

West and East *Entropy versus Syntropy?*

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Abstract

In Europe and in the US the theory of syntropy is considered counter-intuitive, whereas in China it is often considered obvious. The West is now undergoing a deep crisis, not only financial and economical, but mainly existential and ethical, whereas China is experiencing an explosion of wealth and wellbeing. In this paper we provide some short flashes that might help to understand this contraposition.

Heart or brain?

One of the main differences between the West and the East is that the West is brain-centered whereas Asia and especially China are heart-centered. An example is provided by the term consciousness. Copy the ideogram 心 in Google translator and you will obtain the following translations: bosom, center, core, feeling, thinking and intelligence. These are some of the main properties of what in the West we call consciousness. But the ideogram 心 also indicates the heart. Chinese ideograms constantly associate consciousness and life to the heart!

On the contrary, in the West we assume that consciousness and life are associated to the brain: when the brain stops working the person is considered to be dead. The concept of brain death has been officially formalized in 1968 at the time to the first transplant of organs, since the criteria of natural death (end of heart activity and blood circulation) does not allow organ transplants. The concept of brain death provides the legitimacy necessary to perform transplants and the first official definition of brain death was developed by an ad hoc committee set up at Harvard Medical School. The 1968 Harvard criteria for brain death determination have now become the bases for national laws. These criteria establish when it is permissible to “unplug” and consider the patient “legally” dead. The Harvard criteria are also the bases for the laws on organ transplantation, since organs are removed when the heart is still beating. On the contrary in China a person is considered alive and conscious until the heart beats.

Evidences that brain death is not a valid criteria range from the fact that when explanting organs from a person who is legally defined as dead (low EEG activity) the person starts defending and

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screams and must be tied to the operating table in order to allow to remove the organs. Furthermore an awesome number of people who had been diagnosed with brain death awake in full consciousness. In China explanting organs is considered equivalent to an execution and this is one of the reasons why organs for transplants are mainly provided by prisoners who before their execution to death provide their written consensus to donate organs.

In 1985 the Vatican accepted the Harvard Report and in 1989 Pope John Paul II talked on the topic in several occasions legitimating the removal of organs from *warm bodies*, despite the fact that they are still breathing and with their hearts beating. But, on 3 September 2008 in the front page of the official Vatican newspaper, "*L'Osservatore Romano*", Lucetta Scaraffia wrote an editorial dedicated to the forty years anniversary of the *Harvard Report* which introduced the definition of brain death. In this editorial she declared that brain death cannot be used to assert the end of a life and the definition of death should be reviewed in the name of new scientific assumptions. The reactions of the Western medical / scientific world were immediate: "*The criteria for brain death is the only scientifically valid criteria in order to sanction the death of an individual.*" Moreover, "*the worldwide scientific community approves the criteria established by the Harvard report and the criticism that comes from fringe minority, are based essentially on non-scientific considerations.*" Finally, "*scientifically advanced countries have accepted as the norm all the criteria of brain death.*" A book edited by Paolo Becchi: "*Brain death and organ transplantation. A question of legal ethics*" contains the statement of Hans Jonas's who argues that the definition of death established by the Harvard report was not motivated by any real scientific discovery, but by the need for organs for transplantation. In 1989, the Pontifical Academy of Sciences had already addressed the question and Professor Josef Seifert, Dean of the International Philosophical Academy of Liechtenstein, was the only one to object to the definition of brain death. But when the Pontifical Academy of Sciences met again to discuss the issue, on 3-4 January 2005, the positions reversed. The participants, philosophers, jurists and neurologists from various countries, agreed that the criterion of brain death is not scientifically credible and should therefore be abandoned. But these results were unacceptable for Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo, chancellor of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, and the proceedings of the meeting were not published. A number of speakers gave their papers to an outside publisher, Rubbettino, and a book was published with the Latin title "*Finis Vitae*", edited by Professor Roberto de Mattei, deputy director of the Italian National Research Council. The book was published in Italian and English and contained eighteen essays.

The theory of syntropy states that life and consciousness are sustained by the backward-in-time flow of energy (syntropy) which is acquired by the autonomic nervous system and that consequently the center of feelings, thinking, intelligence and consciousness is in the heart and not in the brain.

Life energy or machines?

