



Chapter 6: Exocosmoetics



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6.1 The World or Nature (Exocosmos)



6.1.1. Definition

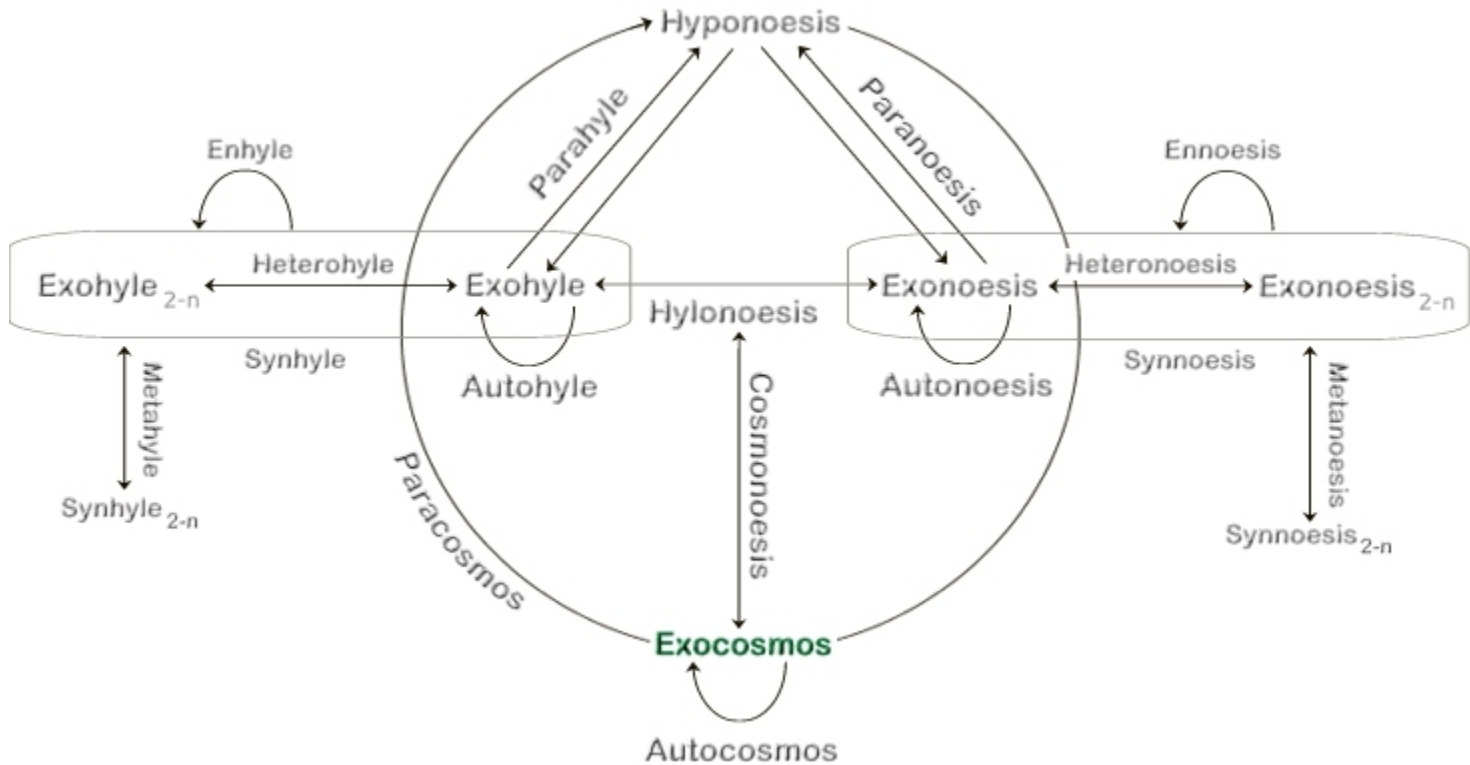


Figure 1 - Exocosmos



From Greek *ἐκ, ἐξ* (ex = out, away, off, from, from out of) and *κόσμος* (kosmos = order, universe, world, totality). It represents the universe, our world, Nature, being in general – in sum, reality as a whole.

The Greek term *kosmos* has the following meanings:

- | order
- | form, fashion
- | universe
- | world
- | mankind
- | totality

I use the term *cosmos* in the sense of "the totality of all actualized noetic forms". Any manifestation of **Hyponoesis** is a noetic actualized form. The term *Exo-Cosmos* denotes a reality that realizes or actualizes a specific, coherent set of potentialities out of (exo) **Hyponoesis**.

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6.1.2 Theories of Reality

To answer the question about the nature of reality, we have first to inquire into the meaning of the term 'real'. Reality derives from the Latin word *realitas*, which literally means 'thing-hood'. *Res* does not only have the meaning of 'material thing'. *Res* is used in a lot of different meanings in Latin, most of them have little to do with materiality, e.g. affair, event, business, a coherent collection of any kind, situation, etc. These so-called situative terms are always subjective, and therefore related to the way of thinking.

Reality is the whole of the human affairs insofar as these are related to our world around us. Reality is never the bare physical world devoid of the human being. Reality is the totality of human experience and thought in relation to an objective world. Heidegger introduced the term "In-der-Welt-Sein" (Being-in-the-World) representing the symbiotic relationship or the embeddedness of the human being with the context of its world or environment.

The German word for reality is 'Wirklichkeit' which is derived from the verb 'wirken' that can be translated as to be active or effective, to act, to work. Reality is here closely tied to action, activity, or more specifically, to [efficiency](#) in the philosophical sense. The English term 'reality' relates to reality as static, in terms of objects, whereas the German 'Wirklichkeit' refers to a dynamically efficient agent. German idealism viewed reality in terms of a dynamic, organic interrelationship between subject and object, whereas modern analytic Anglo-american philosophy views reality in terms of reductionism, which treats the objects of the word statically and independent of the subject.

There are probably as many theories of reality as there are philosophers and thinkers. In what follows I only present the most important historical point of views. I am concerned here with ontology and not epistemology, i.e. with the structure and nature of reality and not so much with our knowledge of it.

The following mind map visually presents the most important and influential views and theories of reality throughout the history of mankind. I will not discuss these views in detail as advocated by the individual philosophers. My intent is only to give a short description of those theories in order to compare them against my own theory below.

