

KAREN GLOY

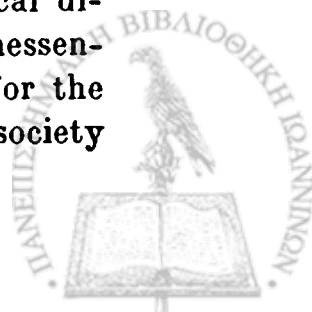
Ἐν καὶ πᾶν - UNITY AS THE CENTRAL THEME  
OF WESTERN PHILOSOPHY

I. Analysis of the Situation

In the wide circle of philosophers, topics such as monism, he-nology, and the doctrine of universal unity mostly meet with a disinterested yawn these days. These topics are felt to be too esoteric, hermetic, and abstract which is considered the same as empirically unprovable. By being empirically unprovable, they are considered suspect, and that means that they should be abandoned.

Attempting an analysis of present philosophy, one meets a contrasting diversity of hererogeneous modes of approach, points of reflection, methods, and traditions. Besides the phenomenology, which had its climax with Heidegger, Sartre, and Jaspers, we find philosophical hermeneutics represented especially by Gadamer and his school. For decades it was considered *the* methodology in philosophy and the study of literature. During the sixties and the seventies, Marxism made its triumphant progress through the universities and in public. In the empirical sciences positivism predominates, influencing the basic attitude of the modern scientist. Analytical philosophy, which originally emerged from the Vienna circle, found a foothold in America after the emigration of its main representatives. It later returned to Europe and spread through the continent and Asia. Besides the analytical philosophy of language, the theory of science has held its ground. With origins in France beginning in the 60's, post-modernism with an emphasis on plurality exerted a major influence.

The current wealth of subject matter is not only connected with the fact that the standpoint of the *observer* belongs to the present; the contemporary viewer has not gained the necessary historical distance that enables him to distinguish the essential from the unessential nor to combine trends and tendencies. The main reason for the plurality of present philosophy is the fact that a pluralistic society



challenges a pluralistic way of thinking. If the thesis is correct that the spirit of the times is reflected in cultural activity such as philosophy, literature, and art, then the pluralism of philosophies explains the pluralistic outlook of life and the world.

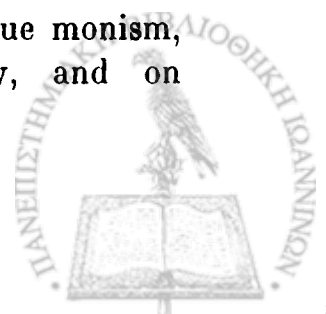
Moreover, all of the mentioned philosophies emerged from an opposition to traditional metaphysics, especially to the great systematic conceptions of German Idealism. Modifying Rousseau's motto of the return to nature, the slogan is: back to the phenomena, back to the facts, suspending all that cannot be theoretically determined and which presents itself as socially useless hypotheses. The rapid development of the empirical sciences since the middle of the last century did something else to banish speculative ways of thinking.

Considering this pluralistic basic attitude, monistic efforts and tendencies of systematization seem to be obsolete. Whoever still clings to them exposes himself to the accusation of merely reactivating the old and not building new progressive theories.

However, since the eighties, one cannot ignore the evolving that leads to a change in attitude. We find inquiries concerning monism and systematic and final argumentation (*Letztbegründung*). Clear proof of the changed thinking is the monistic-systematic literature, indicated by titles such as *Identität und Differenz* by W. Beierwaltes (1980), *Reflexive Letztbegründung* by W. Kuhlmann, *Enhet og Annethet* by E. A. Wyller (1981), *Einheit und Mannigfaltigkeit* by K. Gloy, *All-Einheit* by D. Hernrich (1985), and *du Vrai, du Beau, du Bien*, dedicated to E. Moutsopoulos (1990). Further, the founding of international bodies concerned with systematic rather than analytical philosophy - «System der Philosophie» (1991 in Vienna) and «Henology» (1995 in Oslo) support this assertion. Indeed, we cannot speak about a real breakthrough of monistic philosophy, nor can we talk of a displacement of the empiristic and positivistic attitude at all. But there are subliminal signs of a new era.

