

## **A philosophical approach to human evolution**

### **ESSAY**

#### **1,2,3 or The emergence of meaning**

**Three notebooks to answer the three questions that the philosopher Kant designated as fundamental, as anthropological:**

What can I know?

What must I do?

What can I hope for?

The first booklet, entitled "**The principle of relativity**", attempts to answer the question: What can I (s)have?

A little of everything but not everything. There is no object, thing or idea, or even a value, even a loved one, that can fulfil my desire to have what is and to know what it is. This raises the question of the meaning of existence.

The second booklet, entitled "**The principle of emergence**", attempts to answer the question: What should I do?

I have arrived in this world. I discover it from others, and therefore from the world. It seems that the demand for meaning arises in a relational context that leads me to make being, or even a being, appear if I wish to be in agreement with the fact of having come into the world. The ability to make something appear that does not exist before me, a bit of being, positively introduces me, however small, to the Being of the world. Meaning is beyond the fact.

The third booklet, entitled "**The Principle of Mortality or Generalized Debt**", attempts to answer the question: What can I hope for?

If it is my duty to make something be - even modestly - in order to be of the world, a temporal limit is imposed on me, that of my own disappearance. I can only accept this if I accept that my attempt to be is out of all proportion to what I have been able to receive from the natural and human world in order to construct myself. With the recognition of a Debt that exceeds me, I can live my disappearance as a gift, and not as the failure of my (original) desire to monopolise the Universe.

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### **TO GO FURTHER**

The fourth booklet entitled "**Symbolic limits in the Western imagination**",

attempts to approach the conditions that allow a cultural identity.

The three principles explained above are a particular way of stabilising the ever-anarchic individual mind. The human mind tries everything: it plays hide-and-seek with the Real. But this game of hide-and-seek takes place between four so-called symbolic limits that condition it in variations. These variations will build original and unpredictable cultural identities that collapse when the respect of the symbolic limits fades. This booklet is a way of situating where a culture is: at its beginnings or at its end, in a possible resilience?

The fifth booklet entitled "**The place of Christianity in the Western imagination or the invisible Christ**"

- attempts to recognise how this religion has participated in the construction of Western identity.

In the space of symbolic limits, Christianity appeared, a religious "fiction" that took on a symbolic and mythical value in the Western imagination. This religious 'fiction' has structured our ways of thinking. It is important to see how it has done so, and to know whether it joins as a cultural superstructure a psychobiological sub-base identifiable with the very conditions of the pursuit of life. In any case, Christianity founds a moral dimension critical of any political power, including religious.

The sixth booklet entitled "**Democracy within the limits of philosophy or the unthought of the Western imagination**"

tries to think how the democratic phenomenon appears and can disappear in the history of the West.

Democracy is a method of resolving power conflicts through speech. For a given time, a majority will make the law, but there is no guarantee that this law will be just. It is this risk that philosophy questions. Philosophy questions the foundations, the principles behind the decisions taken. For 2000 years, the search for essences, and in particular for a human essence, replaced the power of the revelations of the gods and contributed to the development of science. Until the moment when, by a reversal, it was said that there is no essence but only existence: man became the measure of all things. Individualism takes hold with its idol of material happiness. The search for a common world and with it, philosophy, no longer have a reason to exist. Democracy is unravelling in favour of a return to the gods and emperors. Like Greek democracy, its distant ancestor, Western democracy is collapsing and with it, philosophy, for not having defined the human being as a poetic animal. In other words, as a being who is entitled to occupy a place only if he is surprised by, recognises and binds himself to a cosmos that he did not make.

Bernard Spee is a philosopher by training. He taught literature and history in the final year of secondary school at the Collège Saint-Hadelin in Visé (Belgium). Concerned with a systemic approach to texts and works, he is the author of numerous analytical articles on Hergé, but also on Molière, Simenon, Rodenbach, F. Emmanuel, Camus, Carrère, not forgetting the paintings of René Magritte. He is also the author of several articles on pedagogy and philosophy.