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VIII International Symposium on Philosophy and Theory of Culture

**Intellect, Imagination, Intuition:
Reflections on the Horizons of Consciousness**

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Roundtable Discussion

September 21, 2000

**REFLECTIONS ON THE INNER AND OUTER FACTORS
OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS**

(ON NEW STRATEGIES OF MANIPULATION OF PERSONAL CONSCIOUSNESS)

Prof. Liubava Moreva:

St. Petersburg Branch of the Russian Institute for Cultural Research, Director

In my opening remarks I would like to say that the subject of our Roundtable is incorporated into the leading and paramount research program of the *International Center for Fundamental Studies in Contemporary Culture* initiated by St. Petersburg Branch of the Russian Institute for Cultural Research several years ago. The topic of this program is phrased in the following way: ***Toward New Paradigms of Communication: Philosophical and Psychological Aspects of the Dynamics of Mentality in Information Societies.***

The focal point of the program is a deep examination of culture as a complex structure of communicative strategies, the changes and re-orientations which intimately bears upon all aspects of human existence.

The major goals and aims of the program – which come close to the aims and goals of UNESCO – are the following: to hone sharp attention to people's perception of values and meanings; to make a contribution to the dialogue of cultures and to the understanding of the complex dynamics of cultural processes; to foster active development of international cooperation in the sphere of interdisciplinary studies in the field of philosophy and in the humanities in general; and to initiate research in the sphere of the ethical aspects of human activity, humanity's freedom and responsibility in the information society, and related directions. The program aims to advance new methods of interaction between human sciences such as *history, epistemology, linguistics* and *psychology* with ***philosophical reflections*** in order to promote an understanding of the complicated changes taking place in contemporary culture. It stresses the

transdisciplinary investigation of the dynamics of mentality and processes of transformation in the human perception of the self and the world in the information society.

During the four days of our symposium you may have observed that all our sessions were based on a cross-disciplinary approach and that there has been a broad participation by humanitarians from different fields: historians, philosophers, psychologists, culturologists, etc. We have also included in these discussions representatives of different cultures, different countries and different mentalities. We believe that transdisciplinarity is not a problem that requires resolution, but is a challenging cognitive process for our future work together.

We aim at revealing «*meta*» levels, that is, philosophically significant generalizations of separate disciplines while enabling each of those sciences to retain their unique foci and research techniques. Philosophical reflection is essential in this context.

We view the following factors as important in the transformation of inner and the outer world of a person:

- ♦ The character and the degree of sustainability of the accepted inter-social hierarchy of values;
- ♦ The change of types and mechanisms of socialization – power infrastructures and social hierarchies;
- ♦ The character, nature and opportunities of creative self-expression (self-realization), relative to tradition and innovation;
- ♦ Paradigm change of cognitive foundations – cosmocentrism, anthropocentrism, pragmacentrism, theocentrism
- ♦ Self-reflection, existential and social freedom – the degree of personal responsibility;
- ♦ Paradigm changes in communicative strategies, ethical and aesthetic orientations;
- ♦ The experience of disasters – existential, ecological and anthropological disasters;
- ♦ The experience of revelations and mystical insight.

I'm sure we could continue this list. But for your consideration, we offer these factors as the horizon we aim toward. Still, a horizon has the property of receding from the observer as he advances toward it. Our objective is to remain focused on this primary subject matter.

Now I am glad to give the floor to our main speaker Dr. Massimiliano Lattanzi: «***On Internal and External Factors of Self-Consciousness Development***».

Dr. Massimiliano Lattanzi:
UNESCO, Division of Philosophy

At the outset, let me thank you, Prof. Moreva, for this introduction, which so well has framed today's roundtable, devoted to bringing into light a series of reflections on the internal and external factors of the development of self-consciousness, as well as new strategies of manipulation of personal consciousness.

If I may, I shall just add few words to yours, and I shall be very brief, since I am afraid I'll be extremely long later on, during the presentation of my paper.

I would like to make all the participants aware of the process, which has led to this roundtable. More than a year ago we had a discussion at UNESCO Headquarters about the viability of launching a pilot project: "*Crises and Development in Contemporary Notions of Identity*". This pilot project was meant to be a transdisciplinary study on the transformation of the human perception of the self, society and the world, *vis-à-vis* the overwhelming changes that contemporary cultures are undergoing due to the pressure of the globalization process. This globalization process is deeply grounded on the backbone of the rapid advancements in new information and communication technologies.

This is why this roundtable, and the project it stems from, are aimed at isolating and developing new conceptual tools to critically understand the evolution of contemporary societies, analyzing the deep consequences of present-day social changes — namely, the impact of NICT (new information and communication technologies); the changing patterns of thinking, behavior and communication; the emergence of «knowledge societies», etc. — through interdisciplinary and comparative philosophical studies.

We have been waiting for one year to hold the present roundtable, which is to be the first concrete outcome of this project. Indeed, only today, framed within this Symposium on Philosophy and Theory of Culture, devoted to a series of *Reflections on the Horizons of Consciousness*, this roundtable can assume its full meaning. Today, finally, we are in a position to put forward our reflections to provide UNESCO with a series of inspiring insights, to promote a better understanding of the complex changes taking place in present-day societies.

May I also mention that this roundtable occurs during the difficult times of the preparation of the Medium Term Strategy of UNESCO, a fundamental document, which draws the paths of the future orientation of the Organization for the next six years.

Our common hope is that this roundtable, and the project it stems from, will provide key elements of analysis and stimulating ideas to support UNESCO in carrying out this vital exercise.

Let me share with you also the hope that the next roundtable will have as its official setting UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, where the many reflections nurtured during these last few days could be brought yet again to the attention of stakeholders and decision-makers of United Nations, and benefit from their concurrent participation.

I think it is now time to share with you my paper, where I put up for discussion some reflections on inner and outer factors of self-consciousness development. I shall introduce these reflections with a quote from Kant.

Epistemology and Self-determination
Reflections on inner and outer factors of self-consciousness development
and on new strategies of manipulation of personal consciousness
(Massimiliano Lattanzi, UNESCO, Division of Philosophy)

Abs: The new information technologies, which are being shaped before our eyes into real-time communication tools and into the Internet, are examined as one of the main outer factors of self-consciousness development; as indeed they put into crisis our systems of knowledge, our systems of values, as well as our perception of the universe and thus our position in the world. On the other hand, our capacity of reflection and meta-reflection, of cognition and meta-cognition, the capacity to counter the new challenges introduced by these technologies, and to transform them into new opportunities for the future, is analyzed as a core factor for the development of an increased consciousness of the self, and as a way to oppose new strategies of the manipulation of personal consciousness.

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Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the oftener and the more steadily we reflect on them: the starry heavens above and the moral law within. I have not to search for them and conjecture them as though they were veiled in darkness or were in the transcendent region

beyond my horizon; I see them before me and connect them directly with the consciousness of my existence.»

While I was thinking about how to start these reflections, this specific part of the *Critique of Practical Reason* came to my mind. I have to confess that the cause was not so much the allusion to the starry heaven, for me element and stimulus of profound thoughts ever since. Nor was the admirable way in which the Kantian text describes and establishes the connection between me as a human being, the world I live in, and its «*systems of systems*». In fact — Kant continues — the starry heaven

«... begins from the place I occupy in the external world of sense, and enlarges my connection therein to an unbounded extent with worlds upon worlds and systems of systems, and moreover into limitless times of their periodic motion, its beginning and continuance.»

Possibly, the rationale for this choice was rather the way in which Kant marks out how that moral law, which directly connects me with the consciousness of my existence, and I quote,

«... begins from my invisible self, my personality, and exhibits me in a world which has true infinity, but which is traceable only by the understanding, and with which I discern that I am not in a merely contingent but in a universal and necessary connection, as I am also thereby with all those visible worlds.»

This law, this moral imperative necessarily connecting me to the world outside myself, was continuously bouncing into my mind as I was trying to figure out the very reason for my enthusiastic response to the possibility to intervene and contribute to this Symposium. And, at a time, I was trying to frame these reflections in a *cadre conceptuel*, which would hopefully unveil their full meaning. Eventually, I found that the answer to my silent innermost quest was lying precisely in this imperative which, as Kant says,

«...infinitely elevates my worth as an intelligence by my personality, in which the moral law reveals to me a life independent of animality and even of the whole sensible world, at least so far as may be inferred from the destination assigned to my existence by this law, a destination not restricted to conditions and limits of this life, but reaching into the infinite.»

What I am trying to say is that I realized I could not properly start these reflections without bearing in mind the reason why, consciously or unconsciously, I trust we all accepted the invitation and we are now gathered here. I mean that, as first instance, I feel I cannot make clear what I intend to say on the development of consciousness and the transformation of the self, without first bringing into focus the reason of this undertaking. I am aware that, by doing so, I may seem to speak more as an international civil servant rather than a scholar. But actually I trust I am using both registers, since I am trying first and foremost to express my point of view as a mere human being. That marvellous human being Kant was telling us about.

I trust we are here because scientists, scholars and civil servants — as well as academies of science, universities and international organizations — all share the very same goal. We are all here to find out how to make of this world a place where the profound thirst for meaningful responses, capable of addressing unresolved fundamental issues of humankind, could be

satisfied; not so much for our sake, but mainly for the sake of future generations. I trust we are gathered here with the conviction that, in order to make of this world a place where the widespread sense of dissatisfaction and bewilderment can find resolute and significant answers, we need to have the courage to re-think it, to re-imagine it, and to transform it.

As the Preamble to UNESCO Constitution reminds us, the world can be transformed only through the transformation of people; transformation that cannot be achieved but through a profound transformation of their minds, their *esprit*, as the French text says. As a matter of fact, no genuine transformation of the world can be achieved without a parallel sincere transformation of the actors of this undertaking. Indeed, if one sincerely wishes to avoid falling into pure self-deceitfulness, the '*know thyself*', the need to reflect upon oneself, the continuous sharpening of our self-perception — first and foremost to shed light on our perceptions of the others, and of the world we share — constitute an undeniable foundation to detect new ways to transform the world; for and with other human beings.

Any transformation thus requires an ever-increasing self-consciousness, to be achieved, I am sure we all agree, through thoughtful and careful consideration of constants and variables in our shifting perceptions, during moments of change and crisis; as well as of an ever-increasing awareness of other people's shift in their own perceptions and self-perceptions. Moreover, we are also aware that the world we reflect and operate upon will forcefully continue to re-act back upon us; while, at the same time, we are more and more aware that never before in the history of humankind we have experienced such a powerful impact of transforming factors coming from the outside world. As a matter of fact, never before have so many and profound changes occurred in such a short time. Nowadays, new technological and economical forces are creating unprecedented possibilities for the unfolding of human potentialities, even though they seem to threaten the very foundations of human life, as we have known them. The same forces are giving rise to ever more complex social, political, ethical and moral questions - ideas, paradigms and institutions that have served humanity until the recent past are becoming now increasingly inappropriate, while leaving behind them a sense of uncertainty and decomposition of meanings and values.

Undeniably, the new information technologies, which are being shaped before our eyes into real-time communication tools and into the Internet, constitute today one of the main outer factors of self-consciousness development; as indeed they put into crisis our systems of knowledge, our systems of values, as well as our perception of the universe, and thus our position in the world. On the other hand, our capacity of reflection and meta-reflection, of cognition and meta-cognition, to oppose the new challenges introduced by these revolutionary technologies, and to transform them into new opportunities for the future, can be truly considered, as never before, a core innermost factor for the development of an increased consciousness of the self, and as a way to oppose new strategies of the manipulation of personal consciousness, which tend to affect each human being.

It is indeed not accidental that this Symposium on *Reflections on the Horizons of Consciousness* is aiming, in the words of the organizers, at developing new strategies for cross-cultural studies to provide a deeper understanding of the dynamics of mentality and value hierarchies in the *Information Society*. It is also not accidental that this Symposium finds itself framed into the wider cross-cultural transdisciplinary network «*Towards New Paradigms of Communication*», whose aims and goals are — and I quote:

«to hone sharp attention to people's perception of values and meanings; to make a fundamental contribution to the dialogue of cultures and to the understanding of the complex dynamics of cultural processes; to foster active development of international co-operation in the sphere of interdisciplinary studies and in the field of philosophy and the humanities; to suggest new paths

of research in the sphere of ethical aspects of human activity, freedom and responsibility in the information society».

It is also not accidental if, earlier this year, the *Eighth East-West Philosophers' Conference*, co-organized by the Russian Academy of Science by Prof. Marietta T. Stepaniants, has focused its reflection, during two full weeks, on the theme «*Technology and Cultural Values: on the Edge of the Third Millennium*».

Undertaking to bring technology into philosophical focus, this conference has drawn the attention of the academic community world-wide to a series of core issues. One of the main concerns expressed was precisely to explore how the new information technologies have an impact on our perceptions, our meanings, our points of reference; and, at the same time, what kind of resources do we, and our different cultural traditions, have to offer in helping to address the epistemic shift, the feeling of disorientation, the deconstruction of sense and meaning that the world is experiencing in the present age, which risks being remembered — it sounds almost paradoxical — as an era of pure technology without science. Nor philosophy.

The new information technologies, upon which globalization is being structured, have been analyzed as «*a ubiquitous politico-cultural force that encompasses even the remotest regions of the world*» (Yoko Arisaka, Univ. of San Francisco); as tools whose power is more dangerous than ever, since they «*are not mere means to ends, but they shape our worlds*» (Andrew L. Feenberg, San Diego State University). Indeed, the new information technologies bring the possibility of empowering the whole of humankind, if conceived and utilized as democratic tools to facilitate both people's participation and the distribution of resources. Instead, they can also greatly endanger all possibilities of envisaging and furthering the development of human beings as independent original thinkers, and thus as citizens of future *Knowledge Societies*. This happens every time information technologies are utilized as instruments of a new dramatic form of cultural colonialism which, veiled under an appealing *facade*, actually represents the threat of a global monoculture. Global not as globally representative, but as globally shaping; as it has been said elsewhere.

And here I am not only thinking of those minority cultures, where many have been waiting for the new hopes represented by education systems based on the use of new technologies to support distributive learning, through which local resources could be shared, included in world-wide networks, get appreciated, and be more and more useful. These minority cultures where, instead, many have mostly received (or are supposed to receive) nothing but a chain of infrastructures to support distance-education systems conceived to deliver ready-made bundles of information to be acritically accepted by those who are in danger of becoming, in the end, just new consumers of a global market. Global, once more, not as it is able to satisfy the needs of each one, but as it tends to standardize the needs of everybody.

I also think of us, of the citizens of the industrialized countries who, day after day, run the risk of finding themselves unconsciously acquiescent and conformed to new uniformed patterns of behaviour and systems of values. I think of the many who are not in a position to exercise their critical thinking to properly confront increasingly transparent technologies; transparent not because they are disclosed to end-users, but as they become more and more invisible, and thus unmanageable for them. Transparent technologies through which, in the mere logic of a cultural (and intellectual) *prêt-à-porter*, people are offered fictitious certitudes, instead of conceptual tools to interpret and transform an ever-changing world.

Actually, the more I think, the more I seem to recognize here and there the appearance of a techno-economic system which is not based on our ethical, moral and intellectual values, but is rather conceived upon a selfish logic of economic and materialistic reward, run on its criteria, spread out as an unquestionable absolute given, and presented as a new natural environment which requires, to survive its inception and to seize its opportunities, the acceptance of a new ethics and of new values, suitably established. And it is true that, if today we try to apply

those ancient sets of critical tools, those concepts, principles, ideals, rules, and assumptions that, until now, we have been accustomed to employ in evaluating new situations and in setting up strategies for survival, we may find out that they are simply no longer up to the task. We may find out that we have reached the point where, reflecting upon the globalization phenomenon, one can rightly refer to it as a «*monoculture of the mind*» (Vandana Shiva), or a «*colonization of consciousness*» (Peter Herschok), at the same time describing us, human beings, as «*members of communities in Diaspora*», moving into unfamiliar and unpredictable situations, as well as cultural environments, for which we may find ourselves unprepared.

But, although we are all confronted with this shift in human perceptions determined by a parallel shift, or rather a decomposition in our values, initiated and set up by the globalization process; although we are all experiencing the feeling of standardization grounded in the breaking down of existing patterns and in the scenario of homogenization offered in return; although we are all troubled by this widespread loss of meaning, more and more disconcerting in the present landscape of fundamental changes and incertitude; we are all here for we believe our reflections and our analyses are still able to bring insights and, hopefully, to draw some paths for the future. We are all here because we feel we may have something important to say and to offer, as scholars, scientists, psychologists, philosophers and, above all, as human beings.

It has been rightly said that «*technology will increasingly define our common life and — if left outside the sphere of critical reflection — threaten our cultural forms and ethical and moral values*». And it will do so in unprecedented, unimaginable, almost unthinkable ways. But, as we know, thinkers are used to thinking the ‘unthinkable’. Indeed, the globalization process is in need of a deeper philosophical analysis if all around the world, in more and more countries, in more and more cultures, people are perceiving how the thin line, that for thousands of years was connecting them to their own roots, seems to have broken down; as their own roots, cultural expressions and traditional values appear now not to be of much importance, when they are not bringing profitable outcome in a new global economy. In this situation, cyberspace has often been proposed as a new virtual land where people could address the downfall of those ancestral values, and find a renewed identity, fit for this rising technological world. But, with its multitude of choices, without criteria to make choices, cyberspace risks becoming the land where one can find everything, apart from what we really need and should look for: values; and meanings.

At the present stage, a question arises, i.e., how can philosophical and scientific reflection, how can our reflection, help in finding points of reference within this technological world, which could otherwise be seen as the exclusive domain of electronic engineers? Giving shape to an attempt to suggest few possible answers, we may get back to another part of the *Critique of Practical Reason*, more precisely to its very conclusion, where Kant reminds us that

«...science (critically undertaken and methodically directed) is the narrow gate that leads to the true doctrine of practical wisdom, if we understand by this not merely what one ought to do, but what ought to serve teachers as a guide to construct well and clearly the road to wisdom which everyone should travel, and to secure others from going astray. Philosophy must always continue to be the guardian of this science; and although the public does not take any interest in its subtle investigations, it must take an interest in the resulting doctrines, which such an examination first puts in a clear light.»

