

Ramona ARDELEAN¹

The Problem of Human Consciousness Fragmentation

Abstract: The problem of human consciousness fragmentation is a critical approach of the fragmentary view over the world, whose main presumption refers to the fact that the Ego, the one who thinks is separate and independent towards the reality at which he thinks of. This way of thinking is the basis of the fragmentation of all our life aspects at psychological level as well as at the social one, the consequences being several psychological, social, political, economical, ecological and cultural crises. The revolution of the quantum theory revealed the impossibility to analyze the world in separate parts, showing that the universe is interconnected. The impacts of this non-fragmentary view are huge especially when referring to human consciousness which leads to the challenge if human being can suffer a psychological revolution equal to the one in physics which can bring fragmentation to an end.

Key words: consciousness, thought, fragmentation, conflict, ego, non-fragmentation

Introduction

An insufficient well-outlined and reflected issue in our contemporary society, but of crucial importance for the future of mankind, is the issue of human consciousness fragmentation and of her destructive consequences at social and individual-psychological level. In my opinion, this issue, highly important from philosophical point of view, is a very timely topic and presents a double interest and has double stake: 1. *theoretical*, interpretative, given by the “cognitive revolution” of the quantum mechanics, whose philosophical presumptions about the world go for a holistic, non-fragmentary logic, opposing to the vision of the contemporary society, tributary to the analytical and fragmentary way of thinking, conflict generator in the intra and inter-subjective space: 2. *practical*, psychological, offered by the implications of this non-fragmentary visions over the human consciousness, that leads to the following challenge: Is there the possibility that the human being suffer a profound “psychological revolution”,

¹ PHD, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Bucharest, Romania, e-mail : ardelean.ramona@ichb.ro

analogue to the “cognitive revolution” in physics, which would bring to an end this fragmentation?

The most significant “cognitive revolution” of the XXth century belongs to the quantum mechanics, whose fundamental presumption states that the world is a coherent whole that cannot be analyzed in terms of separable reality – as the classical, atomist-newtonian physics states. Thus, „no system can be analyzed in parts whose properties do not depend of the state of the entire system – *quantum nonseparability*”². The world appears as a dynamic „cloth” of events interacting³ one with each other, in which properties are determined by the totality of the others, any of the parts suffering the influence of all the events that occur integrally.

This universal interconnectivity denies the existence of some fundamental constituents – „fundamentones” – unaccepting any fundamental existence, not at least principles or fundamental laws, which „represents a reply to the reductionism and fundamentalism of the modern analytical science ontology.”⁴ It is interesting to notice that through this holistic conception, the quantum mechanics comes closer to the Oriental philosophies vision – Taoism, Hinduism, Buddhism - , whose plastic images about the world serve as intuitive support in understanding the fact that, in the universe, everything is interconnected and that nothing has essential character through itself, the properties of the part not being determined by any *fundamental, ultimate and separate law*, but by the properties of the parts of the whole. For instance, the metaphor of the canvas from Indra in Buddhism in which we are told about a braiding of pearls, thus displayed, so that if you watch one of them you can observe the others reflected in it. The same image appears in the mythology of Leibniz, here with each monad reflecting the whole universe.

Although the vision over the world outlined by the quantum mechanics implies huge meanings, the contemporary society functions still on the analytical way of thinking, mechanicist and fragmentary, generator of conflicts among humans. That’s why we need to be aware of the consequences highly destructive that this fragmentary vision implies at level of: Society – divided in separate nations, in economical, political, religious and racial groups; Individual – divided in distinct departments and conflictual of desires, goals, ambitions and beliefs. The natural environment – divided in separate parts that enter the exploitation of diverse groups of interests – the human activity divided in domains and specializations considered without any connection one with another. All this separation, all this fragmentation determines a certain degree of nevrosis, the base of

² Horia Roman Patapievi, Cuvânt înainte la *Plenitudinea lumii și ordinea ei*, p.17

³ Global correlation is considered the essence of quantum reality

⁴ Ilie Pârvu, *Arhitectura Existenței*, p.231

numerous psychological, social, political, economical, cultural and ecological crisis.

