

To bring all of science together in the overcoming of pain and suffering

Claudie Baudoin
claudie.baudoin@gmail.com

What is more important than overcoming the pain and suffering in others and in oneself? To make science and knowledge progress is of value if it goes in the direction of life. The fair and just production and distribution of the means of subsistence, health care, education, the formation of intellectuals with a sensitivity to social issues—these are tasks to be undertaken with the enthusiasm and faith merited by every action that struggles to overcome pain in others.¹

Science is meant to serve the human being, human development, and harmony between humanity and nature. Unfortunately, up to this point many scientific discoveries have been applied more for destructive than creative purposes. In general, there are greater concentrations of high technology in the military-industrial complex than elsewhere; the social sciences are today used to manipulate the social consciousness and behaviour of the masses.

All of culture, education, the socialization of the personality, and social progress depend on the level of development of science and, in the long run, on the degree to which science is given a humanist or anti-humanist orientation.²

I – Scientific substrate

Some elements of scientific knowledge and scientific methods were developed in antiquity (particularly in Egypt, Mesopotamia, India, China, pre-Columbian America, Greece, Rome, and Byzantium) and others during the Middle Ages.³

During the Renaissance in particular, we can see the full dimension of the word “humanism” in the struggle initiated by Art and Science against obscurantism. Though it would take too long today to talk about the contributions of historical figures such as Giordano Bruno, Pico della Mirandola and, of course, Galileo: It was the development of this humanist, anthropocentric vision that finally ushered in the modern age. This vision expressed itself not only in art and science, but also in the politics of the time.⁴

In the modern age after the seventeenth century, however, with what is called the scientific revolution based on the inductive method and experimental methods, science diverged from theology and became an autonomous branch of study and activity, breaking with the Scholastic method. In the twentieth century, along with increasing differentiation of scientific disciplines, a growing importance has also been accorded to the processes of integration and interdisciplinary studies.

Obviously, science is historical, and it progresses in accordance with social process in general. This fact, which is often overlooked, leads to many errors of understanding. It is well known that the science of one epoch becomes corrected or contradicted by new knowledge, so that one cannot speak rigorously of a definitive science as if it were something enshrined forever with its great principles and conclusions. In this sense, it is more prudent to speak of the “present state of the sciences.”⁵

Universalist Humanism doesn't establish hierarchies with Mathematical Sciences, Physical Sciences, (theoretical or pure and applied physics), Biological Sciences, Control Sciences (Cybernetics, Ecology, Genetics), Inter-sciences (Astrophysics, Chemistry, Biology, Archaeology, Meteorology), the Humanities (Psychology, Law, Sociology, Anthropology, General Philosophy), Sciences of Space (Astronomy, General Geography) or Time Sciences (General History, Historiology, forecasting)

Humanism today, therefore, does not set art against science and doesn't commit the error of identifying art with humanism and science with technology.

Arts and technology are structurally linked to the sciences, fulfilling different functions:

- Sciences fulfil the function of accumulating, clarifying and developing knowledge, searching for the demonstration of "truth".
- Arts, the function of interpreting and transmitting, socially, emotional intuitions of "reality".
- Finally, ceremonial services fulfil the function of ordering, purifying and perfecting techniques, on occasions related with the sciences and sometimes with the arts.

Beyond this widely known enumeration, we are interested in comprehending what we call the "**scientific substrate**". The substrate cannot be considered a science, after all. Neither has it ever figured as the base on which sciences of an era are built. The substrate is the apparatus of assumptions of the times or cultural assumptions; the substrate is never noticed and nevertheless, it is the background on which **all scientific "images of the world"** are built.

In this theme, it is surprising how many "scientists" have been able to appropriate explanations of far away things to their interpretative scheme, without needing to clarify (from their theory) how it is that the representation of the world in general and the image of the scientific world in particular are configured. Which is however a condition of the development of ideas and not one more step that can be happily dispensed with.

All study is carried out from a "landscape" and this is applicable to every vision of the world, that allows one to highlight the look of the one observing the world. This is, therefore, a *necessary* concept for Science in general.

Even if the look of the observer—in this case the scientist—is modified when confronting a new object, the landscape of the scientist contributes to directing this look. To maintain that in order to do science the observer must be passive contributes little to knowledge unless it is an understanding that this position is the translation of a conception of the subject as the simple reflection of external stimuli.⁶

In fact with the appearance of quantum mechanics, we witness a radical transformation of the significance of physical laws that stop being deterministic and instead become probabilistic. As Professors Pietro Chistolini and Salvatore Puledda develop so well in their paper on the Anthropic Principle, the observer, or rather human consciousness, acquires an active function with respect to the phenomenon it observes, what's more, a function that will be decisive for the existence of the phenomenon itself.⁷

The Mathematician, **B. De Finetti**, for example, states: "There is no sense talking about the probability of an event but rather only in relation to all the knowledge that a person has available"⁸

So indispensable is the concept of "landscape" that it appears as something obvious in the writings of contemporary physicists. Erwin Schrödinger says: "What is matter? How are we to picture matter in our mind? The first form of the question is ludicrous. (How should we say what matter is—or, if it comes to that, what electricity is—both being phenomena given to us once only?) The second form already betrays the whole change of attitude: matter is an image in our mind⁹." (*end quote*)

J. A. Wheeler has asserted that the deeper lesson of quantum mechanics is that reality ends up being defined precisely on the basis of the questions we pose.