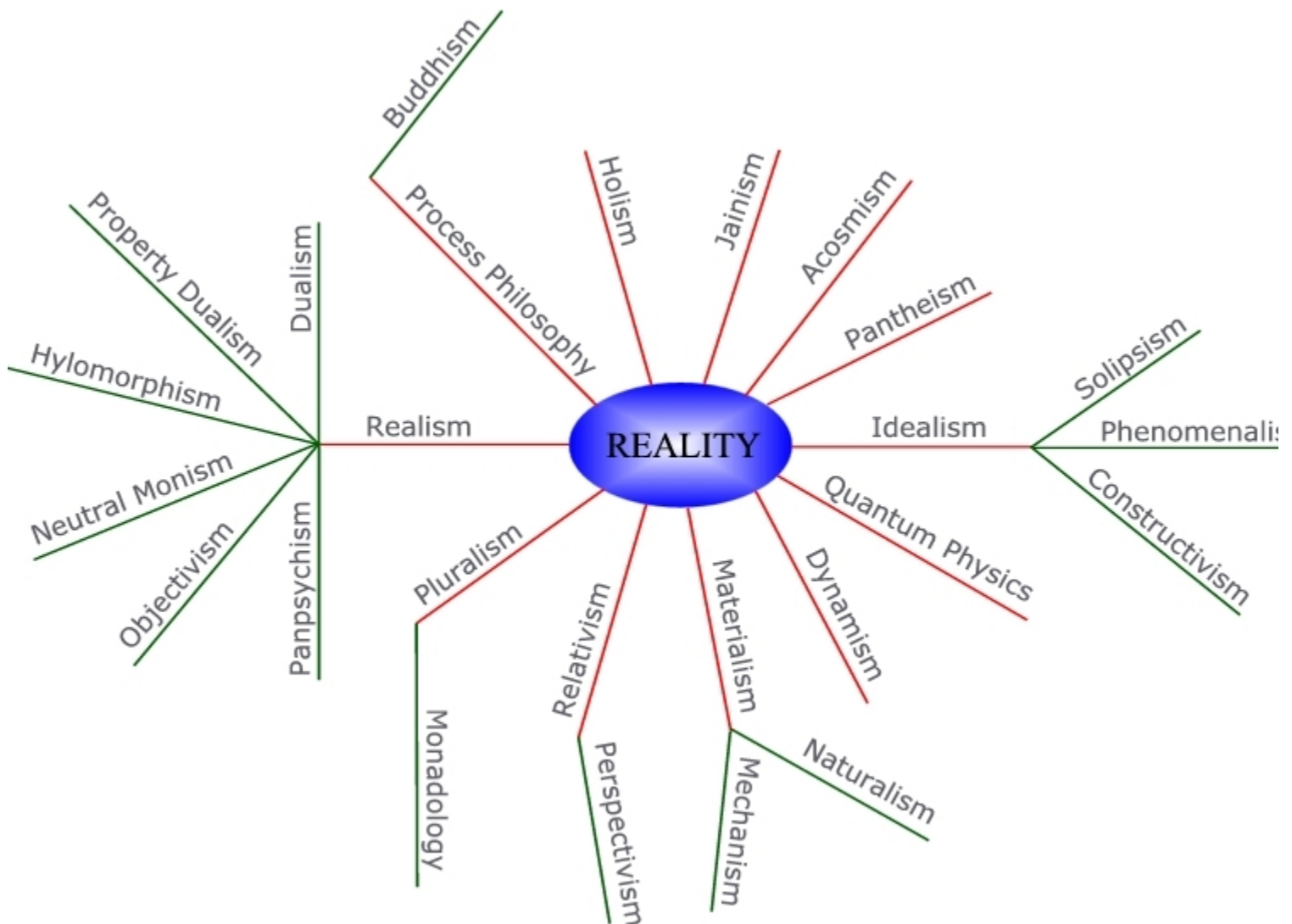


Figure 1 - Theories of Reality Mind Map

Materialism

The monistic view that everything that exists is made of matter or can be reduced to a function or property of matter. The Pre-Socratic philosophers were the first ones to ponder about the nature of reality. They were trying to find the *ἀρχή* (arche = beginning, principle, ultimate underlying substance), or Urstoff, that is the basic "stuff" out of which all things are made. First they considered material substances only, such as water or air. Then, Anaximander suggested something more indeterminate and abstract: *ἄπειρον* (apeiron = unlimited, indefinite). Other principles suggested were Being (Parmenides), atoms (Leucippus, Democritus), and even mathematical principles (Pythagoras). These thinkers can be considered the first materialists, since all their principles are ultimately of a material cause.

Naturalism

A derivative view of materialism that claims that everything that exists belongs to nature and can be understood by scientific investigation and methods. The supernatural and metaphysical is denied in favor of natural laws and causality that can explain all existing phenomena of the world. Based on empiricism and positivism, modern naturalism applies reductionistic methodologies in an attempt to understand the complex structures of nature.

Mechanism

This view states that all phenomena of reality can be reduced to matter, forces, and motions that follow from the laws of cause and effect (principle of causality). Excluded are teleological and vitalistic explanations. Basically, this view believes that the world and its beings function like a machine.

Dynamism

The view that the phenomena of the world can be reduced to forces and their effects. In particular, the view that matter is a product of forces and energies as opposed to the mechanistic view of matter as inert mass. The elements of matter are considered to be centers of force and reality to be a web of interlocked forces.

Idealism

Basically the view that everything that exists is constituted by an immaterial mind or consciousness and that mind is the primary substance of which all things consist and not matter. The objects of our world are dependent on our mind and cannot exist apart from a mind that is conscious of them. This monistic view is contrasted with materialism.

Plato introduced a first form of idealism by postulating reality as ideal Forms or Ideas that exist eternally and apart from the world of appearance. The objects of our world are not real, because they only exist because they derive their substance from the ideal Forms. This distinction between reality and appearance is one of the characteristic principles of idealistic philosophies.

Solipsism

The radical view that I alone exist independently and that the world and other minds only exist as an object or content of my mind.

Phenomenalism

The view that sensations are the only objects we can perceive and know and that matter can be reduced to sensory experiences. British empiricism and French sensualism advocate similar views but are based on material rather than ideal assumptions of reality.

Constructivism

As a philosophical view that "any so-called reality is – in the most immediate and concrete sense – the *construction* of those who believe they have discovered and investigated it." [1]
Our experience and knowledge of the world is not just the result of a passive receiving, but is the product of the subject's active thinking.

Realism

The view contrasted with idealism that physical objects exist independently of the mind or consciousness perceiving them. It also affirms the common-sense view most people hold and was advocated in Scottish common-sense philosophy.

Dualism

The view, postulated first by Descartes, that everything that exists is either a physical or a mental substance, each independent of the

other.

Property Dualism

As contrasted with substance dualism, property dualism or double-aspect theory, derived from Spinoza, states that existing objects may have both physical and mental aspects. These aspects are not, as the substances in dualism proper, independent of each other, but represent properties of the same underlying entity.

Hylomorphism

The view that physical objects are composites of matter and form. Aristotle did not accept the theory of Forms as suggested by Plato, but believed that Form was not something separate from objects, but was an integral principle of complete substances. Matter and form combine to constitute the real object that we perceive and experience.