Apart from incidentally noting how these lines sound like a sort of justification of our present undertaking, I would carry the torch from Kant’s words, suggesting that, for those who find themselves in the position of «*going astray*», those who need to find ways to master worry, fear, concern, incertitude, all determined by the downfall of traditional values and by the impossibility of applying ancient sets of critical tools to evaluate and address new unpredictable

situations, one of the answers is represented by the quest for conceptual means to manage doubt and uncertainty, which is also a hunt for wisdom in a world prone to superficial ready-made answers. As it has been already suggested elsewhere (I shall be forgiven if I make here reference to some research previously undertaken by the UNESCO Division of Philosophy):

«the way (...) to address many crucial issues of our age (...) does not lie in applying ready-made, 'mechanical' procedures based on automatic, stereotyped formulas and standardized recipes; but rather, in establishing various complex, integrative processes to be mindfully and cautiously implemented in the light of manifold criteria.»

This memorandum, formulated in the frame of research devoted to isolating substantial elements characterizing trans-disciplinary approaches to problem solving, can be considered as pertinent also in our present sphere of reflection on the 'trans-formation', or even the 'trans-figuration' of self-consciousness. Some of the answers to renew the set of conceptual tools to address these issues through an increased knowledge of oneself can indeed be rooted in the values belonging to the theory and practice of scientific and philosophical activity; values which are behind the constant capacity to endlessly deal with the uncertainty, without giving up the quest; as well as behind the intellectual humbleness required to properly face this enterprise. Undeniably these are values that both philosophy and science — Science with a capital S, which in previous times was referred to as *Philosophia Naturalis* — have always incorporated. And these are the values that now we may need to brush off, make explicit, and share outside the intellectual community to mitigate and re-direct the side effects of a technological era of fictitious certitudes and acquiescent conformism.

To properly shed light on this trans-position of values from science to society, on which our reflection on the transformation of ourselves and of our civilization can be inspired and enlightened, it may be helpful, once more, to briefly try to recall what we consider scientific, when we consider a human activity to be 'science'. Indeed, when considering an activity as 'scientific' we are somehow putting our attention not so much on what is being examined, but mainly on how this something is analyzed. Scientists are aware that the characterizing aspect of a scientific activity is indeed the application of a peculiar method, a philosophy of inquiry, an ethics of investigation; while people outside the intellectual community mostly perceive science just as a domain of certitude, exactitude and objective truth. Indeed, a great part of scientific activity is actually based on exactitude and exact measurements. But, as we know, this is only one side of it. Now, we all agree, an important element of scientific research is the thorough reflection on the instrument used; thorough reflection through which we consider its possibilities as well as its limits. And the reflection on material tools, together with advancements in technology, does help us in building better scientific instruments, and does imply advancements in many disciplines. However, I wonder whether the most crucial part of scientific activity starts *exactly* when and where things become unmeasurable; or we just do not know how to measure them. I guess what I am trying to say here is that the most precious thing I believe scientists have to share is *precisely* their many ways of dealing with the unquantifiable, the uncertain, the inexact. And that the crucial element in the quest for truth — whether objective or not — is to know *exactly* how to deal with doubt, uncertainty, and error.

Carl Sagan used to say, «*Humans have acquired a world-transforming technology without the corresponding wisdom to know how to use it*». This is undeniably the situation we are experiencing today; a situation that we cannot address solely by using newer and newer technologies, as continuously proposed, and at the same time trying to re-shape our lives, and transform ourselves, to better fit this technologically transformed world. As Einstein reminds us «*the significant problems we face cannot be solved by the same level of thinking that created them*». That is why, in dealing with new technologies, rather than entering into the domain of

electronic engineering, we may be better off by making more use of critical tools belonging to psychology, epistemology and the history of science. And as the history and philosophy of science have shown so far, the basis for scientific progress has often been the abandonment of confident ignorance, for a path paved with doubtful uncertainty that, through constructive criticism, eventually leads to a development in knowledge. Each time this has resulted in a progress for science but, first and foremost, has caused progress in human wisdom. It is in this light that the thorough reflection on the instrument used also implies a parallel thoughtful reflection on our own conceptual tools. This reflection immediately leads us to consider that, as our measuring tools have an innate grade of built-in error (which we try to reduce with better equipment, but which we always take into account in our calculations), our minds, our knowledge processes, our judgements are inherently imperfect and, consequently, prone to mistakes. Scientists are aware of how careful their research procedures are — and indeed have to be — when making hypotheses, setting-up experiments, and trying to infer general laws. The self-criticism, the careful doubtfulness towards one's own analytic and synthetic processes, the intellectual humility and the consequent humble approach to the evaluation of phenomena and to the development of knowledge, are like precious jewels that scientists, as philosophers, have to share with the human community.

Indeed, as Einstein also said: «*The whole of science is nothing more than a refinement of everyday thinking*». In the same way, the best part of this refined thinking has to get back to everyday life, lead the development of our self-consciousness, enlighten the patterns of our behaviours, and shape the criteria and paradigms to remodel our future societies, however complex and difficult this might seem to be. Many are the aspects of each phenomenon, and many are the points of view according to which each aspect can be examined. Furthermore, as just recalled, each observation embodies — at least — imperfections in the measuring instruments, errors in using and reading these instruments, deficiencies in our knowledge processes, as well as faults in our implicit and explicit interpreting theories. As a matter of fact, we must agree with Heidegger when he says: «*Self-discovery and finding oneself are not the easiest, most natural things, but remain the most difficult task*»; as, trivially, object and subject of inquiry are continuously interrelated and, possibly, fall entirely in the purview of Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle (i.e. indeterminacy). Heinz von Foerster, the founder of the first A.I. Lab at the University of Illinois used to say: «*The hard sciences appear hard precisely because they tackle soft problems. The soft sciences face the harder problems*». Today I do ask myself whether it would not be high time for us, human beings, to become *soft scientists*; to apply our doubtful carefulness when reflecting upon those phenomena and processes taking shape around us; and, at the same time, to understand that, however complicated, these phenomena do not approach our complexity as human beings, and consequently the almost unimaginable complexity of interactions among us.

All this is what I feel we should bear in mind when we are called to reflect upon the consequences of the many and profound changes occurring in the world today, where technology is the prime agent determining the overwhelming transformations humanity is experiencing at the dawn of the third millennium.

But I would not go any further if, as Liubava Moreva said elsewhere: «*It becomes harder and harder (...) to be brief. That much knowledge does not teach thinking was noticed quite a while ago. But that much talking switches off thinking becomes obvious only today*». Beside, I am aware that here I have been trying to suggest only some terms of reference, if not a conceptual framework, rather than providing exhaustive analyses. But maybe this is the catalyzing role I was requested to play, since we are just at the very beginning of a long-term critical enterprise. As a conclusion I may now resume some of the reflections I have been putting forth on the issues of our concern. And at the same time, if I may, I would like to mention some of the paths the Organization I represent here, and specifically the Division of Philosophy, may

take to address these issues, as well as the possible actions we wish to initiate; actions on which the support of all of you present here would be most welcome and appreciated.

As we see it, humanity is facing an era where the globalization process — determined by rapid developments in information and communication technologies — seems to have caused, together with new opportunities of economic growth and promises of social progress, a serious loss of ethical and moral points of reference. Moreover, as these recent infrastructural and material outgrowths have not been accompanied by the development of a parallel knowledge on how to properly master their enlarged possibilities, the profound and rapid expansions of personal and social dimensions have entailed frantic transformations in the perceptions human beings have of themselves, their societies and the world they live in. More than ever before, and mostly in industrialized societies, human beings are thus confronted with the rapid decomposition and disintegration of values; values that, so far, had been providing a conceptual framework and meaning to our many endeavours to build a world soundly based on a sustainable knowledge; values which today tend to be replaced by chaotic pursuits for personal economic success that, together with material gain, often entail a profound sense of unhappiness, frustration, disorientation and uncertainty.

In this time of great dangers and hopes, we trust that philosophy, together with other human and social sciences, has a fundamental role to play in helping humanity to better understand the present, in order to build a better world tomorrow. It has a unique role in providing an answer to the need for new forms and dimensions of ethical reflection through the vast heritage of world wisdom, whose extraordinary collection of ideas and concepts can help us to reach a better comprehension of the changes which take place before our eyes, and to develop more responsible strategies for the future. It has a unique role in furthering transdisciplinary thinking, in removing barriers around fields of knowledge, in comparing different theoretical approaches, in broadening the scope of thought while encouraging its constant renewal; in a word, in providing all disciplines with refined tools of analysis and conceptual criteria to build new theoretical frameworks suitable to manage the increased complexity of the new world we live in. Philosophy has thus a unique role in fostering the exercise of critical thinking; in enlarging the capacity for reflection; in encouraging independent autonomous judgement; in promoting the free expression of dissension; in supporting mutual regard and esteem while confronting opposed arguments; in striving for respectful reciprocal understanding rather than for pretended consensual agreement.

UNESCO, as the intellectual arm of the United Nations system and as an Organization devoted to stimulating international co-operation, has here a most important responsibility to exercise in providing public space of reflection where problems can be isolated, notions conceptualized and new strategies defined. At the same time it has a central role to play in capacity building, contributing to the development of a disposition toward critical and independent thinking; helping human beings not only in putting forth individual beliefs as personal truths, but also in learning how to self-question, first and foremost, their own individual beliefs on the basis of solid critical doubts. It has hence a unique role in supporting methodological reflection and in facilitating and initiating research on knowledge processes, aimed at stimulating self-criticism, self-awareness, self-determination and self-empowerment of people, to be achieved through the wise use of the analytical tools of rational inquiry.

But, what is more important, I trust that each one of us is carrying a similar responsibility upon his or her shoulders.

As a matter of fact, if a society, to be considered as democratic, not only needs to be established on the theoretical character of its institutions but, primarily, to be substantiated and secured in the minds of the people who are the living incarnations of its ideals, we have today, more than ever before, the highest responsibility in encouraging and developing a truly Democratic Culture. Indeed, if it does not want to end up as a hollow demagogical exercise, the creation of an authentic Democratic Culture has to be grounded on the acceptance of a new *Social*

Contract, within which the foundations and preconditions of the responsible participation of any individual must be given. In this view, each human being is in need of a fresh array of critical tools — and of criteria for their proper use — to master the increased multidimensional complexity of the international panorama, and to shape, through a regained rational inquiry, a renewed set of meanings which could lead humanity to recognize the paths of its survival and flourishing in the centuries to come.

To sincerely face this challenge, new ways should courageously be undertaken, which would have the main function of furthering critical reflection in order to set up theoretical tools for the analysis and interpretation of today's reality, and to foresee and influence the world of tomorrow. More specifically this approach should foster the development — and create the preconditions — of a '*Knowledge Society*' founded on an authentic '*Epistemology of Emancipation*'. An epistemology which would also have the deliberate purpose of making people able and keen to master the profusion of data delivered via the super-highways of the '*Information Society*'; mastery to be achieved through a critical approach toward the passive acceptance of its messages. In this light, for instance, the common distinction between *info-riches* and *info-poor*s should be properly re-framed and analyzed in terms of *info-slaves* (who can still be *info-riches*, a richness that they do not have the tools to master), and *info-empowered*.

The furthering of critical thinking and of the proper development of analytical tools capable of mastering the transparent conceptual criteria utilized in organizing most of the information disseminated by the media and on the Internet, would in fact set a fundamental prerequisite to the self-empowerment of people.

Providing conceptual instruments to properly formulate questions is indeed the first requirement to put someone in the condition to give coherent answers to complex issues; and to address that profound thirst for meaningful responses, which was the starting point of our reflection. This would indeed result in an authentic emancipation of each individual; the spiritual, intellectual, ethical, moral emancipation of the minds that alone can guarantee genuine material independence, and the long-lasting self-determination of people.

Thank you for your attention.

L. Moreva:

Thanks a lot, Dr. Lattanzi, for your interesting report which undoubtedly guides us to a future discussion. Now we have time for questions, then we will have another presentation, then discussion.

Prof. Boris Markov:

The Philosophical Department, St. Petersburg University

I'd like to thank the organizers for the opportunity to speak here. It was with great pleasure that I listened to the previous presentation, and in continuation of the previous report, I would like to say that the function of philosophy is not to point to some absolute truths or absolute norms, but rather it is a critical function, and we must conceive the link between self-consciousness and self-change.

I would like to say a few words about Plato. Plato had three positions concerning the improvement of human nature. The first is that a teacher or philosopher can improve people through enlightenment, through the opening of truths, and that's what we are doing when we are reading lectures and writing books, in the hope that people will understand how the world is in reality and will follow the truth. But later, as a result of Foucault's work, it became clear that Plato's Socrates developed a more efficient strategy, which Foucault called «taking care of himself», and there we see some doubt about the practitioners of truth. Here we're talking about fundamental work about the cultivating of the human body. Here the Occidental and Oriental tendencies converge because in the East they don't separate the body and the spirit as much—

they don't have the metaphor of the spirit inside the machine. In that sense, the transformation of the self and the transformation of the spirit are very closely linked.

I will not speak in detail about caring about oneself, but I will say a few words about the later period in Plato's life. His views at this time have been well represented by Popper, but what Popper wrote was not fully adequate. I mention Plato's views so that we take a critical stance toward ourselves. Plato at that time does not any longer believe that philosophers can improve people by discovering truth. He sees that education costs a lot, even for the richest states—for equal education you need a tutor for each student. Higher education is not available to everybody—we cannot improve everybody by using that classical technology which we inherited from Greek humanists. We cannot provide classical education to everybody.

Plato compares a politician not to a philosopher, but to a shepherd. A politician is a shepherd who takes care of a human herd. So it turns out that people are seen as animals which must be domesticated, which must be civilized and humanized. Then the question arises, How do we do this? And should we do this? Plato offers an unusual answer, but one which is quite viable now thanks to the discoveries of genetics. Genetics says to us philosophers, you have been humanizing humanity for two thousand years, but we can do what you have failed to do so far.

I will not speak about Plato's concept in detail, but I want to say that it's just about taking care of or improving people. It's an unusual policy which seems strange to us humanists and philosophers. Popper even thinks that it's somewhat totalitarian. But I heard in the previous presentation with great satisfaction that now we can count on intellectual practices for the improvement of ourselves.

Of great importance now is to look not to the obvious, but to look to the collision with other's experience. In the process of communication representatives of different cultures may show and prove the importance of their values. The problem with values is that, if we can agree about notions based on our experience, which is a kind of neutral language allowing for interpretation between holders of different views, in the field of values this is impossible. If we Russian orthodox people go to a synagogue, we will not convince them of anything—they will probably throw us out. So the Western world's fear of Islam and of Slavic states too. And I think that such things cannot be resolved through meditation, because what we encounter in Chechnya and what Americans encounter in Iran is not the Islam that was created by Arabian culture. Present day Islam is quite different, and we must understand this in the process of dialogue.

The second important idea is that changing the values must incorporate intellectual dialogue and discussion despite the fact that we cannot convince other people that our values are better than their values. When we enter into a dialogue, by speaking to others, our interlocutor becomes equal to us. The process of dialogue leads to a situation wherein we change somewhat our initial stance and our interlocutor does the same. This gives rise to hope that such conferences may help us to find the limits of our values.

The word that the previous speaker mentioned often, «globalization», is important. The newspaper *Pravda* showed us that globalization has led to the unification of the Russian language and of our national consciousness. The question is not of erasing or transforming a new language whose limits are dictated by mass media. This will unify our culture and the most difficult task is to pass the sense of our idioms to others. I can't see the resolution to this problem, but I think this is very important because only if we can resolve this problem we will be able to satisfy our desire for a fusion of different cultures and dialogues.

By way of conclusion I want to say a few words about humanism. Under the conditions of globalization, humanism takes a strange form. For us in Russia it's very vital. When everything changed some people improved their lives, while other's lives became worse. Within the Russian intelligentsia there is still the hope for moral discourse. Of course you can evaluate a politician, a businessman or anybody from this point of view, but I'm afraid that such an evaluation is what ideological evaluation used to be. Society is multi-systemic with different zones but one language which governs all. But will the situation improve if a moral language prevails? I think

that some systems of society may collapse and that will not lead to the development of the system, especially on a global scale.

Another question is that of what morality is good and what morality is bad. We cannot resolve this question because everybody will say that their morality is good, but that others cannot take this stance with their moralities. The speaker spoke vividly about the technological changes in our world. I think that this idea contains a very important generalization. I would like to stress that the question of improving the society in which we live is not only a question of changing man. After Nietzsche and Heidegger we understand that too much humanity is a danger. In this sense probably Plato's question of how to humanize human nature is a question of technique and we must be very attentive to what is happening in the world. We see that classical education is collapsing, the family is collapsing—there is a collapse of nations and states and this bears witness to serious changes. In Russia we are trying to reanimate the old, but all such things—nationality, family, etc. become symbols which we exchange. That is a very important change.

The intelligentsia thinks that television is an enemy. This situation is similar to that in ancient Rome when Greek philosophers thought that the gladiator fights in Rome and the system of Roman administration dehumanized people. But we cannot evaluate American television like that. I don't know what Americans watch. They probably don't watch what we watch. What we watch are films with violence, money, lust and automobile crashes. We start to wonder what is happening. We read lectures trying to improve our children and television shows all these terrible things and it seems that bestialization is taking place. But I think that the Romans were no sillier than we are. They had a large population and they had to find some means of uniting that population and the gladiator fights were a means of uniting the population because they went on for weeks. The impact of mass media also civilizes people, and we must not shut our eyes to this.

L. Moreva:

Would you like to formulate a question for the previous presenter?

B. Markov:

Yes, the question I pose is, should we change the technique of philosophizing in light of the new information technologies currently developing in the world and which are an important part of globalization?

M. Lattanzi:

Thank you. I shall try to be very direct.

In the light of the globalization process, if a rethinking of philosophy is needed — together with maybe a rethinking of the whole meaning of the human endeavor at large —, I believe this cannot be undertaken except on the basis of at least two criteria, which I would call 'maximum openness' and 'flexibility of thought'.

Maximum openness to external inputs, as we cannot reject *a priori* the unknown and the unfamiliar — This is, if you wish, the «nihil humani a me alienum puto» as well as the idea that «we must not shut our eyes», so to speak.

We need flexibility of thought, to be prepared to continuously exercise our critical analysis — new thoughts, new solutions should never be considered as 'innovative' and 'better' than the old ones just because they are 'new'. Positive innovations should obviously be evaluated in the medium and long run.

I trust this is exactly what we are proposing to re-discover here, as these criteria have been at the very foundation of philosophical undertaking as such, since the very beginning of the critical reflection of human beings on themselves and the surrounding world.

