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TIME AND HYPOSTASIS:
ON EVOLUTION AS A «TRANSCENDENTAL ILLUSION»

*U*nder this somewhat enigmatic title I would like to propose a very general philosophical critique of the very idea of evolution as a concept which brings us in touch with reality. The title indicates scepticism and, at the same time, trust into a possibility of philosophical thematisation of the conditions of our knowledge; I do not intend to translate this scepticism or trust into any known form of phenomenology, hermeneutics or constructivism, but to make these thoughts about science even more radical. In short: if you do not like phenomenology, hermeneutics or constructivism, you shall dislike my presentation even more.

A critique of the concept of evolution demands a digression — it is indeed going to be a long, but also necessary digression — for which I apologize in advance.

First: when discussing the idea of evolution, it is — according to Michel Ruse — convenient to make a three-fold distinction between the fact of evolution, the path of evolution, and the theory or mechanism of evolution. To make my work harder, I shall designate as evolution the very fact of evolution, on which our concepts of its path and our evolutionary theories are based.

«The fact of evolution is simply the idea that all organisms, living and dead, came into being by a long developmental process, governed by natural laws, from organisms of a different, probably much simpler, kind. The fact of evolution includes the belief that the original organisms themselves developed by natural processes from inorganic materials. If one wanted to extend from the biological to the cosmological, one would see the fact of evolution as including all developmental change from the time of the Big Bang».¹

In that idea one encounters the basic framework of contemporary evolutionary understanding of reality as being in time, as development, as process.

The first question, which should be asked, is the following: why is this idea considered scientific at all?

To really understand the answer to this question, we should turn to Greeks. Despite the obvious and great scientific achievements of other nations, the crucial contribution of the Greek thought lies in the fact that it has been able to put up a mirror to instinctive (proto)»scientific« activity of all times and cultures, including *the time of our (post)modernity*. The conceptualization of the idea of science is yet again a meta-science and it is in this metascience that the sciencicity of science is being established. This meta-science is therefore of utmost importance for our initial question and it occurs — or at least it reveals itself authoritatively — in a precisely defined place: in *Aristotle's works on metaphysics, logics and physics*. On the ontological and epistemological level the very idea of science is identical in Aristotle's thought and in the

¹ *Ruse M. Evolution // Encyclopedia of Science and Religion / ed. by J. Wentzel Vrede van Huyssteen. Vol. I. New York: Macmillan 2003. P. 280.*

post-Cartesian science despite the radical difference in their scientific paradigms, because it stems from the same *ontological pre-decision*: it stems from *the expulsion of the archaic wisdom and archaic inversion of the ontology of common sense*.

Aristotle's critical reflection of scientific work does not happen merely with the formulation of a particular cognitive theory (epistemology), with the explanation of the functioning of senses etc., but it occurs on a more crucial, ontological level as the negation of the relevance of archaic ontological intuition. In *Metaphysics*, *Physics* and in the famous fragment of the work «On Coming to Be and Passing Away», Stagirite often stresses that the thesis of Elea — the school in which the archaic knowledge crystallized in an antithetic harmony with Heraclites — is *madness*. He claims that the presupposition of natural science is the actual existence of the natural world, of the change, the process, the coming to be of the plural beings — which, finally, means the world as it is revealed to us. Only the assurance of this existence gives meaning to a scientific knowledge. It establishes it as res-ponsibility to reality. If the archaic wisdom is unnecessary, if it cannot be obtained by force, if it is only a *privilege* of an ontological ecstasy, the science — on the contrary — is a human possibility to reach behind illusion at something that is *universal*. And this finds its meaning in the fact that everyone who accepts the phenomena and logical grammar, on the basis of common presuppositions comes to the same conclusions. Science is binding for everything that stems from the primary agreement of the common sense — and this primary agreement originates from the expulsion of the archaic *sophia* that challenges the primary commonsensical agreement and its epistemological relevance.

A science that thinks that it really understands reality is thus not necessary. It is a decision, a choice. It is a choice in the

field of human possibilities. And yet, it finds itself necessary. It is, in sum, erasure of all other possibilities, despite the fact that they are also possible. And in this crucial moment the science understands itself as knowledge that wants to do away with mystery. Aristotle wrote: «Whoever knows the causes, stops wondering». This is true. Even if this person only thinks that s/he knows them. And yet with this a specific understanding of knowledge is being put into words — understanding which is completely foreign to the archaic thought. This thought finds in its wondering the fascinating *telos* of thought which it does not want to cancel, because it knows that it must be preserved since it is the testimony of the otherness of the Real. Of the lightning of the Ultimate that endlessly tears consciousness apart. Science, on the other hand, understands the moment of wondering as an embarrassment which is precious only if it stirs us to try to solve other tasks — and thus stop to wonder. Such way of thinking, of course, is not Aristotle's invention. The affirmation of *episteme* that knows the causes and stops wondering is our usual state of consciousness. We need it in order to live and survive. Our normal functioning in the world demands a constant stepping out of the paraplegics of wondering, even if we are philosophically aware that by wondering we are experiencing the truth of ourselves and the world.

