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Contents

Philosophy of Physics

- The Hard Problem of Consciousness from a Bio-Psychological Perspective** 579
Franz Klaus Jansen

Ontology and Epistemology

- Defending Davidson's Anti-skepticism Argument: A Reply to Otavio Bueno** 595
Mohammad Reza Vaez Shahrestani

- Ethnography: Linking Theory and Practices** 601
Abid

Social Philosophy

- Contemporary Dilemmas of the Ecumenical Movement** 606
Wiesław Romanowicz



The Hard Problem of Consciousness from a Bio-Psychological Perspective

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Chalmers introduced the hard problem of consciousness as a profound gap between experience and physical concepts. Philosophical theories were based on different interpretations concerning the qualia/concept gap, such as interactive dualism (Descartes), as well as mono aspect or dual aspect monism. From a bio-psychological perspective, the gap can be explained by the different activity of two mental functions realizing a mental representation of extra-mental reality. The function of *elementary sensation* requires active sense organs, which create an uninterrupted physical chain from extra-mental reality to the brain and reflect the present. The function of *categorizing reflection* no longer needs sense organs, so that the physical chain to extra-mental reality is interrupted and now reflects the past. Whereas elementary sensation is an open system, categorizing reflection remains a closed system, separated from extra-mental reality. This creates the potentiality/reality gap, since prediction from the closed to the open system remains always uncertain. Elementary sensation is associated to specific qualia for each sense organ. Chalmers also attributed qualia to thoughts, with more neutral thought qualia. Thus at the qualia level, there is also an important gap, but now between specific sense qualia and neutral thought qualia. Since all physical concepts are simultaneously linked to neutral thought qualia, the hard problem might be explained by a qualia/qualia gap instead of a qualia/concept gap. The mental function of categorizing reflection induces the change from sense qualia to thought qualia by a categorization process. The specific sense qualia mosaic of an apple is reduced to physical concepts with neutral qualia by progressive categorization first to fruit, then to food, to chemicals and finally to calories. This might explain the gap felt in the hard problem, since specific sense qualia are completely different from neutral thought qualia, so that the hard problem could already be encountered at the qualia level. Since the gap of the hard problem is due to the interaction of different mental functions, it is compatible with a philosophical monism.

Keywords: hard problem, bio-psychological perception, mental functions, qualia mosaic, sense qualia, thought qualia, thought concepts, brain locations

1. Introduction

Chalmers (1996) designated an ancient philosophical problem, denoting it as “the hard problem,” since it is more difficult to explain than some so-called “soft problems.” The hard problem of consciousness concerns phenomenal experience, which cannot be reduced to physics, since both seem to have a completely different ontology. Consequently, this problem seems to require dualism, comprising both physics and panprotopsychism.

Several other philosophical theories provided different explanations of the same problem. The theory of physicalism considered an absolute primacy of physics over conscious experience (Ney 2008). On the other hand, the theory of neutral monism holds the phenomenological and physical difference as non-fundamental (Silberstein & Chemero 2015). Finally, idealism requires the absolute primacy of the phenomenal experience by consciousness over physics (Robinson 1968). Double aspect theories rely on the phenomenological and physical aspects and claim a common ground of wholeness (Atmanspacher 2014; Bohm 1990; Pauli 1952; Pylkkänen 2007). Alternatively, some authors link them together as complementary constituents in an information theory (Chalmers 1996; Tononi & Balducci 2008). These theories are generally starting from physics and try to explain how qualia could be conceived as emerging from physics.

From a bio-psychological perspective, a complementary interpretation could be formulated when starting in the opposite direction from qualia perception and trying to correlate it to physical concepts. The reason for the inversion of analyses is the fact that every physical law has to start with observation, a bio-psychological function, which is thereafter transformed by reduction with other bio-psychological functions into interpretation. This sense of analyses no longer requires emergence but loss of qualia, progressively replaced by physical thought concepts.

The hard problem can then change from a sense qualia/thought concept problem to a more simple sense qualia/thought qualia problem, which is due to two different mental functions. Observation as the primary mental function can only be achieved with “elementary sensation” requiring sense organs (Jansen 2016b). A different mental function “abstract reflection” thereafter allows reduction of observation to interpret with physical formalism, which is associated to neutral thought qualia. Thus, mental functions are the reason for the transformation of a sense qualia mosaic into neutral thought qualia required for physical concepts. The hard problem could then be explained at the qualia level and is in agreement with philosophical monism.

2. The Hard Problem

Chalmers (1995) characterized an old philosophical problem as the hard problem of consciousness, which will be difficult to solve. Already Locke (1690, 617) mentioned the problem as follows: “it is impossible to conceive that matter, either with or without motion, could have, originally, in and from itself, sense, perception, and knowledge.”

2.1. The Hard Problem in Philosophical Literature

Jackson (1982, 127) insisted on the existence of a gap between the phenomenological experience and its physical concept. According to his view, perception leads to non-reducible qualia in consciousness, such as: “the characteristic experience of tasting a lemon, smelling a rose, hearing a loud noise or seeing the sky.”

Levine (1983, 354) introduced the notion of an explanatory gap, stating: “psycho-physical identity statements leave a significant explanatory gap.”

Chalmers characterized this philosophical problem as the hard problem of consciousness:

Why is it that when our cognitive systems engage in visual and auditory information-processing, we have visual or auditory experience: the quality of deep blue, the sensation of middle C?... It is widely agreed that experience arises from a physical basis, but we have no good explanation of why and how it so arises. Why should physical processing give rise to a rich inner life at all? (1995, 201)

The philosophers Silberstein and Chemero raised the question of whether the hard problem requires dualism or monism:

Chalmers (1996) argued that conscious experience has a qualitative character such that even if we had a full physical story about the world, that story would leave out conscious experience. We argued in an earlier paper... that accepting this description of the hard problem guarantees that the hard problem is soluble only by denying that there are conscious experiences or accepting a dualism in which conscious experiences are a separate ontological kind. (2015, 181)

In the philosophical theories, the essential question of the hard problem remains, how can physics explain qualia? The comparison of seeing red with a physical wavelength of about 700 nm demonstrates an inexplicable gap between sense qualia and physical concepts. This question opposes qualia to concepts, however, from a bio-psychological perspective, both are dependent on two different mental functions and might then give another explanation.

2.2. The Hard Problem and Mental Functions

The hard problem is directly dependent on the difference between qualia, such as seeing the color red of an apple, hearing a tone of a saxophone or smelling a rose, and concepts, such as physical facts, like wavelengths. A perception at the first person is based on the mental perception of extra-mental reality dependent on the mental function of elementary sensation (Ia), which requires active sense organs (Fig. 1). It allows an uninterrupted chain of physical interactions from an extra-mental object to specialized brain regions (Jansen 2014; 2016b). When seeing a tree, light reflected from the tree enters the eye and activates nerve cells at the retina, which transmit their activation to regions in the occipital lobe of the brain, specialized in visual processing. Elementary perception warrants the perception of reality, but is limited to the present. In contrast to elementary sensation (Ia), the tree can also be imagined with closed eyes, although the chain of physical interactions is then completely interrupted. When attempting to recollect an image of the tree from the memory, the mental representation is solely based on memory imagery (II) of the past, which no longer reflects reality, but virtuality when retrieving previously encoded elementary sensation, since the present could have changed (Fig. 1).

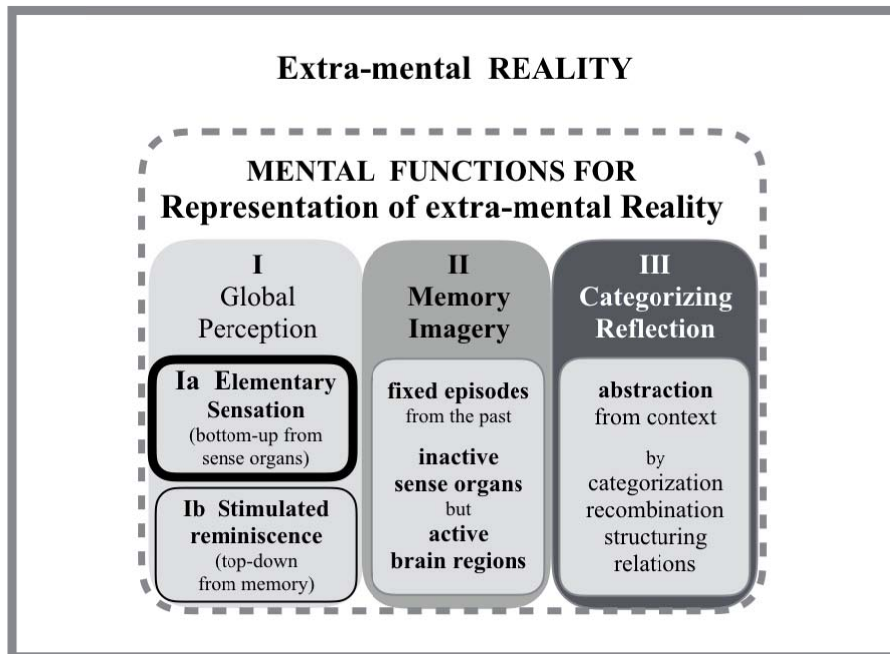


Fig. 1. Mental functions for the representation of extra-mental reality.

Global perception (I) comprises elementary sensation dependent on sense organs (Ia) and stimulated reminiscence (Ib). Memory imagery (II) is a closed system responsible solely for reminding the sense organ activity of the past. Categorizing reflection (III) allows the modification of past experiences for analysis and future expectation.

Memory imagery is a closed system, since it is no longer linked through sense organs to extra-mental reality and therefore shows markedly different properties (Jansen 2016b). As illustrated by a burn, elementary sensation is the intensity of pain felt during the entire contact of the hand with overly hot water, whereas memory imagery is the faint pain remembered a day later. During the contact of the hand with the water, the intensity cannot be voluntarily changed, whereas a day later, in memory imagery, its intensity can be forgotten or retrieved again. Hence, elementary sensation is the intense perception of the present, whereas memory imagery is a faint representation of the past. The pain intensity cannot be transmitted by language to a third person, although she might recall a faint reminiscence of an anterior burn. The intensity of the burn in the first person can also not be felt by the third person, unless she places her own hand with her own sense organs in the same overly hot water. As a result, there is a profound gap between elementary sensation (Ia) of the present in the first person and memory imagery (II) of the past.

The mental function of categorizing reflection (III) reduces individual properties through successive categorizations to abstract concepts (Fig. 3). An apple can lose its individual qualia mosaic by categorization to fruit, then to food, and finally to nutritional properties (chemical compounds or calorific value), which are abstract concepts without any remnants of the initial sense qualia mosaic of the apple. Hence, sense qualia can be transformed by categorization to abstract concepts, reminding the hard problem.

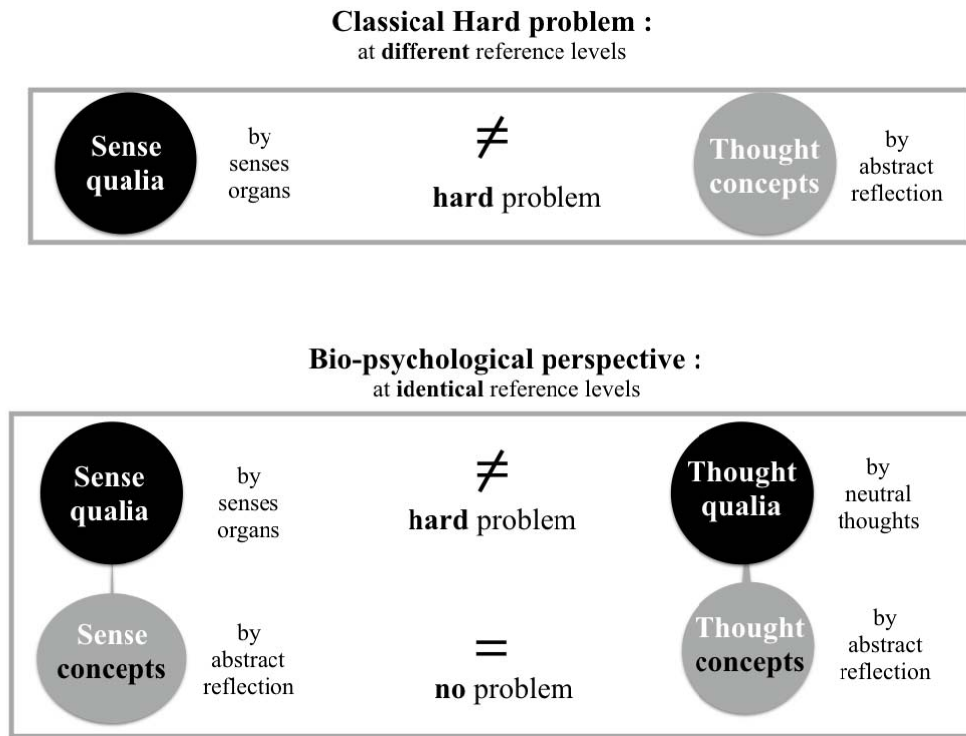


Fig. 2. Comparison of sense qualia and thought concepts.

Chalmers directly compared sense qualia to physical concepts, although they are at different reference levels. From a bio-psychological viewpoint, senses express qualia, but can also be considered as qualia, but also as concepts. In the same sense thought concepts are linked to qualia of neutrality. This allows a comparison of senses and thoughts at the same reference level.