The new interest in monistic ways of thinking is of a completely different kind than in previous periods. In the history of monism we can distinguish three stages:

1. Antique monism represented by Parmenides characterized by thoughts, which exclude all that is manifold and try to ontologize and substantialize the highest principle;
2. Modern idealistic monism, which differs from antique monism, on the one hand by including manifold and variety, and on



the other hand, by emphasizing epistemology.

3. The present monism is marked by methodological and structural considerations about the consistent formulation, the status of the principle of unity, and the possibility of thinking. In contrast to the former varieties of monism, it is dynamic.

## II. Monism of the First Stage: the Monolithic One

Since monistic thinking is always in opposition to pluralistic thinking and strives to disassociate itself from it and to overcome it, it always refers to pluralistic thinking as its basis. The thesis of plurality says that there is an infinite number of completely different single and isolated facts that have no relationship to each other, neither formal nor real.

It is easy to reduce this thesis *ad absurdum*. Not only our experience but also logical argument contradicts it. We do not find the world as one completely splintered, disintegrated into diverse separate entities. On the contrary, the discernible entities have relationships of a spatial and temporal nature. There is causality and interplay and a constant net of relations that allows no empty spaces and gaps. *Natura non facit saltus*.

The following thought lies behind this: In reality, we come across a variety of appearances. They only become understandable in their numeric diversity and qualitative difference in front of an all-encompassing background, before which they can be discerned. Thus, the background not only defines their reason for being, but also provides a way of discerning their variety and differences. We can describe this background as an infinite but unique, homogeneous, and continuous field<sup>1</sup>. It may formally be called space, hylic, prime matter, primal substance, or being.

Independent of this, there are logical arguments unveiling the self-contradiction of the pure thesis of plurality. The thesis makes use of the concept of singularity and separateness. Each fact is definite and unique, incomparable and unmistakable, in short, that which we call the individual. But the concept of individuality does not only hold for one single fact, but each and every one. Despite its meaning, its form and usage demonstrate extreme generality.

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1. For this view, we can understand why Parmenides felt it necessary to describe the One as πᾶν, συνεχές (fr. 8,6) and ὁμοῖον (fr. 8,22).



Hegel's defining work, *Phenomenology*<sup>1</sup>, gives us the most impressive description of the dialectics of singularity and generality. He used the singular terms: «this», «here», «now», and «me». All these terms are key words. Although the demonstrative «this» merely means that which is directly in front of us or what we think about at the moment, we can use it for everything in front of us and for everything we mean. Everything in our environment is «this one». It is the same with «here» and «now». Not only can we use these for this auditorium or this afternoon but for every place and time.

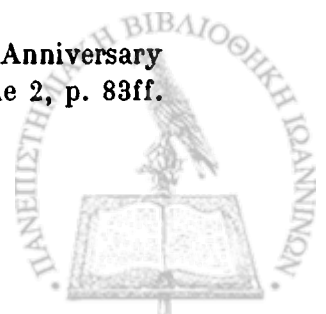
All of these arguments, as well as many others, advocate a monism, which assumes one singular principle clearly demonstrating *generality* and *omni-relatedness*. An inevitable result is then to exclude the separate and diverse from the real, to disqualify and reduce it to mere appearance or even pretense. The actual and true is the One; the Many is the non-actual and seeming and therefore has no existence.

This ontological conception of monism corresponds epistemologically with a theory of knowledge, which requires an especial knowledge to comprehend the One and Whole. This knowledge is different from common knowledge. If common knowledge consists of perception, cogitation, and judging - in short, in the operations of the discursive mind - then this especial knowledge of the One and Whole realizes itself in an *holistic* way of knowledge like the νοῦς, the intellectual intuition, the inner view, and also in belief, revelation, inner religious experience, meditation, etc. All of these establish a *unio mystica* with the One.

Historically, Parmenides was the first to advance this form of monism. His radical conception can be classified as monolithic monism. It was paradigm for all monisms of this kind from Plotinus to Spinoza. According to Parmenides, all things are basically one, ἐν ἅπαντα<sup>2</sup>. The completely diverse being is indeed one, complete and homogeneous. Parmenides compares it to a well-rounded ball, balanced in every way, always acting the same. There is not less being here nor more being there, but a completely homogeneous ball. Variety and diversity are nothing but mere assumptions of mortals. Discrimination and degrading in the world of appearance began with Parmenides in European intellectual history.