The root of fragmentation is considered the structure of the Ego that I have approached from three different perspectives: 1. *The Ego as fragmentary thinking*, in which fragmentary is envisaged as separation of the thinking process by the thinking content – the vision of David Bohm physician⁵; 2. *The Ego as auto-separation between the observer and observed* – the vision of the Oriental mystic *Jiddu Krishnamurti*⁶; 3. *The Ego as Other, as imaginary and illusory structure* – the vision of the French analyst *Jacques Lacan*⁷. Implicitly or explicitly, all these three approaches have in common the fact that the structure of the Ego is the result of the identification process with something external, with a specific image, which constitutes a major source of fragmentation and conflict.

The current approach is an interdisciplinary tackling in which the talking points are brought from the area of quantum mechanics, of Oriental philosophy and psychoanalysis, to which personal arguments are added.

The Ego as fragmentary thinking – David Bohm

Regarding this aspect, David Bohm shows⁸ that as long as human finds himself as being *separate* by the rest of humankind, he will tend to defend the interests of his own „ego” against the interests of another „ego”. Also, as long as human *identifies* himself with a particular form – group, nation, race, religion, ideology etc. he will tend to protect the interests of such forms in a similar manner, which would lead to the perpetuation of fragmentation and conflict.

The main presumption implied in the fragmentary vision over the world is that the *Ego, the one who thinks, is separated and independent by the reality to which he thinks of*, presumption through which we separate the *process* of thinking by the *content* of it. As D. Bohm says, we are used to consider the

⁵ One of the most famous representatives of quantum mechanics to whom one of the most interesting and supported contemporary tentative is dedicated of remaking non-hierarchally the unit destroyed by the scientific thinking and by the other forms of knowledge–philosophical, artistic, religious etc.

⁶ J.Krishnamurti, originary from India, is considered one of the most authentic spiritual messengers of the contemporary world. His highly pertinent and transparent analysis over the human issues has gained an enormous consideration, being very well appreciated in the cultural and scientific, Western and Oriental environments. There couldn't be also ignored the huge dedication that physician D.Bohm gave to Krishnamurti's thinking. The dialogues between the two of them appear in two books: J.Krishnamurti, D.Bohm, *The Ending of Time* and *The Future of Humanity*, dialogues from 1980, respectively 1983.

⁷ J.Lacan is considered the most remarkable interpreter of Freud.

⁸ *Plenitudinea lumii și ordinea ei*, p. 38

content of thinking as „a description of the world as it is”⁹. Given the fact that our thinking operates with distinctions and separations, our addiction to use them, will make us see them as real.

Thus, the *confusion* between the *mental image* and *reality* ¹⁰will take place, which will lead human to the *illusion* that the world - the nature, the society, the individual – is in reality formed of fragments. For example, it is considered that the fragmentation of countries, cities, political, economical, religious groups, the war, the violence, represents the reality and that non-fragmentation is an ideal. Why so? Because the process of thinking itself is again ignored, and that human himself is the one who acting according to his pattern of thinking, led to fragmentation that seems to have now a separate existence, independent of his will or desire.

Thus, the dissolution of the relation between the thinking process and its content, needs to be made. I do believe that this dissolution has a crucial importance in the issue of consciousness fragmentation. The latter can be extremely difficult as our whole way of thinking is conditioned by the *analytical process*, which contains a subject who analyses, and an analyzed object, the subject or the analyzer being considered separate by the analyzed object.