The scientific substrate is constituted therefore by "beliefs". Of course, when we speak of "beliefs" we are referring to the sorts of pre-predicative formulations of which **Husserl** spoke, and that appear as much in daily life as in science. Therefore, it is of little importance whether a belief has mythical or scientific roots, since in any case it involves prepredicates that have been formed previous to any rational judgment.¹⁰

Besides this, the notion of process and structure matters a lot, as it takes us away from simple studies or formal analysis and allows the interpretation of facts happening in a global and structural dynamic.

These two subjects, beliefs and the notion of process, despite their importance, will not be developed here.

What we want to highlight here, is that the centrality of the observer, that is, human consciousness and the intentional act of the observation, seems to be a constant that is arising in various fields of the physical sciences and there is no reason not to widen this to other sciences.

II Discrepancies in the overcoming of pain and suffering

I am provisionally submerged in this world of the perceptual, of the immediate, where perception and illusory memories give in me an illusory consciousness and an illusory consciousness of myself, in a world where it is supposed that science and social organisation take a direction that ends in the improvement of human life.¹¹

But how is it that pain is overcome with the advance of society and science and suffering is not overcome in parallel?

Not all who study (whatever may be the object of their study), study their own existence. There is no science that studies existence itself.

We are interested, precisely because of the situation of human existence, and therefore we have no say in the discussions that take place in science. However we observe that science has serious difficulties to define what happens in existence.

There are a few people who uphold that the human being has not advanced at all. It is obvious that the human being has advanced in its scientific conquest, in its conquest of nature, in its development. But it is clear that in matters of suffering someone from five thousand years ago and someone today, would register the same disappointments, fears, and resentments as if for them history had not existed. But how could we say that the human being has not advanced? Maybe because it has advanced sufficiently today that it is making these kinds of questions and also because of this it is trying to give a response to these interrogators that probably, in another era would not have been necessary to make.

Medical advances show this to be the case; social progress demonstrates this as well. There is no science or organization of society that can overcome mental suffering. And the notable and significant function that the great messages and great teachings have served has been to make us understand that we need very precise conditions in order to surpass suffering.¹²

Where will be found in the current era the solution to make the suffering recede that gives rise to frustration, resentment, fear of death and fear in general?

Silo states: "It is the effort that the human being has to make to enter into other regions of the mind¹³ ...", multiplying experiences of contact with the Profound, something that will help to clarify meaning of life.

Meaning in life is a direction toward the future that gives coherence to life, that provides a framework for all of one's activities, that justifies one's life fully. In the light of meaning, suffering in general and even pain in its mental component retreat and grow smaller as one comes to understand them as experiences that can be surpassed.¹⁴

Will it turn out that reason and faith are opposed?

In "*Humanise the Earth*", Silo says:

If reason is to be at the service of life, it will help us leap over death. Let reason, then, produce a meaning exempt from all frustration, all exhaustion, all accident.

I want those saints who do not fear but truly love. I want those who day by day seek to conquer pain and suffering with their science and their reason. And in truth I see no difference between the saints and those who, through their science, encourage life.¹⁵

And in the following chapter

If it is said that faith and science oppose each other, I will reply that I accept science as long as it does not oppose life.

Nothing prevents faith and science from progressing, as long as they have the same direction and enthusiasm to help sustain the effort.

And those who would humanise, let them help raise our spirits by pointing out the possibilities that the future holds. Or is the sceptic's anticipation of defeat useful for life? Could even science be sustained without faith?

*There is a type of faith that goes against life. It is a faith that proclaims "Science will destroy our world!" **How much better to put our faith in working day by day to humanise science, so that the direction it was endowed with from its birth may triumph!**¹⁶*

III Necessary Ethics

Science has forever arisen as a response to human Need, to its profound aspiration to overcome pain and suffering, even that produced by the phenomenon of death. In order to not extend this paper more we will illustrate the point with Federico II (XII century Palermo) and Rodolfo II (XVI century Prague), who brought together in their courts the most erudite of their times, not only because of their great interest in knowledge, but to respond to their questions about eternity or the immortality of the soul. We highlight that these "dark" sciences, opposed to rationalism and therefore accused of being a naive vision of the world, contributed significantly to a profound comprehension of the world.¹⁷

The process shows how our civilisation arises from the combined efforts of many human beings, of different eras and peoples. In the moments and places where, for love of knowledge, tolerance and breadth of vision, interchange among cultures and peoples is made possible, knowledge has an enormous push, that expands in distance and in time, arising with it the possibility of the evolution of the Human Being.¹⁸

Could this be the ethics of science? To work exclusively for the evolution of the Human Being?