Prof. Kam-ming Wong:

Comparative Literature Department, University of Georgia, USA

What I find interesting in Dr. Lattanzi's presentation and in Dr. Markov's remarks on this presentation is that they both make some kind of return to the ancients – first to Kant, then to Plato. When they made that return, it made me think of another return in the Eastern tradition. I'd like to go back to two philosophers who are more or less contemporaries of Plato in China, namely Confucius and Zhuangzi – one the founder of the Confucian school of philosophy, the other a representative of Daoist thought.

In what is perhaps the briefest autobiography in world literature Confucius summed up his own self development when he was seventy years old. It touches on many of the issues that the two previous speakers raised, especially the issue of self-development and self-transformation. I paraphrase: (Confucius says) at fifteen I turned my mind to learning, at thirty I took my stand, at forty I was not of two minds about things, at fifty I knew the mandate of heaven. Now Confucius could have stopped there, because for the Chinese to know the mandate of heaven was the pinnacle of knowledge. But Confucius went further to say that at sixty his ear became attuned and at seventy he could do what his heart desired without transgressing boundaries.

I think it's very important for him to go further than simply knowing the mandate of heaven because the mandate of heaven used to be the prerogative of kings – that's how they claimed the legitimacy of their rule. So for Confucius, as a common citizen, to claim that he knew the mandate of heaven, there was something intrinsically democratic about it.

Now why is it so important to have one's ear attuned? Because, once you have the wisdom of heaven, that knowledge, you want to share it and, as Professor Markov suggested, to have a dialogue to transmit what you know to others. And to do that, your ear must be attuned in the sense that your ear is attuned to all frequencies – more than just listening and hearing what others have to say, but overhearing. That brings us to the need to understand the language of silence.

Now, what about at seventy, following your heart's desire without transgressing the boundaries. Well, boundaries could be imposed by society, by tradition, but they could also be boundaries demarcated by the individual himself. So this metaphor in a way combines both the inner and outer worlds, the boundary that one negotiates in mediating the inside and the outside. This is a very important concept for Confucius, and it's a necessary condition for ultimate self-transformation.

Now let me turn to a very well known parable of Zhuangzi, the butterfly dream. Very briefly, it simply says that Zhuangzi once dreamed he was a butterfly. When he woke up, he wondered if it was the butterfly who dreamed that he was Zhuangzi, or was it Zhuangzi who dreamed he was a butterfly. The butterfly as a metaphor, I think, is ideal for symbolizing the whole idea of transformation because there's something intrinsically transformative about the figure itself. A butterfly becomes a caterpillar, encloses itself in a cocoon, and then emerges again as the butterfly. This kind of metamorphosis actually anticipates Nietzsche centuries later in the nineteenth century. When Nietzsche talks about the three metamorphoses of the spirit, in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, he begins with the beast of burden, the camel, which transforms itself into the beast of prey, the lion, and later the lion overcomes the dragon, which symbolizes tradition. In overcoming himself the lion transforms himself into a babe – a very Daoist metaphor. How to become naïve again and regain the innocence of the babe. To be naïve is to know that «life is beautiful.» But it also means to make light of what is unbearable.

In another sense the dream of the butterfly of Zhuangzi also anticipates Darwin. When Zhuangzi dreams about the butterfly he actually puts the butterfly on an equal footing with the human dreamer. The butterfly, like the human being, can dream. There's something very radical about this.

Also I think this parable is the perfect metaphor for thinking about self-transformation and also about the boundaries and relationship between inner and outer consciousness, in this sense. In terms of outer consciousness, the butterfly could represent the radical other. For Zhuangzi, the dreamer and philosopher, to be able to put himself in the shoes, as it were, of the butterfly, as the radical other, and still be able to understand and communicate what it feels like - I think this takes us to the issue of how to negotiate the boundary between the outer and inner. Or, you can look at the butterfly as something that is inherently in ourselves. So, when we, as human beings, try to relate to other human beings, as others, then the butterfly can become the radical other. But then it could also be that radical other in ourselves, in our consciousness. And indeed, unless we have the radical other in our inner consciousness, we cannot really communicate with the radical other that is in the outer consciousness. So, to me then, this pretty much becomes a perfect symbol to talk about these things. Also, it's a metaphor that intersects imagination, intuition and intellect.

I'd like to make one additional suggestion. The reading of Confucius, and the reading of Zhuangzi also resonate with the writings, for me as a student of literature, of two nineteenth century American poets, both of whom were very much influenced by Darwin's thinking - Emily Dickinson and Walt Whitman. Let me just recite the first stanza of a poem by Emily Dickinson. It goes something like this: «*A bird came down the Walk / He did not know I saw / He bit an Anglemorm in halves/ And ate the fellow, raw.*» That is Zhuangzi's butterfly dream right there. The poet tried to connect with the bird, wondering whether he knew. And yet, in this attempt to make connection, she goes beyond language, even though she uses language.

The same can be said about Whitman's poem «*Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking.*» In this poem Whitman recalls a scene that he experienced one night when he went out to the beach in Long Island, which he names using a Native American name, «Paumanok.» There on the beach, Whitman as poet reliving his experience as a boy, listens to a mocking bird lamenting the loss of his mate and translates what he sees and hears into poetry. And I think this is a very important term, translation. Because that's what we do here, translation. So, by listening to the mocking bird the boy becomes the poet in years to come, when he remembers this experience. In a way, I think that poem also addresses the central issue of inner and outer consciousness.

Well, that's all I have to say. Thank you so much.

L. Moreva:

Thank you very much, Professor Wong. Let me explain that before the question period begins we have had two small reports by Professor Markov and Professor Wong, who both have to hurry on to other commitments. Thank you both for your participation in this meeting.

Now we really have time for questions. The first question is from Dmitry Spivak.

Prof. Dmitri Spivak:

Human Brain Institute, The Russian Academy of Sciences

Thank you for your inspiring report. I felt it was like a presentation of clusters of problems, which have been very instructive. In some respects there are interesting parallels. For instance, right now in Russian science we are discussing introducing the notion of *le belle-science* as parallel to the *le belle-lettres*. I felt that your notion of soft sciences is very similar. In other respects I didn't feel the same parallels.

There are two problems I would like to understand as precisely as possible. I am used to thinking of the opposition of the traditional industrialized European society and the forthcoming global society is reflected in the opposition between the personality and the individuality. I didn't sense that the personality and the personal principle is really interesting for you.

The second thing I sensed was that the notion of disquietude or of dubiousness was somehow negative for you. However, it is very principle and fundamental precisely for the Kantian

philosopher because, as you know Kantian metaphysics places freedom of will first, even before God and immortality. And this can be found in other parts of his philosophy. This is why, if you want to emphasize that you would like to come to some sort of serendipity at the end of your spiritual quest, then I don't think that you should emphasize the notion of intellectual humility, which is very much not in line with Kant. So, another question would be: either freedom of will or intellectual humility, or is there some other possibility of joining the two concepts? This is my second question. Thank you.

M. Lattanzi:

Thank you for your very insightful questions.

Concerning the first, you are quite right in noting that in my paper I do not address the 'personality/individuality' issue. As you said, I am putting on the table clusters of issues. And, of course, I am positive that there are some topics I am not touching upon. Indeed, at the very beginning, I said that my paper could not certainly address the whole of the issues and factors of self-consciousness development. Now, since I have been already taking up quite a bit of time, I would then propose to put forward for discussion also the issue you are rising; and I would ask each of the participants to do the same with issues relevant to him or her.

In terms of your second question — here you give me some food for thought. I have to think about what you said, i.e., whether there is any opposition, as you suggest, between the freedom of will and intellectual humility. Preliminarily, I would be led to think that the exercise of intellectual humility is indeed a strong choice from my side, thus a clear expression of my freedom of will. However, I would prefer to think it over, and give you my feedback later on.

But I would also like to point out that, although I started by quoting Kant, I did not mean to suggest a mere return to Kantian philosophy to address the issues we are encountering today. I initiated my reflections with some thoughts from Kant because they were inspiring to me, and I thought it would be helpful to share them with you. But I do not feel that here today I am wearing any sort of 'Kantian suit', so to speak.

I would also like to note that I did not intend to give any negative connotation to the feeling of inquietude and apprehension that human beings seem to be experiencing more and more intensely now. I do not consider it harmful *per se*; at least not until this feeling becomes overwhelming and paralyzing. Humanity is facing a global crisis, and periods of crisis are certainly painful. But they are also, or will resolve into, moments of growth, development, and improvement. A crisis is painful, as pruning and surgery are. But the development of human history and of human thought is nothing but a series of leaps from one crisis to the next. It is enough to get back to the Greek root of 'crisis' to clearly see it as a break, which can determine a thin rift, as well as a wide chasm. In any case, these crises have to be overcome for humanity to grow.

So I did not mean to imply anything negative about periods of transition. I am just putting on the table that they produce strong human feelings, which are not pleasant. But they are not negative inasmuch as they stimulate our reflections. They may be negative if, and only if, we remain inactive before these crises and we do not address them.

Mr. Breton Carr:

Cambria, California, USA

Thank you for your melodious presentation.

I have been a member of the Philosophical Research Center EIDOS (SPb) since 1993, but I am also a businessman with investments in Santa Cruz, California. Santa Cruz is about thirty minutes by car from San Jose, which is the location of the so-called «Silicon Valley», the global headquarters of this new technology.

You said in your presentation that you think Western societies have reached a moment of crisis *visa vis* these new information technologies, and you noted that this feeling of crisis and growth is sometimes difficult to accommodate. This is certainly the case, but I wonder whether or not this feeling of uncertainty and crisis might not be self-limiting. I don't doubt that these new information technologies have the potential to continue developing, technically, at their current rapid rate. However, I'm not convinced that human beings will embrace these new technologies with the same enthusiasm in the next decade that they have in the last.

In Santa Cruz there's a new expression that has come into the vernacular; «technophobe». A technophobe (more traditionally known as a «Luddite») is someone who does not embrace this new information technology. I'm a member of this group. During the current transition period, there are many people such as myself who are not embracing these new technologies, even right in the center of Silicon Valley. I can speak from experience when I say that for myself, and for many of my friends, these new technologies have reached something of a point of self-limitation. The additional complexity introduced into the already harried modern life by these new devices is often not outweighed by the additional «connectedness» these devices provide. This is particularly true once the individual recognizes that this «connectedness» (which does have status value in information societies), is often a trap that does not, in the end, enrich life.

The question was raised earlier by Professor Markov, «What do Americans watch on television?» One thing we certainly watch plenty of would be commercials. One recent commercial provides a good example of what I'm talking about. In this particular commercial we see a young couple relaxing on the beach. They are reclining with the physical, real ocean in the background and in the foreground the man has a hand-held device which enables him to access stock quotes, his e-mail, the weather forecast and the vast «virtual» ocean of information on the world wide web—he is definitely connected. (This is the so-called «wireless» technology, the next step in the information revolution.) Obviously we are supposed to envy the «connected» young man, and rush out to buy this magic device so that we too can become connected, even on the beach. But the commercial is really pretty absurd. The reason is that if one goes to the beach, namely to enjoy the beach, there's not much point in taking along this sort of device. People who go to the beach to «connect» with nature, but instead are so fascinated by their «info-status» that they instead connect with the world wide web have, in my opinion, lost some of their humanity. This commercial says to me that we have become exceedingly clever at developing these new technologies, but at a certain point they're not going to actually enrich our humanity. It is the hope of technophobes such as myself that society (and the philosophers who try to guide society) will be able to recognize the point at which these technologies become superfluous to our humanity.

So, I think that the feeling of crisis you mentioned may be self-limiting simply because for many people the most recent advancements in information technologies may not be truly life-enriching, and so we may eventually lose our fascination with them and with the status they seem to bestow.

M. Lattanzi:

Thank you for your interesting point. But let me ask you: are you talking about «self-limitation» in the sense of the self-limitation of the self-enrichment of humanity?

B. Carr:

I'm really using «self-limiting» here in two ways; the first is in reference to the technologies themselves, the second is in reference to the feeling of crisis you spoke of. First, I think these new technologies are self-limiting in the sense that people will soon realize that they don't enhance our lives as much as they complicate them. The second way I'm using «self-limiting» is that once the superfluousness of these technologies is recognized, once we turn away from them, we will find a way back to our humanity, and then the current feeling of crisis will disap-

pear (it will limit itself). This second sense of «self-limiting» corresponds to the way physicians use the expression - to refer to diseases which go away of their own accord. Adolescent acne, for example, will go away as the patient grows older. These are not chronic conditions which require treatment to make them go away. Self-limiting diseases are cured by time.

M. Lattanzi:

I understand your point better, now. So, let me add few thoughts to yours.

Concerning ‘technophobes’, I recently happened to read an article about a second kind of technophobe; not only those who entirely refuse these new technologies. This second kind of technophobe, as this article mentioned, typically work in places like Silicon Valley. But, when back home, they choose to live in old-fashioned houses, without even electricity. They decide to live like monks, if I may, to sort of regain their humanity.

I would take this opportunity to make it clear that I am not a technophobe myself. I have personally been working with the Internet since the time when it was still called Arpanet, and the connections were done not through the user-friendly graphic interfaces of the modern Web browsers, but rather through de-humanising UNIX prompts. I myself own several computers; I live surrounded by computers. I mention this to make clear that the issue I have been putting forth is not at all the refusal of the new technologies. The main issue here is ‘appropriation’. The main issue is mastering the technology, and being conscious of what such a technology means and entails. The question is not whether or not to make use of it. Definitely not. But technology does not have to be a Trojan. That is the issue I am putting on the table. An issue of appropriation which, as I tried to explain, is fundamental to gaining self-determination and, thus, to enter a dimension of ‘full responsibility’.

The same applies to the improper social use of these devices, as in the example of the beach you mentioned. Well, most people today have a mobile phone. I am one who has even owned two of them at the same time. Here, again, I think it is a question of self-management — how to use these things, how to be able to master these tools. There might actually be the need to bring this device to the beach. Or even into the shower. The question, once more, is whether there is an *actual* need. Or it is just trendy fashion.

You make me think of the movie «Hook» by Steven Spielberg, on the tale of Peter Pan - a modern Peter Pan. The central character, Robin Williams, was literally obsessed by his mobile, whose continuous buzzing was keeping him far from his family and, most important, far from himself. I shall make it short. It is enough to know that, in the final scene the movie, the mobile still goes on ringing and ringing. At this moment he throws the mobile out of the window asking the caller to put aside those important matters, and to feel the sensation of flying. Those matters, indeed important, had become less significant to the character than his regained memory; and of his family life; of the fact that he learned how to fly again, after having discovered to be himself Peter Pan; a Peter Pan who suffered from a ‘contemporary-man amnesia’.

At a first look, all this could be read as the mere need to turn ones back on technology; but more profoundly it was nothing short of a re-appropriation of one’s life. As a matter of fact, «Hook» puts on the table a series of many interesting issues we cannot touch upon today, but I wanted to mention this specific one, as it seems to echo your comments.

Concerning the concept of ‘self-limitation’, if I properly understood, you suggest we consider the technophobe as expression of the self-limitation, sort of self-regulation, of new technologies.

I personally tend not to see it in this way. There are technophobes, this is a matter of fact. But in my view this does not mean that the curve delineating the growth of the new technologies is going to be flat from now on. All curves tend to become flat after a certain point. But I personally do not think that, for the information technologies, we are approaching this point of zero growth at the moment.

However, once more, I do not think this is a problem of technology. It is rather a problem of human beings; a problem of conceiving; of how human beings conceive technologies; how they conceive the aim of their life, and thus their lives, within a technological world. Let me say it again: I am not at all suggesting we unplug these technologies. This is a plea for appropriation of technologies. Appropriation, which also means knowing where the plug is; knowing, if and when needed, how to unplug it. And, being aware of the underlying reasons, being ready to do it in complete responsibility.

Alejandro Leal:

Health Research Institute and School of Biology, University of Costa Rica; Institute of Human Genetics, University of Erlangen-Nuremberg

Thank you. You said that sometimes science and technology provide superficial answers. I agree. Considering that scientists are also immersed in the market and competition, do you think that, in a truly democratic and human society, scientists need to be silent more often? If this is true, a practical question would be how the United Nations can promote this silence in this wild scientific world of competition.

M. Lattanzi:

I am not sure whether I was actually talking in terms of ‘superficiality’. Anyhow, now you are touching upon some issues concerning science within the market economy, and a competitive society; and this could really entail a long debate. Let me then just propose it as further element for our roundtable discussion and ask the participants to react to this.

On the other hand, I am in full agreement with you that today we are experiencing a profound lack of silence; that we need more silence. This is a fundamental issue with the modern media. A major drawback is that it seems once the communication channel has been activated, it has to remain active continuously, no matter what is delivered through it.

We need to have the courage to stop this. To *dare* not to be necessarily connected constantly to outside signals, which most of the time are mere noise or junk-info, issued just to keep the channel active.

We need to be able to sit alone more often; to be silent. And even to do nothing for a while. I find it a most difficult thing to do in today's society, where the condition of being unreachable by this plethora of signals — whether or not they constitute information at all — it is almost seen as a social sin.

And I am intentionally talking about plethora, as I can see how much the ‘quantity’ of information is kept as a value, in a world where ‘quality’ has become a difficult issue to address; and one can see the persistent attempt to try to ameliorate the quality of things by simply changing names. It sometimes might certainly be that «nomina sunt consequentia rerum», one should always avoid reaching a stage where «nomina nuda tenemus».

Along these lines, we saw how in the past decades the concept of ‘access to data’ was little by little overcome by ‘access to information’. Although, most of the times, instead of information, mere raw data were still delivered. Or, what could be even worse, the delivered data were actually organized into information, but unfortunately supplied without providing the corresponding criteria used to organize them in that specific way. Whereas these criteria *are* the basis for a meaningful recognition of the pertinence of such specific organization, and then a ‘*condicio sine qua non*’ for careful and thoughtful acceptance and appropriation. We are back to the concept of ‘transparency’ that I briefly mentioned in my paper: an unmanageable transparency through which information is continuously provided as unquestionable truth.

Now, for the new century, ‘information’ seems to me to be slowly getting out of fashion in favour of ‘knowledge’. Now the focus of society is on the ‘access to knowledge’, on the ‘transmission of knowledge’. But quality seems again unchanged, as basically unchanged are the modalities to deliver sets of data to end-users.

Let me mention how skeptical I am about the acritical use of the concept of ‘transmission of knowledge’.