2.3. The Hard Problem at Two Different Reference Levels

Chalmers' viewpoint compares sense qualia created by sense organs with thought concepts from physics. He (1995, 201) also considered that thoughts have qualia by writing "the felt quality of emotion and the experience of a stream of conscious thought." Thereby thought qualia could have qualia of neutrality with respect to non-neutral sense qualia. On the other hand, each sense qualia also corresponds to a neutral concept, seeing to vision, hearing to audition and smelling to smell etc. Thus at the level of neuroscience, vision as a concept could be considered as the effect caused by visual sense organs and the processing center of the visual cortex in the occipital lobe of the brain. In a similar way the concepts of audition or smell and others could be caused by the corresponding sense organ and the corresponding brain region (Fig. 2). If one attributes to physical concepts also a neutral qualia property and to sense qualia also a conceptual property, both could be compared at the same reference level, sense qualia with thought qualia and sense concepts with thought concepts, instead of a comparison over different reference levels.

The hard problem depends on the reference level chosen for comparison; it disappears at the conceptual level whereas it remains at the qualia level. According to Chalmers (1995), "It is widely agreed that experience arises from a physical basis, but we have no good explanation of why and how it so arises..." Thus at the conceptual level, the existence of visual experience can be caused by yet unknown neurophysiological or physical interactions in the brain, which is widely accepted according to Chalmers. This demonstrates that the

hard problem disappears when only the pure conceptual level of experience is considered for the comparison of a concept of experience with a concept of physics.

2.4. Dependence of the Hard Problem on Mental Functions

The fact that the mental function of memory imagery (Fig. 3, II) is voluntarily changeable has the advantage that it can be transformed through abstract reflection by successive categorization (Fig. 3, III), which replaces individual observable properties by common category properties shared with other objects or concepts.

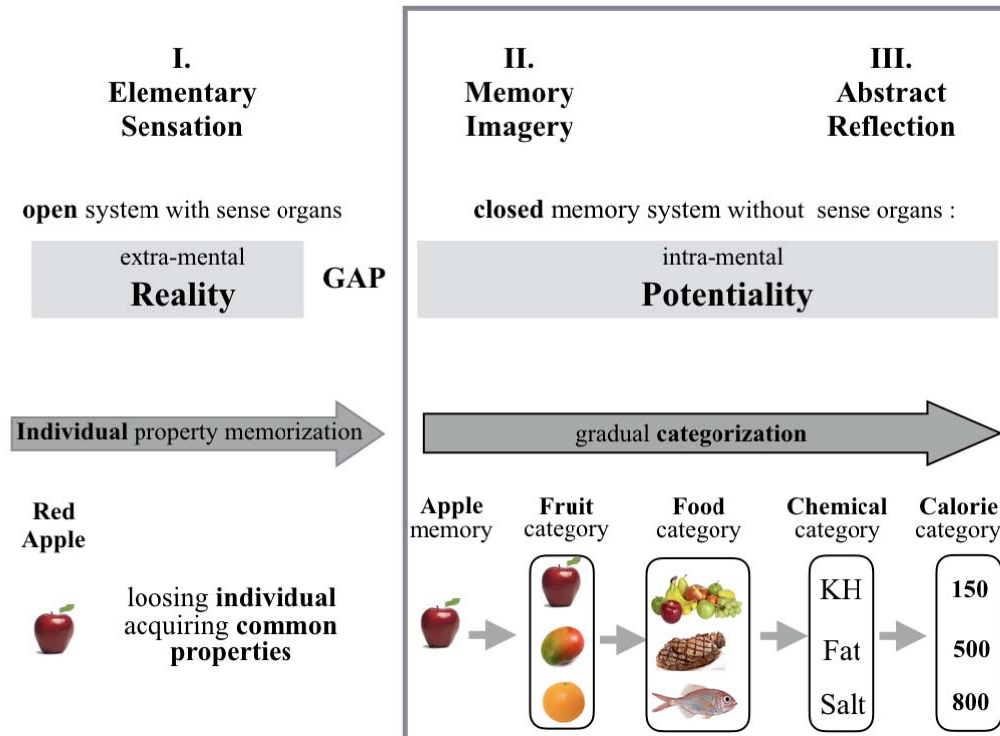


Fig. 3. Succession of mental functions for gradual categorization.

Elementary sensation (I) via sense organs reflects extra-mental reality of the present. Memory imagery (II) is a closed system segregated from active sense organs and reflects the past. Abstract reflection changes the individual qualia mosaic of objects to more common qualia and finally to physical concepts. Thus, an apple loses its individual qualia mosaic when categorized to fruit, food, chemical content or calorific value.

A red apple retrieved from memory imagery is characterized by the mosaic of its special apple qualia, such as color, smell, shape, consistency, and taste. When the apple is classified in the fruit category, its special properties are replaced by common fruit properties, such as different colors, different smells, varying tastes and shapes, or lower consistency. New properties become dominant, such as a more perishable nature. Further categorization reduces fruit qualia to common food qualia with markedly different properties. Color, smell, shape, consistency, and tastes of food are highly versatile and new properties become dominant, such as the capacity to fill the stomach and to satiate hunger. In the category of chemical constituents, apple qualia are reduced to carbohydrates, a powder with a different color, no smell, no shape, and a sweet taste. In the final category of calories, there is no longer any reminiscence of the previously perceived apple, fruit or food qualia, which are replaced by the percentages and number of calories provided by an apple. Here neutral thought qualia are attached to an abstract concept without any sense qualia.

The hard problem appears only at the qualia level when sense qualia are compared to neutral thought qualia. The gap can be frank when the qualia mosaic of an extra-mental object like an apple is compared to its calories. Nevertheless, the gap can also be progressive, when the qualia mosaic is gradually transformed through a continuous categorization process. Thereby, abstract reflection can gradually transform the qualia mosaic of an extra-mental object into pure thought qualia by a progressive decrease of the sense qualia mosaic and a continuous increase of thought qualia during the categorization process (Fig. 4).

Physicists and researchers in other disciplines of natural science strive to establish general laws for their respective fields, allowing understanding the past and predicting the future. Laws are necessarily generalized concepts obtained by elimination of individual properties during the categorization processes aimed at the detection of new common properties, such as nutritional values for an apple (chemicals and calories). Thereby, physical laws become abstract concepts devoid of sense qualia, which is inevitably lost during the categorization process.

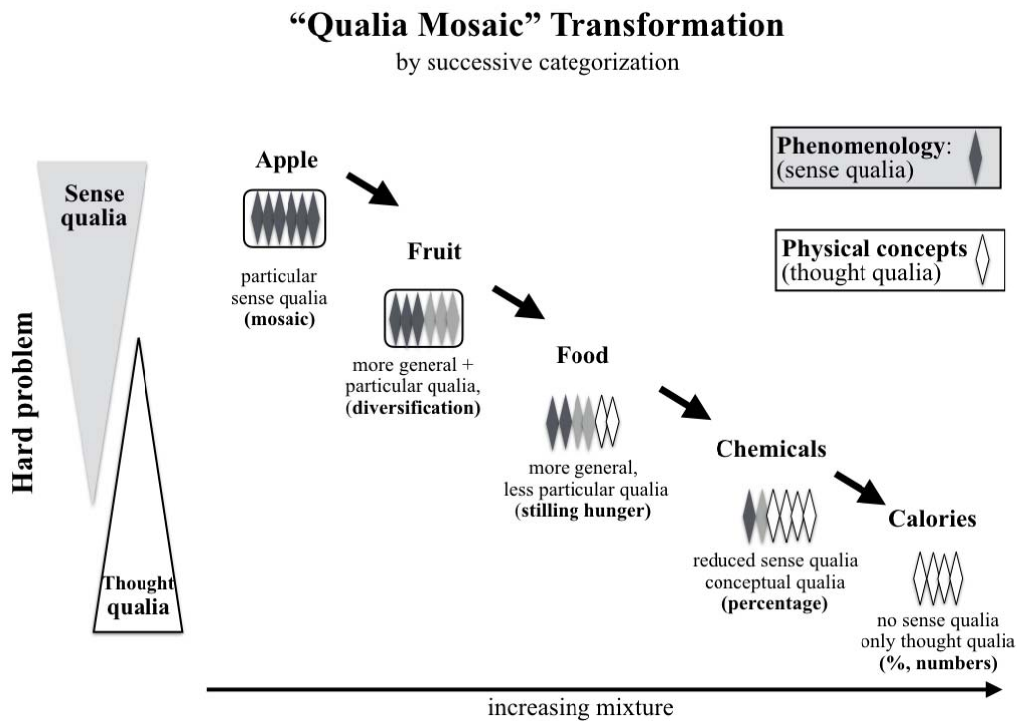


Fig. 4. Mixture of incompatible qualia during gradual categorization.

The mental function of categorizing reflection gradually transforms the sense qualia mosaic of experience to a thought qualia mosaic for concepts. The comparison of pure sense qualia at the start point and pure thought qualia at the end point of the categorization chain shows the profound gap described as the hard problem.

2.5. Extension of the Hard Problem to All Sense Organs

Although the sense qualia/thought qualia gap is very impressive, similar profound gaps exist between all sensory organs (Jansen 2016a). Extra-mental objects are perceived by different sense organs, each of which has different qualia. Together, they form a mosaic of qualia characteristic for each object. The qualia of different sense organs, for instance the visual and auditory qualia of a bell, are completely independent, with no

perceptible relation between them. When the sound at a television screen is muted, the visual impression of a clock gives no indication on the corresponding sound. Only with prior experience of chiming bells can one suppose that big bells produce a lower sound than smaller ones do. Nonetheless, prior experience does not permit imagining the precise sound of a specific bell. In the same sense, seeing a bird does not indicate its song.

Inversely, when the television screen is hidden and only the sound of a bell is perceptible, the precise shape and size of the bell cannot be visualized either. Based on one's prior experience, it could be conceived of as having the classical bell shape, although different shapes also exist. In a similar manner, hearing the song of a bird without seeing it gives no indication of its physical appearance. Since vision does not indicate auditory experience and vice versa, visual and auditory experiences are completely independent and cannot be reduced to one another. Thus, there is a profound qualia/qualia gap between two sense organs.

This can be extended to other sense organs. When touching the edge of a bell with the fingers as a means of recognizing the texture, resistance, and temperature of the material, its sound and visual image cannot be imagined either. Consequently, information obtained through touching is also completely independent from visual and auditory properties. Touching an unknown object will not give indications of its visual or auditory properties, suggesting that the qualia/qualia gap could be extended to all types of sense organs, which provide completely independent, complementary information only.

2.6. Correspondence of the Hard Problem in Neuroscience

The existence of multiple explanatory gaps, not only between the qualia mosaic of experience and physical concepts but also between all sense organs, increases the number of Levin's (1983) explanatory gaps considerably. First, there are the five sense organs, already described by Aristotle, along with many other internally oriented sense organs, since all receptors in the different organs of the body have to be included, as already suggested by Bayne (2011). Such receptors are heat, cold, pain, and pulmonary stretch receptors, as well as those for gastrointestinal function, bladder fullness, muscular tension, and many others, which are all participating in the human experience of the internal body. The functions of all these sense organs are completely independent, without any relation to others, which allows their easy individual recognition. Nevertheless, their complete independence creates profound gaps between all of them.

In neuroscience, every sense organ is represented by a different brain region: seeing to the occipital lobe, hearing to the temporal lobe, touching to the somatosensory cortex in the parietal lobe and finally cognition to the frontal cortex (Kandel et al. 2013). This suggests that the different brain regions of the mental representation of sensory organs could be associated to their specialized qualia, implying that each brain region and the corresponding peripheral sense organ produces markedly different qualia. Therefore, explanatory gaps induced by categorizing reflection of the qualia mosaic might also be attributed to the anatomical separation of brain regions with their specialized functions. Abstract reflection with neutral thought qualia is not linked to any sense organ, however; it is also found in a different brain region, the frontal cortex. Hence, there is a strong similarity between the qualia/qualia gaps of sense organs as well as the sense qualia/thought qualia gap of the hard problem reflecting a strong correlation with different brain locations for their mental representation.

3. Philosophical Mind Matter Theories

The sense qualia/physical concept gap is an essential component of the mind/matter problem, which might suggest that the mind is different from matter (dualism) or that both can be conceived as different aspects emerging from an identical background (dual aspect monism). In the 17th century, an interactive dualism (A) was proposed by Descartes, who posited that mind and matter are completely different substances. However, this view introduced the problem of the manner in which they can interact with each other. Proponents of theories of Mono Aspect Monism (B1-B3) consider, in contrast, that there exist no fundamental sense qualia/physical concept differences. While this premise eliminates the former problem, it raises another, namely why we perceive an intensive gap between sense qualia and thought concepts. Supporters of Dual Aspect Monism (C1-C2) accept the sense qualia/physical concept difference, but link it to a whole as a common ground from which the dual aspects emerge (Fig. 5). Finally, Dual Aspect Syntactic Information Theory (C3) simultaneously attributes qualia to objects and to physical concepts at all levels, down to elementary particles, thereby suggesting panprotopsychism.

3.1. *Mono Aspect Monism*

In order to circumvent the problems of Descartes' interactive dualism (A), three kinds of mono aspect monism are proposed, all of which deny any fundamental difference between mind and matter: physicalism (B1), neutral monism (B2), and idealism (B3). Since physical and mental aspects are considered to be of the same nature, these concepts are compatible with monism.

(B1) Physicalism is the theory that all is physical, whereby the mental is only an emergence from the physical (Neurath 1983; Ney 2008). This view took account of the enormous amount of acquired physical and biological knowledge and considered mind and matter as a monism.

(B2) Neutral monism is based on the work of philosophers like Russell, James and Silberstein. It suggests that there is no fundamental difference between mind and matter. According to this view, cognitive systems are extended brain-body-environmental systems (Silberstein 2009). Thus, conscious experience and cognition are inseparable and complementary aspects of coupled brain-body-environmental systems, allowing elimination of qualia and conceiving a neutral monism. Presence is a fundamental constituent for the "what it is like" of conscious experience.