Neutral Monism

The view, usually associated with William James and Bertrand Russell, that everything that exists consist of some stuff whose nature is neither physical nor mental. No clear definition of what exactly this neutral stuff is has ever been given.

Objectivism

This view is not in regards to logic or ethics, but is based on the philosophy of Ayn Rand. According to Objectivism, then, everything that exists has a specific finite nature. Existence (or objective reality) is logically and metaphysically prior to and independent of consciousness. Objectivist philosophy rejects any form of idealism and theism. The world as a whole is neither the creation of a divine entity nor itself mental or constituted by consciousness.

Panpsychism

This view assumes that everything that exists has a mental aspect. This does not mean that physical objects have minds, but that the mental property is inherent in an object in varying degrees. This view is sometimes also called panexperientialism.

Pantheism

This view holds that everything that exists constitutes a unity that is divine. God is not radically distinguished from his creation, but are integral modes or elements of the Divine.

Acosmism

The view that there is only one reality which is infinite and absolute (e.g. God) and that the phenomenal world only exists as an accidental mode of this eternal substance and does not have an independent reality. The world of phenomena has only an apparent (see Parmenides) or illusory (see the concept of 'Maya' in Eastern philosophy) reality.

Quantum Physics

Modern quantum physics views reality as somehow dependent on the observer. Consciousness affects or changes reality based on experimental parameters. Reality is not in a fixed state, but rather behaves as a superposition of an infinite number of probabilistic states, one of which becomes actual for a conscious and intelligent being. The notion of non-locality plays an important role in quantum physics and seems to hint at the underlying interconnectedness of all physical entities. At last, the concept of quantum vacuum evokes similar philosophical ideas of the unity of the world out of which all phenomena become manifest.

Pluralism

The view, as contrasted with monistic philosophies and dualism, that there are multiple kinds of substances out of which existing things consist and that they cannot be reduced to one (monism) or two (dualism).

Monadology

A special form of pluralism, this view, developed by Leibniz, states that the world consists of a plurality of individual, independent, soul-like entities or units, called monads, each reflecting the whole world. Physical objects are considered appearances of collection of monads.

Relativism

The relativist view of reality states that there is no such thing as objective knowledge of reality independent of the knower. We cannot

even study or understand reality as such without using interpretations or intrinsic categories of our mind.

Perspectivism

This view, first postulated by Nietzsche, is a form of relativism: "...precisely this necessary perspectivism by virtue of which every center of force - and not only man - construes all the rest of the world from its own viewpoint, i.e., measures, feels, forms, according to its own force..." [2]

Holism

A number of similar views can be subsumed under holism. Apart from its biological implications, holism refers to views based on the holographic paradigm and the bootstrap philosophy.

The holographic supertheory says that our brains mathematically construct "hard" reality by interpreting frequencies from a dimension transcending time and space. The brain is a hologram, interpreting a holographic universe. [3]

The bootstrap philosophy not only abandons the idea of fundamental building blocks of matter, but also accepts no fundamental entities whatsoever - no fundamental laws, equations or principles. The universe is seen as a dynamic web of interrelated events. None of the properties of any part of this web is fundamental; they all follow from the properties of the other parts, and the overall consistency of their mutual interrelations determines the structure of the entire web. [4]

Process Philosophy

The view that reality is pure process and in constant change. It stresses the dynamic events and interrelations of reality as opposed to philosophies of substance that maintain that a permanent reality exists that undergoes changes. Process philosophy has been associated with Heraclitus, William James, Whitehead, and Bergson, but also represents an important concept in Buddhist philosophy (see below).

Buddhist Philosophy

I have covered concepts of Buddhist philosophy elsewhere and only mention here the two main ontological theories. The theory of impermanence (anicca) states, similar to process philosophy, that everything that exists is constantly changing. Nothing substantial or permanent exists. Nothing can remain identical to itself because things are not discretely existing entities but consist of a number of interdependent relations (theory of dependent origination (paticca samuppada)).

Buddhism instead adopts the notion that all things exist only in relationship to others, the idea of mutual causality. An event can happen only because it's dependent on other factors. Buddhism sees the world as a vast flow of events that are linked together and participate in one another. The way we perceive this flow crystallizes certain aspects of the nonseparable universe, thus creating an illusion that there are autonomous entities completely separate from us. [5]

Jainism

A relativistic type of realism that states that reality has manifold aspects or infinite characters. Manifoldness in this context is understood to include mutually contradictory properties. Reality is manifold and each entity has a manifold nature - consists of diverse forms and modes of innumerable aspects.

The existence of an entity such as a pot, depends upon its being a particular substance (an earth-substance), upon its being located in a particular space, upon its being in a particular time and also upon its having some particular (say, dark) feature. [6]

Multiplicity and unity, definability and non-definability etc. which apparently seem to be contradictory characteristics of reality are interpreted to co-exist in the same object from different points of view without any offence to logic. [7]

[1] Paul Watzlawick: *The Invented Reality*, W.W. Norton & Company, 1984, p. 10

[2] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will To Power*, Vintage Books, 1968, p. 339

[3] Marilyn Ferguson: *Karl Pribram's Changing Reality*, in: *The Holographic Paradigm and other paradoxes*, edited by Ken Wilber, Shambhala, 1985, p. 22

[4] Fritjof Capra: *Holonomy and Bootstrap*, in *ibid*, p. 114

[5] Matthieu Ricard, Trinh Xuan Thuan: *The Quantum and the Lotus*, Crown Publishers, 2001, p. 62

[6] Nagin J. Shah (ed.): *Jaina Theory of Multiple Facets of Reality and Truth*, Motilal Banarsidass Publisher Private Limited, Delhi 2000, p. 7

[7] *ibid*, p. 134

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6.1.3 How Real is Reality?

Is this objective world, which we encounter in our experience and thought, something that exists on its own, or is it dependent upon our mind? Most scientists concede that the subjective mode of our consciousness affects the perceptions of the objective world. These scientists assume a real and objective world – one that would even exist without a human being alive or observing it. A conceivable way to tackle this problem is the Kantian solution of the 'thing-in-itself' that is inaccessible to our mind because of the mind's inherent limitations. This does not help us very much, but just posits some undefinable entity outside of our experience and understanding. Hegel, on the other hand, denied the inaccessibility of the 'thing-in-itself' and suggested, that knowledge of the world as it is in itself is attainable, but only by 'Absolute Knowing', the highest form of consciousness.

