

## **Are We Ready for Integration in the World? (A Paper in Philosophy for Educology)**

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### Introduction by Co-Editors

This paper was written by Dr. Wieslaw Sztumski, Professor of Philosophy in the Social Science Faculty in the University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland, presented at the UNESCO Conference at the Law University of Lithuania, Vilnius, Lithuania, 2002 and accepted for publication in the International Journal of Educology. It represents Professor Wieslaw's philosophical position about the problems involved in the integration of European countries into the European Union.

Dr. Sztumski and the Co-Editors of IJE have had many long talks, while participating in UNESCO Conference's at the Law University of Lithuania, Vilnius, Lithuania, headed by Dr. Jurate Morkuniene, during the years of 2002, 2003, and 2004. In those talks it became clear that Dr. Sztumski's philosophically oriented reflective thinking experiences were very compatible with the philosophically oriented reflective thinking experiences, as conducted from the philosophy of educology perspective, as this perspective is being developed in the Institute of History and Philosophy of Educology for Developing Democracies in the World (the Institute), an initiative of Educology Research Associates/USA (ERA/USA).

The paper is in a philosophy for educology perspective, implying the philosophy of educology perspective being developed in the Institute as an experiential philosophical oriented one, with the orientation being effected by the sciences of ecology and semiotics.

Dr. Sztumski's philosophy for educology perspective, as interpreted from the perspective of philosophy of educology, in general, is guided: (1) by a growing ecological crisis in the world in which there is a threat to the most important goal of life, i.e. the goal of securing living conditions for the present and future generations of humans, wherein, then, life itself becomes the highest good, as determined by the significance of the synergy of action; (2) by the meaning of the words 'synergy of action' to refer to the human internal will to integrate with others in action, in contrast to referring to the human internal will to coerce others in action, as the principle of unification to encounter the growing ecological crisis in the world, and; (2) by the meaning of the word 'metanoia' to refer to a radical change in human awareness and mentality on a massive human scale in the world in consideration of the significance of the synergy of action to encounter the growing ecological crisis in the world.

### Introduction by Author

Integration is more than the mere joining together, unification, or association. *Integration means merging in many respects.* As a result of merging comes the full effect of the synergy of action. Integration takes place, especially under the influence of *internal* factors having an effect over a long period of time. Integration is possible on the basis of *fundamental interests*. At present, one fundamental interest is to *survive in all critical situations of the human life environment and to secure living conditions for future generations of humans.*

The attempts by European countries to join together, made during the period from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century, failed. This was so because such efforts were undertaken by

political and economic means, i.e. by the means of force, conquest, and coercion, and on the basis of nationalistic, religious, racist, and class ideologies. Measures of unification were undertaken in order to create or strengthen religious, colonial, and imperial superpowers. All previous integration attempts failed because cultural and subjective factors played almost no role. Now we know that the *cultural factors and the level of collective awareness of development play an essential, if not decisive, role in the implementation of the integration process*. The integration process requires shaping an appropriate cultural basis and a quite *new social awareness*. Therefore, our awareness and mentality should radically change on a massive scale. Such change is named "metanoia". A question arises: "*Are we ready for the metanoia needed at the present time?*" To some extent, the answer is "Yes." We have adequate philosophical and ethical bases to meet this need. Unfortunately, it is the economists and not philosophers or ethicists, which determine the social consciousness of humans in the world. And, these economists have forced humans to "hunt for profit" with all its negative consequences, especially the consequences of egoistic and imperialistic thinking.

## Part 1 Cultural Premises of Integration

As stated above, attempts by European countries to join together, made during the period from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century, failed, and they failed because the unification attempts of European countries resulted mostly from a necessity to concentrate forces and means in order, either, to carry out invasion plans or to secure an effective defense against an invader. The very idea of unification was connected with a desire to dominate, in the case of merging into aggressive alliances, and, a fear of losing one's domination, in the case of merging into defensive alliances. In the twentieth century, especially in its second half, it appeared that in the face of the threat of nuclear destruction, any attempt to conquer Europe, if made by a superpower, would be completely senseless in that it would, in fact, amount to a suicidal act.

