

**ФІЛОСОФІЯ НАУКИ І ТЕХНІКИ****УДК 141.33 : 001.19**T. V. DANYLOVA <sup>1\*</sup><sup>1\*</sup> National University of Life and Environmental Sciences of Ukraine (Kyiv)**EASTERN SPIRITUAL TRADITIONS THROUGH THE LENS OF MODERN SCIENTIFIC WORLDVIEW**

**Purpose.** This paper aims to analyze Eastern spiritual traditions in the context of modern scientific worldview. **Methodology.** The author has used hermeneutical methodology, along with integrative approach. **Theoretical basis and results.** Modern perception of the world is undergoing drastic changes: it shifts towards plurality, temporality, and complexity. Increasingly, people feel that their familiar world of order and stability gives way to chaotic, unpredictable world, which exists under its own rules. Old scientific theories, ideologies, and values are destroyed. This leads to awareness of imbalance, ambiguity of human existence and, thus, to the new explanation and understanding of reality. Today the universe is perceived through the lens of syncretism: it is impossible to separate human from nature, consciousness from matter, subject from object. Humanity faces such a chaotic, uncertain worldview not for the first time. Duality and attempts to overcome it permeate the entire history: from traditional archaic cultures to modern civilized societies. M. Foucault, J. Derrida, R. Barthes, U. Eco, G. Deleuze, J.-F. Lyotard urged to abandon dogmatism, monologue perception and explanation, interpretation based on binary oppositions. The world, which is necessary to reach, occurs to be Nothing, Nothingness. In this world, people are seeking for reality regardless of any rules, regulations, notions, and concepts. Here artificial constructs of the human mind, such as Material – Ideal, Determinism – Indeterminism, Finiteness – Infinity, Necessity – Randomness, are united. Trying to reconcile continuity of being with discreteness of consciousness, they appeal to Eastern mystical teachings, in particular, to Zen Buddhism. The core concept of this school is also based on the unity of all things and the idea of the singularity of the world. The main goal of Eastern mystical traditions is to achieve the state of absolute unity through meditative techniques that have been mastered over centuries. Meditation acts as a means of overcoming binary oppositions inherent to any given culture. It contributes to the experience of one absolute unity of all existence. **Scientific novelty.** Modern science reaffirmed one of the basic statements of Eastern mysticism: our concepts that we use to explain the world (such as past, present, future, physical space, personality, etc.) are not fundamental characteristics of reality. They are products of thinking, that is, they are the map rather than the territory. **Conclusion.** In contrast to Western paradigm, the main characteristic of Eastern philosophy and science is the non-mathematical, non-technical approach to an understanding of the universe. Eastern sage has never separated himself from the Nature. He has experienced all phenomena in the world as manifestations of a basic Oneness, Wholeness, as the various aspects of spiritual unity.

*Keywords:* science, Universe, binary oppositions, postmodern, nature, culture

**Introduction**

The recognition of pluralistic interpretation of reality in postmodern era casts doubt on complete and absolute truth of any worldview represented by the only one position. Understanding that human self-determination is a probabilistic model, involvement in the situation and attachment to things are features of modern mass psychology, human consciousness is a set of artificial clichés forces us to reconsider the entire scientific worldview.

Modern perception of the world is undergoing drastic changes: it shifts towards plurality, temporality, and complexity [1]. Increasingly, people feel that their familiar world of order and stability gives way to chaotic, unpredictable world, which exists under its own rules. Old scientific theories, ideologies, and values are destroyed. This leads to awareness of imbalance, ambiguity of human existence and, thus, to the new explanation and understanding of reality.

