



On Two Contrasting Paradigms of Sustainability and Progress in Education in a Deconstructivist and Non- or Post-Binary Approach of Society

Wilfried ALLAERTS

Biological Publishing A&O and Erasmus MC, Rotterdam, the Netherlands

***Corresponding Author:** Wilfried ALLAERTS, Biological Publishing A&O and Erasmus MC, Rotterdam, the Netherlands

Abstract: This commentary is about the two major paradigms, regarded from an educational viewpoint, that keep our present world in check: the paradigms of sustainability and progress. The chosen framework is the model of Spiral Dynamics, based on the ideas of Clare Graves and others, and further developed by Beck and Cowan. The criticisms of Spiral Dynamics, namely the criticisms of Eurocentrism and a gender-bias have been found inspiring to incorporate the issues of gender and non-binary thinking into this educational framework. The deconstructivist approach of Jacques Derrida and especially the reconstruction of Derrida's analysis by Tina Chanter in *Deconstructivism and Feminism* was found very instructive in finding a way out of this conundrum. It is concluded that, although this philosophical analysis forms a very interesting addition to the curriculum for high school students, it is probably not very helpful in directing future cultural development into a post-binary society. Moreover, a critical analysis of the competitive model of government- and/or capital-driven scientific research is also incorporated.

Keywords: Spiral Dynamics – Deconstructivism – Post-gender binary – Education development – Competitive science and gender issues.

1. INTRODUCTION

Acceptance of self-expression is an important issue in education, in particular in educating gifted children, children with the well-described over-excitabilities⁽¹⁾ and especially also in supporting non-gender binary young adolescents⁽²⁾. What kind of society do these young people expect and are they up to? And what is the kind of society that educators can help them to explore? The latter questions of education and preparation for participating in society, not inasmuch as responsible adults but rather as happy persons, or at least towards people feeling well, are general questions affecting the whole of society, but the particular group of specially gifted children poses them in a most challenging or confronting or even an uncomfortable way⁽²⁾. In many publications on specially gifted children, we found that the focus was either on protecting the (highly sensitive, over-excitabile) children during their teenage years or to make them better adapted to the education system and economic demands of society^(3, 4). The question of (re-)building society into a non-discriminating, gender-equal or even non-gender binary future, first of all invokes the role of the ruling discourses in the media and the role of science, and, unfortunately, became also increasingly political (see ¶ 3. **The war of sciences**). The deeper grounds of these questions are in fact philosophical, especially following the post-structuralist criticism of written language as expressed in the work of Jacques Derrida (1930-2004) and others^(5, 6). In this paper, we will recall the challenging debate between deconstructivism and feminism, as beautifully illustrated in the philosophical writings *Derrida and Feminism* (see ¶ 4. **Deconstructivism and Feminism**). In particular, Chanter's point of a culturally neutral view on the debate, merits further attention⁽⁷⁾.

In the perspective of self-development in a culturally defined educational setting, according to the pioneering work of Ken Wilbur (°1949, Oklahoma City)⁽⁸⁾, the pioneering roles of James Mark Baldwin (1861-1934), John Dewey (1859-1952), Abraham Maslow (1908-1970) and Clare Graves (1914-1986) cannot be overestimated. Baldwin not only placed psychology in a developmental perspective⁽⁹⁾, but, according to Wilbur (2000)⁽⁸⁾, also understood the evolutionary significance of

this process, at a time when this was still very controversial. Clare Graves expressed the viewpoint that “when the human is centralized in one state of existence - that is, when the self’s center of gravity hovers around a given level of consciousness – he or she has a psychology which is particular to that state (...)” [*¹]. Correspondingly, Graves developed a scheme around seven developmental “levels or waves of human existence, ranging from autistic, magical, and animistic, through socio-centric/conventional, to individualistic and integrated (...)” (¹⁰). Graves’ work was carried forward, further refined and extended by Don Beck and Christopher Cowan, and became famous under the name of *Spiral Dynamics* (¹¹). An important extension of Beck and Cowan is the systematization of the mind views, beliefs, behavioral patterns as ‘memes’, “invisible core intelligences” that, “like genes, do not operate in solo, but interlock in the mosaics that form *Weltanschauungs*, worldviews” [*²] (¹²). Not only the criticisms of an Eurocentric bias, or the criticism of a bias against woman, such as expressed in Lawrence Kohlberg’s (1927-1987) work on moral development [*³], the very notion of systematization, digitalization and spread of memes will be discussed in more detail (see ¶ 2. **The bias and counter-critics of Spiral Dynamics**).

When looking at the spectrum of convictions, beliefs or ways of thinking, it can be helpful to characterize them by describing in terms of the two poles or most extreme paradigms. On the one hand, there is the conservative, protective, sustainability pole, on the other hand we have the progressive, disruptive and invasive pole. Some may find this distinction a reminiscence of the female versus male paradigm, but, at the moment, we’d rather keep away as far as possible from such a definition of sexual difference. In management literature, the distinction is known as Michael Kirton’s adaptation-innovation theory/distinction (¹³): in a nutshell, adaptors are inclined to do things better, innovators are inclined to do things differently (¹⁴). Of course, some will argue that both sides have to be reconciled, and can ‘easily’ become integrated into one approach. Especially in official or governmental discourses, a political view is expressed of combining both sustainability and disruptive innovations as a solution to the world’s problems. However, it remains to be seen whether these disruptive innovations are really sustainable, and not only an expression of the wish to become sustainable (like the problem of finding enough mineral ore and materials – on the planet we are inhabiting, not somewhere else in our solar system - for the electrification of our economy at a global scale).

