

Complementarity as economy: on embodied resource management



complementarity, 80x80cm, acrylic on canvas

Long before becoming a system of managing social resources, economy was already the body's way to achieve best functioning and prevent energy waste. In this light, economy is a system that relies heavily on the organism's integrity, receives and processes various types of information from all its strands, evaluates external stimuli, and arranges for its functions to be performed in such a way as to ensure the smooth fulfilment of its needs on all levels, with the least possible effort. This complex mechanism of maintaining meaning while interacting with the complexity of the world presupposes and requires a harmonious interplay among the various parts of the whole and, in particular, between the parts that are of complementary value to one another. At the same time, it necessitates that every single decision or choice be made by the system in full consciousness, address the particularities and dynamics of the moment in which it is made, and reflects the system's state on that moment in its entirety.

In the context of this article, complementarity between parts will be explored with reference to two axes: the thinking axis and the feeling axis. Therefore, in discussing absolute complementarity, we are referring to the state in which an emotion is the feeling side of a thought and a thought is the thinking side of an emotion. In the ideal case of such perfectly balanced arrangement, the two parts confirm, nurture, and protect one another, thus making all system resources available for mutual growth and avoiding energy bleeding resulting from abusive demands or irrelevant engagements. On the other hand, in cases of fragmented systems, in which one or both parts refuse or fail to offer representation to the/each other, the meaning continuity of the system is infringed and the energy balance compromised in the following ways:

- a. the resources are not directed to the parties in need, which results in deprivation and underdevelopment
- b. irrelevant, external agents seize access to the resources of the system and absorb them for their own benefit – this can be performed by means of confusion, extortion, deceit, threat, lie, injury, habit, etc.
- c. the complimentary parts perceive each other as the enemy, thus manifesting a type of "autoimmune" behaviour: they engage their resources in constructing and

maintaining a defence mechanism, aiming at eliminating the “threat”, which in reality is only another version of their own self.

Fragmented human systems manifest a shrinking behaviour, which eventually results in physical, emotional, and mental disorders, poor health and various forms of (partial or total) death.

Unfortunately, the role of complementarity has been largely underplayed in human societies, which tend to overemphasize the one or the other part of the thinking vs feeling pseudo-dilemma. The idea of balance between the two parts is usually pursued by means of alternating and that only increases the friction, the agitation, and the animosity. What is required is a life model that maintains focus on both parts at all times and seeks to expunge the “which one of the two” question by providing new, creative ways to include and cater for the two. Always.

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