Today the universe is perceived through the lens of syncretism: it is impossible to separate

## ФІЛОСОФІЯ НАУКИ І ТЕХНІКИ

human from nature, consciousness from matter, subject from object. According to F. Capra [5], our world is a unified whole, which consists of processes instead of things. Objective knowledge is impossible, because the observer affects the observation process. Everything in the universe is tantamount: there is neither fundamental nor secondary. On the basis of the holographic paradigm, K. Pribram [17] proposed “wave theory of reality”. According to it, our brain constructs our image of the world interpreting emanation of the other, primary level of reality that exists outside of space and time. D. Bohm [3] considered that on the “folded up”, “pre-quantum” level of reality the world loses all properties that the human brain attributed to it. Under such conditions, oppositions “material - ideal”, “nearer – farther”, “past – future” do not make sense. The concept of the unified universe is developed by R. Sheldrake [18, 19] in his theory of morphogenetic (morphic) fields. Everything that exists evolves and helps each other. R. Sheldrake argues that world’s wholeness is determined by still undiscovered field that unites the universe into a single information space. J. Wheeler’s model [21] provides that the basis of all objects or phenomena of the physical world is non-material source. Everything that people recognize as reality is created by them during the measurement process, i.e., all physical entities are information theoretic, and the universe requires our participation in their manifestation. Thus, people create their own worldviews using an unlimited number of individual facts. Habitual reality appears to be the result of collective representations or agreements.

Therefore, it seems to be impossible to understand the world in its wholeness, and this impossibility is compensated by binary complementary points of worldview. This is the essence of Yu. Lotman’s cultural conception, N. Bohr’s complementarity principle, and W. Heisenberg’s uncertainty principle. According to Yu. Lotman, the phenomenon we call nature is an artificial construct. This is so-called “anti-culture”,

which is not equivalent to the phenomenon existed before the emergence of culture. True nature is beyond knowledge since it is continual, whereas culture is always discrete. In the process of learning we allocate an object from one unified stream of life, shifting it from the realm of nature to the sphere of culture. This implies the need for reconciliation of non-discreteness of being with discreteness of consciousness [14]. J. Hintikka notes that all our statements about the world are based on concepts created by people themselves. Knowledge of reality essentially can not be separated from its conceptual comprehension [12].

### Purpose

This paper aims to analyze Eastern spiritual traditions in the context of modern scientific worldview.

### Methodology

The author has used hermeneutical methodology, along with integrative approach.

### Theoretical basis and results

Humanity faces such a chaotic, uncertain worldview not for the first time. Duality and attempts to overcome it permeate the entire history: from traditional archaic cultures to modern civilized societies. Ancient people have mastered the world by splitting it into two parts - developed and undeveloped world, friendly (or at least predicted) world of culture and hostile, unknown world of nature. Therefore, the opposition Space – Chaos was originated.

Binary opposition is the primarily notional splitting of the world into two parts, which confront each other. Literally, all objects and phenomena are constituents of this system. Universal binary oppositions are the background of any worldview’s interpretation, for example, Life - Death, Good - Evil, Right - Left, Past - Future, Up - Down, Light - Darkness, East - West. Components of each opposition are not equal in value. Moral evaluation - positive or negative – is attributed to all binary oppositions. Ch. Osgood [16]

## ФІЛОСОФІЯ НАУКИ І ТЕХНІКИ

came to the conclusion that human consciousness is not only characterized by bipolarity (i.e. the meanings of words are differentiated in terms of binary oppositions), but also by the fact that one of the poles is evaluated as a positive and the other - as a negative. According to C. Levi-Strauss, binarity has universal nature and still today our thinking is based on this scheme [13]. Ambivalence in perceiving the world is caused by physiological factors as well. The human brain is divided into two hemispheres, which are not symmetric in their functions. The left hemisphere contains regions involved in speech and language; it is also associated with mathematical calculation and fact retrieval. The right one plays a role in visual and auditory processing, spatial skills, and artistic ability. Thus, there is the eternal contradiction. Binarity gets the status of the fundamental principle of consciousness. Binary paradigm makes people to experience ontological dissonance, which is perceived as a fact of human existence. Binary archetype appears to be an attribute of European culture in general. Antinomic thinking is rooted in any type of European rationality (philosophy and culture), although it is not the only one and undisputed referent. Modern culture demonstrates the problem of "broken consciousness". Human psyche can not unite two oppositions and feels like being over the abyss. It is impossible to get out of this situation without breaking down binary oppositions. Antinomic discourse could lead to disruption in the direction of torn, atactic thinking and, as a consequence, to catastrophic changes in culture [2].

