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Fe(male) Rationality: Is It More Inclusive?

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> "... there is a feminine way of being in relationship to nature. This way is caring rather than controlling; it seeks harmony rather than mastery; it is characterized by humility rather than arrogance, by appreciation rather than acquisitiveness. It's available to both men and women, but it hasn't been exercised much in the history of Western civilization."
>
> Lorraine Anderson (1991: xvii)

Introduction

The term "rationality" is used in different ways. In this contribution, I follow Hartfiel (1976) and employ it in the broad sense of "a principle of orientation for acting human beings". It is common to distinguish three kinds of rationalities (see, e.g., Habermas 1988/89): Cognitive-theoretical, moral-practical and aesthetic-evaluative. Each of them refers to appropriate knowledge employed in particular kinds of interactions of humans with parts of the world, in the first case interactions with "things" in the biophysical world, in the second interactions with other humans in the social world, and in the third interactions with the inner world of the subjects themselves.[1] Here I will be concerned with the second kind of rationality, i.e., with the grounds of morally guided action or simply morality. In particular my topic relates to the question of sex/gender differences with respect to such morality. I entertain the notion that the female kind of moral reason is more inclusive, and I shall try to find supporting evidence for this claim. This search will be conducted in the light of an evolutionary perspective and against the background of the theory of communicative action and discourse ethics by Habermas. The latter is widely acknowledged as one of the most advanced concepts in social and moral philosophy today.

In my understanding rationality is the more inclusive (or comprehensive) the better it is embedded in evolutionary relationships. To characterize such relationships I make use of a non-reductionistic description of evolution: Repeatedly new phenomena emerge from the underlying basis of old phenomena, whereby it is a property of such new phenomena that they require their own realm of explanation; they cannot be understood by simply reducing them to the level of the old phenomena they emerged from. They thus enjoy a degree of

emancipation, but at the same time they can prosper only if they continue to be connected to their own origin. To shed such a connection leads to self-destruction.[2] The evolutionary sequences of subsequent emergent phenomena which are of interest in the present context are those related to the processes of hominisation and socio-cultural development. In particular we will be referring to two of them: (1) the psychological sequence unconscious - practical consciousness (resulting in a capability to learn by doing) - discursive consciousness (resulting in a capability for explicit reflection and linguistic expression)[3] and (2) the sociological sequence archaic (hunter-gatherer) societies (emerging, of course, from a purely biological past) - political societies - economic societies.[4]

To evaluate the degree of inclusiveness of rationalities I propose the use of three criteria: (1) The horizon (of the principles of orientation) of an individual of interest has its home primarily on the level of some older phenomenon; (2) The horizon is such that it affords a connection between phenomenena of different evolutionary age; (3) The horizon, with respect to one particular emergent level, is of a relational (rather than atomistic or holistic) kind, such that it guarantees a non-destructive living relationship between parts (individuals) and a whole (a society). A rationality can be considered highly inclusive if either criterion (2) or (3) or both are met. It is only weakly inclusive if criterion (1) applies. (1) is a weak criterion because it does not require connections of any kind, but it is expected to refer to a situation with a potential for establishing such connections: the underlying idea is that by-and-large it will be easier to "go forward" from older to newer phenomena than the other way round.

To explore the possible greater inclusiveness of female over male rationality makes particular sense in the light of the ecological crisis. The reason is this: Throughout the history of Western civilization scientific and philosophical reasoning (undertaken almost exclusively by men) has seen male rationality as the leading, culture-developing principle. In contrast, female rationality has been regarded as closer to nature and, consequently, as backward (see, for example, Lloyd 1984). Obviously then the supposition is close at hand, that the ensuing patriarchal dominance of men over women goes in parallel with the establishment of dominance of the same men over nature. If this is true and if female rationality is indeed more inclusive then a crisis remedy would be to quickly and drastically enhance the power of the female principle in our culture. But why do we want to concentrate on moral rather than cognitive reason? Simply because the environmental problems will not be solved by knowing more about what is, but only by knowing more about what we ought to do.

