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RELIGION AND NATURE



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RELIGIJA IN NARAVA /
RELIGION AND NATURE

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U V O D N I K

Posebna številka *Poligrafov*, ki je pred vami, je posvečena izjemno aktualnemu vprašanju razmerja med religijo in naravo v luči sodobnih izzivov religijskih ved kot tudi sodobne okoljske krize.

Zahodni svet se je s svojim specifičnim razvojem filozofije in teologije že zgodaj odrekel čustvom in čutnim zaznavam ter v razmerju do narave utemeljil povsem novo misel, zaznamovano s tipično pojmovnim in idejnim svetom, ki temelji na dominaciji razuma nad občutenji, enega spola nad drugim, človeka nad živalskim svetom in človeštva nad naravo. Temu vzorcu mišljenja je sledila tudi teologija, ki je iz okrožja svojega premišljevanja in delovanja prepogosto izganjala duha narave. Grškemu modelu pozabe materialnega sveta je tako sledilo z grštvom premočno zaznamovano krščanstvo vse od sv. Pavla dalje. Človek se je od narave in njenih bitij tako raje usmeril v zanj bolj obvladljiv svet idej in na njih utemeljene transcendence (ega, subjekta, Boga), zdaj pa si mora v zavest povrniti tisto, kar je bilo na tej poti izgubljeno, in se na novo roditi v okviru novega, skozi naravo utelešenega bivanja. Le tako si bomo lahko zamislili pot v novo sobivanje zemlje in njenih bitij ter človeka v okviru religije.

Živimo v času vseobsegajoče okoljske krize in v zadnjem času smo ob pojavu koronavirusa SARS-CoV-2 spoznali tudi veliko ranljivost človeštva. Tako klimatske spremembe v dobi antropocena kakor tudi pojav nevarnega virusa človeštvo opozarjajo na meje našega poseganja v naravo in njene cikle. Morda bomo postali nekoliko ponižnejši, četudi smo še vedno daleč od svojih prednikov, ki so še znali bivati v soglasju z naravo in njenimi cikli – kar kažejo tudi članki v tej številki. Hybris sodobnega človeka, ki želi izkoristiti sleherni naravno danost, zavladati slehernemu koščku planeta in po vrsti uničiti življenjski prostor preštevilnih bitij, je neizmerna. Zgodovina religije nam pove, da so bili ljudje starih kultur občutljivi na pravzorke, ki so jih razbirali med svojim vsakodnevnim posvetnim in ritualnim delovanjem.

Pričujoča številka *Poligrafov* prinaša šest člankov v okviru posebne številke, posvečene religiji in naravi. Članki se navezujejo na vprašanja sodobne filozofije religije, religiologije (vključno z religijami in kozmo-

logijami južnoameriških in indijskih staroselcev ter sodobnega neopoganstva) in ekofeministične teologije. Številko sklepata dva članka, ki dopolnjujeta posebno številko s svojimi navezavami na razumevanje zraka v okviru srednjeveške islamske filozofije pri Avicenni na eni ter estetike in kontemplacije lepega v okviru srednjeveške krščanske filozofije Svetega Bonaventure na drugi strani.

Lenart Škof in Nadja Furlan Štante

Tematska številka
RELIGIJA IN NARAVA

Special Section
RELIGION AND NATURE

RELIGIJA IN NARAVA V LUČI ROSOVE TEORIJE RESONANCE

Bojan Žalec

Uvod

V tem članku¹ se ukvarjam s teorijo resonance nemškega sociologa Hartmuta Rose. To je po njegovih besedah sociološka teorija našega odnosa do sveta, kot se glasi podnaslov njegovega glavnega dela o resonanci.² Teorija je zelo interdisciplinarna in celostna. V njej se filozofija, fenomenologija, hermenevtika, družbena kritika, normativna teorija in še kaj prepletajo s sociologijo.³ Rosova teorija je vzbudila veliko zanimanje med predstavniki različnih humanističnih in družboslovnih disciplin ter tudi predstavniki religije in znanosti o njej.⁴ Za

¹ Ta prispevek je nastal v okviru raziskovalnega programa *Etično-religiozni temelji in perspektive družbe ter religiologija v kontekstu edukacije in nasilje* (P6-0269) ter temeljnih raziskovalnih projektov *Medreligijski dialog – temelj za sožitje različnosti v luči migracij in begunske krize* (J6-9393) in *Holistični pristop k spoštovanju človekovih pravic v gospodarstvu – reforma slovenske in mednarodne pravne ureditve* (J5-1790), ki jih je finančno podprla Javna Agencija za raziskovalno dejavnost Republike Slovenije (ARRS).

² Hartmut Rosa, *Resonanz. Eine Soziologie der Weltbeziehung* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2016); Hartmut Rosa, *Resonance: A Sociology of Our Relationship to the World* (Cambridge & Medford: Polity Press, 2019).

³ Jörg Hübner, »Reich-Gottes-Hoffnung als Auferstehung-Resonanz. Hartmut Rosas Resonanzkonzept ins Gespräch gebracht: ein theologisches Experiment,« *Evangelische Theologie* 81, št. 3 (2021): 225, <https://doi.org/10.14315/evth-2021-810307>.

⁴ Christian Helge Peters in Peter Schulz, ur., *Resonanzen und Dissonanzen. Hartmut Rosas kritische Theorie in der Diskussion* (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2017); Tobias Kläden in Michael Schüßler, ur., *Zu schnell für Gott? Theologische Kontroversen zu Beschleunigung und Resonanz* (Freiburg et al.: Herder, 2017); Jean-Pierre Wils, ur., *Resonanz. Im interdisziplinären Gespräch mit Hartmut Rosa* (Baden: Nomos, 2019); Hartmut Rosa in Christoph Henning, ur., *The Good Life Beyond Growth: New Perspectives* (New York et al.: Routledge, 2019); Martin

znanost o religiji je zelo pomembna, saj je verski odnos v svojem jedru resonančen odnos.⁵

Prva sestavina Rosove teorije, s katero se ukvarjam v tem članku, je njegovo razumevanje religije. Temu bom posvetil prvi del članka. V drugem delu bom predstavil Rosovo razumevanje narave. Na tej podlagi bom v zaključku izvedel nekatere ugotovitve, ki zadevajo pomen religije in strah sodobnega človeka pred izgubo resonance. Preden si ogledamo Rosovo razumevanje religije in narave, moram na kratko razložiti njegov pojem resonance,⁶ kar bom storil v naslednjem razdelku.

Bistvene značilnosti resonance in odtujenosti kot njenega »nasprotja«

Rosa resonanco razume kot odnos do sveta v različnih razsežnostih. Gre za dvostranski ali vzajemni odnos,⁷ kar pomeni, da resonanca zahteva tako utrepevalen, patičen odnos, kot tudi aktiven, delujoč odnos obeh udeležencev resonance. Ima štiri bistvene značilnosti, ki veljajo za obe strani v resonančnem razmerju:⁸ 1. aficiranost ali dotaknjenost, da se deležnikov resonance nekaj dotakne (nem. *Affizierung*); 2. lastno

Laube, »'Eine bessere Welt ist möglich'. Theologische Überlegungen zur Resonanztheorie Hartmut Rosas,« *Pastoraltheologie* 107, št. 9 (2018): 356–370, <https://doi.org/10.13109/path.2018.107.9.356>; Roland Rosenstock, »'Etwas, was nicht ist und doch nicht nur nicht ist'. Konturen einer resonanzsensiblen Theologie im Gespräch mit Hartmut Rosa,« *Pastoraltheologie* 107, št. 9 (2018): 401–407, <https://doi.org/10.13109/path.2018.107.9.401>; Branko Klun, »Reziliencia in resonanca: v iskanju nove drže do sveta,« *Bogoslovni vestnik* 80 (2020): 281–292, <https://doi.org/10.34291/BV2020/02/Klun>; Hübner, »Reich-Gottes-Hoffnung als Auferstehung-Resonanz«; Bojan Zalec, »Resonance as integral part of human resilience,« *Xlinguae* 14, št. 3 (2021): 139–149, <https://doi.org/10.18355/XL.2021.14.03.13>.

⁵ Klun, »Reziliencia in resonanca«, 290.

⁶ Hartmut Rosa, »Gelingendes Leben in der Beschleunigungsgesellschaft. Resonante Weltbeziehungen als Schlüssel zur Überwindung der Eskalationsdynamik der Moderne,« v *Zu schnell für Gott? Theologische Kontroversen zu Beschleunigung und Resonanz*, ur. Tobias Kläden in Michael Schüßler (Freiburg, Basel, Dunaj: Herder, 2017), 34–41.

⁷ Hartmut Rosa, »Resonanz als Schlüsselbegriff der Sozialtheorie,« v *Resonanz. Im interdisziplinären Gespräch mit Hartmut Rosa*, ur. Jean-Pierre Wils (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2019), 11–30.

⁸ Hartmut Rosa, »Zur Kritik und Weiterentwicklung de Resonanzkonzepts,« v *Resonanz. Im interdisziplinären Gespräch mit Hartmut Rosa*, ur. Jean-Pierre Wils (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2019), 196.

učinkovanje (nem. Selbstwirksamkeit); 3. preobrazba (nem. Transformation); 4. nerazpoložljivost (nem. Unverfügbarkeit⁹).

Iz povedanega je že jasno, da je odzivnost sestavni del resonance. Nasprotje resonance je odtujenost, ki je »odnos« ravnodušnosti, brezbriznosti ali celo sovražnosti. Odtujenemu subjektu se predmet ali svet kaže, pojavlja kot nem, gluhi, neodziven, kot golo razpoložljivo gradivo itd. To je mrtev, brezodnosni »odnos«. ¹⁰ Bubrov odnos jaz-ti je resonanca, odnos jaz-ono pa je odtujenost. ¹¹ Z nekom sem v resonanci, če se naju obeh nekaj dotakne, če jaz vplivam nanj in on name in če naju ta odnos – bolj ali manj – spremeni, preobrazi. Resonance ni mogoče nadzorovati, ni razpoložljiva v smislu nemškega samostalnika Verfügbarkeit. V odnosu resonance udeleženci drug drugega ne instrumentalizirajo. Primer resonančnega odnosa je medsebojna ljubezen in tudi za vero je resonanca bistvena sestavina.

Nasprotje odtujenosti je, kot že omenjeno, resonanca. Vendar odnos med odtujenostjo in resonanco ni samo nasprotje, ampak dialektično razmerje, ¹² saj je resonanca mogoča le na podlagi odtujenega sveta. ¹³ Resonanca je nasprotje odtujenosti, hkrati pa brez odtujenosti ni resonance; poleg tega resonanca ni alternativa odtujenosti, ampak le blisk v odtujenem svetu. ¹⁴ Rosa loči med bliski resonance ali izkustvi resonance, ki se pojavljajo tu in tam, na eni strani, ter trajno osnovno zmožnostjo za resonanco in trajnim temeljnim resonančnim zaupanjem na drugi. ¹⁵ Taka zmožnost in zaupanje, odnos temeljnega zaupanja, sta potrebna za prigradne in prekarne resonance, ki jih ni mogoče nadzorovati. ¹⁶

Rosa to osnovno tezo razvija v dveh smereh. Najprej resonanco razglasi za temeljno značilnost človeka. ¹⁷ Ljudje smo bitja, ki imajo temelj-

⁹ Hartmut Rosa, *Unverfügbarkeit* (Dunaj: Residenz Verlag, 2018); Hartmut Rosa, *The Uncontrollability of the World* (Cambridge, Združeno kraljestvo in Medford, Ma, ZDA: Polity Press, 2019).

¹⁰ Rosa, *Resonance*, 184.

¹¹ Žalec, »Resonance as integral part of human resilience«, 144.

¹² Rosa, *Resonance*, 184ff.

¹³ Rosa, *Resonance*, 190.

¹⁴ Laube, »'Eine Bessere Welt is möglich',« 366.

¹⁵ Laube, »'Eine Bessere Welt is möglich',« 366.

¹⁶ Laube, »'Eine Bessere Welt is möglich',« 367.

¹⁷ Hartmut Rosa, »'Human beings are first and foremost resonant beings.' Interview with Professor Hartmut Rosa of Universität Jena and director of Max-Weber-Kollegs made by Dioga

no sposobnost za resonanco in temeljno potrebo po njej. Tako človeška subjektivnost kot družbena intersubjektivnost sta v osnovi oblikovani in zgrajeni z vzpostavitvijo osnovnih resonančnih odnosov.¹⁸ Hrepenenje po resonanci je sestavni del človekove človečnosti.¹⁹ Konkretno oblikovanje in razvoj potrebe po resonanci in s tem uresničevanje uspešnega odnosa s svetom je odvisno od posebnih zgodovinskih, kulturnih in družbenih razmer, v katerih živijo ljudje.²⁰ Tako Rosova teorija doseže raven družbene teorije. Družbeni pogoji in dejavniki ne morejo povzročiti nastanka resonance, ni na voljo in je ni mogoče nadzorovati, lahko pa vplivajo na občutljivost osebe ali njeno nagnjenost k resonanci, dispozicijsko resonanco, kot to imenuje Rosa, ta je družbeno pogojena in zato spremenljiva.²¹ To pa že zagotavlja podlago za diagnostične in praktične poante glede moderne.²² Po mnenju Rose ima moderna v pogledu resonance dve plati. Po eni strani zaradi vse večjega izpolnjevanja imperativa prilaščanja sveta pomeni katastrofo resonance²³, po drugi pa so se v moderni pojavile večja občutljivost za resonanco in v marsičem posebne resonančne zmožnosti.²⁴ Po Rosovem mnenju je stopnjevanje prilaščanja sveta v sodobnosti povzročilo tudi stopnjevanje hrepenenja po resonanci. Če je sodobnost prinesla upad izkustev resonance, Rosa po drugi strani dokazuje, da iskanje resonance v njej ni prenehalo, ampak nasprotno: v odtujeni sodobnosti hrepenenje po resonanci in odrešitvi, ki temelji na njej, ni usahnilo, ampak se je celo povečalo.

Silva Corrêa, Gabriel Peters and João Lucas Tziminadis, « *Civitas* 21, št. 1 (2021), 120–129, <https://doi.org/10.15448/1984-7289.2021.1.39974>.

¹⁸ Rosa, *Resonanz*, 293.

¹⁹ Zdi se, da Rosa s svojo tezo o antropološki potrebi po resonanci podeduje hermenevitično tezo o človekovi antropološki potrebi po smislu, čeprav je zelo zadržan glede pomena smisla (Rosa, *Resonanz*, 303). Laube to zadržanost razlaga s tem, da pojem smisla ne more zajeti momenta preobrazbe, ki je tako pomemben za Rosov pojem resonance (Laube, »Eine bessere Welt ist möglich«, 367, op. 14).

²⁰ Laube, »Eine bessere Welt ist möglich«, 367.

²¹ Laube, »Eine bessere Welt ist möglich«, 368.

²² Pri uporabi izraza »moderna« v članku sledim Rosovi uporabi. Po njegovem pojmovanju je tudi sodobnost del moderne. Zato lahko tudi o sodobnosti govorimo kot o moderni. Rosa za sodobnost uporablja tudi termin »pozna moderna«. Sam, kadar se nanašam na sodobnost, uporabljam izraz »sodobnost« ali »pozna moderna«, če se nanašam na celotno obdobje moderne, pa termin »moderna«.

²³ Rosa, *Resonance*, 307ff.

²⁴ Rosa, *Resonance*, 357ff.

Rosa loči tri razsežnosti resonance: horizontalno (odnosi med ljudmi, skupnost(m)i),²⁵ diagonalno (z neživimi stvarmi in artefakti)²⁶ in vertikalno (z nečim, kar zadeva in zajema človeka kot celoto (svet, narava, zgodovina, Bog ...).²⁷ Loči štiri glavne osi vertikalne resonance: naravo,²⁸ umetnost,²⁹ religijo in zgodovino.³⁰ Najprej bom na kratko predstavil os religije in versko izkustvo kot resonančno izkustvo.³¹

Religija v Rosovi teoriji resonance

Rosa religijo razume kot obljube resonance. »Nekaj je prisotnega,« je osnovna oblika našega odnosa do sveta, ugotavlja Rosa, sledeč Merleau-Pontyju. Za verski pogled pa je to prisotno nekaj bistveno odzivnega, ustrezljivega in razumevajočega. V teističnih religijah je ta odzivni temelj bog. Ta je temelj odzivnega sveta. V okviru Rosove teorije je religija odnos, ki obljublja smiselno življenje v resonanci in zagotavlja, da je temeljna razsežnost sveta odnos in ne odtujenost.³²

V zvezi s tem Rosa posebej navaja Friedricha Schleiermacherja in njegovo razumevanje religije.³³ Poudarja Schleiermacherjevo ugotovitev, da je bistven element verskih izkustev in privlačnosti religije ideja odzivnega, ustrezljivega sveta, ki se nas dotakne in s katerim se lahko srečamo. Ta ideja je po Rosovem mnenju združljiva z zahodnjaško versko tradicijo in je hkrati najpomembnejša za njegovo razumevanje religije, saj je njegov bistveni in osrednji del.³⁴

V dvajsetem stoletju je podoben pogled zagovarjal Martin Buber, za katerega je odnos prvi in temeljni vidik vsega človeškega bivanja. Prepričan je bil, da je hrepenenje po odnosu jaz-ti temeljna in glavna

²⁵ Rosa, *Resonance*, 202ff.

²⁶ Rosa, *Resonance*, 226ff.

²⁷ Rosa, *Resonance*, str. 258 in naprej.

²⁸ Rosa, *Resonance*, 266ff.

²⁹ Rosa, *Resonance*, 288ff.

³⁰ Rosa, *Resonance*, 296ff.

³¹ Rosa, *Resonance*, 258–268; Rosa, »Gelingendes Leben in der Beschleunigungsgesellschaft,« 46–51.

³² Rosa, *Resonance*, 258.

³³ Friedrich Schleiermacher, *O religiji: govori izobraženim med njenimi zaničevalci* (Ljubljana: KUD Logos, 2005).

³⁴ Rosa, *Resonance*, 259–260.

človekova potreba.³⁵ Z vidika tematizacije verskih vidikov resonance se mi zdi relevantno na tem mestu dodati, da se izkaže, da je to hrepenenje hrepenenje po Bogu, saj po Bubru človek hrepeni po trajnem resonančnem odnosu. Krhek in nestabilen odnos jaz-ti ga ne zadovolji. Tak trajni odnos pa je mogoč le z Bogom. Odnos z Bogom je temelj in vir vsakega nestabilnega odnosa jaz-ti v svetu ali s svetom, tudi če sam Bog ni eden od teh odnosov ali množica teh odnosov, ker Bog ni niti svet niti ni v svetu. Še več, po Bubrovem mnenju z vsakim odnosom jaz-ti vstopamo bolj ali manj globoko v odnos z Bogom ali vsaj v njegovo preddverje. »Dih velikega Ti veje v vsakem odnosu jaz-ti,« je zapisal Buber.³⁶

Rosa svoje razumevanje religije razvija naprej prek razlage molitve, čaščenja in verskih obredov.³⁷ Namen molitve je doseči globoko resonanco s svetom, kar je razvidno iz dejstva, da je molitev usmerjena navznoter in navzven. Podobno se dogaja v meditativnih tehnikah. Tak pogled na molitev nam omogoča razumeti, zakaj je prevod religije kot vezi tako sugestiven, čeprav je lahko etimološko vprašljiv.

Rosa ugotavlja, da je pri bogoslužju in verskih obredih, kot sta eharistija in blagoslov, navpična resonanca povezana z vodoravno resonančno osjo med verniki in diagonalnimi resonančnimi odnosi v smislu resonančnega odnosa do stvari, kot so križ, kruh, kelih, blagoslovljena voda itd. Te lahko verniku/-ci, vsaj katoliškemu/-i, zadostujejo oz. omogočijo, da čutno zazna navpično resonanco. V tej perspektivi, ugotavlja Rosa, morda celo križ lahko razumemo v smislu teorije resonance, kot povezavo med vodoravno in navpično dimenzijo resonance. Vse razsežnosti resonance (navpična, vodoravna in diagonalna) so prisotne tudi pri praznovanju božiča.³⁸ Božič je družinski praznik (horizontalna resonanca), praznik posebnega odnosa do jaslic (diagonalna resonanca) in deteta (navpična resonanca).³⁹ Poleg tega je s teološkega vidika ta dokaz, da se v odnosu s človekom lahko spremeni tudi Bog,⁴⁰ kar je nujno,

³⁵ Martin Buber, *Ich und Du* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1995), 26–28; Martin Buber, *Between Man and Man* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul), 31ff; Rosa, *Resonance*, 260–261.

³⁶ Buber, *Ich und Du*, 7.

³⁷ Rosa, *Resonance*, 261–262.

³⁸ Rosa, *Resonance*, 263.

³⁹ Rosenstock, »'Etwas, was nicht ist und doch nicht nur nicht ist',« 406–407.

⁴⁰ Rosa, *The Uncontrollability of the World*, 58–59.

da lahko govorimo o resonanci med človekom in Bogom. Kot je zapisal Roland Rosenstock:

Z rojstvom deteta v jaslicah se Bog preobrazi in – glede na izkušnjo preobrazbe v človeka – ne ostane več isti. Bog se postavlja v odnos s samim seboj in s tem, ko postane človek, odpira ustrezen resonančni prostor za odnos s človekom.⁴¹

Rosa zavrača trditev, da njegovo razumevanje, da je bistvo religije potreba po odzivu, bolj ustreza katoliškemu stališču kot protestantskemu. Verjame, da to razumevanje ni vtakano le v krščanstvo, naj bo to katoliško ali protestantsko, ampak tudi v judovstvo in pravzaprav v vse druge svetovne religije, čeprav se ne spusti v dokazovanje zadnje teze. V zvezi s protestantizmom je prepričljiv njegov razmislek o protestantskih molitvah in pesmih, zlasti tistih, ki jih je napisal Paul Gerhardt. Rosa v zvezi z njegovimi pesmimi kot dokaz za svojo tezo, zapiše:

Protestantizem premakne svojo občutljivost za resonanco stran od teologije in na področji narave, v kateri se iščeta božja sled in glas, in umetnosti ali estetike, kjer ju je mogoče doživeti v glasbi in pesmi.⁴²

Rosa protestanta Paula Gerhardta poveže z judom Martinom Bubernom, čigar filozofija odnosa jaz-ti izhaja iz njegovega razumevanja hasidizma:⁴³

Tako Martin Buber in Paul Gerhardt podobno pripoznavata eksistencialno človeško potrebo po odzivu, skupaj z oblubo, da bo ta potreba potencialno izpolnjena, kot bistvo religije.⁴⁴

Krščanstvo k temu dodaja razumevanje Boga kot bitja odnosov. V zvezi s tem je pomembna ideja perihoreze in dejstvo, da sta bila v zgodnjem krščanstvu Bog in človeška duša konstitutivno povezana. Na tem

⁴¹ Rosenstock, »Etwas, was nicht ist und doch nicht nur nicht ist«, 406.

⁴² Rosa, *Resonance*, 264.

⁴³ Martin Buber, *The Legend of the Baal-Shem* (London: Horovitz Publishing, 1955), xiii; Buber, *Between Man and Man*, 254–255; Paul Arthur Schilpp in Maurice Friedman, ur., *The Philosophy of Martin Buber* (La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1991), 33; Maurice Friedman, *Martin Buber's Life and Work. The Early Years 1878–1923* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1981), 111–112.

⁴⁴ Rosa, *Resonance*, 264.

mestu Rosa navaja Petra Sloterdijka,⁴⁵ ki odnos med dušo in Bogom izrecno opredeljuje kot temeljno in skrajno »radikalno«⁴⁶ resonanco.⁴⁷

Naslednji verski pojem, ki ga Rosa razlaga v diskurzu teorije resonance, je greh kot odtujenost od Boga. To pojmovanje ustreza tradicionalnemu judovsko-krščanskemu razumevanju greha kot odsotnosti odnosa, zlasti greha v smislu napuha, superbie, kot stanja, v katerem človek meni, da je samozadosten. Z vidika teorije resonance je torej greh stanje odtujenosti, v katerem človek noče, ni pripravljen ali sposoben slišati nikogar drugega kot samega sebe. Tudi za Martina Luthra je bilo to bistvo greha. Vendar Luthru in vsem monoteističnim svetovnim religijam ne gre predvsem za to, da bi dejansko slišali kakšen drug glas, ampak da smo sploh odprti za resonanco, da si jo želimo, k njej stremimo in si zanjo prizadevamo. Religija je obljuba, da nas svet še vedno sliši, nam poje ali govori, tudi če ga ne slišimo ali ga ne moremo slišati, tudi ko so vse naše osi resonance neme, gluhe, mrtve.⁴⁸

Dvomi o tem, ali ta trajni in ustrežljivi glas veselja dejansko obstaja ali pa gre le za prijetno iluzijo ali samoprevaro, naraščajo že od razsvetljenstva, kar dokazujejo kritike religije od 18. stoletja naprej. Na koncu v razsvetljenem obzorju, po katerem je svet le nekaj nemega in potekajočega po naravnih zakonih, ideje o odzivnem svetu ni bilo več mogoče ohraniti. Če je Pascal leta 1650 zapisal: »Večni molk tega brezmejnega prostorja me navdaja z grozo,«⁴⁹ hkrati pa je še vedno verjel in stavil na božji glas za vso to brezdanjo tišino, se je Nietzsche čez dve stoletji odrekel vsakemu upanju, da bo kdaj slišal ljubljene glas veselstva. Mislil je, da je to samo igra slepila ali zablode, kolikor že je lahko prijetna. Enega najradikalnejših pogledov na odtujenost sveta je v 20. stoletju razvil Albert Camus.⁵⁰ Njegova analiza ga je pripeljala do sklepa, da ne more biti absurda zunaj človeškega uma.⁵¹ Kljub temu absurd ni le v človeku niti samo zunaj človeka, v svetu, ampak je odvisen od obeh, človeka in

⁴⁵ Peter Sloterdijk, *Bubbles: Spheres I*. (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2011), 545–546.

⁴⁶ Sloterdijk, *Bubbles*, 546.

⁴⁷ Rosa, *Resonance*, 264–265.

⁴⁸ Rosa, *Resonance*, 265.

⁴⁹ Blaise Pascal, *Misli* (Celje: Mohorjeva družba, 1986), 104 [št. 206].

⁵⁰ Albert Camus, »Mit o Sizifu: esej o absurdnem,« v *Mit o Sizifu; Uporni človek*, Albert Camus (Ljubljana: Cankarjeva založba), 13–135.

⁵¹ Camus, »Mit o Sizifu,« 44.

sveta,⁵² poleg tega je absurd edina vez med njima.⁵³ Prepričan je bil, da je to edino pošteno stališče⁵⁴ in da je najgloblje izkustvo sveta izkustvo njegove popolne odtujenosti, izkustvo, da je svet nem in da ga ni mogoče preobraziti tako, da bi (nam) spregovoril. To izkustvo je neke vrste epifanija, ki razkriva odtujenost, tišino in nemost vseh stvari in sveta.⁵⁵ Camus je bil prepričan, da je pristno življenje le v sprejemanju te resnice in ne v zatekanju k različnim slepilom, samoprevaram oz. utvaram: »Živeti se pravi dati živeti absurdnosti. Živeti pa ji dajemo predvsem s tem, da jo gledamo.«⁵⁶ Camusovo razumevanje v osnovi sovпада s stališčem sodobnega filozofa narave Bernulfa Kanitscheiderja, ki je leta 2008 v intervjuju dejal: »Vesolje nam nič ne govori.«⁵⁷

Vidimo torej, da lahko glede resonance in odtujenosti sveta ločimo dva osnovna pogleda: na eni strani stališče, da je vesolje nemo in (nam) ničesar ne govori, na drugi pa prepričanje, da je resonančno. Vendar se med tema možnostma ne moremo odločiti na podlagi logike in razuma, ampak je odločitev odvisna od občutka posameznika, ta pa od njegove občutljivosti ali nagnjenosti k resonanci. Kot je zapisal Rosa:

Ali je tisto, kar leži na 'dnu sveta', resonanca vesolja – kot verjamejo Schleiermacher, Buber in James – ali samo hladna tišina mračnega vesolja – kot trdijo Kanitscheider, Nietzsche in Camus –, ni mogoče ugotoviti s pomočjo logike in razuma. To je mogoče kvečjemu 'čutiti', in to, kar pride iz tega preizkusa občutkov, je odvisno od dispozicijske resonance ali odtujenosti osebe, pridobljenih nenazadnje z njenimi vzgojnimi in izobraževalnimi izkušnjami (prim. poglavje VIII: 3); v tem kontekstu se odtujenost zdi nesrečen koncept, glede na njegove negativne konotacije.⁵⁸

Po Rosovem mnenju sta v človeku antropološko zakoreninjena želja po resonanci in strah pred tišino sveta. Ta strah lahko privede do kolektivnega verskega nasilja,⁵⁹ ki želi s silo zagotoviti resonanco s svetom, kar pa ni mogoče, ker resonance ni mogoče nadzorovati ali izsiliti oz. vsiliti

⁵² Camus, »Mit o Sizifu,« 37, 41, 44.

⁵³ Camus, »Mit o Sizifu,« 37, 43.

⁵⁴ Camus, »Mit o Sizifu,« 37.

⁵⁵ Rosa, *Resonance*, 266.

⁵⁶ Camus, »Mit o Sizifu,« 61.

⁵⁷ Rosa, *Resonance*, 267.

⁵⁸ Rosa, *Resonance*, 267.

⁵⁹ Rosa, *Resonance*, 267–268.

in ker morata v resonanci obe strani delovati, učinkovati in govoriti s svojim glasom, kar pa ni združljivo s prisilo. Nasilni ljudje zamenjujejo podrejenost človeka njihovi volji z resonanco človeka s svetom. Drug način, na katerega je nasilje povezano z bojem proti nemosti svetov, so poskusi prebuditi resonanco z vojno ali nasiljem. Sem spadajo različna stališča (neoničejanska in druga) v 19. in 20. stoletju, ki so povelečevala vojno in druge oblike nasilja (Nietzsche, Bataille, futurizem itd.).⁶⁰ Menim, da je to razlago mogoče uporabiti tudi za številne člane različnih ekstremističnih skupin v sedanosti, ki so se skrajnim gibanjem pridružili na primer zaradi krize identitete, ki jo je mogoče razlagati kot krizo resonance ali posledico odtujenosti. Človek je lahko državljan/-ka neke države, pripadnik/-ca naroda, etnične skupine, družine, skratka, nečesa, kar (vsaj na zunaj) določa njegovo/njeno identiteto, hkrati pa so vsi njegovi/njeni kanali resonance mrtvi, nemi, zamašeni. Zato jih poskuša oživiti z radikalnimi potezami. Človek poskuša na vse načine prekiniti to odtujenost, saj jo je izjemno težko prenašati. Rosa na primer definira depresijo kot mrtvost človeških kanalov resonance. Poleg tega tako stanje odtujenosti pomeni krizo smisla življenja, njegovo odsotnost, kar lahko razlagamo kot odsotnost resonance,⁶¹ saj se smisel rodi, poraja, ko (za)vibrira žica resonance.⁶²

Kljub vsem težavam z resonanco v moderni pa človeška želja in hrepenenje po njej v tem času nista usahnila. Vendar pa je vse več ljudi začelo iskati navpično resonanco (še) po drugih oseh, poleg religije. Najpomembnejše od teh so narava, zgodovina in umetnost. Moderna je oblikovala tri druge institucionalizirane načine za zadovoljitev želje po navpični resonanci, ki so funkcionalno enakovredni religiji, vendar ne zahtevajo njenega metafizičnega sistema.⁶³ Religija je tako v moderni le ena od osi navpične resonance. Še več, vse bolj se uveljavlja iskanje

⁶⁰ Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA, London, Anglija: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 661–675.

⁶¹ V tej točki se Rosa strinja s Camusom.

Dietmar Mieth, »Dynamische Stabilisierung und resonante Weltbeziehung,« v *Resonanz. Im interdisziplinären Gespräch mit Hartmut Rosa*, ur. Jean-Pierre Wils (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2019), 185.

⁶² Rosa, »Zur Kritik und Weiterentwicklung des Resonanzkonzepts,« 199; Mieth, »Dynamische Stabilisierung und resonante Weltbeziehung,« 186.

⁶³ Rosa, *Resonance*, 268.

vertikalne resonance po osi narave, tako zelo, da Rosa ugotavlja, da je narava središčna os vertikalne resonance v sodobnosti. Zato se bomo zdaj posvetili predstavitvi narave v luči Rosove teorije resonance.

Resonanca z naravo ali narava kot vertikalna os resonance

Rosa začne svojo analizo narave kot vertikalne osi resonance s premislekom o prepričanju, da nam narava (lahko) govori.⁶⁴ Najprej pojasni, da je to prepričanje močno prisotno tudi v moderni. Kot prvi primer navaja fizika in astronoma Johannes Keplerja (1571–1630) in njegovo delo *Harmonices Mundi*.⁶⁵ Kepler je v njem apliciral pitagorejski koncept glasbe sfer na moderno heliocentrično stališče. Bil je prepričan, da se da dokazati, da zakoni astronomije ustrezajo zakonom glasbe.⁶⁶ Drug Rosov primer je sodobna fizikalna teorija strun oz. določene interpretacije te. Tako je fizik Brian Greene tretjemu delu svoje svetovne uspešnice *The Elegant Universe* dal naslov »Vesoljna simfonija«. Po tej interpretaciji naj bistvo teorije superstrun ne bi bilo nič drugega kot glasba.⁶⁷

Poleg znanstvene sfere je to prepričanje prisotno tudi v vsakdanjem razmišljanju in kulturi.⁶⁸ Tukaj je zelo razširjeno tudi danes, v obliki mnenja, da moramo prisluhniti glasu narave, da bomo lahko slišali tudi svoj pravi notranji glas in tako bili oziroma lahko postali, kar zares smo, bili avtentični, pristno bivali. To prepričanje se je pojavilo v romantiki, danes pa zaznamuje našo množično kulturo. Ljudje, ki so tako prepričani, težijo k resonanci z naravo, vendar pa Rosa tukaj vidi določen problem. Kot smo že pojasnili, je za resonanco nujno, da sta oba deležnika resonančnega odnosa tako utrpevalna kot dejavna. Pri »romantičnem«
pojmovanju narave, o katerem smo pravkar govorili, pa je ta odnos enostranski: človek od narave predvsem sprejema, jo sliši, ona sama pa ne

⁶⁴ Rosa, *Resonance*, 268ff.

⁶⁵ Johannes Kepler, *The Harmony of the World*, prev. Charles Glen Wallis (Čikago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952).

⁶⁶ Rosa, *Resonance*, 286–269.

⁶⁷ Brian Greene, *The Elegant Universe* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1999), 133 in 135–165; Rosa, *Resonance*, 269.

⁶⁸ Rosa, *Resonance*, 269ff.

sprejema glasu od človeka, ga ne sliši, človek je ne preobraža.⁶⁹ Človek naravo »kontemplira«, narava deluje nanj in ga preobraža, odnos preobrazanja pa ne gre v drugo smer, od človeka k naravi. Tak enosmerni, enostranski odnos pa ni resonanca.

Vendar pa je Rosovo stališče še močnejše od trditve, da je zamisel resonance z naravo prisotna v moderni: ne samo, da je ta zamisel močno prisotna v moderni, ampak je ideja »glasu narave« izum tega obdobja.⁷⁰ To implicira, da je tudi zamisel resonance človeka in narave izum moderne, saj sta dve entiteti lahko v resonanci samo, če vsaka govori s svojim glasom. Ideja resonance med človekom in naravo pred moderno ni bila mogoča, ker prej ni obstajala zadostna avtonomija človeka od narave.⁷¹ Vendar pa sodobni človek pozne moderne kljub svoji »avtonomiji« od narave vendarle ne more brez resonance z naravo.⁷² Pri uresničevanju te želje pa ima težave. Posvetimo se zdaj tem problemom.

Zgoraj, ko sem omenil problematičnost »romantično« razumljenega enostranskega, enosmernega odnosa z naravo, smo že omenili glavno temo, na katero se osredinja Rosa, kadar se ukvarja z naravo kot (vertikalno) osjo resonance. To so napetosti in nasprotja v odnosu sodobnega človeka do narave. Po eni strani človek želi biti v resonanci z naravo, po drugi pa so v njegovem odnosu do nje sestavine, ki tak odnos delajo nekonsistenten, ga ovirajo ali celo kar onemogočajo. Enega od takih primerov smo že omenili: to je romantičen odnos do narave, v katerem je človek (preveč) samó patičen, utrpevalen, da bi lahko govorili o resonanci. Drug tak primer je odnos sodobnega človeka do živali. Vzemimo ljubitelje hišnih ljubljencev. Številni prek živali iščejo stik, resonanco z naravo. Svojim ljubljencem dajejo »vse«, kar lahko. Po drugi strani se ne zmenijo za trpljenje neskončnega števila živali v krempljih mesne industrije in drugje. To kaže, da je v odnosu do živali vendarle še vedno navzoč dejavnik potrošništva ali egoizma, ki je negativen dejavnik resonance.

Rosa opozarja, da je v mišljenju, da bomo prek stika z naravo prišli do svojega pravega, globokega jaza in »globljih« stvari, pogosto navzoče

⁶⁹ Rosa, *Resonance*, 277.

⁷⁰ Rosa, *Resonance*, 270.

⁷¹ Rosa, *Resonance*, 270.

⁷² Rosa, *Resonance*, 270.

prepričanje, da narava na nas deluje tako rekoč za našim hrbtom, če mi to hočemo ali ne, neodvisno od naše vednosti in celo želje.⁷³ Rosa kot tak primer navaja adrenalinske športnike, ki na primer po divjih strmih smučajo, opremljeni s čeladami in kombinezoni, ki jih je izdelala Nasa.⁷⁴ V tem je prisoten element premagovanja narave, njenega obvladovanja, in to s pomočjo sodobne tehnike in tehnologije. Pa vendar je hkrati marsikateri od teh adrenalinskih športnikov, ki naravo premaguje in si jo nekako podreja, jo dela razpoložljivo, prepričan, da je prav takrat, ko jo premaguje ali jo premaga, v resonanci z naravo. To velja za ekstremne alpiniste, jadranja prek oceanov itd.

Težnja sodobnega človeka, da bi našel resonanco z naravo, se kaže tudi v povečanju »turizma« v divjini, ko ljudje plačujejo za to, da živijo čim bolj »divje«, »primitivno«, »prvinsko«, da bi tako prišli v resonanco z naravo, od katere si obetajo globoka duhovna izkustva. Seveda pri takem načrtnem in organiziranem, »programiranem« iskanju resonance praviloma ne pride do nje, saj se je ne da poljubno proizvajati in nadzorovati.⁷⁵ Sledi razočaranje, toda drugače ne more biti, saj inženiring resonance ni mogoč.

Dejstvo, da inženiring resonance ni mogoč in da s tem, ko z neko entiteto razpolagamo, uničimo možnost resonance z njo, je še posebej relevantno v sodobni, tehnološki dobi. Če bi človek naredil, da bi bila razpoložljiva narava in on sam, bi s tem uničil možnost resonance tako z naravo kot s samim seboj. Tega se moramo zavedati, kadar razpravljamo o izpopolnjevanju (ang. *enhancing*) človeka in njegovega okolja, o sedanji dobi antropocena, trans- in posthumanizmu ter podobnih idejah in smereh.⁷⁶ Ljudje se tega zavedajo, zato je v sodobnosti zelo prisoten strah pred izgubo resonance z naravo. Rosa za tipičnimi pojavi sodobne družbe, kot je odnos do živali, skrb za usodo naravnega okolja ipd., vidi strah sodobnega človeka pred izgubo resonance z naravo, kar naj bi bilo pravi izvor in gibalno teh pojavov.⁷⁷ Prava osnova temeljnega strahu sodobnosti glede narave ni strah, da bomo izgubili naravo kot

⁷³ Rosa, *Resonance*, 272.

⁷⁴ Rosa, *Resonance*, 271.

⁷⁵ Rosa, *Resonance*, 277.

⁷⁶ Rosa, *Resonance*, 274.

⁷⁷ Rosa, *Resonance*, 274.

vir, ampak da lahko ta onemi in bomo tako ostali brez eksistencialne orientacije, lastnega jaza, pristinega bivanja, smisla življenja in kar je še središčnih (eksistencialnih) vrednot sodobne kulture. Strah pred izgubo resonance z naravo je v končni instanci eksistencialne, neresursne narave. Problem, da bi narava postala popolnoma razpoložljiva in tako nema, je, kot pravi Rosa, »kulturni 'okoljski problem'« za družbe pozne moderne. Vendar pa politika in sociologija okolja ter še posebej discipline, ki so blizu naravoslovju, nimajo ustreznega pojmovnega aparata oz. pojmovnih sredstev, da bi dojele in artikulirale ta (temeljni) problem, zato okoljsko krizo razlagajo samo kot krizo zmanjševanja virov in (posledičnih) katastrofičnih vzročno-posledičnih verig.⁷⁸

Da ne bo nesporazuma, Rosa nikakor ni proti zaščiti okolja, alternativnim virom energije, drugačnemu odnosu do resursov, bolj etičnemu odnosu do živali itd. Prav nasprotno!⁷⁹ Vendar pa obenem v okvirih svoje teorije resonance razvije omenjeno razlago odnosa sodobnih ljudi do narave. V njihovem ravnanju vidi evidenco za temeljno načelo svoje teorije ravnanja, ki se glasi, da je tisto, kar v temelju motivira ljudi, iskanje oaz resonance in izogibanje puščavam odtujenosti.⁸⁰

Po Rosovem mnenju je narava za sodobnega človeka celo središčno področje, na katerem išče vertikalno resonanco. Vendar pa tega svojega iskanja ne zna uskladiti tako, da bi se v njem uravnoteženo prepletala njegov utrpevalni in učinkovalni, dejavni odnos do narave, in to skupaj, »neshizofreno« razdeljena.⁸¹ Samo v takem uravnoteženem sobivanju patičnega in učinkovalnega se lahko razvije resonanca. Drugače je občutek resonance v najboljšem primeru utvara, ki ima sicer (lahko) nekatere blagodejne učinke. Narava se na nas ne odziva, če smo samo patični, še manj, če jo samo obdelujemo, uporabljamo, instrumentaliziramo. Morda so nam prav odnosi s hišnimi ljubljenci lahko znak za to: po eni strani se nam pes ne bo »odprl«, če ga bomo samo na silo dresirali, po drugi pa seveda potrebuje naše vodstvo, da je lahko »on sam«. Podobno je tudi z drugo naravo. Samo v angažiranem odnosu z naravo, ki ni le gola instrumentalizacija narave, lahko pridemo v re-

⁷⁸ Rosa, *Resonance*, 274.

⁷⁹ Rosa, *Resonance*, 275.

⁸⁰ Rosa, *Resonance*, 117.

⁸¹ Rosa, *Resonance*, 277.

sonanco z njo. To ve vsak dober kmet. V krščanski teološki govorici to pomeni, da smo v angažiranem odnosu z naravo, jo upravljamo in je ne samo »kontempliramo«, vendar pa se ne vedemo kot njeni lastniki ali gospodarji, ampak samo kot skrbniki in partnerji. Njen gospodar je Bog, ki zahteva od nas angažiran odnos z naravo, saj si želi resonance med svojimi ustvarjeninami. Resonanca človeka in narave zahteva, da sta deležnika v dinamičnem odnosu, ki ni niti čista harmonija, niti gola podrejenost, niti samo boj, ampak dejaven dvostranski odnos medsebojnega učinkovanja in preobražanja. Šele v takem odnosu lahko vsaka stran sliši drugo, obenem pa ohrani svoj glas in značaj. Pot resonance je srednja pot, vmesno ali zmerno stališče med »predajanjem« naravi in golim instrumentalističnim odnosom do narave. Resonanca ne zahteva, da se do smrti izstradamo, da ne bomo ubili nobenega živega bitja, da ne hodimo, da ne bi pohodili žuželk, itd. Etika resonance ne zahteva popolne samoopovedi in samozanikanja, popolne odpovedi lastni uveljavitvi, samoafirmaciji, ampak da smo oz. postajamo to, kar smo, da smo pristni oz. bivamo v skladu s svojo naravo. Resonanco lahko interpretiramo kot kazalnik, da smo, kar smo, da bivamo v skladu s svojo naravo. V tej pravici smo si bitja enakovredna in šele s tem, da bitja so, kar so, lahko pride do resonance med njimi. Etika resonance ima v sebi element etike pristnosti, ki pa je razširjen v odnosno dimenzijo. Medtem ko ideal avtentičnosti še dopušča (utvaro), da sem lahko sam avtentičen, ne da bi bil drugi pristen, je pri resonanci očitno, da ne morem biti v resonanci, če ni tudi drugi v resonanci, tako, kot ne morem ploskati z eno roko. V tem je izjemno pomemben motivacijski potencial oz. moč etike resonance, ki narekuje spoštovanje temeljnega načela, zlatega pravila: ne uničuj resonance drugega, če ne želiš, da bi sam pristal v odtujenosti. To je velika odlika etike resonance, ki spoštovanje resonance drugega ne samo zahteva, kot kakšen »neživljenjski« kategorični imperativ, ne glede na dobre ali slabe posledice za konkretno in »otipljivo« življenje človeka, ampak človek lahko tudi razume, da bo kršenje zlatega pravila resonance plačal na lastni koži, z izgubo svoje resonance.⁸²

⁸² Rosa, »Zur Kritik und Weiterentwicklung des Resonanzkonzepts,« 207–208.

Vrnimo se nazaj, k svoji ugotovitvi glede pravega načina doseganja resonance z naravo. Prava pot je samo v uravnoveženi združitvi utrpevalnega in učinkovalnega momenta. To pomeni, da so enostranski, »lahki«, načini izključeni. Resonance ne bomo dosegli niti s popolno predajo naravi niti z njenim golim obvladovanjem. Prava resonanca z naravo je zapletena »veščina«, lahko bi rekli kar vrlina, ki se je mora človek naučiti, še posebej če jo je izgubil. Resonanca z naravo je znanje kako, ne znanje da, zato se je lahko naučimo samo s prakso in ob primernih zgledih. To je v sodobnih okoljih in kontekstih sodobnega človeka težko, saj nas naša civilizacija stalno sili in uri za obvladovanje narave. Navajeni smo potrošniškega pristopa k naravi, ki je obvladovanje ali predajanje. Mi naravo obvladujemo ali pa nam narava daje resonanco kar sama od sebe, razmišlja potrošnik. Tako je bilo na primer v hipijevskih pristopih veliko potrošniške naivnosti. To potrošništvo je navzoče tudi danes, ko čez teden na delovnem mestu naravo instrumentaliziramo, med konci tedna pa se ji predajamo. Kaj je pravilen, uravnovežen odnos do narave, se lahko naučimo od tistih, ki od nje živijo tako, da sobivajo z njo. Zato bomo morali, kakor koli že je to težko dosegljivo, tudi v sodobnem svetu poiskati načine, da bodo lahko generacije konkretno izkusile pravo življenje z naravo in ga izvajale, prakticirale. Taki poskusi ne smejo zapasti v eno ali drugo od omenjenih skrajnosti (golo utrpevanje ali obvladovanje).

