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***Communication and the Metaphysics of Practice
Sellarsian Ethics Revisited***

Some arenas of philosophical inquiry, recently reinforced by scientific research, suggest that we are deeply immersed in our environment, and moreover, that even the most abstract notions ascribed to the human mind are rooted in mundane practice and engagement. A moral philosophy which is to correspond to this image of man must also be anchored in everyday practice, or at least mundane practice has to provide its frame of reference.

In the present talk, I will suggest that Wilfred Sellars' remarks on "moral action" and "the image of man", completed with some deliberations from Hungarian scholar István Hajnal, converge with recent interdisciplinary research on cognition and consciousness, and create the foundation for an adequate moral philosophy. I would also like to highlight the growing force of a holistic view both in the metaphysical and the cognitive sense. This holism became possible due to the development of communications technology, (since this new technology made primary experiences easily accessible again), due to some outstanding efforts to overcome Cartesian dualism, and, of course, thanks to new research in the field of cognitive and neurocognitive sciences.

To prove my hypothesis, I will first consider recent developments against a background of cognition, and especially of motor processes. Due to technology, and particularly to mobile technology, there is no need to constantly translate/code experiences or ideas into verbal, and thus propositional, structures. This possibility increasingly opens the floor to perceptual and motor processes which do not need permanent conceptual supplementation. According to recent research, motor functions are holistic (as opposed to conceptual processing, for example). This holism means the vanishing of the boundary between the body and its environment. That is, the traditional separation of thinking and extended entities can be queried at least to some extent.

Then I will outline Sellars' attempt to bridge the gap between "man and science", or in a less esoteric way, to clarify how norms, which do not really exist, can have an impact on man, who really does exist. Sellars' claim is related to another aspect of the same separation: this chasm is also rooted in the Cartesian dualism of the reasoning mind and the extended body. The main pillars of Sellars' bridge are the notion of "theoretical entity" and the logical analysis of "shall" and "ought" within the framework of the "community".

Finally, I will show the functional similarities between the Sellarsian solution and the distinction of "structure/habit" and "reason/instinct" by Hajnal. Hajnal suggests that a community evolves in the right manner if its structures and institutions are tailored in accordance with customs which are determined by the capabilities of the community-members. Institutions, so to speak, take shape from customs/habits, and due to this crystallization they can resist individual interests which are ruled merely by reason. That is, in the Hajnalian frame of reference, moral laws seem to be the basis of the given structure (the complete institutional framework). That is, in accordance with the

Sellarsian claims of “reasonable principles”, moral rules guard the evolution of a community.

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