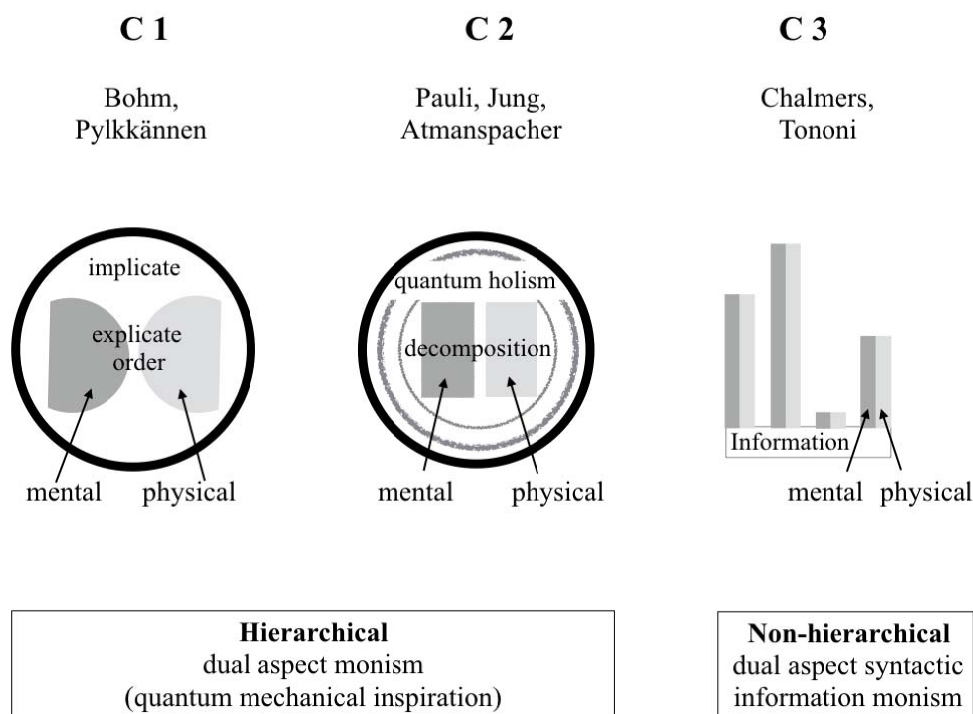


Fig. 5. Dual aspect monism.

Hierarchical dual aspect monism explains that the mental and physical aspects are emerging from a whole. For Bohm and Pylkkänen (C1), the implicate order represents the whole, while the explicate order pertains to the dual aspects. Pauli et al. (C2) proposed quantum holism, which can be decomposed into the physical and the mental aspects. A non-hierarchical theory is proposed by Chalmers (C3), in which each information space has simultaneously a physical and a mental aspect.

(B3) Proponents of idealism claim that the world exists only as spirit or consciousness (Robinson 1968). Buddhism is based on idealism and has existed since the 15th century BC. It promotes the idea that consciousness is the essence of phenomenal reality. Panpsychism is a kind of idealism, in which only the mind is fundamental to the world. It is attributed to the Greek philosophers Thales and Plato. Advocates of metaphysical idealism believe that matter does not exist, whereas proponents of epistemic idealism claim that it is not perceived. The mental is considered as the basis of the physical.

3.2. Hierarchical Dual Aspect Monism

Two kinds of dual aspect monism confirm a profound difference between mind and matter, reducing it to two aspects of monism. A detailed review of these concepts was published by Atmanspacher (2014).

(C1) Bohm (1990) and Pylkkänen (2007) proposed an “implicate order” corresponding to an exhaustive potential universe, which unfolds into the observable “explicate order” representing the universe that can be perceived with sense organs (Fig. 5, C1). “All things found in the unfolded, explicate order emerge from the holomovement in which they are enfolded as potentialities, and ultimately they fall back into it” (Bohm 1990, 273).

In Bohm’s view, the mental and the physical unfold from a psychophysically neutral “holo-movement” in a dynamic way, which is a hierarchical concept with the implicate order as the whole. It has to be unfolded into the explicate order before the dual aspects of mental and physical factors become perceptible. The theory

adopts the structure of quantum mechanics, also based on exhaustive possibilities represented by a Hilbert space, from which individual observable outcomes emerge during the measurement process.

(C2) Pauli (1952) and Atmanspacher (2014) proposed a different dual aspect theory based on a whole, which can be decomposed into its mental and physical aspects. These authors also interpreted the psychophysical problem using concepts derived from quantum mechanics, essentially with complementarity and quantum non-locality (Fig. 5, C2). “It would be most satisfactory if physics and psyche could be conceived as complementary aspects of the same reality” (Pauli 1952, 164).

Complementary mental and physical aspects are obtained by decomposition of the hierarchical, inaccessible whole, which corresponds for Pauli to quantum holism with quantum non-locality and for Jung to his conception of one un-fragmented whole, the *unus mundi*. According to Atmanspacher (2014, 253), “Both ‘ordering influence’ and ‘reaction back’ together constitute a bidirectional interchange between the psychophysically neutral domain and its two aspects.”

The psychophysical hierarchical holism is decomposed through intermediary levels into the mental and the physical aspects, which maintain inter-correlations.

3.3. *Non-hierarchical Dual Aspect Information Theory*

(C3) Chalmers (1996, 284) introduced the syntactic information theory, claiming that everything is information characterized by two different aspects, the phenomenological and the physical: “Information is all there is... This is how I understand the ‘it from bit’ conception of the world. It is a strangely beautiful conception: a picture of the world as pure informational flux, without any further substance to it.”

In contrast to the theories of Bohm (1990) or Pauli (1952), there is no hierarchical holism from which the physical and the mental aspects can emerge. Both aspects are considered as independent properties of the same entity, which is an information space (Fig. 5, C3).

The ontology that this leads us to might truly be called a double-aspect ontology. Physics requires information states but cares only about their relations, not their intrinsic nature; phenomenology requires information states but cares only about the intrinsic nature. This view postulates a single basic set of information states unifying the two. We might say that internal aspects of these states are phenomenal, and the external aspects are physical. (Chalmers 1996, 286)

In a similar sense, Chalmers, Tononi & Balducci (2008) proposed a theory of integrated information.

The aforementioned theory corresponds to non-hierarchical monism based on information with independent but complementary properties—the physical information as relations and the phenomenological information with its intrinsic nature. Relational and phenomenological information is present concurrently, which evokes the aspect of panprotopsyshism from the macrocosm to elementary particles of the physical world, a kind of atomistic picture. Chalmers (1996, 284) considers information as an observer-independent ontic information space, which explains the entire universe, since “information is all there is.”

However, an ontologically conceived information space in the form of bits remains incomplete, since bits only represent an information carrier, which still needs a decoder for understanding the encoded message. A music CD containing bits for songs is an information carrier, which needs a special CD recorder to transform the carried information into music again. Similarly, for language, mental functions are required for interpreting linguistic information. A Chinese word is easily decoded by Chinese people, but not by those speaking other languages. Therefore, it remains an information carrier without detectable sense. Thus, ontologically conceived bits are information carriers, which are useless in the absence of mental decoding.

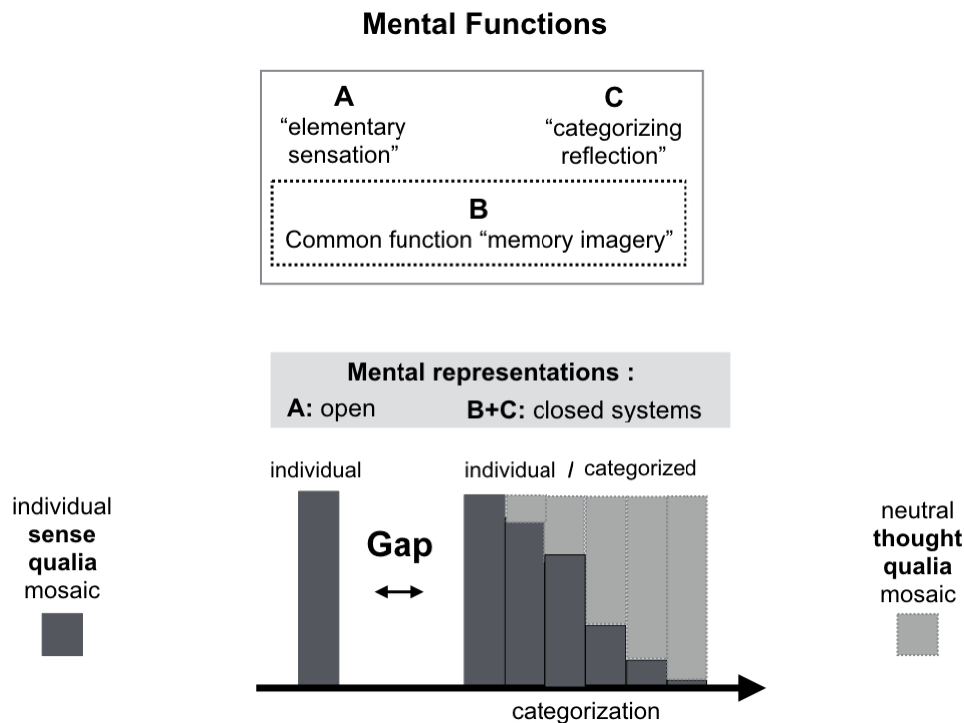


Fig. 6. Mental function monism from a bio-psychological perspective.

Human knowledge is based on three mental functions. Elementary sensation through sense organs is representative of extra-mental reality in the present, whereas memory imagery without sense organs is a closed system representing the past. The difference of presence or absence of sense organs produces a gap between them. Abstract reflection gradually transforms the individual qualia mosaic through categorization by replacing it with neutral thought qualia of common concepts.

4. Bio-Psychological Mental Function Monism

In a different approach from a bio-psychological perspective, three mental functions allow a mental representation of extra-mental reality and contribute to the hard problem, elementary sensation (Ia), memory imagery (II) and categorizing reflection (III) (Fig. 1). These functions are considered as independent complementary functions. Elementary sensation (I) represents an open system, obtaining information from extra-mental reality through sense organs for the present. Memory imagery (II) representing the past is a closed system, no longer informed by extra-mental reality via sense organs. Abstract reflection (III) also participates in the closed system and allows categorizations of past events allowing imagining a potential future (Fig. 6).

Mental function monism aligns with some basic conditions of neutral monism (Silberstein & Chemero 2015). The extended brain-body-environment system corresponds to elementary sensation with its uninterrupted chain of physical interactions from extra-mental reality to the brain. This mental function represents only the present, which is also the main postulate of neutral monism. However, after elementary sensation, abstract reflection by successive categorization is essentially responsible for the transformation of specialized sense qualia into neutral thought qualia, conceived as the hard problem.

The bio-psychological analysis is in agreement with the Pauli/Jung/Atmanspacher theory of the complementarity principle, well known from quantum mechanics, since all sense qualia are completely different from each other, while their mosaic characterizes objects and concepts. The complementarity of sense

qualia for all sense organs caused the philosophical binding problem establishing how independent, complementary properties are linked together to form one perceptual unit.

In contrast to the Pauli/Jung/Atmanspacher and the Bohm/Pylkkänen theories, mental function monism requires a non-hierarchical structure, since the functions of abstract reflection, memory imagery and elementary sensation are equal and independent mental functions. Abstract reflection with no link to sense organs can only indicate potentialities in a closed system separated from extra-mental reality. The three mental functions, which do not represent different ontological entities, are conceivable with monism.

The mental function monism agrees with Chalmers for the attribution of specialized sense qualia to objects, while also assigning neutral thought qualia to physical concepts. Thereby, the gap between sense qualia and physics could be conceived at the qualia level only, by considering sense qualia opposed to thought qualia.

5. Conclusion

The hard problem is well documented in the philosophical literature. It was first discussed by Locke (1690), at the time when physical science was becoming more accepted. Chalmers (1995) gave it an important impulse by creating the expression of the “hard problem” pertaining to the difference between the abstract third person concepts of physics and the first person qualia of experience, such as the physical concept of electromagnetic waves of $\sim 700\text{nm}$ wavelength as compared to the experience of seeing red. The direction when starting with physics for explaining experience shows a profound gap, since it is difficult to conceive qualia experience emerging from physical concepts (Chalmers 1996). This may be characterized as the physical concept/sense qualia gap.

From a bio-psychological perspective, there is another approach when analyzing in the opposite direction by starting with qualia experience and correlating them to physical concepts (Fig. 7). The reason for the opposite direction of analysis is the fact that all human and physical observation has its origin in elementary sensation produced by sense organs with their associated sense qualia. Only thereafter, observation allows interpretation by abstract reflection with physical concepts. Since interpretation may or may not be true, its truth-value has still to be verified by new observation with sense organs. In this direction the gap of the hard problem could be better explained as a loss or a qualitative change of qualia.

In the philosophical literature, several different explanations were proposed. A dualism between mind and matter was introduced by Descartes, concerning the opposite character of qualia and concepts. Some philosophical mono-aspect theories deny a difference between sense qualia and thought qualia. They are represented by physicalism, neutral monism, and idealism, purporting that qualia and physical concepts belong to the same ontic entity. More recent theories reduced the opposite character to dual aspects of an underlying monism.