Zaključek: religija, narava in strah pred izgubo resonance

Naj na koncu spregovorim o odnosu med religijo in naravo kot vertikalnima osema resonance. »Prednost« religije je v tem, da nas lahko osvobodi od strahu na način, na katerega nas odnos z naravo ne more. Seveda pa so meje med osema jasne predvsem analitično, miselno, abstraktno, v konkretnih primerih pa precej bolj meglene in nejasne, saj na primer še zdaleč ni vedno lahko reči, ali je določen resonančni odnos z naravo religioznega značaja ali ne. Treba pa je omeniti še eno opažanje glede strahu. Dejali smo, da sodobnega človeka muči strah pred izgubo resonance z naravo. Ta strah je toliko večji pri tistih, ki niso verni. Vera lahko namreč človeka osvobodi tudi strahu pred izgubo resonance z naravo, saj verniku nenazadnje ostaja njegova glavna os resonance, to

je os religije. Za tistega, ki ne računa na religiozno os resonance, pa je izguba osi narave večji udarec. Tudi to dejstvo bi morali upoštevati, kadar razmišljamo o odnosu ljudi do okolja in njihovem razumevanju okoljske krize.

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EKO FEMINISTIČNA
TEOLOGIJA SODOVISNOSTI:
KONSTRUKTIVISTIČNI
TEOLOŠKI PRISTOP K
SODOBNI OKOLJSKI
(NE)PRAVIČNOSTI IN
RANLJIVOSTI

Nadja Furlan Štante

Uvod

Prispevek¹ obravnava vprašanje družbene in okoljske (ne)pravičnosti skozi prizmo krščanskega ekofeminizma ter njegove etike medsebojne povezanosti in ekološkega skrbništva vsega stvarstva. Ker ekofeminizem povezuje izkoriščanje žensk z izkoriščanjem stvarstva (narave), za izoblikovanje osrednjega raziskovalnega vprašanja uporabljam metodologijo ključa krščanske ekofeministične hermenevtike: najprej sledi analiza stališča krščanskega ekofeminizma do vprašanja družbene in okoljske (ne)pravičnosti, nato analiza pozitivnih prispevkov ter implikacij krščanske ekofeministične etike na krščansko teologijo in prizadevanja za družbeno in okoljsko pravičnost.

Čeprav podnebne spremembe nesorazmerno bolj vplivajo na žensko populacijo, še zlasti na reproduktivno zdravje revnejših žensk, so te pogosto izločene iz procesa odločanja o okoljski problematiki. Ženske po vsem svetu so že sicer bolj ogrožene zaradi onesnaženega zraka,

¹ Članek je nastal v okviru raziskovalnega programa P6-0279 ter temeljnih raziskovalnih projektov: J6-9393 in J7-1824, sofinanciranih s strani Javne agencije za raziskovalno dejavnost Republike Slovenije iz državnega proračuna.

omejenega dostopa do čiste vode in vse večje izpostavljenosti strupenim kemikalijam, podnebne spremembe pa te nevarnosti samo še povečujejo. Občutljivost za vplive podnebnih sprememb pa ženskam daje tudi edinstveno izkustveno znanje, s katerim lahko pomembno pripomorejo k prizadevanjem za izboljšanje podnebne odpornosti in trajnosti ter tudi k boljši ozaveščenosti in drugačnemu odnosu do okoljske problematike in narave med svetovnimi religijami. Za ekofeministke je okoljska kriza realnost, grožnja in opozorilo sodobnemu človeštvu. Podnebne spremembe, globalno segrevanje, zmanjšanje biotske raznovrstnosti in drugi procesi, ki naj bi bili posledica onesnaževanja okolja in dolgotrajnega čezmernega izkoriščanja in izrabe naravnih virov, gotovo izražajo globalni potrošniško-imperialistični odnos človeka do narave.

Ranljivost žensk,² podnebne spremembe in okoljska (ne)pravičnost

Ameriška agencija za varstvo okolja opredeljuje okoljsko pravičnost kot

[...] pravično obravnavo in plodno sodelovanje vseh ljudi, ne glede na raso, barvo kože, narodnost ali prihodek pri razvijanju, izvajanju in uveljavljanju okoljske zakonodaje, uredb in politik.³

Zagovorniki okoljske pravičnosti so kritični do te definicije, saj ne poudarja zgodovinskih bremen okoljskih tveganj, ki so jim (bile) izpostavljene marginalizirane skupine, ter ne priznava družbene pravičnosti in političnega opolnomočenja kot osrednjih ciljev gibanja za okoljsko pravičnost.⁴ Čeprav definicija zajema pomembni vodili okoljske pravič-

² Ranljivost žensk v okviru podnebnih sprememb je skozi prizmo krščanskega ekofeminizma nujno povezana s konceptom ekološke in družbene pravičnosti ter biotsko-duhovne soodvisnosti in povezanosti vseh ekosistemov in živih bitij. Glej podrobneje: Nadja Furlan Štante, »Položaj žensk in odnos do narave: ogledalo družbeno-religijske pravičnosti,« *Poligrafi* 23, št. 89/90 (2018): 9–21.

³ »Environmental Justice,« United States Environmental Protection Agency, dostop 2. 6. 2019, <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice>.

⁴ Cathy Weiss, »Women and Environmental Justice: a literature review,« *Women's Health in the North* (vključno z razdelkoma *Women's Health Goulburn North East*), 2011, 3, dostop 12. 5. 2019, <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Women-and-Environmental-Justice-%3A-a-literature-Weiss/09ef8eee40e4b6f393ef47d0951e838f423717fa>.

nosti, in sicer pravično porazdelitev okoljskih bremen in koristi med vse ljudi ter enakovredno in pravično sodelovanje vseh skupin pri odločitvah, povezanih z okoljem, Schroeder, St Martin idr. ta vidika okoljske pravičnosti interpretirajo kot razdeljevalno pravičnost in postopkovno pravičnost.⁵ S sekularnega, ekofeminističnega stališča je sporno zastavljati okoljsko pravičnost kot samo ali predvsem razdeljevalno naravnano, oziroma kakor navaja tudi ena od pionirk ekofeminizma, Karen J. Warren:

Menim, da so posplošujoče definicije okoljske pravičnosti zgolj ali predvsem v smislu porazdelitve resnično sporne. Izhajajoč tako iz ekofeminističnih uvidov v neločljivo medsebojno povezanost institucij zatiranja človeka s prevlado nad naravnim okoljem kot tudi iz feminističnih vpogledov v nerazdeljevalno pravičnost, kakršno predstavlja Iris Young, zagovarjam dvojno trditev, da je porazdelitveni model okoljske pravičnosti neustrezen in da potrebujemo dodaten, neporazdelitveni model, ki bi porazdelitvenega razširil, dopolnil in ga v določenih primerih nadomestil.⁶

Za navedeno avtorico je skrb vzbujajoče dejstvo, da okoljski filozofi, oblikovalci okoljskih politik in aktivisti okoljevarstvenih skupnosti, ki razpravljajo o okoljski pravičnosti, to počnejo, naslanjajoč se skoraj izključno na aktualne zahodnjaške porazdelitvene modele družbene pravičnosti.

Običajno je bila rasna diskriminacija ena od osrednjih tem v razpravah o okoljski pravičnosti. V zadnjem času pa so prišle v ospredje še druge oblike diskriminacije, denimo razredna in spolna diskriminacija. V številnih primerih se vprašanja spola, rase in razreda (v kombinaciji z drugimi vprašanji, kot sta starost in invalidnost) lahko prekrivajo in vplivajo druga na drugo. Raziskovalka pojavov katastrof Elaine Enarson pravi:

[M]edsebojno izključujoče se kategorije ranljivosti – starejši ali ženske, migranti ali matere samohranilke – lažno nevtralizirajo spol v presečnih identitetah in družbenih odnosih. Ranljivost zaradi spola ne izhaja iz samo enega

⁵ Richard Schroeder, Kevin St Martin, Bradley Wilson in Debarati Sen, »Third World Environmental Justice,« *Society & Natural Resources* 21, št. 7 (2008): 550, <https://doi.org/10.1080/08941920802100721>.

⁶ Karen J. Warren, »Environmental Justice: Some Ecofeminist Worries about a Distributive Model,« dostop 12. 5. 2019, <https://www.bu.edu/wcp/Papers/Gend/GendWarr.htm>.

dejavnika, kot je hranilec družine ali revščina, temveč izraža zgodovinsko in kulturno specifične vzorce odnosov v družbenih institucijah, v kulturnem in zasebnem življenju. Kadar sovpadajo z gospodarskimi, rasnimi in drugimi neenakostmi, ti odnosi ustvarjajo nevarne družbene razmere, ki različne skupine žensk različno ogrožajo.⁷

Z uporabo okvira za okoljsko pravičnost, ki se osredinja izključno na raso ali celo na samo en problem, tako ni mogoče ustrezno obravnavati okoljskih krivic, s katerimi se sooča večji del prebivalstva. Okoljsko pravičnost je namreč mogoče doseči s pošteno in pravično porazdelitvijo okoljskih bremen med celotno prebivalstvo ter z zagotavljanjem enakega dostopa do mehanizmov za reševanje okoljskih vprašanj in omogočanjem sodelovanja v njih.

Dojemanje podnebnih sprememb se razlikuje glede na raso, spol, družbeni razred in raven prihodkov. Zato se je treba reševanja podnebne krize lotiti s presečnim pristopom, ki postavlja v ospredje in združuje glasove zagovornikov/-ic drugih platform za družbeno pravičnost, vključno z gibanjem za reproduktivne pravice. Žensko populacijo na splošno, še zlasti pa nebelsko, lahko podnebne spremembe in njihovi vplivi na reproduktivno zdravje zelo prizadenejo, kljub temu pa so ženske pogosto izključene iz pomembnih političnih odločitev in procesov. Kot dokazujejo etnografske raziskave po vsem svetu, so bila staroselska ljudstva in ženske (ki so v zgodovini pustili najmanjši ogljični odtis) dolgo varuhi/-nje vode, vendar so jim kot prvim odvzeli pravico do odločanja in so v zgodovinski literaturi še vedno premalo zastopani. Kot povzame Veronica Strang: »Iz zgodovinske analize upravljanja vodnih virov [...] je razviden dosleden vzorec izgube oblasti in lastništva [...] Posamezniki so od razmeroma enakovrednega sodelovanja pri upravljanju vode skozi različne faze nazadovali do izgube pravic do odločanja; najprej je to doletelo vse ženske, postopno pa še preostalo prebivalstvo.«⁸

Cathy Weiss je v raziskavi navedla tri glavne razloge, zaradi katerih okoljske težave neupravičeno prizadenejo prav ženske: ker živijo dalj časa (rast pričakovane življenjske dobe žensk), ker so navadno revnej-

⁷ Elaine Enarson, »Through women's eyes: a gendered research agenda for disaster social science,« *Disasters* 22, št. 2 (1998): 160, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-7717.00083>.

⁸ Veronica Strang, *The Meaning of Water* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2004), 36.

še od moških (ekonomska neenakost) in zaradi družbene konstrukcije ženskosti (družbenega oblikovanja in dodeljevanja spolnih vlog). Medsebojno vplivanje teh dejavnikov in oblik diskriminacije, kot so seksizem, rasizem in starizem, privede do družbenih razmer, ki ženske izpostavljajo tveganju za okoljske krivice. Te ugotovitve bi lahko s pridom uporabile politike, ki si prizadevajo za izravnavo aktualne nepravilne porazdelitve okoljskih bremen.⁹

Tudi v bogatih, razvitih državah, kot je Avstralija, je verjetno, da bo okoljska nepravilnost nesorazmerno močno prizadela žensko populacijo, še zlasti revnejše ženske, in predvsem na področju reproduktivnega zdravja. Zdravje in dobro počutje sta neposredno povezana s stanjem okolja, nanju pa vpliva tudi kakovost zraka. V raziskavi o rakotvornih snoveh (IARC, Lyon) je onesnažen zrak celo uvrščen v skupino karcinogenov (dokazano rakotvornih snovi). Onesnaženje zraka, ki ga povzroča izgorevanje fosilnih goriv, povzroča pljučnega raka, verjetno pa tudi raka mehurja. V onesnaženem zraku je veliko rakotvornih snovi, kot so policiklični aromatski ogljikovodiki (PAH), ki so dobro znani mogoči povzročitelji raka.¹⁰

Ob stopnjujočih se vplivih podnebnih sprememb v prihodnjih desetletjih, ki bodo povzročili spremembe v vremenskih vzorcih in dvig temperature, se bo kakovost zraka še naprej slabšala, kar bo javno zdravje še bolj ogrozilo, negativne vplive na zdravje pa še povečalo. Poleg telesne občutljivosti za nihanje temperatur (vročinske valove), onesnaženosti zraka in vode ter negotove preskrbe s hrano je dobro dokumentirana tudi povezava med podnebnimi spremembami in duševnim zdravjem. Helen Berry opozarja, da je v vzročnem odnosu med podnebnimi spremembami in težavami z duševnim zdravjem treba upoštevati tri vidike: povečanje posttravmatskih stresnih motenj (PTSM) in drugih dolgotrajnih težav z duševnim zdravjem, ki jih sprožajo vse pogostejše in vse hujše naravne katastrofe; povečano tveganje za težave s telesnim zdrav-

⁹ Weiss, »Women and Environmental Justice«, 1.

¹⁰ Kurt Straif, Aaron Cohen in Jonathan Samet, ur., *AP – Air Pollution and Cancer*, IARC Scientific Publication št. 161 (Lyon; International Agency for Research on Cancer, 2013), <https://publications.iarc.fr/Book-And-Report-Series/Iarc-Scientific-Publications/Air-Pollution-And-Cancer-2013>.

jem ter spremenljivo naravno in družbeno okolje.¹¹ Dodaten mogoč dejavnik, ki bi ga bilo treba upoštevati, je povečana agresivnost v obdobjih visokih temperatur,¹² ki bi lahko bila povezana s povečanjem nasilja nad ženskami. Fritze, Blashki idr. so namreč v Avstraliji dokazali vpliv podnebnih sprememb na duševno zdravje, še posebej v skupnostih, ki so ekonomsko in socialno ranljive ali živijo na območjih, kjer je velika nevarnost naravnih nesreč.¹³ Vpliv podnebnih sprememb na duševno zdravje žensk na splošno ni dobro dokumentiran, čeprav je bilo narejenih nekaj raziskav v povezavi s sušo. Tako so v Braziliji ugotovili, da ljudje, ki živijo na sušnih območjih, pogosteje trpijo za tesnobo, motnja pa pogosteje prizadene ženske kot moške.¹⁴ Zdi se, da ugotovitve Shora, Tatuma in Vollmerja v raziskavi o izbruhu vulkana na gori Svete Helene leta 1980 pritrjujejo trditvam Angele Coêlho, vendar ta opozarja na nezadostnost raziskav glede tega.¹⁵

V Avstraliji sta pomembne raziskave o učinkih suše v ruralnih območjih med drugim izvajali Margaret Alston in Daniela Stehlik, ki sta na podlagi intervjujev z moškimi in ženskami proučevali razlike med spoloma glede na to, kako so doživljali sušo.¹⁶ Vsekakor pa so potrebne dodatne raziskave o vplivih podnebnih sprememb na duševno zdravje žensk, še posebej v velemestih.

¹¹ Helen Berry, Kathryn Bowen in Tord Kjellstrom, »Climate change and mental health: a causal pathways framework,« *International Journal of Public Health* 55, št. 2 (2009): 123–132, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00038-009-0112-0>.

¹² Derral Cheatwood, »The Effects of Weather on Homicide,« *Journal of Quantitative Criminology* 11, št. 1 (1995): 51–70, <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02221300>.

¹³ Jessica G. Fritze, Grant A. Blashki, Susie Burke in John Wiseman, »Hope, despair and transformation: Climate change and the promotion of mental health and wellbeing,« *International Journal of Mental Health Systems* 2, št. 13 (2008), <https://doi.org/10.1186/1752-4458-2-13>.

¹⁴ Angela E. L. Coêlho, John G. Adair in Jane S. P. Mocellin, »Psychological responses to drought in Northeastern Brazil,« *Interamerican Journal of Psychology* 38, št. 1 (2004): 95–103..

¹⁵ Coêlho, Adair in Mocellin, »Psychological responses to drought,« 103.

¹⁶ Daniela Stehlik, Geoffrey Lawrence in Ian Gray, »Gender and Drought: Experiences of Australian Women in the Drought of the 1990s,« *Disasters* 24, št. 1 (2000): 38–53, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-7717.00130>.

Krščanska ekofeministična etika medsebojne soodvisnosti in udejanjanja¹⁷ božjega

Rosemary Radford Ruether meni, da bi logiko prevlade nad ženskami in naravo lahko presegli le, če bi na novo postavili temelje (zahodnjaške) družbe in (krščanske) religije. To hipotezo je razvijala v skoraj vseh svojih delih z ekofeministično temo. Poudarja, da moramo spremeniti simbole in »preoblikovati dualistični koncept stvarnosti, razcepljene na materijo brez duše in transcendentno moško zavest,« ter odtujeno moškocentrično podobo Boga preoblikovati iz »Boga, ki ga je človek ustvaril po moški podobi in ki je predstavljen kot vladar narave, v imanenten vir življenja, ki napaja celotno planetarno skupnost«. ¹⁸

Sallie McFague je še ena od ekofeminističnih teologinj z vizijo Boga, ki zagovarja enakost moških in žensk, narave in vseh nečloveških bitij. V delu *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology* je med drugim kritizirala sprejeto podobo Boga kot odmaknjene, nadrejenega kralja, ki vlada in ukazuje vsemu stvarstvu. Njena kritika temelji na dveh argumentih: 1. ta podoba naj bi znatno prispevala k oblikovanju koncepta binaristično-dualistične delitve med nebeškim kraljestvom in Zemljo in 2. ta podoba naj bi človeštvo oropala njegove glavne odgovornosti, tj. skrbi za naravo, Zemljo, nečloveška naravna bitja ... Zato poziva vse kristjane, naj si celotno vesolje simbolično predstavljajo kot božje telo, namesto da gledajo nanj kot na nekakšnega eksternega monarha, ločenega od sveta, ki mu vlada. Povedano z njenimi besedami: »[Bolj] primerno si je predstavljati Boga znotraj in kot del celotnega procesa evolucije ter povezanega z njim.« ¹⁹

Biti v odnosu je v skladu z večino ekofeministične teologije predvsem etična dejavnost. Tu ima pomembno vlogo jedro (eko)feministične etike odnosnosti – medsebojna povezanost vseh bitij v mreži

¹⁷ V angleščini je tu uporabljena beseda *enact*, ki v pomenu *uzakoniti* nosi ustvarjalno, aktivno vsebino. Pomeni tudi *uprizoriti* in v tem primeru osebe, ki igrajo, ne delujejo kot avtonomna sestva/jazi, temveč so posredniki za osebnosti, ki jih predstavljajo. Podobno vsebino ima tudi v prevodu *udejanjati* – udejanjati božansko pomeni uresničevati ustvarjalno moč svojega sestva, medtem ko to sestvo hkrati tvori nekaj, kar ga presega.

¹⁸ Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Gaia and God* (New York: HarperOne, 1992), 21.

¹⁹ Sally McFague, *The body of God: An Ecological Theology* (Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 1993), 93.

življenja. Mreža življenja je precej razširjena prispodoba, ki izvira iz ekofeminizma in na poetičen način ponazarja dinamiko kolektivnega femininega pogleda na svet medsebojno povezane subjektivnosti. Rosemary Radford Ruether razume okoljsko soodvisnost v smislu življenje porajajoče mreže kot panenteistične ali transcendentalno imanentne mreže življenja. Ta skupni vir po njenem mnenju napaja in vzdržuje stalno obnavljanje naravnega življenjskega kroga ter nam hkrati daje možnost in nas obvezuje, da se borimo proti izkoriščevalskim oblikam hierarhičnih odnosov in si prizadevamo za vzpostavitev prenovljenih odnosov vzajemnega priznavanja.²⁰

Vež med Bogom in svetom je predstavljena z različnim simboli. Nekateri jih ponazarjajo z ženskimi posebljenji narave in božanskega (predvsem predstavnice poganškega ekofeminizma ali ekoteologije) in božansko počelo prepoznajajo v izrazu *Gaja*, zato ga imenujejo Boginja, Mati narava. Stvarstvo vidijo kot telo, ki zajema različne ekosisteme; množstvo raznolikosti, združenih in povezanih v sožitju in enosti. V takem stvarstvu je vsaka ženska in vsak moški najprej človek, ob upoštevanju enake človečnosti in soodvisne povezanosti pa se skrivata lepota in veličina skupnosti, ki jo ekofeministke opredeljujejo kot *biot-sko skupnost*.

S tega vidika ekofeminizem zagovarja globalno gibanje, ki temelji na skupnih interesih in spoštovanju raznolikosti ter nasprotuje najrazličnejšim oblikam nadvlade in nasilja. Za nadaljevanje življenja na našem planetu bo s stališča ekofeminizma nujno novo razumevanje našega odnosa do nas samih, naših teles, do drugega, narave in nečloveških bitij. Za večino predstavnic teološkega (krščanskega) ekofeminizma to pomeni temeljito proučitev, dekonstrukcijo in kritiko androcentričnih modelov teologije, zlasti v zvezi s podobo Boga in njegovim odnosom do celotnega kozmosa. Samo vključitev feminine elementa v obstoječi teološki načrt ni dovolj. Po mnenju ekofeministk je treba temeljito dekonstruirati patriarhalni teološki miselni okvir in hierarhično strukturo. Tako pravi Ivone Gebara:

Zamenjava patriarhalne paradigme z ekofeministično se začne z epistemologijo, s spreminjanjem načina razmišljanja. Patriarhalna epistemologija

²⁰ Radford Ruether, *Gaia and God*, 260.

temelji na večnih, nespremenljivih 'resnicah', ki so predpostavke za védenje, kaj resnično 'je'. V platonsko-aristotelski epistemologiji, ki je oblikovala katoliško krščanstvo, gre za večne ideje, ki obstajajo a priori, fizične stvari pa so samo njihovi blede in delni izrazi. Katolicizem je k temu dodal še hierarhijo razodetja nad razumom. Razodete ideje prihajajo naravnost od Boga, zato so v nasprotju z idejami, ki izvirajo iz razuma, nespremenljive in neizpodbitne.²¹

Ekofeministična perspektiva Ivone Gebara se izraža v njenem razumevanju intimne povezave med feminističnimi idejami in ekologijo, ki bi, posledično, morala voditi posameznika/-co ne samo k možnosti resnične enakosti med moškimi in ženskami ter med različnimi kulturami in religijami, temveč ga/jo tudi odpirati za pristnejše in polnejše odnose s seboj, z Zemljo in celotnim univerzumom. Za Ivone Gebara je osebna utelešena izkušnja osrednja premisa za razumevanje odnosov v mreži življenja. V ekofeminizmu zavest o soodvisnosti in medsebojni povezanosti vseh človeških in nečloveških bitij, narave, okolja itd. postavlja ekocentrični egalitarizem za temeljno izhodišče etike medosebnih odnosov. Za Karen J. Warren je ekofeministična kritika patriarhata zajeta že v načelih ekologije: »Vse je medsebojno povezano z vsem, vsi deli ekosistema so si enakovredni, nič ni zastonj, narava najboljše ve, zdravi in uravnoreženi ekosistemi morajo ohranjati raznolikost, v raznolikosti je enotnost.«²²

Z vidika teološkega ekofeminizma (predvsem Ivone Gebara) je razumevanje človeške identitete globoko vsajeno v prizmo videnja posameznika/-ce v mreži odnosov. Posameznik/-ca torej zunaj odnosa ne obstaja, ampak se tvori in oblikuje v odnosu in prek njega. Iz tega lahko sklepamo, da avtonomija posameznika/-ce ne pomeni izvzetosti iz mreže življenja. To bi bilo z vidika ekofeminizma iluzorno. Poskus ločiti človeka od kozmične celote ne prinaša avtonomije in individualnosti, ampak utvaro. Individualnost človeka je mogoče razumeti z vidika povezanosti individualnosti v celoto. Človek kot posameznik/-ca je globoko vsajen v to celoto, je del nje in hkrati avtonomen. Njegova/njena avtonomija bi se morala izražati v vzajemni odgovornosti in spo-

²¹ Ivone Gebara, *Longing for Running Water: Ecofeminism and Liberation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 29.

²² Karen J. Warren, »Feminism and ecology: Making connections,« *Environmental Ethics* 9, št. 1 (1987) 10, <https://doi.org/10.5840/enviroethics19879113>.

štovanju celovitosti posameznika/-ce, drugega, drugačnega ... Kritično gledano je torej etični cilj teološkega ekofeminizma izboljšati kakovost odnosov.

Ekocentrični egalitarizem vključuje vse ljudi in vsa druga živa bitja. Ekofeministke poudarjajo intimno povezanost med prevlado nad ženskami, nebelci in drugimi in prevlado nad naravo. Zavest o tej temeljni medsebojni povezanosti ter posledični soodvisnosti in skupni odgovornosti v etično-moralnem smislu je torej naslednji korak v razvoju medosebnih odnosov in vseh odnosov v mreži življenja.

V tej perspektivi želi krščanska (eko)feministična teologija ponovno pretehtati idejo o imanenci in jo postaviti v središče tkanja teologije. Boga razume kot del evolucijskega procesa reda stvarjenja in Bog kot njegov Stvarnik ne bi bil ločen od njega. To ima neposredne posledice za številna področja teologije. V kristologiji lahko na primer pogled na Kristusa, ki se spušča na Zemljo, zamenjamo s pogledom na Kristusa, ki vznika skozi proces divinizacije skupnosti in posameznikov v njih. Na etiko nič več ne moremo gledati kot na nekaj, kar je bilo »poslano od zgoraj«, temveč jo je spet treba začeti doživljati kot izhajajočo iz ustvarjalne imanence, ki obstaja med ljudmi. Tu je poudarek na odnosnosti. Ta se pojavlja kot ključni koncept v (eko)feministični teologiji in še posebej v (eko)feministični etiki. Vključuje koncepta soodvisnosti in vzajemnosti, v nekaterih šolah feminističnega diskurza pa opozarja tudi na obstoj posebnega odnosa med žensko in naravo. Implicira tudi poziv k ponovni konceptualizaciji svetih simbolov, ki bo upoštevala imanenco ter vzpostavila nove odnose med božanstvom, človekom in Zemljo. Carol Gilligan²³ trdi, da velja za ženske v etiki poseben *modus operandi*. To je zdaj že klasična izjava o odnosnosti. Avtorica je pokazala, da se pogled žensk na sebe, na odnose in moralnost razlikuje od tistega, ki ga opisujejo tradicionalne teorije moralnega razvoja. (Eko)feministke so v tej debati šle še korak naprej. Mary Grey postulira »metafiziko povezanosti«, ki se bo začela z razumevanjem odrešenja kot samopotrditve in pravega odnosa ter bo opolnomočila okoljsko celjenje in rast. Feministična vizija, ki poudarja pomen odnosnosti, prepoznava potrebo

²³ Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982).

po preoblikovanju metanaracij zahodnjaške kulture. Rosemary Radford Ruether zagovarja stališče, da moramo v prizadevanjih za ozdravitev Zemlje ustvariti nove narative, ki bodo spodbujali okoljsko pravičnost in podpirali metafiziko povezanosti. To je naravna pot v tako ponovno konceptualizacijo temeljnih svetih simbolov, v kateri bodo človekovi pogovori o božjem navdihovali odnosnost.²⁴ Carter Heyward predlaga razumevanje krščanskega Boga kot modela moči-v-odnosu, ki bi se nato moral zrcaliti v enakopravnih in pravičnih odnosih v družbi. Ob upoštevanju tega poudarek na božanski imanenci posledično zahteva izgradnjo novega odnosa med človeštvom in preostalim ustvarjenim redom, saj zadnji enako odslikava božansko kot človeštvo.²⁵

Zgodi se premik z antropocentrične teološke paradigme na tako imenovano »na življenje osredinjeno teološko paradigmo«, v kateri vse božje stvarstvo, vključno z žensko in naravo, postane subjekt teološkega razmišljanja. Ekofeministične teologinje gradijo na predpostavki, da se bosta ti dialoški paradigmi vzajemno bogatili in kritično popravljali ter tako skupaj prispevali k življenju celotnega božjega stvarstva. Božjo navzočnost v človeku in naravi gre razumeti v smislu modela sveta kot božjega telesa, zato v krščanskem (eko)feminizmu zemlja velja za božji zakrament.

Richard Grigg je poudaril še eno pomembno značilnost (eko)feministične teologije glede razumevanja božanskega, rekoč, da »v večjem delu aktualne feministične teologije obstaja impliciten motiv, po katerem je Bog odnos, ki se ga človek odloči udejanjiti.«²⁶ V tem okviru tako bistveni sestavni elementi božanskega lahko resnično presegajo človeško – tako narava kot »moč biti« sta v feministični misli znani kandidatki za to –, človek pa udejanja odnos z njimi zavestno in na način, ki ne ustvarja odtujenosti, temveč pozitivno preobrazbo. Hkrati pa ta tok feministične teologije Boga tudi ne pojmuje kot neodvisno realnost. Človeška bitja ne udejanjajo preprosto odnosa do božanskega, udejanjajo božje samo, kolikor je Bog poseben preobrazben odnos

²⁴ Radford Ruether, *Gaia and God*, 1992.

²⁵ Carter Heyward, *The Redemption of God: A Theology of Mutual Relation* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1982).

²⁶ Richard Grigg, »Feminist Theology and the Being of God,« *Journal for the Study of Religion* 7, št.4. (1994): 507.

med sebstvom in naravo ali med sebstvom in močjo biti ali morda med sebstvom in drugimi sebstvi. Ta vzorec se zdi veliko bližji ugotovitvi Martina Buberja, da se »jaz« oblikuje skozi odnose, v katere je vključen: »jaz« iz odnosa »jaz-ono« se razlikuje od »jaza« iz odnosa »jaz-ti« (Buberjevo stališče je očitno vplivalo na številne feministke, še posebej na Carol Christ, Rosemary, Judith Plaskow in Mary Daly).²⁷ Ljudje se odločijo udejanjiti božansko, vendar so večinoma stvaritve tega odnosa in ne samo njegovi ustvarjalci. Ali kakor prvi Richard Grigg:

[T]radicionalni zahodnjaški teizem razume Boga kot transcendentno najvišje bitje. Modernost zanika teizem in ga omejuje na projekcijo človekove subjektivitete. Feministično stališče zavrača to zanikanje in Boga ne pojmuje niti kot samostojno nadnaravno bitje niti kot rezultat zmotne človeške domišljije, ampak kot način bivanja, kot odnos posebne vrste, ki ga ljudje lahko udejanjajo med seboj ter z drugimi živimi bitji in silami. [...] Bog je odnos, ki se ga ljudje odločijo udejanjiti. Naloga teologije tako ni pridobiti dostop do neke objektivne entitete, za katero se naivno domneva, da obstaja »tam nekje«, ali v zvezi z njo postavljati kakršne koli trditve, temveč udejanjati Boga.²⁸

Ta trditev naravno sledi feminističnemu nagnjenju k teologiji, ki je v polnem pomenu izraza teologija »od spodaj«, teologija, ki odkrito deluje v funkciji ženskih izkušenj in ciljev. Vse to pomeni zavračanje tradicionalne podobe Boga kot nadnaravnega individua, ki lahko obstaja zunaj končnega. Hkrati obstaja oblika transcendence, ki jo je mogoče združiti s poudarkom na imanenci, ki je v feministični teologiji tako bistven, vsaj po mnenju strokovnjakinj, kot je Rosemary Radford Ruether, ki zavrača transcendentnega oblastnega Boga patriarhalnega krščanstva v korist temeljne človekove predstave o božanskem kot prvobitni matrici, veliki maternici, iz katere se porajajo vse stvari, bogovi in ljudje, nebo in zemlja, človeška in nečloveška bitja ... Tu božansko ni nad nami kot abstrahiran ego, temveč pod nami in okoli nas kot vsezajemajoč vir in obnavljanje življenja.²⁹ V podobi tega, kar bi navedena avtorica želela imenovati »Bog/-inja«, je božansko očitno imanentno, toda tudi

²⁷ Nadja Furlan Štante, »Transcendence in Christian (Eco)feminist Hermeneutics,« *Bogoslovni vestnik* 77, no. 3/4 (2017): 589–99, <http://www.teof.uni-lj.si/uploads/File/BV/BV2017/03/Furlan.pdf>.

²⁸ Grigg, »Feminist Theology and the Being of God,« 508.

²⁹ Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Sexism and God-talk* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1983), 48–49.

vseobsegajoče, delno tudi transcendentno. Izraz »prvobitna matrica« nakazuje vsevključujoč okvir ali podlago, nekaj, kar je zunaj nas in del česa hkrati tudi smo. Oziroma kakor trdi Carter Heyward, Bog je moč v odnosu.³⁰ Podobno meni tudi Rosemary Radford Ruether, ko pravi, da Boga/-injo doživljamo »v odnosih in prek njih, kadar zdravimo pretrgane odnose z lastnim telesom, z drugimi ljudmi, z naravo«. Ko presežemo destruktivno miselnost nasprotij med moški–ženska, bogat–reven, duh–materija – dualizmov, ki nas ločujejo od narave in drugih ljudi –, takrat stopimo v odnos z božanskim: »Skupnost z Bogom/-injo obstaja prav znotraj in prek te prenovljene skupnosti stvarstva.«³¹ V to harmonijo Ivone Gebara podobno zrcali trinitarično razumevanje Boga. V njeni interpretaciji koncept svete Trojice ne pomeni razodetja od zgoraj, ki bi ga bilo treba razumeti kot večno, neizpodbitno resnico, nezdružljivo z izkušnjami vsakdanjega življenja, temveč kot tisto, kar se ves čas na novo gradi skozi vsakodneвне izkušnje odnosov v mreži življenja ter kot tako nenehno spreminja svojo podobo in obraze.³² V skladu z ekofeminističnim razumevanjem medsebojne povezanosti bi ljudje morali biti varuhi narave, ki bi preprečevali njeno izkoriščanje in uničevanje. Rosemary Radford Ruether pravi, da potrebujemo prenovljene regionalne skupnosti, ki bi razvile nov odnos do zemlje, kmetijstva in vode v trajnostnem duhu, na podlagi demokratičnega odločanja, ki bi upoštevalo vse strani, vključno z nečloveško naravo.³³

Zdi se, da je naslednji korak v razvoju odnosov med človeškimi in nečloveškimi bitji v mreži življenja, preoblikovanje negativnih stereotipov, ki vzpostavljajo kakršno koli obliko prevlade, v ekocentrični egalitarizmu. Spremembe se najprej začnejo v nas samih. Ali kot pravi Rosemary Radford Ruether: »Najprej se je treba zavedeti, da se metanoia oziroma sprememba mišljenja začne pri nas.«³⁴

³⁰ Heyward, *The Redemption of God*, 299.

³¹ Radford Ruether, *Sexism and God-talk*, 163.

³² Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Goddesses and the Divine Feminine* (Berkeley, Los Angeles in London: University of California Press, 2005), 113.

³³ Radford Ruether, Rosemary. *Integrating Ecofeminism, Globalization, and World Religions*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005.

³⁴ Radford Ruether, *Gaia and God*, 269.

Zaključek

Moč krščanskega ekofeminizma in njegove etike medsebojne povezanosti in odnosnosti, njegovih prizadevanj, da bi teorijo družbene in okoljske pravičnosti uresničili v praksi, ponazarja mogočno silo sprememb. Krščanski ekofeminizem povečuje okolju prijazni potencial krščanske tradicije in ga bogati z razmišljanji o kritično pomembnih dejavnikih, kot so spol, rasa in družbeni razred. Torej je nujno treba pozvati ženske, naj se oglasijo in ukrepajo v okviru (med)religijskega okoljevarstvenega delovanja in procesa senzibilizacije vernih posameznikov/-c in verskih skupnosti tako v vsakdanjem življenju kot na vseh ravneh religijske hierarhije. Razprave, skupno medreligijsko delovanje in medreligijski dialog bi morali vključevati vprašanja o okoljski senzibilizaciji in okoljski pravičnosti. Oboje je bistveno za preobrazbo in krepitev človeške zavesti na individualni in kolektivni ravni in spodbuja pomemben razmislek o ravni družbene pravičnosti obravnavanega družbeno-religijskega sistema.

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P U S T I N J A Z A C V E T E K A K O R
N A R C I S A : N A P O T I K
Z A H O D N I N A R A V O V A R S T V E N I
E S T E T I K I

G e o r g e H a n d l e y

Med vizijo turistične organizacije
in resničnim rajem leži pustinja,
kjer Izaijev zanos iz peska izvabi narciso.
—Derek Walcott¹

Vse odkar je John Wesley Powell kot prvi raziskal reki Kolorado in Green River in o svojih izsledkih poročal vladi ZDA, je bilo nenehno slišati zaskrbljena opozorila, da bi morala meje rasti v medgorju ameriškega Zahoda narekovati sušnost, ki je tipična za to področje. Vendar pa ta opozorila niso imela daljnosežnih učinkov in zahodna mesta se danes ponašajo s hitrim porastom prebivalstva in širjenjem predmestij. Bernard DeVoto, Wallace Stegner, Marc Reisner kot še mnogi drugi trdijo, da je Izaijeva mantra o spreminjanju pustinje v cvetočo pokrajino značilna za razvoj po vsem Zahodu in v samem jedru odpora ljudi proti temu, da bi se naučili živeti v ravnovesju s sušnostjo področja. Propad ameriškega Zahoda, pravijo, se je začel, ko so mormonski naseljenci v Veliko kotlino vpeljali namakanje in bili priča nečemu, kar se je zdelo kot izpolnitev Izaijeve prerokbe: sušna zemlja se je čudežno spremenila v obdelane vrtove in sadovnjake. Namesto da bi popustili puščavi, so si pionirji iz Cerkve Jezusa Kristusa svetih iz poslednjih dni delo zastavili tako, da bo puščava popustila človeku.²

¹ Derek Walcott, *The Bounty* (New York: Farrar, Straus in Giroux, 1992), 3.

² Ni jasno, ali je bilo namakanje na ameriškem Zahodu izvirno mormonska inovacija. Men-
da so pred njimi poskusili namakati že ameriški staroselci z jugozahoda dežele in španski ko-

Vse od prvih desetletij 20. stoletja lahko spremljamo razmah inovacij v znanosti o namakanju, izkoriščanju podzemnih voda in gradnji jezov, ki so pripeljale do popolne preobrazbe prazne ameriške pustinje v živahno mrežo mest in predmestij, ki jih danes najdemo v Arizoni, Kaliforniji, Nevadi, Utahu in Koloradu.³ Današnji ameriški Zahod je podvržen suši in negotovo umeščen na nenehno upadajočem in izginjajočem podzemnem vodnem viru, pa vendar nič ne kaže na to, da bi rast in razvoj ali porabo vode omejevali. Odklanjanje slednjega se danes kaže v zelenicah za golf, cvetočih vrtovih in novoangleško urejenih krajinah,⁴ ki se, kljubujoč suhim resnicam, veselo množijo. Zahodnjaški optimizem se sicer ob teh resnicah občasno strezni, ko običajna suša vsakih nekaj let povzroči manjši preplah, toda veselje se povrne, ko ponoven dež in sneg navidezno potrđita Božje dovoljenje za razraščanje zahodnih mest v puščavo. In to kljub dejstvu, da vemo, da se suše na Zahodu pojavljajo ciklično in da prav zaradi njih Anasazom in drugim prvotnim prebivalcem na tem področju ni uspelo preživeti. Še več, znanstveniki so opozorili na možnost, ki daje misliti – namreč da je ameriški Zahod še posebno ranljiv na učinke podnebnih sprememb in da bi utegnile biti suše zadnjih let znamenje trajnejšega podnebja, pri katerem je pričakovati nadaljnje zmanjševanje debeline snežne odeje.⁵

Predvsem pa so naše začasne zmage psihološke narave. Pomirja nas naša tehnološka sposobnost, da pokrajini lahko nadenemo podobo kraja, od koder so nekoč prišli naši predniki. Zaradi tega ne občutimo povezanosti z lokalno ekologijo, domišljamo si, da smo izjema, ki potrjuje pravila narave, in za nas je resnično zgolj to, kar si s tehnologijo lahko naredimo vidno ali otipljivo. Vse, kar vidimo, je torej to, kar pričaku-

lonialisti. Gl. Wallace Stegner, *Where the Bluebird Sings to the Lemonade Springs: Living and Writing in the West* (New York: Random House, 1992), 79.

³ Za celovit zgodovinski pregled razvoja sodobne (in čezmerne) rabe vode na ameriškem Zahodu, gl. Marc Reisner, *Cadillac Desert: The American West and Its Disappearing Water* (New York: Penguin, 2003).

⁴ Nova Anglija je regija na severovzhodu ZDA, ki so jo angleški puritanci v 17. stoletju naselili kot prvo na področju Severne Amerike. Zajema zvezne države Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island in Vermont, njeno značilno pokrajino tvorijo hribi in gore, gosti gozdovi, jezera in prostrane kmetijske površine. (Op. prev.)

⁵ Thomas R. Karl in Kevin E. Trenberth, »Modern Global Climate Change,« *Science* 302 (5. 12. 2003): 1719–1723, http://stephenschneider.stanford.edu/Publications/PDF_Papers/worldweatherchanges.pdf.

jemo, da bomo videli. Na ta način se utrjujemo v prepričanju, da med svetom okoli nas in svetom v naši glavi ni nobene razlike. Podobno kot Don Kihot smo tako odločeni svet okoli nas spraviti v neko miselno ureditev, da smo pripravljeni videti samo to, kar potrjuje, kar smo si že zamislili. Ta miselna pokrajina se seveda ni oblikovala pod vplivom srednjeveških viteških romanov, temveč umetnosti, književnosti in življenja iz zelenih podnebij evropske celine, ki so bile izvožene v novi svet. Z njo pa smo izgubili estetsko oko in sposobnost živeti v ravnovesju s pustinjo.

Pustinja cvete kot narcisa

»Naj vriskata puščava in goljava, raduje naj se pustinja in naj cvete kakor narcisa. Bujno naj cvete ... Kajti v puščavi se bodo odprli vrelci, v pustinji potoki. Goljava bo postala jezero, žejna dežela vrelci vodá.« Tako je govoril Izaija (35,1–2, 6–7). Mormoni verjamejo, da se njegove besede nanašajo na poslednje dni, na gradnjo Siona in zbor pravičnikov. Kot mnogi drugi podobni odlomki v Svetem pismu in Mormonovi knjigi tudi ta uči o globokem in pomembnem načelu, da Bog blagoslavlja zemljo v skladu z našo krepostjo in da se naša sposobnost, da se prehranimo in se uspešno razvijamo, poveča z Božjim posredovanjem v okolju, kadar živimo v skladu z Gospodovimi zapovedmi. Nedvomno je bila takšna doktrina v preteklosti zlorabljená za opravičevanje pasivne, slepo optimistične miselnosti, da je okolje na avtopilotu in da ni tako zelo pomembno, kako ravnamo z njim, dokler smo dobri drug z drugim. Toda Izaijevo načelo ima globlji pomen. Uči nas, da sta zdravje človeka in okolja ter duhovni in telesni blagor medsebojno odvisna in ju je zato treba vzajemno negovati.

V obupanem boju za preživetje Izaijevega ljudstva njegove besede izražajo upanje številnih puščavskih ljudstev na obljubljenó deželo, na zemljo, ki se bo naposled vdala in povrnila v naravi, kar je bilo vloženo vanjo. V daljnih dneh boja pionirjev, da bi puščavo spremenili v svoj novi dom, so Izaijeve besede nosile upanje na preobrazbo podnebja, ki bi bila delo Božjih rok. Takšno upanje je bilo v ostrem nasprotju s številnimi izkušnjami bridkega neuspeha. Ena od mojih prednic, Eliza

Briggs, je preživela ledeno hladno vreme na Martinovi odpravi,⁶ ki je dva njena sorojenca in njenega oče stalo življenja. Pozneje so jo povabili v odpravo za poselitev območja reke Muddy River v jugovzhodni Nevada, kjer je njej in njenemu soprogu Jamesu Strattonu sredi neznosne vročine in kljub predanosti klavrno spodletelo, da bi puščavo spremenila v plodno zemljo, in kjer je sama nazadnje umrla pri porodu. Prava ironija je, da to področje dandanes prekriva prostrano jezero Mead.⁷

Nekateri bi lahko ugovarjali, da je ta vodni zakop njune nesojene domačije primeren simbol naše končne zmage nad puščavo. Toda ali gre razumeti Izaijevo prerokbo samo dobesedno? Ali moramo nujno predpostaviti, da se nanaša na končno zmago tehnologije, ki je ustvarila navidezne oaze na sodobnem ameriškem Zahodu? Če je cvetoča puščava mantra za tehnološko preobrazbo kraja, ki v sebi nima živopišne lepote, kakršna krasi klimatska območja severne Evrope, utegnemo zgrešiti eno od najosnovnejših dejstev puščave: najrazličnejše avtohtone rastline v njej cvetijo v osupljivih barvah, njena sušnost in geološka zgodovina, zlasti v Utahu, pa tako neverjetno razgaljata naravne barve zemlje kot skoraj nobena druga oblika pokrajine. Utegnili bi tudi napačno domnevati, da se Božja roka v našem okolju kaže le skozi to, kar z njim počne naša tehnologija, s čimer se nevarno bližamo idolatriji. Jaz na to raje gledam z vidika, ki bolj nagovarja naše notranje duhovno življenje. V angleščini je cvetlica iz Izaijevega verza prevedena kot »vrtnica«, s čimer se je izgubila semantična bogatost, ki jo vsebuje izvorni izraz v hebrejščini; ta namreč lahko pomeni žafran ali narciso, barvni razpon pa lahko sega od modrikasto-škrlatne do rumene, rožnate in bele.⁸ Torej ideja cvetoče puščave mogoče ne pomeni nujno le preobrazbe zunanjega okolja, temveč našega notranjega kognitivnega dožemanja.