Finally, in this paper we will address the issue of certain patterns in the current scientific approaches of governmental and/or capital-driven research, and will ask the question whether these approaches are beneficial or could become so, in the view of the big issues our time is dealing with. Scientific research and especially the publications it procures, most often contains an element of ‘showing off’, or, simply called propaganda. It ensures the investment institutes and governments that their money has been well spent. For the fragile groups in society, and equally so, for the vulnerable pupils in the class room, especially the highly-sensitive and/or over-excitabile youngsters, corroborating the successes of the ruling paradigms in society is not their primary concern, let alone its showing off. Let us also not forget that many examples of the brightest minds came forward out of these ranks. In a world that is teared up by political and economic incommensurable differences, we feel it is important to find a balance between sustainability and progress in education of the young generations. Doing so, this may enable the soft power, e.g. of philosophical education, which is probably necessary for creating a safe environment for Self-deployment, without making it an instrument for government propaganda.

2. THE BIAS AND COUNTER-CRITICS OF SPIRAL DYNAMICS

In his seminal work *Integral Psychology* (⁸), Wilber mentions two serious criticisms against the theory of Spiral Dynamics, and especially Kohlberg’s moral connotations of the theory: these are the criticisms of an Eurocentric bias and a bias against women. Both criticisms can be refuted, according to Wilber [*3] K. Wilber (*ibidem*), p. 46}. Basically, the refutations can be summarized as (1) “there

[*¹] K. Wilber (2000), p. 40.

[*²] D. Beck and Ch. Cowan (1996), with a quote from Howard Bloom (1995), *The Lucifer Principle*, The Atlantic Monthly Press, New York, see Beck and Cowan (1996), p. 34 a.f. (See also our discussion of the fractal nature of memes in W. Allaerts [2020]).

[*³] K. Wilber (*ibidem*), p. 43.

is not much evidence that females travel a different moral path and come to emphasize a morality of care more than males do (...)", and (2): "similar findings have emerged from studies in Mexico, the Bahamas, Taiwan, Indonesia, (...)". To our opinion, neither of these arguments are convincing: regarding to (1) because the argument doesn't clarify whether the observation regarding a male-female dichotomy expresses an ideal or realistic state description, and because at least it has to be called 'binary'. We will come back to the binary-criticism later (see ¶ 6. **Is a post-gender binary society an Utopia and is science helpful in reaching out for more integration?**). Regarding to (2), the fact of finding European or Western ideas and habits in non-western cultures is not at all a refutation of a post- or neo-colonial exportation of ideas or ideological appropriation of third world cultural elements.

The spiral, helix-like dynamic model (of Beck and Cowan, 1996, see above) works through successive antagonistic phases, where the I-perspective and the we-perspective alternate in a dynamic fashion. Doing so, egotistic phases are alternated with more socially-relevant phases of development. A very fundamental question however, remains to what degree these socially-relevant phases are influenced, directly or indirectly by a political system, conglomerate of opinions on a certain politico-economic system or culturally-defined mindset. One example is the neo-liberal political system, proclaimed by Francis Fukuyama (°1952, Chicago, IL) in *The End of History (and the Last Man)* (¹⁵). We previously commented that many liberal, neo-capitalist and western-democratic systems in fact represent a kind of 'practical theodicy', implicating that one either adheres to the system or one is out (¹²). This implicates not only that the value system proclaimed by spiral dynamics is neither politically- nor culturally neutral: also we can't simply believe that when people are supportive or claim to be supportive for a certain value system, they do so because of the social or political benefits of that value system or because they are really believing in the intrinsic 'value' of these 'memetic' values. For instance, when people claim to support a sustainable life on planet Earth, we may ask: do they practically understand the full implications of such a support and can they live up to it on a daily basis? Do they really understand what is going on with our planet and what it takes to turn the tide? Of course, not knowing what is going on with our planet makes it easier to follow their own, individualistic, neo-liberal path to an uncertain future. Given this example, it is interesting to notice a gradual shift in the usage of the notion of 'meme': from a cultural element that is transmitted from one person to another [^{*4}], the notion of meme has evolved into an established or known representation of a cultural element on social media or in the digital world. Unnoticed as such, memes became controllable entities in the digital world, and no longer an authentic cultural element passed on from one brain to another.

In the spiral dynamics model of Beck and Cowan, and also in Wilber's discussion, an important role is put aside for 'second-tier thinking. Clare Graves (following Wilber, 2000) referred to this as a "*momentous leap, where a chasm of unbelievable depth of meaning is crossed (...)*". However, according to Wilber, there is a limit to this 'green, sensitive-self' thinking, for "*what none of those memes can do, on its own, is fully appreciate the existence of the other memes. Each of these first-tier memes thinks that its worldview is the correct or the best perspective (...)*" [^{*5}]. Returning to the green sustainability 'believers', the egalitarian but also the "weak and woo-woo" in the eyes of the 'orange' yup (young urban professional), a most cynical reading would implicate that the green ecologists need the activities of the orange yups to spoil the planet, in order to have something to fight for, namely restoring the planet from the damage done. This is in fact what the system of emission rights exemplifies: one party buys the 'right' for CO₂emission, whereas another party does the 'right' thing, namely planting new trees, or something. The problem, however, is that on a whole, mean yearly average temperatures and sea levels are still rising, the emission rights economy taking most of the profit. This in itself, of course is an extremely liberal-biased value system. Probably the only possible conclusion is that an intrinsically valued system of spiral dynamics is only possible for an individual that is completely detached from its surroundings or from society, which makes it ultimately useless in an educational setting.

[^{*4}] See Allaerts (2020), p. 8, for the original definition of a meme by Richard Dawkins in *The Selfish Gene* (1976).