1. Hegel, G. W. F., *Sämtliche Werke* («Complete Works»), Anniversary Edition in 20 Volumes, ed. by H. Glockner, Stuttgart, 1927ff, Volume 2, p. 83ff.

2. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, III, 4, (1001 a 33).



We not only find this kind of monism in a philosophical context, but also in a religious. We find it in the Indian Advaitamata, for example. The name of this teaching indicates that it manages to get by with only a One and without a Second. We also find this kind of monism in Jewish and Christian monotheism. As in the Advaitamata, the variety of the world is disparaged, either reduced to a mere Maja, or understood according to the categories of creation and causation as products relinquished by God.

It is not difficult to demonstrate in various ways that this type of monism is untenable. On the one hand, our experience of reality contradicts a statement of a monolithic principle, which reduces variety to appearance and pretense. The abundance, which surrounds us, cannot be reduced to an illusion, especially because it sometimes plagues us existentially.

On the other hand, there are logical reasons contributed by Plato in *Sophistes*<sup>1</sup> and by Aristotle in *Physics*<sup>2</sup>. They both more or less conclude that Parmenides *contradicts himself*. He maintains a monistic principle on the one hand. On the other, he gives it two names: the One and the Being. Thus he assumes more than one thing. De facto, he is not content with the One, giving it many properties<sup>3</sup>, such as sameness<sup>4</sup>, imperturbable rest<sup>5</sup>, motionlessness<sup>6</sup>, having no parts<sup>7</sup>, etc. All of these properties point to different aspects of the Being. Even a nominalistic interpretation, which takes the designations as mere names, has to acknowledge a difference between the designation and that, which is designated.

If we were to take the monism of Parmenides seriously, we would arrive at the loss of knowledge and speech, because each form of knowledge and expression, even that of the One, (ἔν), must be differentiated from that, which we want to recognize as a means of knowledge and speech.

The previous critique of Parmenides' type of monism presupposes a rational and conceptual way of thinking. By means of determining concepts in a discourse, and through analysis and synthesis,

1. Plato, *Sophistes*, 244b-245c.

2. Aristotle, *Physics*, I, 2 & 3.

3. Compare fr. 8,2.

4. fr. 8,29.

5. fr. 8.8,4.

6. fr. 8,26, 38.

7. fr. 8,22.



this way of thinking tries to obtain control of the Whole. Dividing into parts that which is understood in a holistic way and then reassembling the parts, a description of the world as an entirety evolves which only comes about through variety and difference. From this point of view, the original thinking of Parmenides seems like archaic knowledge still distanced from free and mature rational thinking. A monism, which wants to have a chance in the future, must therefore *ontologically* acknowledge the variety and diversity of the world as well as its unity and identity. *Epistemologically*, it has to unfold a way of thinking, which includes rational and conceptual thinking. Idealism offered a monistic program, which fulfills these conditions. Thus Idealism represents a monism of the second stage.

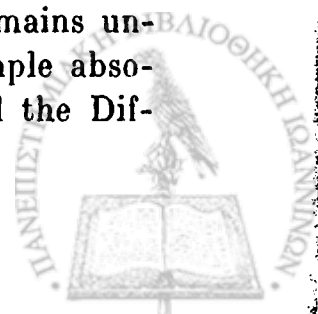
### III. Monism of the Second Stage: Fulfilled Unity

Idealism offered *at least* three different proposals to elaborate its program. There is Fichte's latter philosophy after 1800, Schelling's philosophy of identity, and Hegel's doctrine of the absolute mind in his *Science of Logic*. It would go too far to illustrate these philosophies extensively; I will present them as models and examine their validity.

Fichte's *Theory of Science* from 1804 presents a self-interpretation of his concept and, at the same time, a limit to the counterconcept, which can be seen in Schelling's model and, *mutatis mutandis*, in that of Hegel. Fichte contemplates upon unity and finds his answer in a model that provides an original unity without variety, difference, and relation, and which antecedes diversity. The opposing concepts take unity as synthesis *post factum*, as a union of diversity which includes everything.

According to Fichte, we can achieve unity only in an ascending philosophy, on the way from below to above, through the stages of diversity, and finally transcending them.