S takšnim razumevanjem so na ameriškem Zahodu že ves čas težave, ker se okolje in podnebje tega področja izmikata poenostavljenim predstavitvam v skladu z estetskimi normami zahodne družbe. Wallace Stegner pojasnjuje: »Naša prva in najtežja prilagoditev je bila ponovno

⁶ Leta 1856 so se mormonski pionirji iz Iowe in Nebraske v več skupinah s cizami selili preko prerij na zahod, v Utah. V peti (Martinovi) odpravi jih je v brutalnih snežnih viharjih v gorah Wyominga zelo veliko umrlo zaradi mraza in lakote. (Op. prev.)

⁷ Največje akumulacijsko jezero v ZDA. (Op. prev.)

⁸ Hvaležen sem Terryju B. Ballu za ta uvid.

naučiti se gledati ... Pozabiti moraš na zeleno barvo; nehati moraš povezovati lepoto z vrtovi in tratami; privaditi se moraš nečloveškim razsežnostim; razumeti moraš geološki čas.«⁹ Zadeve še bolj zaplete dejstvo, da so se naša urbana okolja na Zahodu že tako temeljito spremenila, da se zdi govorjenje o tej potrebi po prilagajanju že kar anahronistično. Otroke, ki obiščejo Puščavski botanični vrt v Phoenixu že kar redno sprašujejo: »Koliko od vas je že kdaj živelo v puščavi?« Večina jih ne dvigne roke, saj predvidevajo, da vodič govori o nekih daljnih krajih, kjer ni ničesar, razen peska in kamel. Večina nas zahodnjakov se najprej ukvarja z estetiko vrtnarjenja in vzdrževanja trat, preden se končno lotimo spoznavanja avtohtonih puščavskih rastlin. Dandanes je tovrstno znanje o naših domačih vrstah tako težko pridobiti, da nas morajo drugi učiti tega, čemur se zdaj reče »strokovno« znanje, stvari iz knjig in muzejev. Spet pa je tudi vsak najmanjši poskus, da bi spoznali floro in favno ameriškega Zahoda, anahronističen, saj je veliko naših dreves, divjih cvetlic in plevelov evropskega izvora. Celo breskev starega sveta, ki je danes v Utahu zaradi hitrega razvoja ogrožena in postaja simbol utiškega neokrnjenega okolja,¹⁰ se je zgodaj razsejala in postala divji »plevel«, preden so jo na tej celini začeli gojiti Francozi in Španci.¹¹ Čeprav v Ameriki dandanes veliko govorimo in učimo o naši evropski dediščini, se skoraj izključno osredotočamo na kulturno dediščino, »biogeografske stvarnosti«, ki so omogočile evropske uspehe in celotno poloblo spremenile v cvetočo, čeravno posledično pogosto degradirano puščavo, pa zanemarjamo.¹² Biotski kolonizatorji, kot je bilo breskovo drevo, ki so se razširili po obeh Amerikah, so navdahnili zgodovinarja Alfreda Crosbyja, da je pionirja starega sveta poimenoval »nekakšen botanični Midas, ki je s svojim dotikom spreminjal rastline«. ¹³ Tako to,

⁹ Stegner, *Where the Bluebird Sings*, 52, 54.

¹⁰ O zgodovini upada sadjarstva v dolini Utah gl. April Chabries, Richard Kimball in Gary Daynes, *The Best Crop: A History of Orchard Farming in Orem, Utah*, videokaseta, režija April Chabries (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University, 2002).

¹¹ Alfred W. Crosby, *Ekološki imperializem: Evropska biološka ekspanzija 900–1900*, prev. Borut Cajnko (Ljubljana: Studia humanitatis, 2006), 184.

¹² Crosby, *Ekološki imperializem*, 229.

¹³ Crosby, *Ekološki imperializem*, 188. Nefi, ki prihaja z drugega konca starega sveta, je beležil podoben dosežek: »In zgodilo se je, da smo začeli obdelovati zemljo in začeli smo saditi seme;

kar se danes zdi prvobitna biota, prekriva še bolj avtohtono okoljsko zgodovino, ki je prvemu pogledu skrita.

Terry Ball in Jack Brotherson pojasnjujeta, da lahko »poljedelske prakse [mormonskih] pionirjev kot tudi vpeljevanje novih rastlinskih vrst ter rejnih živali štejejo za glavne dejavnike, ki so spremenili ekosistem Velike kotline.«¹⁴ Crosby pravi, da so se udomačene živali izkazale za agresivnejše pri spreminjanju naravnih okolij širom obeh Amerik »kot vsi stroji, kar smo jih izumili doslej.«¹⁵ Kljub dejstvu, da so svojo robustno individualnost dokazali na skrajnem robu poseljenega ozemlja na zahodu ZDA, so pionirji starega sveta, biološko gledano, prišli kot del »samorazmnoževalnega in svet spreminjajočega plazu«¹⁶ tolikšnega obsega, kolikšnemu v svetovni zgodovini nismo bili priča nikdar prej ali potem. Toda ključno je priznati, da se so z njimi okolja novega sveta nepovratno spremenila in daleč bolj, kot je bil namen evropskih prišlekov. Ti nikakor niso mogli predvideti, denimo, da se bo večina njihovih domačih živali razmnoževala tako hitro in povzročila tako silne in škodljive spremembe v krajini, kamor koli so šli, ali da se bodo bolezni, ki so se počasi, skozi stoletja razvijale na kmečkih dvoriščih in poljih evropskih poljedelskih skupnosti, razširile brez razlike po vsej staroselski Ameriki, da se bodo evropski pleveli izkazali za tako dominantne na zemlji novega sveta, ki je bila pred tem le skromno obdelana, če sploh, in da prve okoljske spremembe v neizprosni puščavah *niso* dokaz dolgoročnega trajnostnega razvoja.

Obnova naravne in človeške zgodovine

Ob na videz tolikšni neizogibnosti, vtisnjeni v samo pokrajino novega sveta, ni težko razumeti, zakaj so postali pogledi na prihod Evropejcev v novi svet deljeni; njihov prihod je očitno lahko razlog tako za

da, v zemljo smo dali vsako seme, ki smo ga prinesli iz jeruzalemske dežele. In zgodilo se je, da je silno raslo; zato je bil obilno blagoslovljen.« (1 Nefi 18,24)

¹⁴ Terry Ball in Jack Brotherson, »Environmental Lessons from Our Pioneer Heritage,« *BYU Studies* 38, št. 3 (1999): 77, <https://byustudies.byu.edu/article/environmental-lessons-from-our-pioneer-heritage/>.

Crosby, *Ekološki imperializem*, 203.

¹⁶ Crosby, *Ekološki imperializem*, 228.

kategorično obžalovanje kot neizmerno navdušenje. Zgodovinski resnici bi bila še najbližje interpretacija, ki bi Evropejce videla v več hkratnih vlogah, jih predstavila kot kompleksne moralne akterje, ki so povzročili velike in tragične spremembe (ki jih v vseh njihovih razsežnostih ni bilo mogoče predvideti). A resnici na ljubo, najraje vidimo, da se naša zgodovina bere kot dobro zrežirana drama s končnimi in spoznavnimi zaključki. Čeravno je v večni perspektivi stvari to vsekakor mogoče, ni jasno, ali je tovrstno védenje lahko pridobiti in ali je v tem trenutku to sploh zaželeno. Velja omeniti, da Mormonova knjiga prikazuje širitev evropskega imperija na zahod, ki ima za posledico hkrati kontinuiteto in prekinitve. Kot pomembno in sveto besedilo novega sveta seveda prerokuje in pojasnjuje prednosti prihoda drugih narodov, a hkrati opozarja na slabosti, ki bodo izšle iz ljudstva, ki bo prišlo z nepopolnim poznavanjem zgodovine novega sveta, s pomanjkljivim poznavanjem Božje besede in z nagnjenostjo k aroganci in nehvaležnosti (gl. zlasti 1 Nefi 13 in 3 Nefi 16). Tako zahvaljujoč pravim potem kot zavoljo stranpoti zahodne civilizacije so se nekateri delčki preteklosti izgubili, drugi pa ohranili. Pričevanje iz Mormonove knjige kaže, da je bila obnova potrebna za to, da bi lahko združili različna védenja narodov starega in novega sveta. Tako v Almi 46,40 preberemo: »In bilo jih je nekaj, ki so umrli zaradi mrzlic, ki so bile v deželi v določenih letnih obdobjih zelo pogoste — vendar ne toliko zaradi mrzlic, zaradi odlične kakovosti številnih rastlin in korenin, ki jih je Bog pripravil za odstranjevanje vzroka bolezni, katerim so bili ljudje podvrženi zavoljo narave podnebja.« Izguba tovrstnega znanja o avtohtonih rastlinah v puščavah novega sveta je bila ena največjih žrtev, ki jo je zahtevalo evropsko naseljevanje. Človek se vpraša, ali bi velika obnova lahko vključevala tudi povrnitev tovrstne ljudske biologije, ključne oblike lokalnega biotskega znanja, ki ga, kot v tem primeru, pridobimo s tesnim stikom z zemljo in ki pomaga ohranjati življenje skozi čas.¹⁷

¹⁷ Izraz »ljudska biologija« sem si izposodil od Thomasa Dunlapa, ki pravi, da je bilo takšno lokalno znanje o bioti ključno za preživetje večine ljudstev pred pojavom pisane besede in modernega znanstvenega védenja. Gl. njegovo delo *Nature and the English Diaspora: Environment and History in the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 23–24.

Naša kompleksna zgodovina od nas zahteva več potrpljenja in pre-mišljenosti pri vrednotenju naše vloge v okoljskih dogodkih. Stegner opozarja: »Kljub temu, da imamo morda radi nek kraj, smo zanj še vedno lahko nevarni.«¹⁸ Naučiti se prenašati inherentno nedoločljivost narave, hkrati kot del človeške skupnosti in ločeno od nje, nikoli ni bilo lahko. Še posebno težko je, ko postane očitno, in z najnovejšim razvo-jem na področju razumevanja okolja je to čedalje bolj, da naš vpliv na naravo ni bil vedno bil nedolžen, tudi če so bili naši nameni dobri. Naš odziv na te »grehe zoper naravo« sta pogosto nostalgija ali zanikanje, toda ne z enim ne z drugim ne moremo ničesar popraviti. Nagonsko obžalovanje lastnih korakov in sprememb, ki smo jih povzročili v po-krajini, je nostalgično in ljudomrzno (od tod težnja okoljevarstvenikov k prepričanju, da so bile stvari vedno boljše prej in bi bile zdaj možne samo ob manjšem številu ljudi). Nasprotni odziv pa je futurističen in nekako »zgrešeno utopičen«, kakor bi mu sam rekel; v prid prihodno-sti, ki kategorično vsebuje obljubo, da bo boljša, na kratko in površno opravi s preteklostjo ter se vznejevolji ob misli, da bi morda želeli ome-jiti naše družbene in gospodarske načrte glede na specifično ekologijo krajev, kjer prebivamo. Predpostavlja namreč, da je to, kar lahko naredi-mo iz naših krajev, vedno boljše od tega, kar kraji lahko naredijo iz nas, k takšnemu razmišljanju pa pripomore še dejstvo, da smo radi turisti v svojem lastnem domu. To je mantra večjega dela zgodovine novega sveta, za katero so že tako značilni preselitev ljudstev, samopromocija ter vse večja hitrost transporta in izmenjav.

Kot protiutež tovrstnemu futurizmu nas hrepenenje po neokrnje-nosti narave vabi nazaj v naravni svet iz predkolumbovskih časov ali morda še dlje, da bi si jasno predočili, kakšen je bil rajski vrt novega sveta pred prihodom Evropejcev. Vendar je zmotno domnevati, da so bili vsi stiki ameriških staroselcev z zemljo neškodljivi. Zgodovinar Ri-chard Grove trdi, da so se predvsem v velikih celinskih regijah, kot je Severna Amerika, kjer je neposredne učinke človeškega posega v na-ravo težje izslediti, »hitre in obsežne spremembe v naravnem okolju«

¹⁸ Stegner, *Where the Bluebird Sings*, 55.

zgodile že dolgo prej, preden so prišli Evropejci.¹⁹ Tako kljub evropski težnji, da bi širna področja novega sveta, kot je ameriški Zahod, jemali za paradiz brez sleherne predhodne zgodovine, Thomas Dunlap ironično ugotavlja, da »je bilo prej res nasprotno. Ljudje s kratko lastno zgodovino so prihajali v deželo z dolgo preteklostjo.«²⁰ Sodobna skrb za ponovno vzpostavitev okolja, kakršno je nekdaj bilo, vključuje torej težavno vprašanje: kako daleč nazaj moramo iti? Kaj predstavlja predhodno nedotaknjenost okolja? Ali se moramo vrniti v tisti trenutek, ko je človek prvič prišel v stik s to poloblo, čeprav je ta trenutek, ki naj bi se po sedanjih teorijah zgodil pred 30 do 40 tisoč leti, verjetno preveč oddaljen, da bi si lahko z njim kaj pomagali.

Z okvirom, ki sem ga ponudil, bi rad pokazal, da je kategorična kritika zapuščine namakanja neučinkovita in zgodovinsko plitka; je le želja, da bi odmislili več kot 150 let zgodovine, ki pogosto vodi v nostalgične in anahronistične sanje o življenju pred padcem zahodnega raja. Tovrstna kritika je, kadar jo podpirajo nepoznavalci mormonske zgodovine, navadno znamenje ljudomrzne zamere zaradi golega dejstva, da v puščavi sploh obstaja mormonsko prebivalstvo. Marc Reisner, denimo, tako neodgovorno pripomni, da so prvi mormoni »sami sebe izgnali« v puščavo,²¹ Bill McKibben pa je zapisal, da »so Mormoni naredili velik načrt za podreditev narave in nekatera mesta zgradili na tako pustih, sušnatih in strmih krajih, da jih je za to zagotovo lahko motivirala samo misijonarska gorečnost, da bi osvojili divjino.«²² Osupljivo je, da se nobeden od omenjenih avtorjev niti toliko ni potrudil, da bi omenil preganjanje, zaradi česar je bilo preživetje v Utahu nuja, ne pa zelen cilj.

Ta zatajevana zgodovina je naravnost simptomatična za globoko nostalgijo po naravi, ki ne bi bila zaznamovana s človeško ali vsaj ne z evro-ameriško zgodovino, in razkriva ironično dejstvo, da nostalgije, ki je sicer zazrta v preteklost, zgodovina pravzaprav sploh ne zanima. Razumljivo je, da je ta pogled v preteklost nekakšen poskus, kako razvijalcem ameriškega Zahoda preprečiti, da bi še naprej po mili volji

¹⁹ Richard Grove, *Green Imperialism. Colonial Expansion, Tropical Island Edens and the Origins of Environmentalism, 1600–1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 16.

²⁰ Dunlap, *Nature and the English diaspora*, 7.

²¹ Reisner, *Cadillac Desert*, 34.

²² Bill McKibben, *The End of Nature* (New York: Anchor Books, 1999), 75.

s pomočjo tehnologije spreminjali sušne, rjave puščave v predmestne vrtove. Vendar se zdi, da takšna nostalgija zanika dejstvo, da je trajnost sama po sebi vprašanje človeškega oblikovanja. Človekovo načrtovanje in oblikovanje naravnega okolja je neizogibno, ni pa nujno neetično ali netrajnostno. V prekomernem zalivanju, zakopavanju odpadkov, reklamnih panojih, razraščanju mest, prometu ali onesnaževanju ni nič neizogibnega, vendar bomo kljub temu vedno morali sprejemati težke odločitve, ki bodo pustile takšen ali drugačen pečat. Z željo, da bi ljudje in naše pretekle napake izginili sami od sebe, zanikujemo temeljno resnico in postanemo slepi za drugačne rešitve za prihodnost. Kot pravita dr. Ball in dr. Brotherson, se v priznavanju tega, česar ni več mogoče spremeniti, skriva modrost: »Tudi če bi lahko v tem trenutku področje izpraznili, se ekosistem Velike kotline ne bi mogel povrniti v stanje pred poselitvijo. Zato lahko le ocenimo sedanje stanje sistema in poskušamo okrepiti njegovo zdravje in stabilnost. To je tudi najboljše, kar lahko naredimo.«²³

Kot vsake druge oblike spokoritve se je tudi sprememb treba lotiti z iskreno oceno posledic naših dejanj in z upanjem, da bo naša obnova v kar največji meri res kaj pomenila. Zdi se, da je človeštvu usojena zagnata, da se globlja ljubezen in pripadnost paradoksalno v nas porodita šele potem, ko nas dolga in izčrpana zgodovina poskusov in napak spodbudi k izboljšanju našega ravnanja. Medtem ko je zgodovina zmagovanja nad naravo v novem svetu Američane naredila slepe za posebne lastnosti krajev, ki jih poseljujejo – zlasti na ameriškem Zahodu, drugačnost katerega je v primerjavi z Evropo še bolj očitna –, je vseeno tudi res, da je iz zmage nad naravnim okoljem paradoksalno izšlo znanje o naravi, predvsem pa »razumevanje [našega] prostora v deželi.«²⁴ Naš največji obet za doseg trajnosti morda tiči prav v tem prehodu od želje, da bi poustvarili naravo, k želji, da bi »postali naseljenci in deželo cenili zaradi tega, kakršna je ali je nekoč bila.«²⁵ Kljub temu, da se je evro-ameriško preoblikovanje Zahoda začelo z mormoni, se utiška zgodovina od ostalih iz te regije razlikuje po globlje ukoreninjeni naselitveni zgodovini.

²³ Ball in Brotherson, »Environmental Lessons,« 77.

²⁴ Dunlap, *Nature and the English diaspora*, 6.

²⁵ Dunlap, *Nature and the English diaspora*, 17.

vini, za katero so samopromocija, uvažanje vode in hitra urbanizacija manj značilni kot, denimo, za Phoenix, Las Vegas ali Los Angeles. Zato je nenavadno, da bi utiške začetke jemali kot razlog za obžalovanje, namesto kot možen vir navdiha, kako vpeljati izboljšave za novi Zahod.

Da bi sploh ustvarili možnost za količkaj pomemben odgovor na degradacijo okolja, moramo najprej razumeti, da sta človekovo delovanje in zdravje neposredno povezana z okoljem in dolgoročnim okoljskim zdravjem. Po mnenju Richarda Grova se je ta ideja, čeprav je bila v svojih zgodnejših izrazih z vidika znanosti zgrešena in je bila v evropski misli stoletja dolgo latentna, uresničila s širitvijo imperija na zahod²⁶ in nazadnje privedla do vznika sodobne okoljevarstvene misli. Znano je, da je Kolumb predpostavil, da izsekavanje gozda povzroča sušo; pozneje so sklepali, da velja tudi obratno: da bo s sajenjem prišel tudi dež. (Ta teorija o izsušitvi izhaja iz razmišljanj Plinija in še pred njim Teofrasta, vendar izkrivlja znanstveno dejstvo: drevesa in drugo rastlinje seveda ohranjajo rodovitnost prsti, ščitijo pred soncem, preprečujejo erozijo in včasih lahko zadržujejo zračno vlago, vendar pa ne morejo povzročiti padavin.) To je v novem svetu spodbudilo množične akcije pogozdovanja in presajanja dreves, v katerih so z združevanjem evropske, azijske in ameriške flore nastale raznolike rastlinske skupnosti, za katere so ljudje upali, da bodo pomagale spodbujati dež.

Razmišljanje, da »dež sledi oranju«, je bilo pomembno za številne naseljence na ameriškem Zahodu, prav verjetno zaradi sušnega okolja, in je postalo mantra Brigham Younga,²⁷ ki je pionirjem redno obljubljal, da jih bo Gospod preskrbel, če bodo sadili raznovrstno drevje in obdelovali zemljo (in če si bodo to zaslužili). Kot je pripomnilo več zgodovinarjev, je nekoliko ironično, da je širitev na zahod v ameriško puščavo potekala med enim najbolj deževnih ciklusov, kar jih je kdaj bilo na tem področju, in spodbudila gorečo navdušenost nad potencialom za preoblikovanje okolja.²⁸ Do številnih posegov v naravo, ki jih je

²⁶ In s t. i. »jasno usodo«, v 19. stoletju razširjenim prepričanjem, da je bilo Združenim državam Amerike namenjeno odkrivati in širiti se na zahod, iz prvotnih kolonij ob Atlantski obali pa vse tja do Pacifika. (Op. prev.)

²⁷ Brigham Young (1801–1877), drugi predsednik Cerkve Jezusa Kristusa svetih iz poslednjih dni. (Op. prev.)

²⁸ Reisner, *Cadillac Desert*, 36.

navdahnilo to prepričanje o vplivih človekovega delovanja na podnebje, je prišlo ob relativno slabem poznavanju njihovih dolgoročnih učinkov. Grove sicer meni, da je škodljive učinke tega nazora v 17. in 18. stoletju omilil razvoj miselnosti, ki jo sam imenuje nova protestantska »empirična estetika« narave. V tej estetiki, na katero so vplivali kalvinizem in dela Honoréja D'Urfeja, je veljalo prepričanje, da je »naravni svet pot do spoznavanja Boga ali sredstvo za poustvarjanje (družbenega) raja na zemlji.«²⁹ Kalvinizem 17. stoletja je načel vprašanje o ideji, da sta padec človeka in propad narave vzporedna dogodka, in širitev kolonialne izkušnje v Evropejcem dotlej neznane pokrajine je razkrila Boga kot »Stvarnika sveta mnogih čudes in lepot«; tako je postalo mogoče »naravi priznati kvalitete, ne pa videti v njej 'poraza'«. ³⁰ Ta pripravljenost sprejeti naravo za našo empirično učiteljico in estetski navdih je obrz-dala teorijo o izsuševanju in omogočila vznik »premišljene previdnosti v zvezi z vplivi ali zaželenostjo človeškega delovanja na novi svet.«³¹

Ni dvoma, da je ta estetika inherentna Izajjevi teologiji. Preplet Božje volje in naravnih zakonov opredeljuje teologijo, v kateri Bog komunicira z nami delno skozi svet narave, in nakazuje, da je poznavanje naravnih procesov pomemben instrument za razumevanje Božje roke. To jasno uči obnovljena zgodba o Stvarjenju, ko Gospod izjavi: »In jaz, Gospod Bog, sem naredil, da je iz zemlje zraslo vsako otipljivo drevo, ki je prijetno za človekovo oko; in človek ga je lahko videl. In prav tako je postalo živa duša. Kajti bilo je duhovno tisti dan, ko sem ga ustvaril; kajti ostal je v sferi, v kateri sem ga jaz, Bog, ustvaril, da, in sicer vse stvari, ki sem jih pripravil za človekovo uporabo; in človek je videl, da je dobro za hrano.« (Dragoceni biser, Mojzes 3,9). Opazna je tudi prednost, ki se daje estetskemu užitku pred praktičnim namenom, kakor je razvidno tudi iz tega odlomka iz Nauka in zavez:

[D]a, vse stvari, ki jih daje zemlja v obdobju le-teh, so ustvarjene v korist in za uporabo človeku, da bi bodisi ugajale očem bodisi veselile srce; da, za hrano in za obleko, za okus in za vonj, za krepitev telesa in za poživitev duha. In Bogu je po godu, da je vse to dal človeku; kajti s tem namenom je

²⁹ Grove, *Green Imperialism*, 15.

³⁰ Grove, *Green Imperialism*, 47.

³¹ Grove, *Green Imperialism*, 47.

bilo ustvarjeno, da bi se uporabljalo preudarno, ne s pretiravanjem niti ne z uničevanjem. (59,18–20).

To zadnje svarilo o ustrezni rabi narekuje, da moramo najprej uživati v estetiki Božjih darov, da bi lahko bolj preudarno presojali o njihovi uporabi. Tako naj bi bila empirična estetika potrebna pred vsakršnim delovanjem; v nasprotnem primeru v naši lakotni naglici po rabi ne bi razbrali, kaj nam želi Bog sporočiti:

[V]se je ustvarjeno in narejeno, da pričuje o meni, tako to, kar je posvetno, kot to, kar je duhovno; to, kar je na nebu zgoraj, in to, kar je na zemlji, in to, kar je v zemlji, in to, kar je pod zemljo, tako zgoraj kot spodaj. (Dragoceni biser, Mojzes 6,63)

Užitek, ki nam ga nudi narava, vodi v skrb zanjo in predanost; iz podobnega razloga imamo, denimo, radi otroke: ne zato, ker so pridni, ampak zato, ker so lepi.³² Čeprav bi seveda lahko kdo vztrajal, da niso vsi otroci lepi, se ti očitno vedno zdijo lepi tistim, iz ljubezni in truda katerih so se rodili: njihovim staršem. S tem hočem povedati, da se iz predanih prizadevanj razvije estetski užitek, ta pa navdahne še večjo naklonjenost in predanost. Almina zgodba o semenu, ki zraste v cvetoče in rodno drevo, govori o tem, da šele po estetskih občutkih »premik[ov] kaljenja« in spoznanju, da je »slatn[o]«, sklepamo, da »mora biti, da je to seme dobro« (Alma 32,28). Alma uči, da se moramo najprej naučiti opustiti dvom in si predstavljati, kaj je možno, »z očesom vere zazrti v sad«, in da se ob spoznanju, da sadovi presegajo naša pričakovanja, kakor se navadno zgodi pri estetskem izkustvu, obvežemo nadaljnjim dejanjem prizadevne ljubezni (Alma 32,40).

Estetsko izkustvo in narava

Estetsko izkustvo je obenem intimen odziv na podrobnosti v našem okolju in okrepljena zavest o subjektivnih razlikah, po katerih se ločimo od tega sveta. Z drugimi besedami, estetsko izkustvo omogoča, da naša subjektivnost in objektivnost sveta vzajemno delujeta, ne da bi se zrušili

³² Moja misel rahlo spremenjeno povzema izjavo Charlesa Hartshorna, ki pravi: »Dojenčki so bolj lepi kot pa pridni.«

druga v drugo. Če ne razlikujemo samih sebe od tega, kar nas obdaja, se vdajamo ali najhujši obliki samoljubja ali najhujši obliki naivnosti; krivi smo »pomilovanja vrednega zmotnega mišljenja«, kot je temu rekel John Ruskin, saj namreč svoja čustva enačimo s stanjem okolja. Naša človeškost je opredeljena prav v sposobnosti čutiti se neodvisne od lastne okolice, zato v resnici ne gre za odločitve, *ali* bomo preoblikovali naše okolje, temveč *kako* ga bomo. Še več, brez poznavanja podrobnosti okolja je bolj malo upanja, da nam bo te uspelo ohraniti. Takšne podrobnosti zbledijo, ko se nam um poleni zaradi navade ali pasivnega prilagajanja vsemu, kar nam nudijo tehnološke in virtualne predstavne oblike. Cilj umetnosti je vedno bil naučiti nas na novo gledati, slišati stare besede na nove načine, uzreti tujost in čudo v starem in poznanem, prepričati nas, da se navadi in ponavljajočim se izkušnjam navkljub plemeniti izraz naše človeškosti skriva v naši sposobnosti, da se prerodimo, ne da bi se nujno morali preseliti v nenavadno in novo. Po drugi strani pa naša mobilna družba od nas ne zahteva nobenih opravičil za nepotrpežljivost do poznanega; nasprotno, prepričuje nas, da je prenova stvar fizične preobrazbe okolja ali našega fizičnega premika na drug kraj. Umetnost pa nas uči, kako se preobraziti v odnosu do kraja, kjer že smo, kako vdahniti novo življenje našim prizoriščem, kako iz naših domov pregnati ustaljene vzorce. Umetnost nam pomaga prepoznati presenečenje in veličastnost, ki se skrivata na najbolj običajnih in nepričakovanih krajih.

Estetski odziv na okolje je nasproten občutku lastništva, saj nas uči skromnosti in spoštljive odmaknjenosti od stvarnega sveta. Odmaknjenost pa ne pomeni brezbriznosti; nasprotno, pomeni spoštljivo ljubezen. Predstavlja najboljšo možnost med mnenjem, da je fizični svet kot tak naš sovražnik, in na drugi strani skoraj patološkim prepričanjem, da smo nerazločljivi od našega okolja. Ko pride do tega, da nas znana in običajna pokrajina navdaja z nenehno presenečenostjo, smo lahko končno prepričani, da se je naša domišljija naučila, kako se zanesti na celovitost dežele, namesto da bi jo ogrožala. Izaija obljublja radost vsem, ki bodo priča cvetenju puščave: »Gospodovi osvobodenci se bodo vrnili in prišli s pesmijo na Sion. Nad njihovo glavo bo večno veselje, dosegli bodo radost in veselje, žalost in vzdihovanje bosta zbežala.« (Izaija 35,10). Navsezadnje ne smemo pozabiti, da je Don Kihot umrl od

melanholije, ker se je dialog s svetom zaključil, ko je končno dobil, kar je mislil, da si želi.

In kar je še pomembnejše, čeprav so nekoč prvi pionirji morda zaradi neučakanosti zanikali stvarnosti vročine in sušnosti, je ironično, da bo mogoče zdaj potrebna nova vrsta ekološke nepotrpežljivosti do okolja, da bomo znali videti onkraj najbolj očitnih podrobnosti cvetočega vrta, da bomo zaznali njegove še vedno avtohtone puščavske lastnosti in si jih prizadevali ohraniti. Estetsko izkustvo na ameriškem Zahodu bi lahko pomenilo, da bi bilo v načrtovanju naših domov, mest, krajin in drugih življenjskih prostorov ter v naših načinih prevoza in v kulinariki manj bahavosti; manj razraščanja mest; več do zraka prijaznejšega prometa in industrije; več poudarka na ekoloških podrobnostih, kot so porečja, mikroklima in biotska raznovrstnost avtohtone favne, rastlinja in pridelkov; in več spoštovanja do cele palete barv v našem oblikovanju krajine, ki bi preseгло zahteve po novoanglijski zeleni. Hkrati bi morda videli manj razdiralne retorike med tem, kar štejemo za prvotno, in novodošlim, in bi se raje posvetili vprašanju, kaj je vredno ohranjati za bodoče generacije. Umetnost bi cenili, ne le zato, ker je lepa, temveč tudi zato, ker nas uči nečesa bistvenega o našem odnosu do sveta onkraj slikarskega platna; tako bi se verjetno tudi manj pričkali glede definicij naravnih območij, in bi bili pogostejše že v osnovi soglasni, da jih je treba zaščititi. Manj bi se ukvarjali z vprašanjem, koliko otrok se rodi v družini, in več s tem, kako domiselna je njihova vzgoja. Izogibali bi se praksi prekomernega zalivanja in inovativno prenovili naše načrte za oblikovanje krajine, da bi se bolje ujemali z lokalnimi razmerami.³³ Molili bi za dež, a tudi za iznajdljivost pri rabi tega, kar nam Božja pre-

³³ Državna univerza v Utahu je vodilna na tem področju. V njihovem magistrskem programu krajinske arhitekture in načrtovanja rabe prostora se ves čas poudarja pomen oblikovanja, ki je skladen z lokalnimi razmerami, kakor velja tudi za številne druge okoljske programe te univerze. Roger Kjellgren iz magistrskega programa hortikulture je preučeval rabo vode v Utahu in dokazal, da so Utašani v nekaterih primerih zalivali s trikratno količino vode, ki jo zmore zagotoviti povprečen deževni gozd. Čeprav se ljudje na splošno nagibajo k varčevanju z vodo, ostaja dejstvo, da manjša skupina prebivalcev in 80 odstotkov podjetij predstavljajo več kot 80 odstotkov vse prekomerno porabljene vode, nekateri je potrošijo celo v količinah, ki bi zadoščale za pridelavo riža. »Poudarek je na prizadevanjih, da bi puščava vzcvetela ... Če nanjo zlijejo 500 cm vode, bi lahko na njej gojili riž.« (citat iz članka Tobyja Hayesa »Utahns Overwatering Lawns [Utašani prekomerno zalivajo trate],« v *Deseret News*, 7. 7. 2003, A1).

vidnost nakloni. Naš končni cilj ne bi več bil odmakniti se od danosti puščave z njenim podjarmljenjem, marveč spoštovati puščavo in v skladu z njenimi zahtevami preoblikovati sebe.

Takšna estetika je skladna s filozofijo velikega naravoslovca Alda Leopolda. Leopold zapiše:

Nekatere slike so postale znane, ker so obstojne in si jih lahko ogleda več zaporednih generacij, in v vsaki od njih se bo našlo nekaj njihovih občudovalcev. Jaz pa vem za sliko, ki je tako kratkotrajna, da si jo le redko kdo ogleda, razen kakšne begajoče srne. Reka je tista, ki vihti čopič, ista reka, ki svoje delo, še preden lahko pripeljem prijatelje, da bi si ga ogledali, za vedno izbriše človeškemu pogledu. To odtlej obstaja samo v mojih mislih.³⁴

Z drugimi besedami, umetniške upodobitve narave, kadar končajo na stenah muzejev ali na koledarjih, niso v resnici nič več kot ujeti drobci spominov na večno dinamične, nenehno spreminjajoče se *naravne* umetnine, ki tvorijo Stvarstvo. Človekovo poustvarjanje narave, naj bo v domovanju ali na umetniški sliki, lahko vzamemo kot izraz žalovanja za tem, česar si to o naravnem svetu neizogibno ne zapomni ali česar ne utegne ujeti. Zato je za poustvarjene krajine na platnu ali pa na uličnih vogalih enako malo verjetno, da bodo okorele v razgledničarske klišeje ali vnaprej določale našo okoljsko domišljijo. Bolj kot osredotočenost na umetniške rezultate nam ustvarjalnejši in sočutnejši pogled na umetniški proces in na naravni svet, na katerega se ta odziva, lahko pomaga, da se bolje zavedamo krhkosti narave in našega odnosa do nje. K temu lahko veliko pripomore reden in neposredni stik z našim fizičnim okoljem, saj omogoča izkustva s samo dinamičnostjo narave, ki jo vsa umetnost rada izpušča. Naša sposobnost smiselnega presojanja o umetnosti in književnosti je odvisna od naše zmožnosti primerjanja tega, kar vidimo, s tistim, česar ne. Če nimamo iz česa črpati, da bi si predstavljali nekaj, česar ni, je malo verjetno, da bi nas končni izdelek, ki ga imamo pred očmi, presenetil. Potem utegnemo vsi postati kot tisti otroci v muzeju v Phoenixu, nezmožni prepoznati puščavo, v kateri živimo.

Številni kritiki se pritožujejo nad močjo umetnosti, da tako zapovedujoče strukturira naše vidno izkustvo fizičnega sveta. Morda nikoli

³⁴ Aldo Leopold, *Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There* [Almanah pečene dežele] (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 51.

ne bomo sposobni videti kalifornijskega narodnega parka Yosemite, ne da bi hkrati pomislili na Ansel Adamsa, ali severnega dela države New York, ne da bi pomislili na Frederica Churcha ali Thomasa Cola.³⁵ Na nek način torej morda ne bomo nikoli zares *videli* teh krajev. In v žeji po razgledničarski različici izkustva narave, denimo Velikega kanjona, kar pet milijonov ljudi vsako leto obiše ta kraj in na njem preživi v povprečju komaj kaj več kot dve uri, kar je ravno dovolj, da izstopijo iz avtomobila, gredo na stranišče, naredijo posnetek in si privoščijo hot dog. Še nedolgo tega je povprečen obisk trajal dva tedna (in ne preseneča, da je bilo manj ljudi pripravljenih prestatati tako intenzivno izkušnjo). V naši z vizualnim obsedeni kulturi so likovna dela še posebej ranljiva za pomanjkanje tovrstne domišljije, ki nam jih pomaga prizemljiti in preprečiti, da jih odnese v virtualni prostor naše potrošniško naravnane kulture. Naj gre za Dalijeve stopljene ure, Monetove lokvanje ali Van Goghovo vrtinčasto nebo, celo največje umetnine lahko postanejo kliše, kadar v njih ne zmoremo več zaznati novosti, kljub temu da se take podobe, kot so denimo pločevinke juhe Campbell Andyja Warhola, monotono reproducirajo na koledarjih, v reklamah in na plakatih, ki krasijo stene študentskih sob.

Torej čeprav je res, da smo postali estetsko osiromašeni, rešitev za to ni preprosto več umetnosti. In ker se dandanes že pogosteje ukvarjamo s prostočasnimi dejavnostmi kot kdaj koli prej, rešitev za to tudi ni v (še) več obiskih narodnih parkov ali spomenikov. Umetnost je v manjši nevarnosti, da bo postala razgledničarski kliše, kadar je lokalna in cenjena med lokalnimi prebivalci, zavezanimi temu, da se bodo v nekem kraju ustalili in spoznali posebnosti svojega doma. Nedavna študija okoljske zgodovine o dolini reke Hudson dokazuje, da so estetske vrednote slikarske šole reke Hudson povzročile naravovarstveni preobrat v tej regiji, a ne zaradi turistov, ki ga obišejo, ali številnih občudovalcev teh ume-

³⁵ Ansel Adams (1902–1984) – ameriški krajinski fotograf in naravovarstvenik, znan po črno-belih upodobitvah ameriškega Zahoda, zlasti parka Yosemite. (Op. prev.)
 Frederic Edwin Church (1826–1900) – ameriški krajinar, eden izmed najvidnejših predstavnikov ameriške krajinarske slikarske šole reke Hudson (Hudson River School). (Op. prev.)
 Thomas Cole (1801–1848) – ameriški krajinar in pomemben predstavnik zgodovinskega slikarstva 19. stoletja, utemeljitelj slikarske šole reke Hudson. (Op. prev.)

tnikov od drugod, temveč zaradi predanosti lokalnega prebivalstva.³⁶ Ti slikarji so se odzivali na svet, za katerega so videli, da izginja, in danes so si številne od teh krajin – deloma zaradi moči podob, ki so jih porodili veliki umetniški umi, podob, ki so jih posvojile in ponotranjile generacije ljudi, ki so živeli in delali v teh krajih – lahko povrnile večino svoje prvotne svežine. Če naša estetska izkustva temeljijo zgolj na tem, kar črpamo iz fotografij ali likovnih del, morda nikoli ne bomo mogli razumeti, da estetske vrednote, ki jih tako cenimo pri slikah Alberta Bierstadta ali Thomasa Morana,³⁷ izhajajo iz estetskih vrednot, ki so inherentne Stvarstvu. Podobno lahko kmetijska družba, ki nikoli ne estetizira svojega okolja, ostane ravnodušna do njegove lepote in celovitosti kot ekosistema ali pa se ne zaveda dolgoročnih posledic človekove prisotnosti v deželi. Narava, za katero mislimo, da jo imamo radi, pogosto ni okolje, v katerem v resnici bivamo, bodisi zato, ker nam ni treba imeti pogostih stikov z njo, bodisi zato, ker se nikoli ne naučimo razmišljati o njej z vidika estetike. Navdušenje kot odziv na tuzemske podrobnosti, namesto vnaprej določenih klišejskih predstav o rajju, kot nas uči epigraf Dereka Walcotta, je morda najbolj etični način, kako doseči, da bo puščava vzcvetela.

Aktualne bitke glede varovanja narave v Utahu se vse prepogosto zapletajo v polemike glede njene definicije, obenem pa se pozablja, da obstajajo skupni cilji tako tistih, ki hočejo ceste, kot tistih, ki jih nočejo; oboji bi verjetno radi uživali v naravni dediščini divjine in jo predali svojim potomcem, vendar se stvar raje prikazuje kot spopad med zakonom neposlušnimi mormonskimi kmetavzarji na eni strani in brezbožnimi zveznimi okoljaši na drugi. Leopold predlaga, da presežemo površne opredelitve divjine in razmislimo o globljem dejstvu, namreč da je »prav širjenje prometa brez ustreznega večjega razumevanja razlog za to, da nam preti kvalitativni bankrot procesa [telesne in duševne]

³⁶ Kirk Johnson, »From a Woodland Elegy, a Rhapsody in Green; Hunter Mountain Paintings Spurred Recovery,« *The New York Times*, 7. 6. 2001, rubrika z novicami o širšem območju New Yorka, <https://www.nytimes.com/2001/06/07/nyregion/woodland-elegy-rhapsody-green-hunter-mountain-paintings-spurred-recovery.html>.

³⁷ Albert Bierstadt (1830–1902) – nemško-ameriški slikar, najbolj znan po upodobitvah prostirnih pokrajin ameriškega Zahoda, tudi on predstavnik slikarske šole reke Hudson. (Op. prev.) Thomas Moran (1837–1926) – ameriški slikar in grafik, še en predstavnik slikarske šole reke Hudson, ki je na poduhovljeno naturalističnih slikah pogosto upodabljal Skalno gorovje. (Op. prev.)

rekreacije [v naravi]. Smisel razvoja za potrebe rekreacije ni v gradnji cest na mikavno podeželje, temveč v vgradnji razumevanja in dojemljivosti v še vedno nemikaven človeški um.«³⁸ Povedano preprosto, »[i]zjemnost dojemljivosti je v tem, da ne zahteva nobene porabe in nobenega zmanjšanja virov.«³⁹

Čeprav estetsko izkustvo nujno ne prepoveduje rabe, do njega ne more priti brez pripravljenosti čakati v nedogled, pa čeprav zgolj zato, ker se zavedamo, da narava ni naša last in je ne moremo izkoriščati po mili volji. Mogoče dovolimo gradnjo ceste, mogoče ne, vsekakor pa se moramo najprej vprašati, katere estetske vrednote so inherentne in si zaslužijo zaščito, preden opredelimo možnosti izrabe nekega območja. To pomeni, da si vzamemo čas za izražanje hvaležnosti in se pripravimo za uporabo »s predanim srcem« (Nauk in zaveze 59,13), zato da so lahko tako naši časi pomanjkanja kot časi polnosti posvečeni naši dobrobiti. A ker se tako počasi učimo, lahko smiselni estetski užitek pogosto občutimo šele potem, ko nas naša pogoltna sitost ne izpolnjuje več. Slednje smo na Zahodu doživeli več kot dovolj, zato je zdaj čas, da sprejmemo težke in potrebne odločitve in pokažemo več samoobvladovanja. Potrebujemo okoljski post.

Starešina Orson Hyde je razumel trajnostne rezultate takega ustvarjalnega dela na notranjem jazu, ko je prvim naseljencem očital, da so negospodarno izkoriščali zemljo, namesto da bi bili iznajdljivi:

Nič nimam proti temu, da ljudje pridobivajo modrost in znanje iz knjig, najsibo starih ali novih ... vendar menim, da je bolje imeti Božjega Duha v srcu, zato da lahko prepoznamo resnico, ko jo slišimo; in ne samo kadar jo slišimo, ampak da smo sposobni s tem Duhom ustvariti stvari, za katere še nismo slišali. Čutim, da je to naš privilegij ... da to načelo biva v nas; ljudje, ki se mučijo s knjigami, starimi in sodobnimi, a v njih najdejo le malo uporabnega, me spominjajo na tiste, ki površno skrbijo za 15 in več hektarov zemlje in žanjejo malo, medtem ko bi jim manjši kos zemlje, dobro zalit in skrbno obdelan, gotovo bogato obrodil.⁴⁰

³⁸ Leopold, *Sand County Almanac*, 176.

³⁹ Leopold, *Sand County Almanac*, 173. Oglati oklepaji so uredniški. (Op. prev.)

⁴⁰ Orson Hyde, »Instructions Concerning Things Spiritual and Temporal,« v *Great and Peculiar Beauty: A Utah Reader*, ur. Thomas Lyon in Terry Tempest Williams (Salt Lake City: Gibbs Smith, 1995), 459.

Biti moramo domiselni in iznajdljivi, da se zavemo bogatih priložnosti, ki se nam lahko odprejo s tem, da ostanemo tam, kjer smo, in živimo preprosto v okviru svojih omejitev, s čimer bomo pridobili sposobnost prepoznati milost v darovih, ki nam jih je narava že doslej velikodušno ponujala.

Seveda prvi pionirji, ki so prišli v stik s puščavskim okoljem, niso čutili drugega kot silno željo, da bi to deželo preoblikovali v cvetoč vrt, ki so ga razumeli kot izraz Božje naklonjenosti. V ta boj za preživetje jih je prisililo preganjanje, zato pionirjev ne krivim in tudi nočem izbrisati njihove zgodovine; sprejemam dediščino, ki so nam jo zapustili. Ni treba, da na Wasatch Front⁴¹ in manjša puščavska mesta gledamo s kategoričnim obžalovanjem ali kot na kategorična znamenja Božje naklonjenosti, saj končna zgodba o našem odnosu s puščavo še ni spisana. Želel bi izkoristiti to priložnost in si po svoji najboljši presoji predstavljati pravo mesto človeka v tej deželi, ki ni določeno s preteklostjo in je intimno povezano s tem, kar v svoji sedanjosti zaznavam okoli sebe. To ne pomeni, da nisem zgrožen nad našim navdušenjem nad velikimi oglasnimi panoji, našo nedomiselno in ekološko oporečno arhitekturo, nad našo navidezno ravnodušnostjo do slabega zraka, saj se tudi sam zavedam, da imamo edinstveno priložnost, ki je prvi naseljenci niso imeli. Živimo lagodno, zato se nam ni več treba boriti, da bi deželo spremenili; ni treba, da je naš človeški odtis na njej znamenje našega zmogostva nad njo. Imamo privilegij estetskega izkustva in odgovornost temu ustrezno oblikovati naše skupnosti. Kaj takega je bilo za pionirje razkošje. Kot je Lyman Hafen zapisal o zgodovini utiškega Dixieja:⁴² »V migljajočem zraku sredi peklenke vročine, ob uvelih poljščinah in umirajočih otrocih je težko uzreti lepoto. Nedotaknjena kanjonska dolina iz peščenca je bila zgolj še ovira, ki jo je bilo treba premagati. Velik kopasti oblak še eno lažno upanje.«⁴³ Prav zaradi pridobitev in izgub

⁴¹ Metropolitansko območje v severno-osrednjem delu Utaha, v katerem ležijo največja utiška mesta in živi približno 80 odstotkov vsega prebivalstva te zvezne države.

⁴² Vzdevek za zmerno poseljeno področje nižje nadmorske višine na jugozahodu Utaha z blago klimo, značilno za mojavsko puščavo, v kateri območje leži.

⁴³ Lyman Hafen, »Sacred Ground,« v *New Genesis: A Mormon Reader on Land and Community*, ur. Terry Tempest Williams, William B. Smart in Gibbs M. Smith (Layton, UT: Gibbs Smith, 1998), 19.

teh prvih borcev imamo zdaj izhodišče za boljše razumevanje naravne zgodovine puščave. Kot nas opominjajo Terry Ball, Jack Brotherson in Thomas Alexander, so pionirji morda res naredili precej okoljskih napak, vendar so se tudi izkazali za tako pogumne, da so naredili tehnološke, moralne in estetske poprave svojih napačnih potez, s tem ko so se vrnili k najosnovnejšim načelom skrbništva v obnovljenem evangeliju.⁴⁴ Ko bi le bili tudi mi tako modri.