Syntropy, the backward-in-time flow of energy, has the properties which have always been associated to life energy. Many traditions assume the existence of a life energy or vital energy, for example, prana and cit in India, mana in Hawai, lüing in Tibet, ruah in Hebrew culture. In China qi (气) is an active principle forming part of any living thing. Qi is frequently translated as “natural energy”, “life force”, or “energy flow”. Qi is the central underlying principle in traditional Chinese medicine and martial arts. The literal translation of 气 is breath, air, or gas. The concept of life energy 气 is rooted in Chinese culture and can be seen everywhere. On the contrary, Western science is based on the notion of cause and effect, a mechanistic view in which life is a highly improbable phenomena, governed by the mechanical laws of cause and effect. Whoever tries to introduce the notion of life energy and retrocausality is banned and censored from Western science. Examples can be found a bit everywhere:

- In 1940 the paleontologist and evolutionist Teilhard de Chardin suggested a tendency of energy symmetrical to that described by the principle of entropy. In the book *“Towards Convergence”* Teilhard writes: *“Reduced to its essence the problem of life is how we can introduce, without contradictions, a universal law which expresses the organization of energy and counters the effects of entropy (...) a kind of anti-entropy.”* Teilhard came to the conclusion that the physical energy has its causes placed in the past (Alpha point), whereas consciousness and life arise from causes located in the future (Omega point). Teilhard's claims have sparked debate within the Catholic church and a decree of the Holy Office chaired by Cardinal Ottaviani imposed, in 1958, religious congregations to withdraw the works of Teilhard from all their libraries. The decree states that the texts of the Jesuit *“offends Catholic doctrine”* and alerted the clergy to *“defend the spirits, especially of the young, from the dangers of the works of father Teilhard de Chardin and his disciples.”*
- In 1942 Luigi Fantappiè developed the theory of syntropy, introducing the concept that backward-in-time causality is at the bases of life and consciousness. Although was one of the major mathematicians of the time Fantappiè was violently censored. Traces of this censorship can be seen in Wikipedia where the page Syntropy has been censored and redirects automatically to the page neg-entropy, a totally different concept which does not introduce the notions of retrocausality and life energy (see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syntropy>).
- In 1940 Wilhelm Reich, an Austrian psychoanalyst and one of the most radical figures in the history of psychiatry, coined the term *“orgone”* to indicate the energy of life that he could observe and prove experimentally in his laboratory. In 1956 Reich was jailed and in the same year six tons of his publications were burned by order of the court, his laboratory destroyed and burned, his manuscripts were burned and the disclosure of his theory was banned. One of the most notable examples of censorship in the history of the United States. Reich died in prison on November 3, 1957.

The introduction of the notion of life energy and backward-in-time causation entails the redefinition of the balance between science and religion which imply deep cultural, economic and political transformations.

Love or instinct?

In China love 春心 is expressed by the combination of the ideogram life (春) and the ideogram heart (心). In West love is now accounted to the action of neurotransmitters. For example in a recent paper by two British anthropologists, Robin Dunbar and Anna Maschin³, it is argued that the need for friendship is caused by internal opioids (endorphins) that are produced during friendship relations. Friendship has always put science in front of a paradox because, unlike love, it is not needed for the reproduction of the species and does not imply a convenience for survival. It has therefore always remained a mystery why we spend hours with people, from whom we will probably never receive any benefit for our survival. According to Dunbar and Maschin the cause of friendship is a neurotransmitter that is part of the group of “endogenous opioids”. These are substances similar to opioids, which we are accustomed to consider as drugs, but which are produced by our neurons. For this reason, Dunbar and Maschin state that since friendship is caused by an internal drug it has the same addictive effects of drugs, and we cannot do without it. Endogenous opioids (or endorphins) are neurotransmitters that are associated with a state of wellness, which encourages us to see life optimistically and reduce stress hormones. According to Western science, endorphins are the cause of wellbeing, and Dunbar and Maschin state that they “*are the glue that makes us keep those neurochemical complex social relationships that go beyond mating and care of offspring*”. Endogenous opioids were discovered in the ‘70s and are difficult to study as they cannot be administered for experimental purposes because they are drugs which cause dependency. Since their discovery the relationship between endorphins and emotional life, love and romantic relationships, was clearly shown. Endorphins confirm their relationship to opioids since the effects are similar. Western science sees the causes of love and friendship in neurotransmitters and hormones. For example, oxytocin, vasopressin, dopamine and serotonin are believed to be the cause of erotic attraction, jealousy, the sense of motherhood and fatherhood. The theory of syntropy reverses this interpretation, arguing that love, friendship and cohesion are vital expressions of our need to acquire syntropy. Syntropy is cohesive and converging and its manifestations are of union and closeness. When we acquire syntropy, feelings of warmth due to the concentration of energy are associated with feelings of wellbeing caused by the regenerative processes activated by life energy. Obviously, these processes produce chemical substances, mediators and neurotransmitters, i.e. endorphins. The production of endorphins is therefore considered to be a consequence of the acquisition of syntropy. Love, friendship and cohesion are the ways by which we acquire syntropy and are not caused by endorphins or neurotransmitters. Western science leads to argue that endorphins and neurotransmitters are themselves the cause of human behavior and therefore also of love and friendship.