But an ascending philosophy must certainly allow a critical question: Is the loss of diversity synonymous with the *winning* of absolute unity? Or is it an *absolute negativity* and the suspension of everything? It cannot be determined whether Fichte has solved this problem convincingly, especially since it is impossible to descend again to diversity after the seeming ascent to unity. It remains unclear how variety and difference can be deduced from simple absolute unity. The explanation of the genesis of the Many and the Dif-



ferent out of the One always comes about on the basis of - and with the categories of - the rational and discursive knowledge that presupposes that, which should be explained. The explanation is a closed circle.

Does Schelling's attempt fare better? He not only promises to reduce variety to unity, but also to deduce it from unity. Schelling begins with the maxim that the methodical way has to correspond with the ontological relation. In his philosophy of identity written around 1801, he places the basis of the system and the explicit system in an interpretive relationship to each other. The basic unity he calls *subject-object-identity*, or indifference. For the deduction of the world of diversity, he uses the form of the quantitative difference. This means that - while maintaining the initial subject-object-unity- the quantitative distribution of both powers in philosophy of nature and philosophy of mind is different. In the philosophy of nature there is a predominance of the objective factor; in the philosophy of mind, there is a predominance of the subjective factor. A deduction of this kind is only possible if the highest principle potentially involves the variety of the world. We can only understand the principle as an absolute balance and harmony of subject and object. However, Fichte is quite correct in his critique (in his letter of October 15, 1801) in which he rebukes Schelling for going to the Absolute without considering that it might be his own thinking and its inherent principles that secretly form his Absolute<sup>1</sup>. The Absolute would be nothing but an hypostatized finite, but in no case, the true Absolute.

With his self-referential and dialectical method, Hegel took a course other than the one of the liner and straight descent. The basic idea is to start out from something we can state and in successive and well-thought out synthetic stages, to add the entirety of descriptions, which is required to articulate the Whole. The Whole on its own provides the explanation for the start and everything derived thereof. Thus the process of derivation also is the process of reasoning going back to the cause that explains the aforementioned. We can understand the synthetic process of derivation as an analytical process of explanation, merely developing that which has already been thought of in the initial principle. The

1. J.G. Fichte, *Briefwechsel* («Correspondence»), Complete Critical Edition, ed. H. Schulz, 2 Volumes, Leipzig 1925, Volume 2, p. 342.



union of the two opposite models, the synthetic and the analytic, is possible only because of a self-referential circular movement; the basis of the system and the explicit system coincide.

The consequence for this monistic program is Hegel's concept of unity that does not exclude variety, and therefore go into external opposition to it, but includes variety, changing it into a contrast within itself. The internal opposition and abolition can merely be thought of as self-diremption and reunion of the disunited. The One divides itself into itself and the other one - the Many, the Different - of itself, to confront itself again over this divide and variety.

The self-referential dialectical method can be used successfully not only for logical and ontological circumstances, but also for historical processes, in which case it says that a final state is achieved when its own genesis enters into its formulation.

To understand the history of monism, it therefore follows that a monism like that of Parmenides is not simply replaced by a monism like that of Hegel. From Hegel's monism, we can understand that that of Parmenides as an early and archaic state on the way to monistic thinking which comes to itself. Therefore, Hegel's monism surpasses all others, because in each and every cogitative process it is able to interpret the motion of thinking properly in its respective phase.

From this perspective, even 'religious' monism appears in a new light, and in fact Hegel used speculative and dialectical method in his late philosophy to reformulate Christian monism. The divine One is no longer in an external relationship to the world, but God in his eternal being-with-himself desists from himself, relinquishes himself, becomes the other one of himself, to find himself back again in this other one - the relinquished world - and to realize himself absolutely in it. Thus the world no longer is the *apostasy* of the divine, but it belongs to it as an *integral part* within which the divine achieves perfection. In juxtaposition to a mere religious monism that is based on simple emotions, this one belongs to the realm of speculative and dialectic theology.

Here indeed monism seems to have reached perfection. In its self-elucidation it includes that from which it first tried to keep its distance. In ontological terms this is the Many, in epistemological terms, the provisional and archaic form of knowledge. As everyone knows, Hegel was of the opinion that he had achieved the perfection of philosophy with his method. But he was wrong.





A model like Hegel's, in striving for *total self-elucidation*, cannot achieve the whole and hence underlies a *regressus ad infinitum*. It is the paradox of totalities that they only can be realized if they are incomplete. Thus a theory only then is able to clear up everything without exception, - even itself - if the theory transcends itself and has proceeded to a metaphase. But everything, and even the theory itself, is the theme of the theory, then the theory as a subject has launched itself out of the process. If this non-thematic subject itself becomes the thematic object, then a new non-thematic subject is needed that takes up the theme again. But then the same holds true for this new non-thematic subject as well<sup>1</sup>.