[^{*5}] K. Wilber (*ibidem*), p. 51.

Regarding the sexual bias, at the moment suffice to say that educational settings of course need to be primarily unbiased toward sex or sexual orientation. The reality however is that in most countries, including the western so-called democratic societies, this is far from the case in adult organizational or professional settings. Also the mandatory quota for women participating in typical male environments, does not detract from the typical sexually oriented stereotyping of roles in society. Also in Wilber's refutation of the sexual bias (see above) the care-taking typology (for the female role) versus the fast and competitive attitude is present, and, as we will see, is also dominant in science and science organization (see below).

3. THE WAR OF SCIENCES

(Disclaimer) The present example is typical for a country like The Netherlands, but could also represent any (Western or Westernized) democratic country or supranational institution or power.

Twenty years ago, the secretary-general (SG) of the Dutch Federation of Scientific Associations (in Dutch called FMWV) was questioned by an official of the Dutch government administration. They asked him questions about his loyalty to the government and/or to the medical organizations. Who was he loyal to in the first place? He answered something like "since you're paying my salary, I am most loyal to you! But, after all, the bottom line is that I'm indebted most to the medical sciences (and these are best performed by the medical scientists)". That was clearly the wrong answer, as the SG could notice from the sudden stop of his career [*⁶](¹⁶). That SG, obviously, was the author of the present paper.

The loyalty question of scientists, both individuals as well as scientific organizations and even universities, versus the national or supranational governments, became a hallmark of the following decades, and thus the decades preceding the huge corona pandemic of 2020-2022. Not so much the questions about who is to blame and who doesn't make any scientific misjudgments, but the loyalty questions became crucial (see also ⁶). Who is loyal to the official doctrine and who is acting on his own gut feelings and information? It was clear that neither side could claim an error-proof knowledge of the whole complex situation, but the scientists were prompted to univocally echo the official doctrine, or remain silent. The end of academic freedom of speech therefore wasn't a sudden fall-out of the pandemic, but the result of an unnoticed seeping of governmental, top-down manipulation, or, in some way an infiltration, like the unnoticed seeping of water through sphagnum bogs, that eventually generate the broad course of a river (¹⁷).

Many scientists however wouldn't notice a lack of academic freedom. Because, within the limits of the academic competition and struggle of the 'fittest', their individual creativity, perseverance and endorsement would suggest, not inasmuch their obligate loneliness during this constant fight for survival, but at least their academic freedom and obligation to look for all possible means to conduct this fight. Of course, all happens within the limits set by the institution or the limits of the system. The scientists at the ground zero level aren't mostly aware of the decisions made at the top, they only see the result of the fitness struggle: either to win or to perish. This is of course a typically male pattern of behavior, regardless of the gender of the persons higher up in the hierarchy of the system. A former president of Twente University, prof. dr. F.A. van Vught, in this regard invoked the portfolio approach (¹⁸), the liberty of the top at cherry picking of qualifications needed in a team of academic professors. The 'free competition' therefore was something occurring at the laboratory benches, the lower ranks of the scientific battlefields, leaving the top with the task of selecting candidates to enter a next career level, because "reputation had become more relevant than (objectively measurable) scientific achievements", he argued (¹⁸).

So, competition and the rat race obviously have continued to exist and moreover, generate the climate of constant struggle. The freedom of individual, productive scientists, plodding at their bench, is limited by the choices made by the management top. There is nothing 'natural' about this selection in the scientific community. The replacement of men by women doesn't alter the atmosphere of rivalry, or even worse, it may augment it by excluding numerous well-qualified candidates because they are not from the desired gender. In natural environments, rivalry, considered as a 'typically' male

[*⁶] See P. Verhoef, *et al.*(2012), p. 104.

characteristic in present-day convictions, but also occurring among females, is almost equally balanced by co-operation. We leave out the designation of whether co-operation can be called typically male or female characteristic, let's therefore qualify it as a gender-free property.

It remains to be seen whether a renaissance of the freedom of thinking and investigation, so sadly forfeited by the academic institutions of the old democracies, that once defended and endorsed the Enlightenment of spirits ⁽⁶⁾, hopefully may be rediscovered in the new emerging economies. And sadly enough, once these were so cruelly scorned off by the old ones.

4. DECONSTRUCTIVISM AND FEMINISM

Returning to the deconstructivist awareness of the logocentrism, inherent to any writing or narrative ⁽⁵⁾, the presumption that the preceding paragraph may have been moulded primarily by the COVID-19 pandemic and not by the intrinsic developments in the sociology of science ⁽⁶⁾, is a plausible line of thought. However, suffice to have a look at a few references added here, to realize that, although some unconscious form of influencing (of an author), by cultural and/or educational background, or by any form of mediatization, can never be completely excluded, these influences haven't so far impeded the publication of an important number of ideas within this highly controversial domain ^(19, 20, 21).

More important for the questions put forward in the introduction of this paper, are the gender-related or neutral patterns of thinking in relation to the sustainability versus progress paradigms for our future planet. The question of Woman versus Man, or the question of gender, has occupied the philosopher's minds from the ancient Greek up to the psychoanalytic schools of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) and the neo-Freudians. For instance, Aristotle places woman as the nourishing medium for man and contrasts the rational activity of man with the irrationality of nature ⁽²²⁾. And, according to Drucilla Cornell ⁽²³⁾, Jacques Lacan (1901-1981) recuperated "*feminine Otherness as the guarantee of the masculine Symbolic, while his conception of law demands the denial of this otherness*".

