learning, and we will not coherently find the most simpleton syllogism, coherent with reality, able to support any affirmative assumption related to our desired immortality. We may cling desperately to many fantasies, myths and beliefs; we can adopt many therapeutic tools and means, we can go ahead with surgical interferences in our brains to forget what we know or to input what we want, but our mortality will be the same, ever, to anyone.

Once for all, we cannot bear the idea of death. Even the suicidal, in one way or the other, is stuck to an image of perpetuation and immortality in his thanatological expression of narcissism.[142]

Humans are the unique species on Earth endowed with the full consciousness of their nature, hauling imaginary and frightful projections
of their own death, in permanent conflict with the strength of the survival instincts.

Being rational in their consciousness, humans become irrational in the face of the dread imposed by the idea of death. This ultimate conflict cannot be solved, as

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[142] Sher, Leo - Psychiatria Danubina, 2016; Vol. 28, No. 3, pp 307 Letter to Editor © Medicinska naklada - Zagreb, Croatia NARCISSISTIC PERSONALITY DISORDER AND SUICIDE
http://www.psychiatriadanubina.com/UserDocsImages/pdf/dnb_vol28_no3/dnb_vol28_no3_307.pdf - retrieved on Jun 16,2020

being the tragic paradox of the existence. There is no rational answer to death; we will always face it with the utmost emotions and fantasies. When we open our eyes to death, we close the ways to critical thinking and, even that we elaborate the most convenient rationale assumptions or beliefs, our emotions will stay the same, ever.

Death is the only definitive and unacceptable human reality, and when we think about it, instantly all our cognitive and psychological resources, the defense mechanisms of the self, and the power of our imaginary are summoned, like a fussy army in despair, standing up to an enemy which cannot be defeated.

In this state, confronting the nothingness of our egos, we invent eternal souls, gods, angels and demons, rewards and punishment, hells and heavens – just for us, humans, and not for any other form of life, whatsoever. In our minds and emotions, we are the center of the universe.

Thus, everything can die, except us, immortal beings like the gods that we created just to make us immortals – this is our dogmatic and insane fantasy commented by Edward Chandler:[143]

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[143] Chandler, Edward *Beyond Atheism – A Secular Approach to Spiritual, Moral, and Psychological Practices*, available on Amazon on 2/14/2019. In https://www.edchandlerandbeyond.com/the-blog/2019/1/21/anthropocentrism-relationship-with-religion-and-prejudice-blog2 – retrieved on Jun 16,2020.

It is quite narcissistic to view humanity, amongst all life forms, as God's pet species, so special that our immediate universe, as well as a blissful afterlife, were created by God, solely for our benefit. This is anthropocentrism cubed.

Hence, we understand that the idea about the human individual's immortality is devoid of any rationality.
Albeit sometimes presented under the appearance of logical theories, structured reasonings, and pseudo-scientific frameworks, our fantasies of immortality do not resist to simple confrontations with elementary critical thinking. We create and insistently defend theologies and theories in the desperate attempt to believe that what we know that we know about our finitude is false. For this reason, all these constructs are inherently dogmatic: they cannot be critically discussed; otherwise, they would not exist.

The shadows of the primal dread devour our rational abilities. Death is our last sickness. The belief or faith in the afterlife is cosmologically absurd, scientifically impossible, biologically grotesque, and logically incongruent.

Garbed with intractable irrationality, our fantasies of immortality are nothing else than a delirium: the supreme expression of our narcissism.

The beauty of life is not a demented image of immortality. The beauty of life resides in it being

precisely how it is for everything living in the Cosmo, in its endless and evolutionary changes and movements, where absolutely nothing is forever. The utmost human rationality is the formulation of the ontological harmony of ourselves with this immensity.

In the present states of science and culture, it is possible changing Adam's ribs for the quantum understanding of scientific cosmology, the forbidden tree of the knowledge of good and evil for accessible modern Universities, and the narcissism for pure contemplation.

Jack Sherefkin & Stephen Schwarzman(op.cit) comment as follows:

> *For the bioethicist Leon Kass, there are important virtues that arise from our mortality. "Could life be serious or meaningful without the limits of mortality? Is not the limit on our time the ground of our taking life seriously and living it passionately?" What if what is most important to us is inseparable from our mortality and finitude? If we were immortal, how could we be brave or noble or any of the virtues that require risk and the threat of death? The Homeric gods, eternally youthful and beautiful, live shallow, frivolous lives.*

We stay with the consistency of the concepts discussed in the Chapters of Part I, related to reality and truth, and can see them reflected in the millenary wisdom of a rubai:

"One moment in Annihilation's Waste,
One moment, of the Well of Life to taste –
The stars are setting, and the Caravan
Starts for the dawn of nothing –
Oh, make haste!

(*Ghiyath al-Din Abu'l-Fath Umar ibn Ibrahim Al-Nishapuri al-Khayyami -*
1048 – 1131 - Quatrain XXXVII – translation Edward Fitzgerald,
1839)

THE ANTHROPOMORPHIC GODS

The other's god is false; we know it for centuries. In the same way that my country is the best one in the world just because I was born there, my faith is the right one, the only following the true scriptures, the one that saves, etc.

We all know the endless litany inverting a religious premise: it is not the case of "an elected people" anymore, but of "a god chosen by my Narcissus." He is elected by me because he is the most adequate to my universe. He adapts to my playpen, and my behavior sculpts the form of the divine.

If I am a conservative, my god is it as well, and I still say that I am it because of him. If I hate sex, my god says what I think in a way that the creator becomes the creature. We format god to our image and similitude, and that is the reason why I will ever use god in the low case because I admit here the traditional idolatry of sacralizing an object.

(Leandro Karnal) free translation.