Attempting an analysis of this paradox, we see that it results from the relationship between a *closed* system and an *open* horizon. A closed but all-embracing unity only shows itself in front of an open horizon. The *closedness* comes from the horizon, and unity iterates into it at will because of its openness.

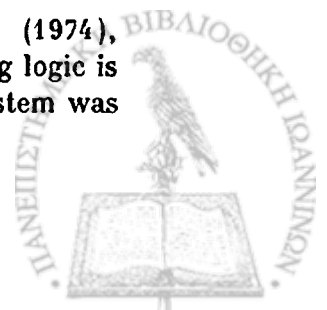
The failure of Hegel's monism leads us to the conclusion that monism, which wants to hold up, must replace the closed system, or the so-called «en bloc monism». And further, a static universalism must be replaced with a dynamic monism that pays regard to the conclusions of the factors taken from the structural analysis of the paradox: *first* the *closedness* of the system, *second* the *openness* of the horizon, and *third* the *relationship* between the two, that is *transition* or *motion*. Naturally this monism will have a structure different from that of the classic. The formulation of this monism of the third stage has only been an assignment until now. I would like to address this task now.

#### IV. Monism of the Third Stage: Free Variation of Possibilities

One can imagine two forms of reconciliation between closedness and openness, between a finite system and an infinite horizon. Before any application, I want to explain them in the realm of *mathematics* in the light of the two possible readings of construction. First, there is the *regular sequence*, which constitutes the structure of the

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1. K. Cramer 'Erlebnis', in: *Hegel-Studien* («Studies»), Beiheft 11 (1974), pp. 537-603; p. 597 especially tries to point out that the circle of reflecting logic is wanted. On the other hand, the fact is that Hegel thought that his system was final and perfect, and not provisional.



natural number series. It works according to the principle  $n$  and  $n + 1$ . The instruction expressed in this formula does not only dictate *that* we have to proceed but *how*, namely, that we have to add a further unit to each number. Here, a *rule* is expressed, by means of which the *open field of quantitative possibilities* is rationally controllable. Thus we can break off the construction after a few steps and replace it with «etc».

Second, there is the *free option of succession*. We only know *that* we have to proceed, but we do not know *how*. For each further step, we have to regulate anew the way we proceed. Here we have a type of construction that makes the *infinite* controllable only by means of an *infinite succession of steps*. For this reason, the character of rationality and clarity on a higher level is missing.

The notion of the free option of succession originally comes from the sphere of biology and is oriented according to the process of evolution.

In biology, we also find different forms of development that are embodied in diverse theories of evolution. In accordance with one theory, development comes about bit by bit and constantly. An original pattern is leading the process, and this pattern prevents a lapse into radical change and mere external accumulation. The genesis rather is a proportional growth, as in organisms like plants and animals. The process resembles somewhat the regular sequence in mathematics.

Moreover, there is a completely different type of evolution. We become aware of it in the observation of sudden, unexpected and unexplainable mutations, which are not designated in the system. This type regulates phylogenetic processes. Here, development no longer is understood as a linear progress but as non-linear dynamics. There are spontaneous random mutations followed by divergent processes. These divergent processes eventually fall into line with a convergent and gradual development. Then again, there are random mutations, which lead to a struggle for existence: the destruction of some species, preservation of others, followed by mutation again, etc. A process we can describe in this way does not demonstrate regularity and determination. There is no criterion, which could stand comparison with a further development. It may even be a step backwards or a standstill. Such processes can be characterized as a *free variation of possibilities*.



The fact that a concept that belonged originally to the realm of biology gained entry into the sphere of mathematics, - and the other way around - is a good reason to assume that one can bring these two spheres into approximation with each other, although they seem to be heterogeneous. The principles of biology can be formalized in mathematics, and the principles of mathematics can be applied empirically to biology.

