

COMMUNICATION: NATURAL AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN THE DANUBE REGION

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All of us are already aware of some present problems of global character that cannot be solved on the basis of authority, imperative, tradition or habit, but require a change in the models of thinking and paradigmatic framework. Within the context of philosophical thinking, this change is linked to the overcoming of the subject/object model of thinking, or to the replacement of the paradigm of object reflection by the paradigm of communication.

In the theoretical and practical sense, the acceptance of the paradigm of communication means, mainly, the researching and respecting of the real communicative preconditions and the basis of communication itself. From the point of view of communication, contemporary streams of environmental philosophy and ethics are penetrating into fields of intercultural orientations, attitudes, ideas and values, and are actually overcoming the ethnocentric and the purely logocentric intention.

From this aspect, the main trend of contemporary philosophical and environmental thinking seems to be a product of communication, not only of one community or one picture of the world but, a product of different communities of the present and even of the past. Thus, the imperative of communicative differentiation coincides with the principle of natural and cultural diversity.

Within the environmental context, the acceptance of the paradigm of communication supposes the existence of a differentiated communicative community and needs extended contents of the notion of community. This notion ought to mark the human being and the non-human being - the whole bios, the natural being, the environment. From this it follows that nature represents a communicative partner and an ideal equal partner. There is no dominant or powerful position of one or the other partner in such a community. Then, the extended community associates all human societies, cultures and nature. It embraces both the cultural and the natural diversity. In spite of the fact that the definition of the notions nature, culture and society is different, in a concrete situation, in our case - in the communicative area of the Danube river - such a division can be hardly made. The natural space and the cultural space of the Danube river overlap. Together, they form a differentiated communicative community which has to be protected.

The paradigm of communication overcomes the one-sidedness of the paradigm of object reflection in this model of thinking. At present, conservative structures of modern intellectualism might be broken by the logic of the acceptance of communicative differentiation; differentiated communication and environmental thinking ought to be introduced into it.

This environmental thinking is to lead a common, world-wide international environmental discourse which has to find the basic rules of its realisation. These rules ought to be based on understanding, consensus and on looking for more moral truth than the classical theory of truth.

The extending of the notion of community by the non-human being, pointed out by A. Leopold in the 1930s, is highly actual at the present time - the post-modern era. The main problems of post-modern time, connected with the understanding of the plurality of values, and the revision of the idea of identity and freedom, coincide with the question of the extending of the "rights and freedoms" of the non-human being, understood as part of community or civilisation at all.

A. Leopold said that if only one of the communicative members of the community broke down, the whole civilisation would break down, too. If man destroys only one component of the community - nature or biological species - it could cause the breakdown of the whole community. This destruction may be found out merely by humanity itself because humanity is the conscious subject of the communicative community and its conscience as well. The question is, which function should humanity have as a subject or member of the community, as there is no place for any privileged member in the community.

The whole area of the Danube river may be understood as the communicative area. Therefore, this fact has to be accepted. From this, it results that there is no privileged place in the communicative space of the Danube river - there is merely a privilege of communication. It is the special communication of all members of the community - all states - based on certain rules of the communicative discourse. Moral truth and understanding must be respected by these rules, so as to reach the consensus to the interest of the future. The consensus will represent and express communicative differentiation and cultural diversity. Within this context, cultural diversity may even be understood as a prolongation of biodiversity.

The bio-ethical environmental discourse, itself, is also a highly political discourse and has powerful implications. Therefore, the ecological question in the space of the Danube river may not be understood as a political priority of one or more social groups or different parties,

because it refers to all the members of the communicative community. The political articulation of the defence of the conservation of life - all of bios - is beyond the ideological dimension of the right, left or further variants of the powerful spectrum of society.

The environmental or ecological ethics ought to be part of the political and cultural dialogue, within the framework of the community as a whole. If the separate areas of this whole are taken as autonomous units and they define merely their sense, freedom and boundaries, the situation is unsustainable. The problem consists in the fact that the field of own activities of these separate regional units is differently defined by them. Therefore, the autonomy of regions on the one hand, and the plurality of attitudes and the different paradigm of thinking and acting on the other, cause some internal and external boundary conflicts among them.

It is evident that, instead of conflicts, the acknowledgement of the differentiation and the plurality in the framework of the paradigm of communication can and has to begin. Cultural systems must co-operate and coexist within the context of the natural and cultural whole. Communication is the inevitable assumption and part of this contact. To realise this fact, semantic structures of different cultures, societies and nature have to be revealed. From this results the need for understanding. This understanding assumes revealing the sense deposited by each partner involved in the communication.

In regard to the dimension of the communicative community of the Danube, its global problems and intercultural dialogue, the following two imperatives are important: (a) resignation in the hierarchy rank of members of the community, and (b) ecological thinking as a component of the discourse. The experience from this region leads, unambiguously, to the conviction that there is a need to give up attempts at hegemony and to accept dialogue as the only way of communication. As this dialogue does not concern merely two partners but all the members of the community and partakers of the discourse, it represents a form of polylogue.

The Danube territory is simultaneously a global, regional and local area: it represents autonomous regional units and the whole territory at the same time. Incorporating separate autonomous regions into this whole, bringing into balance the autonomy of parts and the totality of the whole, and bringing into balance the problematics created must be solved. The aim is to keep this balance that this means to respect sustainable development.

The Danube river represents two important moments: it is the boundary and the bridge - it separates and connects at the same time. The bridge does not abolish the borders, it merely links the separated sides of the borders together. Therefore, it is important to find the way and the ability to move over these bridges - to accept the paradigm of communication. The speech on the Danube river, dividing and uniting at the same time, is becoming a speech on communication, a speech on relations, a speech on dialogue, a speech on polylogue. All political, ideological, cultural and geographical borders are transcended by it.

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