[144]

If, on the one hand, in our search of facts expressing the concepts adopted in this study, we could not find divinity in humans, on the other hand, we found many humanities in gods.

Many similarities exist between divinization and anthropomorphism, and many of the assumptions that we took before could persist untouched. In a significant part, this is true. However, there is a determinant difference between these two phenomena:

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divinization means attributing divinity to humans, and anthropomorphism means attributing humanity to the divine. They are two very close similar processes, going to opposite directions.

The phenomenon is duly primal, giving human attributes to the idea of the divine, often including human forms, mental and emotional states, as well as interests and moral principles emerging from the social experience and needs.

From the most ancient rituals and religions, anthropomorphism spread through all religions and mystical-magical cultural expressions, in any historical period, in two ways: as a literal belief of the nature and form of the divine, or as a didactical tool to facilitate religious teaching the "explanations on god's nature."

As a literal belief, the religious anthropomorphism is the seed of every superstition and mystical-magical culture and beliefs, kept under irrational mysticism, despising any kind of confrontation with reality and critical thinking. It is the realm of dogmatism and sectarianism.

When seen as a didactical tool to facilitate religious learning, the anthropomorphism becomes a fictional discourse or methodical rhetoric of persuasion. Many contemporary theologians support this practice under the preposterous argument that

Anthropomorphism cannot be eliminated without eliminating religion itself because of objects of religious devotion must-have

features to which humans can relate. For example, language, widely considered a human characteristic, must also be present in deities if humans are to pray to them.[145]

The argument could be replaced by the following: *"Without telling lies, we cannot explain what we say is true."* In other terms: *"Humans are so stupid, that to tell them about the divine, we need to talk like we do with idiots."*

The modern "didactic-theological" fallacy around humanized images of the divine never could be reasonably sustained.

Since the ancient philosophy, Xenophanes (560–478 BCE), the creator of the Eleatic School, has ever rejected the anthropomorphic ideas, confronting Plato's assumptions. Once he said: "Should the animals have the ability to paint, they would represent their gods in the form of animals, that is, as their own image."

In the Jewish-Christian and Islamic theological traditions, for many centuries, the idea of the simplicity of the divine prevailed among many prominent thinkers. This argument is known as the Doctrine of Divine Simplicity (DDS),

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[145] Guthrie, Stewart E - "Anthropomorphism" - Encyclopædia Britannica, inc. – Published Apr 15, 2008,

https://www.britannica.com/topic/anthropomorphism - retrieved on Jun 27, 2020

as explained by William F. Vallicella:[146]

> *According to the classical theism of Augustine, Anselm, Aquinas, and their adherents, God is radically unlike creatures and cannot be adequately understood in ways appropriate to them. God is simple in that God transcends every form of complexity and composition familiar to the discursive intellect. One consequence is that the simple God lacks parts. This lack is not a deficiency but a positive feature. God is ontologically superior to every partite entity, and his partlessness is an index thereof.*

> *[…}It is to be understood as an affirmation of God's absolute transcendence of creatures. God is not only radically non-anthropomorphic but radically unlike creatures in general, not only in respect of the properties he possesses but also in his manner of possessing them*

A theological discussion does not fit in this study, because we are analyzing the collective human imaginary as a social-epistemological subject of psychology, under empirical methodology. However,

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[146] Vallicella, William F. (20129)- "Divine Simplicity" – in Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy - https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/divine-simplicity/ - retrieved on Jun 27, 2020

as far as religious beliefs become influential in cognitive processes and behavioral models, we are not talking about religion or theology anymore, but about demonstrable reality.

The anthropomorphic gods, however, survived up to the present days, and often hold corporal human shapes or even acquire a fully human body.

In modern times, Francis Bacon (1561–1626) sustained that this is a persistent tendency that collaborates with the distortion of our perception of the world. The development of the historical process attests that the writer was right.

 As being a projection of our collective imaginary, anthropomorphic divinity exists exclusively because of humans. In this conception, humanity is the ontological reason for the existence of the divine.

The conceptual content of anthropomorphic divinity is not cosmologic, nor ontological. The divinity is something utilitarian or pragmatic.

In common sense, gods exist to take care of humans, giving them life (which should be eternal), writing their destinies (which should correspond to each one's desires). They should fill our ambitions, smooth our fears and suffering, providing miracles when the reality insists on being adverse and write or dictate revelations and normative texts to regulate human behavior, even though for everyday economic or political purposes. Gods should accept any human imperfection,

forgiving our stupidity, cruelty, and bad faith, divinizing us each day. To all humans, a paradise should be promised, assured, and paid in advance by total submission and obedience.

When the gods so then act, humans will declare trusting them and will build temples, or insert their names on the currency bills and other political symbols.

Gods, however, should be dominant as the human governors, being blindly obeyed by the crowd of nonprivileged humans. Gods should keep an accurate accounting system related to any human act or intention, for eternity, in order to rigorously judge them for the smallest disobedience and, when the case will be, condemning humans to a hell which could not ever be imagined even by Adolf Hitler, because of their miserable lives.

Gods should be able to hate, to play tricky games, to lie, to threaten and manipulate, to cover-up truth and intelligence, to discriminate and accept misery, to promote revenge, and also to bless war power and war promoters, to accomplish with the incumbencies given by humans

In the mind of the believers, the same way that anthropomorphic gods are the relief imagined by men, they are the executioners of their horror.