I found one of the most persuasive proofs of an independent objective world in Winston Churchill's autobiography:

Some of my cousins... used to tease me with arguments to prove that nothing has any existence except what we think of it. The whole creation is but a dream; all phenomena are imaginary. You create your own universe as you go along... I always rested upon the following argument, which I devised for myself many years ago. We look up in the sky and see the sun. Our eyes are dazzled and our senses record the fact. So here is this great sun standing apparently on no better foundation than our physical senses. But happily there is a method, apart altogether from our physical senses, of testing the reality of the sun. It is by mathematics. By means of prolonged processes of mathematics, entirely separate from the senses, astronomers are able to calculate when an eclipse will occur. They predict by pure reason that a black spot will pass across the sun on a certain day. You go and look, and your sense of sight immediately tells you that their calculations are vindicated. So here you have the evidence of the senses reinforced by the entirely separate evidence of a vast independent process of mathematical reasoning... We have got independent testimony to the reality of the sun. When my metaphysical friends tell me that the data on which the astronomers made their calculations, were necessarily obtained originally through the evidence of the senses, I say 'No.' They might, in theory at any rate, be obtained by automatic calculating-machines set in motion by the light falling upon them without admixture of the human senses at any stage.[1]

Although this seems to be a strong argument for realism, it is only capable of claiming that a world exists independent of our mind perceiving it, not however, that the reality we perceive might be altogether completely different from the representation or perception in our mind.

Thus, we have two basic problems of reality:

- a. does reality exist independent of a mind? And
- b. in either case, does the structure of reality match the structure of the perceived reality in our mind?

The concept of *Exocosmos* and the following theories about the structure and order of reality attempt to answer those questions to a certain extent.

[1] Winston S. Churchill: *My Early Life: A Roving Commission*, p. 117 f., Charles Scribner's Sons, 1930

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6.1.4 The Theory of Exocosmoetics



6.1.4.1 The Concept of *Exocosmos*

Exocosmos is the reality-for-us, there is no reality-per-se, only for us as individual minds (Exonoesis). Our individual minds constitute the world or reality around us. This reality does not exist by itself or out of itself but only for us because it was established as reality for us through our thinking and acting. Through the act of thinking we constitute reality, however not in an arbitrary or subjective fashion but based on the objectivity of thought, which constitutes the noetic structure of the Individual Mind (Exonoesis).

There are two aspects of *Exocosmos* that ought to be distinguished. First, there is a core, common or shared reality that is part of the inherent structure of each Individual Mind (*objective Exocosmos*). This allows for a world that can be shared through experience and perception.

Second, the core reality is extended or modified by various sections (sometimes overlapping with each other) that represent the constitutive ideas of individuals or more often of a collective of individuals (*subjective Exocosmos*). These ideas manifest themselves as extensions of the core reality. In other words, these extensions are only real for those whose thinking participates constitutively in the creation or sustenance of one or more particular sections.

If, for example, a collective of individuals believes in the existence of God, God is constituted as a reality with all those qualities attributed to Him by those individuals. That means that God is an absolute reality for those who participate in that extended 'God' section, but not for those who don't. God would then exist only as part of an extended reality-for-us, he would not exist independent of that *Exocosmos* or of the community of believers.

Therefore the question of God is the question of man's Mind. The question is not whether God exists or not, but whether what we mean by God is a reality for us, and whether this reality is as real as everything else we denote with that term, such as the everyday world.

Thinking constitutes the reality for us (*Exocosmos*), but only through acting do we confirm the world as reality as established a priori by thought. Thinking (Exonoesis) actualizes potential noetic patterns out of Hyponoesis. These patterns constitute the reality only *idealiter* and in order to gain persuasive reality the patterns need to be established *realiter* as *Exocosmos* or as reality for us through the interaction of our mind with the constitutive *Exocosmos*. This acting upon the thought-world realizes this world as a seemingly independent reality, external to us.

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6.1.4.2 The Theory of Polymorphism and Amorphism

The theory of *polymorphism* states that our reality can take on many forms, that reality consists of an indefinite number of differentiating forms, and that a great number of different realities can exist for us.

When we talk about reality in the sense of polymorphism, we refer to "actual reality" as opposed to "potential reality" which is the concept of Hyponoesis. Actual reality is the actualized reality we perceive and experience and consists of a multitude of differentiated, individual forms (poly-morphe). It also represents the realities we construct mentally and psychologically and which we consider to be our empirical world. People from different cultures have different views on reality, or different forms of reality.

The theory of *amorphism*, on the other hand, states that ultimate reality has no forms whatsoever. It is pure potentiality, Hyponoesis. This also means that we cannot experience or conceive this reality because it has no manifested or intelligible forms. It is formless and not yet actualized. This view of reality as amorphous is similar to the Buddhistic concept of "sunyata" or emptiness or void.

Buddhist philosophy postulates the ultimate reality as emptiness or void (sunyata). However, this emptiness does not mean nothingness and does not imply nihilism of any kind. Things and beings don't have a substantial and permanent nature. All things are just appearances, and that includes our consciousness and mind. Therefore, everything is "empty", without fixed substantial form. This emptiness permeates all phenomena and is the ground of their being, arising and development.

Sunyata or emptiness is the absolute reality, without duality and individual empirical forms. In the Yogacara school of Buddhism, Mind is considered to be sunyata, because all things arise from the mind.

In more Western terms, Sunyata may be called "undifferentiated continuum"[1], although this should not be interpreted as being an objectively existing reality. The "continuum" is undifferentiated because there is no duality of subject and object in it. Suzuki emphasizes the idea of potentiality characteristic of Sunyata as follows:

Prajna [= sunyata] is always trying to preserve its self-identity and yet subjects itself to infinite diversification. This is why sunyata is said to be a reservoir of infinite possibilities and not just a state of mere emptiness. Differentiating itself and yet remaining in itself undifferentiated... - this is sunyata.[2]

The idea of an undifferentiated reality of infinite possibilities is akin to my concept of Hyponoesis as pure potentiality. Hyponoesis is formless, undifferentiated, "empty". But it is not nothing. It can be considered a "vacuum" that differentiates itself into infinite individual forms or phenomena, in what I call the process of actualization. Since the plurality of phenomena are not independent substances with intrinsic existence, but are just appearances, or what I call, aspects or Noemes, individuated out of Hyponoesis, the ultimate reality is both self-identity and plurality, or as Buddhist philosophy phrases it: "Emptiness is form, and form is emptiness".[3]

It is interesting that the philosophical concept of pure potentiality (Hyponoesis), the Buddhist concept of Sunyata, and the quantum-physical concept of "quantum vacuum" all refer to the ultimate reality. This congruence of ideas from different cultures and fields of knowledge is, in my view, a sign that all human knowledge and experience can be placed within a common framework of integration. Also, since science starts to expand its frontiers, it will eventually come to agree with the deepest philosophical ideas, such as Hyponoesis and Sunyata.