The concept of the European Union also developed on the basis of imperial ideologies and aggression and was an attempt to counteract a possible invader, i.e. the bloc of countries grouped around the superpowers of the Soviet empire and COMECON. These two superpowers competed with each other for world domination, especially in the economic sphere, and forced European states, by means of political or economic and financial dependence, to merge into two confrontational alliances: the Warsaw Pact and NATO. Western European countries, in fear of a socialist revolution taking place on their territory and yielding to the pressure of propaganda, underwent a merging process. As a result they achieved certain benefits and guarantees. Wealthier countries benefited from the unification because they gained access to a cheaper labor force and had an opportunity to enter new markets. Poorer countries found an opportunity for capital inflow and the execution of business orders, which contributed to the fall in unemployment and a rise in exports, and gave them access to modern technologies. However, the basic objectives of the unification of these countries within the European Union, i.e: the equalization of economic potentials and living standards and the elimination of xenophobia connected with nationalism, was not reached. It seems that attempts to attach new countries to the European Union, on the basis of the same principles and with the same arguments as in the past, are not optimistically promising. This is especially true in a situation where there is no threat of another world war breaking out. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the bogeyman which was quite convenient for propaganda purposes, ceased to exist, hence new illusions are being created as to the benefits that could be derived from unification.

Speaking about integration, I have in mind something more than the mere joining together, unification, or association. Integration means merging in many respects, and in an ideal case, in

all respects. As a result of such merging comes the full effect of the synergy of action. On the contrary, a unification process can take place in only one respect and does not have to lead to a synergy of action but only to cooperation. Countries may unite under the influence of emergencies and external factors but integration takes place especially under the influence of internal factors having an effect over a long period of time. Integration is possible on the basis of primary interests, i.e. those interests that determine the will to join together, rather than secondary interests, i.e. those interests that determine the will to dominate. A growing number of politicians, including representatives of European Parliament and EU bodies, refer to the anachronism of the European Union in its present shape. They point to the collapse of the original concept of the Union and the lack of an appropriate motivation to maintain the structure as well as the reluctance of post communist countries to join and the unwillingness on the part of the EU founders to broaden the Union in fear of the lowering of living standards, of the possibility of recession, and, even of an economic crisis. These fears are justified to a substantial extent in view of the fact that the pace-to-date of the arms race has been slowed down and the military lobby has collapsed. This lobby was the engine of the economy contributing to the economic growth of highly developed countries. Of course, in an enforced situation, under political and economic pressure exerted by the decision centers of the wealthy EU states, which expect to gain even greater benefits from EU broadening, the remaining countries will find themselves in a dead-end and may be forced to join the European Union. But is this a real goal of European integration?

The unwillingness on the part of many post communist countries to join the European Union is also justified if one takes into account the fact that these countries did not have enough time to enjoy, to the full, their gained or regained freedom and independence. Whereas, following admission to the European Union, their freedom and sovereignty will prove to be only partial, if not illusory.

As a result of the breakthrough in historical developments of the last ten years, unification against something on the European continent within the framework of the continent became actually senseless. There would have been some point of senselessness in such a kind of European unification, if it had been undertaken in order to counteract other continents. Possible threats from other continents cannot, of course, be ruled out. Such threats seem quite probable in the future as a result of a developing polarization between the countries of the East and the West and the North and the South. Currently, however, there are no such threats. This means that in Europe there is no point in the unification of countries AGAINST something. There is only use in unification FOR something, i.e. FOR the implementation of some common fundamental interest, the highest good in the name of which everyone has to make sacrifices in order to reach a compromise which would be the basis of and a necessary condition for the coming into being and proper functioning of an integrated community of states. Such a fundamental interest could be related to counteracting a real, not imagined, threat to the existence and development of European countries, a threat that concerns all residents of Europe irrespective of the differences resulting from their state, ethnic, denominational, and linguistic membership. A growing ecological crisis is undoubtedly such a threat. In this connection the most important goal is to secure living conditions for us and for future generations. Life itself becomes the highest good.

These are not issues concerning solely Europeans. Ecological problems should constitute the first and the most important means of cooperation, i.e. of the joining together of all in thoughts and actions. The second means of cooperation should be connected with measures preventing a war on a broader scale. And, the third means of cooperation should be realizing the model of balanced (sustainable) development.

Europe's integration around these three means, areas, or objectives of cooperation become an historical necessity resulting from the human instinct for self-preservation, rather than arbitrary aspirations of various leaders, adherents of secular or clerical ideologies, pressure groups, or short-term objectives. These are concrete living conditions and it is the people's will to survive that force integration processes in a natural way, in line with a social evolutionary tendency to reach high productivity as a result of people's improved cooperation and integration into more compact and more efficiently functioning social organisms.