In 1993, the 'feminist' philosopher Judith Butler ⁽²⁴⁾ wrote that sexual differences never are simply a function of material differences, but of performativity: material differences are in some way both marked and formed by discursive practices, say by culture or language. In the words of Michel Foucault (1926-1984) ⁽²⁵⁾, sex is considered as a 'norm', and as a part of the 'soul' it constitutes a 'regulatory ideal for the body'. The psychology of sex thus places the gender question in the core of the eternal nature-nurture debate. Could this eternal query be tracked down to a metaphysical cul-de-sac, such as the deconstructivist project proclaimed by Jacques Derrida? Was deconstructivism indeed capable of re-inscribing the nature-nurture dichotomy in history, or was Joan Copjec ⁽²⁶⁾ right, opposing Judith Butler ⁽²⁴⁾, when not applying performativity to biological gender and excluding sex from the deconstructivist discourse? Drucilla Cornell's conclusions are more appraisive: "*Derrida's formulation of deconstruction enables the ethical encounter with the Real, recognizing a beyond to the Symbolic, disrupting any conception of the law of law*"⁽²³⁾. In the words of Derrida: "*If woman is truth, she at least knows that there is no truth, that truth has no place here, and that no one has a place for truth. And she is woman precisely because she herself does not believe in truth itself, because she does not believe in what she is, in what she is believed to be, in what she thus is not (...)*"⁽²⁷⁾. However, Derrida's failure to "*write with the hand of a woman*" makes his attempts suspicious, Ellen Feder and Emily Zakin caution: "*Derrida identifies the danger that in attempting to intervene in the language of metaphysics, one risks merely repeating this language while trying to disrupt it*"⁽²⁸⁾. And, in order to avoid furthering a long history of woman appropriation, Feder and Zakin conclude that it is time to replace the Question of Woman by woman's questions, as the only possibility of generating a feminine subject ⁽²⁸⁾.

But the analysis of Tina Chanter takes the stakes even a bit higher, in order to place the feminine subject in a cross-cultural perspective and to give a more profound reading of Derrida's work on deconstructivism and feminism ⁽⁷⁾. Chanter wants to disrupt "*the ease with which oppositions are entrenched (between deconstructivism and feminism)*", and proposes to read without "*neither subordinate 'feminism' to 'deconstruction' (...), nor to subordinate 'deconstruction' to 'feminism', defensively protecting our rights to a reclaimed territory by warding off prospectors, and punishing*

trespassers.”[*7] T. Chanter (1997), p. 91.} Hereby, an important role is given to the logic of ‘the gift’, invoked by Derrida in *Spurs*⁽²⁷⁾, “*a logic by which woman is both giver and taker, both appropriated and appropriator, both mistress and master – she both ‘gives’ herself, and ‘in giving, she is in fact giving herself for’*” [*7].

The deeper meaning of the notion of the gift, following the discourses of Derrida in several of his works, like *At This Very Moment in This Work Here I Am* (1991)⁽²⁹⁾, *The Ends of Man* (1982)⁽³⁰⁾ and *Woman in the Beehive* (1984)⁽³¹⁾, according to Chanter (1997)⁽⁷⁾, has to be interpreted as “*the thought of a radical generosity that demands ingratitude (from the other)*” [*8]. It brings Chanter to the strange but important role of ‘neutrality’ in Derrida’s work, cautioning against the assumption “that Derrida’s position on the question of woman lacks complication.” It is not the neutrality of the narrator as expounded by Lacan⁽³²⁾ in his reading of Edgar Allen Poe’s (1809-1849) *The Purloined Letter* (1844), originally published in *The Gift for 1845*, nor Emmanuel Levinas’ (1906-1995) neutrality as expressed in *And God Created Woman* (1972)⁽³³⁾. Strangely enough, it is the name of Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) that Derrida invokes in his work *Geschlecht (...)* (1983)⁽³⁴⁾. Not only the word ‘Geschlecht’ refers to both gender and genus (as well as to the taxonomical lineage, the family and generation of a species), Heidegger offers an alternative, according to Chanter⁽⁷⁾, for the “*discourse that could reconstruct phallogentrism*” by taking a position “*which can simply neutralize the sexual opposition, and not sexual difference, liberating the field of sexuality for a very different sexuality, a more multiple one. At that point there would be no more sexes ... there would be one sex for each time. One sex for each gift. A sexual difference for each gift.*” [*9].

Therefore, Chanter (1997) concludes that far from “*writing sexual difference out of the picture*”, Derrida’s reading of “*Heidegger’s insistence upon the neutrality of Dasein*” can be interpreted as a sign for “*expanding the possibilities of sexual identity beyond the conventional binary couple*” (Chanter, p. 97). We will come back to that position in a following paragraph (see ¶ 6. **Is a post-gender binary society an Utopia and is science helpful in reaching out for more integration?**). Questions may rise, however, as to where these ‘expanded possibilities of sexual identity’ may find a practical form, where they may become applied in the ordinary lives of people beyond the conventional roles that already exist, and to what expansions societies may find acceptable or not? Obviously, it is not the secret intimacy of the role play in seasoned love couples that is meant here. The adjective of ‘expanded’ evokes the notion of a normative regulatory ideal (see Foucault, 1975)⁽²⁵⁾, and the openness, or lack of intimacy, may have diminished rather than expanded the contours of the domain where possible fluctuations of sexual behavior are tolerated (in certain cultures). The worldwide #MeToo-movement, moreover, has instigated a new platform to discuss and regulate how formal consent to sexual acts has to be understood (among adults) and how it may also become recognized by criminal law⁽³⁵⁾.