Bohm’s and Pauli’s theories were inspired by quantum mechanics and considered the phenomenal and the physical aspects as emerging from a hierarchical higher order system. Bohm’s implicate order, also known as holo-movement, corresponds to exhaustive possibilities, from which the phenomenal and the physical emerge as observable reality, similar to the collapse of the wave function during a measurement. Pauli’s hierarchical holism is based on quantum non-locality and Jung’s collective unconsciousness. The decomposition of the ontic holism by an epistemic split produces the phenomenological and physical aspects by conserving correlations between mind and matter. The concept of holism, for Bohm and Pauli, has the drawback of being inaccessible and not verifiable.

Aiming to circumvent the opposite character of the sense qualia/physical concept gap, Chalmers (1996) proposed a common nature for the phenomenological and the physical aspects as syntactic information (bits) in an information space. However, information includes macroscopic as well as atomistic physical structures with a simultaneous presence of the phenomenal and the physical aspects down to the atomic level, which evokes panprotopsyism. Chalmers (1996, 267) wrote, “Whenever we find an information space realized phenomenally, we find the same information space realized physically.” This corresponds to panprotopsyism.

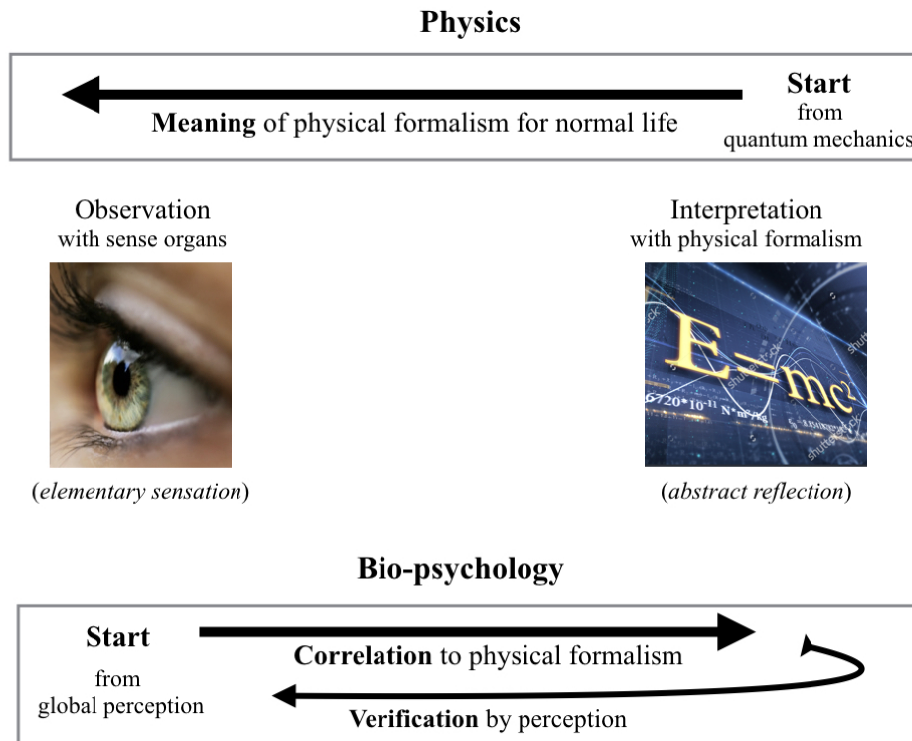


Fig. 7. Opposite direction of physical and bio-psychological analysis.

Physics are starting from quantum mechanical formalism for explaining normal life and bio-psychology starts from global perception for exploring correlations to physical formalism followed by verification.

A bio-psychological approach starts from global perception and replaces the physical concept/sense qualia gap by a transformation of specialized sense qualia to neutral thought qualia due to the mental function of abstractive reflection. Sense qualia mosaics for objects gradually change by successive categorization to neutral thought qualia. Sense qualia and thought qualia are as incompatible as other sense qualia like seeing qualia and hearing qualia, probably because of their different brain location. The only implication of mental functions for the gap of the hard problem permits its classification as philosophical monism.

The bio-psychological mental function monism essentially claims:

(1) The sense qualia/thought qualia gap is not a theoretical concept, but the description of a general perception phenomenon perceived by everyone, which cannot be disputed by any theory.

(2) The sense qualia/thought qualia gap can be explained by the activity of two mental functions: elementary sensation (Fig.1, Ia) for sense qualia and abstract reflection (Fig.1, III) for thought qualia attached to physical concepts. Both participate in the mental representation of extra-mental reality. Whereas elementary sensation (I) produces with each sense organ and the corresponding brain region a sense qualia mosaic, abstract

reflection (III) changes the composition of the mosaic by gradually replacing sense qualia by neutral thought qualia. In this respect, Chalmers (1995, 201) indicated that abstract concepts are also associated to thought qualia “the experience of a stream of conscious thought... All of them are states of experience.”

(3) A bio-psychological analysis compares sense qualia to thought qualia or sense concepts to thought concepts at the same reference level. In general, sense qualia and physical concepts are compared at two different reference levels. At a pure conceptual reference level, the hard problem disappears, but still remains at the qualia level. Every kind of qualia is incompatible with any other qualia, whether sense qualia or thought qualia. Therefore there is a profound gap between all kinds of qualia, so that the gap between sense qualia and thought qualia becomes more comprehensible. The incompatibility of sense qualia with other qualia can be interpreted as a perceptual advantage, which avoids any confusion between perceptions by multiple sense organs. The qualia/qualia gap could be explained by the different location in the brain of all senses and of thoughts.

(4) The transformation of sense qualia to thought qualia does not require dualism, but is conceivable with monism. An apple is successively categorized by the same mental function of abstract reflection (III) simply by gradually replacing the individual sense qualia of an apple with common thought qualia down to calories. This view is in agreement with Pauli’s theory of complementarity, as found in quantum mechanics, since each sense organ produces completely different qualia. Atmanspacher (2014, 252) observed, “Two or more descriptions of a phenomenon are complementary, if they mutually exclude one another and yet are together necessary to describe the phenomenon exhaustively.” The complementarity within the qualia mosaic is an essential reason for the existence of the philosophical binding problem.

In summary, the Hard Problem as a sense qualia/physical concept gap could be differently considered as a sense qualia/thought qualia gap, since there is a profound gap between all different sense qualia also including thought qualia. This might be explained in neuroscience by the localization of each qualia at different brain regions, which produce completely different qualia properties. The hard problem seems to be caused by a normal bio-psychological qualia/qualia gap appearing between all senses and also between senses and thoughts.

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Defending Davidson's Anti-skepticism Argument: A Reply to Otavio Bueno

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In the article of Bueno titled "Davidson and Skepticism: How Not to Respond to the Skeptic," he intends to demonstrate that although Davidson's theory of Coherence holds many attractions, it does not entail a response to any kinds of skepticism including Global, Lottery, and Pyrrhonian. In this study, the goal is to criticize the work of Prof. Bueno in connection with two criticisms raised by him over Davidson's anti-skeptical strategy. Further, by giving some reasons in favor of Davidson's anti-skepticism argument, it will be shown that neither the above stated criticisms nor the global skepticism response could undermine the validity of anti-skepticism argument.

Keywords: Donald Davidson, Otavio Bueno, global skepticism, transcendental argument

1. Introduction

There are different kinds of skepticism and for each kind there is a corresponding argument that the skeptic provides as a challenge to those who claim to have the relevant knowledge about the world. Three kinds of those which differ in their plausibility and in how radical they are include Global, Lottery, and Pyrrhonian.¹

According to global skepticism, which is the target of our discussion, we don't have knowledge about the world, since all of our beliefs about the world may be false. There are three prevalent arguments presented for global skepticism including Cartesian, Humean, and the brain-in-the-vat hypothesis. In spite of the fact that some philosophers consider these forms of global skepticism deferent from each other, a short overview of each argument will be enough to show why a philosopher such as Donald Davidson did not distinguish among them.² Davidson often referred to three aforementioned forms of global skepticism (Cartesian, Humean, and the brain-in-the-vat hypothesis) equivalently (Peto 2009, 1-2):

For clearly a person's sensory stimulations could be just as they are and yet the world outside very different. (Remember the brain in the vat.) (Davidson 1983, 430)

But it does seem to me that if you accept perceptual externalism, there is an easy argument against global skepticism of the senses of the sort that Descartes, Hume, Russell, and endless others have thought requires an answer. (Davidson 1990a, 200)

For the Cartesian or Humean skeptic about the external world holds that it is all too obvious that we can get along without knowledge of the world of nature—what we know of our own mind is self-sufficient, and may be all the knowledge we have. (Davidson 1991, 208)

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He introduces a coherence theory of truth and knowledge, proposing a new form of externalism and using his theory of radical interpretation, and tries to address a problem raised by some kind of skepticism. Initially, it is clarified what Davidson means by skepticism. This initial step is important why we can grasp whom Davidson was going to respond to (or at least whom he thought he was responding to).

The beginnings of a clear understanding of what Davidson considered as skepticism can be found in "A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge," where Davidson wrote:

This is skepticism in one of its traditional garbs. It asks: why couldn't all my beliefs hang together and yet be comprehensively false about the actual world? Mere recognition of the fact that it is absurd or worse to try to confront our beliefs, one by one, or as a whole, with what they are about does not answer the question nor show the question unintelligible. (Davidson 1983, 140)

In the above quote, referring to all "our beliefs," Davidson want to say that there is a possibility that all of our beliefs about the world would be false and it means that we don't have knowledge about the world and it is the same definition of global skepticism.

In addition, the problem of global skepticism in "Epistemology Externalized" is presented although here also Davidson did not specifically use the term of "global skepticism." He wrote: "Yet it has seemed obvious to many philosophers that if each of our beliefs about the world, taken alone, may be false, there is no reason all such beliefs might not be false" (Davidson 1990, 194). Again this is the same conclusion like above quote, i.e., as there is a possibility that all of our beliefs would be false, we don't have knowledge about the world (Peto 2009, 6).

On the other hand, in his article titled "Davidson and Skepticism: How Not to Respond to the Skeptic," Prof. Otavio Bueno aims to show that although Davidson's theory of coherence holds many attractions, it does not involve a response to no kinds of skepticism including Global, Lottery, and Pyrrhonian. As mentioned above, referring to Davidson's text concerning epistemology and language, we can find that he was not going to solve all kinds of skepticism but he only aimed at the issue discussed by global skeptics, who claim that it is not possible to have knowledge about the world. Thus, it is unnecessary to search for an argument that encompasses a response to two other kinds of skepticism in Davidson's text.

In this article, I will criticize the work of Bueno relating to two criticisms raised by him over Davidson's anti-skeptical strategy. Finally, the global skepticism response to Davidson's anti-skepticism strategy explained in section 4-2 of Bueno's article will be investigated and further will be concluded that even having an mental state like skepticism, we need also to assume most of beliefs are true and if this is not the case, mankind suffers from an absolute skepticism where the existence of any mental state including skepticism about the knowledge of the world will be impossible.

2. Resisting Bueno's Criticisms

2.1. Resisting Bueno's First Criticism

As mentioned above, in section 4-1 of his article, Prof. Bueno tries to invalidate the anti-skepticism argument developed by Davidson by making two criticisms against it. By presupposing Davidson's commitment to classical first-order modal logic, the first criticism targets at incoherence between two statements presented by Davidson. These statements are as follows:

- (i) Each belief can be false (Davidson 1983, 140).

(ii) It is not the case that all beliefs can be false (Davidson 1983, 140).

Bueno suggests that by adopting classical first-order modal logic, the first statement can be expressed as follows:

(i) $\Diamond \neg T(Pa) \wedge \Diamond \neg T(Pb) \wedge \dots \wedge \Diamond \neg T(Pn)$ (Bueno 2005, 11).

He also formulates the second statement as follows:

(ii) $\neg \Diamond \forall x \neg T(Px)$ (Bueno 2005, 11).

As a result, since Bueno believes that the negation of (ii) follows from (i) in the classical first-order modal logic, he knows it as an incoherent view in Davidson's argument and therefore considers the argument as an invalid argument (Bueno 2005, 11).

From the author's point of view, the first criticism raised by Bueno over Davidson's argument has two problems: The first problem of the first criticism made by Bueno refers to his argument's structure; since he formulates his argument so as Davidson is going to inference from the statement "each belief can be false" to an anti-skepticism conclusion, i.e., "it is not the case that all beliefs can be false." Davidson wrote: "I think the independence of belief and truth requires only that each of our beliefs may be false. But of course, a coherence theory cannot allow that all of them can be wrong" (Davidson 1983, 140). He also wrote: "Of course some beliefs are false... All that a coherence theory can maintain is that most of the beliefs in a coherent total set of beliefs are true" (Davidson 1983, 138). As a matter of fact, offering some reasons, Davidson firstly supposed that most of our beliefs are true and then he mentioned that it is not also the case that all of our beliefs are true and definitely, some of them are false. It means that the trend of Bueno's argument is exactly contrary to Davidson's philosophical work. Meanwhile, if one asks about Davidson's reasons for the aforementioned presupposition, he/she can find the answer at the end of this article.

Second, the translation of statement (i) in the above logical formulation is not correct, because the predicates ought to be logically independent of each other in the classical logic, as Bueno himself admits rejecting the counter-example for his argument in his article.³ Bueno wrote: "However, a crucial assumption of classical first-order logic is that all predicates are logically *independent of each other*" (Bueno 2005, 11). Therefore, once Davidson says that each belief can be false, even in this statement, the falsity of each belief is dependent on the truth value of other beliefs. In other words, Davidson is of the conviction that a belief can be false once most of the other beliefs are true. Indeed, he considers the falsity possibility of each belief having presupposed that most of the other beliefs are true previously. Consequently, the statement "Each belief can be false" is similar to the counter example mentioned by Bueno and one cannot formulate it like (i) based on the classical first-order modal logic and conclude that the negation of (ii) follows from it.