Instrumental versus Communicative Reason

Cultural evolution as a whole has been described as a continuous process of rationalization in which, however, phases of slow development or even stagnation alternate with phases of more rapid change. Modern Western society in particular appears as the outcome of the most recent instance of such a time of rapid change (enlightenment and industrialization). If, as mentioned above, "rationality" stands for principles of orientation,

then we should expect the term "rationalization" to mean that human actions generally become more rational, i.e., that they are based on enhanced principles of orientation acquired from a growth of knowledge. In a sense this is true. Hartfiel (1976) describes rationalization as a process that frees human action from the unplanned world of traditions and habits and makes it calculated, systematic and planned. Also human action, by this process, acquires a means-ends orientation. This, however, points to a problem. Indeed, modern society has become a social system in which instrumental reason has become dominant. Max Weber (see the exegesis given in Habermas 1988/89) is well known for having described the instrumentalization of bureaucracies, and it goes without saying that the ideal adhered to in today's economic theory (if not in practice) amounts to an extreme kind of instrumentalism. This constitutes a serious imbalance and one-sidedness in which instrumental reason can be recognized to be primarily associated with what earlier has been described as cognitive-theoretical rationality, i.e., to a kind of rationality that treats phenomena with which humans interact as "things" and sees nature as something to be dominated. Even worse, by treating other humans as "things" as well, it also has partially expanded into the realm that should remain reserved for moral-practical reasoning. At any rate, pure instrumental rationality rejects any notion that it should be subjected to a guidance by moral norms and/or aesthetic judgement. This is detrimental because, as we may suspect, human beings can function rationally in a comprehensive sense only if there is an interplay between the three kinds of rationality listed in the beginning.[5] Seen in this light the process of rationalization leading to Modernity can be recognized as a process that is, evolutionarily speaking, pathological as it has helped to make large headway towards a destruction of the basis of human society, the natural environment, and hence to self-destruction of that society.

There are two constrasting conclusions drawn from this state of affairs. There are those who say that the process of rationalization has gone too far and that, therefore, one should seek for a reattachment of human life to some traditional values. On the opposite side there are those who claim that this process has not developed far enough in the sense that the narrowing down brought about by instrumentalization must and can be compensated by activating an unused rationalization potential leading to an expansion. In this latter interpretation modernization is incomplete, meaning that the process of enlightenment must be revived and continued.

Jürgen Habermas, the German social philosopher, who is a prominent representative of this second position, suggests a way to achieve this. He recognizes the unused rationalization potential in what he calls communicative rationality, a kind of reason that has been already always active in the everyday lifeworld of the members of a human society who for their continued existence in that society depend on a continuous process of mutual understanding. What is required in Habermas' view is that this communicative rationality is brought to the surface where it can assume the explicit form of discourses. Participants in such discourses can make statements referring to all three worlds mentioned earlier, i.e., the biophysical, the social and the personal subjective world. In this sense communicative rationality is expected to be capable of affording a reconciliation of the rationalities associated with these three worlds. It is then a superimposed kind of reason and clearly more comprehensive than

instrumental rationality. The latter guides thought and action according to a means-ends type of logic, a logic that is geared to the selection of the best means with which to reach some pregiven, usually unreflected goal. In contrast, communicative reason can search for desirable ends in the first place (Habermas 1988/89[6]).

A Habermasian discourse is supposed to be unconstrained, ensuring an "ideal speech situation", in which everybody has his or her say and is not hampered by structures of domination or dependence existing outside the discourse. In more pratical terms, as put forward by Webler (1992) in his attempt to "put Habermas into practice", it should function according to the principles of fairness and competence. A discourse is fair if all people concerned have equal opportunity of access to the process and of making their views known during it. It is competent, or rather the participants are competent, if they can redeem their statements by giving convincing reasons why they say what they say. Eventually the discourse is expected to come to an end in that the better argument prevails and the consequences of the ensuing action become acceptable to all participants. The proposal to handle human affairs in this way culminates in what is called "discourse ethics", a project that is undertaken jointly by Habermas (1991) and his colleague Karl-Otto Apel (1990). Being based on the idea of communicative rationality, which includes conventional morality as one of its components, this is actually a kind of meta-ethics describing a possible comprehensive procedure to arrive at conclusions of a moral nature on a consensual basis.