Briefly speaking, on the one hand we have a concept of knowledge carrying the loose meaning of ‘lofty information’, so to speak; designating a set of recognized intellectual achievements, e.g. the corpus of western scientific knowledge, if something like this can be coherently delineated at all. But in this case, semiotically speaking — and despite what can be thought — we are still dealing with mere information (i. e. with organized set of data. There is thus no reason to agree to be more and more surrounded by technology, and more and more exposed to overwhelming transmission channels, through which day after day one is provided with similar things, just because they are called by a different name. Similarly, there is basically no reason to agree to see the concept of knowledge trivialized as a buzzword, and used as a marketing argument, to justify the sales of more infrastructures.

This would indeed lead to neglect of a second aspect of knowledge. Maybe the most important, maybe the one that should receive wider and wider acceptance.

In fact, knowledge can as well be considered as something other than a sort of material good that one can buy by the kilo. Undeniably, knowledge is also the product of a thoughtful innermost ability — learning — and as such cannot be transmitted, say, from me to you, but rather increased by each individual through self-listening, self-reflection, and silence.

In the Buddhist tradition there is a story about a monk who climbed a mountain and found a quarry. There he stayed and sat in front of a stonewall in meditation, for ten years. This is very radical. It sounds scary to us. But let us also think of all the things that he was able to see with new eyes while sitting silent facing a stone. Let us think for a few moments of how much this monk, without having been exposed to other information channels but the stonewall, grew in knowledge. Just through innermost listening, reflection and silence. This is something to keep in mind.

The idea of sitting in a dark room, silent with ourselves, with nothing to do but to do nothing, is indeed scary to most of us. But, as you mention, this is an issue — maybe *the* issue — to address. And it would give us some solid conceptual, if not spiritual, tools to substantially address many others concerns.

Regarding what the U.N. can do about this, well, I trust what I just said could provide you with a preliminary indication.

But I would also like to acknowledge one initiative that UNESCO specifically undertook. A very nice initiative. In UNESCO we are lucky enough to have a small Japanese garden in the middle of the buildings. A few years ago, Mr Tadao Ando, a Japanese architect, was commissioned to build, at the border of the Japanese garden, a cylinder of concrete, which is nothing but a temple of silence, a meditation space. It is built in such a way to be entirely open. Imagine a fully unadorned cylinder of concrete with two openings as entrances, but with no doors. Nevertheless, there are some specific points inside it where you are entirely isolated from the outside world. You can physically feel two invisible hands pushing on your ears, and you hear nothing of what is happening outside, although you can still see outside because of the lack of doors. These are points with zero echo and zero transmission of sound. A very nice space, although it seems that very few people actually use it.

In any respect, I trust that we can find a similar space of silence every day, as we do not really need to go anywhere else but inside ourselves in order to get into a space of meditation. It is just a matter of will. An exercise of free will, just to echo a concept already on the table.

Dr. Pierre Grimes:

Academy for Philosophical Midwifery, USA

A very short question: will knowledge be useless or not? We face a challenge. Can we access the knowledge and the tools for meaningful survival fast enough to escape extinction or

will we end in despair with the failure of our knowledge? Will we lose the race or not? We have an interesting challenge, don't we? We're inviting everyone to play, and the results will soon be in.

M. Lattanzi:

I believe this to be an issue of wisdom, rather than an issue of mere knowledge, if it's possible to have authentic knowledge without wisdom.

P. Grimes:

And the results will be known by all. Knowledge is on the line. Where will our bets be?

M. Lattanzi:

You see, I think that human beings are actually very good at hiding from themselves the results of their own actions. This is also an issue to address in the quest for knowledge: self-deceitfulness, not being honest to oneself. So, your question as to whether knowledge will be useless or not for human survival, is a rather complex one. For myself, I consider knowledge as useful, but I do not think knowledge alone — without a corresponding wisdom, as I already said — can save us.

Prof. Victor Allakhverdov:

Psychological Department, St. Petersburg University

Dr. Lattanzi, You made a very important distinction between soft and hard sciences. I would like to offer another metaphor and ask your opinion about it.

The way I see it, natural sciences created specific procedures of verification enabling them to try and predict what the world is all about and to verify these hypotheses. Soft sciences are involved in answering what is the sense of all that, and they have their own procedures of verification in identifying the priority of the best sense out of a big number of different senses. Hard sciences and soft sciences act in different ways and answer different sets of questions. Thus I do not agree with you that soft sciences are more complicated than hard ones, they are simply different.

M. Lattanzi:

May I point out that I did not intend at all, in what I said, to make a ranking between sciences of *higher* and *lower* order. This would indeed betray me, as I had a background in physics before studying philosophy and, even today, I trust I spend more time using telescopes than reading philosophical books.

I agree that historically hard sciences address the question of *what* an object is at the material level, while soft sciences rather address the question of *why*; or, if you wish, what an object is at the level of meaning. I also consent that we can reach a better agreement on what things are at the matter level, than at the level of their meaning.

From the beginning of human history, soft sciences (and of course I include philosophy among these) have basically striven to address always the same unresolved set of questions. We try to offer new — but still incomplete — answers to these questions, and these answers become more and more meaningful, as we continue reflecting on them. I sincerely do not know whether we will ever be in a position to reach an ultimate answer on the meaning of something. But I trust the quest is not really in this goal. The quest for us is to strive to become full-fledged human beings — which means to incessantly question ourselves on our own meanings. And I trust we do it best when seeking to unveil unreachable meanings that seem to behave like the horizon, which runs away faster and faster, the faster we run toward it.

But, at the same time, I also wonder if we can *confine* knowledge, i.e., if we can put an end to our understanding of an object at the material level. I truly wonder whether a scientist can say that s/he *definitely* knows, that s/he reached a *complete* knowledge on what something is.

As I said before, I trust through hard sciences we can reach a better *agreement* on what things are at the material level. But agreement is not necessarily complete understanding, nor true knowledge. We can all agree on a *doxa*; but, obviously, this does not transform our *doxa* into *episteme*.

I truly believe that all the sciences are soft sciences in this regard. This is what I tried to say in my paper.

You also mentioned the importance you assign to the procedures of verification of observational hypotheses. May I say that here I am less in agreement with you, as I am personally more prone to consider the value of interpretational theories above empirical approaches.

A relevant part of my epistemological reflection goes along the line of Popper's falsificationist thought. I mean here not just the Popper of the *Logic of Scientific Discovery* but the one who, blinded in his hospital bed, dictated the *Postscript to the Logic of Scientific Discovery*, addressing a whole new set of issues on the confutation of scientific theories.

As a matter of fact, from the same array of data we can always come up with two, or more, different theories, both of them giving proper — or better, acceptable — explanation to observational data. In my paper I already went through the issue of built-in errors in experiments. Now I would like to go a bit further, if I may. I understand I am making a strong statement. But analyzing the history of science, we can see how often advancements in knowledge are determined just by a rethinking of old data. Sometimes we do have new observational data, but often it is just a matter of framing old data into new theories of interpretation.

Let me give you a well-known example in classical physics: the *discovery* of the so-called 'universal gravitational law'. We all know the tale about Newton and the apple: Newton observed an apple falling off a tree and he suddenly realized that there should be an invisible force of 'gravity'! The discovery came from an 'empirical observation', we are told. Beside, I would notice that we were never told how many apples he needed to observe, how big was that specific one, of what color and so on. But this is not even the point. The tale of the apple, a captivating narrative of a fictitious context of discovery, should not made us overlook the context of justification. The tale of the apple is nothing but a new illustration of the cannon-ball problem in classical physics. Until Newton, while *observing* the motion of a cannon-ball, the stress was always put on the force applied to the ball to make it fly, to counter the weight this ball has as an innate quality. We are of course talking here of *mental* observation, carried out with the intellect, the eye of mind, if I may.

In a most successful synthesis of intellect, imagination and intuition — if I may restate the main theme of our symposium — Newton just *saw* the problem upside-down. He was the first one who just thought not to give importance to what *produces* the motion, but to what *terminates* it. And this is gravity. Indeed, stepping aside from the Aristotelian question «What keeps moving things moving», Newton took inertial laws as axiomatic. In this frame, weight was no longer an essential quality of the bodies but a mechanical force induced from outside, which could be explained mathematically.

Where is here new empirical evidence? Did he observe more cannon-balls than his predecessors? Were these balls of a different kind? Maybe bigger? Did he have better eyesight than anybody else? Was he himself shot from a cannon, as to increase empirical evidence? Of course not.

Reflecting on Kepler's laws on planetary motion, he had an idea. He came up with a mental construct, a pure speculative hypothesis which produced an interpretative theory able to frame the very same data everybody else already had. It was a new description for old data which made the 'discovery' or, rather — to avoid confining knowledge, as I said before — gave an appropriate formulation of a phenomenon in the frame of the classical physics.

As I said, often it is just a matter of framing old data into new theories. It is a continuous on-going process of critical reflection, which determines advancements and growth in human knowledge. This is why I see all sciences as soft sciences. All scientists are alike. In the end, all scientists — physicists, philosophers, psychologists, etc. — they all face the same problems with the same *scientific* tools: intellect, imagination, intuition.

Only when we stop inquiring do we stop being scientists.

Dr. Kenzie Cameron:

The University of Georgia, Athens, USA

In 1973, I believe, Murray Melbin, a sociologist, published a piece that he entitled «Night as Frontier». What he did was look at the Frederick-Jackson-Turner thesis and he tried to compare the frontier of night, as he called it, to the frontier of the American West. Certainly we could look at other frontiers as well, but he focused on the frontier of the American West. Essentially what he did was to advance ten points as to how the frontier of night could be considered a frontier in the way we consider the notion of the frontier of the American West. Some points were things such as, settlements become more isolated, or there's more helpfulness and friendliness among the settlers.

I think we can advance the same ten points when we look at new technologies and cyberspace. As a matter of fact I've actually attempted to do this myself. With the American West, or with a frontier of land, we can know when we've reached the end of it—we see the ocean, we see the end of that continent—but the frontier of night started to advance because of the creation of the Wellsbach mantle that gave us oil torches burning into the night. So a new society was able to develop throughout the night. We can point to the end of that frontier because the dawn comes and the sun rises.

What I think is fascinating, and ties in with what Breton was saying, is the question of how we know, or will we ever know, the end of a cybernetic frontier or this frontier of new technology? We could try to quantify it, we could say the end is when every nation, every culture, every person has access to this new technology. I'm not satisfied with that answer. I don't think that truly tells us that we are at the end of some frontier. So, returning to Breton's remark, this notion of self-limiting can perhaps be used in another way. Not that it will go away, but that we may be truly limited by ourselves in terms of how far we can take the tools given to us by cyberspace. Is there a frontier, or the end of a frontier, that we can reach. Or is it, to return to the underlying theme of this conference, going to be limited by our very intellect, imagination and intuition?

M. Lattanzi:

I trust we will reach the limit when we will no longer call these technologies 'new'. We do not call the car 'a new technology' anymore. In colloquial Italian, just to give an example, everyone calls the car 'the machine'; something that everybody is supposed to have. It has become so useful, so *natural*, that we cannot live without it. That does not mean that not having a car means that someone is not a human, of course. But it has become an obvious tool to own: a *transparent* technology, if I may re-state this concept.

I wouldn't be surprised if the same thing happens with Internet devices, mobile phones, etc. But I have a problem with these technologies becoming transparent. A car moves my body. It transfers my body, physically, from one place to another. An Internet connection, and the media in general (as data-providers or information-suppliers, a TV set and a PC are very much the same to me - although the level of interaction *is different*, this does not necessarily *make a dif-*

ference), ‘move’ our brain, our minds, and change our perception. Trivially, my brain and my mind can be manipulated much more through my Internet connection than through my car. With the NICT, our minds are the object being moved, and this entails the continuous danger of a loss of reference points.

But let me be brief. I would consider the frontier of these technologies to be reached when we do not call them new anymore.

This is a problem which should receive careful attention, as UNESCO has tried to suggest through the establishment of a World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology. Today, most decision-makers are concerned about infrastructures. But infrastructures are not the solution.

Infrastructures could paradoxically be an additional problem, in the sense that if we build highways, we can choose to drive a car on them or not. This does not affect our mental life. On the other hand, when you establish a communication channel, the problem of what kind of information you will receive through that channel, and how — through which cognitive modalities — it will be transferred to you, is set as fundamental at the very same moment the communication is established.

Prof. Martin Leiner:

Theological Department, Universite de Neuchatel, Switzerland

Thank you very much for all your interesting comments. The German systems sociologist Niklas Luhman said that social systems work according to a logic that functions without respect to our individual values. These values don’t count anymore. For example in the military, you have to obey even if your individual values are against the orders you have received. If you disobey, you are likely to be replaced by another soldier. The system continues to function without you, instead of integrating your individual values. Or if you are working in an administrative system, you have to follow the rules regardless of what your individual values tell you to do. If you have to work in an enterprise, you have to be efficient and your individual values are suppressed, and if you assert them, you will probably lose your job rather than change the system. I could go on with these examples. I do admit that social systems and institutions incorporate values, but from the moment the system is established, it is normally functionally closed against individual values. How can we introduce today new individual values into the social systems and especially into the economic system? The economic system always reproduces the standardization that you have so well criticized. According to the logic of economics you are much more efficient by selling the same product world-wide, and you do not have to integrate everybody, only those who can pay.

M. Lattanzi:

You put an enormous set of issues on the table for which I am afraid I may not have an answer.

Individual values might certainly be different from those of the societies we live in. And if the values of our societies are different from our individual values, I wonder if we really can call these societies *our societies*. On this regard, I would like to return to the concept of free will.

There is always a choice for human beings — I sincerely do not know if this is true, but I like to think so! There is always the choice of living in a different way.

For example, let’s say I join an enterprise and, as a newcomer, I am immediately told that, in order to survive in my new environment, I need to do this and that, e.g. snub my colleagues

and this sort of thing. If I happen not to have money, I may be told «Don't worry, here we just take money from other's pockets. Do the same». Well, I always have the choice of behaving differently. I always have the choice to think differently, to be different. I might not be rewarded in that enterprise, but, again, I wonder if in such a case that enterprise is *my* enterprise.

The problem is not to introduce our individual values as such into the system, but rather — if and when needed — to try to lead, to reorient the values of a de-humanized and de-humanizing system through our individual values. This could smoothly facilitate the integration you were referring to, even in an already structured system.

This is a solution proposed as ideal in the media everyday. It is a common theme in many movies. So, for example, I have a different set of values than the values of the environment I live in, and the happy ending comes when the importance of my values is recognized and reshapes the whole environment. This is the happy ending Hollywood has taught us to expect, but which, I find, does not teach much, as it does not tell us what to do when we are not as fortunate as the actors in movies.

We need to reflect on the alternative situation, which is what actually happens most of the time: my values are simply not recognized at all. At this point, as values do not necessarily *lose value* when they do not receive recognition, I shall eventually have to address the issue of whether I have to strive for recognition, and deny my values; or rather stand up for my values, and eventually leave.

There is nothing wrong about it. It takes enormous strength to stand up for unrecognized values, mainly in the scenario of the homogenization of today's societies. I think that today we should more and more rediscover the value of being unpopular, if needed.

I seem to recall that it has been said: if we stand for nothing, we will fall for everything.

Still on the subject of free will, I would like to refer here to the movie «Dead Poet's Society» (I definitely seem to like Robin Williams' movies!). Robin Williams plays a teacher who tries to elicit the best from his students, their best — the best from each one. One of this teacher's exercises is to take his students to the school's courtyard and to tell them all to walk. All the students begin walking in the courtyard like soldiers. Then the teacher tells them to forget that they are in school, and he asks them to walk as if nobody had ever taught them to properly walk, and nobody is watching them. At this point all sorts of different interpretations of walking come into light — running, jumping, pretending to be an animal, walking in the military fashion of the school. There is also one student who just stands, not walking at all. When the teacher asks him why he is not walking, the student answers he is just exercising his free will in deciding not to walk.

I trust we always have the possibility of giving this answer to the system we are facing.

One of the issues here on the table is, again, the concept of transparency. We tend to provide definite answers when we receive direct questions. One problem I see in new information societies is that we are often not given a direct question of whether we want to conform to the system's values. We just find ourselves taken into a way, or habit, of thinking.

We want our technologies to be transparent. To get connected, twenty years ago we had to dial a server using terminals programmed in UNIX language. Often it was not even possible to make corrections to the commands being typed onto the screen. This was definitely not transparent to the user. It was like a «black box» in a logical flow chart. So, there was the need to unveil these technologies, to make them accessible. Here we come to the concept of «user friendly» technologies. Now we have reached the opposite point, where these technologies are so transparent that we do not even realize what is happening when we use them and, as a result, we do not master the process anymore. It is like a glass door that is so well-polished and so transparent that we do not even see it, and we run into it.

These new technologies have become so transparent that we have lost sight of the fact that there are complicated processes taking place when we use them. Nevertheless these processes are there, and they are complicated. Now we can access the world wide web through HTTP

protocols just by clicking. Even a child can do this. But the issue is what does this clicking do to the child? We use fully interactive systems; they are interactive in both senses. Most people who use the «world-wide-web» (WWW) do not even realize that there is a line at the bottom of their computer screen showing the command given by the browser to the Internet. It happens more and more often that, when connecting to a website, there is an automatic reconfiguration of the browser interface and the user is given just a window with no status line, no address line — the user does not really know what is happening. You are clicking following private criteria, but you do not know what you are doing because what is behind the links is entirely transparent to you.

It seems that you are playing, but it is someone else who is playing with you.

L. Moreva:

Time is flying, but we do have time for one more question from Professor Victor Malakhov

Prof. Victor Malakhov

Ukrainian Academy of Science, Kiev

I would like to raise one more topic related to the challenges of self-consciousness. When self-consciousness is endangered by some external factors, it turns out that mere consciousness of moral obligation or value orientation is not sufficient—some profound external factors are also required. These external factors enable the individual to retain his own identity. Here it is appropriate to speak of cultural realities, in themselves— not as the set of cultural values in the individual, but as external factors which enable the individual to preserve a certain level of human morality and human identity. Historically, humanity is able to maintain morality when it feels support from culture. One problem is that we know very little of what culture is really all about—of what culture is as a specific and unique reality. The word «culture» comes from the word «colere», meaning «to foster» or «to take care of something». This presupposes that something is growing in human society thanks to human activity and this something supports people in a specific way. When we speak about the unique culture of St. Petersburg or Paris, it's not the aggregation of mass media and libraries, but it's a peculiar world of its own. It's a unique reality. I think that in current conditions this specific reality of human culture is being destroyed just as the physical environment is being destroyed. But it's needed for the progress of human morality and human self-consciousness. The issue of what cultural reality really is, is very topical now. What can be done to preserve and develop culture as a wholesome thing? The twentieth century experience shows that human self-identification based on land and nationality leads to bloody conflicts. Perhaps cultural realities may become a more fruitful and humane foundation for human self-identification in the modern world.