The notion of consent presupposes the openness toward the other (as an integral, absolute Other)⁽³⁶⁾, as well as the communicative capabilities that may still have to grow – slowly ! - when people are discovering the boundaries of their solitude. It may place the need for expanding his/her/ones sexual identity within the context of recognizing (and eventually discovering) the world of the other. Ultimately, it is not inasmuch the ‘End of Man’ (Derrida, 1982)⁽³⁰⁾, but the end of egotism that marks the future of proper, consenting behavior.

5. THE POSSIBILITY OF A NON-COMPETITIVE SCIENTIFIC APPROACH

What are the basic criteria of ‘good’ science, or of ‘good practices’ in science? What makes some call the competitive nature of scientific research a typically male characteristic? Isn’t that in itself a sexist remark driven by certain prejudicial, binary thinking, or, is it a justifiable position?

At the very bottom of this query, we have to start from some common agreement on a universal quality that is inherently defended in science. Science is defended, because the common opinion is that science should be defendable and defended against those negative qualities that bring it down⁽³⁷⁾. That doesn’t mean that science is always bringing good news, or truth, or should always adopt a positive attitude toward a certain engagement or belief. Also the dictum that science should be

[*7] T. Chanter (1997), p. 93, quoting Derrida (1979), *Spurs (...)*, p. 109.

[*8] T. Chanter (1997), p. 94.

[*9] T. Chanter (1997), p. 95, quoting Derrida (1984, 1987), *Woman in the Beehive*, p. 199.

corroborated by empirical facts or experimental evidence wouldn't stand the universal litmus test⁽³⁷⁾. In the days of Francis Bacon (1561-1626), science was meant to lift up the spirits towards a better world, the utopia of a 'Nova Atlantis'⁽³⁸⁾. That was also the time for explorers to discover new passages through the North Pole ice⁽³⁹⁾ and later also to discover a new continent on the Southern hemisphere in the Antarctic circle.

With the Austrian-born philosopher Karl Popper (1902-1994), we have learned that justification wasn't enough to ground a scientifically sound method and that findings and results had to become falsifiable too. Popper thus rejected the basic empiricist view (in the lines of Bacon and Immanuel Kant [1724-1804]) that basic statements are infallible; rather these statements or bare facts are to be seen as descriptions in relation to a theoretical framework⁽⁴⁰⁾. The logical asymmetry between the amount of data verifying a certain theoretical hypothesis and the sole counterexample falsifying it, for Popper clearly made the demarcation between genuine science and theories that should not be called genuinely scientific, like psychoanalysis and contemporary Marxism. (We will come back to this position of falsifiability in relation to gender studies below). Regarding Popper's criticism of psychoanalysis, the attempts to exempt the work of Jacques Lacan from this ordeal, at least merit attention^(41, 42). Moreover, in the Lacanian analysis of the case of 'Women, Causality (and Feminism)' by Slavoj Žižek, the name of Popper is not even mentioned, in contrast to the philosophy of Theodor Adorno (1903-1969)⁽⁴³⁾.

If the exclusion from scientific-theoretical, methodological scrutiny of the study of the psychological Self, in contrast to the biological Self⁽⁴⁴⁾, could become agreed upon within a broad range of stakeholders of the sciences – which we all are –, there remains enough to be defended against what might detract from the integral value of science. One such characteristic is the commonly accepted view that science should be 'competitive'. This competitiveness, however has become a competition between governments, especially since the global pandemic(s) of COVID-19 [*¹⁰].

A competition of scientific activities orchestrated at a supranational level, such as exemplified in the race for developing new vaccines, no longer can be universally considered as drawing the world near Bacon's utopia (see above). Rather, it should be seen as fulfilling the 'utopia' of its most important stakeholders, the beneficiaries of their investments. In other words, the competitiveness has become an instrument that generates divisiveness among the different regions of the world, North versus South, East versus West.

Another challenge of the global science community is its intentional 'openness'. While we presume that open access publications have augmented the visibility and accessibility of independent scientific research activities, there is little proof that this openness effectively favors the scientists and their communities, neither that research data and results have become really accessible all over the planet. Asymmetry of data accessibility and sharing, invisible walls, shielding of nations or across world blocks, have been more obstructive than ever, let alone the cheating and blunt theft of data and intellectual property. All these adversities have been called inevitable drawbacks of a worldwide digitalization system and connectedness through the internet. The question however is: who are the biggest beneficiaries of these globalized networks and how is their attitude against theft of personal data and intellectual property exemplified, rationalized and approved by their profitability and business models⁽⁶⁾?

There seems to be no easy solution of this lack of balance between the big global players and those who are played with, except for the idle cries in favor of more solidarity. It remains to be investigated whether a non-competitive model of science and of science progress would be possible at all, for instance at a local scale (of stakeholders and actively performing scientists) in a completely new setting of science prioritization. For, in the competitive science race between national state interests, there is neither a (pro-capita) normalization of the benefits, nor a compensation according to the differences in pro capita domestic product or welfare.

[*¹⁰] See our quote of A. Peacock's lyrics in Allaerts (2022), p. 38.

6. IS A POST-GENDER BINARY SOCIETY AN UTOPIA AND IS SCIENCE HELPFUL IN REACHING OUT FOR MORE INTEGRATION?

The answer to these questions a) “is a post-gender binary society an Utopia?” and 2) “is science helpful in reaching out for more integration?” touches upon the issues that have been discussed in the previous sections of this paper. For instance, how does scientific competition work, and what is the role of national states and supranational organizations in orchestrating this competition (see sections 3 and 5)? How can philosophy help, for instance in clarifying the role of language, discourse and the molding role of religion and ideology (see e.g. section 4)? What is the role of education systems (section 2)?

