

Silent message of Nature

(Andrej Detela)



We are living in times of some very rare and precious occasion. Nobody can deny that the “external” world is changing rapidly, and we must ask ourselves about our actual position within turbulent spiritual vortices of our era. Are we able to bring the invisible treasure to the other shore? I shall speak especially about the relation between the subtle and the manifested, as seen through the experience of a contemporary scientist.

INTRODUCTION

Tribute to silence

Let us observe our actual moment. Yes, we are willing to observe it carefully. So first we shall ask ourselves: What observation is? In the first place, from the first step, observation means *respect of silence*. We are not afraid of silence, since when we are listening carefully we find out that silence is very promising. It is the gate of awareness, it is the silent musician who is, very patiently, standing in front of us and waiting to sing another tune as soon as we are prepared. Silence is full of ever-new meaning, acceptance of reality, silence is full of understanding.

Multiverse of living beings

Therefore, our observation is impregnated by silence because only through this primordial silence we are able to hear tiny voices belonging to billions and billions of *living beings*. We do not know how many there are, but all of them are important. We even do not know if these beings, big or small, are pervading the whole vast Universe. But let us believe that they do. That sounds wonderful.

Interconnectedness in space and time: the meaning of love

So let us spread this solitary moment of silence over the wholeness of life that impregnates our Universe – whatever we might imagine by this evading word. We hear so many voices, roaring or subtle, and many of them are hardly discernible. We know that we are not alone. It is clear that all these beings are connected in *space and time*. But as soon as we are awakened within the flow of time, we are gifted by the living experience of *love*. If time did not exist, our world would be crystalized into some perfect, final form – and in that case love would have no meaning. It is easy to imagine that hypothetical, unrealistic situation. Have you read *The Snow Queen*, a moving story written by *Hans Christian Andersen*? A curious boy, *Kay* by name, is trying hard to discover the eternity of perfection in glittering crystals of ice – but all in vain. Finally he finds that “eternity” within a warm relationship with the blooming life all

around. So, love is the eternal link, like the glue that ties this momentary existence to the past and the future.

SOME UNPLEASANT QUESTIONS IN MODERN TIMES

Informational mess: lies and truth

As the members of a seven-billion population, we are living compressed in human agglomerates: cities and so forth. Our basic needs are the same and many interests of other people are similar to our own interests. Therefore, we feel comfortable in the language of human behaviour. We know what makes people happy. In principle, each one has capability of differentiation between good and bad. But many people are not listening carefully to the inner voice of ethical responsibility, the voice called *conscience*. Or, even worse, many of them have never awakened that inner voice. Maybe they have heard this voice in their young years but have suppressed it later. Maybe they are blinded by their “important” position inside social structures. We can really play many tricks with other people; we can lie and deceive them, just in order to fulfil our interests on behalf of others. World is full of manipulation: political actions are impregnated with lies, and likewise, our financial and economic systems are impregnated by greed and will for power. In this era of communication, there are showers of information, in many places even a cacophony of information, but still the question remains: how can we discern truth from lie? The question of *truth* is neglected in our days.

The ancient origin of authority

This last question leads us to the problem of *authority*. In olden times, when people were still living in the midst of untamed wilderness, there was always a male authority in the role of protector from (known or unknown) dangers threatening from everywhere around. He was a respected hero; he was praised in all of the ancient texts that we have inherited. Let us recall Gilgamesh, then heroes of the Old Testament, powerful heroes of the ancient Greek mythology or from the Indian mythology, or here, in Western Europe, of the Celtic mythology, then numerous heroes of our folk-tales, etc. So through our long history, the institution of authority has been established. But, it is important to know that relationship between an authority and “other people” is always *asymmetrical*, it is unidirectional, and it goes together only with pronouncedly hierarchical social structures.

Authority and power

Quite many of those heroes just mentioned were blood-thirsty. Authority functions through *power* but history teaches us so well that the subtle boundary between “beneficent social power” and “aggressive power” (or maybe “manipulative” power) is not clearly visible. We may be misled, and after some temporal delay – when the damage is already too great – we become aware of our misperception. When someone transfers his/her own power to someone, together with this he/she transfers also most of the authentic *spiritual insight*. He is turned into an instrument of an external interest, of an external ego; today we say that he is “instrumentalized”.

The modern problem of false authority

In modern circumstances, such a stance can engender endless problems. We are experiencing a totally new situation that has not been experienced ever before in the human history. All seven billion of us, living in the present global informational society, are day by day bombarded by extremely powerful and large vortices of information (even resembling to tornadoes) – and these are all kinds of limited, partial information or half-truths. And every day we must learn anew to discern truth from lie – otherwise we are quite easily manipulated. So we must develop *our own insight*, we should not rely on any external authority. It is important to know that insight has nothing to do with relation to some external authority.