L. Moreva:

Thank you. I am glad now to introduce you our next speaker, Professor Victor Allakhverdov, with the paper «*Consciousness as Paradox*».

Prof. Victor Allakhverdov:

Psychological Department, St. Petersburg University

I would like to pour some scientific prose into the champagne of the soft sciences. I will speak today about psychology, which started as a hard science, and therefore is more oriented toward verifiable facts than most of the other soft sciences. However, psychology has always existed in a state of crisis, in my opinion. One of psychology's greatest problems is what we mean when we use the words «consciousness», «self-consciousness» and other useful expressions.

Nobody can say, at present, why humans need consciousness. All the theories that have existed throughout the history of psychology fail to answer this question. Modern psychologists shamefacedly keep silent about this problem, after the behaviorists, who threw away this problem. And if we look at the work of cognitive psychologists, we see that modern psychology does not address this question.

If we do not understand what consciousness is, how can we discuss the problems of moral values, of understanding and the problems of self-consciousness? I think this is the range of our problems. A second problem is related to the issue of the manipulation of individual or group consciousness. Modern psychologists know a lot of ways to manipulate consciousness. For example, if we gather two groups of people in two separate rooms and we ask them both to guess the value of some object, we will see different results if one group is first prepared for the question by an earlier question as to whether or not this group thinks that the object is worth one million dollars. Just the act of asking this first question leads the group so prepared to place a higher value on the object than the other group, which has not been subjected to any preparatory suggestions. This is the «association» effect in psychology. In order to either fight or to use such psychological manipulation, we must understand the nature of manipulation itself. But here again we face the problem of what we mean by «consciousness».

Another type of manipulation well known to everybody is manipulation of the unconscious. Humans receive and perceive all the information that comes to them and stores all this information all their lives in the unconscious, which in turn influences consciousness. We know about the so-called «25th image» which acts subliminally. This is a demonstrable way to influence human behavior by using the unconscious.

Psychologists say that the unconscious is a mystery. Freud mythologized the unconscious, and his followers continue in his tracks. But in my opinion the unconscious is something very trivial but very powerful. The unconscious processes huge amounts of information and consciousness works with that processed information. That is why consciousness does not perceive what the unconscious perceives.

So why do we need consciousness? If we cross the street and suddenly find a car bearing down on us, we freeze in our tracks in fear. How can this be useful? Why do we need consciousness? What is the function of consciousness in general? Researchers ascribe to consciousness the ability to reflect the environment adequately. It seemingly regulates our activity, while in reality the unconscious regulates our activity much better. Imagine you are walking on a wide board over a precipice. Many would fall into the precipice because their consciousness of height and fear is paralyzing, but if the same board lies on the floor, the unconscious can easily lead us across this board. So, what is the function of consciousness?

The question of consciousness is tied to the question of what self-consciousness is. This is related to the problem of verifying our self-perceptions. I have a perception of my personality, but can I verify whether I perceive myself correctly?

Let me try to resolve some of these problems. I think that consciousness performs a very important function connected to guessing the reality of the world and the reality of the personality. And after that guessing process, consciousness tries to verify whether its guesses are correct or not. Here consciousness behaves like a scholar who forms and tests hypotheses.

Our ideas are verified by experience. We talk to people to hear that they think we are right. We are trying to prove that what we know is correct. Of course, sometimes we see we are mistaken, and need to adjust. But the most important things are my ideas and my knowledge, which I reconfirm in experience.

If you ask a schoolboy to create an equation, he will always remember it, because he invented it himself. We always remember our own original ideas. Here is a huge problem—the problem of translation. How do we agree with other people, if the most interesting for me is myself, and for someone else the most interesting is himself and his own ideas. This is where social relations arise. But social relations don't have any adaptive function. Two people who

are trying to check their hypotheses about each other enter into very specific relations and the outcome is dubious. In order to verify a hypothesis about someone else, I must avoid acting on and influencing that other person in the act of checking my hypothesis. So, I must influence him (in order to elicit information) while actually not influencing him (i.e. Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle). But we actually begin influencing one another, and this is social interdependence. In the end we know we have influenced each other, and this is social dependence. That is how social relations start to form, and these are based on the checking of one's hypotheses about oneself.

Since the topic of our roundtable is the internal and external factors influencing self-consciousness, I have described the most important internal factor; it is a general question man tries to answer all his life; it is the mightiest moving force in our lives: *Am I really the way I see myself?* We are always trying to answer this question and it provides the main stimulation for self-development. It's very difficult to change one's hypotheses about oneself, although it is possible.

In the process of answering the question, «Who am I?» man tries to find some external factors that could support his idea about himself. And when looking for those external factors, man thinks in the following way, for example: «I think I'm a good man because I've accumulated wealth.» This is an objective criterion. It doesn't matter whether we are dealing with money, knowledge or mistresses, these objective criteria don't really work well. For instance, if all my books burn in a fire, will I lose respect for myself if this is my external criterion for who I am? I could choose another criterion: how willing am I to sacrifice myself for other people? I can evaluate these sacrifices in the external world and that helps me to check my self-hypotheses. Eric Fromm suggests about six different categories of these external criteria and shows them all to be unfruitful. Whatever criterion I introduce I cannot really answer the question of who I am because this is an eternal question. Even if I found the answer to this question, I could never verify that it's correct. This leads to a situation in which however we develop, we will never find final truths, and that's fine because this is a great impetus to self-development.

I would like to return to a point made by Mr. Lattanzi. Any experimental set of data can have lots of different theoretical interpretations. Our consciousness chooses one, usually arbitrarily, then we try to prove we are right. But once we have taken a stance, we discover that the other stances do not disappear, they still influence our behavior, unknown to us. Here there is a lot of possibility for manipulation.

When performing addition in a math class, we want to check our result, so we may reverse our procedure and add the numbers from the bottom up, instead of from the top down. But we will still make the same mistake, for example adding 2 plus 3 and getting 6, regardless of which direction we go when adding. We block other possibilities from our consciousness and repeat our error again. The same thing happens when we perceive the sense of words. Each word can have lots of different meanings depending on the context. For instance, if we say «Napoleon» we may mean brandy, cake, the emperor, depending on the context. But the presence of the other meanings of the word has not evaporated from our consciousness. Their presence remains with a negative connotation, and that negativity may be revealed in special experiments.

So the multitude of possibilities in our consciousness out of which we perceive one thing and don't perceive others allows us to make choices and to be responsible for our choices. All these things are verifiable by experiment, and in the near future they may provide a very powerful stimulus for the development of psychology as well as the answers to some of the questions being asked here today, questions of values and of manipulative systems such as computers. We can truly answer these questions through empirical studies, and so we come back to the natural sciences again. Thank you.

L. Moreva:

Thank you very much. Now we have about 15 minutes for questions. The first is from Professor Marina Saveljeva.

Prof. Marina Saveljeva:

Ukrainian Academy of Science, Kiev

Thank you for your presentation. I'm also involved in issues of consciousness, but not from the perspective of natural science. So, I think we differ on certain points.

First, in terms of the questions of whether consciousness is needed by the human being, I am in agreement with you that consciousness is not needed by the organism.

Second, to go beyond the subjective question of whether or not we need consciousness, we can also ask a more objective question: what does consciousness do?

Third, in terms of manipulation of consciousness. you seem too optimistic. You seem to substitute consciousness with thinking. Thinking can be manipulated but we cannot manipulate consciousness in the same way.

In terms of the definition of self-consciousness, the definition you gave seems to me closer to the idea of self-awareness. The *Philosophical Encyclopedia* gives the following definition: self-awareness is the perception of the personality by itself, its ideas and objectives. But self-consciousness is actually the perception by consciousness of its existence and subsistence as a fact — *cogito ergo sum*. Consciousness may function by making guesses about the world, but I doubt that this is an adequate definition of consciousness.

I think that consciousness, as a philosophical phenomenon, can be explained with the help of such concepts as discreteness. Discreteness is the only formal feature common to every consciousness. It's necessary for making distinctions in general and between people, so that a person can establish his or her uniqueness and self-identity.

I don't think your presentation is a contradiction to the standard philosophical theories of the formalization of consciousness.

V. Allakhverdov:

Thank you for your comments. We do have some differences in our approaches and even in our definitions. I think your definitions could be accepted within different paradigms, but in natural science an expression is defined when it enters a law, not when it appears in the *Philosophical Encyclopedia*. However, consciousness is not a natural phenomenon, so we can't use this procedure. Consciousness is not a neurophysiological process to be studied empirically.

D. Spivak:

Thank you for your interesting presentation which presented in a consistent way the problems of the contemporary theories of consciousness. Could you elaborate on your example with Napoleon? When we select between Napoleon the person and napoleon the brandy we are involved in a language game, in the terminology of the Oxford school; this is pragmatics. When we've chosen Napoleon as a historic figure, we are resorting to the mechanism of metaphor, which is a category of semantics. But pragmatics and semantics are not categories of psychology. So, I wonder how your example illuminates psychological concepts.

V. Allakhverdov:

Let me restate my example for you. We know that there are certain images in which we can see one image or a different one, in the same picture. In some of these dual images the underlying image is not consciously perceived, but is nevertheless perceived unconsciously. We sort of oust or block the less obvious image. The same process occurs in speech behavior when one

word has different senses and connotations. I use one of these senses and all the rest of them are suppressed. Perhaps this blocking or suspension is the result of the organism feeling itself to be competent in working with two mutually exclusive frameworks simultaneously.

I am involved in the problems of overloading of consciousness and diseases which come from that. I'm also involved in the study of sophisticated tests designed to study this process of overloading and the amount or norm which man can sustain while still maintaining adequate reactions. There is no data available related to the overloading of the brain, but the unconscious can be overloaded, it's related to very complex processes.

Prof. Vladimdir Kosarev:

St. Petersburg Technical University

What phrasing, what wording, what definition of consciousness is closest to your heart?

V. Allakhverdov:

The word consciousness is a term used with different connotations, in different senses, in different sciences. Physiologists speak of consciousness as an awakening in contrast to dreaming or sleeping. Some texts speak of consciousness as a qualitative characteristic or speak of the volume of consciousness. Sometimes they say consciousness is a marker. Pioneers of experimental psychology called it a beam of consciousness. So there is very diverse use of the term, and it has a very ambiguous nature. When we speak about consciousness, I would identify two things: consciousness as some empirical manifestation characterized by the sense of perception, and consciousness as a hypothesizing mechanism or tool which we are not aware of but which decides what we will perceive and what we won't and which can be described using a number of laws. As a result, the contents of consciousness, that part which is perceived, cannot be analyzed in other way, only using the methods of the soft sciences. But the hypothesizing mechanism should be studied by scientific methods.

P. Grimes:

Is consciousness a function or is it aware of functions? Or there is nothing aware of the cognitive functions?

V. Allakhverdov:

I made a distinction between empirical things, that which we are aware of, and the hypothesizing mechanism of consciousness which we only theoretically construct. The theorizing mechanism has specific functions and it can be described by a system of laws which we are not aware of, which is why we should study them. And what we are aware of, what we perceive or cognize, is some layer of that hypothesizing mechanism which decides for us what we should cognize and perceive. So, these are two different things but they are related to one another.

P. Grimes:

Of course, you need an object but consciousness may not be an object.

L. Moreva:

Thanks a lot to all the participants of this part of our meeting. Now I would like to introduce the next speaker, Dr. Kenzie Cameron. The subject of her paper is the role of communication in the construction of identity. Following her presentation we will have a circle of discussion

where each of you can offer your own view on the subject. So, Dr. Cameron's paper, «**The Role of Communication in Identity Construction**¹».

Kenzie A. Cameron

The University of Georgia, Athens, USA

In the fall of 1993, I made the decision to apply to graduate school. I had determined that I wanted to earn a Masters and a Doctorate in the field of Communication. My undergraduate degree had been in Communication Studies, and I wanted to continue pursuing my studies in that field. In the fall of 1993, I was living in Moscow. I began to tell my friends of my plans to apply to graduate school. Not surprisingly, my friends asked what field I wanted to pursue and my answer to them, without really thinking, was «Communication.»

After a brief silence, one of my friends ventured a guess: «Does that mean that you will work with things like *Sputnik*?» I paused for a minute, not knowing whether or not my friend was joking. I realized that she was not; rather, she did not know what I meant when I said that I planned to pursue studies in the field of communication.

This misunderstanding was not purely based on cultural differences. Although the friend questioning my choice of discipline was Russian, many in my own culture, back in the United States, have the same questions. What does it mean to «study communication»? My parents have asked me the same question – «What is it that you are studying when you study communication?»

I believe that part of the reason for this lack of common understanding regarding the scope and focus of the discipline of communication comes from the fact that the very word «communication» is used to describe so many aspects of our lives. The reason my friends in Moscow asked if I was going to be working with *Sputnik* is because when someone says «communication,» we may think of the advances in communication technologies that allow us to talk to friends, family, and colleagues across the world, or even those technologies that allow us to communicate with astronauts and cosmonauts while they are in space. To others, communication brings to mind the media industry – the television, radio, and video messages to which we are exposed. And still to others, communication deals with the science of speaking, and the biological processes that allow us as humans to form sounds.

In fact, my specialties in the field of Communication are social influence (or persuasion), interpersonal communication, and health communication. When I was considering my return to graduate school, I intended to focus upon interpersonal communication. After I had explained to my friends that I was not going to be working with *Sputnik* or other technological marvels, then, not surprisingly, they asked me to explain just what it was that I planned to study. I quickly realized, as I had a few years prior when I had a similar translation difficulty, that there was no expression that I knew of in the Russian language which could translate the notion of «interpersonal» communication. My rough attempt at that time was to answer that I would be considering the communication that occurs «*drug s drugom*» – *friend with friend*, or *one with another*.

Yet, such a translation still does not do justice to the field in which I am academically enveloped. The field of communication allows me to pursue my studies of message composition and design, in order to determine how best to construct messages that I want to use to inform and persuade an audience. The field of communication allows me to analyze the dialogue that

¹ I would like to acknowledge the assistance of Dr. Edward Panetta, of the University of Georgia in framing the content of the paper. In addition, I acknowledge a grant, awarded by the University of Georgia, in enabling me to attend and present this paper.

occurs between a doctor and a patient. The field of communication provides me with an opportunity to learn if activists, whether they are political or social activists, use different techniques than do non-activists when they attempt to persuade policy makers.

In the time I have today, of course, I cannot explain all of the avenues that studying the field of communication has allowed me to pursue. However, what I can begin to do is to suggest how what we have learned about the concepts of identity and self-perception from the communication discipline can inform us and complement that which we know from other disciplines. I do believe that the discipline of communication is distinct from fields such as psychology, philosophy, philology, sociology, etc. And I also believe that communication can serve as a bridge across fields that have similarities, yet are seen as distinct disciplines. I am certainly not suggesting that Communication, as a field, supercedes or replaces any other field. Rather, it is by communicating, specifically, by identifying our persona, our group, our culture, our theoretical and methodological traditions by which we pursue knowledge, that we can move forward jointly, and not competitively, in our study of the unknown, in our desire to answer the questions that drive our individual passions. I may well focus on a topic of study that you, too, have pursued. We may ask similar or even different questions in our quest for understanding. We may arrive at similar or divergent conclusions. Are we then to judge right from wrong? I think not. Rather, I believe that by sharing our results, by attempting to understand the worldview by which each of us operates, we will achieve a greater understanding, a more comprehensive understanding of the topic under study.

For example, we can consider the concept of self-perception. I maintain that self-perception, although often characterized as an internal process, is actually a product of both internal and external influences, and is developed, maintained, and transfigured through processes of communication. Identity is closely tied with self-perception, as we tend to construct an identity that is consistent with the person we perceive ourselves to be.

In the field of communication, we can look to the basics of both social scientific study, as well as the humanistic, or rhetorical study of communication, to inform us about the development and construction of an identity, whether it is the identity of a person, group, or culture. Studying communication from a socially scientific approach permits us to develop and test theories that allow us to better understand the processes of human communication. Complementing such study is the examination of rhetoric, whether it is the examination of rhetorical artifacts (such as speeches, films, written thoughts, etc.) from a specific perspective (e.g., feminist rhetoric) or a more general, somewhat exploratory approach (e.g., generic criticism, which seeks to discover similarities in rhetorical patterns across varied situations [Foss, 1996]). These academic studies of communication and communication processes further our understanding of human interaction, a portion of which is identity construction.

An initial question may be: why study rhetoric? Why study oral communication? What purpose will such study serve? A brief answer is that one can combine theory and practice and apply what is learned through such study to daily life. By studying and analyzing rhetorical artifacts, one is exposed to multiple styles, conventions, rules, and exceptions. The skills that are developed through such study include the ability to critically evaluate messages and appeals of varied kinds, to develop a greater sensitivity to people and situations, as well as to increase self-confidence and eagerness to participate in serious dialogue with others (Zarefsky, 1999). David Zarefsky, a greatly respected rhetorician, explains that «these skills will enhance your value as an employee as well as a citizen – you will better understand public issues and social controversies, decide what you think about them, and participate effectively in resolving them» (1999, p. 5). Further, specifying an oral tradition such as public speaking, Zarefsky notes, «public speaking is communication, the joint creation of meaning and understanding by speak-

ers and listeners» (1999, p. 31). Recognition of this «joint creation,» bolsters the view that self-perception is indeed a product of internal and external influences.

Further, as we study the symbols that surround us when we engage in rhetorical criticism, one of the main benefits is that «we engage in a process of thinking about symbols, discovering how they work, why they affect us, and choosing to communicate in particular ways as a result of the options they present» (Foss, 1996, p. 3).

Goffman (1959) suggests that we can view our lives as one long, involved play, i.e., he proposes the view that «All the world's a stage and we are but actors upon it.» From such a perspective, Goffman developed his dramaturgical view of human interaction, proposing that we can see the elements of actor, audience, stage and backstage, script, performance, and audience reaction in the course of our everyday lives. Adopting Goffman's view is again consistent with the suggestion that external factors (e.g., the reaction of the audience, the stage upon which we perform) as well as internal factors (e.g., our perception of ourselves as actors, our ability, willingness, and comfort in disclosing our identity) must be addressed when we create and present our desired image. Goffman also notes that our behavior is not always consistent with our identity. He states, «the individual may privately maintain standards of behavior which he does not personally believe in, maintaining these standards because of a lively belief that an unseen audience is present who will punish deviations from these standards. In other words, an individual may be his own audience or may imagine an audience to be present» (Goffman, 1959, pp. 81-82). Therefore, even at times when it may appear, on the surface, that there are no external pressures, Goffman notes that those pressures exist and play a part in our performance of our self.