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I have said: the experience of the radical otherness of the Reality is not necessary. It is only a possibility of human spirit, although it is in a strange way evident. The archaic sophia with the proclamation of everything for only an appearance is not just a historical image of thought but the revelation of the fundamental evidence. It is trans-historical. To be awaken

by wondering for the ultimate Reality means to step out of history.

Where does this «archaic» experience of the Ultimate stem from? How am I to know that it is not an illusion itself? How can I be sure that it is not an «irrational belief»? The reason — the Greeks would say *logos* — for this is connected with the root of reason (the Greeks would again say *logos*): in this experience something that is much more rational and evident than the world of science expresses itself. Why? Because the openness to the radical otherness of the ultimate Reality is most closely connected with the trans-historical awareness of the intimate, first-person consciousness itself, with the emergence of «I» who am never «he», «she» or «it».

This openness cannot be located spatially or temporally, contrary to the contemporary myth of the emergence of modern subjectivity — in any case it does not only belong to Descartes and the Cartesian tradition but it belonged to neo-Platonism of late antiquity, to Augustine's early dialogues — and to the very archaic Greek and Indian wisdom. It is not a coincidence that the following famous words could be found among Heraclites' fragments: «You cannot find limits of the soul even if you travel along every way — it has such a deep *logos*»² and «I have searched myself».³

The science today, particular in its «cognitive» branches, reduces the mystery of the self into something factual: thought is supposed to be, all in all, only the product of brains, the manifestation — «emergent» or not, it is of no importance —

² *Psychês peírata ion ouk an exeúroio, pâsan epiporeuómenos hodón – hoútō bathyn lógon échei* (fr. 45).

³ It is quoted by Plutarch, *Adv. Colot.* 20. 1118 C: *edizesámen emeoytón* (fr. 101).

of the matter and its laws which belong to scientific jurisdiction. In the contemporary Anglo-Saxon philosophy of science the problem of realism and antirealism is connected with the issue of the relationship of «consciousness» and the natural world. For the thought which is being defined by the so-called «scientific» worldview, this question boils down to the problem how to explain the consciousness on the basis of natural world in its process: and it is usually resolved in neo-Darwinism, functioning as a modern version of materialism, or better naturalism. *Science* is supposed to reveal, on the basis of experience in which things are not given such as they are, what things *really* are and make this revelation commonly binding. But, a *philosophical* answer to the very formation of this question is very simple — if only we can hear it: the claim of science is false because it presupposes its own primary status, despite the fact that it is secondary, derivative — and philosophy is interested only in that which is primary and in the logic of derivation. This claim namely talks about *something*. Yet the self is — the self *am I alone*. Our representational framework is today so contaminated by science that we are convinced that we can understand «perception» and «consciousness» through the study of optics, physiology, neurology and experimental psychology. But in reality, logos is a primordial gathering of perception and thought, awareness and sentiment in self which is always mine, which is without recall given to me, before it becomes part of any explanatory scheme. Every kind of explanation of a human being that believes that humanity of humans could be observed from outside and could through that observation subject the humanity to a systematic and methodical analytics which would isolate this or that causality (physical, chemical, biological, economic etc.), is irrational. Mythical. It is an ungroundable belief. The first

and unconditional is a manner though which we are given to ourselves — and in this we are never objectified but we remain always first-person narrators of our own stories, *including scientific ones*. «Everything is within», as Plotinus said, everything exists in a way I am given to myself, any kind of objectified understanding of myself is always derivative.