Man the Hunter versus Woman the Nurse

Peter Ulrich, a Swiss economist concerned with the ethical value of communicative rationality for a "transformation of economic reason" (economic reason being, as mentioned earlier, a prime example of instrumental rationality), holds that there are distinctly female principles behind communicative rationality, while instrumental thought and action has definitely a male character (Ulrich 1987). As, according to what has been said earlier, communicative reason is the more comprehensive kind of the two by definition, it would follow that female rationality is indeed more inclusive. If this were true, then I could conclude my paper at this point. However, the situation is not quite that simple. Ulrich makes an attempt at putting the distinction of instrumental and communicative rationality into an evolutionist (rather than evolutionary) scheme and by doing so definitely overstates his case.[7] In what follows I shall try to show why.

Ulrich postulates that a male/instrumental - female/communicative dialectic is at work throughout human cultural development with a repeated shift of the weight from one side to the other. Essential for our present discussion is the way Ulrich sees the foundation for this development in the hominid past of humankind: In the protoculture established by hominids during the long transition from the animal to the human stage males provided for the bulk of food through hunting, while females stayed back at the camp nursing the children and adding in insignificant ways to the subsistence by doing some gathering of plant materials on the side. Following Ulrich, successful hunting required the development of faculties of

instrumental action, while the intensive social relationships between mothers and children fostered the emergence of a communicative milieu. As a result we have a divergence between a male type and a female type of rationality and, because of the survival quality of hunting, a dominant masculinity in the hominid protoculture.[8]

I believe that the picture provided by Ulrich is wrong for at least two reasons. First, it is apparent that Ulrich, as so many other male scientists in the past, has fallen victim to the "Man the Hunter" ideology. The overriding importance attached to hunting cannot stand up against the findings of more recent and less male-prejudiced ethnological studies of archaic societies (for example, Sahlins 1974). In the former it is reported that, in a usual diet, at least under conditions that are climatically not too unfavourable, the ratio of foodstuffs of plant to those of animal origin ranges from 2 : 1 to 4 : 1. There is then no plausible reason why such an economic subsistence situation should induce, let alone necessitate, any kind of dominance of male instrumental rationality in the hominid protoculture.

More basic, however, is the second reason: a distinction of instrumental and communicative reason in the Habermasian sense is applicable to modern society only. It cannot be projected backwards in time as Ulrich does. With archaic people presumably both manual action and oral communication were largely grounded in levels of the psyche comprising the unconscious and practical consciousness. The latter is based on knowledge established over long periods of time of direct experience in dealing with nature and with fellow-beings, knowledge that is not readily available in discursive form, at least not in one that would be familiar to us.[9] In such a state of consciousness there would seem to be a blurring between actions with an instrumental and actions with a communicative character. Actually, if we consider the fact that all aspects of archaic life, including the hunting of animals, had religious underpinnings, we may surmise that all actions had rather a communicative quality, albeit one that differs from the Habermasian concept of communicative rationality: language certainly played a less dominant and a different, i.e., narrative rather than argumentative role. Archaic humans experienced themselves as part of nature, not as beings capable of manipulating and dominating it.