Buddhism: sunyata, mu	Hyponoetics: Hyponoesis
Neither being nor non-being	Concept of a-existentiality
Emptiness is form, form is emptiness	One-many relationship: the identity/unity of actuants . What is actual is potential and what is potential is actual. Actuality is potentiality, and potentiality is actuality.
Precondition of all existing entities	Theory of actualization (individuation)
Total insubstantiality	Concept of potentiality
Impermanence	Theory of formal transiency (as applied to actuants)
Dependent origination	Theory of material transiency and Relational Topology (as applied to actuants)

[1] Essays in East-West Philosophy, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu 1951, p.42

[2] *ibid*, p. 45

[3] The Heart Sutra



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6.1.4.3 The Theory of Adaptive Ontology

Darwin's theory of evolution states, in a nutshell, that life evolves through a process of natural selection and mutation. Life adapts to the environmental changes by selecting those features that have proven the fittest. Whatever biological patterns are more likely to be of benefit to the species will thrive and reproduce by passing on the variation or mutation to the future generations.

Adaptation is "an alteration or adjustment in structure or habits, often hereditary, by which a species or individual improves its condition in relationship to its environment..."

Adaptation: adjustment by an individual living thing or a species to the environment. Physiological adaptation involves adjustment by individuals to a sudden change in environment. Evolutionary adaptation, discussed here, occurs within a species during the slow course of evolution. Evolutionary adaptations result from competition among individuals of a particular species in response to an ever-changing environment. Certain traits appear or disappear through natural selection, which favors those individuals that produce the most surviving offspring. Because the environment exerts control over the adaptations that arise by natural selection, the kind of living thing that would fill a particular environmental niche ought to be predictable in general terms."^[1]

In a similar fashion, the theory of adaptation can be applied to an ontological model of reality. Reality adapts to the cognitive varying patterns of our mind. Through a process of noetic selection, as I call it, we create models of reality that fit our current views and beliefs and which are likely to propagate to future generations.

We think we live in a constantly changing world, but what is actually changing or what is the cause of these changes are the variegated, continually evolving and mutating patterns of our mind that are reflected in our perception and experience of reality. Since I determined reality as potentiality, it naturally adapts to the actualizing capacity of our minds. The reason why the world adapts to our minds is that the world is a reality for us (*Exocosmos*) and not a reality per se. We are actualized existents and thus constantly actualize ourselves and the world around us through thinking and acting. Reality just reflects that actualizing process by assimilating or taking on the forms we model in our minds (see 4.8.3.4 about abstractive modeling).

It is important to understand that I am not claiming that each of us creates the world. This would be what is called solipsism – that there is only one mind and that mind contains and sustains the whole world and all other human beings.

Psychology and science tells us that what we perceive and experience is not the world as it is but a world modified and interpreted by the brain and the mind. *Hyponoetics* considers the mind's interaction with the world not as a one-way street. The mind is actively shaping and determining the structure of the world at each moment. Like our body, our minds are organized in a given structure common to all human beings. As there cannot be a living body without a heart, so the mind has a given structure, based on its physical counterpart, the brain. Therefore, the common structure of the mind is reflected in the common structure of the world. We all perceive the world in a similar fashion because our minds operate in a similar fashion and because our bodies, including our brains, are based on the same biological structures.

[1] The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Third Edition, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1992.

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6.1.4.4 The Theory of Abstractive Modeling

It is not reality that is determined but our model of it.

Our mind is infinite in so far as the objects of thought are abstract concepts - not particular or concrete things. The ability to abstract from particulars constitutes the intrinsic relationship and connection between the Individual Mind and the Universal Mind. Abstraction is the formal structure of our Individual Mind. Abstraction transcends the concrete realm of empirical experience. In experience, the objects are given as particulars; therefore, experience is limited by the contents of experience, that is, by concrete things. Even if we experience a feeling or emotion, that feeling is concrete in so far as it is a particular manifestation of an emotion within the context of a particular person.

By omitting the distinguishing features of particular objects we de-individuate an object, make its individual, unique qualifications become general, classified or abstract. Abstract constructs (concepts, ideas) are said to be representational on a higher level of thought. This meta-view of concrete objects is the basic feature of our mind. This basic feature suggests the connection and dependency of the Individual Mind on *Hyponoesis* or Reality. The abstracting capacity of our mind indicates the possibility of the Individual Mind to extend beyond its ordinary usage to an absolute domain of knowledge.

Hyponoesis can be represented as the absolute or final abstraction. To achieve this absolute abstraction we have to abstract from the abstract concepts we already have in our mind. By generalizing the abstracts of the Individual Mind, our thinking can be shifted towards a more holistic mode of thought that comprises all possible abstracts of all potential individual minds. This process of abstracting the abstracts of the Individual Mind is called **paranoetic abstraction**.

Paranoetic abstraction is the absolute universalization of objective abstract concepts. The result is one paranoetic Universal that is all-comprehensive in its scope. Whereas our objective abstracts are finite in so far as they are conceptually separated from each other by definition, the Universal Abstract, obtained through the act of paranoetic abstraction, is the only abstract and represents *Hyponoesis* per se. This universal abstract comprises all possible, actual or potential abstract constructs. Whereas an objective abstract in the Individual Mind is defined and thereby delineated by extensional and intensional properties. *Hyponoesis* is unlimited in its **extension and intension**.

Every conceivable abstract can be subsumed under this Universal Concept. Regarding the intension of the Universal Abstract, the features that an actual objective abstract must possess in order to belong to the extension of the Universal Abstract, are a) its universality and b) its **noeticity**, that is its being an entity of the mental or noetic order, that is, being a product of our Individual Mind.

The question is: why do we need such a speculative idea of a Universal Abstract? The reason is that through paranoetic abstraction we will be able to develop what I call Transrational Thinking (Paranoesis) which is a necessary prerequisite in order to attain a state of reunification between Exonoesis and Hyponoesis. To access the infinite resources of Hyponoesis, our thinking has to be adopted to the structure of Hyponoesis. The precondition to this accomplishment is paranoetic abstraction, the first step in developing Transrational Thinking.

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6.1.4.5 The Theory of Interpretative Layering

The relationship between reality and the Individual Mind (Exonoesis) is two-fold: on the one hand, we actualize the world as an empiric and physical reality through our minds, and on the other hand, we interpret the actualized in various ways. The objects of our experience or consciousness (empiric contents) are not given in an untainted, pure perception that reflects the actualized world in its objectivity. The objectivity of the world is its state of being constantly actualized. The forms of actualization are only objective in their unexperienced and unperceived essence. This is the principle of individuation, the individual existence in time and space. Perception of objective forms through an Individual Mind is again a two-fold process: the objective part is the mechanism of perception as constituted through the structure and cognitive patterns of our mind. The subjective part is what I call the 'interpretative layers', the process that interprets the percept or the experiential object based on the individual patterns of Exonoesis, e.g. beliefs, prejudices, fears, emotions, etc.