We can learn from children: their way to insight

This insight, this process of discrimination cannot be achieved merely by intellect. Why so? First, let us start with an example. Let us spend a time in a warm country with simple and natural life, maybe far out in the countryside. There, maybe under palm trees in a jungle, or by the banks of a river, or in the green of large meadows, children are not constantly led by their parents, not taken care by them, and not even provided by just everything they want to possess. These children are free to invent their own toys and games. Maybe their parents are poor, maybe they are still happy but maybe they are suffering in their worries to survive. Schools are small, simple and natural. So these children must invent their own games, their own children's Paradise. (I hope that they do not get drowned into the children's mafia what I have also seen in poor countries.) They are not burdened with aggressive external information of the established society; they get tuned directly to something inexpressible that is transcending the established human systems. So these "lucky" children develop genuine *love for life*; love for a myriad of tiny voices. Through this creative process they develop also *intuition*, their own inner and direct contact with the all-pervading beauty of life. I do not say that this picture of a poor country is a template of an ideal society – but shortly we shall come back to this point.

RATIONAL AND INTUITIVE APPROACH TO REALITY

The age of reason

Now let us have a brief look at the prevailing cultural atmosphere of the Western society (by this we mean especially Western Europe and North America), since we know that in our days the trends of this very culture are, quite aggressively, imposing the trends of the whole global culture. In order to evaluate honestly these invisible influences, we must pay due interest to our cultural history. Starting from the 16th century (the closing part of European renaissance), the prevailing pivot of spiritual attention was rise of the so-called *Western intellect*. It turned out that elevated development of rational thinking was very fruitful within the realm of natural sciences: at first in astronomy (*Copernicus, Kepler*), but soon also in physics (*Galileo, Newton*, etc.), mathematics (a whole line of famous mathematicians of the 18th century – the age of reason), later also in chemistry, and so forth.

Scientific reductionism

So during the last three or four centuries, it was uncritically believed that *human reason* supplies us with complete understanding of the world and its ways, including even our human soul and spirit. The science of biology (the science of life), for instance, followed the same mechanistic reductionism. The same is true for modern psychology. By the expression *scientific reductionism* it is meant: to extract one single and isolated part of reality, to find out the laws pertaining to this isolated part, and then finally, to incorporate this part, together with the newly discovered laws, back to the all-embracing whole – in naïve belief that these particular laws will function just as well inside the complete whole. Modern molecular biology, for instance, is a good example of scientific reductionism.

Incompleteness of rational approach

But in modern days, especially during the last few decades, we are increasingly aware of one serious problem, arising as soon as we reduce our perception of reality to some crystallized framework of rational assertions. Such wholly rational approach is, more or less, an oversimplified and fictitious view of reality. Why so? *Rational assertions* are always limited in number, but beings and influences and associations among them are innumerable. Achievements of modern science and technology are increasingly influencing our lives. We can say that life is becoming extremely dense, and that no one can escape this density of experiences. We know quite well that influences are numerous and that they are not isolated – all of them are interconnected into a *single web of reality*. Universe is inhabited by innumerable beings and we have said that love could be that reliable binding force that is holding together all these subtle influences – but how can this be realized inside the framework of rationalized ideas, the framework of partial truths (or maybe even half-truths)?

Two faces of reductionism

On one side, one can admit that an *isolated view* of “reality” was a cardinal discovery of European culture (a discovery begotten already within the ancient Greek science). But on the other side, one can also ask (let’s formulate it in the language of mathematics) whether the mistake originating from this simplification is really negligible. Maybe we have neglected one half of the Universe (as *Jean-Pierre Petit* bears evidence). If he is right, the basic discovery of the European culture is simultaneously also its main fallacy. What seemed to be, in the past centuries, the promoter of development, in modern circumstances it is also its main hindrance.

Inadequacy of scientific method: let us be gentle with it

The mainstream of modern science deals with *partial truths*, because such is the method of this very science, science that we have developed (especially in the last 400 years, from the time of Galileo onwards). But let us be gentle and honest: there is nothing basically wrong with this scientific method – obviously under condition that we are continuously aware of its inability to provide us with the so-called “absolute truth”. It is nothing wrong if astronomers provide us with images of distant galaxies; on the contrary, these pictures are the most

wonderful proof of our eternal link with the *divine Presence* that is pervading the whole wide Universe.