2.2. Resisting Bueno's Second Criticism

In this section, I will review the latter criticism raised by Bueno over the Davidson's anti-skepticism strategy. In this regard, Bueno suggests that the consistency of one belief with a coherent body of beliefs is not sufficient for that belief to be true. He emphasizes that Davidson himself does not reject such a claim. He says:

The coherentist may complain that it's indeed true that we cannot guarantee that each particular belief is true. But those beliefs that cohere (i.e. are consistent) with a body of beliefs are true or, at least, are likely to be so. Even here, however, there is trouble. After all, consistency with a body of beliefs is not sufficient for truth, as Davidson wouldn't deny. (Bueno 2005, 12)

As Bueno said Davidson himself admits this point. He in this regard wrote: "So mere coherence, no matter how strongly coherence is plausibly defined, cannot guarantee that what is believed is so" (Davidson 1983, 138). However, Davidson's presupposition (i.e., most beliefs are true) has been disregarded here. Davidson in the following said: "All that a coherence theory can maintain is that most of the beliefs in a coherent total set of beliefs are true" (Davidson 1983, 138). In fact, Davidson believes that once a belief is consistent with a coherent body of beliefs *which are mostly true*, that belief will be true as well. He wrote: "Perhaps it is obvious that the coherence of a belief with a substantial body of belief enhances its chance of being true, provided there is reason to suppose the body of belief is true, or largely so" (Davidson 1983, 140).

Therefore, with respect to the fact that Davidson believes that a belief is true when it coheres with a coherent body of beliefs *which are mostly true*, the sufficient condition for truth will be also satisfied and so the second criticism of Bueno will not be raised.

3. Resisting the Global Skepticism Response

Global skepticism asks whether our beliefs about the world can all be true and as Bueno says "it looks as though Davidson's target in his refutation of skepticism is this kind of skepticism" (Bueno 2005, 13).

The global skepticism response to Davidson's anti-skepticism strategy is explained in section 4-2 of Bueno's article where he says:

Faced with the brain-in-a-vat argument, Davidson presumably would deny the coherence of the skeptic's scenario. It's simply not possible to entertain the possibility of a massive mistake in our beliefs, given that the latter are mostly veridical. In response, the global skeptic would insist that whether such beliefs are veridical or not is precisely the issue that the brain-in-a-vat argument raises. Thus, to presuppose that beliefs are mostly true is to assume the point in question, and the move fails as a response to global skepticism. (Bueno 2005, 13)

Then Bueno mentioned that Davidson could answer quickly that he has not presupposed our beliefs are veridical. Rather, this claim is the result of an argument to the effect that the conditions of possibility of communication require that the speaker's beliefs be mostly true (Bueno 2005, 13). For this purpose, with regard to Davidson never explicitly schematized his own argument, I will try to reconstruct Davidson's anti-skepticism argument on his behalf in a few premises. The argument goes as follows:

- (1) I have a belief (P).
- (2) If true beliefs can be justified, then the necessary and sufficient conditions for knowledge about the world have been satisfied.⁴
- (3) Due to the holistic nature of belief, having one belief involves having many beliefs.⁵
- (4) Having many beliefs involves that there is a language.⁶
- (5) Having language involves the ability of the interpretation of language.⁷
- (6) In order for the interpretation of language to occur, three necessary conditions must be satisfied:⁸
 - a. There must be a shared public world.
 - b. A speaker's beliefs must be mostly true.
 - c. An interpreter's beliefs must be mostly true.
- (7) From (6), if the interpretation of language occurs, language users will have mostly true beliefs about the world.
- (8) The interpretation of language occurs (or language users are interpretable).
- (9) From (7) and (8), language users will have mostly true beliefs about the world.

(10) From (9), true beliefs are justified.

(11) Therefore, from (2) and (9), the necessary and sufficient conditions for knowledge about the world have been satisfied.

In this case, also Bueno believes that Davidson's method fails and the skeptic would be unaffected.

He wrote:

Davidson's argument about the functioning of language and the way in which communication among speakers emerges does presuppose that beliefs are true. In fact, his examination of radical interpretation- roughly, the process that allows us to interpret meaning discourse, whether foreign or domestic- can only get off the ground if the interpreter makes belief attributions to speakers as being mostly true. The method is, of course, perfectly reasonable. But if it is used a response to skepticism, the method ends up assuming the point in question, since it takes most beliefs to be true. (Bueno 2005, 13-14)

With regard to the above, criticism can say even having a skeptical belief something like "I don't have knowledge about the world" or in other words "all of our beliefs about the world may be false," on the basis of Davidson's argument, which needs also to assume most of beliefs are true. It means the argument goes as follows:

(1) I have the belief "I don't have knowledge about the world" or in other words "all of our beliefs about the world may be false."

(2) If true beliefs can be justified, then the necessary and sufficient conditions for knowledge about the world have been satisfied.

(3) Due to the holistic nature of belief, having one belief involves having many beliefs.

(4) On the basis of Davidson's view, having many beliefs involves that there is a language.

(5) Having language involves the ability of the interpretation of language.

(6) In order for the interpretation of language to occur, three necessary conditions must be satisfied:

a. There must be a shared public world.

b. A speaker's beliefs must be mostly true.

c. An interpreter's beliefs must be mostly true.

(7) From (6), if the interpretation of language occurs, language users will have mostly true beliefs about the world.

(8) The interpretation of language occurs (or language users are interpretable).

(9) From (7) and (8), language users will have mostly true beliefs about the world.

(10) From (9), true beliefs are justified.

(11) Therefore, from (2) and (9), the necessary and sufficient conditions for knowledge about the world have been satisfied.

(12) It is not the case that "I don't have knowledge about the world" or "all of our beliefs about the world may be false."

Otherwise, if the skeptic claims that there are no beliefs even a skeptical belief, mankind suffers from an absolute skepticism where the existence of any belief including skepticism about the knowledge of the world will be impossible.

Notes

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1. Otavi Bueno reviews these kinds of skepticism in turn. Bueno 2005, 3-7.
 2. A classic explanation of this claim is the first chapter of Jonathan Peto's Thesis. *A Defense of Donald Davidson's Dissolution to the Problem of Global Scepticism*. University of California, UMI: Dissertation Publishing, 2009.
 3. The counter example as follows: "In a conference, it is possible that each speaker speaks longer than the average time of the speakers. But, clearly, it is not possible that every speaker speaks longer than the average time of the speakers." Bueno 2005, 11.
 4. The first premise in this argument, premise (1), defines what Davidson indicated were the conditions of knowledge about the world. Davidson was of the conviction that if we had justification for our true beliefs, we could have knowledge about the world. He sympathized with the coherentists who believe that "nothing can count as reason for holding belief except another belief" (Davidson 1983, 141). In other words, he was in agreement with Rorty who said: "nothing counts as justification unless by reference to what we already accept, and there is no way to get outside our beliefs and our language so as to find some test other than coherence" (Rorty 1979, 178). As a matter of fact, Davidson thought if we look for evidence to justify our beliefs, it will inflame the confrontation. As a result, since the sensations are not like beliefs or other propositional attitudes and we cannot get outside our beliefs, this relation will not be justifying; rather this is only causal. He wrote: "Sensations cause some beliefs and in *this* sense are the bases or ground of those beliefs. But a causal explanation of a belief does not show how or why the belief is justified" (Davidson 1983, 143). Therefore, on the basis of Davidson's view, if there is a justification for our beliefs to be mostly true, it will be another belief.
 5. The justification for premise (3) comes from the holistic account of belief that Davidson took. Davidson is of the conviction that a belief is determined by a system of beliefs; in other words, having a belief requires having a background of beliefs. In fact, beliefs do not occur in isolation, rather they are interdependent. For instance, in order to have the belief that "I will go to a certain concert," I need a system of beliefs in my mind so to have this belief. These beliefs include "I will be put to a degree of trouble and expense," "I will be enjoying my favorite music by attending this concert," etc. Therefore, in order to have this belief, I need to have a background of beliefs that determine this belief for me. Davidson 1975, 157.
 6. Vaez Shahrestani 2012, 457, Davidson 1991, 210, and Peto 2009, 17.
 7. Vaez Shahrestani 2012, 459.
 8. Peto 2009, 22-23.

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Ethnography: Linking Theory and Practices

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Ethnography has become popular in educational research. Its basic notion of exploring people's shared culture has inspired educational researchers to draw on it when, for example, exploring teachers' belief of a particular educational system of a certain country. In order to understand how this methodology is employed as one of multiple research methodologies in social sciences and education, this article will first lay out its dimensions, which includes definition and characteristics. Following this, it will present the ontological and epistemological aspect of ethnography as well as its research strategies. The article concludes with an understanding that unlike positivist, the cohort of ethnography methodology postulates the ethnographers must study the world in its natural context. The task of an ethnographer is looking for something that lies beyond himself, something that he/she has to uncover by understanding multiple realities that each individual in the world may perceive.

Keywords: ethnography, ontology, epistemology, research strategies

1. The Dimensions of Ethnography

1.1. Definition

Ethnography can be defined as a naturalistic inquiry that attempts to describe the social world from the perspective of the people who inhabit it. Initially, it was regarded as "a descriptive account of a community or culture, usually one located outside the west" (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007, 1). The long history of its spread into other discipline and the influence from other theories put this methodology in substantial development. With such development, Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) elucidated that the term ethnography has now beared multiple meanings. Ethnography has been reinterpreted in a number of ways by the cohort of other theories (e.g., in post-structuralism and post-modernism) to fit in a particular circumstance.

A myriad of scholars have attempted to define ethnography. For example, Johnson (1992) as cited in Mackey and Gass (2005) stated that ethnographic research aims "to describe and interpret the cultural behaviour, including communicative behaviour, of a group" (134) as well as "to give an emically oriented description of the cultural practices of individuals" (Ramanathan & Atkinson 1999, 49). From Creswell's (2012) perspective, such cultural practices can include language, rituals, economic and political structures, life stages, communication styles and interactions. Creswell (2012) contended that: "to understand the pattern of a culture-sharing group, the ethnographer typically spends considerable time 'in the field' interviewing, observing, and gathering documents about the group to understand their culture-sharing behaviors, beliefs, and language" (462).

Other scholars, Denzin and Lincoln (1994), put ethnography very firmly at the centre of qualitative research tradition, especially as developed in sociology and anthropology. It is a multi-method form of research, including structured or semi-structured questionnaire/interviews, non-participant through to full participant observation (PO), diaries, film or video records and official documents (Griffin & Bengry-Howell 2007).

1.2. Characteristics

A number of scholars have proposed their opinions on what characterizes an ethnography research. For example, Punch (1998) and Descombe (2003) as cited in Griffin and Bengry-Howell (2007) identified several important characteristics of an ethnographic research, which are:

(1) Ethnography is founded on the assumption that the shared cultural meaning of a social group is vital for understanding the activities of any social group, thus the task of an ethnographer is to uncover those meanings.

(2) Ethnography seeks an insider's perspective, aiming to understand a phenomenon from the points of view of those involved, which can be diverse, complex and contradictory.

(3) A specific group or a case will be studied in its natural setting.

(4) Research questions (RQ), hypothesis and data collection procedures may develop as the study proceeds, although most ethnographic studies do begin with a set of RQ, an overall research design and a strategy for data collection and analysis.

(5) Ethnographic research frequently involves prolonged period of data collection in order to become sufficiently familiar with the cultural world being studied.

Such characteristics by Punch (1998) and Descombe (2003) are in line with Creswell's (2012). For Creswell (2012), that shared cultural meaning needs to have adopted shared patterns that the ethnographer can discern. According to Spindler and Spindler (1992) as cited in Creswell (2012), a shared pattern in ethnography is "a common social interaction that stabilizes as tacit rules and expectations of the group" (470). The group shares any one or a combination of behaviours, beliefs, and language. In an ethnography context, a behaviour is defined as an action taken by an individual in a cultural setting; a belief is how an individual thinks about or perceives things in a cultural setting; and a language is how an individual talks to others in a cultural setting (Creswell 2012).

Griffin and Bengry-Howell (2007) also shared similar perspective with the above scholars. They explained that ethnography focuses on cultural interpretation, and aimed to understand the cultural and symbolic aspect of people's action and the contexts on which the actions occur. It usually focuses on a specific group of people or a case that involves culturally significant practices or actions. Thus, these researchers perceived ethnography as belong to the tradition of naturalism, which emphasizes the importance of the understanding of meaning and cultural practices of people from within everyday contexts.

Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) further elaborated such understanding of meaning and cultural practices of people from within everyday contexts. They claimed that ethnography is carried out in a naturalistic setting, a setting in which there is no treatment or modification of any variables pertinent to the object of inquiry. This makes ethnography stand in the opposite way of its predecessor paradigm, positivism. These researchers also maintained that in ethnographic research, the initial interest and questions that motivate the research could be refined later. In other words, an ethnographer may develop his/her inquiries into clearer research questions as the research progress.

However, criticism over the characteristics of ethnography persists. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) also criticized the subjectivity of ethnographic research. They claimed that the findings of this type of research are subjective, cannot provide foundation for social scientific analysis in the twentieth century. This is different from scientific research where objectivity is highly pursued. In other words, scientific research is available for being tested, to see whether it can be verified or falsified. One way to do this is by examining the variables through applying a set of standardized method. This is what ethnography does not have. Although observation is present in ethnography, but the way this procedure is carried out differs from the one in scientific research.