Under these conflictive beliefs, if humans did not exist, gods would not be necessary, and the universe would go ahead without them. For all these reasons, we often hear persons saying that gods are neurotic entities, when, indeed, these anthropomorphic gods do not
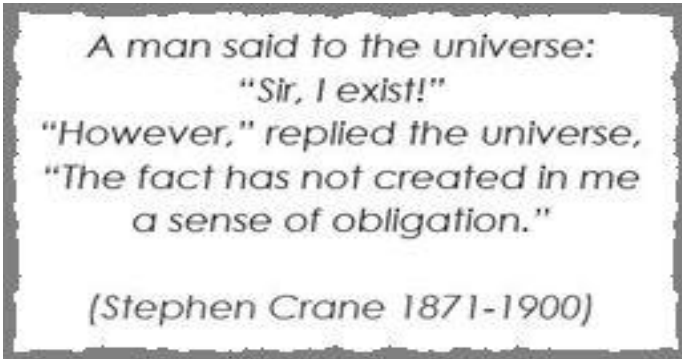
exist; what exists is the divinization of our madness. Anthropomorphic gods are a collective construction of the blind and narcissistic imaginary.

In looking for any approach to the divine, it should be rigorously put aside anything related to humanity, as well as any kind of understanding or representation of our reality. Our science, our epistemology, and philosophy are human-centered. The scientific cosmology is just in its beginning, and theology, along the centuries, became a rhetorical and ideological anthropocentric discourse. Without any rational structure or support, we cannot also resort to our imaginary, because we know that in the darkness of the universe, under the unwitnessed loneliness, we would lie to ourselves, once more.

For the moment, we are alone. All we are is dust in the wind.

CHAPTER VII

THE ANTHROPOCENTRIC UNIVERSE

> A man said to the universe:
> "Sir, I exist!"
> "However," replied the universe,
> "The fact has not created in me
> a sense of obligation."
>
> (Stephen Crane 1871-1900) [147]

CONCEPTUALIZATION

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[147] Crane, Stephen - "War Is Kind and Other Poems" - Dover Publications (2016) - ISBN-10: 0486404242 / ISBN-13: 978-0486404240

Humans know they mean everything to themselves, and almost nothing to the universe.

We live in an anthropocentric universe. Anthropocentrism is the epistemic process through which humans have ever seen the world, the others, and sculpted the reality related to their selves. This universe is the cradle of our imaginary, the realm where the self tries its first steps.

Scared and facing the external reality, the primal men started a culture inferring that "everything exists around us, humans; thus, we are the meeting point of the universe; we are the center." The mirror image resulting from our observation of the cosmos bears a teleological imaginary feature: "everything is related to humanity," in the same way that a child supposes, in the first exposures to the external world, that everything perceivable somehow refers to him.

Everything in the universe has a center, a gravitational reference, even ideas or atoms. Seeking instinctively for their existential center, our remote ancestors could find only themselves in such an immense cosmos; therefore, men became their own center, the absolute owner of their loneliness—this epistemological process results from nature, and not from human wishes or options.

In this scenario, the anthropocentrism relates to the most intense and universal manifestation of the collective imaginary of our behavioral paradigm.

So is our nature, made of instincts and millennia of empirical experience. So are we.

This "centralist" origin of the anthropocentrism induces the rough and mistaken idea that it refers fundamentally to an attitude of human superiority and disdain for the non-human universe. For sure, the anthropocentric behavior can express a pathological narcissism, as any other structure of the human imaginary. However, this is not a feature or usual content of anthropocentrism, which origins are related to fear and solitude, unlike pride and disdain.

Some other trivial expressions relate anthropocentrism to prejudice, religion, sectarianism, philosophical doctrine, moral contravention, ecological destruction, or just bad language.

These are superficial, biased, fragmented, and very simpleton ideas leaving aside the structural complexity of the matter and unduly limiting its content and extension.

Hence, anthropocentrism is frequently misplaced in many studies, mostly when the reasoning considers it a specific object. Under this flaw perception, many writers refer to anthropocentrism with their personal or cultural biases, expressing their rejection as they were talking about the disrespect to a moral code, a kind of stupidity, a political crime, or a religious blasphemy. No one of such ideas is anyhow science-supported; they are just ideological banalities, devoid of any value.

The anthropocentrism is a part of the human psycho-biological condition, existing irrespective of critical thinking or voluntary action. In the same way that there is no individual without a self and a collective

unconscious, there is no humanity without anthropocentric attributions to reality.

Anthropocentrism is a quality, an attributable property, and not a logical object in itself.

In terms of logical syntax, we need an object to shelter this property, making possible the qualitative attribution, which is understood by science and philosophy to be **the paradigm.** The concept of this referential object is defined by Martyn Shuttleworth and Lyndsay T Wilson[148] as follows:

> *A scientific paradigm is a framework containing all the commonly accepted views about a subject, conventions about what direction research should take, and how it should be performed.*

This concept emerges from the traditions started by Plato and Aristotle and up to present one of the core pillars of any methodology, as structured by Thomas Kuhn.[149] The author considers the theories we make

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[148] Shuttleworth, Martyn and Wilson, Lyndsay T – "What Is A Paradigm?" - Philosophy of Science -
https://explorable.com/what-is-a-paradigm - retrieved on Jun 30,2020
[149] Kuhn, Thomas – "The Structure of Scientific Revolutions" - Second Edition, enlarged - International Encyclopedia of Unified Science - Volumes I and II Foundations of the Unity of Sience Volume II number 2 – in extension://ohfgljdgelakfkefopgklcohadegdpjf/http://www.turkpsikiyatri.org/arsiv/kuhn-ssr-2nded.pdf - Retrieved on Jun30,2020.

about reality within a paradigm, and understands that it contains and determines: a) what is observed and measured, b) the questions we ask about those observations, c) how the questions are formulated, d) how the results are interpreted, e) how research is carried out, f) what tools are appropriate.

Foucault's (1926 – 1984) contributions, and the incorporation of language and semiotic as components of its structure enriched the scientific assertions on paradigm methodologically. The concept of paradigm became applicable to other fields than natural sciences.