³Maschin AJ e Dunbar RIM (2011), *The brain opioid theory of social attachment: a review of the evidence*, Behaviour, 148(10): 985-1025.

Working on the fundamental equations of the universe Fantappiè arrived to the following statements:

- *“What makes life different is the presence of syntropic qualities: finalities, goals, and attractors. Now as we consider causality the essence of the entropic world, it is natural to consider finality the essence of the syntropic world. It is therefore possible to say that the essence of life is the final causes, the attractors. Living means tending to attractors ... the law of life is not the law of mechanical causes; this is the law of non-life, the law of death, the law of entropy; the law which dominates life is the law of finalities, the law of syntropy. But how are these attractors experienced in human life? When a man is attracted by money we say he loves money. The attraction towards a goal is felt as love. We now see that the fundamental law of life is this: the law of love. I am not trying to be sentimental; I am just describing results which have been logically deducted from premises which are sure. It is incredible and touching that, having arrived at this point, mathematical theorems start speaking to our heart!”*
- *“Today we see printed in the great book of nature - that Galileo said, is written in mathematical characters - the same law of love that is found in the sacred texts of major religions.”*
- *“The law of life is not the law of hate, the law of force, or the law of mechanical causes; this is the law of non-life, the law of death, the law of entropy. The law which dominates life is the law of cooperation towards goals which are always higher, and this is true also for the lowest forms of life. In humans this law takes the form of love, since for humans living means loving, and it is important to note that these scientific results can have great consequences at all levels, particularly on the social level, which is now so confused. (...) The law of life is therefore the law of love and differentiation. It does not move towards leveling and conforming, but towards higher forms of differentiation. Each living being, whether modest or famous, has its mission, its finalities, which, in the general economy of the universe, are important, great and beautiful.”*

According to the theory of syntropy life follows a converging tendency which is guided by the heart and leads to love. On the contrary Western science tries to reduce love to the interaction of neurotransmitters, a behavior which is triggered by the reproductive need of the species.

Converging of diverging?

The fundamental equations of the universe show that entropy is diverging and leads to death whereas syntropy is converging and leads to life and love. One of the major difference between the West and China is that people in the West think individually and believe that individuality is strengthened diverging from the others, whereas people in China think collectively and believe that individuality is strengthened converging together. Chinese people often refer to the following say: *“A finger by itself cannot wash a face, you need a whole hand.”* Alone we can do little, together we acquire strength and potentialities. For this reason it is deeply rooted in the Chinese culture the idea of developing a network. In China this is usually named *guānxi* (*Guān*=关=close; *xi*=系=relation). *Guanxi* indicates relations in which the abnegation to the common cause is total as much as the sharing of material and immaterial goods. In a *guanxi* a person can become a

brother, a sister, or even a father or a mother. It is not limited only to relations, but it implies also modalities of mutual help, through which Chinese build their wealth and future. Guanxi is a vital asset for any Chinese, it is impossible to improvise it, it is built slowly with a lot of patience and lasts a lifetime. Any Chinese is ready to help any member of his guanxi, but knows also that when he will need help his guanxi will help him. But how does a Chinese build his guanxi? One important way is through money. Chinese use part of their money to create their guanxi. When they trust someone and want him to become part of their guanxi, a close relation, they offer their money, sure of the fact that when they will need money this will come back. It is not lending money, but it is a collective use of money. Money is not individual, but of the guanxi. To build a guanxi is very demanding, but it is also very demanding to remain in a guanxi. If we betray the values of trust and loyalty on which the guanxi is based we are expelled for ever and trying to get back into a guanxi is impossible, since the betray is the proof of the inadequacy to receive such a honour. A Chinese within a guanxi can be trusted for his loyalty. Guanxis follow precise rules which are those of trust, loyalty, sincerity and reciprocity. These laws of mutual help manifest when needed, often in a form of an escalation of generosity. A good guanxi guarantees success and a Chinese is worth according to his guanxi. For this reason it is usually more important to give than to receive. As soon as a Chinese starts working he starts giving to his guanxi. An average Chinese often gives more than 50% of his/her salary to the guanxi, creating the network that after some time will allow him/her to say “*I need a million yuan to start my activity.*”

On the contrary in the West trust and loyalty have disappeared. No one gives money without a signed contract and often contracts are not sufficient.

Final remark

European and US medias usually spread negative information about China: no human rights, no democracy, exploitation of workers, control of religious groups, oppression, suppression of girls, people still eating dogs, etc. Going to China tourists expect to find a dusty, filthy and gloomy country with wide spread depression and unhappiness. An under civilized country compared to Europe and the US. But when in China see and learn that Europe and the US are now the underdeveloped countries and that the negative information which is provided about China is usually made up in order to discredit a country which has now become an example of how to implement syntropy and solve the crises.