Zaključek

Ob razmerah v antropocenu si ne moremo več privoščiti razkošja utvare, da človek lahko nekaznovano prezre ekološke pogoje, ki mu jih postavlja okolje. V prepričanju, da so prejeli Božje pooblastilo za gospodovanje nad naravo, so belski naseljenci ameriškega Zahoda zmotno poskušali predrugačiti in preoblikovati pokrajino in ji nadeti podobo, ki ni spoštovala teh pogojev. To pa ne pomeni, da krščanstvo ali, natančneje, Cerkev Jezusa Kristusa svetih iz poslednjih dni nima kaj ponuditi, da bi to zgodbo spremenila. Antropocen je vernike po vsem svetu spodbudil k novim interpretacijam starih izročil. Pričujoči članek je del tovrstnih prizadevanj, poziv k novemu sodelovanju z okoljem, ki bo bolje ozavestilo tako antropogene spremembe, ki jih je treba ublažiti, kot naravne značilnosti zemlje in pokrajine, ki jih moramo spoštovati. In kakor pri vsaki spokoritvi gre tudi pri boljšem gospodarjenju z zemljo za to, da natančneje preučimo našo zgodovino in sprejmemo odgovornost zanjo ter se bolj optimistično obrnemo k novi prihodnosti, ki je ne bo določala preteklost.

Prevedla Petra Berlot Kužner

⁴⁴ Thomas Alexander, »Stewardship and Enterprise: The LDS Church and the Wasatch Oasis Environment, 1847–1930,« *Western Historical Quarterly* 25 (Jesen 1994): 340–364.

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STAROSELSKE KOZMOLOGIJE V OKVIRU NOVIH EPISTEMOLOŠKIH IN POLITIČNIH TEŽENJ GLOBALNEGA JUGA

Marija Mojca Terčelj

Uvod

Bistvena razlika med staroselskimi verovanji in svetovnimi religijami – krščanstvom, judovstvom in islamom – ni v diskusiji politeizem versus monoteizem, kot jo poudarjajo klasična religiološka in antropološka dela 20. stoletja, ampak v pojmovanju odnosa »človek – narava«. Staroselska verovanja dojemajo človeka kot enakovrednega akterja pri vzpostavljanju kozmične harmonije, torej ga postavljajo ob bok vsem drugim živim in neživim bitjem stvarstva. Svetovne religije ga umeščajo v središče sveta, kar je razvidno že iz znamenitega stavka Geneze: »Bog je rekel: 'Naredimo človeka po svoji podobi, kot svojo podobnost! Gospoduje naj ribam morja in pticam neba, živini in vsej zemlji ter vsej laznini, ki se plazi po zemlji!'«.¹ Krščansko religiozno izročilo na eni strani ter kartezijski ontološki dualizem in metodološki empirizem na drugi so močno vplivali na razvoj zahodnjaške znanstvene misli.

Njene družbene in humanistične vede so v zadnjih desetletjih naredile velik korak: prispevale so k novim razlagam globalnih ekonomskih in socialnih zakonitosti, hibridizacije etničnih identitet in začele

¹ *Sveto pismo stare in nove zaveze* (Ljubljana: Svetopisemska družba Slovenije 1996), 53.

tesneje sodelovati z empiričnimi znanostmi. Kot pravi Escobar,² problem nastane, ko je zaradi svoje kompleksnosti katera koli druga vrsta znanja diskvalificirana kot »neznanstvena«, »lokalna«, »romantična«, nepopolna itd. Delo v humanistiki in družboslovju temelji na branju kontekstov, zgodovinskem primerjanju in analizi vsebinsko različnih podatkov. Tako je treba na primer podnebne spremembe razumeti na kompleksen način: v smislu lokalnih, nacionalnih in globalnih gospodarskih, družbenih in političnih kontekstov, zgodovine in njenih akterjev. Zato ni presenetljivo, da se vsako drugo védenje ali znanje ocenjuje kot pomanjkljivo, »primitivno«, preprosto oz. nesprejemljivo.

Prav tako ni presenetljivo, da so tako nomotetične kot družboslovne in humanistične znanosti v hitrem vrtincu sprememb, ki zahteva nenehno prilagajanje in komplementarnost najrazličnejših področij, prav zaradi zazrtosti vase zašle v slepo ulico. Tudi zaradi zazrtosti v edinega razsodnika resnice: človeka in njegov cogito. Čas antropocena in njegove vsesplošne dominantnosti se izteka.

Na podlagi primerjalne analize treh konkretnih staroselskih kozmoloških in religiozних modelov (odnos človek – narava) želi članek opozoriti na pluralizem miselnih konceptov in družbenih praks. Hkrati implicite predlaga tudi možnost njihove medsebojne aplikabilnosti, oz. sobivanja ter se navezuje na postrazvojni diskurz globalnega Juga in njegove konkretne družbeno-politične dosežke, ki lahko prispevajo k reševanju bivanjske in duhovne krize, v kateri se je znašel človek zahodne družbe. Besedilo vključuje literaturo s področja postrazvoja, antropologije Juga in klasična etnografska dela, opira pa se tudi na rezultate lastnih terenskih raziskav.³

² A. Escobar, »¿'Pachamamicos' y 'Modérnicos'?«, v: *Política y Economía. Miradas Latinoamericanas Heterodoxas* (Montevideo: CLAES D3E), 25. maj 2010, <http://www.politicayeconomia.com/2010/05/%c2%bfpachamamicos-versus-modernicos/>.

³ TZ: Marija Mojca Terčelj: november 1979–marec 1980 (Cuzco, Ollantaytambo, Puno v Peruju, La Paz, Oruro, Cochabamba, Potosí, Tarija in Tarabuco v Boliviji); TZ: Marija Mojca Terčelj, oktober–december 2011 in april–junij 2014 (Peto, Xocen, Espita, Tihusuco, El Balam na Jukatenu). Terensko delo je bilo vključeno v raziskavo Načrtovanje kmetijskih opravil in z njimi povezanih obredij pri Majih na Jukatenu, ki sem jo izvedla v sklopu temeljnega raziskovalnega projekta J6-4003: Astronomske osnove arhitekture in urbanizma Majev (vodja dr. Ivan Šprajc, SAZU, 2011–2014).

Staroselska religiozna in kozmološka izročila

Še preden preidem k predstavitvi treh primerov staroselskih percepcij narave oz. odnosa »človek – narava«, naj navedem bistvene lastnosti, ki so skupne različnim domorodnim verstvom, ter opozorim na nekaj dejstev, ki vzbujajo pomisleke o dosedanjih antropoloških in religioloških razlagah.

Dolgo časa so raziskovalci religij staroselska verstva neustrezno označevali za »animizem«. Zanj naj bi bila značilna vera, da imajo vsi fenomeni žive in nežive narave – človek, živali, rastline, kamenine, voda itn. – dušo, medtem ko krščanstvo, judovstvo in islam (od boga dano) dušo pripisujejo izključno človeku. Kulturni evolucionisti so konec 19. stoletja povzeli poročila prvih misijonarjev in kolonialnih piscev, ki so krščanski pojem duše dobesedno preslikali na staroselske koncepte. Njihova izročila ne poznajo duše v krščanskem smislu, ampak več duhovnih in duševnih entitet.⁴ Poleg tega je napačna preslikava koncepta in besede »bog«, »hudič« ipd., saj staroselske religije poznajo le »gospodarje« ali »varuhe« narave, ki imajo ambivalenten značaj. Kot pravi kognitivni antropolog Kubik,⁵ religioznih vsebin, ki so lastne eni religiji, ne moremo in ne smemo preprosto aplicirati na druge in drugačne religiozne koncepte z dobesednim prevajanjem. Njihove semantične vsebine lahko le analogno prevedemo. Ko poskušamo danes razložiti bistvo staroselskega dožemanja narave, antropologi poudarjamo zlasti koncept njene osebnosti. Prevod seveda ni ekvivalenten, se pa bolj približa vernikularnim semantičnim vsebinam. V staroselskih razlagah so osebe tudi živali, rastline, kamenine, duhovna bitja, kot so predniki itd., ki skupaj s človekom soustvarjajo enovitost sveta ali kozmosa. Še

⁴ V predkolonialnem izročilu mezoameriških ljudstev ima človek 13 duhovnih in duševnih entitet. López Austin (1984: 221–262) v primeru Nauajev (Nahua) navaja tri najpomembnejše: *tonalli*, *yolia* in *ihiyotl*. Vse se s krvjo pretakajo po telesu, vendar imajo sedež v določenih organih: *tonalli* v glavi, *yolia* v srcu in *ihiyot* v jetrih. Verjeli so, da se človek rodi z eno entiteto (*tonalli*), v naslednjih 12 letih pa razvije še preostale. Ko umre, umrejo tudi te, prva pa se vrne na tako imenovano kozmično os in čaka na ponovno utelesitev. Maji to neumrljivo »dušo« imenujejo *píxan*.

⁵ G. Kubik, »West African and African-American concepts of vodu and òriṣà,« v *Afro-Caribbean Religions 2: Voodoo*, ur. Manfred Kremser (Wien: WUV/Universitätsverlag 2000), 17–34.

več, Zemlja v vsej svoji planetarni kompleksnosti je osebnost, ki jo je treba še posebej spoštovati.

Drugo, na kar moram opozoriti, je, da staroselske religije ne predstavljajo prežitkov ("survivals") najzgodnejših oz. prvih verovanj, iz katerih so se razvile višje religijske oblike, ampak paralelne interpretativne modele. Ti namreč sobivajo s svetovnimi religijami. Danes je število njihovih privrženecv omejeno ali na nekaj sto oseb enega plemena oz. ene skupnosti, lahko pa zajema več milijonov pripadnikov,⁶ npr. religije staroselcev Kečua (quechua) in Ajmara (aymara) ali religije Majev. Najdemo jih tudi v urbanem okolju.

Tretje pomembno dejstvo pri obravnavani problematiki je, da religiozno »izročilo« ali »tradicija« ne pomeni nekaj statičnega, nekaj, kar se nikoli ne spreminja. Spremembe so stalnica. Religije ne moremo raziskovati le z vidika fenomenologije, ampak tudi s stališča družbeno-zgodovinske analize. Najkorenitejše spremembe so staroselske religije doživele s prihodom kolonialnih osvajalcev, ki so domačinom vsilili nove verske predstave. Kot omenja Harvey,⁷ so »zaradi širjenja globalnih nadkulturnih verstev, npr. budizma, krščanstva in islama, nekatere domačinske vere zadela razkrajanje, zavračanje in opuščanje. Nekatera domorodna ljudstva pa so sprejela prispelo religijo na svoj način in jo vključila v lastno pojmovanje. Številne so se prilagodile navzočnosti močnejše ali prevladujoče religije ter se ohranjale s precejšnjo trdoživostjo in ustvarjalnostjo«.

Religiozna persistentnost (»trdoživost«, kot pravi omenjeni avtor) ne pomeni odkritega odpora (rezistence) do vsega tujega, ampak pripravljenost sprejemanja novih religioznih konceptov in praks po eni strani, po drugi pa tiho vztrajanje pri že ustaljenih miselnih konceptih in praksah. Antropologi iz sredine 20. stoletja so ta proces imenovali »religiozna vitalnost« (Ortiz, Raboteau), v širšem pomenu besede tudi

⁶ Po podatkih iz poročila ZN – Mednarodne organizacije za delo (UN – ILO) živi na svetu 475 milijonov staroselcev in plemenskih skupnosti. »Implementing the ILO indigenous and tribal peoples Convention No. 169. Towards the inclusive, sustainable and just future,« International Labour Organization, 3. 2. 2020, https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/WCMS_735607/lang-en/index.htm.

⁷ Graham Harvey, »Razumevanje domorodskih religij,« v *Verstva sveta*, 3. izd., ur. C. Partridge (Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga 2009), 100–104.

»kulturni dinamizem« (Sušnik). Gre za potek spreminjanja, dinamika katerega je vpeta v daljše časovno obdobje ter v katerem so bistveni elementi družbenega, religioznega in kulturnega značaja preživeli ali v prikriti ali spremenjeni obliki, torej pomešani z novimi koncepti in vrednotami.⁸

Kot četrto poudarjam potrebo po novem teoretskem razmisleku o konceptualnem ločevanju med »sakralnim« in »profanim« v staroselskih religijah.⁹ Le malo domorodnih jezikov ima svojo besedo za označitev »religije«. Religiozna razumevanja sveta in z njimi povezana etična zadržanja so nerazdružljivo prepletena z vsakdanjim življenjem. Religija v največ primerih ni institucionalizirana. Religiozne in kozmološke predstave staroselcev ne poznajo dualizma med snovnim in duhovnim svetom, zato ne moremo govoriti o delitvi na »sakralno« in »profano«. Vsa narava je sveta in enako spoštovana. Res pa je, da imajo nekateri kraji še posebej sakralen značaj: gore, jame, tolmoni in podobni kraji, ki simbolno označujejo prehod v onostranstvo.

Kot zadnje naj omenim, da staroselske religije še zdaleč niso enake, kot bi pričakovali iz skupnega poimenovanja. Razlikujejo se glede na kulturo, jezik in osnovne načine preživetja (t. i. *genre de vie*), ki jih določa naravno okolje. Lov in nabiralništvo zahtevata selitveni ali nomadski način življenja, poljedelstvo sedentarnega, v katerem so ljudje oblikovali dokaj različno percepcijo sveta in vedenjske vzorce. Verovanjsko ravnanje vsake družbene skupine je prilagojeno njej in njenemu okolju.

Trije primeri ameriškega staroselskega odnosa »človek – narava«

V nadaljevanju bom predstavila imaginarij narave v treh ameriških staroselskih družbah. Iz njihovih kozmoloških in religioznih predstav

⁸ Glej npr. Dolores Aramoni Calderón, *Los refugios de lo sagrado. Religiosidad, conflicto y resistencia entre los zoques de Chiapas* (México, D.F.: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes 1992); in Mojca Marija Terčelj, *Sokejska kozmologija kot interpretacijski model in kot predmet etnološke (antropološke) razlage* (Doktorska disertacija, Filozofska fakulteta Univerze v Ljubljani, 2000).

⁹ Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane. The Nature of Religion* (New York: A Harvest Book 1963).

bom izluščila tiste vidike odnosa človek – narava, ki so v posameznih kozmologijah najbolj izraženi: odnos »človek – žival« pri lovskih skupinah Toba in Išir (Ishir) iz paragvajskega Chaca; odnos »človek – gozd« pri Majih z Jukatana ter odnos »človek – zemlja« pri staroselcih Kečua in Ajmara z območja Andov.

Odnos »človek – žival« pri lovskih skupnostih paragvajskega Chaca

Staroselski prebivalci Paragvaja pripadajo sedemnajstim etničnim skupinam in govorijo jezike petih lingvističnih družin.¹⁰ Glede na svoj osnovni način preživetja so izoblikovali različna kulturna sistema, ki sta tesno povezana s popolnoma drugačnima ekološkima območjema: v vlažnem in rodovitnem vzhodnem delu države so Gvaraniji razvili poljedelsko kulturo, v zahodnem, sušnem Chacu¹¹ pa so se plemena še vse do druge polovice 20. stoletja preživljala z lovom in nabiralništvom. Sušnikova¹² poudarja, da je bila njihova ideologija »izrazito utilitarnega značaja, prežeta z naturalizmom preprostega preživetja«.

Po zadnjem štetju prebivalstva iz leta 2012 je v Paragvaju živelo 117.150 staroselcev v 493 lokalnih skupnostih, od tega 76 % pod pragom revščine. Leta 2019 je število staroselskega prebivalstva znašalo 130.023.¹³ Zaradi krčenja njihovih habitatov in načrtnega naseljevanja v prostorsko omejene staroselske občine, ki jih izvaja država, se jih vse več seli v urbana središča, kjer pristanejo na robu družbe. Tisti, ki osta-

¹⁰ 1. Guaraní: Mbyá, Ava-Katú (Chiripá), Aché (Guayaki), Pa'í Tavyterá, Chiriguano (Guarayo), Guarani-Ñandeva; 2. Maskoy: Sanapaná, Angaité, Enxet (Lengua), Guaná, Toba Maskoy; 3. Guaicurú: Toba Qom; 4. Zamuco: *Ayoreo, Ishir ali Chamacoco*; 5. Mataco: *Nivadé, Choroti, Maká*.

¹¹ Gran Chaco je redko poseljena, vroča in semiaridna nižinska regija Južne Amerike, ki se razprostira na približno 786.791 km² ozemlja med današnjo vzhodno Bolivijo, zahodnim Paragvajem, severno Argentino in brazilskima zveznima državama Mato Grosso in Mato Grosso do Sul. V južnem in osrednjem delu prevladujejo kserofilne ravnice, v severnem nizko rasli grmičavi gozd, ki na skrajnem severu preide v tropski pragozd. Zaradi pomanjkanja vode in neprimernih tal se na tem ozemlju ni razvilo poljedelstvo.

¹² Branislava Sušnik, *El Rol de los Indígenas en la Formación y en la vivencia del Paraguay*, 3. izd. (Asunción: Editorial Intercontinental 2011), 19.

¹³ José Zanardini in Walter Biedermann, *Los Indígenas del Paraguay*, 3. izd. (Asunción: Editorial Servilibro 2019), 17.

jajo na podeželju, se kot sezonski najemni delavci udinjajo na bližnjih veleposestvih. Možnosti tradicionalnega lova, nabiralništva in požigalniškega poljedelstva so skrajno omejene. Tesna povezava med človekom in živaljo se opušča, kar je vidno že iz njihove izrazne umetnosti in pripovedništva. Predstavitev problematike odnosa med lovцем in živaljo je omejena na pisne vire iz sredine 20. stoletja in nekaj lastnih terenskih opažanj.¹⁴

Koncept »odprtega prostora« in »cikličnega časa« sta osnovni miselni kategoriji lovskih skupnosti. Kot zapiše Branislava Sušnik¹⁵ v primeru Emok-Tobajev, »nomadski lovec vedno išče svoj 'nēnağa', odprti prostor (comp.: nā-/nāa – razsežnost; -nāk- / naga- hoditi čez planjave), ki je bistvenega pomena za njegovo gibanje in obstoj; je njegov življenjski prostor, ki ga obvladuje ... Človek odprtega prostora deli oblast z 'nēnağa: lik',¹⁶ prvotnim gospodarjem oz. varuhom ravníc, ki ga Tobaji simbolno izražajo v podobi nojevega tropa«. Lovec (*nēptalik*), kot v nadaljevanju razlaga avtorica, je zasledovalec, stezosledec, tisti, ki se taktično bori za svoj plen (*nēpyak*). Pri tem je odvisen od moči lastnih mišíc in znanja ter tehnik, kako izstreliti puščico in uloviti. Biti mora hraber, impulziven in tekmovalen. Ko žival zavije s travnatih ravníc v goščavo (ki je »zaprtá enota«), ga *habyák lik*, gospodar oz. varuh gozda, ki je lovčev nasprotnik, izzove na boj. Lovec zdaj postane agresiven tekmeč svojemu plenu. Počuti se *šig'iyok lúwa*, kar pomeni sopotnik in hkrati nasprotnik živali. Pokazati mora spretnost in prekanjenost.¹⁷ Koncept boja temelji torej na opoziciji: sopotnik – nasprotnik.

¹⁴ Naslanjam se na dela Branislave Sušnik, ki so temeljna etnografska, etnolingvistična in etnozgodovinska literatura za vse današnje raziskovalce, in na nekaj svojih krajših, tedenskih terenskih obiskov teh staroselskih skupnosti: lokalna skupnost Fichat etnične skupine Nivakle (Nivaclé) oktobra 1998; lokalna skupnost Ače Gvajaki (Aché Guayakí), oktobra 1998 (kot spremljevalka francoskega antropologa Phelipeja Edeba); lokalna skupnost Ebetogue, klan Pikaneray etnične skupine Ajoreo (Ayoreo), 2019.

¹⁵ Branislava Sušnik, *Tendencias Psicosociales y verbomentales Guaycurú – Maskoy – Zamuco. Ensayo Analítico* (Asunción: Museo Etnográfico Andrés Barbero 1998), 24.

¹⁶ Dobesedno prevedeno: »oseba odprtega prostora«. Kot vidimo, so tudi duhovne entitete, t. i. »gospodarji prostora« oz. »varuhi« – osebe (*lik*).

¹⁷ Sušnik, *Tendencias Psicosociales y verbomentales*, 25.

V tradicionalnih lovskih družbah je žival osnovna prehrana.¹⁸ Lov ni samo eksistencialnega pomena, ima kompleksnejši značaj. Za tradicionalnega lovca je žival veliko več kot le vir preživetja. Pred lovom možje izvajajo obred, posvečen gospodarjem ravníc, gozda in živali, v katerem izprosijo oz. »odkupijo« svoj plen. Po lovu sledi obred očiščenja. Vsaj od tri do sedem dni pred lovom so možje in njihove družine podvrženi strogemu postu, veljajo tudi tabuji spolnega občevanja. Vse to kaže na liminalni značaj lova. Lovijo omejeno količino plena, kolikor potrebujejo za sprotno prehrano. Pri tem uporabijo vse: meso za hrano, kože za diademe, kosti za igle, čekane in kremplje za amulete.

Uboj ne pomeni smrti nasprotnika, saj v tem dejanju vse duhovne entitete živali in njene lastnosti (hrabrost itd.) preidejo na lovca in v njem bivajo naprej. Ubiti žival v tradicionalnih lovskih družbah torej nima istega značaja kot pri sodobnem športnem lovu ali zakolu v mestnih klavnicah. Kot pravi Grušovnik,¹⁹ »[...] ne smemo pozabiti, da je bil zakol živali praktično v vseh kulturah poseben *spravni obred*, žrtvovanje, kar je dejstvo, ki nam že samo po sebi priča o tem, da zakol kakega prašiča preprosto ni isto, kot razbijanje vaze – nasilje nad živalmi je zmeraj terjalo svojo *etično upravičitev*, bodisi religiozno bodisi moralno ...«.

Če parafraziram Lévi-Straussa,²⁰ »žival ni dobra le za hrano, tudi za mišljenje«. Žival je v lovskih družbah najpogosteje uporabljen simbol, ali v mitologiji in obredih ali v nomenklaturi družbene ureditve in drugih klasifikacijskih sistemih.

Emok–Toba,²¹ podobno kot druge lovske skupine Chaca, poznajo tri letne čase, ki se ciklično ponavljajo:

¹⁸ Proteinsko hrano (meso sesalcev, glodavcev, kožuharjev, plazilcev, ptic in rib) pomembno dopolnjujeta uživanje sladkega krompirja in manioke, ki ju gojijo v ohišnicah, ter nabiranje zelišč in divjega medu.

¹⁹ Tomaž Grušovnik, »Nepripoznanje trpljenja živali: eksistencialni razlogi,« *Poligrafi* 20, 79/80 (2015): 195, https://www.zrs-kp.si/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Poligrafi-79-80_TR-PLJENJE.pdf.

²⁰ Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Totemizam danas* (Beograd: Prosveta 1979), 117.

²¹ Beseda *toba* izvira iz gvaranijskega jezika in pomeni »tisti, ki si brije oz. na kratko striže lase«. Sebe imenujejo *Qom Lik* (»človek« oz. »človeška oseba«). Nekatera plemena *Qom Lik* so se sredi 18. stoletja preselila z ozemlja južno od reke Pilcomayo na njene severne bregove. Ob prečkanju reke so svoje ime spremenila v *Emok Lik*, kar pomeni »Ljudje z levega brega«. Sušnikova jih imenuje *Emok – Toba*.

- *kaktápiga* ali »čas suhih živali«: sušno obdobje, ki ni dobro za človeka, saj primanjkuje proteinske hrane;
- *kôtap* ali »čas debelih živali«: jesensko obdobje, primerno za lov na divje svinje, koatije in drugo divjad. Poleg tega je takrat veliko rastlinskih plodov in medu divjih čebel. V tem času lovske skupnosti izvajajo obred »izmenjave nevestinih torb«, ki jim sledijo poročni obredi;
- *nômago* ali »obdobje mraza« je čas, v katerem pihajo mrzli vetrovi z juga in primanjkuje živalske hrane. Uživanje proteinov se skrči le na meso pasavca in rastlinsko moko.

Kako pomemben spremljevalec človeka je (bila) žival, se kaže v klasi-fikacijskih sistemih sorodstvene ureditve. Tu mislim zlasti na totemizem, ki je (bil) značilen za lovske družbe Sibirije, Severne in Južne Amerike, Avstralije in indonezijskih otokov. Pojem totemizma obsega širok spekter predstav, verovanj, odnosov, izvajanj, prepovedi in pravil vedenja. Totemizem ni samostojna institucija, ni religija. Gre za poseben odnos med določeno družbeno skupino (klanom) ali posameznikom na eni strani in posameznim bitjem ali vrsto bitij (žival, rastlina ali predmet) na drugi. V okviru tega nastopa žival, rastlina ali predmet (posameznik ali vrsta) kot mitološki ali sorodstveni prednik, zaščitnik ali emblem neke družbene skupine ali posameznika. Zato pride med obema kontrahentoma do vzpostavitve posebnih pravil in oblik vedenja.

Med vsemi skupinami paragvajskega Chaca je bil²² totemizem prisoten le pri Čamakokih (Ishir). Branislava Sušnik je zapisala:²³

Vsa totemska tradicija tega plemena je zasnovana na mitičnem pojmovanju o enakosti in tovarištvu med človekom in živaljo. Pragozdni lovec čuti in preizkuša v svoji borbi za življenjski obstanek, da je odvisen od pogojev naravnega okrožja; žival je za njega bistvena življenjska vrednota, osredno bi-

²² Že leta 1959 je Branislava Sušnik zapisala: »Čamakoki so še do danes ohranili imena totemskih skupin, toda te ne predstavljajo več prvotne kulturno-socialne vrednote, kajti plemo izumira številčno in se življenjsko prilagoduje novemu kolonizacijskemu okrožju.« Pa vendar zapiše tudi, da je bila totemska tradicija v obdobju njenega prvega raziskovanja (1956/57) živa še v iniciacijskih obredih, mitološkem izročilu in nekaterih družbenih pravilih. Ko je leta 1969 izvedla ponovno raziskavo v isti skupnosti, je ugotovila, da so Čamakoki zaradi akulturacijskega procesa opustili totemsko izročilo.

²³ Branislava Sušnik, »Totemizem in šamanizem pri Čamakokih,« v *Zgodovinski zbornik*, ur. Marijan Marolt (Buenos Aires: SKA, 1959), 199.

tje v mitičnem žitju in predmetni izraz čustvenega izživiljanja. Veliki mitični lovec Doxora je tovariš tigra. ... Doxora in tiger se borita za svoj plen, eden z 'znanjem', drugi s 'krepkostjo'; čeprav je zmaga skoraj vedno na strani lovca, vendar pomeni 'tovarištvo' medsebojni sporazum ...

Totemizem kot model družbeno sorodstvene ureditve temelji na mitološki razlagi. Mit je interpretativni model, ki metaforično pojasni izvor in pravila totemske družbe:

Ko se je kozmična pramati Ešnuwarta zaljubila v lovca Cürü-ja, se je odločila pomagati ljudem in iztrebiti demonske sile Anabsorno. Potem ko je rodila sina, je sklicala pleme in ga razdelila v osem totemskih skupin. Dala jim je svojo awoso (»besedo«), po kateri se Čamakoki imenujejo išür ali 'zavezanci'. Ešnuwarta je tako postala njihova asit ali pramati. Vsak išür pripada določeni skupnosti pamonunu, ki vključuje tako človeka, kot za vsak totem točno določeno žival. Vsak pamonunu je nadalje deljen v t. i. 'močne' in 'šibke'... (Sušnik, 1959: 200)

Sušnikova²⁴ nadaljuje:

Medtem ko je Ešnuwarta totemska 'mati', so člani totemskih skupin med seboj 'išüt', bratrance. To socialno in ne krvno razmerje 'bratrancev' je danes za Čamakoke bolj važno, kot pa odnos do totemske živali, ki se smatra kot 'mlajši brat' človeka; oba pa sta 'posinovljenca' boginje Ešnuwarte ...

Čamakoki (Chamacocos) so bili razdeljeni v sedem totemskih klanov: totem medveda²⁵ (skupina Poširaxa), divje race (skupina Kutumarha), papagaja (skupina Tahoro), noja (Losüpik), opice (skupina Tümirha), krokarja (skupina Düčügmisir) in tigra (skupina Namoho). Ti so se delili na »aktivne« in »pasivne«. Trije totemski klani – klani medveda, divje race in opice – so predstavljali »močno skupino« ali »barvne bratrance« ter so se borili in premagovali različna mitična bitja. »Pasivna« polovica totemskih klanov – papagaja, noja in tigra – je zanje pripravljala puščice, sulice in vodila »sveto stražo«. Soočenje s kaotičnimi silami Anabsorno, pramaterjo Ešnuwarte in gospodarjem gozda Nemurjem so Čamakoki ciklično uprizarjali v decembrskem tridnevem obredju. S tem so pramateri pomagali pri vzpostavljanju kozmičnega reda. Gre za simbolno uprizoritev prehoda iz kaosa v stanje kozmične in

²⁴ Sušnik, »Totemizem in šamanizem pri Čamakokih,« 201.

²⁵ Gre za *cabuare* ali mravljinčarja, ki spada v vrsto *Tamandua tetradactyla* ali šp. »oso melero«.

družbene harmonije. Totemska skupina krokarja v tej delitvi simbolnih in socialnih vlog ni bila udeležena, posvečala se je izključno šamanizmu.

Da pa razdelitev v aktivne in pasivne klane ni imela le obredne funkcije, pričajo pravila sklepanja zakonskih zvez. Te so bile prepovedane med najožjimi krvnimi sorodniki prve in druge linije. Še več, pri Čamakokih so poleg tega veljala tudi totemska pravila sklepanja zakonskih zvez. Le določeni klani so se lahko poročali med seboj. Pri tem so morali upoštevati načelo »močno – šibko«. Med seboj so se smeli poročati le člani aktivne in pasivne skupine ali obratno (divja raca – tiger, medved – noj, opica – papagaj) ne pa člani dveh istoznačnih skupin.

Bistvo totemizma torej ni »verovanje« v skupnega mitološkega prednika človeka in njegove totemske živali, kot so razlagali številni etnologi in antropologi prve polovice 20. stoletja. Totem je simbol. Vez med njim in človekom je metaforična in ne temelji na neposrednem odnosu. Totemizem je klasifikacijski sistem, ki določa pravila družbenih odnosov. Miti, ki so vezani nanj, simbolično razložijo izvor družbene ureditve. Izrazi »brat«, »mlajši brat« in »bratranec« so samo analognega značaja. Totemizem ne posega na področje prepovedi krvnega incesta, ampak postavlja tabuje in pravila v okviru širših družbenih odnosov. Totemske predstave pa niso samo zamišljene, so tudi doživete. Vse to se izraža v vedenju človeka do totemske živali, v obredih in ne nazadnje tudi v močni osebni empatiji.

Odnos »človek – gozd« pri Majih z Jukatana

Maji²⁶ so druga najštevilčnejša in jezikovno najvitalnejša staroselska etnična skupina Mehike in Mezoamerike. Kljub evropeizacijskim in

²⁶ »Maji« je skupno ime za družino 30 etnično in jezikovno sorodnih ljudstev, ki naseljujejo ozemlje Jukatana, Chipasa in Tabasca v Mehiki, celotno Gvatemalo, Belize, del Hondurasa in Salvadorja. V začetku 21. stoletja je to ozemlje naseljevalo 7 milijonov pripadnikov Majev. Od tega dobrih 800.000 na polotoku Jukatan, kjer sem raziskovala. Če k jezikovni identifikaciji dodamo še vse tiste, ki so jezik opustili ali se pri štetju prebivalstva niso etnično opredelili, toda ohranjajo tradicionalne poljedelske prakse ter z njimi povezana verovanja in obrede, naj bi bilo po mnenju strokovnjakov Majev na Jukatanu dober milijon. Glej: »INEGI. Perfil sociodemográfico de la población hablante de maya 2005,« INEGI, XII Censo General de Población y Vivienda 2000, http://internet.contenidos.inegi.org.mx/contenidos/productos/prod_serv/contenidos/espanol/bvinegi/productos/censos/poblacion/poblacion_indigena/leng_indi/PHLI.pdf.

evangelizacijskim kolonialnim procesom ter homogenizacijskim politikam nacionalne države jim je vse do danes uspelo obdržati jezikovno in kulturno integriteto. Njihova kultura je v primerjavi s cvetočo civilizacijo v predkolonialnem obdobju neprimerno skromnejša, obdržala se je zlasti v znanjih, verovanjih in praksah na področju tradicionalne medicine in poljedelstva.

Tradicionalno poljedelstvo Majevev na Jukatenu temelji na sistemu čiščenja, sečnje in požiga zaraščenih gozdnih površin. Čeprav je moderna agrarna politika tovrstno poljedelstvo dolgo kritizirala kot neekološko in neproduktivno, v zadnjih desetletjih številni avtorji, tako naravoslovci in ekologi kot zgodovinarji in antropologi,²⁷ ugotavljajo nasprotno: prav ta način poljedelske proizvodnje ne uničuje gozda, ampak ga ohranja, če se izvaja po načelih, ki vzdržujejo naravno ravnovesje. Še več, glede na posebne geološke in podnebne razmere, ki so značilne za polotok Jukatan, je to edini resnično izvedljiv način gojenja poljščin in bolj vzdržen kot ledinska pridelava monokultur, ki jo je na Jukatenu vpeljala kolonialna agrarna politika, razvil in pospešil pa kapitalizem 19. in 20. stoletja.

Sistem ciklične menjave naravno zaraščenih površin in obdelovalnih parcel, v španščini t. i. sistem *monte – milpa* (*k'ax - ch'akbe'en - sak'ab - ox sak'ab k'ax*), je v predkolonialnem obdobju predstavljal dominanten produkcijski način, na osnovi katerega se je organizirala celotna družba: od politike in vojskovanja do družbenih institucij, znanosti in umetnosti. V kolonialnem obdobju je izgubil svojo integriteto in prešel v podrejeni položaj. Do danes se je njegova ekonomska, družbena in religiozna vloga ohranila med majejskimi lokalnimi skupnostmi, ki naseljujejo vzhodni in južni del polotoka, območje, na katerem ni bilo vzpostavljeno moderno monokulturno plantažno gospodarstvo.

²⁷ Glej npr.: Daniel Zizumbo Villareal in Paulino Sima, »Prácticas de roza-tumba-quema en la agricultura maya-yucateca y su papel en la regeneración de la Selva,« v *Medio ambiente y comunidades indígenas del Sureste*, ur. Rodolfo Uribe (Villahermosa: Gobierno de Tabasco y Unesco 1988), 84–103; Silvia Terán in Christian Rasmussen, *La milpa de los mayas. La agricultura de los mayas prehispánicos y actuales en el noreste de Yucatán*, 2. izd. (Mérida: UNAM in Universidad de Oriente 2009), <https://www.cephcis.unam.mx/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/milpa-de-los-mayas.pdf>; Alejandra García Quintanilla, »El dilema de Ah kimsah K'ax, 'el que mata al monte': significados del monte entre los mayas milperos de Yucatán,« *Mesoamérica* 39 (junij 2020): 255–285.

Kamnita kraška tla polotoka prekriva tanka plast zemlje.²⁸ Poleg humusa, večji del tal, t. i. *k'ankab-akalché*, tvorijo odpadlo listje in drugi organski odpadki, ki v procesu hitrega razkroja v vlažnih in toplih podnebnih razmerah omogočajo rodovitnost in gojenje poljščin. Zato je gozdno rastje esencialnega pomena pri oblikovanju tal. Koncept rodovitnosti je prav zato vezan na vegetacijo in ne na zemljo (ali humus). Majevska kultura simbolizma »matere zemlje«, ki so ga razvile kulture Bližnjega vzhoda, Sredozemlja in Andov, ne pozna. Beseda *luum*, ki jo nekateri prevajajo z »zemlja«, je konceptualno bližja pojmu »tal«.²⁹

Koncept gozda ali *k'ax* (šp. »monte«) je torej eksistencialnega pomena za Maje z Jukatana. *K'ax* je tako naravni prostor z vsemi svojimi bio diverzitetami vrstami in kot tako potencialno območje za obdelovalne površine. Prvi poseg v naravno okolje oz. prvi korak k njegovi preobrazbi v obdelovalne površine se začne avgusta, sredi deževnega obdobja. Imenujejo ga *kol ch'ak* (*kol o ch'akche*), kar pomeni »odpreti gozd«. V tem mesecu se sekajo visoka drevesa. Sečnja traja do konca deževne dobe, saj v tem času odpadlo listje bolje zgnije, semena, ki pri tem odpadejo, pa se zasejejo v tla in ostanejo za zarast. Nato gozd čistijo, kar pomeni, da drevesa razrežejo, skrbno očistijo robove parcel, da se ob požigu ogenj ne razširi v druge dele gozda. V skladu s kozmološko predstavo sveta imajo parcele obdelovalnih površin obliko kvadrata.

Čiščenje traja do aprila. Sledi požig podrastja in posekanega drevja. Novo obdelovalno površino imenujejo *ch'akbe'en* ali »polje prvega leta«. Naslednjo sezono se ta površina imenuje *sak'ab* ali »polje drugega leta«. Tretjo sezono se imenuje *ox sak'ab* (tudi *x-lab-sakab*) ali »polje tretjega leta«. Po tretji obdelovalni sezoni pustijo, da se teren zaraste. To je obdobje obnavljanja gozda, ko se ponovno vzpostavlja naravno in kozmično ravnovesje *k'ax*. Obdobje zaraščanja praviloma traja od 16 do 25 let, ker pa se zemljišča majevskih poljedelcev v zadnjih desetletjih vse bolj

²⁸ Plast zemlje je debela od nekaj centimetrov na severu (*tzekel, tzekel-kankab*) do več decimetrov v osrednjem in južnem delu.

²⁹ Besedo *kab* uporabljajo Maje v sestavljenkah, ki označujejo lastnosti tal (npr. *k'ankab*, rdeča tla; ali *sahkab*, bela tla). Tako *luum* označuje tudi »domovino« ali »svet«, *kab* pa bolj naselje, območje (García Quintanilla, »El dilema de Ah kimsah K'ax.«)

krčijo, so nekateri primorani ponovno poseči v gozd že po štirih letih, kar ogroža celoten ekosistem in daje slabši pridelek.³⁰

Po požigu je teren pripravljen za setev (*pak'al*), ki se izvaja sredi maja. Datumi niso natančno določeni, vendar pa se vsi moji informatorji strinjajo, da je nekaj dni še posebej pomembnih v določanju setve, in sicer 3. maj ali praznik križev, 15. maj ali praznik sv. Izidorja in 13. junij ali praznik sv. Antona. Če ne začne deževati do križev, domnevajo, da bo deževalo za sv. Izidorja.

Požigalniški sistem ima po eni strani stroga racionalna pravila in pragmatičen značaj, po drugi pa vključuje močen čustveni naboj poljedelca do narave. Garcia Quintanilla³¹ poroča o ljubečem odnosu Maje do okolja in celo o verbalni oz. konceptualni podobnosti nekaterih poljskih opravil, npr. sejanja, z erotičnim aktom. Delo na obdelovalnih zemljiščih ni le stvar etične odgovornosti, temveč tudi čustvenega zadovoljstva. Ima pa tudi zelo pomemben duhovni vidik. Za Maje so naravno okolje in vsi posegi vanj sveti. Informator iz Peta pravi: »Za nas je *milpa* svetišče.« Prav tako koncept *k'ax* ne označuje le naravnega okolja, ampak metafizični, duhovni prostor, saj so t. i. *Yumilo'ob K'axo'ob* ali »gospodarji gozda« tisti, ki mu gospodujejo tudi v času, ko človek v njem začasno »gostuje«. To gostovanje si mora poljedelec posebej izprositi z obrednimi daritvami, sicer ga lahko doletijo nesreče, slabe letine in bolezni.

Hvaležnost in spoštovanje izkazujejo v prošenskih ali zahvalnih obredih, namenjenih »gospodarjem gozda« (*Yumilo'ob K'axo'ob*) ter »gospodarjem vetrov in dežja« (*Cha'ak'ob*), ki urejajo kozmično in naravno ravnovesje ter s tem obstoj človeka. Obredne daritve so izmenjava med človekom in nadnaravnim svetom, neke vrste pogajanje ali dogovarjanje. Darovati pomeni prispevati k vzpostavljanju kozmičnega ravnovesja. Človek, ki poseže v gozd, je zavezan k delu z veliko moralno odgovornostjo, saj lahko, če prestopi meje dovoljenega, poruši celotno ravnovesje. Kazen, ki sledi, je skupinska. Posledice – bolezni, škodljivce, sušo ali prevelike količine dežja – utrpi celotna skupnost. Zato Maje z veliko odgovornostjo skrbijo za pravo mero dovoljenega poseganja

³⁰ Terán in Rasmussen, *La milpa de los mayas*, 201–252.

³¹ Garcia Quintanilla, »El dilema de Ah kimsah K'ax,« 263.

v naravne vire. Ko obdelovalne terene prepustijo zaraščanju in obnavljanju, so ti zanje spet nedotakljivi, tuji in nevarni. So prostori, ki jim gospodujejo *Yumilo'ob K'axo'ob* ter tudi pritlikavci ali *alux'ob*³² in druge duhovne entitete.

Odnos »človek – zemlja« pri ljudstvih Kečua in Ajmara z območja Andov

Kot tretji primer predstavljam odnos »človek – zemlja« pri dveh najštevilčnejših ter jezikovno in kulturno najbolj prevladujočih staroselskih skupinah andskega prostora: Kečua (quechua) in Ajmara (aymará).³³ Ti etnični skupini sta bili nosilki velikih predkolonialnih civilizacij že pred oblikovanjem inkovskega imperija.³⁴ Ljudstvo Kečua, oz. eno od njegovih plemen, ki je naseljevalo dolino Cuzca, je pod Inki imelo ključno politično in kulturno vlogo. Danes sta obe etnični skupini, tako Kečua kot Ajmara, protagonist »pačamamizma«, socialnega gibanja, ki

³² Eden od varuhov gozda in polja je tudi *alux*, ki si ga Maji predstavljajo kot pritlikavega, do pol metra visokega, debelušnega možaka, ki hodi s peto obrnjeno naprej in prsti nazaj. Kadar se kdo ne drži etičnih predpisov: npr. požge preveč terena ali pred lovom ne opravi pravnega obreda, kaznuje. Njegove stopinje zmedejo človeka in ga napotijo v napačno smer.

³³ Po podatkih CEDIB (Centro de Documentación e Información Bolivia) je v Boliviji leta 2001 živelo 1.555.64 prebivalcev Kečua in 1.277.881 Ajmara od vsega skupaj 3.142.637 staroselskega prebivalstva (od 5.064.992 celotnega prebivalstva), leta 2012 pa 1.281.116 Kečua in 1.191.352 Ajmara od skupaj 2.806.592 staroselskega prebivalstva (in 6.838.606 celotnega prebivalstva). V Peruju je leta 2017 živelo 5.176.809 Kečua. Glej: Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática (INEI), *III Censo de Comunidades Nativas 2017*, Tomo I (Lima: INEI, 2008), https://www.inei.gob.pe/media/MenuRecursivo/publicaciones_digitales/Est/Lib1598/TOMO_01.pdf. Skupaj (Peru, Bolivija, Čile in Ekvador) je v zadnjem desetletju zabeleženih več kot 7 milijonov pripadnikov etnične skupine oz. naroda Kečua, v Peruju, Boliviji in Čilu pa okoli 3 milijone pripadnikov Ajmara. Skupaj lahko govorimo o 10 milijonih. Centro de Documentación e Información Bolivia, »Indígenas: Quién gana, quién pierde: Datos comparativos de la población indígena censos de población, 2001 y 2012,« dostop 10. oktober 2021, <https://www.cedib.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Tabla-Poblacion-Indigena1.pdf>; INEI, *III Censo de Comunidades Nativas 2017*.

³⁴ Inkovski imperij (1438–1532) je bil zadnja državna formacija na območju andskega prostora pred prihodom Špancev. Inki, ki so predstavljali njen aristokratski sloj, so bili eno od plemen etnično-jezikovne skupine Kečua, ki je sprva naseljevalo le rodovitne doline v okolici Cuzca. V času pred tem, pribl. med 2. st. pr. n. št. in 15. st. n. št. so Kečua oblikovali več pomembnih državnih zvez in imperijev, ki so temeljili na sofisticiranem poljedelskem sistemu, poznali so znanost, astronomijo, medicino itd.: npr. Mochika, Nazca in Wari (ozemlje današnjega Peruja). Ajmaraji so razvili imperij Tiahuanaca (500–1000 n. št.).

je vstopilo v politični, filozofski in razvojni diskurz globalnega Juga. Nekateri avtorji ga označujejo tudi kot »duhovno ekologijo«.

Večina klasične etnografske literature označuje Pačamama (Pachamama) kot boginjo plodnosti, ki skrbi za setev in žetev, biva v gorskih votlinah in povzroča potrese. Je htoničnega in ambivalentnega značaja, pooseblja načelo prokreacije in destrukcije. Njeno ime se največkrat prevaja z »Mati Zemlja«, čeprav se njen značaj ne nanaša le na ženski spol in plodno zemljo, ampak na naravo sploh oz. Zemljo v vsej svoji univerzalni kompleksnosti. Za popolnejše razumevanje Pačamame se moramo seznaniti z etimologijo pojma in glavnimi etnografskimi razlagami.

Besedna zveza »Pača – mama« (*pača* – »zemlja« in *mama* – »mati«) je prišla v rabo po prihodu španskih osvajalcev na območje inkovskega imperija (1532), torej v procesu pospešene evangelizacije in evropeizacije domačega prebivalstva. Označuje sinkretično izpeljanko dveh različnih konceptov: evropskega (*mama*) in ameriškega (*pacha*). Pred tem naj bi bil med domačim prebivalstvom v uporabi izraz Pača-Ačachi (*pacha* – čas in prostor; *achachi* – star), kar bi lahko prevedli s »stari čas« oz./in »stari prostor«. *Achachi* v besednjaku Ajmarov pomeni »star«, »stari oče«, »prednik«, torej: »prostor in čas prednikov«. Gre za različna generična pojma: čas in prostor oz. za zelo širok spekter pomenov in njegovo tesno povezavo s poljedelskim in pastoralnim načinom življenja andskih skupnosti.