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But there is an additional problem. The discovery of the self does not necessarily include also the awareness of the otherness of reality. We can observe this not only in the modern constructivism but also in the work of Edmund Husserl, in his profound critique of science developed in his work «Crisis of European sciences and transcendental phenomenology.» Husserl's positioning of the philosophical thought against the scientific understanding is a simple and obvious one; however, it seems that it is hard to understand, otherwise not so many people would take today refuge in the «scientific worldview». Husserlian opposition to objectivism stems from the question: who gives mandate to science? Did science give mandate to itself? In other words: does consciousness give mandate to itself in its already scientific form? Or does all its legitimacy lie on some special procedures of the constitution of scientific universe from the common pretheoretical experiencing of the world, from the everyday life-world? For everyone who understands these questions, the answer is obvious. Husserl does not want to «save subjectivity»: this motto that is from time to time heard today is empty and already indicates the victory of the scientific attitude towards reality. As if we could do away with subjectivity and not fall into nothingness ... For the founder of phenomenology the objectivism (which reveals itself also in Darwinian thought) is simply a «transcenden-

tal naivety» — and yet, in the scientific world, in the great majority of contemporary epistemology, everywhere in the educational and media diffusions of scientific ideology this *naïveté* imposes itself not only as a plausible option but as the only adequate model of scientific understanding. Scientific thought is a continuation of the ontological bias of common sense, which is marked by its entrapment, which is «fettered into the object». The meaning of a transcendental phenomenological turn is a call for realization of this simple evidence, even if it is so paradoxical for our common-sensical, everyday, Husserl would say «natural attitude» (*natürliche Einstellung*) towards the world: «the meaning of being (*Seinssinn*) of the given life-world is subjective formation (*Gebilde*), the effect of the experiencing life, the science-preceding life. In this formation the meaning and ontological validity of world are built up, i. e. it is always the meaning and ontological validity of the world which is actual for the one who is having an experience. As to the 'objective real' world, world of science, it is just a formation of higher level, constituted on a basis of prescientific experience and thought...»⁴

And yet, I would like to further radicalize this position. Husserl's thought strives towards the goal where sciences would be revived and therefore loses something much more fundamental whose light could already be detected in my evocation of the archaic *sophia*: the connectedness between the self and death. The otherness of the Ultimate that demands the collapse of the certainty of life. The transcendental subject in phenomenology is still thought in its Aristotelian ontologi-

⁴ *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendente Phänomenologie*, izd. Elisabeth Ströker, 3. izd. Meiner; Hamburg, 1996. P. 70.

cal paradigm: it does not belong to this world («the reduced self is not a part of the world» as Husserl writes in his *Cartesian meditations*), and yet it exists — and by that *it enables certainty*. It is a point of contact with reality — and that is why it enables the reconstruction and the establishment of certain knowledge. Husserl's critical thought, despite its radical nature, still remains bound to the *idea of groundedness*. In a delicate way it continues the line of thought that establishes a defeatist peace with the scientific ontology with Darwinism as its parade horse. The observance of death does not do away with this peace. The awareness of otherness, of our own finitude, renounces the transcendental self and therefore also all attempt to ground science, it renounces the reality of a common subject who would eventually intersubjectively ground logic and bestow validity to scientific knowledge.

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Science and death. Science and nothing. Science and the Other. The substrate of science that apparently so boldly jumps over all the hurdles breaks before the barrier where being ceases. It abstracts the otherness of being — and therefore also the only being itself. *My* hypostasis.

Here I must briefly explain the second concept from the title of my presentation. Hypostasis is not «something that has been hypostatized» and is therefore not real, but — on the contrary — it is my experienced reality itself. I am what I am. This concreteness I call «hypostasis». *And that I am what I am means at the same time that I am everything*. This is not the question — I hope — of solipsistic sophism or of some frivolous tautological «axiom». Hypostasis finds its fulfillment in the awareness of its own *totality*. This is a matter of obviousness that I experience in the feeling of my radical finitude. *If*

I am not, then nothing else is going to be. When I was not, nothing was. If I had not been, there would have been nothing. What exists, exists only through the contact with me. When I stumble across this limit of groundless groundlessness from which I originate and in which I find my end, I become aware of myself as the whole world, the «inner» and the «outer», of myself as the self-world.

This insight can — of this I am sure — in its radicalness surpass the Greek — or Helenomorphic — radical enlightenment and also various forms of transcendentalism that could be found in classical idealism or in its phenomenological transformations that always tend to *generalize* hypostasis. Hypostasis has got *in itself, in being as being, the relation to being as such*. Even more radically: the hypostasis is being as being (and I ask you to take away any kind of generality from this statement...). Being itself does not disclose itself to the hypostasis; it discloses itself to itself. To understand oneself by recognizing this relationship as the relationship towards one's own being (and by that to understand oneself as «some being», although excelling in its ontological structure) is already to forget this originary «evidence». To step into the realm of *common sense*.