Hence, to start understanding anthropocentrism, we should determine in advance, to which paradigm we are referring.

In this direction, we should attend to Kuhn's criteria: "What is observed and measured?" In social and ontological psychology, which is the case of this study, we are observing a human **collective behavioral model**, related to determined time-space and cultural situation, which context anyhow receives the influence of the value given to humans concerning the external phenomenology. What questions do we ask about this model? We ask **how the causal elements of this model exist and interact**, and how the results of the process influence the individual and social perception and cognition. How are these questions formulated? They are based on the **mind-body evidence**, which can be observed in the expression of the model (behavior). How are the results interpreted? They are submitted to the current **conceptual structures** offered by natural

sciences and psychology. How is research carried out? The applicable **methodology of social psychology** carries it. Furthermore, at last, what tools are appropriate? **Linguistic, cognitive, cultural, and behavioral analysis.**

We need all these tools to the definition of a paradigm to which anthropocentrism can be attributed. In our reasoning and arguments, the compatibility between the behavioral model (paradigm) and the attribute must be present, to avoid the most irreparable misunderstandings. For this reason, we should initially understand that the quality (anthropocentrism) is not related to how men treat the cosmos or the surrounding nature and their elements, but indeed how they understand themselves, and how they express this understanding.

In many cases, we can find this logical error, mostly in original texts related to ecology, referring to the human behavioral model as an attitude of aggression and expression of human superiority. In anthropocentrism, humans only define attitudes referring to themselves, which can bear, as a consequence, the disdain for everything else. This attitude is not necessarily ostensible as aggression, and we can study it with the help of psychoanalytic and psychosocial methodologies.

The individual or collective behavioral model intrinsically involves two elements as components of our paradigm: the imaginary, and the information of the collective unconscious. The imaginary is a time-relative component, and can change continuously; the

elements coming from the collective unconscious are archaic and do not change. We can observe this more clearly in the graphic representation in Chapter V, page 82, taking into account that our paradigm is a social construct.

Once sheltering the collective imaginary, the paradigmatic behavioral model will be ever subject to the influences of cognitive and emotional deflections relative to reality, which we already discussed, including expressions of pathological narcissism, or even madness.

These possibilities of fundamental changes in the paradigm are called "paradigmatic shift" by Kuhn, as having the property of promoting the evolution of science:

> *The successive transition from one paradigm to another via revolution is the usual developmental pattern of mature science. (op.cit.)*

Taking into account all these principles and concepts, we will call our object "the human behavioral paradigm", enabling the analysis of how we can attribute anthropocentrism.

Ben Mylius[150] proposes three forms of attribution:

> *Here are three summary definitions, which I will flesh out in what follows. 1. A paradigm is* **perceptually anthropocentric** *if it is informed by sense-data that a human being has received through their – human – sensory organs. 2. A paradigm is also* **descriptively anthropocentric** *if it, in some way, begins from, takes as its reference point, revolves around, focusses on, is centered around, or is ordered according to the species Homo sapiens or the category of 'the human.' 3. A paradigm is also* **normatively anthropocentric***: a. in a passive sense, if it constrains inquiry in a way that somehow privileges Homo sapiens or the category of 'the human'; b. in an active sense, if it either a. contains assertions or assumptions about the superiority of Homo sapiens, its capacities, the primacy of its values, its position in the universe, etc.; and/or b. if it makes* prescriptions (shoulds/the oughts) based on these assertions or assumptions. (emphasis ours)

[150] Mylius, Ben - "Three Types of Anthropocentrism "in https://www.academia.edu/36367171/Three_Types_of_Anthropocentrism - retrieved on Jun 30,2020

Mylius approach means proper support to our analysis, once we can find many factual shreds of evidence of the three definitions in the structure of our paradigm, enforcing any attribution of anthropocentrism we could express in our research.

ATTRIBUTIONS

The literature about attribution of anthropocentrism is abundant, but unfortunately, only a small part of these papers has an academic origin and format. During the last four decades, the theme became one of the preferred subjects to pseudoscience, pseudo-philosophy, pseudo-psychology, and week-end ideologies. In the present, the matter often is taken into account as meaning a trivial political-religious-economically contaminated literary subject, which recommends keeping our study circumscribed to the traditional academic sources.

Reflecting on Mylius (op.cit) reasoning, it is not difficult to deduce that it is not possible to understand the human behavioral paradigm entirely immune of anthropocentric value attributions to reality, in any of its forms: the perceptual, the descriptive, or the normative. It is quite evident that, as long as the human existence, desires, and fears participate actively in this relation attribution of value, humans will ever perceive, describe and establish norms in such a way that could satisfy their wishes.

Such a conclusion reduces the anthropocentric attribution of values to an immanent and often adequate model, able to protect humans from the threat of their most intense primal fears: the death, the natural forces, and the unknown. Thus, arguing that humans should put anthropocentric attributions by the side is as absurd as intending that individuals must abandon their egos and their collective unconscious, or any of their defense mechanisms.

In conclusion, the attributive discussions cannot be focused on the anthropocentrism in itself, but only on the extension in which its attributions can provoke relevant discord with demonstrable reality, to the detriment of rationality, coherency and truth.

Having in mind that the anthropocentric attributions to our paradigm adopt the same processes of our imaginary constructions, we should adopt the same analytical concepts for both. In doing this, we will conclude that anthropocentrism, as the imaginary, cannot be an object of valuation; it is just as a natural process. It is not good or bad, or anything else; it just exists.

What we may evaluate are the outputs of the process, or what the behavioral model means concerning demonstrable reality, the rationality, the coherency, and the truth.

When the outputs are rational and coherent, the anthropocentrism, in any of its forms, will mean a contributive element to the human evolutive process. When they shelter the obscurity, the incoherence, and

the absurd, they should be considered as products of the blind imaginary, with all the cognitive and behavioral consequences discussed in Part I.