M. Foucault, J. Derrida, R. Barthes, U. Eco, G. Deleuze, J.-F. Lyotard urged to abandon dogmatism, monologue perception and explanation, interpretation based on binary oppositions. As J. Derrida considered [9; 10], philosophizing often arises as a result of uncompromising struggle against binary oppositions, because binary worldview is our subjective desire to reduce the world to a comprehensive layout. The idea of deconstruction really seems to be fundamentally new approach to the analysis of

cultural life. G. Deleuze [7; 8] called for concepts' destruction, since they can not describe the things beyond anthropological predicates; on the contrary, they only manipulate human consciousness. The world, which is necessary to reach, occurs to be Nothing, Nothingness. It is the world of equal opportunities without any evaluations, clichés, and stereotypes. In this world, people are seeking for reality regardless of any rules, regulations, notions, and concepts. Here artificial constructs of the human mind, such as Material – Ideal, Determinism – Indeterminism, Finiteness – Infinity, Necessity – Randomness, are united.

Some modern scholars believe that once all people experienced the "eternal, endless Now", they did not see the difference between Past and Future [4]. Recent changes in interpretation of time even encouraged one of the most influential contemporary theoretical physicists and cosmologists S. Hawking to avoid linear concept of time and therefore history. Scientist considers the concept of imaginary time, which is necessary for the unification of quantum mechanics and the theory of gravity, to be very useful mental construct [11]. According to the concept of imaginary time, there is no significant difference between moving forward and backward; therefore, there is no distinction between past and future. For S. Hawking, imaginary time is actually real time, and what we call real time is a figment of our imagination. Postmodern worldview has questioned the stability of our world and culture: everything people deal with in fact is illusion. Non-classical postmodern ontology is associated with open dynamical systems that can not be described by concepts based on binary oppositions. Postmodern thinkers refer to chaotic, illogical nature of the world, which can be experienced only as a result of empathic connection with diverse world of people and cultures.

One of postmodern key concepts is transgression. It fixes the phenomenon of transition between possible and impossible. It is a kind of overcoming boundaries that

## ФІЛОСОФІЯ НАУКИ І ТЕХНІКИ

separate inner and outer, essence and phenomenon. These boundaries seem to be insurmountable because of mysterious virtue of cultural taboo. Transgression violates linearity of processes and allows people to understand the situation of instantaneous transition of their being to a radically different and fundamentally unpredictable state. It symbolizes aspirations of modern philosophy to move away from the classical focusing on the absolute transcendence of thinking subject, overcoming boundaries of human consciousness, and identification of other positions' capabilities in the ratio of being and thinking. Postmodernists believe that people can intuitively perceive reality as Wholeness (beyond time and space). Trying to reconcile continuity of being with discreteness of consciousness, they appeal to Eastern mystical teachings, in particular, to Zen Buddhism. The core concept of this school is also based on the unity of all things and the idea of the singularity of the world.

Unlike West, East did not disassemble the universe, but sought to overcome discreteness inherent to the world of culture, as well as experience the only one continuous reality, which is the unity of oppositions. According to D. Suzuki [20], escape from reality inevitably leads to endless separation of its components. However, this separation is rooted not in nature, but in human mind that splits everything into two parts. People perceive binary oppositions not only as abstractions, but as reality itself. The essence of Eastern worldview is awareness of unity and coherence of all things and phenomena; it is perception of natural phenomena as revealing the One that is their basis. All things are seen as interdependent and interrelated parts of the One Whole, as different manifestations of the same reality. Eastern traditions often reminisce about the highest, indivisible reality displayed by all things, phenomena, and processes. Taoists call this reality Tao, Buddhists – Dharmakaya, Hindus – Brahman. These traditions claim that true nature of reality is non-dual, thus, all binary oppositions are either unrealistic or inaccurate description that