To now look at our construction and performance of identity from a slightly different perspective, I will turn to briefly explaining what some communication scientists have stated regarding self-perception and identity.

We form perceptions of others everyday as we communicate with them. Our perceptions allow us to determine who these people with whom we are communicating are, and, quite frankly, whether or not we like them. We form attitudes based upon our interactions with others, based upon background information we may learn about them, and based upon our perceptions, or understanding about who these others are. Concurrently with forming perceptions of others, we each hold a perception of ourselves, and we often exert great effort in order to remain consistent with that perception (Canary, Cody, & Manusov, 2000).

It is by comparing ourselves to others that we achieve a sense of who we are, and by what standards we are judging ourselves. For example, as a political figure, how could one know, truly know, that one is the leader in the voting polls, unless one has competitors to not only compare oneself to, but also to reinforce the stated claim of political front-runner. This politician may perceive him/herself to be the best candidate, and his/her *perception* of identity (internal view) would then likely reflect such status; however, unless others (the external influences) accept that identity, the question remains: what is this politician's identity? Research in interpersonal communication suggests that, in order for our claims of identity to be legitimate, we need to assess what have been labeled «indicators of attainment» (Gollwitzer, 1986, p. 145). Such indicators include: our identity is not complete until others acknowledge it, we require feedback from others, and (we have learned) our desire to actually attain and/or present our identity is strongest when we believe that our identity has been challenged (Canary, Cody, & Manusov, 2000).

We can also view our identity as a *theory*, and so we will gather evidence in order to assess the worth of this personal theory. In order for our identity to «work,» it must be viewed by others as being plausible, or believable (Canary, Cody, & Manusov, 2000). We ourselves must believe the identity we project, and it is expected that this identity provides us a means to ex-

plain, predict, and guide our behavior (Canary, Cody, & Manusov, 2000). Gergen (1989) specifies that our identity must also be able to explain our thoughts, actions, and feelings and Canary et al. (2000) add that our identities should also enable us to predict our future thoughts, feelings, and actions. Thus, since identity is being viewed as a theory, the obvious next step is that we, as social scientists, would engage in a test of that theory.

Another test of a theory of identity could be conducted in the multiple forms of human interaction. Currently, in many parts of our world, we see cultures and societies that are engaged in the construction, or perhaps more accurately, the *reconstruction* of their identities. For example, our host country, Russia, has changed greatly in the past decade, moving from a republic of the former Soviet Union, to a country surrounded by other former republics, who now also engage in identity construction. Such construction also occurs at the interpersonal level, as individuals cognitively assess and self-define what it means to them to be a Russian, a Ukrainian, etc. When engaged in interpersonal communication, the identities are shared with another, perhaps a friend, a family member, or even a stranger. At the same time, group identities are being constructed, whether the groups are political, cultural, or social. These groups are part of larger organizations, and, as such, must adhere or find a complementary place in the larger organizations. These organizations, in turn, adhere, or even reject, existing cultural norms, mores, definitions and ideas. Throughout this entire identity reconstruction, processes of communication form the vehicle through which identity is shared, and each level of communication provides an opportunity to test one's projected identity and to determine if such identity is indeed a predictor of future thoughts, feelings, and actions of the individual, the group, or the culture.

In this presentation, in this brief span of time, I have attempted to provide you with a sketch of the field that is my academic home. There is, of course, only so much that can be covered in a presentation such as this one.

I have only been able to provide you with a brief glimpse of what I believe *my own* academic identity to encompass. However, many of our interactions with others are even shorter – we may engage in dialogue as we enter or leave a store, and that may be the sum total of our communication with another person. Have we portrayed our self-perception accurately to this other person in such a brief encounter? Have I provided each of you with an accurate view of my identity? I am constrained by my role as a presenter as to how I can begin to describe a part of my identity to you – for the very fact that there is structure and format to this roundtable discussion imposes parameters to which I must conform. Thus, we can also acknowledge how communication situations themselves, or the channels through which we receive messages, have an effect on our presentation of the self. My perception of myself is continually changing; based upon the response I receive here I may alter my perception of myself. Did I present a thought-provoking presentation? Was the presentation well received? These questions I attempt to answer based on the external influences of which I spoke earlier – the reaction of the audience, further interaction between us, or the lack of such further interaction.

I used communication in order to convey to you part of my identity. I identified myself as a scholar in the field of Speech Communication. What you walk away with from this presentation, your knowledge of who I am in an academic sense, your understanding of the field of Communication, these serve to answer the question of how capably I have presented my self-identity to you. The questions you may now ask, and those you may ask in any dialogues we may have in the future, serve to inform me as to the success of my presentation of my identity.

Our identities evolve, and change. Yet at what point can we know that the identity we believe we are projecting has indeed changed? We only will be able to claim that change has occurred when others validate the new, or perhaps modified, identity that we created. Thus, the

focus yet once more is on both internal and external influences: it is only when others accept our identity that we know we have attained our goal.²

L. Moreva:

My suggestion is that now ask questions of the presenter then continue the discussion as a whole. I invite Dr. Lattanzi, as co-coordinator of this session, to continue the moderation of our discussion.

M. Lattanzi:

Thank you. Are there any questions for our colleague?

Prof. Anna Koneva:

St. Petersburg Branch of the Russian Institute for Cultural Research

Thank you for an interesting presentation. First I would like to know how you define the structure of identity. It is obvious from your presentation that you think that identity is something which has its own structure and at the same time changes. What are the factors that effect the changes in identity and the structure of identity?

K. Cameron:

For me, our identity is composed of multiple internal and external factors. I don't want to open the question of «nature vs. nurture» here. But some of our identity is certainly developed as a result of how we are taught and what we are taught. Some of my identity as a person has certainly emerged because of how my parents brought me up. Yet at the same time, I've certainly changed from the little girl who sat on her father's knee. I think that through experience, which is one of the external factors, our identity is structured. My experience of attending school, of pursuing higher education, structured me in the sense of the way I present myself, and who I view myself to be. So that's one of the external factors. Whether or not I remain consistent to my values, and my beliefs and my mores (some of which have been taught to me and some of which I myself acquired) - that is part of the structure of identity.

I think the difficulty is when I attempt to present my identity to someone else. I'm not sure I could ever present my entire identity to someone. I might suggest that our identity, even though we may hold it as our own, only will exist as such if other people are willing to accept what we present to them. If I'm in a situation where I'm manipulated or coerced to do something that I would not ordinarily do, my identity would not be fully presented. So these are just some thoughts about what encompasses my identity. They may not be held by everyone in my field, but these thoughts give some structure to the question of who I am, and how communication itself is a part of who I am.

P. Grimes:

² References:

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To what fields has your study contributed? Have you contributed to political analysis, market analysis? Where do you show your work and what results have occurred as a result of your studies?

K. Cameron:

Excellent question. The study of communication has contributed to all of the fields you mentioned. I personally have mostly contributed to the field of health. Some of my colleagues have contributed to political campaigns, suggesting how politicians should present themselves, what messages they should present to an audience, if they should use an emotional or cognitive appeal. One of my main fields of work is in the area of HIV-AIDS. What I'm trying to do is contribute to the field of health in such a way that I'm no longer just informing an audience. Today a majority of those at risk for HIV-AIDS know of the danger. But knowing of the danger is not enough, if we don't know how to protect ourselves. I'm attempting to learn what messages will be most effective within different cultures and subcultures in order to persuade them to protect themselves from contracting HIV-AIDS.

Prof. Martin Liener:

Theological Department, Universite de Neuchatel, Switzerland

When I think about the literature I have read, I find people talking about identity only in the middle of the XX century. And my question is: why did this notion become so important then? I have a suspicion that we moderns are not as secure in our identity because there are not so many roles for us now, and we have to show others that we are someone, that we are important; we have to sell ourselves. And I find it important to think about identity, but I think it is also a difficult destiny that we have to work to form our identity. I thought also about something I've read in Martin Buber who says: *«It's not important to impose ourselves as we are, but to interest and to go into contact with the other, and it is in this contact that we become who we truly are in our deepest self and not by showing our conception or construction of our identity.»*

K. Cameron:

I do see something very difficult in what you say, especially with the notion that our idea of identity is a recent phenomenon. I certainly think that identity is a social construction, that it is constructed socially. And I completely agree with Buber that if we only see ourselves, if we only see our identity as we want to see it, then we have blinders on. Certainly, we need to look around us. I think our identity is limited by ourselves and by society and perhaps that might explain why, more recently than ancient languages suggest, we are so concerned with identity. Perhaps we now know more about people who live in different parts of the world today. And so, socially perhaps, it has become more important to be able to say: this is who I am, and I think this addresses that notion of security. It's something for me to hold onto as a human, if I know who I am. A lot of times, I think, as humans we want to be in control. Can we truly be in control? Now, I'm not going to try to answer that question! But I think that trying to assert an identity is moving toward this. When everything around me is unknown and uncertain I want to know something certain, and so I hold onto my self. But I think it is very much socially constructed, and perhaps that is why, as I mentioned, we don't find the word in ancient languages.

Dr. Sergey Chebanov:

The Institute of Biology of the Russian Academy of Sciences

There are scientific schools which often turn into scientific parties, or clans. Can you distinguish the identity of a person who belongs to a scientific school from a person belonging to a scientific party?

K. Cameron:

My initial reaction might be to suggest that in a scientific school, identity is construed through the word «school», as more of a teaching organization. In a scientific school, perhaps, I'm taught the tools that I can use to develop my ideas. Perhaps in a scientific party I have blinders on, and instead of looking to other directions, another ways to develop, perhaps I've already decided which tools I'm going to use, and I refuse to look at others.

M. Lattanzi:

I personally have two questions. The first one is generated by the last sentence of your paper: «We will only be able to claim the change has occurred when others validate our new, or modified, reconstructed identity that we created». My question is: what are your thoughts on the role that self-deceit has in the construction and transmission of identity.

K. Cameron:

I think you have just provided me with a new path for my academic career! I think self-deceit would be the blinders that I talked about. This is when other people have challenged what I believe myself to be, and I refuse to acknowledge that. Because perhaps I so much want to be the identity I believe I am presenting, that I'm completely immune to what's really going on. And in that sense, I think that's self-deceitfulness. Now that may be an unconscious or conscious level.

I think we definitely see self-deceitfulness in our identities. To me the thing that probably relates to that most are Kuhn's ideas of paradigms and paradigm shifts. This is when we are in a paradigm and we are resisting the shift to a new, somewhat different paradigm. In terms of the conscious versus the subconscious level, I think that brings up an interesting idea, because if I am unconscious of how I am deceiving myself, do I truly know that I am deceiving myself? But if I have knowledge, if I am conscious that what I am presenting is being challenged and refuted, and I refuse to acknowledge that, then I think this is a conscious self-deceitfulness, and perhaps this again might relate to the idea of control: I don't want to give up who I am because I'm afraid of the unknown. And if you are telling me that I am not who I think I am, and if you're starting to give me a push to the next paradigm, to make the shift, then I am frightened--I am terrified. And in fact, we see this when we go back to the earlier question of persuasion and fear appeals. I can scare you, but you, even though you know what I've said might be true and even though you know you are susceptible to a particular disease, you may perform what we call «defensive avoidance»: I know, but I don't want to know, and so I'm going to avoid your message. I can deceive myself but there will be consequences. They may come tomorrow, or they may come in ten or twenty years.

M. Lattanzi:

My second question is about deceitfulness and manipulation; informing and persuading. I think that the issue of persuasion is of interest for many of us. I want to link it to my presentation and to what we are discussing here, namely the impact of new information technologies and the manipulation of consciousness by them. I was wondering if you have any experience, opinions, insights or thoughts you want to share with us concerning some examples of manipulation of data provided as information and knowledge to end users?

K. Cameron:

Yes, definitely. Each year that I've been at the University of Georgia, and I'm beginning my third year there, I have spoken to a botany class. The topic of the class is scientific technical writing. I am brought over from the speech communication department to talk about persuasion. And I present to the class my conception of persuasion, as including response shaping the in-

formation, response reinforcing and response changing. And I have met with great resistance from the students. In fact, one student came up to me after my lecture and she said: «Don't put it on my shoulders, that what I write in an article might make somebody do something or not do something. I don't want that responsibility». And I said: «I can't tell you that you don't have that responsibility». My answer was that when she writes a scientific article that's intended for the lay person, she has researched it, studied it, looked at different points, and to the best of her ability she has presented what she believes to be neutral information. However, someone's going to read that article - for example, on genetics - someone is going to read that one article on genetically modified organisms, and then have an opinion and attitude about it. Did the writer of that article intend to persuade the person who read it, intend to change their opinion? Possibly not, if it is a general magazine. But by the mere fact of providing information, that person who knew nothing prior about genetically modified organisms has been informed and perhaps an attitude has been formed. I believe this is a good example of how we can persuade by just informing. This is called into question in my field. I don't think I am in the minority but not everyone believes as I do. But I believe I can persuade someone, even if I'm unconscious of doing so. And so, for example, if I am providing information in the article I may be unconscious of the fact that someone is going to read it and that it may be the only thing that they are going to read on genetically modified organisms, and that I have thus persuaded them about something.

M. Lattanzi:

Thank you. But part of my question was about the actual possibility of providing manipulated data as information.

K. Cameron:

You mean data, that I have manipulated knowingly!?!

M. Lattanzi:

That's right. Perhaps data that you have manipulated at the theoretical level, not necessarily changing the figures, but knowingly giving a specific deceitful interpretation of data.

K. Cameron:

So, the question is how manipulated data may have served to inform or to persuade someone else, and my experience on that? As I mentioned, part of what I do is message construction. And some of my message construction has come from some theories of fear and how fear persuades. It has been suggested that if I use fear I also need to use efficacy. If I threaten you, I also have to tell you what you can do avoid that threat. This was a theory that I've been involved in testing. We talk of efficacy as being self-efficacy and response-efficacy. Self-efficacy suggesting that I think I am able to do something. Response-efficacy being that what you are suggesting I should do will be effective. I've been involved in projects that have collected data that we then manipulate and it fits a theory. Currently I question that, because I am an empiricist but I believe that a theory is like a chain - only as strong as its weakest link. A theory, in order to be meaningful for someone outside my department, needs to be questioned. I currently question the separation between self-efficacy and response-efficacy. When I consider the message that the Center for Disease Control and Prevention has presented to the population, it's not so easy to separate the two kinds of efficacy. Theoretically we can separate them, and I can show you data that indicate this. But when I apply it, it does not always work. I am an empiricist, but I believe that no theory is ever proven true. You can never prove a theory, only fail to disprove it.

L. Moreva:

Thank you for your presentation. You emphasized the existential aspects of the quest for identity. I would like to say a few words on the work of our institute, begun nearly a decade ago, within the framework of a program called «*Philosophy, Culture, and Human Being, in Search of Self-Identity*». The outcome of these studies is that we reached four layers or four dimensions of the approach toward identity: ontological, phenomenological, existential and psychological. To what extent for you, in your work, are these aspects relevant and important? Our premise was that it's not only man who is in search of himself - in the current situation the entire culture is feeling lost, along with its various aspects, like art, philosophy, science, etc. Current culture exists with very vague and indistinct boundaries. In your presentation it seemed that the bottom line for you is the personal search. But to what extent do you include your own considerations into the context of cultural strategies of intercommunication, not just personal ones?

K. Cameron:

I spoke mostly of the psychological level mainly because that is what I am most acquainted with. However, I fully agree that identity is in no way only at one level and I tried to get at this by suggesting the kind of words that we use from my field in terms of the self, the small group, the culture, the organization. So, yes, most of my focus is psychological and on the individual.

L. Moreva:

And one more question from another sphere. Those we know who concern themselves with ideology and persuasion have a saying: «The more effective a lie is, the better it is». The ethical implications and undertones are ignored. A well-designed, well-conceived lie is good for communication in the sphere of ideology. And in other planes of communication, not ideological - let's say between a patient and doctor - to what extent is it acceptable to include a lie into the strategy of communication?

K. Cameron:

That's a very difficult question to answer. I think that's something that I'm struggling with myself. For example, I mentioned I look at dialogue between doctor and patient. Having been a patient, I don't appreciate it when my doctor does not tell me the full story. But yet I know people who would rather not know that they were suffering from the particular disease. Is this along to the lines of your question?

L. Moreva:

Yes, you might put it that way, although I also have in mind other levels of manipulation, as when you manipulate people by persuading them not with truth arguments but by some imbedded, or hidden, false arguments, as well as by false strategies and false words. Some think it's irrelevant whether the deceit is for a good purpose or not. What do you think about this?

K. Cameron:

This is a serious problem in ethics which touches on the question of informed consent. For example, if I do a study I am by law required to attain informed consent from my subjects. The question remains, however, what is informed consent? Have I truly given people the information they need in order to know whether or not they are being deceived? I guess I don't know if I am able to answer that question because it deals with ethics, and I am pretty much against deception.

M. Lattanzi:

So, how do you view the speech of a general to his army before a battle? As you said, these are ethical questions, and we have to be thoughtful when we face them. Whatever the reason for

the battle, whether the general is on the good or the bad side — if it is possible for us to recognize a good or a bad side —, he is the commander of the army and he has the responsibility of winning the battle and saving the army. And his speech is designed to motivate the army, and in this sense it is good. I feel that this is somehow different from the persuasion, or manipulation that, say, a demagogue can perform for the private pursuit of personal gain or success.

L. Moreva:

I think that any argument to justify a strategy of lies for good ends or for bad ends is pernicious, even if the outcome is positive. Ethical arguments are left outside in techniques of developing ideological lies. As soon as you introduce your example, enabling us to find sort of bogus, positive argument in favor of such a strategy of lying, it seems we are caught in a trap based on the classical formula: «The way to Hell is paved with good intentions.»

K. Cameron:

I think it comes down to recognizing consequences. I don't think we can always know the consequences that might come from a lie. But I think that one has to realize that if you deceive there will be consequences.