This logical possibility, sustained by any factual analysis, is the concern expressed by many philosophers and scientists. The central concern relates to the persistent overvaluation of the human occurring in anthropocentric attributions. Christopher Herbert (1991)[151], observing culture and science states at the end of the nineteenth century, comments:

> *The indictment of anthropocentrism was hardly original to Freud. Around the turn of the twentieth century and in the following several decades, it was proclaimed with a frequency that seems to signal some noteworthy cultural perturbation. One writer after another identifies anthropomorphism or anthropocentrism as precisely the antithesis, the nullification, of science. "Anthropomorphism plays a considerable historic role" in the genesis of physical thinking, admits the mathematician Henri Poincaré in 1902, "but it can be the foundation of nothing of a really scientific or philosophical character."*

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[151] Herbert, Christopher. "Science and Narcissism." Modernism/modernity, vol. 3 no. 3, 1996, p

Freud understood anthropocentrism somehow as a threat to scientific thinking and argued that the sciences had humiliated the humankind in three particular occasions: with Copernic's, heliocentrism, with Darwin's theories of evolution, and with the psychoanalysis.

We can infer from Freud's argument firstly that he held a wrong interpretation of anthropocentrism, related, and limited exclusively to its outputs expressing human proudness and feelings of domination. Anthropocentrism is much more and very different than this content limited to narcissism. Additionally, the assumption that science humiliates humans is a mistaken premise; science has ever enriched and expanded the human experience, and the resulting technology rapidly incorporates into ordinary life. Contrary to that, scientific knowledge is among the most intense human desires and means a response to the primal fear of the unknown. Humans have never been proud of being ignorant, and this is what history tells. What humiliates and frighten men is the power of nature.

What obstructs science is not the anthropocentrism, but the mysticism and the sectarianism fed by the blind imaginary and protected by many false beliefs and biases, to sustain insane fantasies and delirium. Being centered in themselves does not mean that men become irrational, stupid, or
necessarily ignorant to the point of despising science and critical thinking.

Freud held the opinion that human presumption and anthropocentrism would decrease in the 20th century. He thought that there was a convergence between sciences, leading to such a result. He was wrong; humanity took the time he mentioned to use science to explore and colonize the outer space – and there is nothing more anthropocentric than this. Moreover, the place where men are prouder of themselves is precisely the deep science.

What most lacks in the Freudian thinking about anthropocentrism is the understanding of Kuhn's principle of the "paradigmatic shift." In the Freudian view, no correspondence would happen between the scientific advance and the structure of the human behavioral paradigm. The contrary has happened: all our behavioral models, and consequently, our paradigm, changed profoundly in the face of all new scientific findings.

Unlike Freudian reductionist positions, often focused on the narcissistic ingredient of anthropocentrism, modern theories of attribution tend to an ontological and teleological argument, approaching the objective and scientific realism.
We can observe the expression of this trend in W.H. Murdy's[152] text:

Anthropocentrism is proposed as a valid and necessary point of view for mankind to adopt for consideration of his place in nature. […]. Anthropocentrism is consistent with a philosophy that affirms the essential interrelatedness of things, and that values all items in nature since no event is without some effect on wholes of which we are parts. […]. An anthropocentric belief in the value, meaningfulness, and creative potential of the human phenomenon is considered a necessary motivating factor to participatory evolution, which, in turn, may be requisite to the future survival of the human species and its cultural values.

This evolutionary analysis, exempted of situational biases and carried on by many current theories, makes possible the discerning attribution of anthropocentrism, in such a way that its cognitive and emotional deviations, as well as its eventual pathological ingredients, can be considered external to the core concept of the attribution.

We should take into account that, during the last 30 years, the anthropocentric attributional concepts stimulated many conflictive approaches in philosophy, sociology, economy, and natural sciences, for the sake of the crescent environmental problems arising from human productive activities.

Many of these recent approaches are indiscriminately biased, fomenting ideological conflicts and political anxiety from all parts. The conceptual confrontation induced a flawed dichotomy between the human and the environment, or in a trivial description, the human against the natural.

Once being rhetorical and merely discursive, the most of these approaches did not offer any consistent contribution to the contemporary thinking and, in many cases, sheltered pseudoscience and specific economic, religious and political interests, up to the point where we often feel the existence of two sects: the anthropocentrism, as the realm of the irrational planet predators, and the ecologism, the universe of the sage saviors. None of them can say what anthropocentrism means appropriately.

We looked for logical elements amid this turmoil, because they exist, and selected to our reflection, because of its interdisciplinary nature and logic consistency, an academic paper produced by Pasi Heikkurinen (University of Leeds, Sustainability Research Institute, UK), Jenny Rinkinen – (Lancaster University, Department of Sociology, Demand Centre, UK), Timo Järvensivu (Aalto University School of Business, Department of Marketing, Finland), Kristoffer Wilén (Hanken School of Economics, Department of Marketing, Finland), and Toni Ruuska (Aalto University School of Business, Department of Management

Studies, Finland)[153].

In their paper the authors consider the current lack of organizational theorizing from an ecological perspective which was noticed since the-1990s, *"when the relationship between organizations and the natural environment attracted scholarly attention (Shrivastava, 1994; Gladwin et al., 1995; Clair et al., 1996).",* what contributed to the dichotomic perception we mentioned:

> *Despite the severity of the ecological challenge, and particularly the significant role that the organization of product*
> *ion has in the climate crisis (Barnosky et al., 2012; IPCC, 2014), ecological questions have remained at the periphery of contemporary organization theory, as reviewed by Cunha et al. (2008). Rather than focussing on the non-human and material aspects of the world, organizational inquiries have tended to emphasize the role of humans and non-material aspects of the organization (Fleetwood, 2005; Orlikowski, 2010). It follows that organizational studies are*

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inclined to reproduce the anthropocentric and antirealist philosophical tradition of science, as the human experience is favored at the expense of the non-human world. The absence of an ecological perspective on organizing human activity seems likely to lead the way deeper into the Anthropocene with unpleasant consequences not only for the human species but also for the ecosystem as a whole.