In addition to such criticism, Mackey & Gass (2005) discussed how the observation in ethnographic research could bring about potential challenges. Since the observation involves commitment to long-term data collection and detailed record keeping, and an ethnographer often participates in the event he/she is observing, this ethnographer may leave little time for the carefully detailed field notes that ethnographies may require. Accordingly, an ethnographer presence as participant in a particular event may change the nature of the event. This change is often associated with the terms Halo and Hawthorne effects (Mackey & Gass 2005).

The other criticism was pointed out by Stacey (1991) as cited in Denzin (2002). She stated that ethnographic method is more likely to leave subjects exposed to exploitation: the greater the intimacy, according to her, the greater the danger. In her study, she mentioned that many of her participants recognized that their stories and concerns could be taken to audiences, policy makers, and the public in the ways that they themselves could not, because they would not be listened to.

1.3. Ontology

Ontology is recognized as questioning about reality—e.g. what is real and where is reality? In ethnographic study, ontology is located at the center, because such philosophy of existence makes ethnography different from another research paradigm, especially positivism, in the way of seeking for reality. Erlandson et al. (1983) claimed that reality in the world was not single, but multiple, because it is “a social construction” and “a projection of human imagination” (Morgan & Smircich 1980, 492). This multiple reality is seen as a unity from which a new knowledge is derived, and what is treated as true and false is relatively restricted to the specific context that is relevant with the people in the world being investigated.

Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) expressed that an ethnographer capacity as a social actor enables him to have access to understand such multiple reality that exists among the people he observes through “ongoing interaction and a developing relationship” (Fox 2004, 134). Yet, what seems to be true for a searcher might not be true for the people he is investigating. The story between Bauer and the residents of the Spanish Sierra del Caurel (Erlandson et al. 1993) represents such contradiction. This story implies that a researcher will need to seek as many details as he can to justify what he believes to be a reality, and at the end, he will need to conform his findings to the people he investigates (Erlandson et al. 1993). He needs to do this to avoid inappropriate self-interpretation and subsequently to construct a new knowledge derived from the multiple realities within the society.

1.4. Epistemology

Two common concerns raised within epistemology are how we know that something exists and how we justify it. To address these concerns, it is useful to take a brief review of the value of ethnography beforehand.

Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) explained that the value of ethnography is the variety of cultural patterns that exist within particular society and how these patterns explain the whole processes of the society. Therefore, they maintained, an ethnographer seeks to utilize the capacity of people in it to learn a new culture, while attempting to minimize his own assumptions even when he is investigating a culture that he is already familiar with.

The epistemological claim here is that it is possible to understand such a new culture “by spending significant extended periods of time in the setting: participating, talking to people, observing what goes on, studying documentary sources, exploring the meaningful roles of material objects, and collecting other meaningful features of the setting” (Parker 2007, 2249). In achieving this, the ethnographer relies upon (to some extent) the everyday epistemological skills of social actors.

Fortunately, the capacities we have developed as social actors can give us such access. As participant observers we can learn the culture or subculture of the people we are studying. We can come to interpret the world in the same way as they do, and thereby learn to understand their behaviour in a different way to that in which natural scientists set about understanding the behaviour of physical phenomena. (Hammersley & Atkinson 2006, 8)

This quotation implies that an ethnographer may be able to recognize the shared meaning that exists among the people he is investigating by immersing himself into the people’s life. It is by understanding the people’s behaviour through an extended period of time and a series of data collection procedures that an ethnographer can begin to justify his assumption of what is believed to be a reality.

1.5. Research Strategies

One of the first steps that a researcher has to consider when embarking on a piece of ethnographic research is how to gain access to people and places in such a way that the ethnography successfully achieves its outcomes (Karen 2012, 5). Yet, Thompson (1988) as cited in Karen (2012) argued that there is a general gathering stage. Here the ethnographers explore his or her topic, collecting background information, reading substantive and theoretical works related to the field and learning more about the research participants. The next step is actually getting into the field and this involves gaining access to the group or settings, and doing data collection using a range of procedures, such as interviewing, observing and writing reflexive journals.

Having collected data, the next step that an ethnographer will do is analyzing the data. Such analysis was considered by Erlandson et al. (1983) as “a progression, not a stage; an ongoing process, not a one-time event” (111). Unlike quantitative data analysis that quantifies data through measurements, frequencies, score, and ratings, qualitative data analysis relies heavily on “the provision of careful and detailed description” (Mackey & Gass 2008, 162).

Prior to report findings, it is of the ethnographers’ obligation to ensure that the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are clearly reflected in his findings. Erlandson et al. (1993) claimed that this was done for the reason of building trustworthiness of a research, a quality standard of a qualitative research.

2. Conclusion

Ethnography has been promoted as a response to the existing research paradigm, positivism. Unlike positivist, the cohort of this naturalistic approach postulates the ethnographers must study the world in its natural context. The task of an ethnographer is looking for something that lies beyond himself, something that he/she has to uncover by understanding multiple realities that each individual in the world may perceive. To

understand such multiple realities for the reason of knowledge production is not an easy task to do. Thus, an on-going and active process, which includes selective observation and theoretical interpretation of what is seen, through asking particular questions and interpreting what is said in reply, through writing field note and transcribing audio/video recording, and writing report, is necessary.

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Contemporary Dilemmas of the Ecumenical Movement

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Humanity has experienced many tragedies in the micro- and macro-social aspect, and also crystallized in several movements, which in the face of postmodern drama of a man are trying to create a friendly atmosphere around relationships. One of them became an ecumenical movement that promotes openness among societies, respect for differences and encourages the dialogue. Suggested by the author's loss of interest in ecumenical ideas and lack of reception of inter-church documents, it results from the reduction of the role of religion in the institutional dimension. This is reflected in the processes of secularization and privatization, and consequently resignations of large social groups of being part to any church. Modern man is a result of pluralistic reality in a way that an individual is individually looking for religious and non-religious references and systematically distances himself from the models of religiosity proposed by the Churches. In this context, the proposed ecumenical movement, i.e., legitimized by religious institutions, loses its importance and is identified only as treatment that restores the prestige of Churches.

Keywords: ecumenical movement, ecumenism, modernity, institutionalism, religiosity, society, religion

1. Introduction

Contemporary social reality brings the enormity of events, initiatives, and treatments that inspire today's Europe inhabitant to the intellectual reflection on the future. On the one hand, we are witnesses of intensification of the idea of unification in the economic-military dimension, as exemplified by the European Union and NATO enlargement, and on the other hand of the growth of social marginalization, social exclusion and the increasingly visible delaminating of civilization. We note some actions towards integration, which are based on good faith, honesty, love, and people's justice but we also notice intensification of violence, terrorism and widespread exploitation of societies and communities in order to achieve their own selfish purposes.

The duality transformation presented here introduces in the average European citizen anxiety, impatience and fear. A modern man who faces such situation, is constantly looking for silence, the meaning of life and its purpose. He needs that internal order to overcome difficulties and adversities both in the individual and collective aspects. The outlined prospect of modernity is rooted in history, an integral part of which is the time. Modernity cannot be seen without the past, even that one which has generated many wrongs and evil to people. History is designed to discover errors and mistakes of societies, to seek peaceful ways and to walk in solidarity for the future. In this respect, the religion which has accompanied people virtually from the moment they appeared on Earth has a great role. It is extremely difficult to imagine the history of Europe without the Judeo-Christian idea influence that inspired and stimulated the development of the continent. Christian ideas

were mostly expressed in the activities of churches and institutions established by them, which from the beginning of its existence were constantly creating the man and often were the forces inspiration that led to breakthroughs and reforms in a particular socio-historical reality. The ecumenical movement, which originated and developed on the continent, is part of religious character of Europe. It was created as a typical religious movement, which evolved over time towards a social movement. It is said that this expansion has resulted from the discovery of human values, which creates the movement. At the moment, the ecumenical movement is still not enough popular and present in the life of societies, to speak about his lasting presence in human consciousness. A good example might be just occasional reflections on this issue of the researchers in various fields of science as well as few publications in the socio-religious periodicals. This movement does not formally function in the life of the Christian churches. Current status and development is due to many lay people and clergy from various traditions, whose cherishing the tradition of the unity of the entire world shall be perceived rather as a hobby.

Having the above suggestions in mind, we decided to present the contemporary dilemmas of the ecumenical movement in the context of the functioning of social movements. We make this assumption due to the fact that social movements are the primary stimulus for change in modern societies, and the ecumenical movement is an excellent illustration of these changes taking place in the socio-religious sphere. We also sincerely hope that this publication will contribute to the intensification of research works on ecumenism and make researchers from different disciplines explore this issue.

2. Basic Aspects of Ecumenism

The fate of modern Europe is intrinsically linked to the fate of Christianity. The thesis, according to which Christian ideas have been implemented into life in a complicated and often turbulent way by particular countries and people, is indisputable. When we look at the development of Christianity from a historical perspective, we see different phases of development and variety of methods used by representatives of religious institutions in order to form religiosity among people. The institutional manifestation of the Christian ideas is inseparably linked to the fact of the Church creation, and then its split.

Modern scholars usually speak about the ecumenical movement in terms of two planes. The first concerns the attitude of individuals towards the area of difference, as well as confessional and religious otherness. This is typically a personal dimension, accomplished not only by learning and assessment of other faiths and churches, but also through emotions that significantly impinge upon the process of cognition and evaluation, as well as through specific individual actions towards religious otherness.

The second area concerns the institutionalization of the ecumenical movement, apparently exhibited in the work of the World Council of Churches. The very institution was established in Amsterdam in August 1948. From the very beginning of its existence it embraces representatives of Protestant, Anglican, Orthodox, and Old Catholic churches from dozens of countries around the world. As this worldwide organization grew, regional religious organizations began to emerge from it. One of them was the Conference of European Churches (Karski 2002, 35).

It is the Conference of European Churches (CEC), which was founded in 1959 and is currently bringing together 126 non-Latin churches with the Council of the Bishops' Conferences of Europe (CCEE) and includes 34 national Episcopal conferences; in 1975, it formed a joint committee that for the first time in the history of Christianity developed a document stating the basic rights, responsibilities, and challenges of ecumenism. The

document, called the Ecumenical Charter, could be formed as a result of long-term work of both bodies and the observations made during the First European Ecumenical Assembly, held in Basel in 1989, and thanks to the concretization of ideas at the Second European Ecumenical Assembly in Graz in 1997. The ceremonial signing of the Charter took place on 22 April 2001 in Strasbourg. The document was assigned by the Cardinal Miroslav Vlk on behalf of the CCEE and the Metropolitan Jeremiah from Paris on behalf of CEC.

Ecumenical Charter in the introduction, among others, states: "The Conference of European Churches and the Council of the Bishops' Conferences of Europe in the spirit of both European Ecumenical Assemblies in Basel (1989) and Graz (1997) definitely decide to keep and develop a community that has been created between us" (Charta Oecumenica 2002, 159).

The document consists of three parts, each with specific responsibilities defined. Charter promises strengthening the cooperation between CEC and CCEE, defending the rights of minorities and ensuring that all churches have a broad access to public life.

In its form, it clearly emphasizes the need for European integration, not only in terms of politics and economics. "Therefore, we wish to keep the *soul of Europe*, when guided by our common faith, we act on behalf of such basic values as justice, freedom, tolerance, participation, and solidarity, and when we together admit to the fact that these values should result in a common benefit among the people" (Charta Oecumenica 2002, 164). Hence, the obligation is to provide support for the process of European unification with all its cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity. This commitment is consistent with the approval of the diversity of regional, national, cultural, and religious traditions, defined as the common wealth of Europe. As follows, the churches are obliged for supporting the democratic processes and for ensuring peace and justice to all people.

According to the opinion of Hryniewicz, one of the authors of the document,

Europe has a special responsibility for the fate of the world. It should remain open to all newcomers, refugees and asylum seekers. Thus, churches should consider nationalism a sin, when the love of one's own nation leads to unfair treatment of other nations or minorities. Christians and Churches are obliged through the Ecumenical Charter to commit themselves to the dialogue of appropriate relationships with other religions and beliefs, especially with the Jewish people, with whom we share a belief in the God of Abraham. Everyone has the right to seek truth and bear witness to it in accordance with his or her conscience. (Hryniewicz 2002, 72)

Through the ecumenical movement in this study, I understand the collective action of the society, whose objective is striving to share common values among Christians, values resulting from the sources of the Christian faith and formalized by religious institutions. Reflection about the essential premises of the ecumenical movement will allow the enrichment of the society with the values resulting from the unification ideas and will indicate the direction of cultural change resulting from the violating structure of human communities.

In modern literature, there are three aspects of ecumenism: the spiritual, doctrinal, and practical. Spiritual ecumenism is the inner transformation of a man, from the novelty of spirit, after all, the self-denial and unrestrained outpouring of love, unity desire is born and matures. New spirit in the sense of the individual, means to change attitudes towards other religions. In the social aspect, it is the relation between Christians, which is filled with love. The basis of it is everything that unites rather than divides. When searching for connecting elements of Christians of different confessions, we should adopt an attitude of openness and friendliness. We should understand thoroughly the reason for religious divisions and dogmatic-theological differences. The result of this analysis will lead us to the universal Christian values present in various Christian traditions.

In this type of ecumenism, humanistic aspects of this movement seem to be apparent, which means return to the source of conceptual ecumenism. According to Floran,

humanism does not require any additional terms, it is an essential, common element of all the people and understood by all. It can also be a way to rescue and rebirth of humanity. Humanism is a value beyond the material existence of a man, it includes the so-called higher, spiritual values cultivated by both Christians and followers of other religions among believers and unbelievers. (Floran 1995, 45)

However, the requirement of ecumenism perceived in such way, is to get rid of alienation, hostility, aggression or conviction of possession “only correct views” in social life.