But how about Antiquity, the time in human history which is thought to mark the beginning of rational thinking? Given the ancient Greeks' differentiation of *poiesis* from *praxis,* one might indeed suspect to have found a root for the instrumental-communicative contrast (Eder 1988). *Poiesis* refers to human action through which something is produced, that something being a goal lying outside the action. *Praxis,* in contrast, refers to political action (in the ancient Greek sense) in which the goal is internal to that action, i.e., it serves to realize a human potential. However, even this point of reference vanishes as soon as we realize that there is a difference between the theoretical description of *poiesis* just given and the meaning it had in practical life. For example, Huppenbauer (1991), in a discussion of the significance of the Greek goddess Demeter, describes agriculture as an activity the primary goal of which was not really the making of a product, but to shape the life of humans in the right way. Moreover, the communicative culture associated with *praxis*, i.e., political action, was reserved for men exclusively.

In summary then we have to reject Ulrich's claim for the feminity of communicative reason, at least in the way it is presented in the context of his evolutionist scheme. Yet we will see that his notion can be given some credence as it applies to modern society. To find a suitable explanation for this circumstance, however, we will have to turn to the results of feminist research.

Boys versus Girls

Habermas claims his concept of communicative reason plus discourse ethics to be of universal significance and as such neutral with regard to such categories as race, creed, culture, social class or sex.[10] By-and-large feminist writers tend to be in agreement with this concept, in particular as it applies to a further rationalization in the communicative sense which should help to put persistent notions of female-male role differentiation in our society under critical scrutiny and hence further the emancipation of women. Still, there are a number of aspects in Habermas' theory that put a question mark to his neutrality claim. One such aspect is his alliance with the scheme of human moral development as worked out by the American psychologist and philosopher Lawrence Kohlberg (1976) (see Habermas 1991).

According to Kohlberg's theory an individual develops, broadly speaking, through three stages of moral understanding, called "preconventional", "conventional" and "postconventional". The first applies to small children that still have an egocentric attitude towards the world and are not capable of recognizing the existence of any matters at a superindividual social level. This is only possible when conventional morality starts to build later in child development, a kind of moral attitude which can express concern for the common good by adhering to social norms, the rightness of which is not questioned. Finally, the stage of postconventional moral development is attained if the individual concerned is capable of recognizing the relativity of norms hitherto thought to be valid in particular social contexts, and is moreover able to proceed further to an understanding of abstract, context-free and hence universalizable rules that can be accepted and therefore adhered to by anyone at any time at any place.

It is Kohlberg's notion that this three-stage scheme also applies to the historical dimension of human cultural development. I think it is a conjecture that in some early, "primitive" phase of (pre)cultural evolution people lived in a stage of preconventional morality. It seems to be certain, however, that humans in all traditional societies observed rules of behavior anchored in some version of conventional morality. Finally, reaching a stage of postconventional morality should be the goal of a postindustrial society that wants to become "fully enlightened". Having just given a description of what "postconventional morality" is supposed to mean and knowing by now the direction taken in Habermas' development of the concept of communicative rationality we will not be surprised to find a convergence at this point of the Kohlbergian and the Habermasian type of thinking.

But now comes the problem: Kohlberg arrived at his conclusions with respect to moral development mainly on the basis of investigating the growing up of boys. When he did also research the progression of girls he found differences or rather, in his interpretation, deviations which suggested a retardation or deficiency, in some cases even regression of female development. This oddity aroused the interest of Carol Gilligan, originally one of Kohlberg's coworkers, and she started her own independent research. She found that indeed the development of girls and that of boys exhibits relatively consistent differences, and that it is certainly not possible to take one of the two as a general standard. Asked about adequate solutions to ficticious problems that contain components of a moral nature boys tend to think more in rule-oriented terms free of any particular context. They see moral questions as a kind of mathematical problem involving people. Girls, on the other hand, think more in a relation-based way, i.e., they seek solutions to such problems more often within the particular context of concrete people with concrete relationships (Gilligan 1982).