With respect to the status of gender and gender non-conforming people, the role of common opinion as well as the role of science, when regarded as a normative instrument, are controversial. In the words of Alok Vaid-Menon ⁽²⁾, the problem “is not that gender non-conforming people aren’t normal, it’s that (we/they) aren’t considered normative” (p. 40-41). It’s an important achievement that the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Medical Association (WMA) and the American Psychological Association (APA) have “formally depathologized gender-diverse identities” ⁽²⁾. It is also very recommendable to keep aloof from certain deterministic, neuro-hormonal explanatory theories, reducing sexual orientation to the results of hormonal factors during brain development ⁽⁴⁵⁾. The question is not to explain how the brain is formed during development of such and such a person, but to recognize the choices made by a personality during his/her or other Self-deployment in a safe environment.

It is a next-level achievement to recognize that gender non-conforming people are disproportionately affected by physical violence (incl. murder), job and hosting discrimination, and other inequalities or atrocities ⁽²⁾. For the scientific community, this may seem a serious dilemma, for not only the ‘normative’ character of scientific valorization (see section 5) as well as the imputed ‘supremacy’ of ideas and ideologies from more-developed versus developing countries (see section 2), may have an adverse effect on the (global) implementation of such scientific progress (in new countries). Besides, it is a common misunderstanding that gender non-conforming people are an invention from the developed, western world, since they have already been present in many ancient and non-western cultures ⁽²⁾. On the other hand, ignorance and ignoring the discriminations and their impact is not at all helpful, even not if the exclusion of the development of the psychological Self from the realm of ‘genuine, falsifiable science’ (section 5) may render it (in some way) immune to the falsifiability claim.

If we agree upon the finding that education of children and young adolescents is an important asset for their personal, social and cultural development (and not only for the economic development of a nation), and that the education of the especially gifted people ^(1, 46) may increase their inclusiveness, safety of and benefit for society, the group of gender non-conforming people may equally benefit from this positive attitude.

However, an important caveat could be raised against the spoiling of children and young adolescents by over-emphasizing their egotistic approach and Self-centered narratives of their surrounding world. Therefore, the philosophical widening of their knowledge of the development of the psyche may become a very interesting tool in secondary school education. Increasing the student’s philosophical aptitude then may also increase their awareness of other than their personal, Self-centered interests, for instance the ecological, social and cultural awareness. This implies that a delicate approach has to be found and pursued to secure a balanced education path, allowing both personal development, cultural and ecological deployment of the young generation.

Concerning the role of philosophy in promoting the maturation of young individuals, in a post-binary or non-gender or any other personal development, a note on the much discussed *Dasein*-modus may have some place here. It is a commonly accepted belief that women are better adapted than men for living in the *Dasein*-modus, following their improved social and communicative skills ⁽⁴⁷⁾. Philosophically, the analysis of Derrida (see Section 4) on the role of language in extending the realm of a person’s *Dasein*: by extending the surrounding, private area with spoken language, i.e. the speech adaptation to the immediate ‘here-and-now’ experience, this spoken extension of the objective,

physical world now becomes part of its *Dasein*. Or, the weakness of men still living in a realm of truth and falseness or lying, or the weakness of a living in a so-called objective, physical world, assuming that objectivity is given as such, from a typically female perspective, therefore must be seen as a deplorable condition. Within the limits of common law⁽³⁵⁾, however, it is not a tremendous problem to maintain the resulting, behavioral balances within the privacy of the established couple, binary or non-binary. It is a problem though, for the increasing number of one-person households, not only in the Western world⁽⁴⁸⁾. This caveat could be given to all extensions of the Self-developing narratives, at least from the perspective of a stable development, both demographically, economically and culturally of the population at large. But we should never underestimate the auto-corrective (social) capabilities of individuals, couples, families and other combinations or small communities, with the exception of the real antisocial individuals, which, in an ideal, self-regulating society, might have their important role too.

But what does all this tell us about the role of science of interpersonal relationships in the future? At least it reinforces the wish to keep the scientific objectivity and falsifiability claims aloof of the world of Psychoanalysis and Self-deployment, herewith corroborating the viewpoint of Popper⁽⁴⁰⁾. Once again, philosophy, as an instrument to construct and analyze these rational approaches, has created its own cul-de-sac, it seems, leaving a descriptive, statistical objectification of the World's dominant inhabitants, as the only second-hand alternative.

7. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this review paper, we embarked from the Spiral Dynamics model of psychological development in an educational setting as proposed by Graves (1981), Beck and Cowan (1996), Wilber (2000) and others. Although the criticisms of Eurocentrism and a gender bias may seem rather easy to refute, according to Wilber (2000), the problem of a non-gender binary approach of society does constitute a serious challenge in a large number of states and education systems.

The philosophical analysis of several of Jacques Derrida's writings on 'Deconstructivism and Feminism', as remarkably reconstructed by Tina Chanter (1997) and others, may offer an interesting, new viewpoint on this challenging debate. We have called this analysis a 'reconstruction', because it edifies a thoughtful, delicate reply to the incommensurability between deconstructivism and feminism. Namely, the latter work shows it was based on philosophical writings that have been so scattered that it is difficult for the non-specialized reader to recollect them. We think that, at least, this analysis is interesting enough to give more attention to the philosophical education of youngsters at high school/secondary school levels, in particular related to the questions of gender and Self-deployment. As a normative, instructive framework to scientifically 'guide' soundly developing societies, however, we cannot conclude that this philosophical approach would be very fruitful. Apparently, there is a natural limit to the realms of society that can be molded and rationalized according to the commonly accepted standards and methods of science. Let there be some space for the individual and inter-individual creativity of Self-deployment, it is suggested.