The basic form of spiritual ecumenism is prayer for the unity of Christianity. The first symptoms of this type of activity could be isolated during the pontificate of Leo XIII who in 1894 established the Catholic Church annual day of prayer for Christian unity, immediately before the event of Pentecost. However, this initiative did not meet the wider response from non-Catholic community.

Several years later, this initiative was strongly supported in Lyon by a Catholic priest Paul Couturier who in 1935 began to invite his church Christians of different denominations to pray together for unity. The habit of January prayer for Christian unity was extended to France and thence to neighboring countries, and then to other churches: Orthodox, Anglican, and Protestant. Since 1996, the themes of the annual Week of Prayer, Scripture readings and worship schedule are set by a joint group established by the World Council of Churches and the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity. In Poland, since 1998 there has been a common adaptation of the material by the Ecumenical Council of Bishops for the Roman Catholic Church Ecumenism and the Polish Ecumenical Council (Kijas 2004, 221-3).

Hryniewicz has written that

overcoming the split happens every time the state of mutual alienation is overcome. While remaining a stranger, or even hostile against one another, we only enlarge the scope of distribution, extending it into our own interior. When overcoming alienation and division we accelerate the day of reconciliation. (Hryniewicz 1982, 1499)

Spiritual ecumenism concerns individual, it teaches how to overcome internal phobia. There's no place for triumphalism or self-egoism. However, it is the self-denial and the adoption of shared guilt for the divided Christianity. Implementation of this task is extremely difficult for the individual. That is why theologians, representing various churches in a scientific way, have been trying for several years to bring people closer to this subject. Their area of operation is doctrinal ecumenism.

Doctrinal ecumenism discusses theological and ecumenical issues, cooperates in doctrinal field and conducts interfaith dialogue. Since the beginning of Christianity, a lot of attention has been paid to doctrinal unity, recognizing it as an essential condition for the unity of the Church. To preserve this unity already in the patristic period, after many debates and disputes, it was possible to determine the Creed as a true force in the whole Church. Starting from the sixteenth century, when the family of Christian churches underwent rapid fragmentation, there were established new churches that interpreted differently the doctrinal principles set out in the first Councils. Along with a different interpretation of the principal truths of faith, the rite was changed and with time passing particular tradition was created. Over the centuries, there were several attempts to make arrangements on doctrinal differences. It was not until the twentieth century that most Christian churches took up reciprocal dialogue. Lutheran and Reformed Churches joined dialogue first. Their greatest achievement was to conclude in 1973 Leuenberg Concord by which the two churches recognized the community of “altar and

pulpit.” An important aspect of the inside-protestant ecumenism expansion in the terms of Leuenberg Concord is the adoption of seven European Methodist Churches on 2 February 1997 (Karski 2001, 56). In the late sixties representatives of the Orthodox Churches and the Catholic Church sat to the talks table. The inclusion of these churches to the dialogue resulted in quantitative and qualitative changes in the ecumenical movement. Bilateral dialogues are currently being carried out on a global, national or regional plane. “These involve representatives of the following Christian traditions: Anglicans, Baptists, United Evangelists, Roman Catholics, Lutherans, Methodists, Orthodox, Oriental Christians, Reformed, Old Catholics, Pentecostals and followers of Christ” (Karski 1986, 273). Taking such significant number of dialogue in the world (currently about 30) confirms that in many countries exists friendly climate for discussions, which often involve the largest ecclesiastical authorities. Multilateral discussions and documents, which arise as a result of work of the theological commissions, do not close this issue; it still remains a very difficult and lengthy process of reception and approval of arrangements. It is complicated due to the fact that in almost every church there are different ways to exercise and understand the supreme power (alliances, federations, councils, etc.), hence the need for time so that the church authorities can take such a decision. Doctrinal ecumenism also deals with the missionary issues and cares for ecumenical orientation of priests and pastors education. The aim of every Christian church is to bring thoughts of evangelizing to the whole world and the splitted church loses the integrating function as a consequence and ceases to be credible. The consequence of the confessional divisions was, among other things, the establishment of new independent churches, separatist and syncretic which is contrary to the idea of mission and ecumenism, which requires the existence of one and indivisible Church.

In addition to the realm of consciousness and attitudes of individuals as well as doctrinal arrangements, social, and international relations became an important plane for Christian’s cooperation. The third direction of ecumenical ecumenism, called practical ecumenism is trying to resolve this problem. The origins of this movement back to the second half of the nineteenth century and the initiators were mostly members of clergy, derived mainly from the Protestant Churches. The most famous character of this ecumenical trend in its initial phase known as “Practical Christianity” was Archbishop Upsari, Nathan Soederblom. Among the pioneers of the Church who tried to awake public interest on social issues the two Swiss ministers shall be mentioned, Hermann Kutter and Leonhard Ragaz, and the theologian from the USA-Walter Rauschenbusch. Having used the international organizations of workers, they performed for understanding between people. “The International Association of Reconciliation and the World Association for Promotion of People’s Friendship by the Churches emerged from these initiatives” (Karski 1986, 43). These organizations were created just before World War I, and for obvious reasons they could not extend their activities, especially in the countries involved in armed conflict. However, despite the difficult international situation, the group of church leaders of the neutral countries managed to announce in 1914 the peace appeal, stating among others that “the Church task in the present situation is to appeal for peace and Christian community” (Karski 1986, 43). Roll call was initiated by the before mentioned Archbishop and Soederblom, whose headquarter in Uppsala was the center of ecumenical peace efforts and the assistance to prisoners and victims of war was organized there.

After the war, it was an intense attempt to convene the first Conference of Churches to the Home Practical Christianity. It did not take place until August 1925 in Stockholm and gathered over 600 delegates from 37 countries which were divided into four groups: American, British, European and the Orthodox Church (Karski 1986, 45). Participants in this conference worked in five committees that dealt with such problems as: a/The Church and the economic and industrial issue, b/Church and moral problems, c/Church and international

relations, d/Church and Christian education, e/Church and the methods of creation and federation. As a result of the findings of the Stockholm Conference in 1926, there was the Institute established for Social Research in Geneva, which gave birth to the still existing Ecumenical Institute in Bossey.

The Institute prepared a program of the second Conference held in July 1937 in Oxford. The difficult political situation in Europe and economic crisis doomed that the conference debates differed from the program. The conference was attended by 425 representatives of Protestant Churches, Orthodox, and Old Catholic. There were no representatives of the Catholic Church and the Evangelical Church in Germany. With the Oxford Conference there is a related slogan: "Let the Church remain the Church," which echoed throughout the Christian world. It was to express the idea that the Church had been influenced by historical, social and political forces and that so far there is no possibility to identify its real character. The slogan formulated in Oxford was supposed to be kind of stimulus, inducing the church to reflect upon its own particular essence. Oxford Conference was an attempt to recover the integrity of the Church (Karski 2007, 49).

3. The Ecumenical Movement in the Context of Social Movements

Beginning of the 21st century is characterized in many societies by great pace and a comprehensive range of social change. These changes affect not only the microsocial level, but also penetrate into the macrosocial dimension. Wnuk-Lipiński has said that

the world has entered a phase of global transformation, the consequences of which we are not able to predict. There is almost nothing which will be like in the past, and the future will not be a simple continuation of the present day. The deepest qualitative changes are probably still ahead of us, and this what the world has experienced since 1989, may be just a prelude to the more qualitative breakthroughs awaiting us in the first decades of the twenty-first century, that will fundamentally change our present horizon of imagination and that will reveal new perspectives and new threats the next generation will have to deal with. (Wnuk-Lipiński 2004, 7-8)

A common understanding of social movement usually refers to some steering effect, which had influence on the qualitative and quantitative change in particular society. Usually the term refers to the movements of workers, peasants, and religious liberation. Modern scholars dealing with issues of social movements define it variously. Generally, two approaches can be distinguished. The first consists of analyzing the movement as a group with specific characteristics, while the second movement is recognized in the broader context of the social system, taking it as a process of the change in thinking, attitudes and institutional arrangements. This distinction has an analytical and ordering character. Most authors take into account both aspects of the studied phenomenon (Szczepański 1970, 252-3; Hryniewicz 1982, 113-36).

Social movements, according to Sztompka, are probably a historically universal phenomenon. People in all societies must have had a reason to join up and fight for common objectives, and against those who stood in the way of their implementation. Historians describe the riots, insurrections, explosions of discontent, which took place in ancient times, powerful religious movements in the Middle Ages, the meaningful peasant revolts in 1381 and 1525, the Reformation and the cultural, ethnic and national movements emerging from the time of Renaissance. Powerful social movements contributed to the birth of modernity in the great bourgeois revolution, mainly English, French and American (Sztompka 2005, 259). "Generally by the term social movement we mean loosely organized community acting together in a non-institutionalized manner to produce change in their society" (Sztompka 2005, 256). These aspects of social movements, despite having been presented in a very selective and general way, will allow preliminary analysis of the ecumenical movement understood as collective action.

Although the ideas of unification were formed with different intensity and effect almost from the beginning of Christianity, it is only in the twentieth century when the conferences on the subject of ecumenism started to be organized. These events are considered to be the beginning of the ecumenical movement. At these conferences the current meaning of the ecumenism was shaped and Nathan Soderblom, Archbishop of Uppsala, described it as “the expression of spiritual attitudes, providing a deep knowledge of the fundamental unity of Christian Churches” (Karski 1986, 12). This definition emphasizes the fundamental unity of the Church and its common tasks. The Catholic Church states in the Ecumenical Decree that the ecumenical movements are activities and enterprises aimed to promote Christian unity, depending on various needs of the Church and the time (DE.4). Unity in this definition is understood as an attempt to overcome the existing confessional barriers. Overcoming these barriers depends on each person, and more on his attitude in relation to Christians of other denominations.

Such an attitude should be characterized by a profound respect, sincere openness towards Christians from other churches, lack of prejudices and fears, and partner trust consisting in exchange of ideas for mutual integration. Considerations about the essence of the term ecumenical movement and the difficulties of definition have led to such a situation that today we use more often the term ecumenical movement than the term ecumeny. Such a state, according to Kijas results from the fact that,

ecumenical efforts taken by the Christians are nothing static, on the contrary, they constitute a dynamic reality of the word. Their ultimate goal is not “scrambling” the wounds of the past and standing still, but the brave, though often very difficult going ahead. Scholars involved into that process do not stop solely on the mere intellectual reflection on what happened in the past, but indulge in finding and identifying new ways towards the future, in which Christians might find the lost unity. (Kijas 2004, 62-63)

Taking into account main goals of social movements and considering the general conditions of the ecumenical movement, we will present here the essential elements of the ecumenical movement in a social context.

3.1. The Ecumenical Movement as a Community in Action

The community is usually a group of people connected by a kind of social bond; in other terms we can determine the community as a number of persons between whom there are any relations (Karski 2002, 256). Therefore, the essence of this element will not focus on the idea, which the movement includes itself as the research shall concentrate on the values that result from the implementation of this idea in society. However, the crucial aspect becomes the fact of adoption of these ideas by members of the community, which is the essence and purpose of every human action (Weber 2005, 55-64).

Therefore, in our case, we will name the community a certain number of persons addressing common actions to restore Christian unity. In such circumstances, the ideas of ecumenism are internalized by members of the community who create then an ecumenical attitude among the rest of society.

The main task in creating ecumenical attitudes is minimizing the interfaith distance. We mean here two dimensions: cognitive and emotional. The concept of social distance is difficult to define in the context of empirical research. The origins of this concept should be seen in the spatial recognition of the issues of familiarity and strangeness in the concepts of G. Simmel, W. Sumner and E. Bogardus. Distance in the context of the ecumenical movement is recognized as the perception of difference and as the scope and nature of contacts with people operating in different confessions. Such approach to distance determines the intensity of

relationship with our person or group, where proximity is expressed by the use of the words: “yours,” “mine,” “ours.” We often talk about, e.g., our nation, our country and our church or our religion. The word “our” includes hidden content suggesting the existence of a social community which we identify ourselves with and which we are connected to.

Nikitorowicz has written that “social bond is created and maintained by what links people and by what divides people in the collective coexistence. Interactions and relationships are formed at a certain level and they make people connect to each other, need each other, feel they are complementary and feel the differences and the community” (Nikitorowicz 1995, 13).

The essence of this part of the ecumenical movement is the desirability of specific human community, which created a bond between them by closing the interfaith gap and adopted the aim of fostering ecumenical ideas.

3.2. The Ecumenical Movement as an Imperative for Change in Christianity

Writing about the changes which have occurred since the emergence of the unifications ideas to the present day, one should go back to the late nineteenth century and realize the deeply divided Christianity. The division of Christianity in 1054 into the so-called East and West cemented the sixteenth century division of the Western Church. Christian churches in the late nineteenth century functioned independently. Their official documents and teaching were focused on the isolationism and negative judgment of other confessions, and the creation of Christian identity based on discriminatory factors but not general. In practice this approach led to many conflicts and mutual antagonisms, which in some way undermined the essence of Christianity as a religion that believed in love, respect and forgiveness. In such circumstances, it was very difficult to carry out missions to preach the good news effectively and at the same time take in a mutual exclusion or hatred. This attitude became a very unreliable and internally contradictory. Therefore, the first ecumenical impulses should be seen in the mission field. At the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth century, as reported by Karski, “it was easy to observe the Christians activity to promote peace, international understanding and solving social problems; it was the activity that exceeded the denominational and national limits” (Karski 2007, 43).

The mere fact that the emergence of the ecumenical ideas within Christianity was the beginning of changes that intensified in the Christian churches in the second half of the twentieth century. These changes related primarily to the interdenominational relationship, which directly influenced the attitudes of society towards people with different confession.