It soon became obvious that these differences can plausibly be explained on grounds of a differently situated socialization taking place for girls and boys. As it is still common in our society that mothers, not fathers, look after the children, girls will experience a relationship with an adult person of the same sex. Consequently, they can identify with their mother to a greater extent and maintain a relatively intensive relationship to her throughout adolescence into their adult life. Boys, conversely, are confronted with their mother as a person of the opposite sex from which they have to detach themselves in order to become a man, a person like their father. Obviously, given the small amount of time spent in our society on children by fathers compared to that by mothers boys can never establish a relationship with their father that would have a quality comparable to that of girls with their mother. From one generation to the next boys then acquire a bounded kind of identity based on separation, girls in contrast a more open kind of identity founded on relations.[11]

The conclusion then, from the findings just reported, is that there are indeed different kinds of moral rationality in our society that can be associated with women and with men, respectively. This difference is, in Seyla Benhabib's (1986) words, recognizable as the result of a "gender-sex-system", a basic pattern through which society reproduces concrete women and men. In other words, it is socially constituted and does not have a foundation in a biological or protocultural past. To the extent that female morality has a more concrete relational and male morality a more abstract rule-oriented character one might indeed see communicative elements being associated rather with the former, instrumental aspects rather with the latter. Seen this way Ulrich (1987) has a point, but unfortunately the present situation has apparently stimulated him to develop an unjustified generalization in the form of an evolutionist female-male dialectic. Also, Ulrich's point is well-taken in part only as there really is a considerable difference between communicative reason as envisaged by him (and by Habermas, for that matter) and any communicative aspects of female rationality as just described on the basis of Gilligan's work. The latter is always grounded in particular contexts, while the former is based on the presupposition of generalizability and hence abstraction from any particular situation. To this difference we will now turn.

Universalism versus Contextualism

Concepts of postconventional ethics are the product of the Enlightenment after the Middle Ages. They typically reject any notions of a metaphysical nature, i.e., the postulation of reasons outside of us that might provide guidance for our moral behavior. Instead they claim that human reason itself is the only source of relevant knowledge. Here Kant's categorical imperative as an abstract formula has a paradigmatic character.[12] In modern concepts such as the already mentioned discourse ethics by Apel (1990) and Habermas (1991) as well as the theory of justice by Rawls (1971) this Kantian background is still noticeable. However, instead of basing themselves on a formula they rely on a process of negotiation or argumentation in which universalizable rules of procedure (the procedure must be acceptable to all concerned) are supposed to lead to universalizable outcomes (the outcomes must be acceptable to all concerned). In doing that they reflect the modern turn from a philosophy of consciousness to a philosophy of language.

The universalizability inherent in the theories just mentioned is contrasted in the feminist literature with contextuality. For example, Benhabib (1986), illustrates this opposition by the two viewpoints of the "generalized other" and the "concrete other", resp. The first, associated with the concept of universalizable ethics, abstracts from any individualities and identities of the persons concerned, i.e., their biographies and their social positions and relations become irrelevant. Conversely, the sameness of all individuals is in the foreground: all are regarded to be autonomous rational beings having a justifiable claim for equal rights. I take the viewpoint of the generalized other if I am able to encounter my fellow beings in just this way. If this is the case then moral questions arise out of circumstances in which claims for fairness or justice expressed by different people contradict each other. The viewpoint of the concrete other in contrast requires that each person is seen as an individual with a concrete biography and identity and a particular affective-emotional constitution. In taking this perspective I must try to understand the needs of the others, which is more than simply stand up for my own rights against the needs of the others. Moral questions in this case concern issues in which conflicts of responsibilities towards different persons occur.

This contrast also relates to a distinction which originally was made by the German philosopher Hegel early in the previous century and since then has become a common topic in moral philosophical discourse: the distinction between morality and ethical life*(Sittlichkeit)*. The former term stands for explicit moral principles that are the outcome of rational thinking and debate in modern society. The latter expression in turn points to moral principles that are implicit and have evolved in historical time as a means of regulating the living together of people. In Aristotelian terms such principles refer to questions of the "good life", i.e., issues concerning personal self-fulfilment but also mutual care. The present philosophical discussion occurs in a post-Aristotelian world in which only questions of morality, i.e., of individual rights (and possibly duties) are acknowledged as being of relevance for governing human affairs. Issues related to the realm of *Sittlichkeit*, i.e. to questions of the good life, in contrast are seen as lying outside the scope of real moral

discourse and are thus relegated to the private realm of personal decisions. This position takes its justification from the fact that only an approach to moral problems of the former kind lends itself to some kind of cross-cultural generalization, whereas conclusions drawn from the latter necessarily always have a relativist character, i.e., they retain an ethnocentric bias.