Etimologija besede ni natančno pojasnjena. Pomenska razhajanja izvirajo iz razlag prvih kronistov. Tako González Holguín³⁵ v *Vocabulario de la Lengua General de todo el Peru, o llamada lengua quichua, o del Inca* iz leta 1608 meni, da *pacha* v svoji nominalni funkciji pomeni »čas – tla – prostor«. Inca Garcilaso de la Vega³⁶ v *Los Comentarios Reales de los Incas* iz leta 1609 pa pojasnjuje, da *pacha* pomeni »svet«, »univerzum«, tudi »nebesa – zemlja – pekel« in »kakršna koli tla«. Besedne zveze Pačamama prva kronista ne omenjata. Poznejši kronisti menijo, da Pačamama pomeni dobesedno »mati zemlja«, iz *pacha* ali »zemlja« in

³⁵ Holguín v Ginett Pineda, *Rescatando a la Pachamama* (Doktorska disertacija, University of Wisconsin, 2018), 29.

³⁶ Garcilaso Inca de la Vega, *Los Comentarios Reales de los Incas, Tomo I* (Lima: Editorial Universo, S.A. 1967), 83.

mama ali »mati«. Kot pravi Murúa,³⁷ je bilo »v navadi častiti zemljo, ki so jo imenovali Pachamama in Macpacha«.

Kolonialni avtorji poročajo tudi o številnih obredih, posvečenih Pačamami. José de Arriaga v delu *La extirpación de la idolatría en el Perú* iz leta 1621 navaja:³⁸ »Mamapačo, ki je zemlja, še posebej častijo ženske v času setve. Z njo se pogovarjajo. Prosijo jo, naj jim da obilno letino. Ob tem zemljo poškropijo s čičo in po njej raztrosijo mleto koruzo; to naredijo same ali pa čarovnik v njihovem imenu.« Waman Puma de Ayala je v *Nueva Crónica y buen Gobierno* (1615) na risbi št. 92³⁹ upodobil marec inkovskega koledarja, imenovan *pacha puquy killa* ali »mesec, ko dozori zemlja«. Na risbi vidimo alpako, žrtevno žival, imenovano *wil-lancha*. Obredi rodovitnosti, posvečeni Pačamami, imajo kontinuiteto vse do danes. Ajmaraji v Oruru v Boliviji v času karnevala še vedno žrtvujejo alpako. V Peruju in na bolivijskem Altiplanu pred setvijo in po žetvi kmetje Pačamami darujejo čičo,⁴⁰ fermentirano pijačo iz koruze. Darujejo pa ji tudi ob drugih prilikah, npr. pred začetkom gradnje nove hiše v njene temelje zakopljejo posušene lamine zarodke, liste koke in ipd.⁴¹

Glavni obredi rodovitnosti se izvajajo med januarjem in marcem, odvisno od zorenja pridelkov.⁴² V tem času (poletni solsticij – karneval) obredje Pačamame sovpada s praznovanji evropskega izvora. Evokacijo dobre letine izvedejo sredi januarja, ko družine izdelajo majhne glinene figurice v obliki poljščin in domačih živali in jih postavijo na hišne oltarje, da bi jih Pačamama obdarila z bogatim pridelkom. V 19. stoletju se je običaj prenesel v večja urbana središča, zlasti v La Paz. Znan je kot praznik izobilja, Alasitas ali »sejem miniaturne«.

³⁷ Murúa v Pineda, *Rescatando a la Pachamama*, 29–30.

³⁸ Arriaga v Pineda, *Rescatando a la Pachamama*, 30.

³⁹ *El terzero mes, marzo, pacha puquy killa* (sl. št. 92) v Waman Puma de Ayala: *Nueva Crónica y buen Gobierno*, 1615, <http://www5.kb.dk/permalink/2006/poma/242/en/image/>.

⁴⁰ Čiča (*chicha*) je fermentirana pijača, narejena iz mlete ali prežvečene koruze in vode.

⁴¹ TZ: Terčelj, januar 1980.

⁴² Na območju Andov se poljedelski cikel spreminja glede na nadmorsko višino poljskih površin, na pribl. 1.000 metrih je to veliko prej, kot na Altiplanu, ki leži na višini 4.000 m.

Praznovanje Pačamame doseže vrhunec v času karnevala: na podeželju v obliki tradicionalnih ajmarskih daritev⁴³, v urbanih središčih v obliki pustnih povork, v katerih je najbolj zastopana figura *Saxsra* ali »hudiča« (šp. »diablita«). Karnevalske povorke bolivijskega in perujskega Altiplana trajajo štiri dni in noči, brez premora, in imajo izrazito hibriden značaj. Skupine plesalcev, ki se po mestnih ulicah pomikajo v ritmu *huayna*, andskega tradicionalnega poskočnega plesa, na sarkastičen način uprizarjajo kolonialno obdobje: prihod španskih osvajalcev, inkovsko gospodo, boje Mavrov in katolikov, staroselce, mulate in Špance. To, kar ga še posebej zaznamuje, je predšpansko kulturno izročilo. Najbolj zastopane so plesne skupine, ki upodabljajo t. i. »diablitos« ali *Saxsre*. Kot poroča Martínez,⁴⁴ je *Saxsra* na območju Altiplana imenovan tudi »Tio del Cerro« (»Stric hriba«), gospodar vzpetin, kjer so že v predkolonialnem obdobju kopali rudo. *Saxsra* je neke vrste moška oblika htoničnega principa Pačamame. Še več, Pačamama ima v svoji pojavnosti gore ambivalenten spolni značaj. V severni provinci Potosija v Boliviji imajo moški »diablitos« vlogo, da prevarajo ženske in obratno. V tem času sta dovoljeni spolna promiskuiteta in transvestija.

Pačamama in njena obredja je evangelizacijska politika želela prekriti z različnimi poimenovanji Marije in marijanskim bogoslužjem. Tako so predkolonialni obredi ameriških staroselcev Kečua in Ajmara večkrat le površinsko prekriti z »amalgamo« rimo katoliških praznikov, npr. Marije Svečnice, Marije Roženvenske ipd.⁴⁵ Pa vendar, Pačamama ni devica Marija in nima njenih lastnosti. Je ambivalentna oseba, ki ne prispeva le k dobrobiti človeka, ampak tudi k njegovi destruktiji. Še več, gre za Naravo z veliko začetnico, za kompleksen, abstrakten

⁴³ V teh obredih tla poškropijo z alkoholom, jih posujejo s cvetjem, okolico okrasijo z živopisnim okrasjem in pokadijo z zeliščnimi esencami, nato pa opravijo posebno molitev, ki vključuje tako predkrščanske kot krščanske elemente.

⁴⁴ Gabriel Martínez, »Saxra (diablo) / Pachamama; Música, tejido, calendario e identidad entre los jalq'a,« *Estudios Atacameños* 21 (2001): 283–309, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25671165>.

⁴⁵ Glej npr.: Miha Poredoš, »Fiesta de Mamacha Cocharcas. Darovanje in vzajemnost med marijanskim praznovanjem Device Kočarkanske v Sapallangi v Peruju,« *Etnolog* 23, št. 1 (2013): 127–151, <https://www.etno-muzej.si/sl/etnolog/etnolog-23-2013/fiesta-de-mamacha-cocharcas-darovanje-in-vzajemnost-med-marijanskim-praznovanjem-device-kocarkanske>; Terčelj, *Sokejska kozmologija*.

pojem, oz. kot pravi Pineda,⁴⁶ za neke vrste »superorganizem«. Ker pa se ta v andskih poljedelskih družbah najočitneje izraža v načelu ženske plodnosti in plodnosti zemlje, je popolnoma jasno, zakaj ji Kečua in Ajmara posvečajo posebno pozornost prav v obredih rodovitnosti.

V začetku 21. stoletja smo pričé revitalizaciji staroselskih tradicionalnih religiozних praks. Pačamama je postala glavni simbol etnične identitete domorodnih prebivalcev Kečua in Ajmara. Še več, vstopila je v ideologijo širših ekoloških in socialnih gibanj v Južni Ameriki in uradno politiko nekaterih južnoameriških vlad (Ekvador, Bolivija, delno Kolumbija). Že več desetletij pa je ena od ključnih problematik postrozvojnega diskurza družboslovnih in humanističnih ved globalnega Juga.⁴⁷

Pačamama in pačamamizem: »boginja« v političnem, socialnem in razvojnem diskurzu 21. stoletja

Leta 2008 je Republika Ekvador sprejela novo ustavo, v katero je vključila pravico Pačamame kot enakopravnega subjekta. Ne gre za zaščito naravnega okolja (kot objekta), ampak za Zemljo kot osebo, čeprav se problematiki še kako prekrivata in dopolnjujeta. Za boljše razumevanje navajam 71. člen ekvadorske ustave: »Narava ali Pačamama, kjer se reproducira in realizira življenje, ima pravico do popolnega spoštovanja svojega obstoja ter vzdrževanja in obnove vitalnih ciklov, strukture, funkcij in evlucijskih procesov.«⁴⁸ Ekvador je tako prva država na svetu, ki je naravi uradno priznala državljsanske pravice. S tem je priznala tudi staroselske kozmologije kot enakovreden in enakopraven diskurz obstoječi politiki in filozofiji.

Ustava je leta 2008 uzakonila tudi koncept »dobrega življenja« (*sumak kawsay*), ki je v svojem ontološkem in etičnem bistvu tesno povezan s pojmom narave (z malo in veliko začetnico). Temelji na načelih

⁴⁶ Pineda, *Rescatando a la Pachamama*, 29.

⁴⁷ Glej npr.: Arturo Escobar, *Cultura, ambiente y Política en la Antropología Contemporánea*, (Bogota: Instituto Colombiano de Antropología), 1999.

⁴⁸ Constitución de la Republica del Ecuador 2008, https://www.oas.org/juridico/pdfs/mesicic4_ecu_const.pdf, Titulo VII. Art. 71, 72.

tradicionalne andske skupnosti *ayllu*⁴⁹ in njenih moralnih normativih. V svojem 14. členu ekvadorska ustava priznava »pravico prebivalstva do življenja v zdravem in ekološko uravnoteženem okolju, ki zagotavlja trajnost in dobro življenje *sumak kawsay*«. Gre za bistven premik v političnem diskurzu globalnega Juga: za vnos endogenih epistemoloških dimenzij v konvencionalne razvojne koncepte in prakse globalnega Severa.

Leta 2009 je Zakon o pravicah Pačamame in Zakon *sumak kawsay* sprejela tudi Republika Bolivija, ni pa ju uspela vključiti v ustavo. Tretji člen II. poglavja Zakona št. 071 navaja to definicijo: »Mati Zemlja je dinamičen živ sistem, ki ga sestavljajo tako bitja nevidne življenjske skupnosti kot žive osebe, ki so medsebojno povezane, soodvisne in si delijo skupno usodo. S stališča svetovnega nazora staroselskih poljedelskih narodov in ljudstev, velja Mati Zemlja za sveto.« Četrty člen istega poglavja navaja: »Različne skupnosti rastlin, živali, mikroorganizmov in drugih bitij ter njihovo okolje sobivajo s človeško družbo in preostalo naravo kot funkcionalna enota, tako pod vplivom podnebnihi, geografskih in geoloških dejavnikov kot produkcijskih praks in kulturne raznolikosti Bolivijk in Bolivijcev ter njihovih svetovnih nazorov: staroselskih poljedelskih narodov in ljudstev, medkulturnih in afroboliwijskih skupnosti.«⁵⁰ Zakon določa kolektivno odgovornost in spoštljiv odnos do narave.

Kot omenja Raúl Prada,⁵¹ se je politični koncept *sumak kawsay* oblikoval na podlagi reševanja etimološkega problema. Ameriški staroselski jeziki namreč ne poznajo besede in ne pojma »razvoj« v smislu napredka in rasti. Kako ga torej prevesti? Kako prevesti nacionalno in mednarodno zakonodajo? Zato so predstavniki andskih skupnosti poskušali z antropologi in etnolingvisti poiskati podobne pomene. Kot poroča

⁴⁹ *Ayllu* je družbeno gospodarska enota: pomeni tako patrilinearno in patrilokalno razširjeno družino, kot njena skupna zemljišča in razdelitev dobrin. Tretjino pridelka je *ayllu* dajal Inku, tretjino je obdržal zase, tretjina je šla v skupno rezervo.

⁵⁰ Ley de Derechos de la Madre Tierra, 21. december 2010, <https://bolivia.infoleyes.com/norma/2689/ley-de-derechos-de-la-madre-tierra-071>.

⁵¹ Raúl Prada, »Buen vivir as a model for state and economy,« v *Beyond Development. Alternative visions from Latin America*, 2. izd., ur. Miriam Lang in Dunia Mokrani (Quito, Amsterdam: Rosa Luxemburg Foundation/Transnational Institute 2013), 145.

Simbaña,⁵² staroselci človekovo dobrobit/prosperiteto določajo s temi vrlinami: recipročnost, kolektivna lastnina, odnos in sobivanje z naravnim okoljem, socialna odgovornost in družbeni konsenz. Kot pravi Lang,⁵³ »v obdobju svetovne gospodarske krize, lokalnega razvoja niso uspele rešiti ne levo ne desno usmerjene stranke s svojimi obetavnimi programi, ampak solidarnost staroselskih žensk, ki so se povezale v poljedelske in obrtne zadruge«. ⁵⁴

Ustavne spremembe omenjenih držav so sprožile odobravanje in entuziazem številnih ekoloških in socialnih gibanj, zlasti gibanj t. i. duhovne ekologije, v Latinski Ameriki znane kot »pačamamizem«. Postrazvojna antropologija in filozofija ostajata ob tem skeptični.⁵⁵ Stvar namreč ni tako preprosta in enopomenska, kot si jo predstavljajo protagonisti duhovne ekologije. Pačamamizem promovirajo namreč ekstremna biocentrična alternativna gibanja.⁵⁶ Njihova ideologija temelji na pomanjkljivem poznavanju historičnih, antropoloških in filozofskih diskurzov. Svoje teoretične postavke gradijo na posploševanju etnografskih podatkov, pridobljenih v posameznih lokalnih skupnostih, torej na staroselskih »imaginarijih«, ki jih velikokrat prikrojijo svojim interesom. Kot pravi Giraldo,⁵⁷ je na tej podlagi pačamamizem »izoblikoval radikalno kritičen odnos do prevladujočega družbenoekonomskega sistema, celo več: zatrjuje, da ta vodi v 'samomorilski zlom sodobne civilizacije'«.

⁵² Floresmilo Simbaña, »El *sumak kawsay* como proyecto político,« v *Más Allá del Desarrollo*, ur. Miriam Lang in Dunia Mokrani (Quito: Fundación Rosa Luxemburg/Ediciones Abya Yala 2011), 225.

⁵³ Miriam Lang, »Crisis of civilisation and challenges for the left,« v *Beyond Development. Alternative visions from Latin America*, 2. izd., ur. Miriam Lang in Dunia Mokrani (Quito, Amsterdam: Rosa Luxemburg Foundation/Transnational Institute 2013), str. 7.

⁵⁴ Glej npr. staroselske zadruge v Ekvadorju: »Cooperativas indígenas en Ecuador,« Socioeco.org, april 2010, http://www.socioeco.org/bdf_fiche-video-266_es.html.

⁵⁵ Escobar, »¿'Pachamamicos' y 'Modérnicos'?.«

⁵⁶ V tem primeru bi pačamamizem lahko primerjali z ekofeminizmom. Ta izpostavlja tezo, da obstajajo pomembne zgodovinske, kulturne in simbolne vzporednice med zatiranjem in izkoriščanjem žensk in narave.

⁵⁷ Omar Felipe Giraldo, »El discurso moderno frente al 'pachamamismo': La metáfora de la naturaleza como recurso y el de la Tierra como madre,« *Polis* 11, št. 33 (2012): 2, <https://journals.openedition.org/polis/8502>.

Če se povrnem k izvornemu konceptu Pačamame in staroselskim etičnoreligioznim normam, ki določajo odnos človek – narava, se sprašujem, ali morda le ne gre za zlorabo trenutne politike v korist lastnih interesov. Gudynas⁵⁸ meni, da »se soočamo s temeljnim nasprotjem med ukrepi, ki naj bi zagotavljali kakovost ohranjanja zdravega okolja in varovanja ekološke dediščine, ter pogoltnostjo razvojnih strategij, ki pripomorejo k uničevanju in izumetničenju narave. Prisluhujemo namreč številnim nagovorom v korist zaščite okolja, hkrati pa ohranjamo ustaljene prakse prisvajanja naravnih virov«. Avtor, ki sicer pozdravlja politično vrednost novih ustavnih določil, se vendarle sprašuje: »Če bi ekvadorska vlada resno pristopila k zakonodaji o pravicah Narave, še zlasti ko se ta navezuje na izročilo staroselskih ljudstev, bi se morala vprašati, ali sploh še lahko izvaja črpanje nafte na območjih Amazonije, ki jih je sama eksplisicito zaščitila. Ali lahko še vedno dodeljuje koncesije zasebnim naftnim družbam? In če sledi določilom globalne podnebne politike, ali je sploh še smiselno, da vzdržuje naftna črpališča?«. ⁵⁹

Gudynas⁶⁰ poudarja, da je treba problematiko narave čim prej vključiti v širši diskurz človekovih pravic in da je za to treba dodati podrobno analizo humanističnih znanosti. Za boljše razumevanje razmerja »naravnega okolja« kot objekta človekovih zadovoljitev in »Narave« kot subjekta moram nekaj pozornosti posvetiti kratki predstavitvi postrazvojnega diskurza antropologije Juge in njegovih namigov k reševanju globalnih ekoloških in razvojnih problemov. ⁶¹

⁵⁸ Eduardo Gudynas, »¿Por qué Bolivia no reconoce los derechos de la Naturaleza?«, Nature Rights Watch: Nature is a Subject of Rights, Montevideo: CLAES D3E, 8. junija 2018, <https://naturerightswatch.com/por-que-bolivia-no-reconoce-los-derechos-de-la-naturaleza/>.

⁵⁹ Eduardo Gudynas, »Peru: Ministerio del ambiente debe hablar con la Naturaleza y no con el mercado«, Foro Público Alternativas al Extractivismo. Los retos del nuevo gobierno, Lima, 14. junij 2016 (videoposnetek referata: na Red GE), <http://ambiental.net/2016/06/el-ministerio-del-ambiente-debe-hablar-con-la-naturaleza-y-no-con-el-mercado/>.

⁶⁰ Gudynas, *Peru*.

⁶¹ Več o tem – glej Marija Mojca Terčelj, »Etnologija in antropologija med akademizmom in aplikativnostjo. Analiza socialnih in ekonomskih politik za staroselsko prebivalstvo Latinske Amerike«, *Etnolog* 29 (2019): 75–77, <http://www.dlib.si/details/URN:NBN:SI:DOC-NP6IHU2Z/?language=slo>. Gre za širok spekter konvencionalnih in alternativnih teorij in praks, ki so se oblikovale od začetka 70. let in utirale pot postrazvojnega diskurza: od zahtev deklaracije Cocoyoc 1974 (Declaracion de Cocoyoc, 21. avgust–29. september 1978, https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/34958/S7800686_es.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y), njene kritike dependenčnega razvoja do vzpostavitev prve teorije trajnostnega razvoja

V 80. letih je mehiški antropolog Rodolfo Stavenhagen predlagal koncept »etnorazvoja«, ki temelji na predpostavki, da morajo biti družbe dovolj zrele oz. samozavestne, da se ozrejo na svoje kulturne dosežke in črpajo navdih iz njih, namesto da si izposojajo tuje poglede in vrednote.⁶² Čilski ekonomist Manfred Max-Neef je v istem desetletju izoblikoval idejo humane ravni razvoja ("human scale development"), in sicer na podlagi treh postulatov: človeka, njegove potrebe in njegove povezanosti z naravo. Poudaril je, da se razvoj osredinja na osebe in ne na objekte, loči zadovoljstvo od potreb, in opozoril, da je revščina pluralen koncept, odvisen od nezadovoljenih potreb. V središču torej ostajata človek kot glavni akter in zadovoljitev njegovih potreb.⁶³

Devetdeseta leta prinesejo ideje ponovnega razvoja ("redevelopment"). Na globalnem Severu se to izraža v oživljanju tradicionalnih praks, na globalnem Jugu v dekolonizaciji oz. preseganju kolonializma in postkolonializma. To privede do novih teoretičnih paradigem (marksizem 21. stoletja, medkulturni dialog in postrazvoj) in endogenih družbenih *bottom-up* praks, ki delujejo od spodaj navzgor, kot je *sumak kawsay*. V tem času sicer prevladuje liberalizacija trga (neoliberalizem), ki pa je s strani latinskoameriških demokratičnih in/ali levičarskih vlad še vedno uravnavana s strani države. Središče razvojnega diskurza se z vidika ekonomske rasti premakne na vidik družbene dobrobiti. Človek ostaja v ospredju začrtane problematike.

Dekolonizacijske težnje antropologije Juga se najbolj izrazijo v postrazvojnih teorijah, ki poudarjajo pluralizem miselnih konceptov in družbenih praks. Eden od začetnikov postrazvojnega diskurza, kolum-

v Poročilu Konference ZN o varovanju okolja, ki je junija 1972 potekala v Stockholmu (United Nations, *Report of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment*, Stockholm, 5–16. junij 1972, https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/CONF.48/14/REV.1), in Zaključnega poročila ZN: Naša skupna prihodnost, 1987 (znano tudi kot Brundtlandsko poročilo – WECED, Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future, 1987, <http://www.un-documents.net/our-common-future.pdf>).

⁶² Glej: Gustavo Esteva, »Development,« v *The Dictionary of Development. A Guide to Knowledge as Power*, ur. Wolfgang Sachs (London: Zed Books, 2010), 1–23.

⁶³ Eduardo Gudynas, »Debates on development and its alternatives in Latin America. A brief heterodox guide,« v *Beyond Development. Alternative visions from Latin America*, 2. izd., ur. Miriam Lang in Dunia Mokrani (Quito, Amsterdam: Rosa Luxemburg Foundation/Transnational Institute), 15–40.

bijski antropolog Arturo Escobar, že leta 1992⁶⁴ poudari, da se rezultati družbene dobrobiti ne skladajo z začrtanimi cilji razvojnih teorij. Zato predlaga nov metodološki pristop. Ta izstopi iz konvencionalnega koncepta razvoja kot družbenoekonomskega napredka, kakor si ga predstavlja zahodna oz. severnoatlantska civilizacija. Ključni prispevek postrazvojnega diskurza je kritična razlaga zmot razvojnih teorij in prizadevanje za opustitev ustaljenih praks globalnega Severa. Postrazvojni avtorji⁶⁵ v svojih delih poudarjajo, da je koncept razvoja (v smislu evropske oz. severnoatlantske civilizacije in njene filozofije) glavni »krivec« za širitev zahodne oz. evropske hegemonije in ga je kot takega treba zavreči. Gre torej za alternativo razvoju in ne za alternativne popravke ustaljenega razvoja. Prav ta postrazvojna stališča so bistveno pripomogla h konkretnim staroselskim etničnim in socialnim gibanjem Latinske Amerike. Nikakor pa jih ne smemo enačiti s pačamamizmom, ki se pojavlja v obliki širšega novodobnega ekocentričnega duhovnega gibanja.

Zaključek

Staroselski in zahodnjaški miselni koncept se razlikujeta v pojmovanju sveta in vlogi človeka v njem. Medtem ko prvi vidi človeka kot sestavni del kozmične celovitosti, drugi temelji na antropocentrizmu. Prvi človeku nalaga delno, toda odločujočo vlogo v soustvarjanju kozmičnega ravnovesja, drugi mu daje pristojnost in nadzor nad svetom. Staroselskih miselnih predstav ne moremo enačiti z religijo, čeprav so z njo tesno povezane. Prav tako jih ne moremo označiti za biocentrizem, saj gre v njihovih percepcijah za medsebojno povezavo, soodvisnost ter skupno usodo človeka in narave.

Nēnağa (»odprti prostor«), *K'ax* (Gozd) in *Pachamama* (Zemlja) so kompleksni simboli in družbenogospodarski sistemi, ki jih je zahodna znanost do pred kratkim označevala za »neznanstvene«, »neracionalne«,

⁶⁴ Arturo Escobar, »Imagining a Post-development Era? Critical Thought, Development and Social Movements,« *Social Text* 31/32 (1992): 20–56, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/466217>.

⁶⁵ Escobarjevimi namigom sledijo drugi protagonisti postrazvojnih teorij: Gustavo Estava, Gilbert Rist, Majid Rahnema, Victoria Bewtree, Serge Latouche in Vandana Shiva, vidni intelektualci globalnega Juga.

celo »primitivne«. Pa vendar so v primerjavi s sodobnimi razvojnimi modeli veliko primernejši za reševanje ekoloških in podnebnih problemov, v katerih se je znašla globalna družba. Ti sistemi še zdaj sobivajo z znanstveno miselnostjo. Še več, vstopili so v politični diskurz globalnega Juga in so alternativa konvencionalnemu razvoju. Če je v posameznih državah več kot polovica prebivalstva staroselskega porekla ter se ravna po načelih večtisočletnih izročil in praks, ali lahko govorimo o »prevladi« zahodnjaškega miselnega koncepta? Gre le za njegovo ideološko hegemonijo.

Politična prizadevanja nekaterih južnoameriških vlad, da priznajo staroselske koncepte in družbene prakse in jih vključijo v zakonodajo, je treba pozdraviti. Žal pa so njihovi poskusi zašli v »absurd birokratske izpraznjenosti«, v kontradiktoren položaj glede na njihove izhodiščne namere. Nespoštovanje zakonodaje, številne kritike intelektualcev in celo nekaterih staroselcev, ki ne poznajo koncepta Pačamame, jih označujejo kot »pačamamske skupnosti«, pa po mojem mnenju ne pomenijo nevarnosti vsesplošnega »kaosa«, ampak prej produktivno zgodovinsko obdobje, ki bo, upam, pripeljalo do smotrnih rešitev: pluralizma miselnih konceptov in družbenih praks. Če se kartezijanski in holistični pristop na področju epistemologije izključujeta, bi bilo staroselsko etiko, ko gre za odnos do narave, vsekakor vredno temeljito premisliti in smiselno vključiti v reševanje perečih ekoloških problemov.

Staroselci Andov vztrajajo pri teh vrednotah: »zadovoljitev potreb je rezultat dostojnega življenja in smrti vsakega človeka; ljubiti in biti ljubljen; zdravstveni razcvet za vse, umirjen in uravnotežen odnos z naravo, vse to za širitev kulturne in biodiverzitetne dobrobiti«. Ta načela so uspela združiti interese staroselskega prebivalstva z alternativnimi socialnimi gibanji globalnega Severa. Gre za kombinacijo kulturne rezistence prvih in ekološke ozaveščenosti drugih. Pravzaprav gre za nekaj več: za dobrobit vsega planeta.

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GOD - SELF - WORLD CONTINUUM IN TRIBAL RELIGION

S a s h i n u n g l a

Introduction

In this paper, I draw on the Tribal religions in order to show that religion does not have to be a site of domination and exclusion (human or non-humans). Much of what is analysed in this paper is drawn primarily from my research in India's Northeastern region:¹ my lived-experience, personal visits, discussions with tribal elders in the region. I do not offer an elaborate introduction on the indigenous tribes and cultures of Northeast India, as the literature is already replete. Nor is this a systematic account of the minutiae of tribal religions. My analysis focusses primarily on the god-self-world continuum within a tribal paradigm and looks at the ethical implications of various metaphysical commitments that it instructs.

The partial and exclusionary model of spirituality conveyed by many dominant religious traditions² divides the universe into radical realms that exclude the in-between and border spaces that connect multiple, often overlapping and contradictory realms. Such models obliterate

¹ It is not to suggest that Northeast tribal groups are homogeneous, but it is reasonable to say that there are broad similarities between all tribal systems of thought. The terms "Northeast" & "Tribal" are colonial and political concepts. The region is linked to the rest of the country by a narrow land corridor and shares only two percent of its boundary with India while the other ninety-eight percent is shared with the international borders of Bhutan, China, Myanmar and Bangladesh.

² The dualistic tradition leads to the problem of "us and them." Monistic thought is hard to reconcile with the fact that there are distinct things that are "separate" from each other.

possibilities for respect and communication between two different categories by either treating all things as one and the same or by treating one category as higher or more sacred, while the other is treated as incommensurable with the different “others.” Tribal spirituality supports the belief that all things stem from the same source and are related as parts of a greater whole. However, it also celebrates and respects individuality and, furthermore, chooses to learn from individuality rather than stress a belief that one should try to blend in and lose one’s “ego” to be fulfilled. Further, unlike Aristotelian radical binarism (“true,” or “false”), tribal conceptual frameworks express ontological nebulosity: it does not exclude the in-between (“neither” or “sort of”); and recognises that more than two values can be accounted for, without leading to radical exclusion or contradiction. Similarly, it is not limited by the dualistic structure of otherness and negation. To quote Mamang Dai, renowned Adi³ poet and novelist, whose home state is Arunachal Pradesh:

In our language, the language of the Adis, the word ‘pensam’ means ‘in- between.’ It suggests the middle, or middle ground ... where anything can happen and everything can be lived ...⁴

In Adi language and culture, the word “pensam” also refers to the “hidden spaces of the heart where a secret garden grows.”⁵ But it may also be interpreted as a course of action or perspective that is between two extremes or categories – instructing an earth oriented vision of the world / life that embraces complexity. Tribal philosophy considers most things to exist on a continuum rather than being made up of absolute wholes. It also takes into account the apparent “irrationality” that everything can be separate and distinct and yet be One at the same time. By not excluding the in-between proposition and by accepting the probability that there can be a variety of different standards and reasoning for determining truth, it opens up the possibility that one can have knowledge and truths that are not familiar to or possessed by others. Thus, knowing the limits of one’s own knowledge and being

³ The Adi (also known as Abor) are a major collective tribe in the State of Arunachal Pradesh.

⁴ Mamang Dai, *The Legends of Pensam* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2006), vii.

⁵ Dai, *The Legends of Pensam*.

willing to share and listen to what's shared are integral to supporting such a principle.

The idea that society and nature are interrelated but are separate domains of reality is a central precept of modernity. Australian environmental philosopher Val Plumwood uses the expression "hyperseparation" to describe the extreme differentiation between human beings and other living things, where humans and "nature" are separated by a radical discontinuity.⁶ For many people, nature is irrelevant to human flourishing, or even an impediment. For instance, in Plato's dialogue *Phaedrus*, Socrates tells his interlocutor that nature is not his teacher and that he values only the knowledge of people in cities.⁷ This approach is vastly different from that of the tribespeople, who look at nature as a whole, as a great "book" to be read intelligently by humans. Similarly, in the tribal system of thought,⁸ subjectivity in the form of sentience and agency is not solely a human prerogative but is located throughout all species and across every elemental category.

The Meta-Ethics of Tribal Spirituality

In tribal religion, everything is spiritually alive and interconnected through their genealogical myths and its associated events and practices. For instance, origin myths, recorded in the *Tarnunger otsu* (Tale of the ancestors),⁹ provides important details about the character of cosmogenesis as the Aos, one of the tribal communities in the state of Nagaland, understood it. The Ao spiritual framework is *Lung trok*, the Ao metaphysical explanation of origin – the fundamental principle

⁶ Val Plumwood, *Environmental Culture: The Ecological Crisis of Reason* (London: Routledge, 2002), 123–142.

⁷ Plato, »Phaedrus,« trans. Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff, in *Plato: Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Co, Inc., 1997), 510.

⁸ Tribal conceptions of nature vary greatly as each ethnic group has its particular way to conceive nature and understand the relations established with it. However, what is common among all of them is that the "natural world" is, above all, a wide network of inter-relations between and among agents.

⁹ Translation is my own.

of order. Its extended phrase *Lung trok ko voker*¹⁰ is literally translated as: “emerged from the six stones,” but the more accurate translation is “originating from eternity.” It refers to the mythical age of origin, the primordial time of beginning, the time of ancestors which gives meaning and significance to all that follows. I briefly characterise the nature of the *Lung trok*, to contextualise the moral obligations which are contingent upon it. The Aos have an interesting myth connected with their ancestral origin in an ancient place called Chungliyimti. According to the myth, the Aos “originated” out of stones at Chungliyimti, tracing all the six major clans as having “emerged” from six stones, called *Long trok* – symbolising six chiefs or ancestors.

In the creation myths of many tribal communities of India’s North-east, they consider themselves to be “children” of the earth. According to Nagaland’s Chang tribe’s legend, human existence on earth started when human emerged from a big hole in the earth.¹¹ Tribal cosmogonies, by “relating” them to nature – natural elements, thereby establish a connection to the land in the very nature of their being. I think that the most important point about the origin myths for philosophical purposes is that it makes very clear that what happens to exist now is an expression of a specific configuration of the divine – each piece/element is a special configuration in a cosmic order. For the purpose of this study, I am interested in the spiritual narrative of the origin stories (not the literal truth of their content) – the spiritual connectedness and bonds between the people and the land that it instructs.

Creation narratives also relate humans directly to other creatures and elements of nature, affirming the belief that they are the progeny of the same ancestors and therefore, are the same being: they are their kin, and some are their totems. The tribal totemic system demarcates a world of “difference,” and at the same time weaves patterns that connect particular human groups with particular non-human species and elements, such as an animal, plant or spirit-being – generating inter-species/cross-elemental consubstantial kindreds. For instance, there is a

¹⁰ It should be noted that there are problems in translating this phrase into English. This is not the only interpretation; it is, however, the most central.

¹¹ *Folk Tales from Nagaland: Part 1 & 2*, (Kohima: Directorate of Art and Culture, Nagaland, 1989), 151.

myth among many tribal communities in India's Northeast, including the Aos of Nagaland that in the beginning tiger, man and spirit-being were brothers who all lived together. Although these three brothers developed characteristics different from each other, they were potentially the same and formed one community in the interrelated web of creation. It is this "conversational" connection and the sense of adaptivity of relationships between humans and their non-human kin, and the natural elements, which grounds tribal morality. In this conceptual framework, reality is seen as a web of intimate ontological relationships that cross-cut difference – human, other species and all elements of nature. Thus, the Tribal metaphysics of nature and life, of the world and human, unites one with nature's activities and species in a bond of a mutual cycle of life-giving continuity and do not allow the fragmentation of experience into mutually exclusive realms.

These genealogical affiliations are not only crucial in understanding tribal spirituality and their understanding of the universe, but also of the nature-society relations in ontological and epistemological terms. There are moral imperatives between individuals (and communities) and the natural world because of their ontological connectedness—that is, a connection inherent in the nature of their being. The precise term to describe such a connection is *ecological connectionality* (different from the dyadic model of relation). These genealogical connections are ethical connections—expressed as *sobaliba* (wisdom)¹² in the Ao language. Such a portrayal of nature in a broader canvass reaffirms the tribespeople's perception of nature not merely as a passive recipient of human actions, but as active participants in the whole web of relationships.¹³

¹² The translation is my own. It should be noted that there are problems in translating this term into English. *Sobaliba* – the core of the Ao people's sustaining principle is encoded and instituted in the Ao system of rules and regulations that holds the world/society together. It teaches how the world's interdependence results in an inter-responsibility. For a slightly different interpretation of the concept *Sobaliba*, see Sashinungla, "Exploring Ao Values and Ethics," in *Ethics and Culture: Some Indian Reflections*, ed. I. Sanyal and Sashinungla (New Delhi: Decent Books, 2010), 231–242.

¹³ One Ao origin story, for instance, tells of a time when rice grew without a husk but humans interfered with disastrous results. One day Yarila and her sister decided to pound the rice to make it even whiter than it was before. Nature resented this scorning of her gifts, and since then rice has always grown with a husk and must be laboriously pounded before it can be eaten. See J. P. Mills, *The Ao-Nagas* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), 223.

Just as humans can alter the world, the world can act on and alter us. In this respect, the universe is personal – that is, having personality and particularity. In the tribal paradigm, the universe is “alive” – a hugely dynamic entity to be entered into a dialogue with, respected and establish a reciprocal relationship with.

God-Self-World Continuum

Most dominant religious traditions strongly focus on human beings and their relation with God as the most important element. However, in the tribal traditions “creation” is the central point of reference in understanding all reality. It is neither human-centric nor god-centric. Rather, together with god, humans and the world constitutes a “cosmic web” of relationships in which the truth is to be lived with all others. According to the Khasi religion: in the cosmic web of relationships, humans are placed in-between U Blei (Supreme Being) and Ka meiramew (mother earth). U Blei creates all things, Ka meiramew nourishes and sustains them and humans complete them. Their earth-centred approach to reality is based on the fundamental premise that human (culture) is a part of the physical world having an inalienable and mutual interaction between them, thereby, relationships characterised by both mutual respect and mutual use. Tribal spirituality, thus expands the concept of “nature” including in it the entire ecosphere unlike other religious and scientific traditions where nature/the world has a limited sense, only for the social sphere.

For instance, the Aos do not think of “being” as the fundamental principle of reality but rather that the fundamental principle of reality consists in creation. This kind of conception is different from Aristotle’s characterisation of what is real (eternally true). Aristotle understands science as a body of knowledge that seeks the eternally true, whereas, the tribespeople understand the character of reality as it is given is not eternal. This account of tribal reality needs to be distinguished from a naturalist’s position as the latter does not require any specific sort of religious commitment. *Long trok* may be taken as the basic character of reality in the Aos’ account, but it never loses its connection with divinity. Hence, their position appears to be thoroughly theological.

This centrality of creation is supported variously, though one finds it most clearly in the tribal cosmological myths – which relates the character of the cosmos and the origin of human beings. For instance, one Tangkhul creation myth¹⁴ tells of a great convention called by the Kasa Akhava (the Supreme God), inviting the opinion of all creatures to determine the duration of day and night. This image of the assembly of all creatures: involving consultation, search for order and consensus, tracing the eldest, words of wisdom from Kasa Akhava suggests that all are constituents of respect and rights. The story basically describes the character of the Supreme Being, the place of humans and all creatures – a cosmic order, characterised by mutual respect and interdependence.

Appearing in an Ao song of philosophical lyric, the Aos' version reads in part as follows:¹⁵

Oh having emerged from the six stones,
 The day all birds congregated
 Owl proclaimed, if there is light, let it always be day; If there is darkness,
 let it always be night
 Amidst the hullabaloo,
 To the relief of all, the hummingbird said, let light and dark coexist; let
 night follow day and day follow night. [...]

Ancestors practiced the ancient religion of mighty rocks and (sacred)
 woods

In hope the generations follow that path of the great God

All gathered at the village meeting place at Chungliyimti,¹⁶
 And decided to take the advice of Ongangla¹⁷

Ongangla directed us to worship new water and perform ceremonial rites
 at the new village site.

¹⁴ R. Luikham, *Folklores and Tales of the Nagas* (New Delhi: Immanuel Publisher, 1983), 67.

¹⁵ The translation is my own. It should be noted that there are problems in translating these verses into English.

¹⁶ Ancient place of the Ao people.

¹⁷ An Ao diviner who foretells the future. She is also perceived to be the wife of *Meyutsüngba* (chief/god of righteousness).

What this part of the philosophical lyric shows is the Aos seek to follow the path of the great god of earth-centred religion. The reference of the *Long trok ko voker* (the Ao metaphysical explanation of origin, the fundamental principle of order) describes that god-human-earth can only be meaningfully and fully conceived together as a whole; further suggesting that the Divine is not seen as totalitarian. The text indicates that “wisdom” and the upkeep of the cosmic order is not the exclusive domain of the humans alone (the indication is also clear in the Tangkhul’s creation story above). This understanding is in marked difference to the idea of biblical stewardship (about human’s exercising God-given dominion over His creation) or to the approach of “ecological rationality,” where the emphasis is on the role of the human being’s rationality in preserving the environment.¹⁸ In contrast, tribal spirituality works with multiple, recursive connections. The text also specifies that there is one Supreme Being, one principle of reality, identified in the singular – though it has a fundamentally dualising, connectional aspect, and metaphorically “dwells” *in* water and *through* Ongangla – that it is all of reality.¹⁹ In this sense, the traditional Aos are “pantheists,” for they hold that the divine pervades all things and is expressed through all of existence.

Ao philosophical lyrics and oral poetics of the pre-conquest period (and before Christianity), indicate that all the “gods” were taken to be a single being. The Aos did not believe in a pantheon of gods, but treated all as mere aspects of a single Supreme Being. The Aos refer to the Supreme Being as Lijaba: literally translated as, “earth” (*Li*) and “indwell” (*jaba*). It means “the one who indwells the earth.” The word

¹⁸ Rational ecologist, John S. Dryzek contends that human beings are to find out a mechanism to preserve the ecosystem, it is their rationality that would determine the nature and scope of this mechanism. See John S. Dryzek, *Rational Ecology: Environment and Political Economy* (New York: Basil Blackwell Inc., 1987), 38–64.

¹⁹ For the Adi tribe of Arunachal Pradesh for instance, the *Donyi* (sun) and the *Polo* (moon) are the two “eyes” of the *Sedi-Melo*, the Supreme Being manifested in physical forms. Among the forces of nature, it is the duality of sun-moon, *Donyi-Polo* who is regarded as most powerful. An Adi invocation to *Donyi-Polo* illustrates the dualising, connectional character of the Supreme Being very well. It goes in part: “You are the greatest of all. You are above all. You see all. [...] At night you watch the world of the dead. In the day, from the world below ... You look in every side; you know everything.” See Verrier Elwin, *Myths of the North East Frontier of India* (Shillong: North East Frontier Agency, 1959), 211.

jaba also means “real” or “existence,” therefore, Lijaba could also be translated as, “the real earth” or “embedded being.” Consistent with their pantheistic outlook, Lijaba is existence for the Aos. The name is unambiguous as it directly indicates that Lijaba is omnipresent, always near. This is true because Lijaba not only pervades all things, but self-expresses as everything.²⁰

The same being is addressed as Longkitsüngba / Aningsüngba (Sky Chief or the Sun-Moon God) in relation to elements/forces of nature and seasons. The name *Tiaba* (Chief of Providence) is used in relation to man’s earthly fortune – the God of Life and Death, blessings and misfortunes, also called Meyutsüngba (Chief of Righteousness) in relation to moral and ethical judgment in life and after death. Meyutsüngba is considered the *gateway* between the world of the dead and the living – who judges everyone according to their deeds on earth. They are all addressed as Lijaba, the one Supreme Being, in relation to the creation of the earth and everything therein. O. Alem, an Ao theologian wrote:

Lijaba expresses the mundane nature of God, while Longkitsungba expresses the transcendence of God, and Meyutsungba expresses the omnipresent nature of God. [...] His presence is both simultaneously transcendent and immanent.²¹

The above descriptions largely highlight that the basic principle of reality is characterised by a kind of reciprocal duality: man and nature, day and night, life and death, male and female,²² material and spiritual, transcendence and immanence, creation and destruction, sky (heaven) and earth, and so on. To my mind, what is most significant about the dualising, reciprocal character of reality (Lijaba) is that it is a principle that exists as a connecting relation. Therefore, a relationship of reciprocity is established across categories of meaning/experience, never losing sight of an ultimate wholeness. The pattern that thus emerges is that

²⁰ Ao legends describe that while the Aos were at *Chungliyimti* (an ancient Ao place), Lijaba, the Supreme Being dined and stayed (in disguise) at the home of the villagers.

²¹ O. Alem, *Tsungremology* (Mokokchung: Clark Theological College, 1994), 35.

²² The Supreme Being is identified as male but has attributes described as “feminine.”

Lijaba only exists qua creation as reality, and Lijaba qua the *Long trok* is the cosmos.

Since only a transient account of reality such as Lijaba is possible (unlike the kind of eternal knowledge, much less “rational” knowledge described by Aristotle’s *episteme*), the Aos’ highest metaphysical concepts are stated poetically, in metaphors and not in treatise form. This does not mean that abstraction is absent in tribal philosophy but that abstraction is insufficient for explaining a whole range of questions that affect one’s experience of the Good. In tribal thought, the kind of reasoning employed takes into account all aspects of interactions of humans *in* and *of* “nature.” Therefore, pure abstraction has only a small role in tribal philosophy. By ascribing to a connectional metaphysics,²³ their concepts of truth/good are different from how Plato idealised abstraction and a life free of material restraints and distractions. In tribal thought, good/truth is not only an abstract concept, but a way of living that comes out of meaningful, reciprocal relationships with the entire environmental complex that makes life possible. Their commitment to the interdependence of different categories undermines the way in which western sciences formulated man/nature relationship within the separation/domination model. The principle that everything is connected suggests that truth is an effect of action rather than of formal propositions. As such, truth is not something figured out abstractly in the mind alone; it emerges under a certain cosmological configuration that can only be fully understood in a connectional and ethical context.

Lijaba is the basic name for the fundamental principle of reality. But reality is always perceived / revealed under a certain cosmological configuration. This suggests that Lijaba is not a singular being who might be the focal point of perception. It simply means nothing in nature can exhaustively represent it. The main point here is that Lijaba is not directly perceptible, since he is everywhere, i.e., Lijaba is imperceptibly everywhere. Therefore, the Aos hold a metaphysically quasi-realist view, since they did not deny that in some sense we could know the cosmic order in which we live, but they did deny that this cosmic order was the

²³ As I have shown, tribal creation narratives are a manifestation of a broader metaphysics of ecological connectivity.

basic character of reality itself. Wisdom (*sobaliba*),²⁴ therefore, for the Aos consists in grasping the limits of our knowledge and understanding the way things are through their changes, while giving it the best possible (adequate) expression one can in connectional (reciprocal) existence. This entails that even if the Aos consider wisdom to be the best sort of knowledge, what makes it best is not because it is guaranteed by the seal of eternity.

As the Supreme Being, in the singular, the word Lijaba simply means “real” and “true” being or “embedded being” and “grounded being.” But in its broader sense, it came to be used as the term for “truth” and “reality.” Lijaba, which is often translated as “God,” is hardly a personal god. Lijaba is rather more like a universal energy which is formed into our specific cosmos for a time. It means that the Aos did not think of a personal god as the fundamental source of reality but rather argued for a view that recognised a divinity to be present in all features of the world. If everything is inspired by a single/common reality, then self-realisation and the realisation of the other (which includes “nature”) are co-extensive. Therefore, to subservice one category is not only to compromise the creative possibilities of the other but also to impoverish one’s own.

Conclusion

I want to reiterate that tribal spirituality instructs the kind of sensibility or attentiveness which is prevalent among many tribes of India, as elsewhere in the world – a sense of “oneness” and connectedness with each other and every object of creation. This view of tribal sensibility must be distinguished from the modernist idea of “ecological humanism,” a theoretical coinage to “humanise” ecology and to give humanist dimensions to ecology. Tribal eco-sensibility is also different from the kind of process where the emphasis is on gaining self-knowledge that subsumes the knowledge of the world. The kind of earth-centred spi-

²⁴ To know both epistemically and by acquaintance. Wisdom is understood in connection to other sorts of knowledge in the tribal understanding. However, it is important to note that the Aos distinguish wisdom from other sorts of knowledge.

rituality that tribal religion imparts does not insist on detachment or renunciation of self from the world – as in their vision, the spiritual is not opposed to the material. Neither does it quest its union with the absolute (mystic’s way of life) nor propose a kind of “fusion” with nature, to eclipse all difference for a greater whole (Deep ecology). Rather it is a sensibility to live *responsibly*²⁵ which follows from their cosmological vision that all “life” is sacred. This makes possible communication and love for the other without undermining the reality of the other. Tribal legends characterise animals and other natural elements and forces as beings capable of inspiring respect or disfavour, yet, recognise that each is a different species, though members of the same biotic community. Therefore, one must respect the members both separately (and individually) and together (and collectively).

