

cosmology) with philosophy and theology. For this reason reading his works, including the reviewed book, provides the reader with thorough knowledge, although it is conveyed in a popular manner. At the same time the book offers food for thought of a philosophical nature. Contrary to its title, the book certainly does not claim the right of giving an ultimate explanation of the universe. Instead, it indicates a direction for those who seek such explanations. Heller strongly recommends accepting many ultimate explanations, which in turn suggests that the question of explaining the universe is unanswerable, or at least requires the gaining of new knowledge and the creation of new interpretations. Thus the „ultimate explanations” are in fact only temporary. And this is also the way to treat the book of the winner of the Templeton Prize, keeping in mind that this in no way belittles the worth of the author’s search for the ultimate.

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Józef Bremer, *Osoba – fikcja czy rzeczywistość? Tożsamość i jedność ja w świetle badań neurologicznych* [A Person: Fiction or Reality? Identity and Oneness of the I in View of Neurologic Research], Wydawnictwo WAM, Krakow 2007, 489 pp.

The issue of identity is often approached against the following backgrounds: nationality, ethnicity, style of education for the independent choice of a life path. A shaped identity affects the ethical behavior of the individual, their ecological actions, and their mature tolerance. On one hand, identity is described as a process of individualization, on the other, the need for the person to be established in the norms and customs of their society is emphasized. A new way of thinking about identity appeared in relation to so called virtual reality – the sense of identity that the Internet user gains (cf. J. Kojkoła (ed.), *Filozofia tożsamości*, Gdańsk 2007). The book *The Person: Fiction or Reality? The Identity and Unity of the I in View of Neurological Research*, exceeds this scope. It is a story about man – about attempts to understand the human being. The story presented reaches back from ancient times, from the ideas of Plato and Aristotle, to the proposals of e.g. J. Fodor, selected from contemporary conceptions of the *I* – as well as the modular theory of the brain and the *self*, of D. Dennett – where the *I* is treated as a result of narration, or the theory of T. Nagel – who differentiates the non-material *self* from the material brain.

An account of philosophical ways of thinking about man constitutes the bulk of J. Bremer’s book. What is original is their arrangement (e.g. other historical arrangement of the concept of a person may be found in the book of J. Kozuchowski,

Spór o człowieka we współczesnej filozofii niemieckiej, Pelplin 2006). J. Bremer moves from the ancient conceptions, through Cartesian dualism, the thinking creature of J. Locke, the subject-less theory of *self* of D. Hume, the bundle theory of self of D. Parfit, to the constructed unity of the *I* proposed by I. Kant. Then the author describes the achievements of contemporary linguistics in respect of the results of research on the pronoun, „I”. He pays particular attention to the ideas of L. Wittgenstein. „I” means the extra-empirical element of reality. Other parts of the book refer to the philosophical-neurological theories of the *self*, where it is presented as narrative, fictional, or in some conceptions just the opposite, as the real although extra-empirical foundation of a person. The final two fragments refer to the *self* of a split brain and to phantom pains. These phenomena are discussed in view of the previously presented philosophic and philosophic-neurologic concepts.

In short, the book is a compendium of issues related to issue of the secret of the human being, both in respect of philosophy and contemporary neuroscience. It should be noted that it does not exhaust the issues related to these themes. J. Bremer does not mention e.g. neuron networks. In particular networks with an inbuilt system of feedbacks are interesting, because they have numerous „cognitive abilities”. Though the signs of activity of networks based on non-linear dynamics are often misused in the creation of reductionist models of the human being, depriving it of free will. However, such a solution would be a valuable supplement to the whole picture of contemporary answers to the question about the secrets of identity. In general, one may say that reference to a larger number of the results of research based on neuro-imaging could broaden many fragments of the book, e.g. where the author refers to the concept of emergence (cf. P.M. Churchland, *Mechanizm rozumu, siedlisko duszy. Filozoficzna podróż w głąb mózgu*, Warszawa 2002). The scope of the subject could also be supplemented with the issues related to the *I* in a virtual world. The issues related to virtuality are particularly incorporated in all shades of dualism. The virtual world is often an intelligible reality based on number and eliminates the bodily aspect. The following principles do not apply in it: reality, truth in the classical sense, there is no possibility of verification, the principle of contradiction does not apply. In such a world the human *I* appears in a different light (cf. M. Ostrowicki (ed.), *Estetyka wirtualności*, Warszawa 2005).

The author of *The Person: Fiction or Reality?* refers to the specific disorders in bodily perception, like the aforementioned phantom pains. However, he does not refer to the wide spectrum of genetic and psychophysical disorders such as: Down’s syndrome, Huntington’s disease, Parkinson’s disease, schizophrenia, or endogenous depression, etc., the identification of which seems helpful in philosophic thought, based on the results of detailed sciences, about the notions of the *self*, the *I*, identity, and the unity of the person.