We do not just perceive the world but we interpret it based on the hermeneutical structure of our mind. Our view of the world may be less interpretative when we are young because we are not yet imbued with a culture's belief systems and we have not yet developed our own individuality to a degree that it permeates all our life and beliefs.

The philosophical problem of [hermeneutics](#) is the following: to understand always means to interpret. We can even say that knowledge is always hermeneutical, that is, it interprets its objects. Knowledge is always mediated and never direct. This mediated or interpreted knowledge of the world does not have to be utterly subjective. Mediation can occur on several levels or layers. The objective layer of interpretation includes basic cognitive mechanisms that mediate between the original percepts and the actual contents of consciousness, the experienced or known object. There are many flavors of subjective layers of interpretation based on the actualized patterns of behavior and thinking of the Individual Mind. Emotional layers have a strong impact on the way we perceive and understand things. Beliefs are yet another layer that shape and determine the selective and interpretative process.

We constantly evaluate and reevaluate our perceptions and our views of reality. Although there is a core reality that remains constant to a certain degree and appears as an independent and objective structure to us, the relationship and interaction we have and continuously develop with the world or reality are determined by our individual cognitive and psychological patterns. This is mostly a subconscious process, a process that is part of the structure of our mind and is therefore objective. I usually don't use the term 'illusion' to denote the impermanence or mutability of reality because it implies that reality as we perceive it does not exist. My point, however, is that reality is actualized through our minds and therefore is real and not illusional. Even the mediating process of interpretation does not make reality illusory or unreal. Reality is what we make or think of it, the projection of our mind's mental patterns and processes, including those of interpretative layers. We exteriorize our patterns and this process of differentiating the subject from the object actualizes reality as we know and experience it.

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6.1.4.6 The Theory of the Generative or Constitutive Mind

...the experiencing consciousness creates structure in the flow of its experience; and this structure is what conscious cognitive organisms experience as "reality" – and since this reality is created almost entirely without the experiencer's awareness of his or her creative activity, it comes to appear as given by an independently "existing" world.[1]

Or, Kant in the Preface of the second edition of his *Critique of Pure Reason*:

Hitherto it has been supposed that all our knowledge must conform to the objects: but, under that supposition, all attempts to establish anything about them a priori, by means of concepts, and thus to enlarge our knowledge, have come to nothing. The experiment therefore ought to be made, whether we should not succeed better with the problems of metaphysic, by assuming that the objects must conform to our mode of cognition, for this would better agree with the demanded possibility of an a priori knowledge of them, which is to settle something about objects, before they are given us.[2]

The theory of Generative Thinking or Constitutive Mind claims the autonomy and sovereignty of Mind in relation to our ideas, concepts, opinions, beliefs and knowledge. Whatever we know and believe in is not about facts or certainties or absolutes. All this is created by our Mind, especially those ideas that refer to entities beyond the rational and the empirical, such as the soul or God.

[This section has not yet been completed. More to follow here...]

[1] Ernst von Glasersfeld: *An Introduction to Radical Constructivism*, in Paul Watzlawick: *The Invented Reality*, W.W. Norton&Company, 1984

[2] Immanuel Kant: *Critique of Pure Reason*

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6.1.4.7 The Theory of Coextensive Determinativity

By knowing and experiencing something that we think is "outside" of us, "in the world" makes the experienced thing (qualia) a determination of our own being or actuality. Thinking in terms of objects establishes those objects as determinants of our own actuality. So, when we say that we construct the world we experience, what we actually mean is that there is an interactive, interrelated, and interdependent process going on that constitutes both the reality of the world and our own being. By thinking and experiencing the world we construct the world to the degree that the object(s) of our experience or of thought are determinations of the world. The world can be thought of as a potential sea of indeterminacy and only through the act of thinking and experience (by acting on the world) do we actualize a reality-for-us (*Exocosmos*) that constitutes ontologically a "real" world for us that is fully qualified and determined. However, the determinations of the world structure are our own determinations, the determinations of our own being and essence.

Reciprocally, by thinking or experiencing the world, the determinations of the world – previously established through our thinking – are now determining our own actuality, our thinking and experience. This seems like a vicious circle, or like a snake biting his own tail. Like the Gnostic symbol of the *Ouroboros*, it connotes the fusion of opposites, the transcendence of duality. We tend to think in terms of bipolar concepts. The most basic of these bipolarities is the concept of subject and object, of 'I' and the world as being opposites. As long as we think in those terms we will not be able to grasp the concept of what I call **constitutive knowledge** or **constitutive thinking** (which includes experience as well).

When I say that we co-construct the world through our thinking and the same act of thought constitutes and determines our being, then we have to step outside of dualistic thinking, of thinking in terms of a world that is "outside" of us, independent of us. By transcending this intrinsic duality we will be able to comprehend that both our Individual Mind as well as the world are only potential structures that are actualized through mutual constitution, interaction, and interrelation.

The world or any object of our thinking and experience for that matter cannot exist without a subject thinking it and vice versa, the subject cannot exist without there being a world or objects that can be thought or experienced. This mutual, co-extensive determination constitutes the actuality of our own being as well as the actuality of the world or reality-for-us (*Exocosmos*).

Knowing or experiencing the world is constitutive of the thinker's own actuality and his thinking or experiencing the world is constitutive of the world's own actuality. The same principle can now be applied to God, the transcendent entity that appears to be outside of both the world and ourselves as subjects. God is co-determined by our belief, by our thinking and acting that has God as object. The actuality of God is realized by the act of faith. At the same time, our actuality as creatures created by a God are realized through the supreme entity we call God.

Constitutive knowledge is based on the intrinsic differentiation between *noema* (thought, concept) and *phenomena*. What we think is realized as phenomena so that we can think *of it*. Thinking is the timeless act that actualizes phenomena that are temporally and spatially coterminous. Thinking as such does not happen in time, but thinking *of* does, because it is intentional thinking that needs objects. Although we never seem to think without objects, the very act of thinking is objectless. Objects are the contents of our act of thinking, but the act of thinking per se is oriented towards objects. Pure thinking without objects is a state of being one without multiplicity or polarities. Only through the creative act of diversification or hypostatization are multiverse ideas or values established that manifest themselves phenomenally as the world of our thought and experience.

There is no ontological difference between *noema* and *phenomena*, but only an epistemological difference. The difference exists in the degree of actualization. *Noema* are differently manifested from phenomena, that is, on a different level of being or reality, although there is no ontological difference (= different substances), but only a contingent, epistemological difference in the way we know *noema* and *phenomena*. *Phenomena* are known through our experience and they appear to us as being "outside" of ourselves whereas *noema* are part of our own actuality.