is used for convenience. People have to transcend dual thinking for perceiving true nature of their mind that appears to be pure light. The main goal of Eastern mystical traditions is to achieve the state of absolute unity through meditative techniques that have been mastered over centuries. Meditation acts as a means of overcoming binary oppositions inherent to any given culture. It contributes to the experience of one absolute unity of all existence. Perception of the world is its description. Anyone who contacts the child acts as his teacher describing him the world, until the child begins to perceive the world the way it was described [6]. Thus, people learn to transform and create their own flow of perception in accordance with description adopted in a given culture. World as description becomes their ultimate reality. In fact, person enters into the linguistic realm of being. Forgetting of child holistic perception of the world is due to the fact that it does not match the structure of culturally agreed description, therefore people lack notions for its interpretation.

### Scientific novelty

Modern physics reaffirmed one of the basic statements of Eastern mysticism: our concepts that we use to explain the world (such as past, present, future, physical space, personality, etc.) are not fundamental characteristics of reality. They are products of thinking, that is, they are the map rather than the territory. During meditation, a person experiences any given moment in all its fullness and is able to perceive true reality. Meditation purifies and calms an anxious mind, makes it more flexible. It overcomes automatism of thinking, eradicates existing patterns of behavior, and contributes to unity of subject and object as well as to deep involvement in all that exists. Through the practice of meditation, person sees things as manifestation of perpetual becoming, achieves dynamic perception of the world – the world that moves, changes, transforms, and thereby embodies the idea of life. New horizons are waiting for humans,

## ФІЛОСОФІЯ НАУКИ І ТЕХНІКИ

who realize that forms of life are diverse and life itself is infinite.

### Conclusion

Objective, mathematical, technological approach of Western thinkers, dating back to ancient Greeks, has been held to nature. On the one hand, this approach has led to barbaric use of natural resources and, as a consequence, to alienation from nature and from other people. On the other, it has contributed to the improvement of living conditions (due to scientific and technological progress), to development of human rights that should be guaranteed for everyone. In contrast to Western paradigm, the main characteristic of Eastern philosophy and science, according to F. Northrop [15], is the non-mathematical, non-technical approach to an understanding of the universe. For this reason Eastern sage has never separated himself from Nature. He has experienced all phenomena in the world as manifestations of a basic Oneness, Wholeness, as the various aspects of spiritual unity.

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## ДУХОВНІ ТРАДИЦІЇ СХОДУ В КОНТЕКСТІ СУЧАСНОЇ НАУКОВОЇ КАРТИНИ СВІТУ

**Мета.** У статті зроблено спробу проаналізувати східні містичні вчення в контексті сучасної наукової картини світу. **Методологія.** Автор застосовував методологію філософської герменевтики, а також інтегративний підхід. **Теоретичний базис та результати.** Сприйняття світу сучасною людиною зазнає кардинальних змін у бік множинності, темпоральності і складності. Все частіше люди відчують, що звичний світ порядку, усталеності поступається місцем світу хаотичному, непередбачуваному, існуючому за правилами, відомими лише йому самому. У розумінні Всесвіту сьогодні панує синкретизм; у ньому неможливо відділити людину від природи, матерію від свідомості, суб'єкт від об'єкта. З такою хаотичною, невизначеною картиною світу людство стикається не вперше. Двоїстість і намагання її подолати пронизують всю історію від традиційних архаїчних культур до сучасних цивілізованих суспільств. З вимогою відмови від догматизму, жорсткого могологізму, пояснення світу за допомогою бінарних опозицій виступили такі мислителі як М. Фуко, Ж. Дерріда, Р. Барт, У. Еко, Ж. Дельоз, Ж. Ліотар. Світ, до якого треба прорватися, є Ніщо, Небуття. Тут поєднуються такі протилежності як матеріальне - ідеальне, детермінізм - індетермінізм, скінченність - нескінченність, необхідність - випадковість, які є штучною конструкцією людського розуму. Намагаючись примирити континуальність буття з дискретністю свідомості, мислителі апелюють до східних містичних вчень, зокрема, до дзен-буддизму, який також виходив із єдності всіх речей та ідеї сингулярності світу. Основна задача східних містичних традицій – це досягнення стану абсолютної єдності за допомогою медитативних технік, які розроблялися століттями. Медитація виступає одним із засобів подолання бінарних опозицій культури. Вона сприяє переживанню абсолютної єдності всього існуючого. **Новизна.** Сучасна фізика підтвердила одне з базових положень східного містицизму, смисл якого полягає в тому, що всі наші поняття, за допомогою яких ми пояснюємо світ, такі як минуле, сучасне, майбутнє, фізичний простір, особистість, не є фундаментальними властивостями дійсності, а виступають продуктом мислення. **Висновки.** На противагу західній парадигмі, характерною ознакою східної філософії і науки є нетехнічний, нематематичний підхід до розуміння Всесвіту. Саме тому східний мудрець ніколи не відділяв себе від Природи і не намагався її контролювати. Він усвідомлював, що всі елементи світу, включаючи і його самого, є різними аспектами духовної єдності.