There is no intellectual way to absolute truth

But it is very questionable if we begin to argue (maybe just on the basis of such excellent and inspiring pictures) that we know everything most important about our Universe and if we believe that we are given the key to its secret origin. Many prominent scientists are doing just that (but I shall not name them). And similarly, it is highly questionable if, after detecting the *Higg's particle*, many scientists believe that a "Theory of Everything" (as they call it) is firmly established. Intellectual pride like this is baseless and futile. Namely, *intellectual approach* cannot provide us with any kind of "final theory" – in spite of our vast and admirable knowledge. If we do not respect the great *Unknown*, we lose our subtle perception of reality, and we lose our ability to explore, the ability to discern the *suchness* of phenomena. Silence is behind everything and it is teaching us how to observe. Fitted out with this gift of silence, we are prepared to dismiss any kind of belief in some intellectual Absolute.

LOVING OBSERVATION OF NATURE VS MODERN SCIENTIFIC MACHINERY

Scientist is like a child who wonders about the vastness of our Universe

Still, we do not lose anything by this seeming sacrifice, since what is really precious is not some "final theory" but our spiritual approach to investigation – even if this search cannot bring us to some "final" (crystallized) perception of reality. What is to be praised is our *wonder of natural beauty* without limits. We are like children playing on the shore of an enormous ocean. Every wave that approaches from the distant horizon is a new wave; and every foamy splash designs a totally new pattern across the sandy beach; and every coloured pebble or shell is extremely beautiful and different from any other. And there are also many tiny creatures living in the sand ... It is this innocent primal wonder what makes us really human – and simultaneously divine! We are engaged in continuous search for the so-called "truth" – a concept that can never be adequately named. As soon as we enclose apparent "truth" into some crystallized form, as soon as some relative truth is given the name of an absolute truth, then surely it is truth no more. The last quotation in *Lao-Zi's famous Tao Te Ching* begins like this: *He who knows does not speak; he who speaks does not know ...*

Entropy of information

It is clear that we cannot perceive reality unless we brush aside all intellectual interpretations, brush it aside right from the first movement. But it is not an easy movement; it is more like a continuous process. Continuously we need *mindfulness*: patient attention and spiritual strength and also courage and much more. All those are obvious prerequisites protecting us like an umbrella from confusion of informational showers – showers with enormous *entropy of information*. Every day we are exposed to all those rational argumentations. Words and pictures, presented especially through modern electronic media, are permanently bombarding all of us who are living in this modern world. Knowledge about Nature has grown so much and we know so many of her ways, but it is partial and rational knowledge, therefore limited within its own realm. It is contaminated with informational entropy. Modern society is (in

many ways) pushing us right away from that simple and sober state of mind, which has always been so dear to lovers of Nature – and will always remain dear to them.

Loss of spiritual freedom

There are new traps around. Yes, we can arrange our machinery working for us. Robots (supported by modern science) are producing nice cars for our comfort and leisure. A modern man is nearly sure of his supremacy over Nature. But the greatest danger is hidden right here, in our *apparent supremacy over Nature*, in our self-sufficient pride. Our technical abilities have become so powerful that they are threatening our authentic human nature. A great part of our modern world has succumbed to crazy belief that our human civilization can function like a *machine* (and is already functioning alike); and that also our human soul can function like a machine. The modern man is constantly “wired” through internet, so he is not free; in fact he has forgotten what the true meaning of free time is. He must promptly serve the requirements of invisible people behind the great World Wide Web.

The danger

In contrast to our extremely efficient *intellectual and technical machinery*, a human being is quite frail – in physical sense, but also with regard to intellectual arrangements of so many data. So the machinery we have established has grown so powerful that most of us have forgotten who we really are, in spiritual sense. The external machinery is becoming internalized. Hence, this vast external and internal machinery has lost its driver (our *discriminative intuition or spiritual insight, budhi or vipaśyana* in Sanskrit) and has run out of our control. No one can stop it, any more, because it is fuelled by never ending competitive efforts of the actual neo-liberal economy. This economy is not based upon sane spiritual values: at least from the times of *David Hume* (18th century) it is based upon human greed. And this has become extremely dangerous – as indicated by actual facts about global ecological situation and about the prevailing state of human sanity (psychological dependence on our global system with extremely high social entropy).

So now we are prepared for bridging science and spirituality in a fresh, modern light.

LIBERATION

Silent steps into the embrace of Nature

In the calm of night, we could listen to symphony of stars; we could even hear the subtle interplay of cosmic magnetic fields. They all wanted to tell us something, and now, before dawn, their message has become dense; it is ready to materialize in front of us. And now, still again, it is early morning: the first light is getting in. We can see how our loving Earth has materialized, now her shapes are visible and we can see them dancing. In sober freshness of the morn we are invited by distant unknown horizons, so we go out and we instantly feel a great joy under the open sky. There are wide oceans and there are large forests: the living breath of nature is so broad that we cannot foresee all of her ways.