The same holds true for two other spheres: science and philosophy, and their histories. In the past, both spheres and their histories have often been confronted with each other. It was said that science works methodically and according to rules, while philosophy is free to choose its own methods, altering them each time. According to the common interpretation, the process of science always is the progress of knowledge, a linear extension of knowledge. Knowledge is increasingly accumulated. The succession of different theories and systems of science is read in a way, that each subsequent theory integrates the preceding one, implying that it is a special case. A clear example of this can be found in the transition from Newton's classical physics to Einstein's Theory of Relativity. Although the latter took the place of the former, Newton's principles are still valid at the «cutting edge»<sup>1</sup>.

If this assumption is correct, the earlier theories have to be deducible from and reducible to the structural core of the later theories. However, this interpretation meets with problems. Although occasionally some concepts of one theory are maintained in another, these concepts take on a new interpretation, which is incompatible with the old one. Werner Stegmüller proved this in the use of the classical concepts of mass and energy in the Theory of Relativity.

This conceptual change of meaning is comparable with a change of *form*. We know this from everyday life, from psychology, and from inventions and discoveries, which are based on the understanding of new structural connections. Whether we see a figure built of four lines as one square or two sets of parallels is not the same. It is something completely different and depends upon the perception of the form at the time and on the thematic modification. It is the same thing with physical concepts. They fix their *meaning* according to their *theoretical context*.

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1. W. Stegmüller, *Hauptströmungen der Gegenwartsphilosophie* («Main Streams of Thought in Contemporary Philosophy»), Vol. 3, Stuttgart 1986, p. 299.



In contrast to the *classical ideology of linear progress*, Thomas S. Kuhn has put forth a new theory of evolution in his startling work, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*<sup>1</sup>. Kuhn understands the process of science as a *substitution of paradigms* according to the model of the *free variation of possibilities* taken from biology. Kuhn himself refers to Wittgenstein's games' theory. According to this, the paradigms of science that appear in the history of science are structurally incommensurable with each other. They also cannot falsify each other or be reduced to one another. Their displacement occurs spontaneously and through chance, conditioned by repeated problems of explaining something according to the earlier theory. Basically this displacement is conditioned by a change of interest, a mania for innovation, belief, persuasion, propaganda, etc. All of these criteria are irrational.

Kuhn's interpretation is not only applicable to the *history of science* but also to the *history of philosophy and the mind*. Their interpretation according to Hegel's model of the absolute mind could not be confirmed. The metaphysics that follow one another do not follow from each other, because each later metaphysic criticizes and revises the previous. This is not linear progress reaching its end in an absolute philosophy that contains all of the former philosophies as transitional stages - a process that should have found its perfection in Hegel's philosophy. A linear progress of the history of philosophy could be confirmed just as little as Hegel's model could. More likely, the history of philosophy is comparable to a search for the best and most fitting theory and a free game with interpretations of the world, that all have equal rights. This view brings the *history of science* closer to the *history of philosophy*.

With the last concept that structurally reflects the free option of succession respecting the free variation of possibilities, an all-inclusive monistic concept is found. It is *universal* because it contains regular and irregular options of succession. It thus has the widest range one can imagine. In another sense, it is universal because its schema controls *structural and applied sciences*, and it reappears likewise in the *exact sciences*, and in *philosophy* and its *history*. They no longer fall into opposites. The monism contained in this new concept realizes unity as *context*.

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1. The University of Chicago, 1962.



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«Ἐν καὶ πᾶν - Η ΕΝΟΤΗΤΑ ΩΣ ΤΟ ΚΕΝΤΡΙΚΟ ΘΕΜΑ  
ΤΗΣ ΔΥΤΙΚΗΣ ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΙΑΣ»

ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Ποια είναι η θέση του ερωτήματος για την ενότητα και την πολλαπλότητα στην προύσα κατάσταση; Είναι γεγονός ότι ο πλουραλισμός της μετανεωτερικότητας απξιώνει την ανάπτυξη μονιστικών τρόπων σκέψης, έχοντας ανκδυθεί από την νεώτερη κριτική στην παραδοσιακή μεταφυσική.

Ωστόσο, και ιδίως από τη δεκαετία του '80, το ενδιαφέρον για μία μονιστική - συστημική φιλοσοφική θεώρηση έχει επανακάμψει, όπως αποδεικνύεται και από τη δημοσίευση σχετικών μελετών. Υπογραμμίζοντας το γεγονός αυτό, οφείλουμε να διακρίνουμε το σύγχρονο μονισμό τόσο από εκείνον που συναντούμε κατ' εξοχήν στην αρχαιότητα, όσο και από το μονισμό της νεώτερης εποχής: έτσι, το ερώτημα περί της ενότητας και της πολλαπλότητας θα ανκδειχθεί αυτομάτως σε έναν από τους πόλους ανέλιξης της δυτικής φιλοσοφίας.