The Ego as a Separation between the Observer and the Observed– Jiddu Krishnamurti

In this regard, J.Krishnamurti¹¹ shows that due to this separation we tend to ignore the process of thinking – the way our thinking works – and we concentrate our attention just over the *content of thinking, I mean only over the ideas, symbols, notions which replace thus the reality and tend to become more important than that.*

In other words, the subject projects over the reality a series of images – concentrating himself over their content – but what he ignores and does not see, being „blinded” by the own images, is the source of his look itself, of

⁹ Bohm considers that a theory is rather a way of looking at the world – and not a form of knowing the world as it is. As a way to see the world, this theory is the source of organising the experience and knowledge, getting closer to those categories a priori that Kant reminded.

¹⁰ This confusion resembles to the one about which Platon speaks in the Mith of the Cave, in which the ‘prisoners’ unable to watch the reality directly mistake the projected images on the wall with reality.

¹¹ Vision of Krishnamurti and the one of Bohm are essentially similar, both underlying the fact that the fragmentation resides in our ignorance regarding our way of thinking, ignorance through which we separate the content of our thinking by the thinking process that produces this content, the two aspects not being seen in the unity of their relation, but considered independent.

his own projection, I mean the process. That's why it's necessary we understand first the process of thinking, as it generates the separation.

Our thinking, as a process, has produced the content of our thinking – images, ideas, symbols to which the race, nation, religion, family, society, environment, culture conditions are added, but afterwards the thinking tends to separate¹² this content and conceive it as existing independently, which actually does not act so. The „trick” of thinking is that it separates, that it auto branches in observer and observed¹³, *analyzer and analyzed, thinker and thoughts*, all these distinctions being but an illusion because, as it can be observed from the new vision of the quantum mechanics, in reality, there is no entity separate by the series of thoughts, they being actually the one and the same thing, not two separate entities.

Consequently, I think that the relation between the process of thinking and the content of thinking needs to be clarified from the perspective of their unity, which means, as J. Krishnamurti indicated extremely clear, from the perspective of the „observer” and the „observed”. For this, the surpassing of the analytical and fragmentary thinking is necessary in order to make room for a non-fragmentary and non-accumulative vision, which is the total attention state and passive receptivity, non-discriminatory, which allows things to disclose from their within, without „the intervention of thinking, memory, desire, willingness or choice¹⁴” of the subject.

In this pure¹⁵ observation, there is no space or period of time and observed object, there is no attention not graft by time¹⁶. The profound consciousness of this fact, an extremely difficult thing, but highly intelligent, ends the fragmentation and produces a bounce, a psychological „revolution”.

The Ego as an Other, as imaginary and illusory structure - Jacques Lacan

Taking into consideration the fragmentation issue, I think that the *mirror state*¹⁷ – *stade du miroir* – of the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan

¹² Maybe this separation is the result of the identification process of thinking with a series of images, ideas and symbols, seen as “real”. The fragmentation would be thus present not at level of content but at level of process, too.

¹³ J. Krishnamurti, *The First and Last Freedom*, p.119.

¹⁴ W.Bion, *Gânduri secunde*, p.53.

¹⁵ This pure observation would be that non-discriminatory consciousness of thoughts without thinker, without the centre, the Ego, who judges, measures, condemns or censures etc.

¹⁶ At Krishnamurti, time represents the most profound conditioning of mind, in the sense that always thinking in terms of future and past, our mind eludes the present, the reality, what-it-is. This thing is excellently illustrated in *The Ending of Time*.

¹⁷ Considered the point of reference of the entire work of J. Lacan this one sends to the

is very useful in understanding the human consciousness fragmentation regarded from the subject *identification* process perspective, with the own image reflected – the primary image – which constitutes the cause of imaginary alienation, through which the *Ego* is originally speaking, *Other*. The *Ego* is formed through peer or reflected image identification – the ideal image – in which the *Ego* and the Peer form the prototypical dual relation, fundamentally narcissist, the narcissism being characterized by aggressivity as *rivalry with self*, in its trial to maintain the identification born in mirror stage.¹⁸ I do believe that on this *imaginary structure* of the *Ego* – as identification with the primary image, with *Other* – the temporal structure of the *Ego* is eventually built – basing on the secondary identifications with different images, ideas, symbols or personal experiences – this temporal structure being also our most profound *conditioning*, reason for which this constitutes a major source of fragmentation and conflict, as it studies divisions such as: „my country”, „my religion”, „my belief”, „my profession”, „I am American”, „I am Muslim”, „I am democrat”, „I am nationalist”, each „I am” confronting violently with the other.