This natural integration tendency is manifested always at a proper time and is implemented in a continual way. History, just like nature, does not tolerate leaps, i.e. the speeding up of the social pace of evolution or slowing it down, the premature realization of certain models of social life, or the social and economic systems that do not offer chances of success. This has been proved many times. In this connection Europe's integration can only take place at an appropriate historical moment, at an appropriate stage of cultural evolution when people generally realize the need and the necessity for integration, when the state of social awareness enables starting such a process, i.e. the process in which cultural factors and the level of collective awareness of development playing such an essential, if not decisive, role in the implementation of the integration processes. An objectively existing threat and the subjective awareness of this threat are a sufficient condition for the integration processes to take place. However, the necessary condition is internal conviction as to the need and possibility to integrate and the will to integrate. These are subjective factors.

A question arises: "Are such conditions present at our time?" It seems that they are not, except for the sufficient condition, in which we face a real and objective ecological threat and the threat of mass destructive weapons being used in case of war. But, considering our social awareness and cultural paradigms functioning as principle of choice in the social evolution, which lie at the foundations of interpersonal attitudes and relations and govern our behavior, "Does this sufficient condition allow for an immediate start to the integration processes?" "Does this sufficient condition imply internal agreement on European integration?" It seems that it does not. Xenophobia, present in many European countries, derived from the paradigm of rationalism and developed and became binding under free market conditions and the pursuit of profit, still dominates in our culture and in our awareness alongside the attitudes of hostility and aggression. And, the attitudes of xenophobia, hostility, aggression, and domination over others are the basic subjective obstacles on the road to integration. So long as these attitudes and paradigms are binding in the European culture the integration idea will remain another Utopia, created by politicians and adherents of various ideologies. The integration process requires shaping an appropriate cultural basis and an appropriate state of social awareness. This means that an appropriate philosophy is needed in order to realize the integration process. What is needed is a philosophy that would replace old cultural paradigms with the new ones, on the basis of which a new style of thinking would become widespread, implying new attitudes, positions, and ways of action. The paradigm of rationalism, a paradigm that brought about a crisis situation in the contemporary world, emerged from modern European philosophy and penetrated European culture and, as a result of colonialism, world culture as a whole. Europe can thus be regarded as responsible for what happened, hence, Europe should create a new cultural paradigm on the basis of a new philosophical concept.

## Part 2

### Metanoia as a Replacement Cultural Paradigm

Metanoia means a radical change in human mentality on a massive scale. It is a form of the reorientation of collective social awareness. It is preceded by a replacement system of values

binding at a given level of social evolution. Its essential moment is the establishment of a new hierarchy of values as a result of which a new cultural paradigm starts the binding effect. Metanoia is preceded by transformations taking place in the sphere of ethics, within the framework of a practical philosophy which has a decisive impact on the shaping of philosophical outlooks and related views, convictions, attitudes, and ways of behaving and thinking. The reshaping of systems of values, consisting in the introduction of a new fundamental value to replace an old one, is a leap in nature.

In this meaning metanoia is “an awareness revolution” which marks points of discontinuity separating individual periods in the history of culture. Such revolutions usually take place in situations termed as peculiar or critical. They appear from time to time as a result of technological and economic development. Metanoia is a recurrent phenomenon in human history resulting from people realizing that their certain expectations or aspirations cannot be met. It takes place when behavior, consistent with a recognized hierarchy of values, fails and gives no chance for the realization of a given universal ideal. There is no doubt that universal ideals were connected up, until now, with the human will, to rule over the world and over nature and society, originating in anthropocentric attitudes as well as individual and species egoism.

The first metanoia, i.e. a basic mentality reorientation process, took place when the concept of domination based on conquests, the development of empires, and the subordination to earthly values and worldly objectives collapsed. The emergence of Christianity and its quick development was connected with such a transformation to a new system of values that seemed more promising. People started to perceive a possibility of domination over the world in their unification with God, the Supreme Being recognized as the only and almighty ruler of the world. Man on his own proved to be unable to subordinate the world to himself. So man had to be united with God and only together with Him he could strive to secure for himself rule over the world and a privileged position in it. God becomes a tool in the human fight to reign over the world. That is why God is subject to hominization (God’s Son is to be a man) and man is subject to deification (man as a reflection or image of God). People, in the fight to reign over the world, have excluded other living creatures. People disputed these creatures’ right to having a soul that is a link between living, or generally earthly, creatures and God. In this way people easily got rid of rivals.

The second metanoia appeared when people realized that limitless subordination to God and trust in Him in order to gain the possibility to reign over the world also proved fallible. People began to build their new hopes for the fulfillment of a dream about absolute human domination on reason and thinking. In such a way the triumphant march of rationalism from modern times through to the Enlightenment started. In the nineteenth century this led to George Hegel and his followers giving the quality of an absolute to reason and its role in history. The development of rational scientific knowledge, theoretical and empirical studies, and accompanying technical progress favored the spread of the culture of reason and rationality and required reducing the share of extra-reason factors in cognitive and evaluation activity. A decisive turn in the sphere of mentality, i.e. the turn from faith to reason, from the cult of God to the apotheosis of knowledge, took place over a relatively short period of time. In this connection the ideology of atheism started to spread.