The feminist critique, based on Gilligan's findings quoted earlier, does not, in general, put the need for universalization in question, but declares the viewpoint of the generalized other to be insufficient if it remains unconnected to concrete contexts. As Benhabib (1986) puts it, the concept of the concrete other should serve as a critical term which marks the ideological limits of a universalistic discourse and brings the unthought, the unviewed and the unheard in such theories to the fore. Consequently, she proposes a "relational model of moral autonomy" in which the actual differences between human beings in concrete situations are taken as the starting point for reflection and action. Such reflection and action should strive for the ideal of generalizability, but should not sacrifice any aspects related to questions of the good life by concentrating on rights only. Strictly speaking, a true adherence to the principle of universalizability would logically require a complete levelling of life form differences on this planet. The necessity for such an "end of history" is avoided in Benhabib's approach as it recognizes the existence of a pluralism of life forms, without necessarily accepting all of them as morally justified.

There is an eminently political side to this issue. It becomes obvious when we refer to arguments of Kohlberg et al. (1984) used in their response to critics, among others to Gilligan. They hold that a more generalized orientation towards rights and justice and a more particular orientation towards care and responsibility are complementary in that they are valid in separate realms of human life. The first applies to the public world of politics and economy, the second to the private world of the family and the circle of friends. It so happens, of course, that, according to the way our society is still organized, the first world is also predominantly the world of male, the second of female experience. This discriminating fact may be deplored by Kohlberg, but he still insists that a postconventional morality, which can be learned in the extra-domestic sphere only, is further advanced.[13] Habermas takes a somewhat more moderate position in this respect. Despite his claim for universalism he is closer to a contextual framework as he takes great pains to show connections between the concrete lifeworld and the abstract "ruleworld" of argumentation.[14] Still, in the end, he sticks also to a concept of postconventional morality that should remain uncontaminated by questions of the good life. However, the necessity of locating any rational discourse in its proper context becomes apparent when one tries to apply Habermas' theoretical concepts to the solution of practical problems (Webler 1992).

Conclusion

In the foregoing I have highlighted various aspects of a contrast between male and female moral rationality and shown that it arises basically from a difference of still dominant conditions of socialization. With regard to the three criteria of inclusiveness mentioned in the

beginning it would appear that all three apply to female rationality emerging from these conditions. Let us comment on these criteria in the order of their listing in the introduction.

(1) Women by-and-large still spend much of their life in the private world of direct social relations in which issues of affection, care, responsibility and so on are predominant. As this world is our heritage from archaic times one can say that women are closer to the root of our human existence than men are. Men in contrast live much of their lives outside this realm in the rule-governed world of politics and economy, which is of a younger evolutionary origin. By so doing they tend to become "rootless" and for their continued existence must compensate by relying on the reproductive services of women. Women, when moving outside the world of family and friends, can do this from a firm foundation and they should thus have a better potential of connecting old to new phenomena than men.[15] Men, on the other hand, hang in midair, so to speak, and have to find their footing again.