Conclusions

As I have seen, the challenge of the quantum mechanics has shown the impossibility to analyze the world in separate parts. The world is seen like a coherent entity within every part is connected with all the others from the universe, each of them containing the totality, so thus an action created over another part is reflected over all the others – *nonseparability*. This fact led to a revolution of a way of reflecting and contemplating the reality, the latter having not been conceived in a static and rigid manner, in which the one who reflects would be separate from the reality he reflects to, but through a dynamic method, similar to a *process*¹⁹ in which the distinctions with which we were used to operate, those of the part-integral type, fellow-society, observer-observed, consciousness-material resorb and describe the unique process of an unfragmentated reality.

The implications of this non-fragmentary vision of the quantum mechanics enclose also huge meanings strongly related to the complete revalorification of all the reports: human-human, human-nature, human-

myth of Narcis, and to the identification with the own image as a source of alteration and alienation.

¹⁸ J. Lacan, *The mirror stage as formative of the function of the I as revealed in psychoanalytic experience* in *Ecrits: A Selection*

¹⁹ The idea that reality needs to be understood as a process is old, the Oriental ontologies being significant in this sense, philosophy of Heraclit, and in modern times the ontology of Whitehead and D.Bohm.

society and human-universe. I think that the most profound and most revolutionary implication of this non-fragmentary vision over the world envisages the *human consciousness*, notably the awareness of the fact that the *Being-Me* – cannot be perceived any longer as *an individual consciousness, separate from the world consciousness*. Nonetheless, the human consciousness is perceived like a whole which does not include any longer „my consciousness” or „your consciousness”.

Understanding this fact, not intellectually, not as an idea, but as real as possible, understanding, that we, as individual consciousnesses actually struggle and suffer, and that the whole human consciousness struggles and suffers and lives within us – asking for her resolution – then the „unique tentative of the Ego to suffer would become something global and a totally different attitude would evince”¹⁹. We would then be aware of the spectacular „I am the World and the World is I” – *nonseparability*. From the profound perception of this fact, there is some compassion, love and this compassion affects the inner levels of human consciousness. This determines a profound inner revolution of the human being, a great psychological mutation in the human consciousness.

I do consequently believe that the philosophical presumptions of the quantum mechanics which led to the great „cognitive revolution” imply, given the *global intercorellation of the reality*, a „psychological revolution” which would put an end to the fragmentation of the human consciousness, given by the separatist-conflictual structure of the Ego.

REFERENCES:

- Bion, W.R., - *Gânduri secunde*, Editura Sigmund Freud, București, 2003
- Bohm, D. – *Plenitudinea lumii și ordinea ei*, Editura Humanitas, București, 1995
- Krishnamurti, J., & Bohm, D., *The Ending of Time : Thirteen Dialogues*, Krishnamurti Foundation Trust Ltd., England, 1985
- Krishnamurti, J., & Bohm, D. – *The Future of Humanity : A Conversation*, Krishnamurti Foundation Trust Ltd., England, 1986.
- Lacan, J., - *Écrits : A Selection*, capitolul *The mirror stage as formative of the function of the I as revealed in psychoanalytic experience*, W.W.Norton & Company, New York, 2002
- Patapievici, H.R., - Cuvânt înainte la *Plenitudinea lumii și ordinea ei*, Editura Humanitas, București, 1995
- Pârvu, I., *Arhitectura existenței*, Editura Humanitas, București, 1990