Applying their proper methodology, the authors sustain the conceptualization of the ecocentrism as the subordination of **human organizational structures** to the planetary ecosystem, not related to human values supposedly overestimated by the anthropocentric attribution, in an antirealist ontological model.

The current research indicates that the new geological era of the Anthropocene calls for a new ontology to guide the organization of human activities. The ontology proposed here takes a realist and ecocentric turn to avoid the pitfalls of the antirealist and anthropocentric approaches. Drawing from object-oriented (Harman, 2002, 2009) and ecological philosophies (Naess, 1973, [1974] 1989), the study proposes three

*essential qualities common to all objects, namely autonomy, intrinsicality, and uniqueness. The ontological outline formed by these three points responds to the critique of ecocentric organization studies**. It demonstrates how to avoid the human–nature dualism** by considering each thing an object while still arriving at an ecologically relevant view of reality.* (emphasis ours)

THE OVERVALUATION PROBLEM

In every conceptualization or theorization related to anthropocentrism, taking into account human overvaluation, we will face an irresolvable problem: **the dilemma of valuation of the human and the non-human**, since ontologically both are necessarily opposed or compared to the other.

To sustain any conception of anthropocentrism containing the supposition that humans attribute a higher value to themselves than they should, a quantitative referential scale must be applied. Otherwise, the conceptualization will be no more than a vulgar fallacy.

If we had a mathematical model for this comparison, any theorization would be possible. However, the mathematical and value theories do not offer this kind of solution. Since In any traditional ontological analysis of anthropocentrism we shelter the concern of

rejecting the human overvaluation, we are employing an argument involving quantitative elements which we cannot demonstrate.

As long as we insist on human evaluative arguments, we will ever arrive at mere discursive conceptualizations and will insert in our logic formulas the absurd question of which is the value of humanity before the universe.

Consequently, the most trustable instrument to the understanding of anthropocentrism is its consistent observation as a behavioral model, with all the corresponding implications.

THE SECTARIAN FRAGMENTATION.

We use to study the "centralist" ideas of anthropocentrism in a generalized assumption, probably because we are insistently looking for a theorization.

However, the most potent and relevant manifestations of our collective imaginary through anthropocentric attributions are not those expressed by this general perception of humankind as the center of the universe. Contrastingly, to become universal and time-space relative, the anthropocentrism is a multi-fragmented behavioral model.

This assumption means that the anthropocentric paradigm is divided into behavioral particles, each one

keeping the same structure that the general paradigmatic model, but directed to particular objects.

What happens in this process is that the imaginary construction does not elect men as the center of themselves, but designates men as the center of other men. As being the center of themselves in their narcissism, humans desire to become the center of other humans. Any process of domination and subjugation follows this model in which harbor politics, ethics, law, economics and religious organization. *Homine dominatur homo*.

Each of these micro psychological universes becomes a unique anthropocentric model. If we observe this in individuals, we will find the seeds of love and hate. If we analyze this in the collective imaginary, we will understand sectarianism better.

Each sect is the center of their members: families, groups, nationalities, religions, races, cultures, social and economic statuses. The social fabric is a complex web of sects, on many different levels. Every member of a sect is continuously referred to its center because everything in the universe must have a center. Finally, when men are centered in their sects, the remaining external universe does not matter, as in any anthropocentric paradigm.

We can recall Domèmech's (op.cit.) words quoted on page 18:

> *"Every human being has a belief system that they utilize, and it is through this*

mechanism that we individually, 'make sense' of the world around us."

From the sectarian fragmentation of our behavioral paradigm emerges one of the most paradoxal features of the human nature: the ambivalence between **anthropocentrism and misogyny**. We are dualistic animals, taking our nature as our center and protecting it as our identity. With the same intensity, we despise the humanity existing out of our sects, and in some circumstances, we hate being humans, ourselves.

Like it happens in our imaginary, the anthropomorphic behavioral model contains all the causational elements to any kind of output: from the grandiosity of arts and sciences to the most pathological narcissism and complete madness of war and destruction.

The attempts to convert the anthropocentrism in an ethical element to be classified and qualified, or in a demonstrable metaphysical theorem, are entirely meaningless. Anthropocentrism is immanent to humanity, is empirically everywhere, in any form. Absolutely everything that is human passes through an anthropocentric process before becoming knowledge, emotion, creation, belief, or madness. We are self-centered animals, like all the others. The only difference is that we know it.

Our cosmology is limited to our situational reality, and mostly to our lives. We are our sole reference.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PRESENT DAYS "POST-EVERYTHING" THINKING (CONCLUSION)

All roads are blocked to a philosophy which reduces everything to the word "no." To "no," there is only one answer, and that is "yes." Nihilism has no substance. There is no such thing as nothingness, and zero does not exist. Everything is something. Nothing is nothing. Man lives more by affirmation than by bread.

(Victor Hugo, 1802 – 1885)

All the concepts involved in our reflection played a significant role in humankind's natural and cultural evolutionary odyssey. Since the most primal interactive experiences, reality, truth, and the imaginary frames our existence and everything related to our knowledge and reasoning, our creativity and fantasy, the lights of our intelligence, and the darkness of our ignorance.

We took this triangle as the center of our reflection because it is from its observation and interpretation that we will define how we see the world existing around and inside us and how we understand our own existence.

