

## EVOLUTIONARY PHILOSOPHY<sup>1</sup>

KRISTÍNA KMEŤOVÁ

To be alive means to be in a constant flow of change. Some changes affect the physical body—as time goes on, we grow taller or gain weight. Even the slightest things change, like hair loss or teeth straightening up. In addition, as the saying goes, we also *change our minds*. We learn and become wiser, or we unconsciously alter our memories and forget the past. This means that we are both the same and also completely different at every waking moment.

The evolution of living matter, as derived from the verb *evolve*, also involves an endless chain of actions and reactions. Life is never still otherwise it would cease to be life. But in evolutionary biology, for example, we do not talk about what we call *ontogeny*—the individual development of an organism. We focus on *phylogeny*, constructing the phylogenetic tree that shows the various evolutionary relationships among species, whether these species still roam the Earth or have long been extinct.

As stated in the preface of *Philosophy for living in Evolution*, even the “right philosophy is never standstill, never static, never cool, never unconcerned” (p. 11). Moreover, philosophy of this kind helps us to reveal all the mysteries of the universe. With its help we can discover all the truths relating to life on Earth. With reference to Henryk Skolimowski, editors Vir Singh and Zlatica Plašienková agree that the right philosophy is, in fact, evolutionary in its nature.

*Philosophy for living in Evolution* is divided into four parts. The first two parts consist of philosophical essays. The third part contains poems embracing an ecological conscience, and the fourth part features paintings by Grażyna Cebo-Więcek. Part I mainly reflects on the philosophy of light—Lumenarchy and Lumenosophy. Part II contains a wealth of articles on a sustainable way of life, ecological integrity and environmental ethics. The book is the output of an international congress on Ecological Integrity and Environmental Ethics in Pantnagar, India in November 2014. The inspiration for the event came from Prof. Henryk

<sup>1</sup> Vir Singh, Zlatica Plašienková (Eds.): *Philosophy for living in evolution. Light, life, lumenarchy, and lumenosophy*. Detroit: Creative Fire Press, 2016, 291 pages.

Skolimowski, who in 2010 came up with the idea of organizing an international congress on Light and Lumenarchy.

The first essay in the volume, “Cosmocracy, Sophocracy, and Lumenarchy”, is written by H. Skolimowski, who contemplates the idea of cosmocracy. As the author explains, *cosmocracy* means democracy for the entire universe. Democracy as we know it is too anthropocentric and tilted toward the Western conception of the world and thus cannot meet the criteria for a sustainable way of living. Another fundamental idea, tightly bound up with the conception of cosmocracy, is Lumenarchy. Briefly, Lumenarchy means state of mind—the reflection on all there is through Lumen, the inner Light. Living within a social order based on *homo homini lupus*, as it seems we do today, is a path toward darkness and disaster. We can conceive of Lumenarchy as the exact opposite. But Lumenarchy is a place in the making and it does not mean a perfect place either. Lumenarchy is found in constantly improving and progressing toward perfection in our undying will to become better. Guided by the energy of Light, Lumenarchy means fulfilling the lives of all its participants.

V. Dwaraknath Reddy’s contribution is an essay entitled “Philosophy of Light: Further unfolding of the Mysterious Cosmic Creativity”. He asks, how can people brought up in dualistic thinking seek and find that *something* that is the source of everything in the universe? In other words, what was before duality? We need to postulate Light as Life itself, illumination to Itself, in Itself, for Itself, and Absolute with no differentiation into sight. The multitudinous things we see are merely forms of light, because light surrounds the object and only then it is reflected into our eyes. Without light, there is nothing. Light comes before seeing. Light is the inner structure of reality itself.

Rajny Krishnan in his essay “Light on Light” shifts the focus from visible light onto the light within each person. The author analyses the similarities between Light and Self. He also writes about three states of experience—waking, dreaming and deep sleep—“gross body, subtle body and no body” (p. 31). The disintegration of the material body cannot reveal anything positive in terms of true self-knowledge. A person’s Self cannot be anything but the entity of inexistence or transcendence. *I am light*, writes Krishnan.

Another inspiring essay is John Mels “Lumenology: New Perspectives in Human Thinking”. He writes that human species consciously participates in the journey and the evolution of Light. Light is a form of creative energy. If there were no powers of creativity in the universe, it would not have evolved into anything at all. And there is another thing. Light is consciousness itself. The author of this essay comes up with a different approach to understanding the world around us—he turns the conventional relationship between the physical and the mental upside down. Consciousness is the precursor of mind and the brain is only the resulting physiological outcome.

A triad of authors—Zlatica Plašienková, Michal Vivoda, and Viera Žufková—combined their knowledge and looked at the theme of Light from a distinctive perspective. As the title says, they were seeking the “Interpretation of Symbolism of Light in the Western Tradition: Some Religious and Philosophical Aspects in the Context of Contemporary Ecological Thinking”. The reader comes to understand the symbolism of light in the Biblical tradition and learns about the responsibility that people bear towards the environment they live in. Another part of the essay is devoted to the philosophy of Hegel and to the period in the history of philosophy called the Enlightenment, but it contains much more.