3.3. The Ecumenical Movement and the Formalization and Concentration of the Activities

On these matters, the ecumenical movement is heterogeneous and it is very difficult to refer to the specified aspects clearly. This heterogeneity is apparent even from the fact that when we look closer at the accomplishments of ecumenism followers over the centuries, we see that they were finalized on a high level of formalities, for instance Ecumenical Charter, doctrinal agreements or development of research institutes. Such institutions are obviously lacking in other social movements. However, this picture is rather simplified since our own research clearly shows that more than 90% of conscious ecumenists (for such we consider participants in the ecumenical meetings) argue that ecumenism is not encountered in the churches or through contact with a formalized ecumenical group but mostly accidentally from his colleagues or friends. This fact indicates the problem with the reception of the doctrinal arrangements and their impact on the creation of ecumenical

attitudes. In our opinion there is a large discrepancy between the effects of doctrinal dialogues and the actual attitudes of the believers' community. These processes do not run in parallel, and even distant interdenominational agreements are very hard to be internalized by believers. This situation confronts us with another aspect of the ecumenical movement, referring to the concentration of ecumenical activities or rather lack thereof. In Poland, there are centers or places where the so-called "saturation" of ecumenism followers is high, among others Warsaw and Kielce. On the other hand, there are areas where there is a complete lack of those.

3.4. The Ecumenical Movement and Unconventional Forms of Action

In this case, the actions of social movements are characterized by a high level of spontaneity and unconventionality. The ecumenical movement at the current pointed to the existence of great spontaneity and unconventionality as well. The first contacts of the clergy of different faiths raised on the part of church hierarchs high concern and unequivocal opposition. Hitherto, the whole essence of the creation of denominational identity based on the negation of science and tradition of other Churches, and the only full-exponent and carrier of truth was the own Church. There was a need of brave and looking into the future theologians and philosophers in order to alter these views systematically. For this purpose, there were used unconventional methods and activities that substantially exceeded the existing arrangements or practices in the various Churches.

We will use here the example from Poland, which turned into a habit of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Polish specificity of these days is a guest preacher's exchange: during the masses in Catholic churches sermons are preached by the clergy from other Christian Churches and the Catholic priests preach sermons in the fraternal temples. From the standpoint of the Holy See or theologians coming from other denominations, this fact is seen to be inconsistent, however, long-term "community of the pulpit" has been existing so deeply in the consciousness of the clergy and the faithful that the church hierarchs have been forced to accept this fact.

All previous arrangements and the changes that occurred in the interdenominational relations can be related to the ecumenical movement. These changes can be viewed from two points.

First, the ecumenical movement might be the cause of changes, therefore, we claim that the rapprochement of Churches occurred through its development. This fact can be attributed to creation of the institutions which realize the ecumenical postulates including World Council of Churches and the appropriate Councils functioning within the Catholic Church which intensified ecumenical involvements and extended the group of unity supporters among the clergy and laity.

Second, the ecumenical movement may be the result of changes that occurred in the Churches during the formation of the movement. These changes relate to opening up the Churches to other Christian communities as a result of the impulses coming out, among other things, of changes in social structure, the countries involvement in global wars, the evolving of the secular religiosities nature from ritual to evangelical and the emergence of reformatory movements in many Churches.

The wisest and most complete solution of the ecumenical movement causality is to co-locate both cause and effect. An important element is the fact that the ecumenical movement seeks to change the public awareness in the aspect of the confessional relations improvement or strengthening the unification efforts, which is transferred in a direct way to the change of social attitudes in general. Therefore, the ideas of ecumenism transported by its followers to other members of society give a new quality to social relationships

and create new cultural patterns. We may assume that their course and conditions will be strongly correlated with the changes launched by a specific type of social movement, which is the ecumenical movement.

4. The Ecumenical Movement as Inspiration to Activity for European Unity

When talking about Europe, we cannot forget its identity mainly based on the Greek and Roman culture. Europe is not only a defined territory, but also culture. Four great heritages influenced its emergence, namely Judaism brought strict moral precepts and prohibitions and the idea of social justice, the Greeks—the universal value of truth, understandable to all people, the Romans—the idea of common law, relevant to all humanity, the Christians—ideas of human brotherhood and the belief in one God who loves and saves. These four great heritages were mutually intertwined and they enriched themselves through the contributions of other nations, such as the Celts, Teutons, Slavs. As a result of this process, it created a European culture, which is a certain unity, however not homogeneous but pluralistic. This culture can be described as unity in diversity.

That unity in diversity is emphasized and proclaimed by the ecumenical movement, which took as its goal the unification of Christianity in its all main currents. The principal area of operation of the unification ideas is to create an axionormative system by individual communities or Churches.

The ecumenical movement initiated by the Protestant Churches in the late nineteenth century and intensified by the inclusion of the Orthodox Churches and in the longer term also the Roman Catholic Church, has currently different intensity and various effects. One of the most important issues still being raised in the circle of ecumenists is how to make a wide range of people aware of the lack of Christian unity. This is the challenge posed to every Christian, at any time and any place. It is a universal and current demand and it is based on the need for continuous learning about ourselves and others, the need to approach and not move away from each other.

In recent years, mankind has experienced many tragedies of micro- and macro-social scale, yet there have been crystallized several movements, which in the face of postmodern drama of human endeavor to create a friendly and welcoming atmosphere in people's relationships. One of them has become undoubtedly the ecumenical movement, which basically promotes attitudes of openness, respect for dissidence, and in disputable cases encourages to take up a dialogue.

When analyzing the changing notions of meaning and different forms of expression the word *ecumeny* or *ecumenical movement*, we need to modernize the ancient interpretation of the term. It will allow a broad view of the substance of ecumenism, that is what is used today. Today's equivalent of "the world inhabited by the people" may be separate inclusion of "living environment" understood as a sphere or a space of human life. For this space, we can include natural, social, and cultural environment.

The first one is sometimes perceived as the occurrence of the people's relations with the environment and the impact of nature on human life and biological development of *homo sapiens*, enabling or hindering the satisfaction of physiological needs. We need to consider also the environment components that do not belong to the world of nature, the metabolic processes and physiological balance as well as adapting to the environment (Wolański 2012, 13-15). The ecology deals with these problems and as a self-study science it defines in detail the problems and the scope of its inquiry.

However, with the interaction of individuals and society in the sense of collective life deal sociology and other social sciences, which on the basis of the empirical research, preceded by the deep theoretical reflection, attempt to describe the individual's attitude towards society, how social bonds are formed inside the concrete

human communities, how the process of learning the social roles is conducted or how society shapes the man and how separate conditions proceed in social reality. So outlined social issues perceive the social environment as the determination of what is common or functions for the relationships between individuals and the community.

Another sphere of human activity and functioning is a cultural space. The object of scientific inquiry in cultural anthropology is “searching for the features of a typical human, that is, those that bind to the cultural essence of man” (Wnuk-Lipiński 2004, 40-41). With the broad cultural context in mind, we can say that it is the characteristic of a given society, it is all that we learn in social life and that we will pass to future generations. Hence, the cultural environment is called the configuration of material and spiritual heritage elements typical of the collectivity, which include the products of human activity, as well as activities related thereto.

Considering three purely theoretically separate functioning environments, it appears to us a three-dimensional image, which is difficult to determine any boundaries of each sphere, or indicate the beginning and the end of that space. This ancient term based on the specific issue of the social sciences, internalized in the consciousness of contemporary man can be an excellent plane to reconsider the diverse social reality, including the church. This reality affects not only the purely social space, but may well go beyond the empirical dimension of humanity. It may concern not something only profane but also sacred.

Modern man, who deliberately creates an environment of residence occasionally also suffers from painful problems of the past. He carries in himself difficult past feuds and interpersonal conflicts including those that concern religion. This is an expression of selfish desire to subjugate others, willingness to impose their beliefs and expand to other entities. The human nature is to strive for the only one “right” socio-religious picture of the reality, often interpreted very personally, as an expression of individualistic ambition and determination to interpret the socio-cultural reality. Hence, reaching for different administrative and political methods in the past people tried to impose their interpretation of the truths and beliefs, their socio-historical vision of the past.

These problems are no longer subject to conflict in view of the ecumenism, whose sense is the coexistence of people from different religious traditions and the acceptance of their past. This is a basic social function, which is satisfied by ecumenical movement. The idea of this feature is to build between people friendly relations that are the foundation for the functioning of all human communities. Such a perspective on ecumenism, which has the strength and will merge, attract, and not discard or break, allows extracting from its core universal values, which are becoming necessary in the functioning of modern democratic societies.

Therefore, ecumenism, as the intellectual and religious current has large deposits of positive impulses in order to counter the different forms of fundamentalism, hatred, or selfishness, to shape the modern man and the future in a spirit of respect for otherness and to teach how to benefit from the wealth of the world diversity.

The characteristics listed above should not be underestimated in the context of European unity. Re-unity is possible only inside a quite homogenous civilization. The civilization identity does not exclude the presence of a whole range of seemingly foreign elements, which in the course of history have been adapted or even assimilated by the ever-wider social groups. It must be agreed as to the truth that due to the interweaving of cultures appears the process of reclaiming rigid native forms. But not always it is possible to exclude the phenomenon of still dangerous eclecticism. This applies particularly to the religious sphere where there is the temptation to simplified reconciliation between apparently similar ideas.

5. Social Functions of Ecumenism

Having the general assumptions of the ecumenical movement and the significant historical problems in mind, we would like to extract the social functions, which ecumenism serves in the modern world.

The first of these is the cognitive function, which determines the degree of interest to other Christian confessions and religions. The interest or desire to explore concerns the nature and specifics of the operation of other churches or denominations. The scope of this feature covers the historical aspects of the formation of specific churches and religions. Not without significance is the fact of getting to know the confession and constant reflection on its changes. It is extremely difficult for us to participate in exchanges of thoughts, whether inter-church or inter-religious dialogues if we do not know sufficiently the specifics of our adversary in matters of doctrine, worship and religious structure.

In direct contacts, called interpersonal, the cognitive aspect is also needed in order to shape appropriate attitudes towards other human beings. In this regard, ecumenism as a process of bringing people with different philosophies of life, serves undeniable assistance in mutual maintaining and edification of interactions with another person. Cognitive efforts preferred by the ecumenical movement in all conditions and circumstances may result in the formation of lasting interpersonal relationships, necessary for the proper and peaceful functioning of human societies.

The second function of ecumenism we can call integration. It is particularly important today, where the interpersonal integration is the core of relationships. This is due to the position of the post-modernism man, who is constantly being placed in new social situations. These situations are subject to fast-paced, constant changes for the cause of emerging new technologies, or development of methods, techniques, and information flow. The changing socio-cultural reality forces the modern man to create and learn new social roles, to create new social networks.

An important feature of the present day is processes changing the socio-cultural environment, which previously was subject to slower changes. The contemporary understanding of human functioning was simpler and more predictable, due to the similar socio-cultural entity context. Stability and durability were qualities which were permanently preparing the man to function in society. However, today's motility, mobility and the constantly changing social reality make the integration processes more difficult.

In this situation, ecumenism is preparing the present to continuous changes and new social situations. It does not inhibit or obstruct relationships but with the multiplicity and diversity allows focusing on core values, on what unites people and not divides them. It proposes the integration, rather than unification, it opts for saving the own otherness but with respect for other people's separateness and autonomy. The proposed value with full accountability can contribute to the integration of modern societies and to adopting an open attitude to otherness.

Another function performed by the ecumenism in the lives of individuals has the pedagogical and educational dimension. The education is said to be a process. Therefore, education to ecumenism is not limited to a specific time or space dimension, it is not just a specific moment in the life of an individual, but it runs throughout the whole life. This applies not only to children and adolescents, but also applies to adults. Through contacts with people from different religious traditions occurs a process of mutual approach, acceptance and empathy. Contacts with people from different religious backgrounds help to create attitudes of respect for otherness and attitudes of understanding followed by acceptance of other positions, ideas and opinions. A man

equipped with such personality traits becomes more open, compassionate, understanding others and less selfish. He looks for beauty and truth in others and he does not shut down in his idealized, fundamentalist world.

6. Closing Remarks

The above presented arguments and remarks on the role of the ecumenical movement in the modern world were actually accepted and used in the everyday life of contemporary societies only to a certain degree. In our opinion, there are several reasons for this state of affairs.

One of them is to reduce the role of institutional religion. We have in mind the secularizing processes that are particularly hard to run in the societies of Western Europe, and consequently resignation of large social groups from belonging to any church. As a result of pluralistic reality, a modern man individually seeks religious and extra-religious reference systems and he systematically distances himself from the models of institutional religiosity proposed by the Churches.

In this context, the ecumenical movement proposed or legitimized by these institutions, by analogy, is not that significant, and is identified only as treatment that restores the prestige of Churches. Incidentally, as a result of intense social transformation and globalization processes Churches more willingly care about the image of their confession than about the inter-religious or interdenominational affairs. It affects the positions of the faithful, and the whole idea of ecumeny as a community of people weakens. The problem of unity or religious community is also not discussed at meetings of political leaders who create political unity, for instance within the European Union.

In this regard, religious leaders agreed to leave the religious matters to individual member states, which in turn distanced even more the perspective of turning the ecumenical into a real social reality. Such decisions were in many cases dictated by maintaining the political interest of the authorities, which resulted in various roles the Churches play in every state. The issue of unity in the world is also raised by the so-called authorities, scholars or artists. Postmodernism in its high rate of change and visual creation of reality is a fundamental dilemma and the biggest difficulty in more intensive reception of the movement in contemporary societies.

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11