In the meantime, this paper also entails a critical view on the current methods of scientific research and the way of nationalization of the competition standards of scientific discovery and prioritization. It is however a matter of the highest priority to safeguard science and scientific discovery for a sustainable future of our planet.

REFERENCES

-
- (¹) K. Dąbrowski and M. Piechowski (1969). Les émotions supérieures et l'objectivité d'évaluation. *Annales medico-psychologiques*, **127** (2): 589-613.
- (²) A. Vaid-Menon (2020). *Beyond the gender binary*. (Pocket Change Collection). New York: Penguin Random House.
- (³) E.N. Aron (2002). *The highly sensitive child*. (Dutch transl. M. Noordenbos, *Het Hoog Sensitieve Kind*). New York: Broadway Books.
- (⁴) P. Dawson and R. Guare (2012). *Coaching students with executive skills deficits*. (Dutch transl. W. Scheen, *Coachen van kinderen en adolescenten met zwakke executieve functies*). New York: The Guilford Press, Guilford Publications Inc.

- ⁽⁵⁾ J. Derrida (1967, 1976). *De la Grammatologie*. Paris: Minuit (Eng. transl. G.C. Spivak [1976], *Of Grammatology*. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University press).
- ⁽⁶⁾ W. Allaerts (2022). The Quadrature of the Governance Triangle: on the heritage of Idealism and Prometheus' Myth. *Communication & Cognition*, **55** (1-2): 21-48.
- ⁽⁷⁾ T. Chanter (1997). On Not Reading Derrida's Texts. Mistaking Hermeneutics, Misreading Sexual Difference, and Neutralizing Narration, pp. 87-113. In: E.K. Feder, M.C. Rawlinson and E. Zakin [Eds.] *Derrida and Feminism. Recasting the Question of Woman*. New York, London: Routledge.
- ⁽⁸⁾ K. Wilber (2000). *Integral Psychology. Consciousness, Spirit, Psychology, Therapy*. Boulder, Colorado: Shambala.
- ⁽⁹⁾ J.M. Baldwin (1895). *Mental Development in the Child and Race*. New York, London: MacMillan and Co.
- ⁽¹⁰⁾ C. Graves (1981). "Summary Statement: The Emergent, Cyclical, Double-Helix Model of the Adult Human Biopsychosocial Systems". (Boston, Lecture, May 20, 1981, *vide* Wilber, 2000, p. 227).
- ⁽¹¹⁾ D.E. Beck and Ch. C. Cowan (1996). *Spiral Dynamics. Mastering values, leadership, and change*. Malden (MA), Oxford (UK), Victoria (Australia): Blackwell Publishing.
- ⁽¹²⁾ W. Allaerts (2020). Phonemes, the use and abuse of speech-recognition systems. On a fractal topology of memes in a fractal world. *Communication & Cognition*, Vol. 53 (1-2): 3-32.
- ⁽¹³⁾ M. Kirton (1976). Adaptors and innovators: A description and measure. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, **61** (5): 622-629.
- ⁽¹⁴⁾ M. Bobic, E. Davis and R. Cunningham (1999). The Kirton Adaptation-Innovation Inventory: Validity Issues, Practical Questions. *Review of Public Personnel Administration*, **19** (2): 18-31. (<https://doi.org/10.1177/0734371X9901900204>).
- ⁽¹⁵⁾ F. Fukuyama (1992). *The End of History and the Last Man*. New York: Free Press (Simon & Schuster Co.) (Original work: *The End of History?* [scripture]. Appeared in: *The National Interest*, 1989).
- ⁽¹⁶⁾ P. Verhoef, J.W.W. Coebergh and J.J.L. Jacobs (2012). *Vijftig jaar Federa (1959-2009). Een beknopte geschiedenis en vooruitblik van de Federatie van Medisch Wetenschappelijke Verenigingen* (in Dutch). Rotterdam: Erasmus Publishing Federa.
- ⁽¹⁷⁾ E. Hooper (1999). *The River. A journey to the source of HIV and AIDS*. New York, London: Little Brown and Company.
- ⁽¹⁸⁾ F.A. van Vught (2005). Kennis en de reputatierace (Interview, in Dutch). *Mediator plus ultra*, **2** (3-4): 15-18.
- ⁽¹⁹⁾ W. Allaerts (2019). Connectivity, continuity and distance norm in mathematical models for community ecology, epidemiology and multicellular pathway prediction. *International Journal of Bioinformatics and Computational Biology*, **4** (1): 1-10.
- ⁽²⁰⁾ W. Allaerts (2020). How could this happen? Narrowing down the contagion of COVID-19 and preventing Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome (ARDS). *Acta Biotheoretica*, **63** (4): 441-452 (<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10441-020-09382-z>).
- ⁽²¹⁾ W. Allaerts (2021). The too obvious, uncontrolled controlling factors in the spread of COVID-19 infection: the role of school openings and public media. *International Journal of Humanities Social Sciences and Education (IJHSSE)*, **8** (4): 8-18 (<https://doi.org/10.2431/2349-0381.0804002>).
- ⁽²²⁾ W. Allaerts (2003). Gender studies, the question of woman and science of history. *Mediator plus ultra*, **1** (4): p. 21.
- ⁽²³⁾ D. Cornell (1997). Where Love Begins, pp. 161-206. In: E.K. Feder, M.C. Rawlinson and E. Zakin [Eds.] *Derrida and Feminism. Recasting the Question of Woman*. New York, London: Routledge.
- ⁽²⁴⁾ J. Butler (1993). *Bodies that matter: on the discursive limits of sex*. New York: Routledge.
- ⁽²⁵⁾ M. Foucault (1975). *Surveillance et punir*. Paris: Gallimard.
- ⁽²⁶⁾ J. Copjec (1994). *Read my Desire: Lacan against historicists*. Cambridge (MA): MIT Press.
- ⁽²⁷⁾ J. Derrida (1979). *Spurs: Nietzsche's styles*. (Transl. B. Harlow, from 'Eperons: Les Styles de Nietzsche'). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- ⁽²⁸⁾ E.K. Feder and E. Zakin (1997). Flirting with the Truth, Derrida's Discourse with 'Woman' and Wenches, pp. 21- 51. In: E.K. Feder, M.C. Rawlinson and E. Zakin [Eds.] *Derrida and Feminism. Recasting the Question of Woman*. New York, London: Routledge.
- ⁽²⁹⁾ J. Derrida (1991). At This Very Moment in This Work Here I Am. (Berezdevin, transl.) in: R. Bernasconi and S. Critchley [eds.] *Re-Reading Levinas*. Bloomington (IN): Indiana University Press.
- ⁽³⁰⁾ J. Derrida (1982). The Ends of Man. (Transl. A. Bass). In: J. Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