Paul Hague's contribution is an essay titled "The Coherent Light of the Consciousness: Awakening Self-reflective Intelligence", where he introduces the idea of evolution becoming fully conscious for itself within us, within human beings. The last essay in Part I, "Life Science through Light" by Poonam Gusain and Vir Singh, is partly about sunlight as a first source used in medical treatments.

Part II consists of ten essays. For example, "Sustainability of the Living Planet: Homeostasis, Ecological Integrity and Sustainable Lifestyle Perspectives" written by Ima Dovinová and Zlatica Plašienková. The essay starts with a quotation by Stanislav Grof and his idea that the main problem of humanity lies in the discrepancy between the development of intelligence (neocortex) and our emotional life. The authors point out that two main universal laws govern the self-regulation of complex dynamic systems—polarity law and resonance-affinity. They explain what homeostasis and "tropic cascade" mean, touch on the problem with the new biology systems theory and explore J. Lovelock's holistic concept of Gaia. With reference to H. Skolimowski, the authors propose that human "should not be defined as a rational animal but as the sensitivity-making animal" (p. 106). The conclusion to all of these entwined thoughts is that we as a species need our minds to radically change so we can understand and recognize our unity and integrity with the whole Universe. And, it is essential that things like economic growth and political or religious differences are subordinated to the principles associated with the survival of the planet.

Oliver Chiron continues in a similar vein to the authors mentioned above. In "Ecological Integrity and Environmental Ethics for a Sustainable Future: The Case of Sikkim, India" he writes about weak and strong anthropocentrism. This is good guide to environmental ethics that draws on the ideas of J. Lovelock, A. Leopold and B. Callicot. The main part of the essay covers the Buddhist view of the world and explains terms from Buddhist religion.

"Farming for Peace and Ecological Healing" by Kavita Jain moves away from philosophical theory to facts. Of the 6.8 billion people on this planet 925 million are undernourished. This means that society should be developed in such a way as to reflect human needs first, but such that it is compatible with ecological harmony. Organic farming is free of the highly toxic pesticides in use today. In addition to the consequences of this "toxic" farming on the land, the author discusses how pesticides affect farmers and other people who come into contact with them. These chemicals adversely affect human thinking and motor performance to a level that would justify worker disability payments in wealthier countries. The chemical molecules directly affect the brain and disturb its mechanism and consequently the mind.

"Philosophy of Foods and Nutrition" by Vir Singh reads like an apology for vegetarianism, with the author concluding that vegetarianism is not only a dietary habit but a way of life. As vegetarians we "stay closest to the abundance of living energy being generated through photosynthesis" (p. 189). As vegetarians we cultivate compassion and sanctity for all life. Vegetarianism is vital for ecological regeneration and ecological balance.

Leo W. Zonneveld's contribution is an essay titled "On Being Human". The author combines both anthropological and evolutionary issues in the way P. Teilhard de Chardin did. Drawing on the work of V. Frankl, the author of this essay concludes that the main motivation for living is the search for meaning in life. All organisms are goal-oriented systems and they have acquired a remarkable capacity for self-complexification. Human reality creates meaning and so reality belongs in the category of religion.

The essays I have not mentioned are “Human Cosmolization: Unleashing Creative Potencies of the Mind and Empowering Humans for Co-creating with the Cosmos” by Denise Gurney, “Sustainability of the Living Planet in the Context of Eco-philosophical Thinking: Teilhard de Chardin’s and Henryk Skolimowski’s Perspectives” by Zlatica Plašienková and Lucio Florio, “Ethics in Business” by Krystyna Sabiniewicz, “Our Garden So Sweet So Lovely” by Brigadier Chitranjan Sawant and “Human Upliftment through Kashmir Shaivism” by Virendra Quazi.

The poems in Part III are by Henryk Skolimowski, Juanita Skolimowski, Anjali Dewan, Poonam Gusain and Vir Singh. To quote just some parts of the eco-poetry, I have chosen “The Dawn of Lumenosophy” by H. Skolimowski. He writes, “Every manifestation of light is a celebration – Thus the whole universe is continually celebrating itself” (p. 242). “To enhance existence is a thing of beauty – To destroy existence is a sin against the cosmos”, is from his “Light, Altruism and Lumenarchy” (p. 250). Anjali Dewan demonstrates through his work that even poetry can be a medium for communicating truths about the life around us. I quote from “Imperfections”: “It is not strange – That despite being – Not always perfect – We think we never err”, and “We forget, we are – Moving bubbles of water – Within no time – They will burst” (p. 256).

Today, there is an enormous amount of literature on evolution and related subjects. For somebody new to this area of research this can be very confusing. Surrounded by a mass of information that you cannot sort out, it is sometimes better to pick out a book which provides you with deep questions rather than cheap answers. *Philosophy for living in Evolution. Light, Life, Lumenarchy, and Lumenosophy* is that type of book. It does of course—I would not wish to be misunderstood—contain a considerable variety of research facts. But what makes this book unique is the fusion of science with philosophy and religion without giving precedence to any one of these. I would certainly recommend this book to everyone who enjoys inquiring into the nature of things and who doesn’t believe that there’s only one suitable method for this task.

Department of Philosophy and History of Philosophy,  
Faculty of Arts,  
Comenius University,  
Gondova 2,  
P.O.BOX 32  
814 99 Bratislava,  
Slovakia  
Email: kristina.kmetova@uniba.sk