*Ключові слова:* наука, всесвіт, бінарні опозиції, постмодерн, природа, культура

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## ДУХОВНЫЕ ТРАДИЦИИ ВОСТОКА В КОНТЕКСТЕ СОВРЕМЕННОЙ НАУЧНОЙ КАРТИНЫ МИРА

**Цель.** В статье предпринята попытка проанализировать восточные мистические учения в контексте современной научной картины мира. **Методология.** Автор применял методологию философской герменевтики наряду с интегративным подходом. **Теоретический базис и результаты.** Восприятие мира современным человеком претерпевает кардинальные изменения. Все чаще люди чувствуют, что привычный мир порядка, устойчивости уступает место миру хаотичному, непредсказуемому, существующему по правилам, известным

## ФІЛОСОФІЯ НАУКИ І ТЕХНІКИ

только ему самому. В понимании Вселенной сегодня царит синкретизм, в нем невозможно отделить человека от природы, материю от сознания, субъект от объекта. С такой хаотичной, неопределенной картиной мира человечество сталкивается не впервые. Двойственность и попытки ее преодоления пронизывают всю историю от традиционных архаических культур до современных цивилизованных обществ. С требованием отказа от догматизма, монологизма, объяснения мира с помощью бинарных оппозиций выступили М. Фуко, Ж. Деррида, Р. Барт, У. Эко, Ж. Делез, Ж. Лиотар. Мир, который надо постичь, - это мир равноправных и равноценных возможностей, это Небытие, Ничто. Здесь сочетаются такие противоположности как материальное - идеальное, детерминизм - индетерминизм, конечность - бесконечность, необходимость - случайность. Пытаюсь примирить континуальность бытия с дискретностью сознания, мыслители апеллируют к восточным мистическим учениям, в частности, к дзен-буддизму, который также исходил из единства всех вещей и идеи сингулярности мира. Основная задача восточных мистических традиций - это достижение состояния абсолютного единства с помощью медитативных техник, которые разрабатывались веками. Медитация выступает одним из средств преодоления бинарных оппозиций, присущих культуре. Она способствует переживанию абсолютного единства всего существующего. **Новизна.** Современная физика подтвердила одно из базовых положений восточного мистицизма: наши ментальные конструкты, такие как прошлое, настоящее, будущее, физическое пространство, личность, не являются фундаментальными свойствами реальности, а выступают продуктом мышления. **Выводы.** В отличие от западной парадигмы, характерным признаком восточной философии и науки является нетехнический, нематематический подход к пониманию Вселенной. Восточный мудрец никогда не отделял себя от природы и не пытался ее контролировать. Он осознавал, что все элементы мира, включая и его самого, выступают различными аспектами духовного единства.

*Ключевые слова:* наука, Вселенная, бинарные оппозиции, постмодерн, природа, культура

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