(2) In the "archaic" private world, with which women are more familiar than men and in which processes of direct social integration are dominant, it is natural to rely on a concerting interplay between the different levels of human consciousness (the psychological evolutionary sequence mentioned in the Introduction). Outside this sphere this is less acceptable and the levels of the psyche "below" discursive consciousness tend to become suppressed. A possible result is that the actions of men carried out on the basis of "as if pure reason had reigned" may in fact, measured against our criteria of inclusive rationality, be quite irrational.[16] To the extent that the female capacity for better psychological integration also means better integration for the three types of rationality, aesthetic, moral and cognitive, women's morality receives its orientation from a wide range of aspects of human life, not just from the field of moral issues in the proper, narrow sense. Seen this way one can understand why Ulrich (1987) ascribes a female character to communicative rationality with its integrating aspects. However, Ulrich uses a Habermasian concept of communicative rationality, which is preconditioned on this rationality being elevated out of the naturalness of a lifeworld up to a platform of discursive consciousness where it becomes further narrowed down to the field of argumentatively used language. Maybe this is indeed the only way to reasonable problem solving in the political and economic world as it is. However, one is inclined to wonder how this world might have looked like had women been in charge to develop it.

(3) According to the British sociologist Anthony Giddens (1984) a social system can be understood as a system in which the actions of human agents are simultaneously structured and structuring, i.e., they are continuously guided by rules on the one hand and serve to reproduce (or transform) these very rules on the other. Now a result of modernization (a process defined and driven largely by men) is a curious split, in theory if not in practice, between the level of acting persons and the level of structures: atomistically operating individuals must, in order to keep any resemblance with a living society, counterbalance themselves with explicit rule formulation (a holistic notion). A true social system, however, has neither an atomistic, nor a holistic character. It is relational, i.e., it develops gradually and implicitly through the establishment and maintenance of relations between human beings in

flesh and blood. To the extent then that female rationality is predominantly relationally oriented, it is attached very directly to the continuous flow of day-to-day socio-cultural development. A male rationality that centers on the formalities of abstract rules in contrast tries to detach itself from such contingencies.[17]

A final note with respect to the question whether the solution to our present crisis might lie rather in a forward (in the direction of a further rationalization) or rather in a backward orientation (in the direction of traditional values): It seems to me that it cannot be one or the other, but must be both. In other words: A further rationalization may open up avenues into the future, but such a process can be rational in a comprehensive sense only if it happens within a framework that also allows a reattachment to the past. For such a mediation between past, present and future to be successful, an enhanced influence of female rationality in our society is urgent and necessary. In the end, of course, we would hope to arrive at a society in which a gender-related difference in socialization and ensuing division of labour has been abandoned, such that all their members can equally well be rooted in the old and grow towards the new.

Acknowledgments

Notes

[1]   Note that this is valid in particular for modern society. In contrast, for example, aesthetic rationality in ancient Greek thought applied to the relations of humans to the surrounding natural world and even more broadly to the universe at large (Biervert and Wieland 1990).

[2]   An obvious candidate for self-destruction today is our economic society, at least as long as the economic rationality dominant in it does not recognize the necessity of links to the evolutionarily older political and social phenomena (compare with the sociological evolutionary sequence in the following).

[3]   This sequence finds, of course, its expression in a corresponding tripartition of the present human psyche (see Giddens 1984). Furthermore, it has also a bearing on some aspects of the three different rationalities, the evaluative, the practical and the theoretical, mentioned earlier.

[4]   Again here we have, as an older phenomenon does not disappear as a new one emerges, all three levels represented in today's modern society. Accordingly, a person may have three different identities, an archaic one (family or kinship position), a political one (class member, citizen etc.), and an economic one (profession).

[5]   This should become obvious if we regard the three kinds of rationality, aesthetic, moral and cognitive, to have its primary root in the three levels of consciousness distinguished by Giddens (1984), namely the unconscious, practical consciousness and discursive consciousness, respectively. This is clearly an evolutionary sequence, and a person is a "whole" person only if the newer levels remain connected to the older ones. The ecological significance of this is discussed by

Naess (1989: 63) as a matter of spontaneity: "... reality as spontaneously experienced binds the emotional and the rational (in the narrow sense of the word! D.S.) into indivisible wholes".

6 This is Habermas' major work on the topic, comprising two volumes. In it he contrasts instrumental rationality as the "non-communicative application of propositional knowledge in goal-oriented action" with communicative rationality as the "communicative use of propositional knowledge" (Habermas 1988: 28). For those interested it may be pointed out that an English edition exists (Habermas 1989). A very useful summary of the Habermasian thinking is a recent article by Brulle (1992).