Ένας συνεπής πλουραλισμός, δηλαδή η ταυτόχρονη αποδοχή πολλών και κατ' ουδένα τρόπο συσχετιζόμενων κοσμικών αρχών δεν είναι δυνατόν να στηριχθεί λογικώς: από τη στιγμή που η κατηγορία της ατομικότητας θα εφαρμοστεί στα Πολλά, προσκτάται η γενικότητα, οδηγώντας μας στον αλληλοσυσχετισμό όλων επί τη βάση του οντολογικού «υποστώματος» του Ενός.

Πρώτος λοιπόν ήταν ο Παρμενίδης που, ακολουθώντας το δρόμο αυτόν, αντιμετώπισε τον κόσμο των φαινόμενων και των αλλαγών ως απετηλό, κληροδοτώντας μία τέτοια αντίληψη ως τον Πλωτίνο και τον Σπινόζα. Ο μονισμός αυτού του τύπου αφενός αντιβίνει προς την εμπειρία μας και αφετέρου αντιφάσκει λογικώς προς τον εαυτό του (πβ. την κριτική του Πλάτωνα στο Σοφιστή και του Αριστοτέλη στο έργο του Φυσική Ἀκρόασις): η ενότητα ουσιαστικά εμφανίζεται να νη έπεται της πολλαπλότητας.



Ο (γερμανικός) ιδεαλισμός - και ο Hegel κιτ' εξοχήν - θέλησε να υπερβεί το πρόβλημα θέτοντας την ενότητα και την πολλαπλότητα ως τις δύο όψεις της ίδιας αυτο-αναφορικής κυκλικής κίνησης: το Ένα διασπά τον εκυτό του στα Πολλά και μέσω μιας τέτοιας ποικιλομορφικής αποκτά αυτογνωσίη. Η αδυναμία του εγελιανού (και κάθε ολιστικού) μοντέλου είναι ότι δεν περιλαμβάνει τον εκυτό του ως αντικείμενο της θεωρίας (οδηγώντας μοιραία σε μία επ' άπειρον αναγωγή).

Ένας σύγχρονος μονισμός θα πρέπει λοιπόν να θεματοποιήσει τη σχέση μεταξύ της κλειστότητας ενός ολιστικού συστήματος και της ανοιχτότητας του ορίζοντα που εκτείνεται πέρα από αυτό.

Κινούμενοι προς αυτόν το στόχο, θα ήταν δυνατό να στραφούμε προς την επιστήμη. Συγκεκριμένα, γνωρίζουμε από τα μαθηματικά και τη βιολογία ότι μία εξελικτική διαδικασία δεν είναι πάντοτε προβλέψιμη σε όλα της τα στάδια, αλλά μάλλον υφίσταται ως «ελεύθερη διακύμανση πιθανοτήτων». Έτσι, και στην ιστορία της επιστήμης γενικά, εγκαταλείπεται πλέον η κλασική θεώρηση περί γραμμικής εξέλιξης των εννοιών, έστω κι αν αυτό σημαίνει υιοθέτηση ανορθολογικών κριτηρίων για την ερμηνεία της δημιουργίας των διαφορετικών επιστημονικών θεωριών (βλ. Th. Kuhn). Αυτό φέρνει εγγύτερα την επιστήμη και τη φιλοσοφία, αφού ούτε για την τελευταία θα μπορούσαμε να συγγράψουμε μία ιστορία γραμμικής εξέλιξης.

Συνεπώς, έχουμε δομήσει μία διευρυμένη αντίληψη περί μονισμού, η οποία αντιμετωπίζει την ενότητα ως ενότητα του ερμηνευτικού πλαισίου, δηλαδή περιλαμβάνει όλες τις δυνατές ακολουθίες συμβάντων (προβλέψιμες και μη) όλων των επιστημών (θετικών και ανθρωπιστικών).

ΝΙΚΟΛΑΣ ΓΚΟΓΚΑΣ  
ΙΩΑΝΝΙΝΑ