- ⁽³¹⁾J. Derrida (1984). *Woman in the Beehive*. Reprinted in: A. Jardine and P. Smith[eds.] (1987), *Men in Feminism*, pp. 189-203. New York: Methuen.
- ⁽³²⁾J. Lacan (1956). *Seminar on the Purloined Letter*. Reprinted in: 'French Freud' (Transl. J. Mehlman, 1972), *Yale French Studies*, 48 (source: <https://lacan.com/purloined>).
- ⁽³³⁾E. Levinas (1972). Et Dieu créa la femme. In: E. Levinas, *Du sacré au saint: Cinq nouvelles lectures talmudiques*, pp. 122-148. (Engl. transl. B. Bergo) *And God Created Woman*. In: *Levinas Studies*, **12**: 83-118.
- ⁽³⁴⁾J. Derrida (1983). Geschlecht: Sexual Difference, Ontological Difference. *Research in Phenomenology*, **13**: 65-83.
- ⁽³⁵⁾J. Bartle (2018). Where should the law draw the line between consent and culpability in sadomasochism? *The Conversation*, February 21, 2018 (<https://theconversation.com/>).
- ⁽³⁶⁾E. Levinas (1961). *Totalité et Infini. Essai sur l'extériorité*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.
- ⁽³⁷⁾G. Ellis and J. Silk (2014). Defend the integrity of physics (Comment). *Nature*, **516**: 321-323.
- ⁽³⁸⁾F. Bacon (1620). *The New Atlantis*. (Reproduced in the Project Gutenberg, 68.378 free ebooks). (<http://www.gutenberg.org>).
- ⁽³⁹⁾G. de Veer (1598). Verslag van de derde zeiltocht om de Noord (naar de koninkrijken Cathay en China in het jaar duizend vijfhonderd zesennegentig. In: J.J. Zeeberg (2007). *Terugkeer naar Nova Zembla. De laatste tragische reis van Willem Barents*. Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 254 p.
- ⁽⁴⁰⁾K. Popper (1962). *Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge*. London, New York: Basic Books.
- ⁽⁴¹⁾N. Laor and J. Agasi (1986). The scientific status of psychoanalysis: Lacan contra Freud. *Psychoanalysis and Contemporary Thought*, **9** (3): 465-492.
- ⁽⁴²⁾N. Laor and J. Agasi (1988). The grand protester: Lacan on the scientific status of Psychoanalysis. *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, **18**: 73-100.
- ⁽⁴³⁾S. Žižek (1994, 2005 ed.). *The Metastases of Enjoyment. On Women and Causality*. New York, London: Verso.
- ⁽⁴⁴⁾W. Allaerts (1997). The self and its biological function: contrasts between Popper and Sartre. *Logique et Analyse*, **158**: 189-214.
- ⁽⁴⁵⁾H. Li, A. Fernandez-Guasti, Y. Xu and D. Swaab (2021). Sexual orientation, neuropsychiatric disorders and the neurotransmitters involved. *Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews*, **131**: 479-488. (<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neurobiorev.2021.09.048>).
- ⁽⁴⁶⁾C.M. Ackerman (1997). Identifying gifted adolescents using personality characteristics: Dabrowski's overexcitabilities. *Roeper Review*, **19** (4): 229-236.
- ⁽⁴⁷⁾J. Gray (2008). *Mannen komen van Mars. Vrouwen van Venus*. Ndl. Vert. Uitg. Spectrum.
- ⁽⁴⁸⁾W.J. Yeung and A.K. Cheung (2015). Living alone: One-person households in Asia. *Demographic research*, **32**: 1099-1112.

AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Wilfried Allaerts graduated in biology and philosophy and obtained a PhD in Sciences from the University of Leuven (Belgium); also, he graduated in Innovation Sciences at Twente University (the Netherlands). After conducting several postdoc positions in France and the Netherlands, as well as some projects in Finland and Taiwan, he works as an independent publisher and lecturer. His main research interests are in theoretical and mathematical biology, immunology, ecology and philosophy of nature. Being inspired by the young generation of students, he is actively networking for the promotion of science education in the twenty-first century.

Citation: Wilfried ALLAERTS. "On Two Contrasting Paradigms of Sustainability and Progress in Education in a Deconstructivist and Non- or Post-Binary Approach of Society" *International Journal of Humanities Social Sciences and Education (IJHSSE)*, vol 9, no. 9, 2022, pp. 126-136. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.20431/2349-0381.0909013>.

Copyright: © 2022 Authors. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.