The question of how to co-exist together and to live sustainably is the most important of our time. Tribal cosmic-centred theology, by emphasising the web of vital relationships embedded in all things – its vision of the world, reminds one that all things and creations on earth share a common destiny. The dependency of humanity on the natural world and the exigency to adhere to an order that maintains its earth-oriented balance is lucid in tribal thought.²⁶ If philosophers are committed to overcoming the problems of binary dualisms that privilege one form of life or reality over others, then they must become involved in the making and remaking of the world by adopting respectful (and non-exclusionary) methods of philosophical engagement in their work. Moreover, the unilineal concept of religion and history needs to be tempered by an earth-centred spirituality. This means we need to re-conceptualise our long-standing comprehension of the god, human,

²⁵ The ideal of living *responsibly* involves doing the right thing by fellow human beings, community, God, Mother Earth, ancestors, as well as future generations.

²⁶ A Tangkhul myth illustrates this point well. The story goes like this: A scene was created by a hungry fox disturbing the peaceful sleep of the fellow creatures at night. He was seated on a tree enjoying a walnut. By mistake a walnut fell out from his hands and hit the crab lying below. The crab filled with fury destroyed the nest of the giant ants, who in turn, stung a sleeping wild boar. The agonised boar went wild and destroyed the banana trees. This disturbed the tiny bat sleeping peacefully on the leaf of the banana. The angry bat sped about wildly and landed in the nostril of a sleeping elephant. The agitated elephant went wild resulting in the death of a man. (Luikham, *Folklores and Tales of the Nagas*, 91.)

and the “nature” relation in a different, fresh way. Humankind needs to reconnect with nature, not relating to it, but being in nature and being part of it. One should look for other sources of knowledge for bridging and nearing opposite phenomena, harmonisation of spiritual and material experiences, reconciliation of the transcendent and immanent plans. In tribal spirituality I think we have a powerful conceptual alternative towards this.

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THE ANIMISTIC WAY: CONTEMPORARY PAGANISM AND THE POSTHUMAN

Victoria Dos Santos

“To speak as the first man spoke ... To make visible how the world touches us ...”

– Maurice Merleau-Ponty

Introduction

There is currently a constant interconnection between categories thought to be opposites. Different modes of integrating with the more-than-human world are being offered in this contemporary environment, challenging the instrumental and mechanical perception towards the natural world. Religion has had a role in renegotiating the social imagery and in contributing to this paradigmatic turn, not only by re-writing the relations with the cosmos and the sacred, but by proposing new ways of “re-enchantment” where humans are just part of a web of translated experiences.

One of those cases can be seen in Neopaganism, also understood as contemporary Paganism: an earth-based spirituality that rejects the dogmas of traditional religions – in the West, that typically means some form of Abrahamic monotheism – while proposing a non-scientific ontology of the natural world.¹ Contemporary Paganism is often described as a macro-category that rescues pre-Christian traditions,

¹ Murphy Pizza and James R. Lewis, eds., *Handbook of Contemporary Paganism* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 14.

mixing them with practices related to magic, folk beliefs, and popular narratives. Some expressions of Paganism claim to have an ancient origin or an unbroken lineage with an extinct civilization, like the Celts. However, such statements typically lack historical accuracy since they include many elements of fantasy and modern re-imaginings of ancient civilizations.² Paganism today is a re-constructed and creative apparatus founded by the practices and beliefs of its own members.

According to Graham Harvey, many pagans identify themselves, their worldview, and the world they inhabit as animists.³ On a more abstract level, animism can be understood as a relational strategy where beings and environments are not ontologically separated even if they show there are distinctive and clear diversities among them. In Paganism, such animistic sensibility is expressed in how pagans relate to other (non-human) entities and how they experience and conceive the domains of ritual and spiritual appreciation. Such reflection about animism will be strengthened by the phenomenological analysis provided by David Abram about the sensuous relationship between humans and the more-than-human world.

A similar “rethinking” of the ontological links that humans have with the world, as well as alternative ways of “being human” is also present in the core of posthumanism. The posthuman project aims to recompose the human, as well as human-non-human, interactions by locating “the subject in the flow of relations with multiple others.”⁴ With the advances and ubiquity of digital technologies, Paganism is becoming increasingly intertwined with posthumanism, for which there is no clear, morally relevant separation and no metaphysical disconnection between humans and other entities, including machines. This article highlights how the assemblages proposed in the posthuman

² Following Liz Williams, “Western neopaganism as a whole draws on folklore, on literature and on the work of groups as diverse as the late nineteenth-century occult society of the Golden Dawn and the Woodcraft Folk.” See Liz Williams, *Miracles of Our Own Making* (London: Reaktion Books, 2020), 10.

³ Graham Harvey, “Animist Paganism,” in *Handbook of Contemporary Paganism*, ed. Murphy Pizza and James R. Lewis (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 393.

⁴ Rosi Braidotti, *The Posthuman* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013), 50.

project with both the natural and the technological non-human can be conceived in Neopagan animistic sensibility.

The article will achieve this by on the one hand underlining the diverse ways in which animism resonates as a relational strategy between humans and the other-than-human world, contributing to a better understanding of contemporary Pagan spirituality – where nature is often said to be central – and of posthumanism’s claims of non-anthropocentrism. On the other hand, I will show how the relational affinities between the human and the “other than human” in pagan animism can be understood through Merleau Ponty’s expressive function of language as a way of “singing the world,” and Julia Kristeva’s semiotic Chora, a notion that addresses how the subject is not symbolically separated from the world in which it is contained. In this way, the article will enrich the explained synergy between pagan animism and posthumanism with Kristevian semiotic interpretation.

Neopaganism: rethinking animism

For Peter-Paul Verbeek, “[o]ur reality is a web of relations between human and nonhuman entities that form ever new realities on the basis of ever-new connections.”⁵ In the religious context, this heterogeneity resonates with what is understood as contemporary Paganism: a diversity of religious, spiritual, and magical traditions having syncretic and heterogeneous relations between humans with their surroundings and with other non-human entities. Due to its eclectic nature, Neopaganism lacks an “authentic” way of conceiving it as a formal and ordered system.

Paganism comes from the late Latin *paganus*, meaning “country dweller” or what now might be understood as “peasant.” The term generally works to indicate beliefs that conceive themselves, in one way or another, as descendants of ancient religiosities.⁶ In contemporaneity,

⁵ Peter-Paul Verbeek, *Moralizing Technology: Understanding and Designing the Morality of Things* (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 2013), 29.

⁶ However, as with the Greco-Roman, many ancient societies are usually described as pagan to make a contraposition with Christianity and Judaism, instead of referring to a specific reli-

the term Paganism – or Neopaganism – encompasses “many different spiritual paths and a wide variety of beliefs and practices.”⁷ It can be conceived as a map to recognize common patterns in certain religious groups or spiritual paths, even if they are different from and not directly related to any ancient tradition in specific.⁸

Contemporary Paganism has been part of the social environment since the middle of the twentieth century, permeating both the spiritual sphere and popular culture with a variety of narratives related to the occult and the numinous but at the same time taking inspiration from popular culture itself. Since it is extremely heterogeneous, “there are no rules regarding “faith” or how the divine should be worshipped.”⁹ That is to say, there are no agreed normative notions of what counts as authentic Paganism, and it cannot be considered inside a traditional religious structure.

Despite their differences, all the “paganisms” usually combine specific characteristics such as: a) an eclectic and multiple vision of the deities and the sacred, which is sometimes located in the axis of pantheism or within a polytheistic “structure”; b) a not hierarchical status of genders, giving particular importance to the figure of the goddess as well as the possibility for women to be priestesses; c) the performance of magical practices, involving beliefs in spirits and other ethereal entities; and finally d) a special place for rituals¹⁰ – they can be either related to folk traditions or grimoire-based practices – considering that throughout rituals the believer legitimates, renews and portrays the relation with his/her spiritual path.

gion itself. Paganism, for that matter, does not work as a descriptive concept but instead as a condition given to non-Christian societies.

⁷ Jenny Butler, “Neo-Pagan Ritual Practice as Visual Culture and Creative Expression of Identity,” in *Communicating Cultures*, ed. Ullrich Kockel and Máiréad Nic Craith (London: LIT Verlag, 2004), 109.

⁸ Williams, *Miracles of Our Own Making*, 27–53.

⁹ Butler, “Neo-Pagan Ritual Practice,” 108.

¹⁰ Ritual is a heterogeneous and polyhedric term with multiple and complex potentialities of construction and transformation of meaning. From a pragmatic point of view, it is one of the most outstanding aspects of religion, since it represents the practice that best legitimates, renews, and portrays the relationship between the believer and the spiritual path.

However, one common feature accompanies Paganism, whichever path is in question: the central spiritual role of the natural world. Nature is understood as a shared environment where we are all crucially immersed and connected. On that matter, all pagan paths are – on one level or another – a nature-based religion, where “their most common and central manifestations are in the celebration of seasonal festivals.”¹¹ Also, in nature, their pantheism or polytheism occurs either by conceiving it as the supreme embodiment of the divine or by picturing its deities as personifications of nature’s different aspects and/or features.¹²

For pagans, considering nature as sacred is also a way to engage with all forms of life. That is to say, nature is neither separated nor mechanically diluted in the human world; it is instead a net of relations where humans are part of the consciousness of earth as a living planet. In some pagan movements, the earth is represented by the notion of the great goddess.¹³ Such conceptions have developed an activist perspective among pagans since most of them have “something to do with the environmental movement, whether this means ordering one’s solstice cards from Greenpeace, or hardcore road protests and political activism.”¹⁴ The author and high priestess Starhawk, one of the most prominent leaders of Neopaganism, is a great example due to her active way of relating spiritual practices with activism and communal networking:

Meditation on the balance of nature might be considered a spiritual act in Witchcraft, but not as much as cleaning up garbage left at a campsite or marching to protest an unsafe nuclear plant.¹⁵

Nonetheless, the Neopagan worldview is widely syncretic, rejecting dogmas and religious creeds. It also creates a fertile and dynamic ground for personal expression and creativity by often inviting discourses that do not possess any tangible historical basis but instead belong to

¹¹ Graham Harvey, *Animism: Respecting the Living World* (London: Wakefield Press, 2005), 88.

¹² Michael York, “Pagan Theology,” in *Handbook of Contemporary Paganism*, ed. Murphy Pizza and James R. Lewis (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 292.

¹³ Williams, *Miracles of Our Own Making*, 290.

¹⁴ Liz Williams, “Paganism, Part 1: What Is Modern Paganism?,” *The Guardian*, July 15, 2013, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/jul/15/what-is-modern-paganism>.

¹⁵ Starhawk, *The Spiral Dance: A Rebirth of the Ancient Religion of the Great Goddess* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979), 12.

fiction and fantasy. That is where the importance of contemporary Paganism lies: it is an eclectic assemblage. It converges history, popular culture, mythology, social emergencies, and environmental sensibilities, using almost any media to express itself. For these reasons, it is very difficult to talk about normative or genuine Paganism since it is constantly integrating within its practice other forms of conceiving itself, as can be noticed in popular and internet-based spiritual discourses.¹⁶

Contemporary Paganism proposes a hermeneutics that re-writes the human/nature relation from the territory of the spiritual and the subject's role as an active actor in religious construction. As Erik Davis points out, Pagans:

have cobbled together their rituals and cosmologies from existing occult traditions, their own imaginative needs, and fragments of lore found in dusty tomes of folktales and anthropology. Pagans have self-consciously invented their religion, making up their "ancient ways" as they go along.¹⁷

This relational and horizontal approach to nature can be understood from an animist ontological perspective. The anthropologist Edward Tylor coined the term "animism" in 1871 to describe the first stage in the development of religious thought. In this stage, there was a consideration of souls and spirits as agents in the functioning of life.¹⁸ For animistic societies, the "things" of the natural world were also animated and similar to their own beings. On that matter, the natural environment and the moon, stones, and stars, for instance, were considered living objects with souls. Still, for Tylor, the term had a pejorative use, referring to a primitive condition, a "savage" stage of development situated far away from cultured societies.¹⁹ Nonetheless, the interest in

¹⁶ Markus Davidsen, "Review Essay: What Is Wrong with Pagan Studies," *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 24 (2012): 189, <https://doi.org/10.1163/157006812X634881>.

¹⁷ Erik Davis, *TechGnosis: Myth, Magic, and Mysticism in the Age of Information* (North Atlantic Books: London 2015), 423–425.

¹⁸ Edward Tylor, *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Art, and Custom* (London: Murray, 1871), 20–21.

¹⁹ Tylor's point is clearly explained by Durkheim: For Tylor, this extension of animism was due to the particular mentality of the primitive, who, like an infant, cannot distinguish the animate and the inanimate. Cf. Émile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (New York: Free Press, 1915), 53.

animistic sensibilities remained vibrant, overcoming Tylor's unjustified conceptions.

Other theorists have been proposing different conceptions and notions of animism as a relational perspective between subject-object. This "new animism" usually searches for a "two-way" relation with that otherness instead of a "one-way" mechanical approach. The new animism emphasizes an actual interaction: something like a conversation instead of a monologue. For Harvey, the new use of "animism" encompasses worldviews and lifeways, which treat the world as a diverse and vibrant community of persons (human and other-than-human). It is the practice of relational participation where the material world is not conceived from a Cartesian-modernist or any other scientific-reductionist perspective²⁰ in which nature transcends the instrumental conceptions and it is not a mere inert object.²¹

Anthropologist Philippe Descola goes even further and proposes animism as an ontological perspective. His "fourfold schema of ontologies" – conformed by naturalism, animism, totemism, and analogism – proposes the animistic ontology as "a continuity of souls and a discontinuity of bodies"²² between humans and nonhumans,²³ meaning that each animistic being has a shared interior quality such as a soul or vital life force, therefore, there are different kinds of bodies in any given animist world.²⁴ Nonetheless, Descola's point has been criticized by other scholars, such as Viveiros de Castro, who suggests that animism should not be a projection of human qualities cast onto animals and proposes the category of "perspectivism"²⁵ instead.

²⁰ Harvey, "Animist Paganism," 409.

²¹ Nurit Bird-David, "'Animism' Revisited: Personhood, Environment, and Relational Epistemology," *Current Anthropology* 40, no. S1 (1999): 77–79, <https://doi.org/10.1086/200061>.

²² Philippe Descola, "Modes of Being and Forms of Predication," *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 4, no. 1 (2014): 275, <https://doi.org/10.14318/hau4.1.012>.

²³ Descola, "Modes of Being and Forms of Predication," 275.

²⁴ Katherine Anne Swancutt, "Animism," v *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Anthropology* (Cambridge, 2019), 9, <http://doi.org/10.29164/19anim>.

²⁵ See Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, "Cosmological Deixis and Amerindian Perspectivism," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 4, no. 3 (1998): 469–488, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3034157>.

There are, of course, different animist expressions around the globe, and they can be found in indigenous societies, tribal communities, as well as in urban groups. The Siberian Yukaghir hunters and urban shamans in Stockholm are great examples which show the internal diversity of animism today.²⁶ In contemporary Paganism, animism can be vividly noticed not only in the work of many eco-pagan activists, such as Starhawk, but also in the modes of their celebrations and ritual practices. This occurs since in the majority of paganisms there is no affiliation to a transcendental god, the divinity or the sacred “is not separated from the manifest world that we perceived by our senses.”²⁷

On that matter, the perceived world that is touched, touches in return.²⁸ Each subject is an embodied and participative person in a physical and sensuous continuum with the non-human otherness. When reconsidering Merleau-Ponty’s works on perception as a relational and reciprocal encounter between the perceiver and the perceived, David Abram concludes that it can’t be any inanimate phenomena since such encounters always transform subjects. Therefore, “the perceiving self is not a disembodied mind but rather a bodily subject entirely immersed in the world it perceives.”²⁹

Pagans, however, have also developed an animistic approximation towards non-organic entities. Several studies conducted during the rise of computer technology and the internet showed an interesting affinity between contemporary Paganism and techno-culture. For instance, in the ethnographic work of many pagan researchers such as Margot Adler³⁰ and T. M. Luhrmann,³¹ many of the pagan communities and subjects they studied were involved with technical fields and compu-

²⁶ Swancutt, “Animism,” 2.

²⁷ York, “Pagan Theology,” 283.

²⁸ David Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-Than-Human World* (New York: Vintage Books, 1997), 68.

²⁹ David Abram, “Magic, Animism, and the Shaman’s Craft,” in *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*, ed. Bron R. Taylor and Jeffrey Kaplan, vol. 1 (London: Thoemmes Continuum, 2015), 1023.

³⁰ See Margot Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon: Witches, Druids, Goddess-Worshippers, and Other Pagans in America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986).

³¹ See Tanya Marie Luhrmann, *Persuasions of the Witch’s Craft: Ritual Magic in Contemporary England* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989).

ters. As Erik Davis points out: “(t)he machine thus comes to serve as an interactive mirror, an ambiguous Other we both recognize ourselves in and measure ourselves against.”³²

Such interconnection between digital technologies and contemporary Paganism can be pictured in Technopaganism, a digital-based pagan phenomenon that was very popular during the '90s and the first decade of the 2000s. Though the term of Technopaganism has descended into obsolescence, pagans – as well as other spiritual and religious groups – have increasingly continued to ritualize their virtual environment by bringing – or discovering – the sacred in cyberspace and by shifting the instrumental view of computer technology into a “lived” territory of spiritual potentialities.

A posthuman (or more than human) spirituality

In the light of the current dynamic and interconnected societies, the emerging human condition can be described as increasingly dispersed and in constant flux. Critical posthumanism³³ answers the current crisis of “humanism” by challenging the hierarchical, dualistic and anthropocentric assumptions of the modern paradigm. It can be understood as an umbrella term of different schools of thought which focuses on, on one hand, “elaborating alternative ways of conceptualizing the human subject,”³⁴ and, on the other, exploring how humans relate with non-humans and the surrounding environments. Here, the “human” is not a closed, pure, and self-sufficient actor but instead is open, changeable, and interconnected with the biosphere that contains it. On that matter, ecological ethics are a fundamental pillar of posthumanism since humanity is already “fully immersed [...] in a network of non-human (animal, vegetable, viral) relations.”³⁵

³² Davis, *TechGnosis*, 136.

³³ This article uses the concept of critical posthumanism of Rosi Braidotti and the posthuman notion addressed by Katherine Hayles.

³⁴ Braidotti, *The Posthuman*, 37.

³⁵ Rosi Braidotti, *Metamorphoses: Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002), 122.

As claimed by Rosi Braidotti,³⁶ the way of conceiving the world needs to be focused on “multiple grounded perspectives.” That is to say, “‘we’ is not one and the same, but ‘we’ are in the posthuman convergence ‘together’.” Braidotti’s critical posthumanism interrogates and redefines the human notion as a whole, paying particular attention to how humans relate with the otherness when the subject/object and mind/body binarism is dismissed or at least thoroughly reconceived. In other words, the posthuman means a radical re-conceptualization of “the human” in light of its entanglement with nature, culture, and technology. It is, therefore, “an amalgam, a collection of heterogeneous components, a material-informational entity whose boundaries undergo continuous construction and reconstruction.”³⁷

Harvey addresses a similar reflection, but from an animist point of view. For him, instead of projecting human likeness onto other beings, “animists understand that humans are just one kind of person in a wide community dwelling in particular places. The old and new approaches to animism are about quite different understandings of the world and result in distinct modes of discourse and practice.”³⁸ Instead of humanizing the “non-human,” animism sets a horizontal approach by attributing sentience and consciousness – in some cases even personhood – to other beings, spirits, and the environment. As for Harvey, Cary Wolfe assures that the human being is, before everything, not just a moral and political being but one who has an animal body. Therefore, human dignity is already inherent to the animal condition and rationality is just one more aspect of human animality.³⁹

On that matter, the value of any other being does not lie in its similarities with humans. Instead, it is an intrinsic right for being “subjects of a life”⁴⁰ and for inhabiting the same world in an interrelated way. Each living body is in constant dialogue with the beings and elements

³⁶ Rosi Braidotti, “Posthuman Knowledge,” *Harvard GSD*, March 13, 2019, <https://youtu.be/oCewnVzOg5w>, 15:40–15:52.

³⁷ Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), 3.

³⁸ Harvey, “Animist Paganism,” 396.

³⁹ Cary Wolfe, *What is Posthumanism?* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 66.

⁴⁰ Wolfe, *What is Posthumanism?*, 66.

that surround it and its boundaries are not closed or impermeable but opened. By acting “more like membranes than barriers, they define a surface of metamorphosis and exchange.”⁴¹ The body limits do not isolate the subject but, on the contrary, enable it to engage with the surrounding world. Therefore, “far from restricting my access to things and to the world, the body is my very means of entering into relation with all things.”⁴²

The aforementioned can be conceived in a broader sense with Merleau-Ponty’s work about the “flesh” of the world, that is to say, on the ways in which humans meet the world.⁴³ This “enfleshedness”⁴⁴ refers to how entities are not separated since “the world touches everything.” As David Abram assures us, Ponty’s notion of the collective “flesh” refers to “the mysterious tissue or matrix that underlies and gives rise to both the perceiver and the perceived as interdependent aspects of its spontaneous activity.”⁴⁵ Abram considers the “flesh” as a way of establishing an interconnectedness and continuity between humans and other beings. In the words of Merleau-Ponty, “the world is not what I think, but what I live through.”⁴⁶ How we perceive and interact with everything around us is not a mechanical action but an organic process of heterogenic connections and couplings.

The Neopagan practitioners have, then, an “enfleshed” relationship with the non-human context since it is all part of its spiritual dimension. The immanent conception of the sacred and the numinous in Paganism considers the sensuous and perceptive body itself as the source of connectedness of all beings. For Abram, “if this body is my very presence in the world,”⁴⁷ it is the body alone that “enables me to enter into relations with other presences.”⁴⁸ Therefore, the sentient living body “is

⁴¹ Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous*, 39.

⁴² Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous*, 39.

⁴³ Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous*, 48.

⁴⁴ See Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1968), 219.

⁴⁵ Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous*, 48.

⁴⁶ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* (New York: The Humanities Press, 1962), xvi, xvii.

⁴⁷ Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous*, 37.

⁴⁸ Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous*, 37.

the very possibility of contact, not just with others but with oneself, no soul can be detached from the body.”⁴⁹

The communion between human subjects, the natural world, and other entities – such as machines – is essential to both posthumanism and to contemporary animist Paganism since both conceive the world as a web of connections and collaborations. At this point, it is possible to make deeper parallelisms between posthumanism and the animistic sensibilities of pagans. In both cases it is crucial not to consider the manifest differences between humans and other entities as pejorative according to the former’s “perspectivism” and the latter’s “relationism.” Accordingly, an animistic and posthuman spirituality is ambiguous, plural, radically immanent, and deeply interrelated with all forms of life. There is, in other words, an animist “theology” that is coherent with Braidotti’s interrogation of what is meant by “being human” and the implications of a “post-anthropocentric” world inspired by ecology and environmentalism.

By bringing the posthuman project together with the animistic perspective, pagan rituals and seasonal festivals arise as an example of such relational epistemology, since they welcome not only animals and plants but also spirits, elemental beings, and even digital machines. Rituals can be seen as revealing values at their deepest level, allowing us to understand the essential constitution of human societies.⁵⁰ In Neopaganism, such practices are a central aspect “since they express the meaning-system or worldview of such paths and are also used as a means to connect with the sacred.”⁵¹ Pagan rituals, then, express in their performative construction how humans live or interact with other beings and the world, framing these relations in their particular ways.

Whereas by casting a circle, invoking spirits or ancestors, making a devotion to a deity in particular, or just calling the god and goddess together, pagan rituals express a dimension of full connection even if they are not following a structural and ancient tradition. This can be broadly perceived when observing, for instance, the growing of Neopagan

⁴⁹ Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous*, 37.

⁵⁰ Monica Wilson, “Nyakyusa Ritual and Symbolism,” *American Anthropologist* 56, no. 2, part 1 (1954): 241, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/664361>.

⁵¹ Butler, “Neo-Pagan Ritual Practice,” 109.

sacramental spaces in digital games or virtual community platforms, without actually neglecting their earth-based fundamentals. They “create a space where most boundaries dissolve, where all beings become part of a greater web. Ideally this is what spirituality should do.”⁵²

The relational pagan and the semiotic Chora

Such a relational aspect of Neopaganism, rooted in the notion of animism and manifested in their ritual performances, sets an interconnective and dialogic process between the human with the non-human world. Its own “theology” reveals an organic perception of the numinous, which is not static, settled, or apart but present in our immediate reality. In this “more than human” spirituality, the individual is not separated but in a state of “interrelatedness” with the otherness. It is posthuman since pagans inhabit a world with dialogic and clear relationships between souls, beings, and things.

In a brief pagan manifesto, the author and Wiccan priestess Selena Fox expresses how her feeling of connection with the cosmos and her surroundings – humans, nature, and technological “objects” – are embedded in an animistic sensibility:

I am a Pagan.

I acknowledge that the Divine is everywhere in the energy of life.

I am Animistic. I sense the life force in the oak tree on the hill, in the herbs in the garden, in the birds singing at my window, in the boulders on the hill, in myself, and yes, even in “things” such as my car and computer.

I understand that everything has its physical and non-physical aspects. The physical and spiritual are deeply intertwined, not separate, and one is not better than the other.⁵³

This poetic expression of her spiritual life shows the level of connectedness between humans and non-humans in contemporary Paganism.

⁵² Francesca Ferrando, “Humans Have Always Been Posthuman: A Spiritual Genealogy of Posthumanism,” in *Critical Posthumanism and Planetary Futures*, ed. Debashish Banerji and Makarand R. Paranjape (New Delhi: Springer, 2016), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-81-322-3637-5_15.

⁵³ Selena Fox, “I’m a Pagan,” *Circle Sanctuary*, accessed August 12, 2021, <https://www.circle-sanctuary.org/index.php/about-paganism/i-am-pagan>.

I propose that Julia Kristeva's theory of poetic language and the semiotic *chora* can provide some ground to address the notions of connection and separation. At the core of Kristeva's studies on the *signifying process*⁵⁴ and the role of language, the semiotic *chora*⁵⁵ is a stage of the subject when it is not constituted as such. It represents the lack of separation in this pre-symbolic state of being where there is no distinction between the self and other, a place deprived of unity, identity, or ideology. The *chora* is untidy, unarticulated, and transgressive.⁵⁶ There are no distinctions between the "I" and the external world.

The stage of the semiotic *chora* is understood as the semiotic – drives and affections – and is different from the symbolic stage, which instead is articulated, situated and governed by law. The symbolic stage occurs when the infant recognizes his own subjectivity and separates his worldview from the mother. Both of these modalities are inseparable from the signifying process, and the dialectic between them determines the type of discourse (narrative, theory, poetry, etc.).⁵⁷ For Kristeva, the poetic language – a type of discourse which does not have any utilitarian use, therefore it does not objectify language – is what reactivates "the semiotic drive force" through its sounds and rhythms.⁵⁸ It is an operation in which the dialectic of the subject is inscribed, that is to say, the "dialectical movement between [the] semiotic and symbolic."⁵⁹

The dynamics of heterogeneity, interconnectivity, and openness of the poetic function free language from automatism by enriching the signifying process with desire and consciousness since the poetic dimension splits the subject and decenters it.⁶⁰ By acknowledging this, any

⁵⁴ See Julia Kristeva, *Semiotica 1* (Madrid: Fundamentos, 1978).

⁵⁵ The term *Chora* was taken from Plato's *Timeaus*, who used it to refer to a receptacle. *Chora*, for the Greeks, meant "space" or "land." Kristeva associated it with the maternal body "because the infant's drives are structured around the mother's body." It is the stage where the infant is not yet a separate subject" and therefore still unified with the maternal sphere. See Kelly Oliver, ed., *The Portable Kristeva* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 24.

⁵⁶ Julia Kristeva, "Revolution in Poetic Language," in *The Portable Kristeva*, ed. Kelly Oliver (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 36.

⁵⁷ Kristeva, "Revolution in Poetic Language," 34.

⁵⁸ Oliver, *The Portable Kristeva*, 24.

⁵⁹ Oliver, *The Portable Kristeva*, 25.

⁶⁰ Oliver, *The Portable Kristeva*, 24.

speaking subject is, therefore, a process that is never unified because it is always interconnected and in constant relation with the outer world.

It should be noted that the animistic ontology is very well-suited for recognizing the semiotic stage reactivated by poetic language. In the spiritual context, the animistic sensibility welcomes a sense of profound interconnection between “self” and “others” by manifesting how humans are also a part of the web that collectively inhabit the other more-than-human bodies. Religion, ritual, and magic are signifying systems where the poetic language emerges as it displays the boundaries of common social practices. That is occurring since such spiritual-oriented performances generate meaning and produce belonging, separating the space where the sacred is being manifested from the ordinary and “profane” space.⁶¹ This process does not take place from a rationalized perspective but from subjective and emotive implications. Poetic discourses create, then, a sense of intimacy with the “outsider,” which instead of being perceived as an object is now a “related other” with whom a dialogue is created.⁶²

Merleau-Ponty’s philosophy of language can help elucidate how the rhythms and gestures characteristic of the poetic are an animistic act by itself. For him, language is not a fixed and immovable form but a collective medium correlated with the perceived world that contains all beings.⁶³ Instead, for Merleau-Ponty, the initial forms of language were expressive, consisting of gestural and poetic rhythms, similar to a song. Therefore, “language is always, in its depths, physically and sensorially resonant,”⁶⁴ and it can be understood as a way of “singing the world.”⁶⁵

⁶¹ According to Mircea Eliade, the sacred and the profane constitute the “two modes of being in the world.” Cf. Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* (Orlando: Harcourt, 1959), 14. The sacred represents fascinating and awe-inspiring mystery, a “manifestation of a wholly different order” from our natural or profane everyday lives. Cf. Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, 11. The manifestation of the sacred in a ritualized space answers to the concept of hierophany (from the Greek: hieros = sacred/holy and phainein = to reveal/bring to light) where the sacred can be manifested in any type of object.

⁶² Emmanouil Aretoulakis, “Towards a Posthumanist Ecology: Nature without Humanity in Wordsworth and Shelley,” (reprinted in) *European Posthumanism*, ed. Stefan Herbrechter et al. (London: Routledge, 2016), 82.

⁶³ Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, 213.

⁶⁴ Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous*, 55.

⁶⁵ Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous*, 54.

This would also mean that language corresponds to all expressive bodies and not only to human beings. Considering this, even the non-organic entities – such as machines and computational technology – that are actively participating in the world's dynamic, can produce their own and particular “song” and generate a dialogic relation with the rest of the living beings.

On that matter, to describe, communicate and relate with the animate world by means of poetic language is to reconsider “the non-intellectual, spontaneous responses to gestures, facial expressions, and so forth, which are at the roots of language.”⁶⁶ As Andrejč claims, the poetic and expressive functions of language are given in the form of creative movements involved with the pre-linguistic stages.⁶⁷ Those “movements” are guided not by a final resolution or objective, but by the process of such practices in the present moment. It is in those instants of linguistic innovation and irregularity of meanings, where the poetic force that Kristeva addresses⁶⁸ emerges. A moment where the semiotic stage challenges the conceptualization of the symbolic, and where the gestures and body expressiveness become significant.

In other words, both the semiotic stage described by Kristeva and the expressive language proposed by Merleau-Ponty, would mean the diluting of the isolated human subject with the outer and non-human reality, challenging the homogeneity of the symbolic and the anthropocentric conceptions regarding the more than-human life world. It is a state of undifferentiatedness where the critical posthuman project meets the animistic pagan sensibility which welcomes a relational spirituality.

⁶⁶ Gorazd Andrejč, “From Existential Feelings to Belief in God,” (PhD diss., University of Exeter, 2012), 243–244.

⁶⁷ Andrejč, “From Existential Feelings to Belief in God,” 248.

⁶⁸ This does not mean that all unarticulated language is poetic, but that through the poetic appreciation of language it is possible to rethink its function and its expressive power. Language, then, is not just a simple envelope of meaning, but is connected to the speaking subject and their own dialectics.

Conclusions

In his anthropological study of ritual, understood as the practical matrix of religious life,⁶⁹ Roy Rappaport aimed to portray religion not as a fixed structure but as a ground that needs to be reconstructed in order to be aligned with the world in which we are living. Today's world is deeply intertwined with digital and related technologies, science, and syncretic considerations of the sacred, as well as with sensibilities and emergencies not sufficiently considered by established religions, such as the environmental crisis. Following Rappaport's observations, it is crucial to identify the religious and spiritual manifestations developing within the different aspects of contemporary culture in order to reimagine and re-evaluate the ways in which religion can – still, in different and new ways – work as “the ground” he conceives religion to be.

Such reflection addresses the importance of spiritual approaches that celebrate and find sacredness in the differences without the need for anthropomorphizing the other. While posthumanism proposes new ways of considering humans and the ways in which they are interlinked with the world, contemporary Paganism expands this reflection, as well as the corresponding experience and ritual, to the spiritual domain by its animistic relational sensibility. On this matter, it is plausible to say that animist pagans are posthuman by default, just as posthumanism strongly resonates with the Neopagan paths when taken in the religious context.

Due to its heightened ecological awareness and creativity-oriented beliefs,⁷⁰ Neopaganism produces other ways of understanding spirituality and religion than the established religions – in the West, which is still predominantly Christianity – as well as the modernist Enlightenment paradigm, while addressing the earth crisis. Since it is not a text-based religion and since it tends to reject the authority of religious institutions,⁷¹ modern Paganism is particularly diverse, fluid,

⁶⁹ See Roy Rappaport, *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 1–5.

⁷⁰ Shawn Arthur, “Technophilia and Nature Religion: The Growth of a Paradox,” *Religion* 32, no. 4 (2002): 303, <https://doi.org/10.1006/reli.2002.0407>.

⁷¹ Williams, “Paganism, Part 1.”

and non-systematic,⁷² constantly rewriting itself within the social and cultural environments in which it emerges. Its “openness” allows it to connect with other discourses and to deny any sense of structural homogeneity, something which this article attempts to show by relating it to critical posthumanism.

Following the semiotic dimension proposed by Julia Kristeva, Paganism can plausibly be seen as a poetic expression: it is not governed by law, and it is in a constant dialogue and attentive interaction with the external other, i.e., the radical other of the immanent nonhuman actors and realities. That is, perhaps, an important reason for its popularity today: contemporary Paganism’s emphasis on nature and the nonhuman connects the individual with essential facets of existence which are often neglected in monotheistic and secular frameworks.⁷³

The animism of contemporary Paganism, and its poetic condition, can also be understood from the phenomenological project of Merleau-Ponty, that of a philosophy which instead of explaining the world from the outside instead gives “voice to the world from our experienced situation within it, recalling us to our participation in the here-and-now, rejuvenating our sense of wonder at the fathomless things, events and powers that surround us on every hand.”⁷⁴ The pagan’s active relation towards the non-human is nothing but the poetic instant where the subject establishes a present and fulfilled relationship with the world around them, not by mapping it into definitions or structuring their feelings but by connecting, through their own sensuous living body, a pre-symbolic relation with it. To engage with life in an animistic way is to experience the living world in a spontaneous, reciprocal and poetic way, prior to all our conceptualizations and definitions.

⁷² Harvey, “Animist Paganism,” 393.

⁷³ Williams, *Miracles of Our Own Making*, 14.

⁷⁴ Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous*, 38.

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DRUGE RAZPRAVE

REGULAR PAPERS

AERIAL AND RESPIRATORY ATMOSPHERES OF AVICENNA'S FLYING PERSON

P e t r i B e r n d t s o n

Introductory Words

Persian philosopher Avicenna (980–1037) is famous for his thought experiment referred to as the Flying Person Argument (also known as the Floating Person, the Suspended Person or the Person Suspended in Air Argument). In his studies, Nader El-Bizri has examined this thought experiment in connection with phenomenological philosophy. According to El-Bizri, this Suspended Person Argument could be understood as “Avicenna’s *reduction*” and “*epoché*.”¹ In this presentation I will focus on phenomenologically interpreting the aerial-elemental and respiratory² atmospheres of Avicenna’s thought experiment. In trying to interpret the almost entirely forgotten aerial, elemental and respiratory contexts of the Person Suspended in Air Argument, I will make particular use of Gaston Bachelard’s phenomenologically oriented imaginary aerial thinking.

¹ Nader El-Bizri, “Avicenna’s *De Anima*: Between Aristotle and Husserl,” in *The Passions of the Soul in the Metamorphosis of Becoming*, ed. Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (Dordrecht: Springer, 2003), 78–82 and 85.

² My article concentrates solely on the phenomenological and spiritual dimensions of breathing and thus I will not speak of Avicenna’s immensely important studies on respiratory medicine. If one is interested in his views on respiratory medicine, see, for example, Seyyed Mehdi Hashemi and Mohsin Raza, “The Traditional Diagnosis and Treatment of Respiratory Diseases: A Description from Avicenna’s *Canon of Medicine*,” *Therapeutic Advances in Respiratory Disease* 3 (December 2009): 319–328; Tina Williams, “Invisible Experiences: A Philosophical Exploration of Breathlessness,” (PhD diss., University of Bristol, 2019), 71–73.

What Could the Flying Person Argument Be About?

What could Avicenna's story of the person suspended in air tell us? Over the centuries many have wondered as to the meaning and purpose of this thought experiment. Avicenna scholar Dag Nikolaus Hasse writes: "It is part of the attractiveness of the Flying Man that its meaning and purpose are rather difficult to understand."³ Because of these difficulties in comprehending the meaning, Tommaso Alpina writes: "As for the purpose of the experiment, there is disagreement in the scholarship."⁴ According to Jari Kaukua, Avicenna uses the Flying Man Argument as a pointer or a "reminder to make us pay attention to something that is and has always been there [experientially] for us but that we seldom take heed of [...]. Although the argument may be *per impossibile*, it is still used to point out something present to the reader's experience"⁵ that we have a "tendency to neglect [...] in favour"⁶ of other aspects of our experience. As I have previously mentioned, El-Bizri connects Avicenna's argument with phenomenological reduction and *epoché*. According to El-Bizri Avicenna's "*epoché*, as exemplified by the 'Suspended Person Argument,'"⁷ "provides access to the *Ur-Ich*, that is not the *Ich* [self] of solipsism nor of relativism, but rather that of an anonymous universality and a pre-personal originary ground that underlies all positing."⁸ Avicenna's *Ur-Ich* as the "primordial self" (*al-awal*)⁹ is compared by El-Bizri to "Merleau-Ponty's consideration of the primordial subject that is beneath the subject, whereby being is already being oriented."¹⁰

³ Dag Nikolaus Hasse, *Avicenna's De Anima in the Latin West: The Formation of a Peripatetic Philosophy of the Soul* (London and Turin: The Warburg Institute, 2000), 81.

⁴ Tommaso Alpina, *Subject, Definition, Activity: Framing Avicenna's Science of the Soul* (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2021), 71.

⁵ Jari Kaukua, *Self-Awareness in Islamic Philosophy: Avicenna and Beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 34.

⁶ Kaukua, *Self-Awareness in Islamic Philosophy*, 35.

⁷ El-Bizri, "Avicenna's *De Anima*," 85.

⁸ El-Bizri, "Avicenna's *De Anima*," 82.

⁹ El-Bizri, *The Phenomenological Quest: Between Avicenna and Heidegger* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), 14.

¹⁰ El-Bizri, *The Phenomenological Quest*, 149–150.

Having said all this in preparation for an interpretation concerning the flying or floating person suspended in air, let us turn to Avicenna's own words about this thought experiment.

So we say: one of us must imagine himself so that he is created all at once and perfect but his sight is veiled from seeing external [things], that he is created floating/flying in the air or in a void so that the resistance of the air does not hit him – a hit he would have to sense – and that his limbs are separated from each other so that they do not meet or touch each other. [He must] then consider whether he affirms the existence of his essence or his self (*dhat*). He will not hesitate in affirming that his self or essence exists, but he will not thereby affirm any of his limbs, any of his intestines, the heart or the brain, or any external thing. Rather, we will affirm his essence or his self without affirming for it length, breadth or depth. If it were possible for him in that state to imagine a hand or some other limb, he would not imagine it as part of his essence or his self or as a condition of his essence or his self. You know what is affirmed is different from what is not affirmed and what is confirmed is different from what is not confirmed. Therefore the essence or the self whose existence he has affirmed is specific to him in that it is he himself, different from his body and limbs which he has not affirmed. Thus, he who takes heed has the means to take heed of the existence of the soul (*al-nafs*) as something different from the body – indeed, as distinct from any body – and to know and be aware of it.¹¹

So what could this most famous version of Avicenna's Flying Man Argument as phenomenological *epoché* reveal to us if we were to read and interpret it as carefully as possible in the most preparatory manner inspired by Hasse, Kaukua and El-Bizri? Let us take seriously that Hasse says that the “meaning and purpose [of the thought experiment] are rather difficult to understand.” Where should one put one's focus on this story which has so many aspects to it? Which aspects of our experience do we have a deep tendency to neglect? Could some of these aspects of our experience be those that even the scholars who study

¹¹ Avicenna quoted by Kaukua, *Self-Awareness in Islamic Philosophy*, 35. I have also used translations of Avicenna's Flying Person Argument that can be found in El-Bizri, *The Phenomenological Quest*, 151; Hasse, *Avicenna's De Anima*, 80; Federico Campagna, *Technic and Magic: The Reconstruction of Reality* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), 203, and Michael Marmura, “Avicenna's 'Flying Man' in Context,” *The Monist* 69 (July 1986): 387, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27902982>.

Avicenna's thought experiment have a tendency to neglect? According to Hasse, scholars have debated if the story of Avicenna is most essentially about 1) "the incorporeality of the soul," 2) "the independence of the soul from the body," 3) "the existence of the soul," 4) "the self-awareness of the soul" or 5) "the substantiality of the soul."¹² For certain we can say that Avicenna's Person Suspended in Air Argument is essentially about the phenomenon of *al-nafs* (which can be translated as "soul") and the relationship between *al-nafs* and the body, but all these scholarly interpretations Hasse mentions neglect several aspects which are, in my view, truly important; perhaps even more important than those aspects that traditionally and normally have been emphasized and discussed by Avicenna scholars.¹³

If Hasse listed the typical scholarly theories of what Avicenna possibly wants to reveal about the soul with his thought experiment, then another Avicenna scholar, Peter Adamson, crystallizes the usual perspective of how scholarly discussions frame the Flying Person Argument. Adamson writes:

[the flying] person is in a state of total sensory deprivation. Furthermore, he has just been created, so he has no memories of prior sensory experience. Avicenna asked what a person in this situation could know. A strict empiricist would say, 'nothing', thinking that all our knowledge comes directly or indirectly from sensation. But Avicenna thought that the flying man would be aware of his own existence. He took this as a pointer, not only to the ineliminable self-awareness that belongs to each human soul, but also to the soul's immaterial nature. After all, Avicenna reasoned, the flying man's soul is aware of itself, but not of his body.¹⁴

As scholars have emphasized the "total sensory deprivation" as a lack of something and debated these above-mentioned questions concerning the soul, they have not at all taken seriously the idea that the person or the self in this thought experiment is "floating in the air," "flying

¹² Hasse, *Avicenna's De Anima*, 81.

¹³ For example, Dag Nikolaus Hasse, Tommaso Alpina, Jari Kaukua, Nader El-Bizri, Michael Marmura, Jon McGinnis, Dimitri Gutas and Peter Adamson are among these Avicenna scholars.

¹⁴ Peter Adamson, *Philosophy in the Islamic World: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 84.

in the air” or “floating ... in a void,” nor that this could be something essentially important. None of the Avicenna scholars mentioned have said anything meaningful about the phenomenon of floating or flying as a way of being. What could be the purpose or meaning of floating or flying in the air in Avicenna’s thought experiment?

Another truly important aspect in this story is that the person or the self is only in relation to either the element of air or the void which makes it possible that the person can float. Thus we must ask: what kind of relationship is of a purely aerial relation? Or what kind of relationship is a relation with emptiness or voidness? And what kind of purely aerial encounter is it to exist in the element of air when all “the resistance of air” and wind have been bracketed out in order that the flying person does not feel or experience any kind of resistance or hit by the air? Would this not also mean that the elemental atmosphere of air where the person floats is immense, at least experientially immense, in order that there would not be anything blocking or obstructing the float or the flight or anything else affirming to him “any external things” or objects? This experience of spatial relationality with the immense air would not prove affirmation of “length, breadth or depth” as there is no length, breadth or depth in such immensity or vastness. The experience and knowledge about such spatial measures become possible only in a sensory perceptual dialogue between the perceiving self and the perceived things, between the perceiving subject and the perceived object. The perceiving self is not only in a perpetual dialogue with things that are of different sizes, shapes, boundaries and surfaces and that are to be found near and far, left and right, up and down, front and rear, etc., but also in a constant dialogue with itself in which its eyes gaze at different parts of the body that are at different distances from its eyes and each part of its body work in collaboration with other parts.

Also none of the scholarly studies have pondered how does the flying person stay alive? I do not mean how he finds something to eat or drink. The person can fly or float in the air for quite a long time without need for nutrients. I am referring to the need for breath. Breathing is our most essential relation with the air. What would it mean if the flying person’s fundamental relationship with the air were breathing? Could it perhaps be that Avicenna’s Person Suspended in Air Argument

is essentially about respiration? And if this were the case, what would this then mean?

In my opinion, all these questions that Hasse and Adamson raise concerning the soul in its incorporeality/immateriality, independence from the body, existence, self-awareness and substantiality should be examined only after one has truly pondered the questions and problems that I have just raised. It is also truly important that these questions and concerns mentioned by Hasse and Adamson should be examined not only after we have deeply pondered these aerial and respiratory questions but they actually need to be asked within the atmosphere that we have been provided access to by these newly formed aerial and respiratory questions.

The Flying Person within the Atmosphere of the Bachelardian Aerial Imagination

Let us begin to explore these aerial and respiratory questions in dialogue with Bachelard. As a thought experiment, Avicenna's Person Suspended in Air Argument is essentially connected with imagination. This thought experiment begins with the words: "one of us must *imagine himself* so that he is created all at once and perfect ..." The whole story about the flying person moves within the reign of imagination. According to Bachelard, the most primordial form of imagination is what he calls "elemental imagination."¹⁵ Bachelard divides the realm of elemental imagination into four essentially different reigns depending on four elements: the elements of fire, earth, water and air. He calls these four types of elemental imagination: 1) the imagination of fire (igneous imagination), 2) the imagination of earth (terrestrial imagination), 3) the imagination of water (aquatic imagination) and 4) the imagination of air (aerial imagination).