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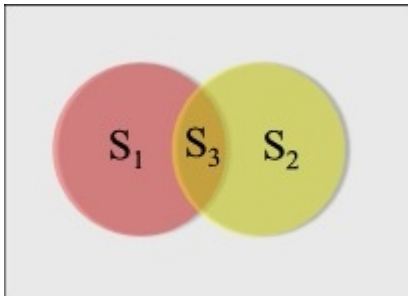
6.1.4.8 The Theory of Synnoesis

We discovered that reality is not just given but is being continually shaped and created (exocosmic morphology). The question now is: how do we – as conscious minds - shape the reality we perceive?

We can establish that it is not the thinking process of an individual mind that creates and sustains the forms of reality, but the structure and organization of the individual mind in concert and unison with a community of individual minds, or what I call *Synnoesis*. A plurality of individual minds forms a Synnoesis or synergetic collective mind that shapes reality for those individuals. Since individual minds are an integral part of the Exocosmos and are tightly coupled with its existence and phenomena, changes in Synnoesis change the exocosmic reality.

There is a hierarchy of morphic processes. Starting at the bottom, Exonoesis affects other individual minds within the same Synnoesis or across Synnoeses. A change in a Synnoesis then affects the exocosmic reality. So, a community of homogeneously thinking individuals creates its own reality, can even create new entities, such as a transcendent or personal God.

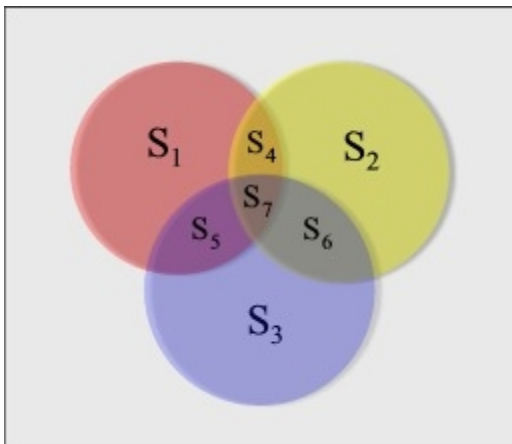
In order to better understand the concept of a community of Individual Minds, I apply set theory and Venn diagrams of mathematics. A collective of Individual Minds that share a certain belief or belief system constitutes a set or *Synnoesis* (see *Theory of Synnoetics* in Chapter 4). In the diagram below, $S_1 = \{\text{all individuals (Exonoesis) that share belief A}\}$ and $S_2 = \{\text{all individuals that share belief B, but not belief A}\}$.



The frame represents the universal set, that is, all elements that are not in S_1 , S_2 , or S_3 . These would be elements that are defined as "individuals" in the sense of conscious, human beings, e.g., all physical elements and lower biological organisms.

Although a subset of S_1 contains elements that are not contained in set S_2 (formalized as $S_1 - S_2 = \{\text{all individuals that share belief A but not belief B}\}$ and $S_2 - S_1 = \{\text{all individuals that share belief B but not belief A}\}$), some individuals may share both beliefs A and B, and therefore a new subset at the intersection of the two sets exists, $S_3 = S_1 \cap S_2$. S_3 is then a proper subset of S_2 and S_1 , or $S_3 \subset S_1$ and $S_3 \subset S_2$.

In a more complex and real-life scenario, individuals share beliefs not just with one or two synnoetic sets, but with many, each one shapes reality according to the level of participation.



An individual in subset S_7 , for example, shares beliefs with all other sets and subsets: S_7 is the union of all elements found in S_1 through S_6 : $S_7 = S_1 \wedge S_2 \wedge S_3 \wedge S_4 \wedge S_5 \wedge S_6$. Or in terms of subsets: $S_7 = (S_1 \cap S_2) \wedge (S_1 \cap S_3) \wedge (S_2 \cap S_3)$.

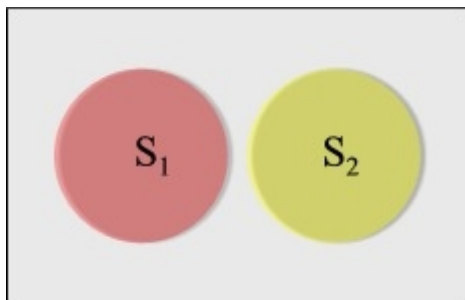
In set theory, the level of participation in subsets cannot be formalized. Either an individual is an element of a subset or not. However, a synnoetic set or subset has not so much to do with containment (as in regular set theory), but with participation or involvement. Individuals share beliefs in different degrees, from fervent advocates, to intriguing supporters, to fanatics. This is the positive participatory mode. Individuals, on the other hand, can also deny or be skeptical of beliefs other people share. Negation is also a form of participation.

I would like to extend current set theory and adapt it to synnoetic sets. To introduce positive and negative participatory modes, I use the following formal notations:

Individual $E_1 \in S_1 = \{\text{all tokens of belief A that individual } E_1 \text{ shares with } S_1\}$.

Individual $E_1 \in S_1 \neq \{\text{all tokens of belief A that individual } E_1 \text{ does not share with } S_1 \text{ or that } E_1 \text{ denies or questions of } S_1\}$

Very often, individuals don't share beliefs with other individuals. This is the case where we have two disjoint synnoetic sets.



Since individual E_1 believes in A but not in B and individual E_2 believes in B but not in A, communication between these antagonistic beliefs will be difficult if not impossible. They can both accept and respect each other beliefs but have to deny the other's belief its reality. If E_1 believes in God, but E_2 is an atheist, their respective realities are morphologically and ontologically different because they are both members of two disjoint synnoetic communities.

To support my thesis above, I picked two theories from the history of philosophy: Protagoras' relativism (*Homo mensura* Satz [1]) and Ludwig Feuerbach's anthropologism.

The Greek sophist Protagoras is well known for his subjectivist and relativist philosophy. The relation between man and reality is subjective because man only knows about reality through his experience, and it is relative, insofar as each individual man has a different view of reality and therefore no absolute or purely objective truth can be advocated.

Of all things a measure is man – of the things that are, that they are; of the things that are not, that they are not. [2]

This statement can be interpreted in regards to our beliefs and opinions. Our beliefs are true because we, as human beings, hold them. We are the measure of truth, and ultimately, of reality. Our beliefs "measure" reality. When we measure something, we account for an object's quantitative properties related to space, and an object's existence related to time. We apply standards in measuring the objects of our world. The standards are considered objective, but technically, they are subjective, because our mind invented those standards and methods of measure. Thus, in superimposing our mind's metrics on reality, what we perceive and experience is essentially formed according to our mind's measuring activity.

Protagoras gave us also an application of his *homo mensura* statement in his treatise "On the Gods":

Concerning the gods I have no means of knowing either that they exist or that they do not exist nor what sort of form they have. [3]

Although this statement about the existence of God is agnostic, it reflects the underlying assumption of the relativistic *homo mensura* idea that our ideas and beliefs are the measure of our knowledge, that knowledge is not absolute or given, but inferred from the mind's metric ability.