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But why would the emergence of the enigmatic, authoritative, almost infinite hypostasis need to be connected with the discovery of the otherness? Because the self that is discovering its own endlessness at the same time experiences its radical limitation — and in the limited endlessness it experiences its radical finitude. The world is all that *I* experience from the moment of my emergence from nothingness. And it is all that I shall experience, all that I could experience. The world is all

possibilities that are hidden in every moment when I gather all views and attitudes, all thoughts, all traditions (accepted and rejected, scientific and unscientific). *All this remains the contents of myself.* The endless contents that is defined by the form with its own *esse* — and as a form it trembles because of the non-apprehension of its own formation. As the hypostasis, as being of the totality «I am» unutterable and unknowable. Any kind of reflective definitions push my mystery into the realm of beings. The other side of this reality is the radical transformation of the notion of subject. *The hypostasis is not a subject in modern sense of the word.* A subject is always connected with knowledge, thought, consciousness, self-awareness. The hypostasis is the bare *esse* though which and in which everything that is exists. The objectivity in its own thusness and the subjectivity of the subject demand passivity which surpasses the opposition to the activity. I am given to myself in my own being as the subject — thinking, creative subject that is aware of itself. However, I am *given* to myself. *Esse* of the «subject» itself is hypostatic, which means that it is passive through emergence of the objectivity in the hypostasis from the other of its own — and only — being.

But if the existing world is everything that I experience from the *moment* of my emergence, what then with the *time of science*? We have to set up yet this last trap — if we want to get behind the backs of the fact of evolution «as including all developmental change from the time of the Big Bang», to quote Michael Ruse once again.

Time has a central meaning for any kind of science — even if science moves away from it and wants to define laws that are supposed to be timeless. If I do not «internalize» today my own *common-sensical* feeling of, let's say, million years of past that are presupposed by geology and paleontology, or billion

of years of cosmic history that is presupposed by cosmology, I leave behind scientific *sensus communis*. I become a *freak*.

But let us look at the evolution from this freakish point of view. Everything that can be the object of experience happens to me in time. Also the scientific laws are in their own apparent timelessness laws only if they reveal themselves in time. Everything appears to me in time, even my thought (which can apprehend only in time). That «in» is, of course, problematic — different theories and philosophies, different paradigms of science shall dance around it. However, I do not want to take a stand here in relation to them. I am interested in something that precedes that. Every theory of time is crucially connected with a radically defined *ontology*. A theory of time stemming from meta-ontology of hypostasis is first and foremost a radical reversal. *The only time that is real is hypostatic*. What does that mean? Much more — or much less — than that time is «only subjective». The only time that is in a real relationship with being is the time that is in the relationship with the only — always my — being. With hypostasis. *There is no other time than my aión*, my «duration» — drivenness from the emergence from the unnamable nothingness to incomprehensible entrance into the otherness of being. The question of the essence of time should not refer to different modalities of time because they are only complex transfers of original hypostatic timeness. Undoubtedly: necessary transfers. Often also pragmatically necessary. However, they are deeply *unreal*. Time is singular. Time is like blood. Hypostatic blood. It runs out. When it runs out completely, I am no longer. It is only mine.

The previous century deeply thematised this connectedness between death and time: let us only remember Tolstoy's *Death of Ivan Ilich* or Heidegger's thoughts on the *Jemeinichkeit*

of death. We now know: deaths give us a shock, but always not deeply enough. I can cry over the deaths of others, I can feel sad — but I understand them only in the moment of my own death, in the timelessness of my own dying. Death is in fact only my own death, un-e-vent of hypostasis (raz-do-godek hipostaze). And yet, we have to take a step further. According to the normal, materialized, outer, spatial perception, the lives that encompass a particular line segment happen on an imaginary line of time — and those line segments either completely cover each other or do not touch each other at all. They last in the midst of it. Such an outward understanding of death and time does not enable us to behold in a relevant way either the former or the latter. Such a line does not exist. The time of death as the time of apophatic nothingness is not the destruction of time, but the limit in which the times of all hypostases on the border of hypostasis supra-logically and illogically converge regardless when they came into being and what kind of relationship they have. And this very possibility of death — the limit of time — paradoxically leads me to the source of self-world, to the «groundless» groundedness which reveals itself as that which is grounded by time in my own grounding. The lost memory of this connectedness of death and the cessation of time, the emergence and supra-logical coincidence of all times that establishes the original time-ness, establishes *the time of science which does not belong to it: the time in which science can become science*. Time is neither radically finite nor infinite: it is entirely dependent on the openness of existence into apophatic unknowability whose time-ness and non-time-ness are not evident.