Bachelard's book *Air and Dreams* is a study devoted to the aerial imagination. In this book Bachelard says: "everything that passes through

¹⁵ Gaston Bachelard, *Air and Dreams: An Essay on the Imagination of Movement*, trans. Edith R. Farrell and C. Frederick Farrell (Dallas: The Dallas Institute Publications, 2002), 26.

air is dynamically and substantially aerial.”¹⁶ So if any phenomenon is imagined to pass through air in an essential manner, this phenomenon belongs to the reign of aerial imagination. As Avicenna’s flying person is imagined to be “floating/flying in the air” it is “dynamically and substantially” an elemental and imaginary “aerial phenomenon,”¹⁷ and if this Bachelardian aerial perspective is taken truly seriously as I will take it, this imaginary aeriality of the flying person is the most essential feature of its existence or its way of being. The imaginary flying in air is actually, according to Bachelard, the essential feature of aerial imagination. For aerial imagination, “flight is not a technique to be discovered, it is a matter to be transmuted; it is the fundamental basis for a transmutation of all values. Our *terrestrial* being must become *aerial*. Then it will make the whole earth *light*. Our own earth, within us, will be ‘the light one.’”¹⁸ This imaginary aeriality and becoming aerial is essentially connected with breathing as Bachelard also says about this aerial becoming: “let us become as aerial as our breath.”¹⁹

These ideas of becoming are influenced by Bachelard’s reading of Nietzsche’s “revaluation of all values” within the reign of aerial imagination. In this Bachelardian project of “aerial ethics,”²⁰ the transmutation of all values changes them into aerial values. For example, freedom as a value transforms into what we can call “aerial freedom.”²¹ When we are able to understand that freedom is essentially a phenomenon of air, according to Bachelard, we begin to witness how the atmosphere of air itself “frees us from our attachment to matter.”²² One of the ultimate questions of aerial ethics and aerial freedom is: “how freely one breathes.”²³ In the Bachelardian aerial interpretation of Nietzschean

¹⁶ Bachelard, *Air and Dreams*, 30n5.

¹⁷ Bachelard, *Air and Dreams*, 9.

¹⁸ Bachelard, *Air and Dreams*, 142.

¹⁹ Bachelard, *Air and Dreams*, 241.

²⁰ Bachelard, *Air and Dreams*, 146.

²¹ Bachelard, *Air and Dreams*, 117.

²² Bachelard, *Air and Dreams*, 136.

²³ Bachelard, *Air and Dreams*, 140. In relation to Nietzsche’s will to “breathe freely,” see, for example, Friedrich Nietzsche, *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 118 and 126; Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols and Other Writings*, trans. Judith Norman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 72, 92, 184, 256, and 260.

thinking, the ethical task of becoming a superhuman (*Übermensch*) in an aerial manner is a project of going beyond (*über*) and transmuting terrestrial and earthly weight and matter and becoming “an aerial being” who is “free,” “aerial” and a “joyous spirit” who breathes “an air of the heights, a strong air.”²⁴ He becomes “the master of [winged] lightness”²⁵ and is always ready to fly to the summits of “immense” “superhuman joy.”²⁶ Thus we learn to live and “float” “in the air, by the air, for the air ... [and] free as the air.”²⁷

How would Avicenna’s Person Suspended in the Air Argument reveal itself to us if it were interpreted within the Bachelardian reign of aerial imagination? The thought experiment begins as follows:

So we say: one of us must imagine himself so that he is created all at once and perfect but his sight is veiled from seeing external [things], that he is created flying/floating in the air or in a void so that the resistance of the air does not hit him – a hit he would have to sense – and that his limbs are separated from each other so that they do not meet or touch each other.

Avicenna demands that we individually imagine his thought experiment. Within the atmosphere of aerial imagination I will listen carefully to Avicenna’s call and I will personally and intimately imagine it step by step. When Avicenna demands that “one of us must imagine himself so that he is created” in a new aerial manner, his way of imagining is in harmony with Bachelard’s aerial imagination in which the dream of “flight is not a technique to be discovered, it is a matter to be transmuted; it is the fundamental basis for a transmutation of all values. Our *terrestrial* being must become *aerial*.” Bachelard has a similarly demanding voice when he says that “our *terrestrial* being must become *aerial*.” In Bachelardian terms, we must imagine the fundamental transmutation from terrestrial being to aerial being. When Avicenna demands that I imagine that I am created all at once and perfect but my sight is veiled from seeing external things, this means that I am freeing or liberating myself from my terrestrial way of being. The external things that I see

²⁴ Bachelard, *Air and Dreams*, 135 and 140.

²⁵ Bachelard, *Air and Dreams*, 142.

²⁶ Bachelard, *Air and Dreams*, 136.

²⁷ Bachelard, *Air and Dreams*, 28 and 145.

are part of the terrestrial. Visual perception connects us ceaselessly with terrestrial beings. Avicenna also demands that I imagine that while I float in the air that my limbs are separated from each other so that they do not meet or touch each other. Within the reign of aerial imagination, Avicenna's demand takes me further away from my terrestrial way of being, that is, from my bodily existence of touching and sensing. In his thought experiment, Avicenna is truly transmutating all values as he is shifting from terrestrial values to aerial values. What does it mean to become aerial? Bachelard suggested that it means to "become as aerial as our breath."

The Flying Person within the Judeo-Islamic Atmosphere of Nephesh and Nafs

What could be the meaning of Avicenna's demand to imagine myself "created all at once and perfect"? How can I aerially imagine myself in that kind of way? Do these words "created all at once and perfect" refer to something? This expression "created [...] perfect" refers to the *Quran's* creation of human being in which God created him perfect. The *Quran* says: "Recall when your Lord said to the angels, 'I am going to create a human being from a ringing clay made of decayed mud. When I form him perfect, and blow in him of My spirit (*ruh*)'" (Quran 15:28–29).²⁸ Elsewhere in the *Quran* the following is said about God's perfect creation: God "gave everything its perfect form. He first created man from clay [...] Then He moulded him; He breathed from His Spirit (*ruh*) into him; He gave you hearing, sight, and minds. How seldom you are grateful!" (Quran 32:7, 9)²⁹ It is important to understand that these Quranic verses follow and are based on the creation story from the *Old Testament*: "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul (*nephesh*)." (Gen 2:7) Both of these stories

²⁸ *The Qur'an*, trans. Mufti Taqi Usmani. <https://quran.com/32>.

See also *The Qur'an: A New Translation*, trans. M.A.S. Abdel Haleem (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 163.

²⁹ *The Qur'an: A New Translation*, 264.

describe the beginnings of the relation between “the divine breath and the earthly clay”³⁰ in human existence.

In order to understand this relation as well as the relation between these Biblical and Quranic creation stories and their relation to the *nafs* that plays an important role in Avicenna’s thought experiment, let us quote the following words from Golam Dastagir:

Etymologically, the term *nafs* is derived from the term *nafas*, meaning ‘breathing’. In early Arabic literature, by *nafs* is meant ‘self,’ or ‘person,’ while the term *ruh* denotes ‘breath,’ or ‘wind.’ In Islamic theology, the notion of the soul is referred to as *nafs*, though often confused with *ruh*, and the concepts of *nafs* and *ruh* seem, to a greater degree, similar to the Biblical concepts of *nephesh* and *ruach*.³¹

The Hebrew *nephesh* and *ruach*, which are cognates of the words *nafs* and *ruh*, also have deep respiratory meanings. According to linguist and rabbi Ernest Klein the most primary etymological meaning of *nephesh* is “breath, breath of life.” The other meanings of this word are “soul,” “person, human being” and “self.” Etymologically, the term *nephesh* is derived from the term *naphash*, meaning “to blow, to breathe.” In relation to Klein’s etymological study of the term *nephesh*, Róbert Bohát writes: “etymology and lexicography agree that [*nephesh*] is ‘a living, breathing being’, ‘a breather’ in short.”³² Similar to the Arabic term *ruh*, the Hebrew *ruach* also means “breath” and “wind” as well as “spirit.” As etymologically the Arabic *nafs* and the Hebrew *nephesh* both derive from words that mean “breathing,” it is highly interesting to mention that Bachelard calls the word “soul” (*âme*) “a word of breath.”³³ In ref-

³⁰ William C. Chittick, “The In-Between: Reflections on the Soul in the Teachings of Ibn ‘Arabi,” in *The Passions of the Soul in the Metamorphosis of Becoming*, ed. Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (Dordrecht: Springer, 2003), 30.

³¹ Golam Dastagir, “Nafs,” in *Islam, Judaism, and Zoroastrianism*, ed. Zayn R. Kassam et al. (Dordrecht: Springer, 2018), 519.

³² Róbert Bohát, “‘My Soul Knoweth Right Well’: the Biblical Definition of Soul (heb. ‘*nefes*,’ Gr. ‘*psyche*’) and the Epistemology of Embodied Cognition – an Ancient Source of a Modern Concept?,” in *The Soul in the Axiosphere from an Intercultural Perspective. Volume One*, ed. Joanna Jurewicz, Ewa Masłowska, and Dorota Pazio-Włazłowska (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2020), 167.

³³ Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), xx. The translation has been altered. See Gaston Bachelard, *La Poétique de l’Espace* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1961), 4.

erence to this, he quotes Charles Nodier's truly insightful words: "The different names for the soul, among nearly all peoples, are just so many breath variations, and onomatopoeic expressions of breathing."³⁴

With the help of these etymological investigations, we can now give one possible interpretation of Gen 2:7 which would say: "And the LORD God formed man (*adam*) of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living, breathing being (*nephesh*)." *Adam* ("man") originated from *adamah* ("ground" or "earth"). Thus we could also interpret that in the creation God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man as an earthling became a living breather (*nephesh*)." In his book *Anthropology of the Old Testament*, theologian Hans Walter Wolff ponders the meaning of the word *nephesh* in Gen 2:7. In his view, *nephesh* in this verse of the *Old Testament* should "[c]ertainly not [be translated as] soul." Instead of "soul," Wolff emphasizes "breath" as he writes: "*Nephesh* is designed to be seen together with the whole form of man, and especially with his breath; moreover man does not have *nephesh*, he is *nephesh*, he lives as *nephesh*."³⁵ I still want to bring in Etan Levine who relates Gen 2:7 explicitly with air as he writes: "human life derived from the air when God 'blew into his nostrils the breath of life.'"³⁶

After all of these various aspects that complement each other, I wish to give an initial interpretation of Gen 2:7 which would say: God formed man (*adam*) of the dust of the ground (*adamah*), and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life that is His breath/air/wind/spirit (*ruach*); and man became a living, breathing being, that is, a breather (*nephesh*). As Wolff said "man does not have *nephesh*, he is *nephesh*, he lives as *nephesh*," this would mean in my interpretation that, according to Gen 2:7, human being does not have a breath, but is at the most primordial level a breathing being and lives as a breather, as one who

³⁴ Charles Nodier quoted by Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, xxn1. In reference Nodier's words it is interesting to hear what Hans Walter Wolff says about the etymological and onomatopoeic roots of the Hebrew *nephesh*. According to Wolff, this word's root *ps* could be understood as "an onomatopoeic representation of the violently hissing breath." Hans Walter Wolff, *Anthropology of the Old Testament*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), 13.

³⁵ Wolff, *Anthropology of the Old Testament*, 10.

³⁶ Etan Levine, *Heaven and Earth, Law and Love* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2000), 12.

breathes. This respiratory way of being, which derived from “the common air”³⁷ (*ruach*) when God “blew into his nostrils the breath of life,” is the fundamental principle of human existence.

Now if we compare our possible interpretative formulations of Gen 2:7 with Bachelard’s aerial imaginative formulations “our terrestrial being must become aerial” and “let us become as aerial as our breath,” we will see that they are not very far from each other. Let us combine these two formulations of Bachelard into one aerial imaginative formulation that says: *our terrestrial being must become as aerial as our breath*. If one were able to transform one’s terrestrial being into a being that is as aerial as our breath, such a person could be called, in Bachelard’s words, “a great breather.”³⁸ We can also take note that both Gen 2:7 and Bachelard use the verb “to become.” Gen 2:7 uses it in the past tense and Bachelard in the present tense with the auxiliary verb “must.” So in a sense, according to Gen 2:7, what man has already become Bachelard in his aerial imagination says we must become. Human being as an earthling or a terrestrial being has already become by the grace of God, that is, by the breath of God a breathing being, a living breath-soul, a breather. If we truly take seriously within the Bachelardian aerial imagination the Biblical creation story as that *which we always already are*, then Bachelard’s Nietzschean inspired ethical project of becoming as aerial as our breath can be called with a catch phrase taken from Pindar, Nietzsche and Heidegger: *become what you already are*.³⁹

³⁷ William Glen Moncrieff, *Soul: Or the Hebrew Word Nephesh and the Greek Word Psyche* (Edinburgh: William Laing, 1864), 3.

³⁸ Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Reverie: Childhood, Language, and the Cosmos*, trans. Daniel Russell (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), 180. In relation to this idea that somebody could be “a great breather” in a manner similar to when we say that somebody can be a great thinker, a great musician or a great swimmer it is very interesting that around 1959 Marcel Duchamp tells an interviewer the following: “Art was a dream that became unnecessary ... [Nowadays] I spend my time very easily, but I wouldn’t know how to tell you what I do ... I’m a *respirateur*—a breather.” Duchamp quoted by Peter Sloterdijk, *Terror from the Air*, trans. Amy Patton and Steve Corcoran (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2009), 106.

³⁹ Thomas Sheehan, *Making Sense of Heidegger: A Paradigm Shift* (London and New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), 155 and Babette Babich, “Nietzsche’s Imperative as a Friend’s Encomium: On Becoming the One You Are, Ethics, and Blessing,” *Nietzsche-Studien* 33 (December 2003), <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110179200.29>.

The Flying Person within the Atmosphere of Phenomenological Reduction

Could we interpret that *becoming what you already are* is perhaps also one of the key elements of Avicenna's Person Suspended in the Air Argument? Let us return to Avicenna's Flying Person Argument. Before we dived into the respiratory depths of Judeo-Islamic creation stories, our last question concerning Avicenna's thought experiment was: what could be the meaning of Avicenna's demand to imagine myself "created all at once and perfect"? We mentioned earlier in this article that El-Bizri understood the Flying Person Argument as Avicenna's phenomenological reduction or *epoché* that "provides access to the *Ur-Ich*" as the primordial self. Merleau-Ponty says: "Phenomenology is only accessible to a phenomenological method."⁴⁰ This method is the method of reduction which means a perpetual return to the beginning. In the "Preface" of *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty wonderfully describes the role of the philosopher as a phenomenologist whose task is to enter into the methodological atmosphere of phenomenological reduction:

the philosopher is a perpetual beginner. This means that he accepts nothing as established from what men or scientists believe they know. This also means that philosophy itself must not take itself as established in the truths it has managed to utter, that philosophy is an ever-renewed experiment of its own beginning, that it consists entirely in describing this beginning, that radical reflection is conscious of its own dependence on an unreflected life that is its initial, constant, and final situation.⁴¹

In his thought experiment concerning the flying person, in his own unique way Avicenna truly enters into the phenomenological atmosphere of the perpetual beginner. Within this atmosphere, his task is to return to the beginning of everything. This beginning of everything as our "initial, constant and final situation" is the Judeo-Islamic creation story that Avicenna says that we must return to as imaginative beings. It is not enough that this creation of human being has already taken place

⁴⁰ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Donald A. Landes (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), lxxi.

⁴¹ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, lxxviii.

and that it has been established, for example, within various religious orders as part of their belief system and dogma. That is not enough. We must return to this event at the beginning of our life, that is, to this starting point of our existence as human beings and reimagine it as deeply as possible. Human beings have a strong tendency to become forgetful of what takes place in this creation story and of how it is that our conscious and normal life is dependent on this beginning that is our “initial, constant and final situation” whether we want it or not.

It is not enough that somebody else returns to this phenomenological beginning. We have to do it ourselves. As previously mentioned, the meaning of Avicenna’s words “one of us must imagine himself so that he is created all at once and perfect” are that one has to do it, that is, imagine it himself and not accept anything as established from what ordinary people and the so-called experts, for example, theologians or philosophers believe they know. We have already read the creation story of Gen 2:7 within an etymological context and the Bachelardian atmosphere of aerial and respiratory imagination and interpreted it to say: God formed man (*adam*) of the dust of the ground (*adamah*), and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life that is His breath/air/wind/spirit (*ruach*); and man became a living, breathing being. Alternatively we also stated: God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man as an earthling became a living breath-soul, that is, a breather. In my interpretation of Gen 2:7, my train of thought goes well together with these words of Bohát: “I strove to ‘hear’ the meaning of the root word ‘breathe’ or ‘breath’ [of *nepheš*] constantly as would an ancient Hebrew speaker, whose mother tongue was used in the [Biblical] text.”⁴² The creation story of the *Quran* (15:28–29 and 32:7, 9) has its foundation on Gen 2:7 as it tells: “Recall when your Lord said to the angels, ‘I am going to create a human being from a ringing clay made of decayed mud. When I form him perfect, and blow in him of My spirit/breath/wind (*ruh*)’” (Quran 15:28–29). I would like to bring up two important aspects of the original story. The first one is the invitation or commandment to “recall” again and again the creation story. The second aspect is that human beings are formed perfect by

⁴² Bohát, “My Soul Knoweth Right Well,” 167.

God. Both of these points can be found in Avicenna's thought experiment. To imagine oneself created again is recalling the creation story in a true phenomenological sense as in it one is returning to the beginning of everything. So Avicenna in the Quranic manner recalls the perfect creation of human being in his thought experiment about the flying person. In other Quranic verses on the creation of human being are said: God "gave everything its perfect form. He first created man from clay ... Then He moulded him; He breathed from His Spirit/Breath/Wind (*ruh*) into him; He gave you hearing, sight, and minds. How seldom you are grateful!" (*Quran* 32: 7, 9)

Let us first connect these Quranic words together with the words from Gen 2:7 and then ponder the possible meanings when Avicenna's Person Suspended in Air Argument is read within the etymologico-respiratory atmosphere of *al-nafs* and the Judeo-Islamic creation story. As Gen 2:7 is the foundation of these Quranic ideas about the creation of human being from clay and God's breathing being the true beginning of human existence, in my opinion, we can interpret that Avicenna reads Gen 2:7 together with the *Quran* 15:28–29 and 32:7, 9. This verse (*Quran* 32:9) says: "He breathed from His Spirit/Breath/Wind (*ruh*) into him; He gave you hearing, sight, and minds. How seldom you are grateful!" Now if this verse would be read together with Gen 2:7 it would say something like this: In the creation/beginning of man, God breathed from His *ruh/ruach* into man and he received the breath of life and he became *nafs/nephesh*. God gave you hearing, sight, and minds. How seldom you are grateful! What Bohát said about ancient Hebrew speakers can also be said about Arabic speakers like Avicenna.⁴³ So to paraphrase Bohát, Avicenna constantly heard the root word "breathe" or "breath" of *nafs* and *nephesh* and of *ruh* and *ruach* when he read the *Quran* and the *Old Testament*. If he were to have interpreted

⁴³ Persian Avicenna spoke Arabic fluently and wrote most of his works in Arabic. Dimitri Gutas writes about Avicenna's use of the Arabic language as follows: his "language is ornate, with frequent use of rare words culled from literature, while the syntax at times is complex to the point of obscurity, pushing the regular paratactic structure of Arabic to its limits ... The whole is breathtaking and quite a tour de force; there is nothing like it in Arabic philosophical literature." Dimitri Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition: Introduction to Reading Avicenna's Philosophical Works* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014), 382–383.

Gen 2:7 as the foundation of the Quranic creation stories in a manner similar to the way in which I have interpreted them in this article, we may provide a new interpretation of the meaning of the Flying Person Argument. So let us read together the etymologico-respiratory atmosphere of *al-nafs* and the Judeo-Islamic creation story.

We should recall when God formed man from the dust of the ground. He created man perfect and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. He became a breathing being, that is, a breather. God gave you hearing, sight, and minds. How seldom you are grateful! Man does not have *nephesh/nafs*. He is *nephesh/nafs*. He lives as *nephesh/nafs*. According to Wolff the word *nephesh* should not be translated as “soul” because *nephesh* is not a soul as understood by the Western tradition’s notion of “soul” (for example, Platonic or Cartesian). Man is a breathing being, a breather. He lives as a breathing being, as a breather. Levine wrote that “human life derived from the air when God ‘blew into his nostrils the breath of life’” and this “breath of God” is that “non-earthly quality ... what sets human beings apart from the plants and beasts.”⁴⁴ I am not sure if this “non-earthly quality” sets us humans apart from rest of the creation, but what is at least important in Levine’s words is that the common air as the breath of God is a “non-earthly quality” that defines essentially who we are as human beings. I would suggest that these Judeo-Islamic insights should be the starting point when we begin to interpret what Avicenna is trying to tell us.

Concluding Words: The Flying Person Within the Atmosphere of Air and Breath

It is important to remember that in the beginning of this article I quoted Hasse who said: “It is part of the attractiveness of the Flying Man that its meaning and purpose are rather difficult to understand.” Kaukua also said that this thought experiment is “a reminder to make us pay attention to something that is and has always been there [experientially] for us but that we seldom take heed of [...]. Although the argument may be *per impossibile*, it is still used to point out some-

⁴⁴ Levine, *Heaven and Earth, Law and Love*, 12.

thing present to the reader's experience" that we have a "tendency to neglect ... in favour" of other aspects of our experience. Perhaps the meaning and purpose of the Flying Man Argument is so difficult, cryptic and mysterious that no Avicenna scholar, at least to my knowledge, has even imagined as a thought experiment that which it is reminding us of and which has always been experientially there for all of us since the creation or beginning of man is that man is a breather within the aerial atmosphere of divine breath where we all float. As we can see, Kaukua uses the wording that the thought experiment is "a reminder" of something that "we *seldom* take heed of." The word "seldom" appears also in the Quranic verse 32:9 which says: "He breathed from His Spirit/Breath/Wind (*ruh*) into him; He gave you hearing, sight, and minds. How seldom you are grateful!" I have mentioned it already few times but have not yet examined it. Now is the time! What could the meaning of this verse be? How should it be interpreted? Does it have some kind of relation to the flying man? The verse says that we have been given amazing perceptual, emotional and intellectual faculties that we generally take for granted. We are seldom truly grateful for the wonderful gifts we have been given as human beings.

But what happens in Avicenna's thought experiment? Let us again begin to imagine and dream within the Avicennian and Bachelardian reign of aerial imagination: We are all created at once and perfect which means that in this creation God has given to us "hearing, sight, and minds" and other human faculties like touch. But we are deprived from all of them as Avicenna says: "sight is veiled from seeing external [things]" and "limbs are separated from each other so that they do not meet or touch each other." And at the same time we are "created floating/flying in the air." With regard to this Adamson says: "The human is in mid-air, his sight veiled and his limbs splayed so that he is not touching his own body. There is no sound or smell. In other words, this person is in a state of total sensory deprivation."⁴⁵ After all of this, Avicenna says: we "will not hesitate in affirming that [our] self or essence (*dhat*) exists." The Arabic word *dhat* means both "self" and "es-

⁴⁵ Adamson, *Philosophy in the Islamic World*, 84.

sence.” El-Bizri translates *dhat* also as the “essential self.”⁴⁶ So it could also be said that we affirm that our essential self exists. What could our essential self be which reveals itself after total sensory deprivation? How could we have any sense of it? “A strict empiricist would say,” as Adamson said, [“that there is nothing to affirm as] all our knowledge comes directly or indirectly from sensation.” But to quote El-Bizri, Avicenna could reply: “the primary encounter with being or existence does not rest on sensible experience or sensory perception.”⁴⁷ But what is left of the Quranic verse 32:9 after all this deprivation? “He breathed from His Spirit/Breath/Wind (*ruh*) into him; He gave you hearing, sight, and minds. How seldom you are grateful!” (*Quran* 32:9) Avicenna has not demanded that we imagine that we would be deprived of God’s *ruh* which He breathed into us. In the words from Gen 2:7 God breathed into us “the breath of life; and man became a breather (*nephesh*).” How seldom we are grateful that we have been given “the breath of life” and that we are breathers! We are created in the air, into *ruh* or *ruach* as that is where we breathe. We cannot be breathers if we are not surrounded and penetrated by air. Now we are able to affirm that our essential self exists, that is, that our essential self is breathing, which makes us breathers.

After we have affirmed and recognized our essential self as breathing, as respiratory self we have, in Avicenna’s words, “the means to take heed of the existence of *al-nafs* as something different from the body.” We have already earlier interpreted *al-nafs* as a cognate with *nephesh* as a breathing being, a breather. We could make a preliminary interpretation of what it means that our essential self as *al-nafs* (the respiratory self) is different from the body. The body (which includes, for example, the perceptual faculties) in the Flying Person Argument means all our relations to the terrestrial and earthly, that is, to that clay, dust of the ground from which everything is created. The body connects us to the world that we can see, hear and touch. On the contrary, *al-nafs* (the breath, the respiratory self) connects us directly to the invisible air that is the “non-earthly” atmosphere of our experience and from which, ac-

⁴⁶ El-Bizri, *Phenomenological Quest*, 14

⁴⁷ El-Bizri, *Phenomenological Quest*, 162.

ording to Levine, our human life derives. Breathing connects us with the *ruh*. We could also say again in a preliminary manner that our essential self as *al-nafs* cannot be anything other than a flying man or a floating person, because it is our first and most primordial relation with the air, which in terms of Bachelardian aerial imagination is considered pure lightness (weightlessness) and freedom from matter. The breath (*al-nafs*) flies or floats in the air. The body as seeing and touching connects us with the terrestrial world of weight and gravity. Terrestrial matter weighs us down. The lightness of the air ascends and elevates us. Within the aerial imagination of Bachelard, “flight is freedom [from the terrestrial world.] [...] [B]ird personifie[s] free air [...] [and to be truly free is to be] free as a bird in the air.”⁴⁸ For Avicenna, who is a philosopher with immense aerial imagination, “[t]he bird is a symbol of [*al-nafs*] set in its flight of liberation.”⁴⁹ This aerial flight of *al-nafs* within the depths of the non-earthly atmosphere of *ruh* (the Breath of God) is Avicenna’s reduction to the phenomenological beginning that is the *Ur-Ich* as our essential respiratory self. The greatest task of aerial ethics is to be a perpetual beginner whose motto of immense superhuman joy is: become what you already are!

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⁴⁸ Bachelard, *Air and Dreams*, 77.

⁴⁹ El-Bizri, *Phenomenological Quest*, 198.

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CONTEMPLATING GOD
FROM THE MIRROR OF THE
SOUL: THE FIRST LEVEL
OF ST. BONAVENTURE'S
INTROSPECTIVE AESTHETICS
FROM ITS INSPIRING
SOURCES

José María Salvador-González

Introduction¹

Saint Bonaventure of Bagnoregio (c. 1221–1274) was a Franciscan thinker whose immense doctrinal prestige earned him the well-deserved privilege of being named a Church Doctor, known as a “Seraphic Doctor.” Among his abundant writings, the philosophical,² theological,³ exegetical,⁴ ascetic and mystical, and those on common Franciscan

¹ I sincerely thank the copyeditor of *Poligrafi* for the extensive and very professional work carried out in editing my article, as well as for the numerous and appropriate corrections and suggestions that she made.

² On the philosophy of Saint Bonaventure, see Johannes Hirschberger, *Historia de la Filosofía, Tomo I: Antigüedad, Edad Media, Renacimiento* (Barcelona: Herder, 1981), 368–371; and Étienne Gilson, *La philosophie au Moyen Âge. Des origines patristiques à la fin du XIVe. Siècle* (Paris: Payot, 1962), offer brief synthesis. José Antonio Merino Abad, *Historia de la filosofía franciscana* (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1993), 29–105 is much broader and more explicit. The most comprehensive study on this subject is Étienne Gilson's monograph, *La philosophie de Saint Bonaventure*, 2nd ed., 3rd print (Paris: Vrin, 1948).

³ His theological works are recorded in León Amorós, Bernardo Aperribay and Míguel Oromí, *Obras de San Buenaventura. Edición bilingüe. Tomo I. Dios y las criaturas* (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1968), 43–44.

⁴ His theological works are indicated in Amorós, Aperribay and Oromí, *Obras de San Buenaventura*, 45.

themes⁵ stand out. This extensive opus has generated a broad set of studies both on his philosophy as a whole and on some of his thematic treatises or specific theses.⁶

Saint Bonaventure, although he enjoys much universal recognition for his theological, exegetical, mystical, catechetical, and religious writings, he is not generally valued as a philosopher. This devaluation as a genuine philosopher is due, above all, to the fact that for him, philosophy lacks autonomous validity if it tries to place itself beyond theology, that is, of revelation and faith. However, there are many scholars who give a prominent place to the Seraphic in the field of philosophy, and more specifically as the founder and undisputed leader of Franciscan Scholasticism.

Now, in addition to writing extensive philosophical treatises on metaphysical, cosmological, epistemological, anthropological, and ethical issues, Bonaventure was also interested in formulating his own Aesthetics, in which he knew how to integrate a complex accumulation of philosophical and theological ideas. Despite his preference for theological, exegetical, spiritual, and mystical themes, Saint Bonaventure did not neglect Aesthetics (with its valorization of the sensible, material world),⁷ considering it a valuable way of attaining spiritual access to God.

In his *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*, Bonaventure constructs the essential elements of his Aesthetics, building upon the central thesis that contemplation of the material world allows us to rise contemplatively

⁵ His works on Franciscan themes are listed in Amorós, Aperribay and Oromí, *Obras de San Buenaventura*, 46–49.

⁶ You can see a part of the extensive bibliography on St. Bonaventure in Amorós, Aperribay and Oromí, *Obras de San Buenaventura*, 43–70; in the registered by Pietro Miranesi, “Per una bibliografia bonaventuriana,” in *Dizionario Bonaventuriano: filosofia, teología, spiritualità*, ed. Ernesto Caroli (Padova: Editrici Francescane, 2008), 25–46; or in recently (2016) collected by Isabel María León Sanz, *El arte creador en San Buenaventura. Fundamentos para una teología de la belleza* (Pamplona: EUNSA, 2016).

⁷ For a brief exposition of Seraphic’s Aesthetics, see Étienne Gilson, *La Filosofía en la Edad Media. Desde los orígenes patristicos hasta el fin del siglo XIV* (Madrid: Gredos, 1999), 432–443; Edgar de Bruyne, *Estudios de Estética medieval, Vol. III: El siglo XIII* (Madrid: Gredos, 1959), 201–240; and Tatarkiewicz, *Historia de la estética, vol. II: La estética medieval* (Madrid: Akal, 2007 [1970]), 244–252. Much deeper is the study done by León Sanz, *El arte creador en San Buenaventura*.

to God. According to him, the ascent to God from the material world must take place in three steps:

- a) The first step consists of contemplating God *outside* of us, by appreciating corporeal, temporal, and external beings as *vestiges* of deity. This constitutes the stage that we have called the immanent phase of the Aesthetics of the Seraphic. In this *immanent* stage, Bonaventure already establishes two possibilities of contemplating God *outside* of us: that of contemplating him *through* his *vestiges*, and that of contemplating *in* his *vestiges* in created things.
- b) The second intermediate stage, which we have designated as the *introspective* phase of the Bonaventurian Aesthetics, offers two other more profound possibilities of contemplating God entering *within* us: that of contemplating him *through* his spiritual *image* imprinted in the powers of our soul, as a mirror of the Trinity; and that of contemplating it *as through a mirror* and *as in a mirror*.
- c) The third step of the ascent towards God, which we have designated as the *transcendent* stage of the Aesthetic of the Seraphic, consists of raising ourselves *above* us to God himself, contemplating and revering Him as the *First Principle*, highly spiritual, eternal, and superior of all creation, and rejoicing to know God and revere his divine Majesty.

Now, among the complex universe of Bonaventurian Aesthetics, our focus in this paper is exclusively concentrated on the *first* contemplative modality of the *immanent* stage of Bonaventurian Aesthetics: that of contemplating it *through* his spiritual *image* imprinted in the powers of our soul, as a mirror of the Trinity.⁸

With this we will try to vindicate the epistemic value and the conceptual originality of such Aesthetics in the face of those who deny or undervalue them. Our research contribution will be substantiated here in two aspects: firstly, in the intrinsic analysis of the Seraphic theses on the aspect under study; secondly, in the extrinsic comparative analysis of these Bonaventurian theses with ideas of other philosophers, to try to specify some possible influences on our thinker. Lastly, this article will

⁸ Neither de Bruyne, *Estudios de Estética medieval*, Vol. III, nor Tatarkiewicz, *Historia de la estética*, vol. II, explain this introspective Aesthetics.

complement what we have discussed in other papers regarding the first two levels of these Aesthetics.⁹

The introspective stage of Bonaventure's Aesthetics

The Seraphic Doctor expressed his aesthetic ideas¹⁰ in a somewhat scattered way, through numerous isolated thoughts in writings of various kinds, although he managed to systematize them in a relatively coherent, complete manner in his *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* (1259).¹¹ In this book, he exposes the intricate details of the ascent that the human being must embark upon from the created world to God, whom he can contemplate through six successive degrees or levels. According to our author, in the first two levels—the nucleus of what we have called the “immanent,” “material,” or “empirical” stage of the Bonaventurian Aesthetics—, man achieves an embryonic contemplation of the Creator by considering His signs or vestiges upon objects. Our Franciscan philosopher develops the intermediate stage of that contemplative ascent—which we have called the “introspective” stage of Saint Bonaventure's Aesthetics—in Chapters 3 and 4 of *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*. Chapter

⁹ See the papers of José María Salvador-González, “Per imaginem et in imagine: El estadio introspectivo de la estética de San Buenaventura en su *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*, un discurso barroco avant la lettre,” in *Del Barroco al Neobarroco: Realidades y transferencias culturales*, ed. R. de la Fuente Ballesteros, J. Pérez-Magallón, and J.R. Jouve-Martin (Valladolid: Universitas Castellae, 2011), 295–309; José María Salvador-González, “Ascensio in Deum per vestigia et in vestigijs: La Estética inmanente de S. Buenaventura y sus posibles reflejos en la iconografía de la Basílica de San Francisco,” *Mirabilia Journal* 16 (2013): 79–117, <http://dx.doi.org/10.13140/2.1.4150.6245>; José María Salvador-González, “La Estética inmanente de San Buenaventura desde sus fuentes de inspiración,” *Revista de Filosofía* 48 (2022) (in press); José María Salvador-González, “The concept *vestigium* in the immanent Aesthetics of St. Bonaventure” (under revisión in an academic journal). We have also partially studied the “transcendent” phase of Bonaventurian Aesthetics in the article José María Salvador-González, “The second level of St. Bonaventure's Transcendent Aesthetics: Speculating the divine Trinity through the good,” *Mirabilia Journal* 31 (2020): 741–755, https://ddd.uab.cat/pub/mirabilia/mirabilia_a2020n31/mirabilia_a2020n31p741.pdf.

¹⁰ On the aesthetic scope in the writings of Saint Bonaventure, see Orlando Todisco, “Dimensione estetica del pensare bonaventuriano,” *Doctor Seraphicus* 54 (2007): 17–76.

¹¹ Bonaventura de Balneoregio, «*Itinerarium mentis in Deum*,» in *S. Bonaventurae Opera Omnia* (Quaracchi): Q V, 285–316. In the text of this article, we will cite this work with the abbreviation “It,” followed by the chapter in Roman numerals, and its section or epigraph in Arabic numerals.

3 deals with how man speculates on God by the imprinted image of Him in his natural human potencies; Chapter 4 discusses how man speculates on God through his image of Him, reformed by grace.¹² In the last two levels of the contemplative ascent towards God, which constitute what we could call the “mystical” phase of the Bonaventurian Aesthetics, man can achieve “mental excesses” through ecstatic contemplation of God by meditating on His essential attributes as Supreme Being (fifth level) and His personal properties as absolute Good (sixth level).¹³

Unable to explain in this brief article each of these complex six levels established by our author, we will now specify the details of the first level of the introspective stage of Bonaventure’s Aesthetics.

This first level of the introspective stage is indeed the third level of the contemplative ascent to God in the Bonaventurian system. It consists of entering into our soul to see the Creator through a mirror.

At the beginning of Chapter 3 of *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*, the Seraphic Doctor recalls that in the two preceding contemplative levels – which constitute what we have called the “immanent” phase of his Aesthetics¹⁴—created beings are seen as vestiges of God; and through these vestiges man, after entering his mind, “where the divine image shines forth,”¹⁵ has already made a rudimentary contemplation of the Creator (It, III, 1). The Franciscan mystic adds that in climbing the third step

¹² On the Bonaventurian idea of man as the image of God, see Manuel Barbosa de Costa Freitas, “A doutrina bonaventuriana do homem-imagem e a coexistência da fé e do saber,” in *San Bonaventura Maestro di vita francescana*, Vol. II, ed. Alfonso Pompei (Roma: Pontificia Facoltà teologica S. Bonaventura, 1976), 441–453.

¹³ On the third level of the Aesthetics of Bonaventure, see Cornelio Fabro, “Contemplazione mística e intuizione artistica del Seraphicus,” *Doctor Seraphicus* 9 (1962): 5–13; and J. E. Arias Rueda, “Conocimiento de lo bello desde una perspectiva estética de la sensibilidad trascendental en los capítulos VI y VII del *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* de San Buenaventura,” *Franciscanum* 44 (2002): 137–220.

¹⁴ Edgar De Bruyne, *L’Esthétique du Moyen Âge* (Louvain: Université Catholique de Louvain, 1947), 101–109, employs the term “immediate Aesthetic” (*Esthétique immédiate*) when referring to this Aesthetic based on the sensitive beauty of bodily beings, which he studies above all in the thinkers of the Saint-Victor School.

¹⁵ Giuseppe Beschin, “La creatura simbolo del Creatore in S. Bonaventura alla luce della ragione e della fede,” *Doctor Seraphicus* 47 (2000): 46–47, explains this Bonaventurian thesis of the analogy of creatures with respect to the Creator, highlighting the differences between material creatures that are only distant vestiges of God, and creatures composed of matter and spirit,

of the ascent towards the Supreme Being,¹⁶ we must see God through a mirror, entering our mind,¹⁷ in which the light of truth¹⁸ and the image of the Trinity shines (It. III, 1).

Now, our author has no qualms about invoking the Christian dogma of the divine Trinity. He considers it evident that if entering within himself, man reflects on the operations of his three spiritual powers (*memory, intellect, and will*),¹⁹ he will be able intellectually contemplate God as by an image,²⁰ “which is to see Him as through a mirror and as in an enigma” (It. III, 1). As you can see, here our author begins to draw not a few theological presuppositions, quite problematic from the perspective of a purely rational, secular philosophy. In later paragraphs, we will discuss some of these a-rational assumptions.

What we have outlined so far is the part of the Bonaventurian Aesthetics that we could define as his “introspective” phase. To better understand it, one may find it helpful to follow step by step the complex and twisted—at times somewhat obscure—reasoning of our author about the skills that each of these three spiritual aptitudes (memory, intellect, and will) have to allow us to contemplate God intellectually.

such as men, who are close images of God, for they have attributes common to the three divine persons.

¹⁶ Numerous commentators, among whom we can mention Giovanni Santinello, “S. Bonaventura e la nozione dell’essere,” *Doctor Seraphicus* 10 (1983): 69-80, and Orlando Todisco, “Esse. Esentia,” in *Dizionario Bonaventuriano: filosofia, teologia, spiritualità*, ed. Ernesto Caroli (Padova: Editrici Francescane, 2008), 345-346, explain this thesis of Saint Bonaventure on the need to be in and of itself, which is the first essential attribute of God.

¹⁷ On the third level of the Aesthetics of Bonaventure, see, among others, Fabro, “Contemplazione mística,” 5-13, and Arias Rueda, “Conocimiento de lo bello,” 137-220.

¹⁸ On the philosophical, theological, anthropological and moral projections that according to the Seraphic Doctor are derived from that illuminating presence of God in the human soul, see Elisa Cuttini, *Ritorno a Dio. Filosofia, teologia, etica della mens nel pensiero di Bonaventura da Bagnoregio* (Soveria Manelli (Catanzaro): Rubbetino Editore, 2002).

¹⁹ Jacques Guy Bougerol, “San Bonaventura: il sapere e il credere,” *Doctor Seraphicus* 22 (1975): 12-13, explains accurately the Bonaventurian thesis according to which man, by his three powers of the soul, memory, intelligence and will, is a true analogous image of the Word of God.

²⁰ Chavero Blanco, *Imago Dei. Aproximación a la antropología teológica de san Buenaventura* (Murcia: Espigas, 1993), goes on to extensively explain this anthropological-philosophical thesis of Saint Bonaventure according to which the human being, due to his essential mental qualities, is a clear image of God.

- a) According to Bonaventure, memory—being able to retain and represent both present things, which are corporeal and temporal, and successive things, which are simple and eternal (It. III, 2)—has three fundamental skills:²¹
1. to retain past things by recollection, present things by suspicion and future things by foresight (It. III, 2);
 2. to retain simple things, such as the principles of discrete and continuous quantity, namely, the point, the instant, and the unit, which are three essential elements to understand everything derived from them (It. III, 2);
 3. to retain the principles and axioms of the sciences as eternal cognitive contents and eternally, since we neither forget them nor deny them, since reason accepts them as something familiar and connatural (It. III, 2).

The Bagnoregio philosopher adds that thanks to his first retention of temporal things past, present, and future, memory is an image of eternity whose indivisible present encompasses all times (It. III, 2); thanks to its second retention of things past by recollection, present by suspicion, and future by foresight, memory is not only capable of being informed of what exists outside of man through phantoms, but it can also receive simple forms from above. Elusive by the senses or through representations of sensible objects (It. III, 2); thanks to its third retention of scientific principles and axioms, memory has an immutable light in the mind, in which it is capable of remembering immutable truths (It. III, 2). Hence, the Seraphic infers that by memory operations the human soul is the divine image and likeness, capable of having God present and knowing in action and participating in Him in potentiality (It. III, 3).

Now, it is evident that our Franciscan scholastic introduces several free presuppositions here, hardly acceptable to a rationalist mind. To refer to only one of them as an example, to pretend that by retaining things past, present, and *future*, memory is an image of eternity is entirely gratuitous: in fact, no memory can keep at the present moment

²¹ On this point, see, among others, Prini, “‘Ars aeterna’ e ‘memoria’ nel pensiero di S. Bonaventura,” *Doctor Seraphicus* 22 (1975): 21–29.

(in which supposedly it would be an “image of eternity”) *future* things, which have not yet happened and we do not even know if they will or will not happen one day.

- b) After analyzing the *intellect*, Bonaventure points out that his power consists of knowing the meaning of the terms, the propositions, and the sentences (It, III, 3).

According to him, the intellect knows the meanings of the terms when it understands what each of them is by definition (It, III, 3). As the definition is necessarily given by more general terms, and these must be defined by even more general terms, until reaching the supreme and most general terms, the Seraphic concludes that if we ignore the latter, we will never be able to define the lower terms (It, III, 3). Therefore, if we do not know Being by itself, we will not fully define a particular being; nor can we know Being by itself, without knowing it with its three essential properties: *unity*, *truth*, and *goodness* (It, III, 3).

The Seraphic again incurs gratuitous presuppositions: since from the knowledge of some terms and definitions (a *gnoseological* status), it is impossible to jump without more to the existence of being by itself (an *ontological* status of the *Supreme Being*). From the simple *definition* of an entity, we cannot necessarily go on to its effective *existence*. For example, the definition of “the number infinite” is clear and precise, without implying that we can specify it by the existence of a specific number. As if that were not enough, nor can we admit that this alleged Being by itself essentially possesses the transcendental properties of unity, truth, and goodness. Where does the author get such characteristics?

Our author adds that, on the other hand, the intellect is capable of thinking of being according to antithetical possibilities, namely, as diminished or complete, as perfect or imperfect, as being in potentiality or being in the act, as conditioned or unconditioned, as partial. or total, as changing or permanent, as being by another or by itself, as mixed with non-being or as pure being, as dependent or absolute, as anterior or posterior, as changeable or immutable, as simple or compound (It, III, 3). Hence, he believes he can affirm that as denials and defects are known only through the corresponding affirmations, our understanding cannot fully know any created being without knowing the purest, complete and absolute Being, an unconditioned and eternal Being,

which in its purity possesses the reasons for all things;²² in fact, the intellect cannot know that something is defective and incomplete without knowing in some way the Being exempt from all defects (It, III, 3).

Without stopping now to discuss each of the various gratuitous statements made here by the Seraphic, let us insist only on the idea that the possibility of thinking that there could be a “very pure, complete and absolute Being” does not allow us to affirm that it really exists: thinking or defining a centaur or a Martian does not necessarily imply that one or the other exists.

Analyzing the ability to know the *propositions*, Bonaventure asserts that the intellect understands the meaning of these when it knows with certainty that they are true and that such truth is absolute and immutable (It, III, 3); but, because it is changeable, our intellect cannot see the truth shine in such an immutable way if it is not thanks to another immutable light, which is Christ (It, III, 3).

Regarding the competence to know the *inference*, the author asserts that our intellect perceives the meaning of this inference by seeing that the conclusion necessarily derives from the premises (even if they are formed by contingent terms), a necessary relationship that the intellect discovers both in existing things and in non-existent ones (It, III, 3). In his view, the need for this inference does not derive from the existence of being in matter, since such existence is contingent, nor from the existence of things in the soul, since they do not really exist in it (It, III, 3), but it derives from the “exemplary nature of eternal art, in which things have mutual aptitude and relationship, as they are represented in eternal art.” (It, III, 3). Our author highlights the indissoluble link of our intellect with eternal truth²³ since nothing true can be known without it (It, III, 3).

²² In this respect Gilson, *La Filosofia en la Edad Media*, 439, points out that according to Saint Bonaventure, man can reach eternal reasons or ideas as they are in God, only as his reflection and also in a confused way. Despite this, divine Ideas or eternal reasons are the immediate rule of our knowledge, so that we see the truth not simply for eternal reasons, but in eternal reasons.

²³ As do many other commentators, Davide Riserbato, “Bonaventura e il fondamento di ogni conoscenza certa,” *Rivista di Filosofia Neo-Scolastica* 109, no. 4 (2017): 879–888, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26477238>, highlights the Bonaventurian theory on the role of divine illumination to enable man to know the truth.

Again, you can find here a *petitio principii*: from the necessary inference between the conclusion that my cat, because it is an animal, will die one day, because every animal is mortal, neither the “exemplary nature of eternal art” is necessarily inferred, nor is our intellect necessarily linked to “eternal truth.”