In a much more lucid and systematic attempt, Ludwig Feuerbach critically analyzed the theses of Christianity. He started with the essence of man – consciousness:

Consciousness, in the strict or proper sense, is identical with consciousness of the infinite; a limited consciousness is no consciousness; consciousness is essentially infinite in its nature. [4]

Feuerbach thinks that man projects his own infinite being into objectivity and relates to this objective being as a being different from himself. "God is the highest subjectivity of man abstracted from himself" [5]. Therefore, religion is the relation of man to himself, to his

own nature:

The divine being is nothing else than the human being, or, rather, the human being purified, freed from the limits of the individual man, made objective – i.e., contemplated and revered as another, a distinct being. All the attributes of the divine nature are, therefore, attributes of the human nature. [6]

The consciousness and knowledge of God are ultimately self-consciousness and self-knowledge. Feuerbach also speaks of "measure" when he says that "...the measure of thy God is the measure of thy understanding." [7]

When it comes to the nature of faith, Feuerbach really turns theology into a form of psychological anthropology:

Thus, if I believe in a God, I have a God, i.e., faith in God is the God of man. If God is such, whatever it may be, as I believe him, what else is the nature of God than the nature of faith? ...That God is another being is only illusion, only imagination. In declaring that God is for thee, thou declarest that he is thy own being. What then is faith but the infinite self-certainty of man...? [8]

Feuerbach's thesis is that God is a product of our faith, of people believing in a transcendent, personal being. God is the infinite part of our nature and mind, but projected outwards into infinity and perfection. Similarly, the world is our mind projected outwards (objects), as opposed to us (subjects) and different from us. Even how other subjects appear can be considered to be part of our mind projected outwards as another being. This does not mean, however, that I advocate a form of solipsism. I am simply stating that we can apply Feuerbach's anthropological principle to all areas of our experience, not just to God. The projective mechanism of our mind implies that. On the other hand, if we assume that Individual Minds are ultimately just one Mind and not many, then all these projections would happen within one Mind, but are perceived by the phenomenally manifested Individual Minds.

[1] Homo mensura, from lat. *homo*, man and *mensura*, measure. "Man is the measure of all things".

[2] Diels and Kranz, 80 B1.

[3] *ibid*, 80 B4

[4] Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, Prometheus Books, 1989. p.2

[5] *ibid*, p. 31

[6] *ibid*, p. 14

[7] *ibid*, p. 39

[8] *ibid*, p. 127

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6.2 Autocosmos

6.2.1. Definition

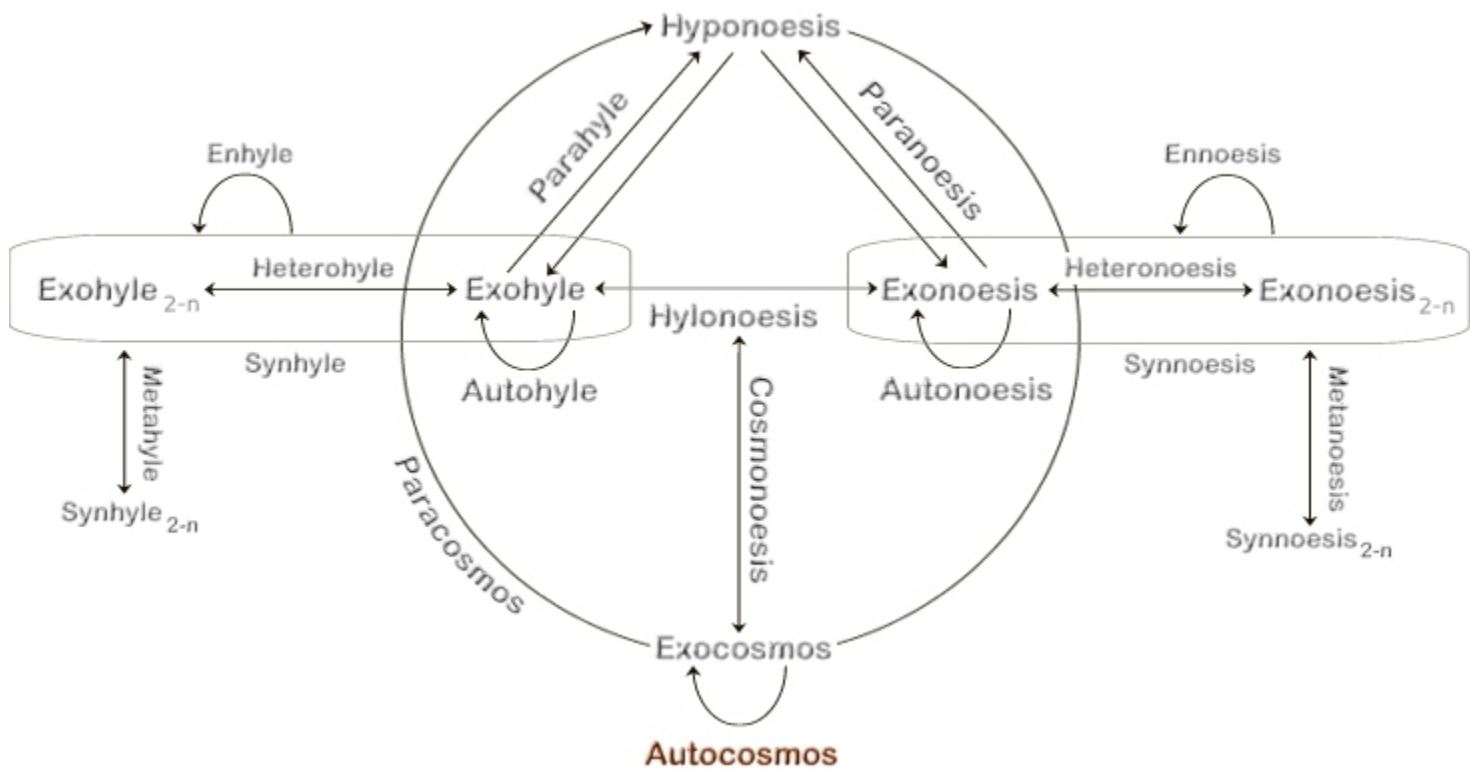
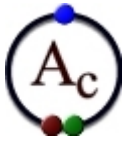


Figure 1 - Autocosmos



From Greek *αὐτός* (autos = by or in itself, self) and *κόσμος* (kosmos = order, universe, world, totality). The self-organized, ordered universe and the principle of evolution.

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6.2.2 Theories of Evolution

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6.2.3 The Theory of Autocosmoetics

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