

Editorial

The Philosophy of *Philosophies*: Synthesis through Diversity

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“E pluribus unus” Vergil, *Minor Poems: Moretum* [1]

“You cannot conceive the many without one.” Plato, *Parmenides* [2]

Our new journal *Philosophies* is devoted to the search for a synthesis of philosophical and scientific inquiry. It promotes philosophical work derived from the experience of diverse scientific disciplines. This work should not be constrained by traditional divisions of philosophical subject matters or traditional methodology. Multiple philosophies already exist: philosophy of information, philosophy of computation, philosophy of natural and artificial life, philosophy of natural or artificial intelligence, philosophy of complexity, philosophy of logic, *etc.* Certainly, the idea is not to abandon the philosophical roots and tradition but to promote development of authentically new methodologies and new foundations derived from the scientific experience and intended for enhancement of scientific inquiry. Yet another dimension of the desired diversity is in cultural differences. The objective is to search for what other civilizations or cultures can offer from their heritage to contribute to the emergent synthesis of philosophical inquiry. *Philosophies* are thus not only philosophies of particular scientific themes, but also philosophies of different cultures with their different intellectual tools and traditions.

The beginnings are always humble, but accompanied by hope. When Vergil was writing his poetic recipe for the cheese paste with garlic and herbs (*moretum*), he did not expect that the words “E pluribus unus” from his poem would be adopted into the unofficial motto of the most powerful country in the world, the United States of America, at its humble beginnings, and later would be paraphrased into the motto of the European Union. I would like to begin my presentation of the new journal with another quote of Vergil’s words from *Aeneid* “*audacibus annue coeptis*” [3]. The request “favor [our] bold undertakings”, unlike those written in the original context of *Aeneid* or on the official Seal of the US is

directed to people, not to the divine; to the scholarly community of potential readers of, and contributors to the new journal *Philosophies*.

The plural form of the journal title *Philosophies* can be intriguing, but its choice was not a marketing tool. This is an expression of the mission of the journal to serve as a venue for publication of philosophical works characterized by the diversity; diversity of subject matter, diversity of methodology, diversity of cultural foundations. This mission was born from the recognition of the limitations imposed by the traditional, institutional framework of Western philosophy. Philosophy gave birth to many disciplines of science, which, as children usually do, tried to emancipate themselves from the parental control as soon as possible. But, while parents patiently wait for the return of children, philosophy started to exhibit declining interest in what children are trying to bring back home. Scientific disciplines are not without blame ignoring or trivializing family tradition.

Thus, *Philosophies* promotes philosophical work derived from the experience of diverse scientific disciplines and at the same time invites scientific contributions informing philosophical reflection.

One of the most frequently used concepts in the contemporary general media as well as intellectual discourse is globalization. However, thus far globalization is bringing not much new in quality, but rather intensity. It is a very old conquest of the world by relatively narrow, but certainly pragmatically very powerful Western Civilization. Without doubt, this civilization has a lot to offer humanity. Thus, the objection is not against the propagation of Western ideas, achievements, or even values. The problem is in the negligence of what other civilizations or cultures can offer from their heritage. Of course, Western elites were always fascinated with the Far East. It was and is fashionable for intellectuals to have some knowledge of the Eastern intellectual menagerie assemblage of puzzling concepts and ideas. However, the reception of the Eastern philosophical tradition is very limited and superficial. It would be difficult to identify within institutional philosophy any example of the profound enrichment by the intercultural intercourse with Indian, Chinese or Japanese intellectual tradition, and the cultures of non-literate societies are excluded completely from consideration. *Philosophies* are thus not only philosophies of particular scientific themes, but also philosophies of different cultures with their different intellectual tools and traditions.

Although the journal *Philosophies* has its sources in the recognition of shortcomings in philosophy of science, its role would not be complete without including in the scope of its interests the arts and humanities. After all, they form the core of one of C. P. Snow's "Two Cultures" and the mission of *Philosophies* may be seen as continuation, on the larger scale and with a more precise vision, of the same idea.

Here is the real danger of misunderstanding. The mission of *Philosophies* is not to propagate a hotchpotch of New Age slogans, to popularize esoteric theories, or even to collect highly professional but loose articles on subjects outside of the traditional philosophy. We cannot claim that by mixing disciplines and cultures we will get Vergil's delicious cheese paste such that "out of many comes a single color, not entirely green" [1]. The mission is to search for a synthesis. In the context of the preceding paragraph, it is significant that the best formulation in a few words of what the journal *Philosophies* is about can be found in the mission of the Gwich'in Tribal Council of far North American Indians. Thus, not "E pluribus unum" (one out of many) of American Great Seal or "In varietate concordia" (united in diversity) of European Union, but Gwich'in's "Unity through diversity" [4] describes the desired role of

Philosophies. The diversity is the means, not the goal. The ultimate goal, most likely only ideal, is to achieve unity, *i.e.*, a holistic, synthetic view of reality.