Each one of us will process a different and unique

critical synthesis arising from everything that has been discussed, which will be a valuable result irrespective of its content. It will necessarily involve the revision of our core reasonings, beliefs, and desires. It is not achievable revisiting and discussing reality, truth, and the imaginary, without silently reflecting on our innermost universe.

For this reason, we initially declared that this study was based on reflection, rather than in demonstration or theorization, even systematically grounded on theoretical principles of social and ontological psychology, and philosophy.

Whatever could be the output of each reflection, presently, all of us are involved in an emerging context compelling us to further reflection and decision, as well as inviting the use of everything that we have discussed.

The complex empirical dynamics of the present days provoke unprecedented cultural contexts, which we will call "the post-everything thinking."

Technological cycles determine our history. It has always been that way, since the instrumental use of stones, and discovery of the domination of the fire. So it will be until the death of the last individual of our species.

Each one of these technological cycles determined uncountable consequences in human knowledge, emotions, beliefs, values, behavior, and lifestyles.

The technological cycles are sinusoidal, considering

their beginning (with discoveries and very new available resources), development (with its gradual absorption by the society), and descent (with new researches related to its substitution by better alternative). Such description is a utilitarian concept of history but, independently of the doctrine it came from, expresses a demonstrable reality.

The length of the technological sinusoidal cycles of human history is exponentially decreasing in the time, once each new technology reflects in the probabilities of accelerating new correlated discoveries, developments and uses, in a multiplicative "retropowered" model.

If we go back to Kuhn's paradigmatic shift principle, we will understand how the speed of technological development determines changes in our behavior models, which, in turn, will determine new technological expansions, and so on:

> *The successive transition from one paradigm to another via revolution is the usual developmental pattern of mature science. (op.cit.)*

During the second half of the twentieth century, a new sinusoidal cycle has started with the digital and nanotechnologies, the quantum physics, neurosciences, artificial intelligence, virtual reality, robotic engineering, cosmological findings, biology,

and mathematics. The stunning consequences of this technological wave on humanity occurred in forms, timing, intensity, and amplitudes never seen before and not even immediately adaptable to our imaginary. This cycle is just starting, and a forecast of its intensity is not yet achievable.

In only two generations, a negligible elapse of time in historical terms, humans experienced more substantial changes in their lives than what our predecessors faced in millennia. We were not prepared to face this catastrophic impact, but we are progressively noting that we are able to.

The technological impact determines concomitantly social, psychological, emotional, cognitive, mental, and biological intense transformation.

Besides the magnificent results in the benefit of humanity, this cycle imposes to each of us the painful, and sometimes the desperate daily task of adaptation to survival. Frequently, this is carried out without any possibility of engagement of critical thinking.

All our rational references and beliefs, whatsoever, suffered from the impact, in the measure that their foundations have been changed or deconstructed by the incoming technology.

For millennia, since the most primal stages of our species, we understood our existence as involved by the immensity of the macrocosm, starting with the atom, and ending beyond the amplitude of our imaginary. Suddenly, the quantum physics arrives and

tells us that in the other direction, from inside the minimal atomic known particle, starts a microcosm, as immense and unknown as the cosmos we knew before. Moreover, both universes do not have the structure and constitution we believed. We perceive that the spiritualists should not look for god in the core of the galaxies, surrounded by the most luminous celestial bodies and centers of energy, but in the smaller sub-atomic vibrational particle, called by the scientists "the particle of god," which could be the seed of everything, fitting in the micro-universe of any cell of our body.

In our daily lives, we assisted the linguistic changing restlessly to shelter and express an unimagined world, the robots invading factories, hospitals, laboratories, and universities to replace astonished humans, the war machines acquiring apocalyptical dimensions, as well as gigantic libraries and archives fitting in a piece smaller than our nails, in digital form.

Submerged in two cosmoses, we learn in some minutes that the matter, including our own bodies, do not exist as we believed up to present. What we understood before about our bodies is just a perceptive state of mind, because the matter is as vibrational as continuous: my body and your body are the same things. Moreover, this state of mind is not the creation of our wishes and beliefs, but rather it means an interactive result of brain states which our reason does not command.

Additionally, when we think that we did not have sufficient time to process these so abrupt changes, the

science will ask us what we are talking about, once all the concepts of time and space relations that we knew do not exist anymore, as well as all that before we understood for "me" and "the other."

We, the kids of the earth, felt abandoned by our own beliefs, humiliated by nature, and its relentless laws, imprisoned in the capsules of our limited and fragile knowledge and abilities. We felt betrayed by the gods that we invented to our image and likeness, and we felt empty in our identities, where the wreckage of our egos and convictions float on our melting narcissism. We felt like as everything has gone and that our orphanhood determines that we should reinvent ourselves in a meaningless universe, without knowing why or for what.

Human acceptance of change is difficult and resists authoritative statements of fact, as has been identified in applied psychological and sociological studies (Nyhan, Reifler, Richey, & Freed, 201 Prochaska, DiClemente, & Norcross, 1992)[154].

The resistance to significant and diversified changes imposes the replacement of many elements of the cultural model and, indeed, determines the elaboration of a new adaptative model. Such "new culture" should be understood as Manadue and Cheer (op.cit) considered:

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[154] Menadue, Christopher Benjamin and Cheer, Karen Diane - Human Culture and Science Fiction: A Review of the Literature, 1980-2016 – First Published August 3, 2017 Research Article
https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244017723690

Culture has been defined as "the symbolic, ideational, and intangible aspects of human societies. The essence of a culture is not its artifacts, tools, or other tangible cultural elements but how the members of the group interpret, use, and perceive them" (Banks & Banks, 2004, p. 8), or, more simply, as knowledge and behaviors shared within groups of interacting individuals (Useem, Useem, & Donoghue, 1963).

