



Human-Made World

Introductory

The main dedicated topic of this issue of *Synthesis philosophica* is the relationship between human beings and the world. Does the world exist before and outside of humans, and in this sense, are human beings nothing more than “a product” of the world, or is it that humans themselves are those who bring the world as such into being? Who determines the possibilities and limits of the human production of the world today, and should these limits even be defined? What is the relationship between microcosm and macrocosm? Is there only one world, or, as Giordano Bruno claims, is there an infinite number of worlds? Is a different world possible – or in other words – is a world revolution possible? How does science explain the world, and what kind of worlds does art create? Can an all-encompassing notion of the world be theoretically expounded, and what would be the consequences of such an attempt in our current scientific and technological epoch which has abandoned the “big concepts” typical of philosophical approaches in favour of particular scientific solutions? What does being a part of the world and coexistence with others mean in a world of global communication?

The current historical situation, marked by pervasive globalisation, sees the world finally becoming a whole in the literal sense, however this transformation of the world into a unified whole is serving to expose and radicalise the contradictions inherent in the logic of the world order. While human exploration of the world once entailed an attempt at conquering the unknown, we have all become more or less cosmopolitan. Mobility is becoming the basic mode of existence in the world, and frequent travel is becoming a way of life. Overwhelmed by this feeling of having conquered the world, we transform our understanding of the world as a “cosmic expanse surpassing human measure” into a “global village” accommodated to human needs. In this sense, the notion of *cosmos* in Greek philosophy of nature originally designated the world or space as an “ornament”, implying the beauty of the order inherent in the world. Anaximenes and Heraclitus used the word *cosmos* as a designation of a world-order arising out of tone of the world elements, either air or fire. Democritus mentions the *mezas diakosmos* and the *mikros diakosmos*, the great and the small world order. The Pythagoreans and the Stoics expounded the eternal circular movement of the *cosmos*, later revived in the thought of Nietzsche. The anthropocentric viewpoint took precedence when the physical (visible) cosmos ceased to be seen as the ultimate reality, and its place was taken by an invisible God who created the transitory world for the sake of human beings. St. Augustine completed this transformation of the Greek notion of the world into a theological-anthropological concept. After many centuries, Bacon’s and Descartes’ understanding of *knowledge* as human being’s (means for gaining) *power* over nature finally led to the key turning point in the

modern development of the notion of the world, where the world, which had been previously understood as something surpassing human beings, came to be interpreted as a product of human beings, as a “human-made” world.

The “enlargement” of human beings and the corresponding “diminution” of the world are also reflected in the manner in which people communicate today. Until recently, humans still depended upon static means of communication with others not physically present (e.g. upon a home phone or a phone box). For this reason, long-distance communication could only be established under certain circumstances. Contemporary means of communication travel together with their user and are becoming dynamic, while their user, the human of our age, must constantly service them as she is becoming ever more dependent on them. These new means of communication are bringing the communicative nature of humans to its full expression. The outcome of this process is twofold. On the one hand, human beings were never more open to the world, and the world has never been more accessible to them, while on the other hand, the unification of human beings and the world has been perverted into an attempt at subjugating the world to humans. This process could have dangerous consequences not easily foreseen. This attempt at subjugating the world displayed its dark side when human beings began to loosen their ties and breaking their connections with nature, starting from those binding them to their environment and ending with those that bind them to the natural side of their own being (attempts at the biomedical enhancement of human nature). While nature has warned about the consequences of its irresponsible exploitation through climate change and frequent ecological disasters, experimental intervention in human nature is still in its beginnings, and therefore we are yet to witness reactions to the scientific-technological invasion. Will the perpetuation of today’s approach to the world, in which the world is reduced to a set of calculable data, result in world destruction, or will human beings use their abilities to bring their humanistic ideals to life for the first time? To answer this question, a thorough reassessment of today’s relationship between humans and the world is indispensable.

By excluding reflections upon “big concepts” from the philosophical and humanistic tradition, such as the world and the meaning of history, we perpetuate the dominance of positivistic thinking in which scientific methods hold a monopoly over truth. We must not delude ourselves – the exclusive monoperspectivism typical of scientific-technological approaches cannot reveal the truth as such, because it ignores everything unexplorable from its perspective. On the contrary, the truth should be sought in its entirety and complexity, which implies that different and complementary perspectives must always be taken into consideration. Therefore, pluriperspective approach will include both scientific and non-scientific perspectives (e.g. artistic, religious, philosophical), thus offering an alternative to the reductionist approach to the world and human being. We present you a refined selection of papers disseminated at the 23rd *Days of Frane Petrić* (Cres, Croatia, September 21–27, 2014).

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