Prof. Irina Protasenko:

St. Petersburg Branch of the Russian Institute for Cultural Research

This is not so much a question as my reflection. We must be aware that knowledge is ambivalent: we can use it for good, and we can use it for bad ends. And that's the responsibility of the researcher and the responsibility of the manipulator, the ethical responsibility. Perhaps this calls for the study of the techniques of self-protection of individuals from the mechanisms of manipulation. I think that those mechanisms are out there and we should study them in order to enable us to learn to discern different methods of manipulation and how to spot hidden objectives and aims. Individual man should be able to protect himself, and the community should be able to protect itself from political demagogues mentioned by Mr. Lattanzi. Minorities, small nations and minority cultures should be able to protect themselves.

K. Cameron:

To add to that, I believe that this field of persuasion or influence includes manipulation, not because I want to use that but because if I can understand manipulation, perhaps I can use it to a greater good. But I need to understand these processes in order to know how to avoid being manipulated.

L. Moreva:

Now we really have time for a round table discussion on our reflections about the inner and outer factors of the development of self-consciousness, on new strategies of manipulation of personal consciousness. So, if you agree, maybe we go person to person and each of us will have a chance to share their views on this subject.

Julia Grabel :

Thank you. I am from California. I study there with Pierre Grimes, and I have been participating in his philosophical midwifery program for many years. Seeing so many people gathered to discuss these topics is very interesting to me. Before we can manipulate personal consciousness I think we need to be aware of what personal consciousness is. And I think the Platonic methodology that Pierre has introduced me to has provided me with the possibility to discover what truth really is, at least with respect to my own personal truth, which I think none of us has access to until we surface (i.e. bring into consciousness) what it is that we truly believe. I think

that in doing this kind of reflection, I have also learned to see that there are such things as truth and beauty and that there are things that we can participate in directly that are universal, that do not require any kind of personal interpretation. And I think that is a very high goal to set for people to come together in this world and see these things that we all share. There is nothing that prevents us from appreciating beauty other than our false beliefs. And I believe that we can offer our process of philosophical midwifery to combat false beliefs. This is self-discovery, this is something that people can now go on the internet and experience directly.

Pierre has developed a program, an actual computer program. It is called «*To Artemis*». And this is a dialogic exploration that you can take yourself through personally. It consists of over four hundred questions structured to assist you in going through this process of self-discovery. This is personal consciousness (self-awareness) to the maximum.

I would say that in the United States philosophical midwifery has not received the attention that I think it is going to receive in the international community. It is almost too obvious, it is so direct, so simple, so unpretentious that I think what people find difficult is that it's almost too simple, too easy to believe. People have trouble believing that we do have access to the truth about ourselves and the truth about our humanity. They do not believe that it could be so easy, that looking directly can achieve these results. But I am here to tell you that it is possible, and I am grateful for the opportunity to express my thanks to Pierre, and to this community for being open to hearing these ideas.

L. Moreva:

Thank you. Now we have the strategy of a relay-race. So, on to the next speaker.

P. Grimes:

Strategy is a good word here. It presupposes that we can stand back and examine, that we can differentiate clearly certain sets of categories. So, therefore, when I am going to approach a philosophical exploration that has a strategic importance I must already have a map, we might call it a map of consciousness, to chart our metaphysical journey. And the metaphysical levels which intellect projects itself through, of course, are the idea of the One, while Being-Intelligence-Vitality is the second, then questions on the nature of the soul, of the dynamics of the soul and the structure of the soul, would be third. Each one of these levels has its own logic and its own language. The ability to keep the concepts appropriate to each level becomes a measure of the clarity of the mind that's using them and that can express itself through them. Therefore, the strategy for personal consciousness is an ancient one, that has to be brought into everyday and any day, which is to discover whether or not one has mixed the levels of meaning and to discover that there is some map through which you can find what is essential. For myself, the map would be Plato's *Parmenides* and Proclus' *Commentary on Plato's Parmenides*. And this map has been used, I think, again and again throughout history. It has been especially important in my own work, as a strategy for personal consciousness and individual development. Thank you.

S. Chebanov:

Although it is well known that there is less truth than delusion, I think that much more has been done and said in history in order to find out what is true. But delusions are very rarely studied seriously. Of course, there is Francis Bacon, and a few others, but I think that we need to understand clearly how delusions are constructed and construed, to make fundamental categories of delusions. Everything exists, but different things exist in different ways, and the systematic works of A.A.Ljubishev and Ju.A.Shreider is very interesting. Sixteen criteria of illusion were distinguished which were then divided into seven independent criteria: locality, stability, individuality, logicality, etc. and from these we could build a polymodal ontology. And out of these modes of reality only some exist. Then the question arises whether in what is

given to us we can distinguish two things: what is actual (what is real in this or that mode, what is authentic), and what is not actual (that which is not real). And it turns out that the inauthentic things are very efficient and they have some morphological qualities such as deceit, forced extrapolation and spontaneous psychological expansion. There are certain sources of delusions such as dreams, and we could build a typology of unrealities including mirages, phantoms (for example phantom pains), etc.

Fictions serve as an instrument for idealization, for the perception of real objects as fictions and for ideals when those ideals become fetishes and for myths - the unreal things that cannot be falsified and so will always remain correct. Those are the illusions of the first order. Illusions of the second order manifest a special kind of seemingness. Here we see that we have different types of people who perceive cold and hot differently, and that the amino acid phenylalanyl seems either bitter or tasteless to different people. Here we come to the process of psycho-ontogenesis. I think that this is important to bear in mind when discussing the phenomenon of consciousness and how it works constantly with what it does not understand.

Prof. Dmitri Dubnitskiy:

St. Petersburg

I would like to call your attention to one point that was mentioned today but was little discussed: the influence of culture on self-consciousness. Self-consciousness is always motivated by interpersonal culture, and the interrelation and inter-influence of self-consciousness and culture constitutes the history of humanity. Their mutual roles are very important and define different types of culture and semantic and epistemological norms. This role evolves and you can see crisis in our history, the crises of interpersonal motivation and of human consciousness. They are very vivid. For instance, the crisis between antiquity and Christian culture, when for the first time in European culture we see the role of self-consciousness, although this role is very passive still and in Christianity becomes active. There is a strong motivation which leads man outside the borders of culture: I am not of this world, so to speak, and very similar things happen in Buddhism. But at the same time, culture is a powerful imperative in human behavior. It controls motivation. The inversion of those two components, the cultural and the personal, takes place in the European Renaissance. And the personality, the importance of personal innovation, became the basis for European culture up to the present day. It also evolves from the Renaissance through the seventeenth century when the limiting disciplines of consciousness appear, the rules that guide our mind, that develop a cultural interpersonal component and then in the eighteenth century it evolves into an omnipotent imperative. All those imperatives are transformed at the time of Kant into the age of reason, the cult of reason. Then there is another inversion and the crisis of motivation which gives birth to the culture of the nineteenth century where personal importance starts to dominate absolutely. Personal self-consciousness defines the very fact of the existence of culture and becomes the object of tense reflective thought. Then in the twentieth century the personal component is subordinated to the interpersonal and now personal involvement in the social situation becomes of utmost importance. In this modern culture there are many negative aspects, but we can say that radical personalism can never resolve those contradictions: is there any way beyond this radical personalism? History will answer that question. Thank you.

Prof. Abram Usfin:

St. Petersburg Conservatory

I would like to try to go from the ontological to the practical, to some real aspects of the subconscious manipulation of man. We must look soberly at society and our times. Because now we have come to the point that leads the individual to become a zombie, and in that process one of the most radical and reliable means is the audio component of our world. What

is sometimes called music (I mean pop music) but which, alas, is only similar to music because it incorporates some aspects of rhythm and frequency. And I would define what is happening as a tragic triumph of pseudo-culture. I will not give my full opinion because that would demand much more time and a very serious study of who is doing this and how programmable that process is within small regions and on the planetary scale. I can only say that it is very effective; this process is very efficient. I am talking about more than the devastation of hearing or about the degradation of operative memory. I think it is time to try to reveal the dangerous qualities of this «music» and to find some means of blocking or suppressing that collective suicide which threatens our future. I hope that this will happen and that we will find ways of protecting ourselves before it is too late. Thank you.

V. Kosarev:

I want to say that the topic that was raised today about the influence of the internet on our minds and the topic that was raised here two days before of «The Genetic Biotechnologies» lead us to a broader topic. In my presentation yesterday I talked about the evolution of human consciousness, but that evolution took place within the framework of one species alone. The prospects that are opened before us now provide us with the possibility, or perhaps even the inevitability, of a species change and of man merging with the information environment that he has created. I think this is an interesting topic which could be the subject for a future conference. Thank you.

Dr. Marina Mikhailova

High School of Cinema and Television, St. Petersburg

Seductive and Seditious Speech Strategies

There are a lot of works about the seductive speech strategies in modern philosophy (M.Foucault, J.Baudrillard, R.Barthes). On the contrary, language includes the possibility to overcome the magic of discourses, to liberate consciousness from the dictate of words. What are the conditions of the actualization of the first group of strategies or of the second one? It is evident that the quality of speech depends on the speaker, on his position in relation to the extralinguistic reality. Language seems to become seduction and dependence when speech has no existential foundation, when the linguistic activity is reduced to the tautological repetition of the discourses of others. The situation of the strict contact of the personality with the world, when the personality is involved in vivid relations with truth, has as its result responsible and creative speech, able to liberate consciousness and to struggle against stereotypes.

Prof. Lydia Starodubtseva

Kharkov University, Ukraine

It is known that in moments of transition in the life of cultures, attitudes towards historical memory are polarized. On the one hand, they strive to get rid of the dead cultural forms. For instance, at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, they were afraid of drowning in pseudo-history and false memory. Albert Schweitzer wrote about «abuse of history». «Surplus is harmful for life», — declared Fridrich Nietzsche. When foundations are ruined and the instinct for self-preservation weakens, culture easily erases traces of the past. Spiritual effort becomes oriented toward the future — to the «other side of the abyss» which culture tries to jump over. Hence futuristic dreams and utopism: the value of the past is exhausted, memory loses its value.

On the other hand, it is during points of critical change that the conservative tendency of going back to historical prototypes becomes stronger. It is paradoxical, but the time of the flourishing of super-retentive cultures is at the same moment a time of destabilization, of change of paradigms, and «reevaluation of values». It is another extreme, a contrary pole of historical con-

consciousness. It is during the period of catastrophes and crises that we try to catch a salutary straw of illusion of the past. Such «retentive» cultures are concerned, most of all, with maintaining and preserving the traces of what exists no more. «Memorativeness» overcomes «spontaneous feeling for the present», and «the history cult» begins dominating society; it defines cultural models, stereotypes and the spiritual bearings of development. Hence, it involves respect for the monuments of the past, «passe-ism», and a seeking of one's roots in the past. Slogans «back to traditions» and the strategy of «restoring historical memory» are no better than the dictatorship of artificially organized oblivion: there is a threat of restoring not the spirit, but the formality of traditions. And it, as a rule, results in distortions and the substitution of real history with quasi-history. To deliberately erase the past is deception, but a false and illusory past is a no less unfortunate deception.

Both tendencies, forgetful and retentive, interweave and merge into each other creating a complex unity. Their most characteristic combination is the so-called «retrograde amnesia» when recent events are wiped out from consciousness while distant ones are kept in absolute clearness. Arthur Schopenhauer used to call such memory «far-sighted». Retrograde amnesia is manifested in culture in the fact that the memory of culture becomes far-sighted, in a certain sense: recent history is deliberately ignored while spiritual priorities are selected from deeper layers of the past.

Interrelation of retentive and forgetful tendencies creates a complex picture of the historical past which is built- into the consciousness of culture. In this map of historical consciousness there are places of special ethical preference, «memory loci», continents of neutral territories as well as «blank gaps» and whole «oceans of oblivion». It is very difficult (if not impossible) to define a certain «memory locus» and its chronological connection. The map of historical consciousness is a living and moving entity. Not for a single moment does it ever remains motionless, and every new turn of historical events changes its outlines.

Let us conventionally think that «looking back into the past» is memory, and «turning away from the past» is oblivion. But who or what «universal necessity» defines the choice between the former and the latter? The laws of cultural memory and oblivion are of artificial, and natural, in character. Artificial, as the past is governed by subjective selection and interpretation of cogitating consciousness. Natural, as the subject of historical culture memory is always a «super-individuality», and thus the laws of memory and oblivion are ruled by rhythmical changes analogous to ebbs and tides, to alterations of nights and days. These changes are longer than human lives; their rhythm is measured by centuries and millenia; super-retentive epochs alternate with forgetful ones, *and vice versa*. It is evident that in cultural life there is a «natural restricter», some kind of consciousness filters which avoid, on the one hand, superfluous forgetfulness and, on the other hand, superfluous retentiveness.

The epoch of the final decades of the 20th century, that is, the boundary between the second and the third millenium, is often called «postmodern», «postindustrial», «postclassical», «poststructuralist», «postreligious», etc. An attribute with the prefix «post-» is usually used. The culture of the «post-» epoch is being absorbed by memory but, like a system of mirrors looking into the past, gives a new image every time. The mirrors of memory are flexible and unstable, and memory itself reminds us of Proteus: it is changeable, moving and multifaceted; it abounds in new reflections, images and shadows. Some mnemonic peculiarities of the «post-» epoch are as follows:

- «Hypermnesia», i. e. superfluous memory, passe-ism (L.N.Gumilev), such conditions of retentive culture when it is «moving forward, looking backward», feeling that it is doomed to the unbearable and constantly growing burden of the past.
- «The loss of time coordinates», i.e. the confusion of the chronological sequence of events in historical consciousness. Layers of the past belonging to various times coexist as far as their value is concerned, they make up an a-chronological landscape of ideas where «before» can freely mix with «after».
- «Retrograde amnesia»: recent events are forgotten while the distant past is perceived more and more clearly. Thus, the recent cultural layers of modernism are negatively evaluated in the «post-» epoch culture, and are ousted by more distant ones.
- The art of pseudo-reminiscences: present is pressed into an illusory past; neo- and pseudo-worlds of the past are constructed in mind, and a culture eagerly believes in their existence. The gaps of memory are filled in with imaginary history.
- Torn of memory, i. e. an entropy of meanings of historical existence resulting from the disintegration of the «idea of history» and the loss of the highest Meaning. Hence, ontological vagueness about the aims and bearings of world history scatters of culture memory into a collage, and its movement away from logocentrism toward a chaos of meanings.

The memory of the «post-» epoch keeps an unstable and changing image of the past — the image of post-history which inspires only an ironic attitude. What will come next? The transformation of the historical vector into a ring? A new synthesis? The next Renaissance? A return to the beginning? Disintegration and collapse? Maybe the superfluous retentiveness of our times is a sign it is facing non-being, a retrospective show of cultural reminiscences before it turns into nothing?

If a metaphorical concept «cultural memory» can be termed cultural «mnema» then all the above questions can be addressed in «mnemology», i. e. the teaching of «mnema». Its structure and the laws of memory and oblivion in organic and non-organic, natural and cultural media. Mnema is neither the process of memory-oblivion, nor the object of memory-oblivion, but the ability of thought, the very possibility of retentiveness and forgetfulness in the human mind, in the history of thought, and in the historical being of culture.

In order to arrive at a more exact definition of «mnema», it is necessary to recount a number of episodes from the history of memory theories. In 1870 German psychologist Ewald Hering in his report to Viennese Academy of Sciences declared his hypothesis of total or universal memory, i. e. memory characteristic of all forms of matter: beginning with the simplest cell up to man. Hering's report was entitled «Memory as a Universal Function of Organized Matter». This German psychologist regarded memory as «the retaining of any changes resulting from outer impulses after these impulses are over». Following Hering were the philosophers of the first half of the 19th century, K. N. Carus, R. Zemon (1904) and E. Bleiler (1931), who developed the teaching of «mnema» which considers memory not only as a psychic but as a generally organic function. The teaching of «mnema» or «mnemism» originating approximately at the same time as the theory of «noosphere» by P. Teilhard de Chardin and V. I. Vernadsky, assumed that there was a universal ability to remember which is characteristic of all living beings: plants, animals and people.

Using this concept of «mnema» half century later when deep structural changes in information technologies have taken place and the earth is covered with computer nets, one should widen this concept extrapolating it from the organic world into the «second nature» world. The word «mnema» could mean the transition from memory treated as a biological and social abili-

ty (to remember, store and pass traces of impulses), to the memory of artificial signs and symbols, i. e. to create a bridge from the world of nature to the worlds of culture and civilization.

Mnema of culture is somehow akin to human memory. The Aging of culture is invariably connected with changes of mnema analogous to human memory diseases. Thus, cultures approaching their decline become, on the one hand, too retentive (like old men engulfed in reminiscences) and, on the other hand, too forgetful (senile amnesia). If traditional cultures have strong mnema, the dynamic processes in modern and postmodern cultures crush mnema. The memory of «virtual cyber-space» is mosaic and short-lived. At the same time, integrative tendencies of global informational processes create new nets of cultural mnema which try to resist the total «oblivion of being», the tearing of the fabric of culture. However, the more aggressively and imperiously information technologies march forward in cultural space, the less hope remains that the mnema of culture itself will not turn into a «virtual reality», and the latter might be a post-modern Lethe — the informational river of forgetfulness of the third millenium.

Alejandro Leal:

I have in this moment the impression that humankind is in a submarine and everybody is touching buttons to go in different directions, but no one understands very well how this submarine works. We do not understand ourselves and how we are using this submarine or even the reasons why we are in this submarine. At this moment, I see the cybernetic possibilities that we have, the ecological situation, the genetic techniques, the communication capabilities, and political situation; there are a lot of parameters that are playing very crucial roles. And I also see that we aim to be an authentic democracy and that we also want to have authentic human development, and I think that at this moment it is very difficult for anyone in the submarine to say «OK. Let's stop. We should go again to the surface.» We have to keep working on these philosophical reflections and also trying to integrate all the people who are just pushing buttons, and to say «Let's stop, let's reflect on all these things.» So, in this sense I think we should try to develop ideas for humanity and to avoid the manipulation that is leading to the deterioration of human beings.

Liubava Moreva

If you permit me, I would like also to share some of my reflections (or perhaps some of my illusions) concerning the subject of our round table. It seems that the human being of today is dealing with serious shifts in the paradigm system of values and ontological orientations. Notwithstanding the flexibility of this system, one should take care in order to preserve its vital force, which consists of an essential difference between *descending* and *ascending*. Any indifference to this distinction, any insensitivity to it, any forms of ethical and ontological aloofness, lead a person to a crisis of identity, to a total lose of the meaning of his/her own existence, to existential devastation. An extremely attentive and sensitive relation to Tradition is needed in order to avert the dangers of the paradigm shift that is happening (in the *topos* of Being). In this context we may remember the following: «*Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God.*» (Rev.. 3:2)

Today the industry of death is hidden under a certain cultivation of the production of «rubbish» - ready made, casual cheap commercial standards of life, love and death. The intense replacement of deep existential states with their signs, turns man into simply a case or envelope, the carrier of artificially inserted bits of information which transform man into an individual variable in the algorithmical system of social existence. Occasional break-downs in this system are relieved as often as necessary by psychoanalytic, psychedelic or other means. The common result is a feeling of growing internal emptiness.