The interpretation of social behavior changes brought by the recent technological wave indicates many models emerging as responses to such changes. Among them, there is a kind of response that could be seen as a sub-cultural model which we will call "the **culture of the post-everything,"** a spreading cultural context deserving our attention in the reason of its content.

In the apparently chaotic existential realm brought by the technological impact, anxiety and fantasy proliferate, starting expressions of a flawed thinking pattern. We can describe it as the cultural expression of the nonetheless, like the rhetoric that we heard at the beginning of this technological revolution, during the '50s of the twentieth century: the speech of the "beatniks," from Jack Kerouak and his "The Road" (1957). The content is quite the same: "We are being killed and destroyed by the technology-dominated by

economic power, and our existence, much more than ever, is meaningless."

The meaning of "post" in this emerging thinking is not limited to a chronological concept but mainly refers to the landslip of our existential references and the frameworks of our knowledge, believing, and imaginary structures.

Several new and meaningless concepts were invented: "post-truth, "post-modern," "post-reality," "post god," "post ethic," "post linguistic," "post markets," "post anything." They sound like magic words erasing our past as something old, useless and stupid, condemned to death because they did not sustain efficiently our beliefs, ideas, desires, fears, fantasies, and "selves," standing up to the "new realities."

Invaded by this emptiness feeling, our minds stop searching for evidence, coherence, and a structured perception of reality. The world around us starts looking like a sea of unrelated fragments. Our brains, conditioned to logical reasoning and problem solving, cannot recognize these fragments as adjustable puzzle pieces; the truth and the untruth, reality, and unreality become the same, and our creativity turns into chaotic fantasies.

In the realm of the collective imaginary, without any stable structures able to sustain an active connection with reality, the ethical behavior and the perception of social values are replaced by the banalization of the

nothingness, of the sectarianism, of the aggressivity, and egocentrism in a kind of desperate narcissism.

The social behavior of the Crowd Effect, as studied by Gustav Le Bon and Jaap van Ginneken (see Chapter I), hatches more often and banally, replacing reflection and free will with collective irrationality and severe deindividualization (see Chapter VI).

Under the umbrella of this cultural model, many nihilist and radical determinist movements emerged opportunistically from all corners, like the hyenas devouring the carcass of the human hope.

The "post-everything" culture becomes an intense and insane yell of our narcissism, as being just a selfish illusion. When we face interpretative dissonances referring to a cultural structure or status, moreover, when it means an informal process using diversified semiotic elements, we can employ many tools to clarify the understanding of its content. One of these efficient tools is the analysis of the corresponding science-fictional outputs brought by the model. Science fiction is an intense non-organized expression of the collective imaginary, offering conclusions which would be difficult to achieve with other semiotic structures, as Manadue and Cheer (op.cit) reveal with their research:

> *Findings revealed that science fiction literature had been used in research across disciplines including theology, semantics, natural sciences, and*

education. Two characteristics of the use of science fiction in research became evident in the review: its role as a tool foradvocacy and cultural insight and its effectiveness as an aid to learning and teaching. An unclear boundary between real science and science in the public imagination is problematic for research success, but the purposeful integration of fictional representations of science (both natural and social) into the research story has demonstrable benefits.

The analysis of the science-fictional material emerging from this cultural model confirms our assertions about a blind nihilism, the scorn of current reality, the irrational aggressivity, and the presence of the most pathological narcissism. For sure, these features existed before, but in the current cultures they appear more extensively, and some destructive contents acquire extreme and dominating intensity as technical wars, robotic domination and slavery, genocide, disruption of liberty with digital control, and the extinction of humanity with the destruction of the planet. These themes did not exist before, at least with the current frequency and generality. Moreover, despite existing in a lower intensity in the recent past, they did not invade the children's literature and leisure, as it happens nowadays, seeding a nihilist and violent culture on immature minds, with social, cultural, psychological, cognitive and ideological severe consequences, which only will be measurable in future generations.

There is no such "empty new reality." The universe, with

all its known and unknown facts and principles, already existed before we have arrived and, independently of our knowledge or existence, will follow its evolutionary course. All our past is there, at the same place and form, engraved in our collective unconscious, and present in our minds, emotions, and social models, despite anything happening today.

These flaw "cultures of the crisis" are temporary, only existing when the human experience faces extreme transformation, which is necessary and part of our evolutionary process.

The first scope of this study was critically analyzing our reality, grounded in concepts elected as coherent and rationally discussed in philosophy and psychology, with the possible exemption of our fears, desires, biases, and beliefs—a critical academic exercise from which we could obtain useful instruments to interpret our lives and our universe better.

This scope is an attempt to understand that, In the present state of science and culture, we can stop looking to an imaginary abyss, leaving aside the emptiness of the "post-everything thinking" trends, and the old darkness of the blind shadows of Narcissus. We can face our individual and collective existence and future with a **"pre- many things"** thinking, under the clarity of the science, the reason, our creativity, and the good philosophy.

We all, even those rejecting the existentialism, can choose. We can open the box of our imaginary – the door of our free will – and participate with our creativity

of the generation of the evolutionary alternatives that humanity has ahead, and how it is written in the genome of our species and not in the stars, on legendary books, or magical fantasies which sometimes we sacralize with our ignorance.

Humanity can be studied, as we did, and perhaps understood, as we tried. However, this is not enough because humanity exists mostly to be lived and to be shared.

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This is a research-based study in analytic philosophy and social psychology, approaching some of the essential questions about the collective imaginary, and their relations with reality and truth.

These core concepts involve cultural, social, religious, scientific, philosophic, psychological, and political contents, belonging to the individual and collective existence of each one of us.

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The Metaphysical Society of America (MSA) member.
The Philosophical Society of England - member
The Social Psychology Network
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