

DISCUSSION PAPER

on

Camilo Vijiil y Tardon's

A MODEL OF MAN

by

Wilfried von Studnitz
Physician and Professor of Medicine
University of Munich
Munich, WEST GERMANY

The Seventeenth International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences
Los Angeles, California November 24-27, 1988

© 1988, International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences

Dr. Vijil provides a very stimulating paper. It was - indeed - a pleasure for me to read it and therefore it is a pleasure to comment it.

The paper in a practical and logical sequence presents an overview of the concept of evolution of man.

His aim is to give a better understanding by summarizing how the human being has developed to the present state. All this with background of the world crisis we are confronted with. Before referring to a model of man an explanation and understanding of the physical model of the universe is necessary. It is widely accepted that the universe has its origin by a so-called Big Bang. The increasing amount of data delivered by astrophysicists and investigators working in related fields are rather convincing that our terrestrial world is a part of the universe. This universe is consisting of natural events in all their variations as regular or irregular, repeating themselves or never repeating again. These events are physical events and may be reduced to the interplay of subatomic particles. All these physical events may be explained as a struggle between gravity and opposing forces. This struggle finally results in what we call the solar systems.-

We should not forget that- even if we live in our apparent stable solar system- uncountable solar systems have already disappeared and uncountable solar systems will probably emerge.

I would ask here if biological events in the same way may be reduced to subatomic particles?

As a consequence of our mental and sensorial endowment we

recognize a certain order in it. All this exists in a framework of physical constants. Thus- the author asserts - we feel all this as a whole. We have no knowledge if life has its origin extraterrestrial or was emerging on our earth. The possible pathways from the inorganic to the organic and to living structures are shown up in more detail in various papers presented and discussed here in the same Committee.

Once conditions for life have emerged the evolution has started. We have no idea in which way the ignition to life has operated. Obviously the whole process was very slow. The author gives his opinion that we have a rather clear picture how human beings have become what they are now. He mentions the evolution of our forebears of a small group of primates to different stages up to now.

I would think- with all respects to the advance in science relevant to the evolutionary problem - we ought to be very cautious with our interpretations. We shall be aware of the scarcity of our data concerning the gradual change within the various groups of primates. Furthermore this is true of the localisation of fossil remains. To many factors may have influenced the actual places for these remains. Anyhow there is little doubt that our forebears which are close to us can be dated to certain time, that means some million years ago.

The acquisition of the "human condition" of our forebears has doubtlessly to do with the character as pedestrians and the acceleration of the brain development.

Now Dr. Vijil comes to the biological and historical evo-

lution of the human mind. He starts with a definition of intelligence and mind. Here I am hesitating to agree. With his definition of intelligence all living organisms are intelligent. May be that I have misunderstood his definition but I have difficulties to apply the term intelligence to plants. But this is not important in this context. Important is that only humans have a mind. I would like to know if the soul should here be included? - The ^{emergence} of mind in our forebears is dated between 6 and 1,8 million years ago. - Here somewhere - as I believe - the development of the language has to be placed. The first creation of symbols is much younger and a cultural diversification is not older than 4000 years.

This creativity seems to be correlated to the need and desire of a better and more efficient way of life.

The author describes now in a rather exciting and convincing way this diversification of the creativity, it means the development of culture.

The development of various cultures probably is one fundamental reason for the difficulties man have in living together in harmony. The main reason for the conflicts among various groups are the tremendous increase in population in combination with the progress made in science and technology.

This problem has been noted by several investigators already in the last century. But the increase in population of the poorer and poorest nations is not slowed down.

Sociological, economical and cultural differences are main causes for conflicts between human beings. International conventions and institutions had in a very limited way

influenced the relations between nations and men. However, some progress is made. On the other hand the exploitation of our resources are still going on and changing the ecological system. Pollution of the atmosphere and changing of the climate threatens us. And behind this all stands the human being.

For a better understanding of these problems, first of all we need a better understanding how the humans have developed to the present stage. Than it is easier to create new values and perform a new cultural revolution. The author means that this demand may be naive but it is the only reasonable and reliable assumption.

I would like to add to the demand of better understanding the demand of better information. In consequence of this information about all "dead end streets" we are marching "forward", we have to open new streets undoubtedly by the creation of new absolute values - here to be understood as basic values common to all humans unrelated to races, ethnical groups, social position or similar.

The authors demand for absolute values leads him to - what he calls - a Synthetic View of Man. Here he uses a theory of the input and output of energy all living organisms are submitted to. The main input from the cosmos is solar energy as much as we know. Dr. Vijil stresses also the importance of the terrestrial input for the development and transformations of various living organisms. I am aware of the complexity of this input but here I have some difficulties to

follow Dr. Vijils ideas. Therefore I would like to get some more information or maybe a kind of definition of the so-called terrestrial input. First of all because the output is the feedback of the input.

The output is the action on the environment. We know that this output very often has disastrous influence on the physical, biological and human environment. Therefore it is most important to find ways to improve the quality of that output in order to save our future.

Since we human beings have the ability of creation which could lead us to a new cultural revolution, we have the obligation to secure the possibility for everybody to live in freedom. The only way that men can live with inner freedom. If we reach this stage of inner freedom we can judge and act with full responsibility.

Even if we cannot reach this freedom now we can at least start to discuss in a free debate all controversial problems in order to abolish misunderstandings mostly caused by ignorance, lack of information or prejudice. We have to abolish the ignorance about our selves and learn to be self critical, self corrective and self creative.

Then we have the chance to define new values.