The dialectic of unity and diversity in the search for a synthesis of philosophy through the diversity of philosophies (including natural philosophy that has given birth to contemporary natural sciences) is not as revolutionary, as it may seem at first sight. We can find its seeds in Plato's dialogue *Parmenides* [2] (which explains the second motto for this editorial). It should not intimidate those who are pondering submission of their articles to *Philosophies*. For many years, there have been individual and collective initiatives to develop this type of inquiry. It would take several pages to describe all. An example is in the works on philosophy of life by Francisco Varela and Umberto Maturana or independently by Robert Rosen. Their names can evoke an objection: is it an example of philosophical inquiry? Their work was scientific, not philosophical! Certainly, they made multiple important contributions to biology, but even more important was their contribution to philosophy of life, to one of the philosophies, to which the title refers. I will not go beyond only one more example of the works of Gregory Bateson, to point at the style of inquiry sought by *Philosophies*.

There are organizations and research groups which have as their mission the propagation of a similar vision of studies, not always in the name of philosophy. Foundation of Information Science, International Association for Information Studies, International Association for Computing and Philosophy, The Society for the Study of Artificial Intelligence and the Simulation of Behaviour, Integral Biomathics are just a few examples. These examples may be misunderstood as limiting the scope of the journal to philosophies of life, cognition, intelligence, information, or computation. Philosophies of mathematics, physics and logic could be used equally well to illustrate their roles in the mission of *Philosophies*.

Even closer to the spirit of the journal are philosophies of interdisciplinary scientific inquiry, such as molecular biology. Looking into the future, philosophy of medicine seems a domain where at this very moment there is a high demand for reflection on emerging new paradigm of medical practice. Integrative medicine, at first sight may look not much different from many earlier unconventional practices discarded by the professional world. However, this time the Consortium of Academic Health Centers for Integrative Medicine has as its members' institutions with the highest reputation in the world, such as Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine or Mayo Clinic. It is a spectacular, victorious return of the idea that the primary goals of the discipline are wellness and healing of the entire (sic!) person in bio-psycho-socio-spiritual dimensions [5].

All these philosophies are addressing the most fundamental questions of traditional philosophy, and probably they can and actually do contribute to traditional philosophy most directly, but the scope of *Philosophies* is much wider. The editors would be happy to be surprised by philosophically oriented contributions from other scientific disciplines, which do not have yet own intra-disciplinary philosophical tradition.

Since there are some similarities of the goals set for *Philosophies* to those of other, earlier initiatives (e.g., related to Snow's reflection on the need to bridge "Two Cultures"), there is a legitimate question about the distinctive character of the journal. Some of these distinctive characteristics can be found throughout this text, but one should be emphasized. It is an expectation of the equal role of philosophy or philosophies and the other domains of inquiry and of the initiative coming from all sides. The journal is for those who want to cross the borders between different scientific and philosophical disciplines or between different cultural paradigms of intellectual inquiry, but building bridges requires firm

foundations on the both sides of their span. We expect that submitted articles will bridge different research domains are characterized by a high level of expertise on both sides. We encourage submissions of the works, which may be considered methodologically too rigorous and specialized for publication in traditional philosophical venues, but too philosophical to qualify for scientific specialized publications. However, we discourage submissions, which although possibly innovative and imaginative, lack rigor or discipline of scholarly intellectual work. Finally, since the journal has an emergent synthesis of philosophical inquiry as its ultimate goal, we request for clear statement in the introduction of each submission, unless it is really obvious, in what way the work is committed to philosophical inquiry and how it can contribute to the synthetic view of the world.

Articles with more scientific or formal content are welcome, but the authors should consider that the best way to utilize the opportunity to reach the broad audience of *Philosophies* is through presenting the results in the form comprehensible not only to fellow specialists, but to those who work on the same subject, but from the perspectives of other disciplines. After all, we do not want to be just “In varietate concordia” (united in diversity), but we want to seek philosophical synthesis, which requires mutual understanding. For this and also for more pragmatic reasons, it is worth to remember when writing contributions to *Philosophies* that an excessive reliance on external resources by directing readers to other specialized literature materials, in particular the works not available in open access, for explanation of matters necessary to understand the main line of thought may jeopardize the objective of a wide dissemination of the published article. The authors are encouraged to use in full extent the fact that they are not restricted by the length of the paper. On the other hand, overloading the article with irrelevant details obscuring the substance of thought may be equally harmful to the wide reception, and the wide reception is the means to achieve diversity, and ultimately synthesis.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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