At present we are at the verge of a third metanoia, i.e. a metanoia linked with a departure from the paradigm of rationalism and scientism. This is so because mankind is again unpleasantly disappointed, even though it seems that the reign of rational man over the world is certain by means of a victory in the fight for anthropocentric domination through human hands armed with technology.

And, in this time of the third metanoia, it seems that we will finally have to say good-bye to the overwhelming ambition of the human race to conquer the world, in that awareness reorientation processes always accompany periods of transition from old ways of production and social systems to new ones. New ways of manufacturing and management, implied as a matter of fact by technical revolutions, as well as modern technologies, used to give rise to hopes, justified at the beginning, the idea of fulfilling a dream about absolute human reign in the world. Unfortunately, as usual, these hopes proved at their end to be another illusion.

It can be concluded, even on the basis of this brief analysis of human history, that mankind experienced at least three great turns in the history connected with the will to dominate, based on an anthropocentric species egoism. The first turn was connected with mankind's disillusion as to effectiveness of the system of values based on force; the second turn was connected with the fallibility of the system of values based on hope, and; the third turn was connected with the ineffectiveness of the system of values based on reason. The first two turns resulted from human ambition to reign over the world. The third one results rather from a necessity to depart from the idea of human domination over the world.

The problem is not an ordinary change in mentality, which would mean another attempt to fulfill the idea of human domination, equally unsuccessful as shown by previous attempts. What is needed is such a change in mentality that would finally put an end to the revival of the idea of domination, replacing it with the idea of coexistence, the idea of domination with the idea of cooperation, and the will to subordinate the world with the will to survive in the world. This is a special type of metanoia that is appearing for the first time in history. A necessity to give up the human will to reign over the world also implies a necessity to give up the will of domination of some groups of people over others, i.e. to give up dictatorial and totalitarian inclinations. If humankind wants to survive, and this will is dictated by the instinct for self-preservation, it must get rid of idea of the fight for hegemony, of hostile attitudes, and of the will to destroy others. The future of mankind and its possibility for survival depends on spreading a system of values, i.e. a system of values in which life is the highest value and in which respect for others, dialogue, and tolerance are the highest principles. Such a system of values is created on the basis of a universally oriented environmental philosophy and bioethics.

The two previous forms of metanoia, connected with the departure from paradigms of ancient and modern culture, resulted from the fact that these paradigms did not lead to a victory in the fight for domination of one group of people over other groups, for achieving imperial goals through territorial expansion, and for appropriating resources and labor force, markets, etc., i.e. a fight carried out with the use of military means in the political and economic spheres. Now, at the end of the second millennium, facing a global threat to natural, social, and personality-related environments, mankind should finally reject imperialistic ideas. However, adherents to imperialistic ideologies do not give up. Defending their concepts and their status quo they carry over the fight for imperial domination through military, political, and economic means to that of the means of culture.

Such a fight, as they believe, can be waged without resorting to military measures, hence, without a risk of a world war and mankind's extermination. I associate the fight for goals involved in an imperial reign, using military, political, and economic means, to goals involved in an imperial rein using culture as a means, i.e. I associate extra-military means, with the means of "cultural imperialism" as means that will probably lead to the "final stage of capitalism." And, when it appears that, also, this form of imperialism does not bring about the expected results or even increases the threat of dehumanization and extermination of the human race as a result of the

degradation of cultural and personality-related environment, humankind will reject the ideology of imperialism forever and the implementation of the above mentioned third metanoia will begin.

### Part 3 Culture as the Area of a Fight for Domination

It seems that objective premises for Europe's starting its integration process have already appeared. Subjective premises for this process are also emerging. An appropriate environmental philosophy and the cultural movement of universalism are already active although still in the stage of being established. On their basis, one can start overcoming anachronistic paradigms of culture, ways of thinking and attitudes arising from anthropocentric views, and effect an awareness reorientation in such a spirit so that it favors integration. A system of values, under which common and long-term interests would be more important than private and short-term interests and universal values would be superior cherished by groups of people, can already be propagated.

It would have seemed that in these circumstances Europe's integration should be successful. However, the integration process encounters quite a strong resistance linked with factors that are cultural and historical in nature. Questions arise: "Is it necessary for Europe's integration to take place on the basis of a Western philosophy, which does not favor metanoia, and on the basis of Western, and especially American, model of culture and system of government?" "Should U.S. culture, including its political culture, become a model for Europe's culture and should the culture of Western European countries be worth imitating by the remaining countries?"