Besides this, some peoples were always aware of other realities and a particular "science" allowed them to recognise and decipher the signs of the sacred.

Dr Hoffmann notes, when he established the parallel between the molecular structure of LSD and the mushrooms used by the shamans of South America, that the world of the twentieth century is not mentally, economically or socially prepared for the application of his discoveries in sustained searches in human consciousness, investigating these "other realities".

They are not few the impediments to development of science at the service of liberation of the human mind.

The studies carried out by **Mircea Eliade**¹⁹ show how the secularisation of today's world has led the human mind to be unprepared for the experience of other realities. What's more, what could be investigated in this direction without a clear purpose? It also seems that one can't go towards these zones of the mind without a pre-historic substrate of the dominant-dominated kind.

Something that makes us return to the need for ethics with a high humanist value that would maybe cause the collapse of the whole current political and economic system.

As Salvatore Puledda pointed out in his conference "An Ethical Oath for Scientists", "in reality, an enormous responsibility falls on scientists and their technicians. If they could say NO to the destructive use of science, if a great movement were created against weapons and wars, born out of universities and research centres all over the world, then, politicians and the military would see the space for warfare adventures of any type reduced to the limit."²⁰

In addition, even if the past fictions are our present reality because of the sustained work of scientists, if in the fictions of today we can intuit future realities, for Universalist Humanism science would have to commit itself once more to a project at the service of mankind, overcoming its physical limits and also its mental ones, giving the possibility to gain free energy to investigate in “pure virtual space”.²¹

Conclusion

Human antecedents, thanks to the first “science” of fire totally changed the conditions of life; giving rise, with the free energy gained, to the first human groups and with that the development of new sentiments and registers, notably broadening the emotional centre. Later, with the first urban centres, transformation of matter was developed, writing, etc and the external projection of inner searched continued, consequently broadening the intellectual centre... Today it falls to us to manage other fires, to once more gain free energy and investigate with resolution the internal landscape.

Intentionally contributing to the creation of the Universal Human Nation, maybe science should also be endowed with a clear mental direction; to contribute to the creation of the New Human Being, a being that doesn't move in compensation for its fear of death but rather in creation and generation of the spirit within it.

After all, if it is admitted that there is a possibility for a society that has no fear of death, endowing it with meaning and approaching a luminous opening, the integral conception of our universe and of the human being within it should be reviewed, something that would provoke a profound change in the sciences, arts and definitely, in all human activity.

So we will conclude with Silo:

*“The heroes of this age fly through regions previously unknown toward the stars. They fly outward from their world and, without knowing it they are impelled toward the internal and luminous centre.”*²²

¹ SILO, *Silo Speaks*, Chowpatty Beach, Bombay, India, 1981. *Complete Works*. Volume I

² Ibid, *Dictionary of New Humanism*

³ Idem.

⁴ Ibid, *Humanism and the new world*, University of Bellas Artes. Mexico D.F., 7th of July 1991.

⁵ Ibid, *Dictionary of New Humanism*

⁶ Ibid., *Contributions to thought, Historiological discussions*

⁷ SALVATORE PULEDDA & PIETRO CHISTOLINI, *An Ethical Oath for Scientists*, in *A contemporaneous humanist*.

⁸ Ibid, *The Anthropic Principle and the Rise of the Centrality of the Observer in Some Recent Developments in the Physical Sciences*

⁹ E. SCHRÖDINGER, *Science and Humanism*.

¹⁰ SILO, *Contributions to thought, Historiological discussions, Complete Works. Volume I*

¹¹ Ibid, *Silo Speaks, Agricultural Collective in de Sri Lanka*, 1981

¹² Ibid, *The meaning of life*, Mexico, 1980.

¹³ SILO, *La Experience*, Punta de Vacas, May 2008.

¹⁴ SILO, *Silo Speak. The meaning of life. Complete Works. Volume I*

¹⁵ Ibid, *Humanise the Earth, Provisional meanings, chapter XIII the Internal Landscape*.

¹⁶ Ibid, *Faith, chapter XIV the Internal Landscape*

¹⁷ *The appearance of knowledge in the court of Rudolph II and Federica II a bridge between East and West, documentary series, “Beacons of Humanity”*, Pangaea foundation

¹⁸ Ibid, *Toledo-Alexandria*, 2004.

¹⁹ MIRCEA ELIADE, *The sacred and the profane*.

²⁰ SALVATORE PULEDDA, *An ethical oath for scientists in A contemporaneous Humanist*

²¹ SILO, *The day of the Winged Lion, last chapter Complete Works, volume I*

²² *Silo's Message*, Chapter XX, Internal Reality