Nature is our great teacher

And this is exactly why we feel this joy: we are free; we have abandoned the unnecessary and petty need for control. Why should we carry that burden? We are liberated from crystallized forms. Nature is so wide and she is our great teacher: she teaches us to see the bare *suchness* of things and phenomena (Sanskrit: *paratantra, tathata*), suchness that is free from preconceptions of any kind. Calm abiding in this experience is something most beautiful, most precious, and liberating. If we stay a long time within the embrace of Nature, and after listening patiently (for many days and for many years) to her whispering, step by step we foster that quality of mind which we call *intuition*.

Intuition

In modern rational culture it is very unclear what the meaning of the word *intuition* really is. We cannot learn intuition from another person or from a book; one even cannot analyse the process of intuition in rational terms. So I shall rather resort to poetic language. We are aware of the silent painter hidden behind the beauty of phenomena. From the first breath, silence is the artist of enlightenment. Our own ability of perception is a process that is born from inner heart; it is our inner angel or cosmic Being who feels and knows eternal life of the whole Universe. When observing dispassionately (equanimously) through intuition, we can see simultaneously *all parts of the whole* – although maybe some particular part is not perceived with that admirable resolution as it may be perceived through the process of reason. We can even see the whole within a tiny single part. A poet would say that he can see the whole world in a dew-drop, like the whole world is reflected in a single pearl of the *God Indra's web*, as an old Indian myth goes.

Intuition vs. rational thinking

We can compare this act of observation to the act of observing a *hologram*: A small opening in the hologram displays the complete picture, although *optical resolution* is much better when we observe the entire hologram. The same quality can be attributed also to our creative process: it starts with intuition, then right from the beginning we get some sense of the whole new land that we are exploring (maybe this is still quite vague sense); and only very gradually we assume, one by one, the discrete attributes of reason. Rational thinking includes continuous testing by the classical method of “trial and error”. In that way we perceive the contours of reality more clearly, and so gradually we improve the resolution of separate parts. But intuition still remains throughout the whole creative process; it is like water that impregnates the dry parcels of soil, so that they are not separated one from another. At least from time to time, we should reverse back to intuition; otherwise we may lose our creative insight. Namely, from love for life, fully impregnated by intuition (as the wet soil is impregnated by water), spiritual insight originates also. And hence, if this insight is not cultivated, the essence of someone's activity is quite obscure, and one may even forget what his main priorities are.

Creativity in scientific research

When we import these simple ideas into the realm of scientific research, we obviously meet the following question: is scientific research of an *intuitive* type, or is it a *rational* type of creativity? During the first, creative phase, the leading expression of mind is *intuition* (or at least it should be); while later, during the communicative (informative) phase, we must cling to *rational* languages of expression. Similarly, *Henri Poincaré*, at the end of the 19th century, declared: communication (among scientists) is based on bare facts, while discoveries are based on imagination. In addition to this, *Andrej Župančič*, a famous Slovenian biologist, complimented: The creative phase is inductive and hypothetical, while the communicative phase is deductive and empirically verifiable. But in practice, final verification of scientific results often leads back to new methods, and these methods are again developed by intuition. Therefore, sharp division is quite impossible. We should rather say that *intuitive* and *rational* approaches are entwined together into a single creative process. In short, the both types are necessary: in the creative phase, a scientist's work is intuitive, illogical, and metaphorical, beyond words; while in the communicative phase it is rational, logical, and apt for verbal expression.

Science and spirituality

A stubborn rationalist (or alternatively, a religious fanatic) would say that scientific creativity and spiritual liberation are two totally separate realms of our human existence. But such a view is unjustifiably truncated: it is advocated mainly by those who only read about final (visible) achievements of modern science but do not take any active part in its deeper philosophical (or spiritual) implications. Namely, as we have seen, the two apparent extremes are originating from the same source. All great scientists have given full tribute to meditative insight into fresh ideas that never before had been considered seriously. It was just this spiritual insight that had led them into newly discovered lands – and also gave them strength and patience, so necessary to persevere on their difficult path (maybe against many oppressions of conservative society within a certain period).

Orphism as union of science, art, and spirituality

Remember only the ancient *orphic* scientists like the great *Pythagoras*: his mathematical laws of music scales were, to him, grammar of a definite divine language. Or maybe, on another side of timeline, remember *Einstein's* reflections on philosophy, together with his playing a violin. When reading biography of such great scientists or inventors, again we are aware of their continuous tie with the transcendental divine: Yes, definitely, it was the source of their inspiration. In our living experience, science and spirituality are only two different expressions (two different modes of manifestation) pertaining to the same reality: the observer and the observed are fused into one.