It is obvious that the United States is unable to compete with European countries in the area of culture. Because of historical and ethnic reasons the U.S. does not measure up to European countries and cannot boast such momentous and positive achievements. Also political culture, especially American democracy, leaves a lot to be desired. Under high-sounding slogans of freedom, democracy, and respect to human rights, actions and conditions are implemented and tolerated which are in fact in absolute contrast to these slogans. If Europe's integration were to be effected on the basis of American examples it would bring about its cultural regression, a kind of return to barbarism. It is clear that Europe has to use its own cultural achievements and develop culture more intensively in the process of integration.

The rich cultural output of Western countries and positive elements of American culture should be used in the implementation of integration processes in Europe. However, the respective achievements of East European countries should not be forgotten. Eastern European countries do not equal Western countries in the economic respect. This is also the case with respect to technical development, although, while assessing this sphere, one should differentiate between the level of technology and the level of technological thought and creative abilities of engineers. The creativity of technical staff is actually lower in the United States than in Europe. Lower, also, is the state of development of humanities, philosophy, and art. In spite of this the United States imposes on European countries, especially post communist states, its mentality, style of thinking, behavior, patterns, ways of action, and its hierarchy of values binding in the paradigm of American culture, aspects that are unfamiliar to European traditions.

This takes place on the occasion of the transfer of technologies, computerization, capital, and economic models (although not accidentally). An important role in this process is played by the popularization of the language, actually American-English slang. Efforts are being made to make this slang used worldwide. All of this is a manifestation of the brutal expansion of "culture" of wealthier and economically more developed countries, which have secured for themselves

political domination thanks to certain historical circumstances that are now usurping the right to the exclusive assessment of the principles of justice, moral standards, political legitimacy, and the right to impose their political will on the entire world. This is a manifestation of power monopolization on a global scale by means of cultural imperialism. In case of Europe, efforts for cultural domination made by Western countries, especially Germany, to some extent seem to be another attempt to implement the “Drang nach Osten” slogan known from the time of Bismarck. This time without a military or nationalistic meaning implied.

European integration processes should not take place without the support of Eastern Europe’s cultural traditions. These traditions must not be underestimated, omitted, or disregarded.

The output of political and philosophical thought of the Slavic countries, including Poland, is highly significant. It was in Poland where the tradition and the principles of tolerance were shaped for a long time, with the unifying slogan “For your freedom and ours too” being implemented and various concepts of European unification emerging. This also occurred in the period of People’s Poland. Also in Poland the concept of universalism was born and developed in an institutionalized form, as well as varieties of ecological philosophies and transregional anthropologies. The religious concept of universal ecumenism, as the basis for world integration, was established and has been developing.

If one wants to counteract the cultural imperialism of the West and to avoid its pernicious results, one should not yield to the pressure of rich and economically developed countries nor to be ashamed of one’s own past. One’s own traditions and cultural achievements should be given prominence, propagated, and confronted by means of discussion and polemics. The pseudoculture of the West should be opposed.

The ruling elites in highly developed countries, united as world financial and various Mafia-style organizations started a fight in the area of culture for monopolistic rule and for constraining others. Attempts made so far for control of the world by military means or the use of physical violence failed and even, as a result of the development of military techniques, led to a critical state, i.e. led to a real threat of the extermination of mankind. The fight in the sphere of culture can be waged without the use of armed forces or physical violence. Rule over the world can be secured by means of a bloodless revolution in outlooks thanks to advertising and the dissemination of an appropriate ideology as a result of exerting influence on the human consciousness and subconscious. Thanks to this, the constraint becomes deeper and internal rather than only external and superficial as can be achieved as a result of physical violence. The control gained in this way is firmer, lasting, and not threatening.

Reference to tradition, historical memory, and common sense are good forms of defense against cultural aggression, i.e. against the way the Western liberalism-related hierarchy of values is being contrasted with traditional Christian values. We also have to do with reference to national traditions, even nationalistic and Nazi traditions, in order to manifest cultural differences and to counteract cultural imperialism. Essential objectives of cultural imperialism, hidden behind allegedly universal, innocent, and often even trivial, slogans of freedom, pluralism, justice, and democracy are exposed on the basis of common sense. The fight for domination in the sphere of culture, subordinated to imperial objectives, is a significant factor delaying European integration and an obstacle on the road to the metanoia consisting in the rejection of the idea of domination, in any form, in the future.