7 To be fair to Ulrich (1987) I should point out that he himself regards his scheme as a possible, but not certain logic of development.

8 It is easy to see that Ulrich's (1987) evolutionist argumentation comes fairly close to being biologistic. Indeed one might conclude from his analysis that, given the long period of hominid protoculture, any differentiation between male and female behavior would have had to follow a path staked out by the principle of selective advantage. As a result, it should be "natural" for males to exhibit an aggressive type of instrumental behavior and for females to show a counterbalancing disposition toward a communicatively based attitude of love and care. I *do* think that there is some kind of essential (natural) difference between the psyche of women and that of men, but that it would have to be described in other than sociobiological terms. Women, with their potential for bearing new life, or with their "bodily creativity", as Katrin Wiederkehr (1991) puts it, may experience the world differently from men. And, as according to the Norwegian ecophilosopher Arne Naess (1989) ethics follows from world experience, this could be far from negligible. It will not be possible to pursue this aspect of the topic any further in this paper.

9 As an illustration consider the following story about a Hopi council meeting: "The pueblo's elders called a council to decide what to do about the federal government's proposal for a land trade involving mineral rights. A fire burned in the pit at the center of the kiva's dirt floor, around which the 12 elders gathered. ... The council began as the talking stick was passed around the cirlce, each of the elders relating a tale or a portion of the tribal history. Then the men sat quietly together, without discussing the matter at hand directly or apparently coming to any descision. After a prolonged silence they nodded, rose, and left the kiva. In the silence they had each 'seen the truth of the council' and in this way evoked the appropriate decision" (Zimmerman and Coyle 1991: 79). Now the Hopi are, of course, not an archaic society, but the story documents the fact that a kind of mythic rationality has survived in many traditional settings up to the present. See also the discussion of "implicit knowledge" by Steiner (1991) or of "mythic knowing" by Pratt (1992).

10 Indeed, Habermas (1991: 12) explicitly makes the point that his moral principle is generally valid and does not simply reflect "the prejudices of the adult, white, male, bourgeois Central European".

11 For a psychoanalytic interpretation of this situation see Chodorow (1978).

12 It appears in Kant's *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft* and reads as follows: "Act in such a way that the (subjective) maxim of your will at any time can also have validity as an (objective) principle for a general law" (after Glaeser 1986, translation by D.S.).

13 It is ironic that already Aristotle's moral philosophy about the good life was actually concerned with political life in the *polis* outside the domestic sphere and, consequently, referred to a man's world (see the elaboration by Hannah Arendt 1958 on this point). This fact apparently tends to be overlooked.

14 For example, Benhabib (1986) can identify herself with much of what Habermas says. Still, she sees some degree of family resemblence between Rawl's (1971) "veil of ignorance" and Habermas' "ideal speech situation" (Benhabib 1982). The former concept refers to the extreme notion that members of a social system must be initially in a ficticious "aboriginal state" in which any knowledge about their concrete social connections and historical backgrounds is hidden.

15 Benhabib's (1986) above mentioned theoretical reflections on moving from the particular to the general may provide some guidance here.

[16] Amitai Etzioni (1988), for example, emphasizes the vast difference between the concept of a utility-maximizing individual in neoclassical economic theory and a real human being which may be "rational" (in the narrow sense of the word) only within small uncharted areas of a much larger landscape that is sculptured by normative-affective factors.

[17] Sandra Harding (1983) sees this as an attempt at having a mind that controlls body and emotions. Hence we have a cross-connection here to what we said with regard to criterion (2). Harding further speculates on whether the male preference for depersonalized rules might itself be nothing more than simply a historically produced distorting prejudice. Certain is that a consequence of men being detached agents of history has been an unbroken sequence of violence and destruction, culminating today in a global environmental and cultural crisis.

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