But when we usually talk about time, we talk about something more general. And «usually» again points to the common sense. Therefore, the continuation is also valid: when

science talks about time, regardless of its attempts to avoid a «vulgar» conceptualization of time, regardless of its radical move of time into the observer or its placement into the relational networks of time-space continuum — its time is the abstraction of the only real *aion*. The apparent pre-human time of nature with its stretching into «bad infinity» or at least into the singularity of the first moments of expansion of the primordial matter is fiction that humanizes what is pre-human, that turns into being what is pre-existential. The question of diachronical sciences is therefore connected to our ontological reflection on the status of absence in the only time of hypostasis. How does that which I posit as the manner of being that is no longer present, so that I have to draw conclusions about it and posit it on the basis of something which is now entering the horizon of my perception and/or reflection? In the act of reflecting imagination I return something that no longer exists into actuality: for example, «the first three minutes of the universe», this or that kind of story about the beginning of life, evolutionary emergence of its various forms etc. But if I *think* about this gesture, I can see that what is absent — despite this act of onto-thetical imagination that postulates being — remains completely non-existent. The presentation of the past and the future is a trick that we design for ourselves and fall for it. Can the traces of past in the memory make us say that there is something, although it no longer exists? That there is absent that, however, has a completely different status from that what is utter non-being? No. This is also just a continuation of our illusion. *And in this context it is crucial that we use it to cover the very essence of the time of science.*

Science is hypostatically *synchronic*. The false diachronic signal that it emits originates from its pretention (again grounded in the common sense) that it can move from the

diachrony of experience not only into the synchronicity of the model but also back to the diachronic narration about reality. *The first and fundamental lie of evolutionary science — proton pseudos — is its stories in which it narrates about the occurrence of everything in time, about the emergence in the general horizon of time, about the development in time. The narrations about the origin of the universe, the narrations about the emergence of life and its various forms.*

How can we tell that these stories are false, on the basis of the above argument? We can be sure because these stories are *not possible*. Because they happen in the realm of impossible. And what is impossible? *Life that goes through the door of death*. The disruption in time, the break, the breach of time itself which is the death of hypostasis, gives a completely unexpected status to experiences that step out of my time. My time is limited with its end; even the imaginary structure of the anticipation of time which is always possibly also a lie is in its ignorance an arche-type of the construction of the common time. Only if in the absolute ignorance of the end of my time — of the time in general, the only experience of the time-ness — I live in the total openness, in the total awareness of *mors certa, hora incerta* — I live a genuine time. When I step out of it — and I step out of it structurally, I step out of «philosophical paralysis» it seems, which makes my everyday activities and my normal everyday routine impossible — I step out of the original givenness of time. I trade time — my own, the unique — for its construction. For its extension which analogically projects into the future and in thoughts hides from the past its closeness to the abyss.

The moment of scientific attitude which I am after therefore hides itself in the reduction of evolutionary stories to the reflection of synchronic structures in the changing «now» of the hypostatical time.

The formulas that coagulate in the running out of the origin of time-ness in order to describe the singularity of the original event are the unconscious transposition of the unutterable mathema of the uniqueness of the hypostasis. The expansion of galaxies does not mean anything outside the hypostatic synchronicity of hypostasis. The fossils do not mean anything outside their present co-existence with me. Their own «time» is unknowable, unutterable. It cannot be included into my story. When I start telling this story, I leave the obviousness and set out into the fictitious nature of imaginary narration — and into the forgetfulness of my own self, my own truth, the only truth. The sciences may have the pretention to grasp the past — for example in cosmology, geology, evolutionary biology etc. — but in reality they enter the understandable «transcendental illusion», the fictitious extrapolation of the present experience and their synchronic structural models. Cosmology and biology which can reach, with the help of imagination or thought, the time before human being, are only contemporary forms of mythology. In reality, nothing corresponds to it. What was before human gaze in history, the logos of the universe without a human being, is simply unnamable. This does not mean to me the negation of incomprehensible, the utterly apophatic analogue to to the cosmic and biological reality: just the logos of this incomprehensible reality is reduced to a meta-intelligible point of the absolute, non-human gaze onto its other. To call that *Ding an sich* is precisely three words too many — and yet I do not renounce with this claim the existence of the radical passivity of the objectivity and the primordial reality of logos. When the pre-human comes into us, we create — by feigning the world without hypostasis, the world before hypostasis — an transcendental illusion. Modern cosmology and evolutionary teachings as the trans-

formations of mythical cosmogony and zoogony show their limitations in this very meta-intelligible point. This limitation can be claimed by philosophical thought. Moreover, it has to claim it if it wants to remain philosophical. The theory that would express adequately the logos of the emerging universe and life in universe is the very formalization of the cancellation of this gaze, its disappearance: the paradox of formula that renounces itself.