In relation to other works devoted to the same problems, and irrespective of the aforementioned comments, J. Bremer’s book is original in its expression, and in its consideration of the clearly represented anti-reductionist trend. As compared, e.g.

to P. M. Churchland's *The Engine of Reason, The Seat of the Soul: A Philosophical Journey into the Brain* it definitely meets the higher standards of the scientific approach, although it may be accused of including too few references to specific experiences, and well as poor documentation of these in relation to the theme announced in the title „... *in view of neurophysiologic research*”.

It is not easy to separate the views of the author from the numerous conceptions presented. While he reliably presents the conceptions of the person, the *I*, the *self* held by the authors mentioned, J. Bremer concludes that we need to take the position of the emergentist, and not the dualist or extreme reductionist. However, the author does not end with the enigmatic notion of emergence, he takes a step forward, indirectly indicating that what neuroscience explains to us are only the issues arising within the scope of the so called „sensuous consciousness”. What can be expressed in the categories of time and space may be, and in the future probably will be easy to explain in terms of the brain's reaction to external and internal impulses, or by its structure and function. But whatever exceeds the limits sense perception, e.g. the *I* of Wittgenstein, cannot be seen by the application of the empirical method. The empirical does not enter the world of metaphysics. But is the ontic level real? We will return to this problem.

This is not the end of J. Bremer's journey into the depths of the secret of identity. He moves this time not into the brain, but into the human soul. The author discovers that it is not only the *self* alone that forms the identity and unity of the person, but also the social relations – me – you. The person, its identity, the oneness of its identity – this is on the one hand self-consciousness aiming at individualization, and on the other – a network of relations through which the personalization process takes place. Only these two aspects of human existence create personal identity. The personal *I*, in the view of this author, does not involve sensual, visual, or tactile consciousness, etc. It is not only a case of proprioception, but something much deeper, not expressed by the simple algorithm of feedback: senses – structure, physiology of the brain. Although J. Bremer emphasizes the importance of corporeality as the ground for the creation of identity, he does not stop there. It seems that the dominant paradigm governing the search for the nature of the *I*, or *self*, searches for identity on the basis of corporeality. The generally accepted model, however, requires rethinking. Distancing oneself from corporeality in discussions about identity is however very dangerous, since it may lead to a belief in dualism. Therefore, the question refers, rather, to the need to start the discussion not from the body – the matter, which is not unambiguously described by physics, but from the phenomenon of consciousness.

If we are speaking about paradigms, it should be emphasized that J. Bremer's book is in conflict with the paradigm of empiricism dominating science. Due to the dominance of this interpretative model, the present discussion about the extra-phenomenal may seem to be empty talk. One may conclude that such an approach to science creates limits which prevent us from reaching into the depths of reality.

Unity of identity does not unity or multiplicity of *self*; it is not corporality, it is not the proprioceptional reception of the body's borders. The consciousness of one's own person, its unity in the dichotomous or synchronic sense – is also something not related to the brain, or at least according to J. Bremer not directly. A human being also means someone who has been shaped on the basis of corporeality via the process of socialization, the process of gaining skills in relations with others. A person is not only the *self* or its multiplicity existing in time and space, shaped on the basis of corporeality. The person on the view presented by Bremer is the *I* made corporeal in relation with the other. It is also the existing *I*. „Existence” as the primal and indefinable term in this description points to the existence of a dimension exceeding the spatial and temporal conditions of the human being.

The book is an ambitious attempt to present contemporary reductionist views on cognition and neurobiology against the background of a wide spectrum of philosophical and philosophical–neurological concepts. It does not depreciate the empiricist trends of interpretation of the human phenomenon, the author crosses the border of determinism by means of the concept of the relational nature of the human being and their existence.

The final paragraphs of the book are meaningful. J. Bremer asks: *whether speculative theses in neurology are actually empirical knowledge. Even if we say that we understand the structures and functioning of the brain, we still do not know how such a category as „sense” appears in it; does meaning appear in the external world, and if so, how*” (p. 462).

The book presents a broad discussion of contemporary problems in the analysis of the self, identity, and the personal *I*. Reading it allows us to discover the core of the difficulties in the anti-reductionist vision of man. Although the author does not express this *expresis verbis*, one may easily recognize that the problem involves the elimination of that level of reality, which, in the classical sense, is described as ontological from scientific interest.

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Ireneusz Ziemiński, *Śmierć, nieśmiertelność, sens życia. Egzystencjalny wymiar filozofii Ludwiga Wittgensteina* [Death, Immortality, the Meaning of Life. The Existential Dimension of Ludwig Wittgenstein's Philosophy], Krakow: Aureus 2006, 368 pp.

I strongly believe that philosophy plays (as it indeed should play) an important role in our culture, influencing the ways we think and the ways we treat values. What is more, I think that philosophers have a duty to show how the sophisticated and extremely abstract philosophical theories can be useful for non-philosophers.

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