Today one can hear the following in modern philosophy:

The total simulacrazation of culture and life, the impossibility of distinguishing authentic from inauthentic, existential devastation - all these are more or less evident symptoms of the failure awaiting us. We carefully maintain signs of culture, intensify communication, and with this we are losing more and more of the sense of our own existence. To revive past values is to revive old illusions. Behind us there are no anticipations which have not already been realized.

All of what was based on mystery and truth has also disappeared. Man is left with the space of play, imitation and aesthetics (and this brings its own transcendence). No signs of renaissance are visible so far. But we are not in a difficult situation, just in a unique situation. Probably, we should see it to the end; no one knows how it will turn out and this is interesting.

Such is the law of systems, the more perfect a system is, the more catastrophes and unpredictable mishaps it produces. The system starts working according to the random character of metastases. The themes of plot, identity and everything related to them are impossible. We enter a sphere which is totally probabilistic, in a situation where there is no purpose for activity. The internal state of a system which contradicts itself is irony. Irony is in the center of catastrophe.

All strategies are turned upside down: the world starts playing with them. Irony becomes the only form of reconciliation for us in the catastrophic space of hyper-ir-reality. We are in an extreme situation: life, death, love are surrealistic. Though, from existence's point of view, everything is realized already.

The paradox of the «final situation» in which modern man apparently finds himself, requires of him certain «fatalistic strategies». The peculiarity of the situation about which we are speaking is that man is essentially pushed out of the space of life into the zone of signs. In this zone the saturation of information makes the reality of an event absolutely indistinguishable from its virtual reality. Here the virtual reality of the mass-media makes equally significant/insignificant any of its messages. For instance, if violence and killing continue in Chechnya, despite all the assurances of the official statements of political leaders (as evidenced by footage of calm and peaceful life there); if this violence and killing go on despite all our calm footage, the result is general indifference in the population.

One of my hypotheses, which I would like to suggest for your consideration, is that, notwithstanding everything mentioned above, the tendency to a new productive and searching synthesis has become vitally important in contemporary culture. Conceiving, explaining and interpreting the intentions of the human mind - getting behind the looking glass of postmodern discourse - is exhausting. The most intense activation of the sense-making ability of the human being is needed to restore the lost balance between "the absurd versus the meaningful" - to prevent the human being from perishing in the post-mortal state of one's own absence.

The necessity of a productive mental synthesis and sense-making activity emerges in the growing interaction between religion, philosophy, science and art. Having noted that "***we still don't have an epistemology, which would match the highest spiritual being***" Nicolai Berdyaev (1874-1948) highlighted the deep dependence of epistemology on the spiritual growth of man. Accepting the immanence of cognition in being and the possibility of the creative growth of man (to the highest states of spirituality) not only presupposes a return to ontological roots of thought, but fills thought with a striving to the transcendent, that is, feeds it with an energy of infinite self-deepening and openness.

Philosophical thought was supposed not only to overcome "*the low forms of communication*"; it appeared to be not only a right, but a duty of everybody to strive to transform and perfect one's being, the task of individuality to "*creative increasing life*". Here establishing the personality as the foundation of any being presupposed first of all the discovery of individuality in its freedom to affirm its striving to universalism. This is the aim of philosophy "*not creating a system, but as a creative cognitive act in the world*".³

It is more difficult to take upon oneself the execution of philosophy as the production of spiritual activity in which the inner integrity of man is not only realized but is also restored. Only then will philosophy see itself as the liberation of man from any depression so that he could play his own role in the *cosmos*, where he is able to express the meaningfulness of his own spiritual life. *Philosophy expects communication to be carried out on the basis of primary and ultimate intuitions and not on the basis of the intermediate proofs of discursive thought*. It is important to recognize the essential difference between some averaged logical forms of philosophical knowledge (which often functions in society by solving purely didactic problems) and philosophy in the process of its birth and life in culture.

For M. Bakhtin, to understand an object is «*to understand my duty toward it (my due attitude), to understand it in its relation to me in the unique being-event, which presupposes not abstraction from myself, but my responsible participation*», this means «*to grasp the truth of interrelations*».⁴ the striving of philosophical reflection to understand (and thus to overcome) the "crisis of the act". The division of the subjective world into the vital world of depth and the objectively posited world of abstract meanings is inside this crises. Thus, the most vital test for philosophical gnosis is whether or not it is able to be the praxis of a "spiritual act".

The striving of philosophical reflection, increasingly pronounced in the twentieth century, to force its way to life-authenticity (or the authentic vitality?) for the man-in-the-world inevitably gives a problematic character to the very phenomenon of reflection. As thought discovers for itself the possibility of *consciousness broadening equally with life* (A. Bergson) and when the theory of knowledge and the theory of life appear inseparable, then the motif of deep dissatisfaction with the so-called "logic of solids" appears. The anemic range of expression of abstract-logical discourse is unable to comply with thought seeking to express all the wealth of its shades of meaning. Thought longs for a lively word which does not hide meaning but opens the possibility of the infinite increase of meaning

Probably, we would look to the role of intuition in philosophy anew if we saw that *intuition in thought is not an occasional spark, but the primary essence of thought*. Thought is not a concept here, but the essence of the thing, reflected in the concept and participating through the concept in meaningfulness and comprehensibility.

The fact that the human being not only lives through his life, as if running some distance between the date of birth and that of death, but also searches for some meaning for his stay in this world, is almost a commonplace in terms of his *differentia* - in the definition of his species. In this search a human being undertakes a task similar to that of a fairytale character: «go, I don't know where - bring, I don't know what», - he goes, without knowing where, making his way in life through the semantic field of unpredictable possibilities. The questions forming the pattern of rhythm of going this way are not anymore from a fairytale: «Who are we? - Where have we come from in this world? - Where are we going to? » Those are variations on the classical questions of gnosis: «Where do we strive for? Where do we escape from? What is birth? What

³Berdyaev N.A. *Meaning of Creativity*, Moscow, 1916, p.47

⁴Bakhtin M. *Philosophy of Act*.

is rebirth?» (Valentine, II, Clem. Exc. Theod. 68.2). This is echoed in the Christian Gnostic imperative to know «What you are born for; to whose image? What is your essence? Who governs you? What is your relation to God?» (Clement of Alexandria, II Strom. v.23,1).

In our historical consciousness we need to leave behind the abstract idea of humanity. The idea of humanity becomes concrete in real history, in its integrity. Carl Jaspers once remarked that the real measure of our humanity comes when we stand helpless before a catastrophe which destroys all our defensive thinking habits. From these sources comes the demand of communication in its unlimited sense. They give us a feeling of kinship. They indicate to us the aim that allows our will to communicate.

The word of the artist, the word of the philosopher and the religious thinker or scientist meet on the boundary of the utmost responsibility of humanity (of its own individuality, the peculiarity of human being) before the universe. This is the encounter of thought and word in the spiritual space of deep feelings experienced by the person who is aware of his unity with the infinity of the world. It is here that the possibility of the "*gnosis of life plenitude*" is acquired; the possibility of that inner principle of cognition, imbued with the energy of man's spiritual growth wherein we observe not the opposition of the inner and outer world but their reciprocal relation. This is how the necessity of the spiritually growing gnosis declares itself: the movement of thought in the space of life plenitude where man as "an emotional-practical-comprehending being" is included into the ethical-meaning continuum of the ontology of communication. Here thought is directed at the horizon of free creative human self-formation in the world; here the individuation of thought and word represents, in effect, the principal universalization of meaning generated in the space of interactive discourse.

An elementary condition of the possibility of any dialogue as a meta-form of communication and life is the human ability to hear and understand "another one" even if comprehending only the very general meaning. The main point here is to be able to respond to the heard and to understand with your whole entity, your word and deed supporting the energy of generating distinct sense.

It is easy for a hermeneutically experienced thinker to find an important inaccuracy in the above: it is proved that we can hear and understand in the "other one" first of all our own tensions of meaning. The invisible network of historical, national, socio-cultural, individual psychological, universal metaphysical and other prejudices determine our response in such a quasi-dialogue, so transforming it into the "limitless place" of solipsistic monologues fraught with total incomprehensibility.

We do need the time and space, and new horizons for real *communicating silence*. «*For where among people openness is established, even not in words, the sacred word of dialogue is pronounced*» (M. Buber, *Dialogue*).

Prof. Martin Leiner:

Theological Department, Universite de Neuchatel, Switzerland

As a theologian I will try to contribute something to the history of the notion of self-consciousness within the great *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie* which has appeared in many volumes in Germany. Five years ago volume S with «self-consciousness» appeared (cf.

article: «*Selbstbewußtsein*» in: *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, vol. 9, Darmstadt/Basel: Schwabe 1995, pp. 350-379).

It was found that the notion has its origins in theological discussions about the Trinity in England in the late seventeenth century. And the discussion was the search for analogies to the trinity in which something is different and identical at the same time. In my consciousness of myself I (A) am conscious of myself (B). The idea of self-consciousness says that the I who is conscious is identical with the I who is the object of the consciousness ($A = B$). These two are different: A is subject and active, B is object and passive. Nevertheless these different entities (A and B) are identical. Probably in 1690, theologians like J. Turner and W. Sherlock used the word of 'self-consciousness' for the first time. This discussion influenced John Locke who introduced this concept in 1694 in the 2nd edition of his «*Essay Concerning Human Understanding*». Beginning with this work 'self-consciousness' became a key-concept of philosophy and of modern culture.

What can this mean? Like in the trinity there is a mystery. There is an profound insight here: God, the father, cannot be grasped with our ideas, but only his expressions in the son and the Holy Spirit. In the same way, the identity of the I, the first I (A), cannot be completely grasped and cannot be completely expressed in all we say about our identity. And thinking about our discussions I would say that the mystery is important to respect; the other one as somebody whom we cannot ever know totally, is to be respected. Where does his freedom come? What determines ultimately his choices? All this comes out of the mystery of another person. On this basis all that we tried to make others believe about us is a certain, but not a complete truth, even for us in a certain sense. And it is important to open this myth we establish about ourselves to a dialogue with others.

We even have to respect the mystery of the other more profoundly than everything we can build upon our so-called knowledge about the other. And then by relativizing ourselves we can perhaps go forward. This would be also a kind of intellectual humility. Thank you.

Dr. Elena Yaroslavtseva:

The Institute of Human Being of the Russian Academy of Sciences

We have been feeling worse and worse speaking about manipulation and things like that. But I guess that the key manipulator we have in life is nature, is our outside continuum, is the environment. And man, in the history of his existence, always opposes this manipulation. If we are to change the pattern of interaction from conflict and competition to one of less conflict, we need friendly dialogue. Now we are accumulating in each other destructive experience, that is, destructive experience toward ourselves. And if we know how to respect ourselves, maybe by respecting the mystery in ourselves, we will be able to construct positive discourse with others. In this case we should not suspect manipulation from someone else if he wants to achieve his own ends with our help. But we should be aware that the other person might have inadequate objectives and we might come to terms with him, agreeing by negotiating on the systems of interaction. The challenge of manipulation would be even sharper and more sophisticated in the further interaction with the environment, world and nature. We should not be hurt by that and we should try to exist in another dialogue system, the system of cooperation and mutual trust.

Dr. Alina Venkova

St. Petersburg Branch of the Russian Institute for Cultural Research

The problem of self-representation technologies, creation of identity construction and its transformation under social influence is urgent, because it touches the subject of the various ways and spheres of knowledge, originally being the common point of many branches of science.

Solution of this problem requires a comprehensive approach to its study with application of the research technologies of various humanitarian sciences.

In the usual, present day type of mentality, named postmodern, the construction of identity with fuzzy outlines and varying content has been generated. The absence of a hierarchy of values, precise behavioral algorithms, taste pluralism, all these have determined the destruction of the «centre – periphery» links in identity construction. The changing of an "I image" has taken place under the influence of the transformation of self-consciousness, which demonstrates movement from structural to rhizomathical organizations. Because of this, identity in general, and self-identity in particular, receives qualities of mobility, flexibility, remaining in an atmosphere of possibility, instead of reality. Various kinds of masks, fictions and false identities, certainly having a place in prior epochs, today receive wide circulation. Playing a maximum amount of "I image" variations, trying on other models of behavior and images of thought strengthens the element of a game beginning in the self-representation of a person.

The problem of a presentation of One's identity to Another, of the separation of oneself from another receives, because of the described circumstances, a new dimension. How should one express oneself in the process of perpetual formation? What should we show to another: self-identity or a mask? Are there any points of binding which allow us to detect a steady kernel of identity construction?

The possibility of answering these questions is hidden in self-representation technologies, mechanisms and forms of disclosing oneself to another. The choice of a channel and a modus of self-representation becomes here of basic significance. Whether it will be a self-disclosure on a social (nationality, trade, circle of communication), bio-social (sex, age), intellectual-generalized (science), artistic-creative (art) or some other channel depends on the subject of the self-representation and conditions in which this self-representation is carried out. The character of identity, its elements and form, appear in the individual's discourse, containing the structures of "a story about him or herself" (studying of these structures allows us to open through a verbal component, more global matters and their derivations), in the characteristics of the series of events, in the algorithms of acts, in the type of character and life strategies, in the outlines of a vital project. Perhaps, the most essential aspect allowing one to come nearer to disclosing the character and structures of identity, is the choice of the path or framework in which the process of self-disclosing occurs.

A solution to the question "how to show oneself to another?" appears in the situation of choice. In spite of the absence of a hierarchy of values and a system of preferences in the postmodern mentality, the actuality of the choosing procedure and decision making is saved. However, the structure of this process has undergone noticeable changes. The choice procedure which is carried out in modern conditions can hardly be considered as fate-making, giving the accepted solution a final and irrevocable character. The situation is the opposite. The moment of a choice is opened as event: the event of preference of one form of self-representation over another. This moment of making a preference - one "I image" to another - acquires in the contemporary situation a new acuteness. Criticism of postmodern mentality does not want to recognize the fact that varying, sliding identity is a kind of self-statement declaring its right of existence. Dynamic, constantly-forming self-consciousness claims to be the factor of a self-structuring, creation of identity of a new type.

The strategies of manipulation of personal consciousness which take into account the factor of floating identity, oriented on the singleness of "I image" configurations, could be considered the most productive today, because of the indicated reasons. The World Wide Web is a most attractive and a most dangerous tool just because of its boundless possibility to manipulate self-consciousness and self-identity. The possibility of being absorbed in the total environment, where there are no systems of orientations and all points of views seem to be especially attractive mean that as a tool of manipulation the WWW is the most employed and unpredictable.

Contemporary art sensitively reacts to the present background, demonstrating the possible consequences of the growth of the above described processes, showing various elements and structures of the forming future mentality.

Art - playing with social and political utopias and myths, ecological and mental catastrophes - is not as infantile, as the professionals believe. The problem points of the development of consciousness under the influence of external and internal factors, forming outlines of a future identity, are in an unusual way highlighted and demonstrated by contemporary art both in the West, and in the East. The close study of these processes in a wide socio-cultural context should become one of the topical tasks, today facing the representatives of all the humanitarian and natural sciences.

L. Moreva:

Thank you. And now two final remarks, first from Dr. Lattanzi, and then I myself will say a few concluding words.

M. Lattanzi:

Thank you. I shall say just few words. It seems that the sign that we have achieved a higher level in the development of the human mind and of consciousness is when we start analyzing what we are perceiving, when we start doubting what we are perceiving - when we abandon certainty. I really value this idea. I definitely think that the impact of the new information and communication technologies on modern societies represents a crisis, which needs to be addressed; so as we strive to reach a new, higher level in development of our consciousness, we must continue analyzing, doubting, and not being overconfident about the correctness of what we are thinking and doing. «*Dubium sapientiae initium*», as Decartes put it.

May I conclude by saying that this roundtable, and the whole symposium, have been most enjoyable and fruitful. I cannot adequately express my thanks to Professor Moreva for providing the enriching space of sharing and of mutual learning that we have enjoyed during these last five days. Thank you once more.

L. Moreva:

I am thankful to everybody who accepted our invitation and joined in this five day *intellectual marathon* we have had here in St. Petersburg. I believe that during our symposium each of you has not only received new information, but also had the possibility for the growth of self-consciousness. I would like to thank the organizing committee of the symposium, my colleagues, for their exemplary work.

We appreciate very much the support of the UNESCO Sector for Social and Human Sciences. It was a great pleasure to have the UNESCO Division of Philosophy as a co-organizer of our meeting. We warmly thank Dr. Lattanzi for his active professional support during the realization of the project and for his participation in the Symposium. We hope to continue our fruitful collaboration and to develop interdisciplinary and comparative philosophical studies into the dynamics of contemporary culture, and the consequences of present day social changes. We will continue our meetings, our discussions and our publishing work devoted to *the philosophical and physiological aspects of the dynamics of mentality in information societies*, keeping in mind that «**to be, means to communicate**».

Finally, I would like only to remind all of us about the primary role of a philosopher, that is, a person who is an expert in the art of harmonizing (*musikos*):

«He strained his ear,» Jamblich tells us about Pythagoras, «fixed his mind upon the symphony of the spheres... heard and understood the universal harmony and chiming of the spheres and of the stars moving in those spheres...being in a good

mood in terms of the sense content of his mind and, so to speak, as he perfected himself, he thought of transmitting this image to his disciples...»

The *intuition of being* here appears as the true source of philosophy.

We feel it is significant that UNESCO's Director-General Mr. Koichiro Matsuura concluded his first address by proposing to introduce one of the guiding principles of Japanese ethics, *wa* (harmony): "As Director-General, I should like to impart the spirit of *wa*. In accordance with *wa*, tensions should be resolved, not through conflict, but through harmony - not only amongst one another, but in attainment and sensitivity to the very flow of the natural order around us."

We have to remember the strategic importance of intellectual research efforts, not only for the understanding and description of the ongoing processes of contemporary culture, but also for accurately forecasting our possible future. It is our hope that these research efforts will significantly contribute to the historical transformations of values and orientations that humankind is presently undergoing.

Thank you.