- c) Saint Bonaventure then considers the *will*, the operation of which he appreciates in *advice*, *judgment*, and *desire*. Regarding the *advice* to suggest the best among several alternatives (It, III, 4), the Seraphic states that nothing can be qualified as the best except by resemblance to the optimal: “nobody knows if one thing is better than another without knowing that is closer to the optimum” (It, III, 4). Hence, he deduces that whoever advises on the best necessarily carries the notion of the highest good (It, III, 4).

Again, it is worth asking how our scholastic can justify that the good, the best, and the optimum in contingent and relative beings necessarily require the existence of the highest and absolute Good.

Regarding the operation of the will in the *judgment*, Bonaventure believes that the true judgment about something that the advice appreciates necessarily derives from a law whose absolute rectitude is known with certainty by the person issuing the judgment. That is why this law is superior to our mind, and it judges by this law, as it is imprinted on it (It, III, 4). He concludes that since there is nothing superior to the human mind but its Creator, our will, when it thoroughly judges and decides, touches “the divine laws” (It, III, 4).

Finally, explaining the third operation of the will, *desire*, the author claims that it tends towards what it loves in the highest degree, that is, the supreme happiness which is only achieved by possessing the optimum and the ultimate end (It, III, 4). As a result, he concludes that the human desire for the will only craves the highest Good, or what is ordered to the highest Good, or what has the appearance of the highest Good (It, III, 4). In his opinion, so great is the force with which the highest Good attracts us,²⁴ that just by wanting it, the creature can love something (Cf, It,

²⁴ Orlando Todisco, “Bonum,” in *Dizionario Bonaventuriano: filosofia, teologia, spiritualità*, ed. Ernesto Caroli (Padova: Editrici Francescane, 2008), 221–227, explains with clarity and abundant documentary apparatus that ontological or transcendental category of God according to the Seraphic.

V, 1), to the point of committing a serious error when it accepts as true what it is a simple image or simulacrum of good (It, III, 4).

Not very different is the level of gratuity that Saint Bonaventure shows when exposing the capacity of the will to *judge* and *desire*: it is not seen why appreciating the rectitude or correctness of a judgment necessarily implies “touching the divine laws”; nor is it explained why wanting some good and some happiness necessarily implies the existence of supreme happiness and the highest and last Good.

In any case, from what has been stated so far it is clear that for the Seraphic—firmly based on the foundations of his unshakable Christian faith—our soul maintains great proximity to God, taking into account that “memory leads us to eternity, the intelligence to the truth, and the elective power [the will] to the utmost goodness, according to their respective operations” (It, III, 4).

After exposing that third degree of the contemplative ascent of man towards God, Saint Bonaventure concludes that by speculating in its principle one (a single substantial entity) and triune (through its three powers), which make it the image of God, the human soul is aided by the lights of philosophy and science, which, by perfecting and informing it, represent the Trinity in three ways (It, III, 6). Taking his primordial theological presuppositions to the last consequences, the mystic Doctor states that all philosophy is natural, rational, or moral. On this basis, he asserts that natural philosophy, which deals with the cause of existence, leads to the power of God the Father; rational philosophy, which studies the reason for understanding, leads to the wisdom of the Word of God; and moral philosophy, by taking care of the order of living, leads to the goodness of the Holy Spirit (It, III, 6).

Our mystical author thus confirms with absolute frankness the significant theological-trinitarian presuppositions that solidly sustain his entire philosophical-aesthetic system, not only in its central parts but also in each statement derived from those.

After these disquisitions, Bonaventure develops the second level of the introspective phase of his Aesthetics,²⁵ which consists of the human

²⁵ According to Bonaventure’s theoretical approach, the second level of the introspective phase of his Aesthetics constitutes the fourth degree of man’s ascent to God.

being having to contemplate God from within his soul as an image of God (It, IV, 1).²⁶ According to him, this is only achieved through Christ (It, IV, 2), for which man needs to clothe himself with the faith, hope, and charity of Christ to enjoy the absolute divine Truth (It, IV, 2). As if that were not enough, he asserts that to reach the fourth degree of contemplation,²⁷ the human being needs an abundance of devotion and the support of the grace of God, reformed by the theological virtues, by the delights of the spiritual senses, and by ecstatic suspensions (It, IV, 3).²⁸ Furthermore, the Seraphic argues that in this fourth degree of contemplative ascent to God, the means of the argument are the Holy Scriptures (and not Philosophy), which hierarchically illuminate the works of reparation, especially on faith, hope, and charity, all virtues—above all, charity—that must repair and reform the soul (It, IV, 3).

It is thus evident that Bonaventure introduces in this fourth contemplative degree a plexus of gratuitous religious assumptions and complex Christocentric reflections, which enter fully into Christian dogmatic theology, entirely outside of natural and non-confessional philosophy. So, due to the theological presuppositions and the dogmatic—almost mystical—corollaries that it contains, we will not develop this fourth degree of the intellectual ascent towards divinity, which, as previously mentioned, is the second level of the introspective phase of the Seraphic's Aesthetics.

²⁶ Hirschberger, *Historia de la Filosofía*, 264, considers that in this thesis Saint Bonaventure is inspired by Plotinus. According to this historian Plotinus, he affirms that the metaphysical return to the one, that is, to God, is carried out in an ethical way in the individual soul when man frees himself from his fall and transcends his individuality that distances him from the original unity, and tends towards new to the one, transcending matter, the principle of multiplicity, and becoming more and more spiritual.

²⁷ This Bonaventurian topic of the aesthetic contemplation of the human being in his ascent is analyzed by among others Macario Ofilada Mina, "St. Bonaventure: Aesthetics and Contemplation in the Journey towards God," *Studies in Spirituality* 16 (2006): 151–164, <https://doi.org/10.2143/SIS.16.0.2017796>.

²⁸ In this thesis Bonaventure is doubtlessly inspired by Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita, whose thought at this point Hirschberger, *Historia de la Filosofía*, 326, synthesizes. According to this historian, Pseudo-Dionysius maintains that if every movement is a yearning and tending towards the beautiful and the good, it turns out that the whole world is animated by a movement towards God; And in the concrete case of the human soul, this return to God is made through faith and prayer until reaching the ecstatic union with the One.

Background to the first level of the introspective phase of Bonaventurian Aesthetics

It is now time to analyze some philosophical sources in which our author bases three essential theses of the introspective stage of his Aesthetics. He proposes these theses after subtly reformulating specific theories consolidated as traditional doctrine under the aegis of conspicuous ancient and medieval philosophers.

In the paragraphs that follow, we do not pretend to exhaust all the sources that inspire the Seraphic in the subject analyzed. We believe, however, that what we present below could reflect some influences which may have inspired the Seraphic when proposing his central thesis in this field.

Fundamental presupposition

As previously mentioned, Bonaventure bases his introspective Aesthetics on the postulate that if a man enters within himself and considers the operations and habits of his three powers, memory, intellect, and will, he will be able by himself to see God as though an image, “as through a mirror and as in an enigma” (It, III, 1).

Such a consideration of the three powers of the human soul (*memoria, intellectus, voluntas*) seems to be taken from Saint Augustine, who, according to Johannes Hirschberger,²⁹ is inspired in turn by Plotinus, when he highlights as essential attributes of the One (God) intelligence, freedom, and will.³⁰

From this basic assumption, the Seraphic derives these three core theses, whose sources of inspiration we are now trying to elucidate.

²⁹ In this respect, Hirschberger, *Historia de la Filosofía*, 264, points out that according to Plotinus, in the One freedom and will develop in all their fullness. Hirschberger adds that these voluntarist concepts of Plotinus “will help [Saint] Augustine to see God as love and the Holy Spirit, within the Trinity, as the substantial bond that unites the Father and the Son, also as will and love (*memoria - intellectus - voluntas*).” (Hirschberger, *Historia de la Filosofía*, 264)

³⁰ According to Hirschberger, *Historia de la Filosofía*, 262, Christian speculation on the Trinity is inspired by the system of Plotinus, for whom Trinitarian speculation must refer only to God who is identical with the one, endowed with intelligence, freedom and will in all its fullness.

Memory as a means of contemplative access to God

In Bonaventure's opinion, thanks to *memory*, in its ability to retain the principles and axioms of science as eternal knowledge and in an eternal way, the soul is the image and divine likeness (It, III, 1), capable of knowing God in the act, and able to participate in Him in potentiality (It, III, 2).

In proclaiming such a momentous theophanic role to memory, the Franciscan mystic seems to have no background influences. It only occurs to us to partially relate this Bonaventurian proposal with Plato in his theory of reminiscence or anamnesis (*ἀνάμνησις*). According to this Platonic theory, man, when seeing in this material world the individual entities (each of them a fictitious shadow of the corresponding universal, abstract idea subsisting in *hyperuranium* (*ὑπερουράνιος τόπος*), recalls the true ideas which he knew in hyperuranium when his soul had not yet been imprisoned in matter (the human body).

Now, although Plato and Bonaventure put memory as the central axis here, the differences between the conceptions of each one are substantial, to the point of making them practically incompatible. To begin with, the Seraphic completely rejects the Platonic thesis of the preexistence of the soul in contemplation of the real and true ideas in *hyperuranium*. As a logical consequence, he also discards the *a priori* and innate knowledge of the truth on the part of man, since, according to him, everything that man knows, he knows through his sensory and intellectual experience, without any innateness.

The intellect as a means of contemplative access to God

As we have seen before, another basic thesis of Bonaventure is also that the *intellect*, thanks to its ability to know the meaning of terms, propositions, and statements (It, III, 2), maintains an indissoluble link with the eternal truth (God), because without it, human understanding cannot know anything true (It, III, 3). In this centrality of the intellect in its contemplative ascent towards God and relation to relative similarity or concordance between God and the human intellect, the Seraphic

seems to be inspired by some ideas of Plotinus, Saint Augustine, and Hugh of Saint-Victor.

For Plotinus (205-270), in effect, the source of beauty is only spirit, never matter, to the point that the sensory world is beautiful only thanks to the idea, to the model or archetype, to the inner form of the spirit.³¹ Tatarkiewicz explains this thesis of the Neoplatonic master, saying that “Only the spirit is capable of recognizing the spirit and, therefore, only he can perceive beauty, precisely managing to capture and receive it because of their mutual kinship.”³² In that order of ideas, Plotinus expresses:

What he sees must be applied to contemplation after having become akin and similar to what is seen. For no eye would have ever seen the sun if it had not become similar to the sun, and no soul could see beauty without having become beautiful. Make yourself, then, first everything deiform and beautiful if you intend to contemplate God and beauty.³³

And in another passage Plotinus raises his transcendentalist and almost mystical approach even more, stating: “Inner contemplation and communion not with the statue or with the image, but with the divinity itself [...] and this may not be a contemplation, but another way of seeing, an ecstasy.”

However, much more than in Plotinus, it is in Saint Augustine of Hippo (354-430) that Bonaventure bases his thesis on the theophanic capacity of human understanding. For Augustine, ideas remain immutable and eternal in the mind of God, in which they give true form to created things. This is how St. Augustine points it out:

Ideas are given, which are permanent, essential, immutable forms of things; They were not themselves formed but remain eternally identical and are in the mind of God. And while they are neither born nor perish, everything that has a beginning and an end and is really born and dies is configured according to them.³⁴

³¹ Tatarkiewicz, *Historia de la estética*, I: *La estética antigua* (Madrid: Akal, 2000), 329, explains the significant spiritualist thesis of Plotinus in a synthetic way.

³² Tatarkiewicz, *Historia de la estética*, I, 330.

³³ Plotinus, cited in Tatarkiewicz, *Historia de la estética*, I, 337.

³⁴ Augustinus, *De div. Quaest.* 83, qu, 46, 2, cited in Hirschberger, *Historia de la Filosofía*, 303.

For Saint Augustine, man can apprehend true ideas through spiritual intellect from this original source in God's mind. In his treatise *De vera religione*, when wondering where to find the necessary, absolute, and eternal value of truth, he affirms that it is not found in sensory experience but in the spirit of man. This is how he puts it: "Don't go outside, come back to yourself; in the inner man dwells the truth; and if you find your nature to be changeable, transcend yourself".³⁵

In an earlier passage in the same book, he notes: "I delight in the utmost equality, which I do not perceive with the eyes of the body, but with those of the mind; for this reason, I judge that the things that I perceive with the eyes are so much better the closer they are by their nature to those that I perceive with the spirit".³⁶

The bishop of Hippo complements this thesis with his theory of enlightenment, a theory according to which God radiates truth into the spirit of man, not through supernatural revelation, but natural illumination. In his opinion, even in the case of being blinded by lust, every rational spirit, when he thinks and reasons, can arrive at the truth, but this should not be attributed to himself, but in the light of the truth, which enlightens in your capacity so that you can feel the truth by reasoning.³⁷

Similarly, Saint Bonaventure, by necessarily linking the capacities of the human intellect with God, who illuminates it, also seems to be inspired by some theses of Hugh of Saint-Victor (c. 1096–1141), such as the one he formulates as follows:

Our spirit cannot ascend towards the truth of invisible entities, unless it is illustrated by the consideration of visible things, that is, in such a way that it judges that visible forms are images of invisible beauty.³⁸

And a few lines later, Hugh of Saint Victor adds:

³⁵ Augustinus, "De vera religione, XLI, 77," J.-P. Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina*, vol. 34, col. 151.

³⁶ Augustinus, "De vera religione, XLI, 77," J.-P. Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina*, vol. 34, col. 147.

³⁷ Augustinus, cited in Hirschberger, *Historia de la Filosofía*, 295.

³⁸ Hugo de Sancto Victore, *Exp. in Hierarchia Coelesti S. Dionysii, Liber II*, J.-P. Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina*, vol. 175, col. 949..

there is some similarity between visible beauty and invisible beauty, according to the similarity or emulation that the invisible creator [God] constituted to one and the other, similarity in which both configure, as in a mirror, a single image of different proportions.³⁹

The will as a means of contemplative access to God

As previously explained, Saint Bonaventure maintains that the *will* expresses itself in *advice* (which necessarily implies the notion of the highest Good) (It, III, 4), in *judgment* (which requires having the divine laws printed) (It, III, 4), and in *desire* (which is only achieved by possessing the optimum and the ultimate end (It, III, 4), since man only desires the highest Good, or what is ordered to the highest Good, or what has the appearance of supreme Good) (It, III, 4).

Plotinus, by granting the will a leading role in the face of the primacy of intellect in Greek intellectualism, may have been able to inspire the Franciscan mystic. This is how Plotinus expresses his thesis: “The works of the one are the manifestations of his will since he does nothing without wanting to. But his actions are in a way his substance. His will and his substance are therefore the same”.⁴⁰

However, at this point, the Seraphic is inspired above all by Saint Augustine, whose voluntarism is reflected in lapidary phrases like this: “You made us, Lord, for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you”.⁴¹ Or this other sentence: “The will is always present; even the movements of the soul are nothing but will”.⁴² Or when the bishop of Hippo states:

Just as, before being happy, the notion of happiness is already imprinted in our minds; and through it, we already know, and with faith and without any doubt, we say that we want to be happy; so also before being wise, we have

³⁹ Hugo de Sancto Victore, *Exp. In Hierarch. Coel.*, PL 175, 949.

⁴⁰ Plotinus, *Enneada VI*, 8,13, cited in Hirschberger, *Historia de la Filosofía*, 264.

⁴¹ Augustinus, “Confessiones, I, 1,” in *Obras completas de San Agustín* (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1998, col. II), 73.

⁴² Augustinus, “De civitate Dei, XIV, 6,” J.-P. Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina*, vol. 42, col. 1040.

already imprinted in our spirit the notion of wisdom, by which each one of us, when asked if he wants to be wise, answers yes, without a shadow of a doubt.⁴³

Nor can it be ruled out that Saint Bonaventure had at this point been influenced by Johannes Scotus Eriugena (c. 810–c. 877), for whom “visible forms [...] are figurations of invisible beauty, through which Divine Providence guides the human soul towards the pure and invisible beauty of its truth”.⁴⁴ Or, as Gilson puts it, interpreting Eriugena: “everything is *essentially* a sign, a symbol, through which God makes himself known to us: *nihil enim visibiliuum rerum corporaliumque est, ut arbitror, quod non incorporale quid et intelligibile significet* (De div. Nat., V, 3).”⁴⁵

Conclusions

We could synthesize what we have highlighted thus far about the introspective phase of Bonaventurian Aesthetics in these brief assertions:

1. At the third level of his contemplative ascent to God, man can see Him as in the mirror image of his soul by considering the operations of his three spiritual powers, his memory, intellect, and will.
2. As these three spiritual powers, totally different from each other, are proper to a single substance (the individual human soul), they are analogous images that reveal God one in substance and triune in Persons.
3. Bonaventure has no qualms here about mixing rational philosophy with Christian dogmatic theology. For him, reason and revelation are not two separate or antithetical elements but integrate the same human way of thinking. For him, man’s rational intelligence needs to know the truth, to be illuminated by God.
4. In formulating the various theses that structure the first level of the introspective stage of his Aesthetics, Bonaventure draws inspiration from more than a few statements by other pagan and

⁴³ Augustinus, “De libero arbitrio, Liber II, 9, 26,” J.-P. Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina*, vol. 32, 1254–1255)

⁴⁴ Johannes Scotus Eriugena, *In Hierarchia Coelesti Dionysii I*, PL 122, 138–139.

⁴⁵ Cited in Gilson, *La Filosofia en la Edad Media*, 210.

Christian authors. In one or another of these Bonaventurian aesthetic theses, we believe we have seen some traces of Plato, Plotinus, Saint Augustine, Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita, Johannes Scotus Eriugena, and Hugh of Saint-Victor.

5. Apart from these foreseeable influences, the Seraphic—even granting himself numerous unjustified theological-dogmatic presuppositions—shows in his aesthetic theory unquestionable originality, in which he succeeds in balancing the intellectual and volitional dimensions.

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P O V Z E T K I

Bojan Žalec

Religija in narava v luči Rosove teorije resonance

Nemški sociolog Hartmut Rosa je razvil celostno teorijo resonance, ki je teorija našega odnosa do sveta. Ta teorija je v zadnjih letih vzbudila veliko zanimanja ne samo med sociologi, ampak tudi med predstavniki drugih humanističnih in družboslovnih disciplin, vključno s predstavniki znanosti o religiji. Zato avtor meni, da je o njej vredno razpravljati. V članku se ukvarja z religijo in naravo v luči Rosove teorije. Rosa religijo in naravo razume kot dve od glavnih osi in področij človekovega iskanja vertikalne resonance v moderni. V delu o religiji avtor predstavi Rosovo stališče, da je bistvo religije človekova potreba po odzivu. V luči teorije resonance osvetli fenomene kot so molitev, čaščenje, verski obredi, nekateri prazniki (božič) in greh. Kot še posebno relevantne mislece in ustvarjalce poudari Schleiermacherja, Bubra, Gerhardta, Luthra in Camusa. Na tej osnovi osvetli eksistencialno nasilje, ki izvira iz potrebe po resonanci in zavračanju odtujitve kot njenega nasprotja. V delu o naravi se posveti predvsem problemom, ki ovirajo modernega človeka pri njegovem prizadevanju, da bi izpolnil svoje hrepenenje po resonanci z naravo. Pojasni Rosovo tezo, da je ekološka kriza v svojem temelju in izvoru eksistencialna in kulturna kriza, ne pa kriza virov. V sklepu izpelje ugotovitve, ki zadevajo pomen religije in strah sodobnega človeka pred izgubo resonance.

Ključne besede: resonanca, odtujitev, Hartmut Rosa, religija, narava, osi vertikalne resonance, antropološka potreba po odzivu, resonanca z naravo.

Nadja Furlan Štante

Ekofeministična teologija soodvisnosti: konstruktivistični teološki pristop k sodobni okoljski (ne)pravičnosti in ranljivosti

Prispevek obravnava vprašanje družbene in okoljske (ne)pravičnosti skozi prizmo krščanskega ekofeminizma ter njegove etike medsebojne povezanosti in ekološkega skrbništva vsega stvarstva. Ker ekofeminizem povezuje izkoriščanje žensk z izkoriščanjem stvarstva (narave), za izoblikovanje osrednjega raziskovalnega vprašanja uporabljam metodologijo ključa krščanske ekofeministične hermenevtike: najprej sledi analiza stališča krščanskega ekofeminizma do vprašanja družbene in

okoljske (ne)pravičnosti, nato analiza pozitivnih prispevkov in implikacij krščanske ekofeministične etike na krščansko teologijo in prizadevanja za družbeno in okoljsko pravičnost.

Čeprav podnebne spremembe nesorazmerno bolj vplivajo na žensko populacijo, še zlasti na reproduktivno zdravje revnejših žensk, so te pogosto izločene iz procesa odločanja o okoljski problematiki. Ženske po vsem svetu so že sicer bolj ogrožene zaradi onesnaženega zraka, omejenega dostopa do čiste vode in vse večje izpostavljenosti strupenim kemikalijam, podnebne spremembe pa te nevarnosti samo še povečujejo. Občutljivost za vplive podnebnih sprememb pa ženskam daje tudi edinstveno izkustveno znanje, s katerim lahko pomembno pripomorejo k prizadevanjem za izboljšanje podnebne odpornosti in trajnosti ter tudi k boljši ozaveščenosti in drugačnemu odnosu do okoljske problematike in narave med svetovnimi religijami. Za ekofeministke je okoljska kriza realnost, grožnja in opozorilo sodobnemu človeštvu. Podnebne spremembe, globalno segrevanje, zmanjšanje biotske raznovrstnosti in drugi procesi, ki naj bi bili posledica onesnaževanja okolja in dolgotrajnega čezmernega izkoriščanja in izrabe naravnih virov, gotovo izražajo globalni potrošniško-imperialistični odnos človeka do narave.

Ključne besede: ekofeminizem, krščanstvo, okoljska (ne)pravičnost, podnebne spremembe, ranljivost, ženske.

George Handley

Pustinja zacvete kakor narcisa: na poti k zahodni naravovarstveni estetiki

Cerkev Jezusa Kristusa svetih iz poslednjih dni (znana tudi kot mormonska cerkev) ponuja, po mnenju njenih vernikov, obnovo izvirnega krščanstva. Avtor v članku raziskuje podlage za mormonsko obnovo nekdanje izgubljene naravovarstvene modrosti, s katero bi sodobni kraji na ameriškem Zahodu, predvsem taki, kjer so sveti iz poslednjih dni osnovali številne skupnosti, lahko postali bolj trajnostni. Medtem ko so mormoni in drugi naseljenci Zahoda svoje delo jemali kot nekakšno izpolnjevanje Izaijeve prerokbe, da bo z radikalnim preoblikovanjem okolja »pustinja zacvetela kot narcisa«, avtor zagovarja bolj estetski in okoljsko občutljivejši odziv na naravne danosti puščave, ki potrebujejo zaščito ali obnovo.

Ključne besede: mormonska cerkev, mormonstvo, Cerkev Jezusa Kristusa svetih iz poslednjih dni, Utah, ekologija, puščava, Aldo Leopold, Wallace Stegner, naravovarstvena estetika.

Marija Mojca Terčelj

Staroselske kozmologije v okviru novih epistemoloških in političnih teženj globalnega juga

Bistvena razlika med staroselskimi verstvi in svetovnimi religijami je v pojmovanju odnosa »človek – narava«. Staroselska verstva dojemajo človeka kot enakovrednega akterja pri vzpostavljanju kozmične harmonije, torej ga postavljajo ob bok vsem drugim živim in neživim bitjem stvarstva, medtem ko ga svetovne religije umeščajo v središče sveta. Krščansko religiozno izročilo na eni strani ter kartezijanski ontološki dualizem in metodološki empirizem na drugi so močno vplivali na razvoj zahodnjaške znanstvene misli. Družbene in humanistične vede so v zadnjih desetletjih naredile velik korak – prispevale so k novim razlagam globalnih ekonomskih in socialnih zakonitosti ter hibridizacije etničnih identitet in začele tesneje sodelovati z empiričnimi znanostmi. Problem nastane, ko je zaradi lastne zadržanosti katera koli druga vrsta znanja diskvalificirana kot »neznanstvena«, »lokalna«, »romantična«, nepopolna. V začetku 21. stoletja je staroselska kozmologija vstopila v politični diskurz in ideologijo številnih socialnih gibanj globalnega Juga. Na podlagi primerjalne analize treh konkretnih staroselskih kozmoloških in religioznih modelov (odnos človek – narava) želi članek opozoriti na potrebo po pluralizmu miselnih konceptov in družbenih praks.

Ključne besede: človek – narava, staroselec, pačamamizem, ekologija, razvoj.

Sashinungla

Kontinuum Bog-sebstvo-svet v plemenski religiji

Naslanjajoč se na religije staroselskih ljudstev, želi avtorica v članku pokazati, da religija ni nujno kraj prevlade in izključevanja (človeških ali nečloveških bitij). Pri tem ne podaja sistematičnega opisa podrobnosti plemenskih religij, temveč razpravlja predvsem o kontinuumu Bog-sebstvo-svet znotraj plemenske paradigme in prikaže etične implikacije različnih metafizičnih zavezanosti, ki jih ta narekuje. Pogled na plemensko duhovnost, ki je osredinjena na zemljo, razkrije številne možnosti za razumevanje »narave« in mesta človeka ter prispeva k preseganju problemov binarnega dualizma.

Ključne besede: plemenska religija, Bog-sebstvo-svet, plemenske kozmogonije, ekološka povezanost, elementarno, plemenska filozofija, na zemljo osredinjena duhovnost.

Victoria Dos Santos

Animistični način: sodobno poganstvo in posthumano

Avtorica skuša v članku raziskati podobnosti med sodobnim poganstvom in posthumanim projektom v tem, kako pristopata do nečloveškega naravnega sveta. Po eni strani posthumanizem odkriva nove načine pojmovanja ideje človeka in njegove povezanosti z nečloveškim svetom. Po drugi strani pa novopoganstvo s svojo animistično odnosnostno senzibilnostjo to razmišljanje širi v domeno duhovnosti. Obe perspektivi izpodbijata moderno paradigmo, v kateri sta si narava in človek nasprotna in medsebojno nepovezana. Namesto nje predlagata odnosnostno ontologijo, ki sprejema »drugačnega drugega«. Ta celostni odnos med človekom in »vsem, kar ni človek«, je mogoče razumeti skozi semiotično chóro, pojem, ki ga je vpeljala Julia Kristeva in v katerem subjekt ni simbolno ločen od sveta, v katerega je zajet.

Ključne besede: posthumanizem, novopoganstvo, animizem, čaščenje narave.

Petri Berndtson

Zračna in respiratorna atmosfera Avicenovega letečega človeka

Perzijski filozof Avicena (980–1037) je znan po svojem miselnem eksperimentu v zvezi z »letečim« ali »lebdečim človekom« oziroma s »človekom, ki visi v zraku«. Ta postulira, da se človek pojavi kakor lebdeč v zraku v stanju popolne senzorne deprivacije. Znanstveniki so stoletja razpravljali o tem, o čem naj bi šlo pri tem poskusu. Večina v njem vidi dokazovanje obstoja duše (*al-nafs*) v njeni nesovnosti, substancialnosti in samozavedanju, pa tudi kot dokazovanje neenakosti med dušo in telesom. Avtor v članku razlaga Avicenov miselni eksperiment na povsem drugačen način, znotraj atmosfer zraka in dihanja. V svoji interpretaciji podrobno preučí dejstvo, ki ga znanstveniki zanemarjajo, in sicer, da se ta let dogaja v zraku, torej da zrak opredeljuje obstoj letečega človeka. V takšni zračni perspektivi avtor dokazuje, da pri tem miselnem eksperimentu ne gre prvenstveno za dušo, temveč za zrak in *al-nafs* kot respiratorno sestvo. V svoji zračni in respiratorni interpretaciji Avicenovega letečega človeka uporabi na zrak osredinjeno fenomenološko razmišljanje Gastona Bachelarda in se opre na etimološko analizo izraza *al-nafs*.

Ključne besede: Avicena, leteči človek, lebdeči človek, Bachelard, dihanje, zrak, al-nafs.

José María Salvador-González

Razmišljanje o Bogu skozi zrcalo duše: prva raven introspektivne estetike sv. Bonaventure iz virov, ki so jo navdahnile

Cilj članka je predvsem osvetliti prvo raven introspektivne estetike frančiškanskega filozofa sv. Bonaventure, kakor je razložena v 3. poglavju njegovega dela *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*. Bonaventura je menil, da je človek, če se nasloni na vse tri moči v svoji duši – spomin, razum in voljo – sposoben intelektualno razmišljati kakor v zrcalu enega in troedinega Boga, saj so te tri moči podobe Stvarnika. Nadalje skuša članek zaslediti še katere od doktrinalnih virov, ki bi lahko navdahnili Bonaventuro, ko je zastavljal teze, s katerimi je zgrajena prva introspektivna raven njegove estetike.

Ključne besede: sv. Bonaventura, estetika, Bog, um, duša, primarni viri.

A B S T R A C T S

Bojan Žalec

Religion and Nature in the Light of Rosa's Resonance Theory

German sociologist Hartmut Rosa has developed an integral resonance theory, which is a theory of our relationship to the world. This theory has aroused much interest in recent years not only among sociologists but also among representatives of other humanities and social sciences, including representatives of the science of religion. Therefore, the author considers it worth discussing. The article deals with religion and nature in light of Rosa's theory. Rosa understands religion and nature as two of the main axes and areas of man's search for vertical resonance in modernity. In the section devoted to religion, the author presents Rosa's view that the essence of religion is man's need for a response. In light of resonance theory, the author examines phenomena such as prayer, worship, religious rites, certain holidays (Christmas), and sin. Schleiermacher, Buber, Gerhardt, Luther and Camus are singled out as particularly relevant thinkers and creators. On this basis, he discusses existential violence, which stems from the need for resonance and the rejection of alienation as its opposite. The section devoted to nature is mainly focused on the problems that hinder modern man in their quest to fulfil their longing for resonance with nature. The author explains Rosa's thesis that the ecological crisis is, at its core and origin, an existential and cultural crisis and not a crisis of resources. The author draws conclusions concerning the importance of religion and modern man's fear of the loss of resonance.

Keywords: resonance, alienation, Hartmut Rosa, religion, nature, axes of vertical resonance, anthropological need for response, resonance with nature.

Nadja Furlan Štante

Ecofeminist Theology of Interdependence: A Constructive Theological Approach to Contemporary Environmental (in)Justice and Vulnerability

This article addresses the issue of social and environmental (in)justice through the lens of Christian ecofeminism and its ethic of interconnectedness and ecological responsibility for all of creation. Because ecofeminism connects the exploitation of women with the exploitation of creation (nature), I use the cen-

tral research methodology of Christian ecofeminist hermeneutics to formulate a central research question: first, an analysis of Christian ecofeminism's position on social and ecological (in)justice, then an analysis of the positive implications for Christian theology and for the pursuit of social and ecological justice. Although climate change disproportionately impacts female populations, in particular the reproductive health of poorer women, women are often excluded from environmental decision-making processes. Women around the world are already more affected by polluted air, limited access to clean water, and increased exposure to toxic chemicals, and climate change exacerbates these threats. Sensitivity to the impacts of climate change also provides women with a unique experiential knowledge that they can use to make an important contribution to efforts to increase climate resilience and sustainability, as well as to improve awareness and attitudes toward environmental issues and nature in the world's religions. For ecofeminists, the environmental crisis is a reality, a threat, and a warning to modern humanity. Climate change, global warming, loss of biodiversity and other processes that are supposedly the result of pollution and long-term overuse and exploitation of natural resources are certainly a reflection and consequence of man's global consumer-imperialist attitude towards nature.

Keywords: ecofeminism, Christianity, environmental (in)justice, climate change, vulnerability, women.

George Handley

The Desert Blossoms as a Rose: Toward a Western Conservation Aesthetic

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (aka The "Mormon" Church) offers what believers consider to be the restoration of an original Christianity. This essay explores the grounds for a Latter-day Saint restoration of a once-lost ecological wisdom that could make contemporary settlements in the American West more sustainable, especially where Latter-day Saints have established many communities. While Latter-day Saints and many other settlers of the West considered their work to be a kind of fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy to make the desert "blossom as a rose" through radical environmental transformation, this essay argues for a more aesthetic and ecologically sensitive response to the native qualities of the desert that need protection or even restoration.

Keywords: Mormon Church, Mormonism, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Utah, ecology, desert, Aldo Leopold, Wallace Stegner, conservation aesthetic.

Marija Mojca Terčelj

*Indigenous Cosmologies in Light of New Epistemological and Political Trends
of the Global South*

The essential difference between indigenous religions and world religions is in the understanding of the “man-Nature” relationship. While the former perceive man as an equal actor in the establishment of cosmic harmony, placing him alongside all other living and non-living beings of creation, the latter place him in the centre of the world. The Christian religious tradition on the one side, and the Cartesian ontological dualism and methodological empiricism on the other, have strongly influenced the development of Western scientific thought. Over the past decades, the social sciences and humanities have made a great step forward: contributing to new interpretations of global economic and social laws, as well as of the hybridisation of ethnic identities, and starting to cooperate more closely with empirical sciences. The problem arises when self-indulgent introspection disqualifies any other type of knowledge as “non-scientific,” “local,” “romantic,” imperfect. At the beginning of the 21st century, the indigenous cosmology entered the political discourse and ideology of numerous social movements of the Global South. Based on a comparative analysis of three concrete indigenous cosmological and religious models (man vs. Nature relationship), this article seeks to draw attention to the need for a pluralism of mental concepts and social practices.

Keywords: man-Nature, indigene, Pachamamism, ecology, development.

Sashinungla

God-Self-World Continuum in Tribal Religion

This article draws on the religions of the indigenous tribes in order to show that religion does not have to be a site of domination and exclusion (human or non-humans). It is not a systematic account of the minutiae of tribal religions. It primarily discusses the god-self-world continuum within a tribal paradigm and looks at the ethical implications of various metaphysical commitments that it instructs. Looking at tribal earth-centred spirituality uncovers many ways to consider “nature” and the place of humans, and contributes to overcoming problems of binary dualisms.

Keywords: tribal religion, god-self-world, tribal cosmogonies, ecological connectivity, elemental, tribal philosophy, earth-centred spirituality.

Victoria Dos Santos

The Animistic Way: Contemporary Paganism and the Posthuman

This article aims to explore the affinities between contemporary Paganism and the posthuman project in how they approach the non-human natural world. On the one hand, posthumanism explores new ways of considering the notion of humans and how they are linked with the non-human world. On the other hand, Neopaganism expands this reflection to the spiritual domain through its animistic relational sensibility. Both perspectives challenge the modern paradigm where nature and humans are opposed and mutually disconnected. They instead propose a relational ontology that welcomes the “different other.” This integrated relationship between humans and the “other than human” can be understood through the semiotic Chora, a notion belonging to Julia Kristeva that addresses how the subject is not symbolically separated from the world in which it is contained.

Keywords: posthumanism, Neopaganism, animism, earth-based religion.

Petri Berndtson

Aerial and Respiratory Atmospheres of Avicenna's Flying Person

Persian philosopher Avicenna (980–1037) is famous for his thought experiment concerning the flying person, “floating person” or “person suspended in air.” In this thought experiment, a person is created flying in the air in a state of total sensory deprivation. Scholars have debated for centuries what this thought experiment is all about. Most scholars have interpreted this thought experiment as essentially being about the existence of the soul (*al-nafs*) in its immateriality, substantiality, and self-awareness, as well as about the difference between the soul and the body. In my article, I will interpret Avicenna's thought experiment in a totally different manner within the atmospheres of air and breathing. In my reading, I will carefully examine the fact neglected by scholars that this flight happens in the air and that it is the air that defines the existence of the flying person. With this aerial attitude I will argue that this thought experiment is not above all about the soul, but about air and *al-nafs* as a respiratory self. In my aerial and respiratory interpretation of Avicenna's flying person, I will use Gaston Bachelard's phenomenologically oriented aerial thinking as well as etymological analysis of *al-nafs*.

Keywords: Avicenna, flying person, floating person, Bachelard, breathing, air, al-nafs.

José María Salvador-González

Contemplating God from the Mirror of the Soul: The First Level of St. Bonaventure's Introspective Aesthetics from Its Inspiring Sources

This article seeks primarily to highlight the first level of the introspective stage of Saint Bonaventure's Aesthetics, as highlighted in Chapter 3 of his *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*. According to this Franciscan philosopher, if man considers his three spiritual powers, memory, intelligence, and will inside his soul, he will be able to contemplate intellectually as though in a mirror God one and triune, because those three powers are images of the Creator. Secondly, our article attempts to detect some of the doctrinal sources which could have inspired Bonaventure when proposing the different theses that structure this first introspective level of his Aesthetics.

Keywords: Saint Bonaventure, Aesthetics, God, mind, soul, primary sources.

O AVTORICAH IN AVTORJIH / ABOUT THE AUTHORS

BOJAN ŽALEC

Professor Bojan Žalec was born on March 15, 1966 in Ljubljana, Slovenia (then Yugoslavia). He is employed at the Faculty of Theology, University of Ljubljana where he is head of the Institute of Philosophy and Social Ethics. He is a member of the European Academy of Sciences and Arts (residency in Salzburg). He was a visiting researcher at the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw and a visiting professor at the Faculty of Theology, University of Zagreb (phenomenological ethics). In 1999 he received his doctorate in philosophy at the University of Ljubljana (mentored by Professor M. Potrč). He spent one year studying at the Institute of Philosophy of the University of Würzburg. Professor W. Baumgartner from that institute was his master's thesis co-mentor. Professor Žalec focuses on researching rationality, the conditions of normativity, virtues, tolerance, solidarity, dialogue and the conditions of fair cooperation in a value-heterogeneous society. The religious aspects of all these matters are of particular concern. Dr. Žalec deals with the theory of citizenship and the role of religion in public life. He has developed a special form of personalist philosophy (solidary personalism). Another area of interest is S. Kierkegaard. Lately, he has been devoting himself to resilience and resonance. He has published as a sole author more than one hundred and fifty scientific publications, six of which are scientific monographs. He has led both national and international research projects.

Profesor Bojan Žalec se je rodil 15. marca 1966 v Ljubljani v Sloveniji (takratni Jugoslaviji). Zaposlen je na Teološki fakulteti Univerze v Ljubljani. Tam je predstojnik Inštituta za filozofijo in družbeno etiko. Je član Evropske akademije znanosti in umetnosti (sedež v Salzburgu). Bil je gostujoči raziskovalec na Poljski akademiji znanosti v Varšavi in gostujoči profesor na Teološki fakulteti Univerze v Zagrebu (fenomenološka etika). Leta 1999 je doktoriral iz filozofije na Univerzi v Ljubljani (mentor profesor M. Potrč). Leto dni je študiral na Filozofskem inštitutu Univerze v Würzburgu. Profesor W. Baumgartner s tega inštituta je bil somentor pri njegovi magistrski nalogi. Profesor Žalec se osredinja na raziskovanje racionalnosti, pogojev normativnosti, vrlin, strpnosti, solidarnosti, dialoga in pogojev poštenega sodelovanja v vrednotno heterogeni družbi. Pri vseh teh temah posveča posebno pozornost verskim vidikom. Ukvarja se s teorijo državljanstva in vlogo religije v javnem življenju. Razvija posebno obliko personalistične filozofije (solidar-

ni personalizem). Posebno pozornost namenja S. Kierkegaardu. V zadnjem času se posveča rezilienci in resonanci. Kot edini avtor je objavil več kot sto petdeset znanstvenih publikacij, od tega šest znanstvenih monografij. Bil je vodja domačih in mednarodnih raziskovalnih projektov.

NADJA FURLAN ŠTANTE

Dr. Nadja Furlan – Štante je višja znanstvena sodelavka in izredna profesorica religijskih znanosti v Znanstveno-raziskovalnem središču Koper. Pri svojem znanstvenoraziskovalnem delu se osredinja na ženske religijske študije, ekofeminizem in medreligijski dialog.

Dr. Nadja Furlan-Štante is Senior Research Associate and Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Science and Research Centre Koper. Her current research interests are women's religious studies, ecofeminism and inter-religious dialogue.

GEORGE HANDLEY

George Handley je redni profesor za interdisciplinarne humanistične vede na Univerzi Brigham Younga v Utahu, v ZDA. Je avtor knjig *Postslavery Literatures in the Americas* (2000) in *New World Poetics: Nature and the Adamic Imagination in Whitman, Neruda, and Walcott* (2007) ter sourednik zbornikov *Caribbean Literature and the Environment* (2006) in *Postcolonial Ecologies* (2011). Leta 2020 je izdal zbirko esejev o mormonskih okoljskih vrednotah z naslovom *The Hope of Nature*. Njegovo ustvarjalno pisanje vključuje roman *American Fork* in okoljsko monografijo *Home Waters: A Year of Recompenses on the Provo River*. Trenutno piše knjigo o književnosti in ekoteologiji.

George Handley is a Professor of Interdisciplinary Humanities at Brigham Young University in Utah, USA. He is the author of *Postslavery Literatures in the Americas* (2000), *New World Poetics: Nature and the Adamic Imagination in Whitman, Neruda, and Walcott* (2007), and the co-editor of *Caribbean Literature and the Environment* (2006), and *Postcolonial Ecologies* (2011). His collection of essays on Latter-day Saint environmental values, *The Hope of Nature*, was published in 2020. His creative writing includes the novel, *American Fork*, and the environmental memoir, *Home Waters: A Year of Recompenses on the Provo River*. He is currently writing a book on literature and ecotheology.

MARIJA MOJCA TERČELJ

Marija Mojca Terčelj je predavateljica na Oddelku za antropologijo in kulturne študije Fakultete za humanistične študije Koper Univerze na Primorskem. Od leta 1990 je gostujoča raziskovalka mehiških institucij *Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas de la UNAM*, *Instituto de Estudios Indígenas de la UNACH* in *Unidad de Estudios Sociales, UADY*, Merida. Med letoma 1990 in 1997 je raziskovala tradicionalno zdravilstvo in religiozni sinkretizem v obredjih rodovitnosti med staroselskim prebivalstvom Soke v Chiapasu, od leta 2000 pa proučuje Maje na Jukatanu, in sicer medkulturne odnose, socialne politike, etnična gibanja, človekove pravice – pravice za staroselce, poljedelske prakse in tradicionalno zdravilstvo. Leta 2010 je za raziskavo Sveti čas in prostor med Maji na Jukatanu prejela prestižno štipendijo mehiške vlade *Genaro Estrada*.

Dr. Marija Mojca Terčelj is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Anthropology and Cultural Studies, University of Primorska, Koper. Since 1990 she has been a guest researcher with the *Mexican institutions Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas de la UNAM, Instituto de Estudios Indígenas de la UNACH, and Unidad de Estudios Sociales, UADY*, Mérida. From 1990 to 1997 she investigated traditional medicine systems and religious syncretism in the fertility rituals among the Zoque in Chiapas and she has been researching the Maya of Yucatan since 2000: intercultural relationships, social policies, ethnic movements, human rights, rights for indigenous peoples, agricultural practices, and traditional healing. In 2010 the Mexican government awarded her the prestigious “Genaro Estrada” grant for conducting research on sacred time and space among the Maya of Yucatan (Universidad Autónoma de Yucatan - UADY).

SASHINUNGLA

Sashinungla je profesorica filozofije na Univerzi v Jadavpurju, v Kolkati. Njena osrednja raziskovalna področja zajemajo etiko, staroselsko filozofijo, feministično filozofijo in okoljsko filozofijo. Objavila je več knjig, med njimi *Tradition and Modernity: Essays on Women of India*, ur. Sashinungla in A. C. Sinha (Suryodaya Books, 2015), *Environment Preservation: A Philosophical Critique* (Decent Books, 2005) ter *Ethics and Culture: Some Indian Reflection*, ur. Sashinungla in I. Sanyal (Decent Books: 2010).

Sashinungla is Professor of Philosophy at Jadavpur University, Kolkata. Her main research interests are ethics, indigenous philosophy, feminist philosophy, and environmental philosophy. Books include *Tradition and Modernity: Essays on*

Women of India, ed. by Sashinungla and A.C. Sinha (Suryodaya Books, 2015), *Environment Preservation: A Philosophical Critique* (Decent Books, 2005), and *Ethics and Culture: Some Indian Reflection*, ed. by Sashinungla and I. Sanyal (Decent Books: 2010).

VICTORIA DOS SANTOS

Victoria Dos Santos je doktorska študentka semiotike in medijev na Univerzi v Torinu. Raziskovalno se ukvarja področji novih verskih praks v digitalnem prostoru, sodobnega poganstva, digitalne religije, semiotike, medijskih študij ter presečišč med ekologijo in hibridizacijo digitalnih medijev. Diplomirala je iz komunikologije na Katoliški univerzi Andrés Bello (UCAB) v Caracasu, v Venezueli, magistrski študij s področja novinarstva pa je pozneje opravila na Univerzi v Barceloni in na Univerzi Columbia v New Yorku.

Victoria Dos Santos is a PhD student in Semiotics and Media at the University of Turin. Her areas of research are emerging religious practices in the digital space, contemporary paganism, digital religion, semiotics, media studies, and the intersections between ecology and digital media hybridizations. She holds a degree in Communication Science from the Catholic University Andrés Bello (UCAB) in Caracas, Venezuela. She later obtained a master's degree in Journalism from the University of Barcelona and Columbia University in New York.

PETRI BERNDTSON

Dr. Petri Berndtson je znanstveni sodelavec Znanstveno-raziskovalnega središča Koper. Doktorski naziv iz filozofije je pridobil z disertacijo o fenomenološki ontologiji dihanja. Njegova področja raziskovanja so respiratorna filozofija, fenomenologija (zlasti Merleau-Ponty) in elementarna poetika (zlasti Bachelard).

Dr. Petri Berndtson is a Research Associate at the Science and Research Centre of Koper. He holds a PhD in Philosophy with a dissertation on the phenomenological ontology of breathing. His research fields are respiratory philosophy, phenomenology (especially Merleau-Ponty) and elemental poetics (especially Bachelard).

JOSÉ MARÍA SALVADOR-GONZÁLEZ

Dr. José María Salvador-González je profesor na Fakulteti za geografijo in zgodovino Univerze Complutense v Madridu. Raziskovalno se ukvarja predvsem

s krščansko ikonografijo, patristiko, filozofijo, teologijo in srednjeveško kulturo. V povezavi z omenjenimi področji je že objavil 12 knjig, 87 strokovnih člankov in 19 prispevkov v zbornikih ter sodeloval, tudi kot predavatelj, na 36 konferencah.

Dr. José María Salvador-González is a Professor at the Faculty of Geography and History of the Complutense University of Madrid. His main research interests are Christian iconography, Patristics, philosophy, theology, and medieval culture. Within these research fields he has published 12 books, 87 academic articles and 19 book chapters and has participated in lectures and communications at 36 Conferences.



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