

L. P. Karcavin and the World of Personality

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Abstract

The human being has always been one of the most concerned propositions in philosophy, but after the philosophy of subjectivity, the theory of personality has entered a vacuum state, and the existentialist notion that man's existence precedes his essence became theoretically dominant. However, for Lev Karcavin, a Russian religious philosopher in the 20th century, the man had already acquired his specialty in their Personal God, Jesus Christ. Being is the existence of individuality, its origin is the hypostasis of God, and man becomes a non-perfect individual existence by participating in the hypostasis of God, but it still reflects some extent the perfect image of the Holy Trinity and makes it its mission to realize this perfect image. Moreover, human existence of consciousness is all-united for his participation in a divine being; it's an organic fusion of all existence beyond the individual, where each individual is not only himself but also an individual "larger" than himself—the harmonious individual. The world in its ultimate sense is a harmonious unity of individuality composed of different individuals in a hierarchical order, in which the individual and the world, the instant and the eternal, are dialectically united.

Keywords

Theory of Personality, Harmonious Individuality, Unity of All

1. World of Individuality

Man is the subject of historical development, but the man in history has never had the same definition. According to Karl Marx's judgment on man, man is always specifically in various relational networks and becomes the sum of social relations. Even if we fix the time in the present moment, different disciplines and types of knowledge will still divide people in various ways and turn them into objects of their own knowledge structures. For example, biology sees man as an organic cellular organization, sociology sees him as an integral part of society,

and political economics sees him as a subject that creates and participates in political and economic activities. But among these many “different” all human beings have a common “different” face—“I”, in other words, it is the individual’s self-consciousness that has become the symbol of collective human attributes and gives man the right to be a subject. “I am human; I consider nothing human is alien to me” (*Nihil humani a me alienum puto*); this wonderful dialectic embedded in man himself is the embodiment of all-united individuality in Karcavin’s view, and it is also the “ontological proof” of the existence of God. He believes that individuality is God’s individuality (personality), that human beings only participate in God’s individuality after being created, and that only God’s individuality truly exists. In order to clarify this concept, he constructed a whole set of a huge and subtle system of individualism. The existence of the individual person and even the existence of the individuality of the whole world are redefined under the guidance of this belief truth. The main purpose of this paper is to introduce and analyze how Karcavin constructs an individual’s organic harmonious world on the basis of personality and further analyzes the special relationship between individuals, social groups, and even the country and the world under this framework. The theory also reveals a new form of time and space, which is closely related to the existence of individuality, unlike the concepts of time and space in traditional metaphysical theories.

When Karcavin talks about the individuality of man, he is referring to our understanding of otherness; the whole self-consciousness is inextricably linked to the consciousness of God, which according to the opinion of contemporary Russian philosopher Khoruzhy belongs to the paradigm of theological personality theory in a broad sense (Khoruzhy & Zhang, 2011). This paradigm was first established by the Christian Fathers (especially the Cappadocian Fathers), who adapted the resources of ancient Greek and Roman thought to express and interpret Christian doctrine and to explain how the empirical existence of individual human beings can be aligned with God as an earthly image of God from the point of view of hypostasis. Karcavin inherited the traditional thought of Fathers and shaped the existence of individuality based on the doctrine of the Trinity. He once said, “If you do not understand and recognize the Trinity, then you will not understand personality.” (Karcavin, 1994) He believes that the origin of personality comes from the personal nature of God and that the three hypostasis, although distinct from the mystical essence of God (*усия*), are at the same time the manifestation and existence of the essence of God, “there is no impersonal essence”, the person it is the image necessary for the existence of the essence. In this way, the essence of individual beings is “transferred” from man to God, man and the entire created world obtain “a certain degree of beings” only by virtue of their participation in the Logos hypostasis, which leads to two sides of existence and development of human beings: on the one hand, the human personality is endowed with the divine meaning of “theophany”, his “personality” is isomorphic with the divine personality, on the other hand, man is

not God, he is “the other” in God and is opposed to God, because being created from nothing does not have any essence of its own, his “personality” is not a true personality and real being, but only non-perfect relative existence of personality and individuality.

Karcavin believes that the main reason for the imperfection of human personality lies in its insurmountable division, which is manifested in all aspects of personality, but the most fundamental of which is the division of self-consciousness. For example, in Descartes’ famous assertion of “I think, therefore I am”, “I” seems to have obtained some kind of clarity of existence, but what behind is the gullibility of rational logical reasoning and ignorance of more important precondition: Can thinking to be equated with being, and are the “I of thinking” and “I of being” the same? In order to examine personality itself, he proposes to abandon abstract reflection on the concept of “I”. Contemplating personality will yield three basic facts about itself: 1) “I” am (ecmb) existence, 2) “I” corresponds to otherness, 3) I consider myself to be the source and center of the existence of this self-knowledge, and he emphasizes that “the unity of these three moments is the self-awareness of my personality, the existence of my personality, and my personality” (Karcavin, 1992). He states that the existing content of “I” is never a constant but a self-movement that constantly discovers and affirms itself in the transcendence of givenness. Givenness or otherness do not arise outside the self, but must be within the self. One can never draw an implicit boundary between the two. Otherwise, the knowledge of the other will not be realized. Literally, it is exactly the same as what the ancient Chinese philosopher Zhuangzi said: “If there is no other, there is no self, and if there is no self, there is nothing to take.” But opposed to Zhuangzi, clarification of Karcavin that the preexisting unity of the self and the other is not to prove that “I” is an illusion. He aims to raise individuality to a higher unity of consciousness, pointing out that individuality is not limited to a single “I”, it is not enclosed reality, but the whole content revealed by all “I” in the cognitive activities, in other words, all “external” knowledge of personality is at the same time the self-knowledge of personality. The “I” of the individual personality exists, but there is no isolated “I” as one may consider he was to be. The latter is the result of the self-splitting of the self into the observer (cognitive subject) and the object of knowledge (cognitive object) in order to carry out cognitive activities in the being of all-unity. All in all, Karcavin believes that “I” is only a specific image of being, in which he gathers and reveals other images of being, splitting in opposition to them to know them as overcoming the splits through finished knowing, there is the limited restoration of unity of the self with the other at the same time. But in any case, Karcavin insists on the religious context of individuality and believes that everything revealed in “I” is the content of God’s being, not from human beings or created beings. When all “I” finally overcome the imperfection of creation and recognize fragmented reality caused by a strong split of self-movement of personality, he perfectly integrates himself and the world into all unity, and he will appear as the perfect image of Logos’ personality in the Logos hypostasis.

2. Harmonious Individuality

Through the personal union between God and man, Karcavin not only unifies man's individuality and the otherness (the unification of subject and object) in cognition, but also directly affirms the ontological meaning of man's cognition. Any cognition is not a one-way behavior, but the communication and qualification between individualities, and it is also a process in which the personalities freely carry out self-movement in order to reveal themselves. Karcavin asserts that "every time I become acquainted with otherness, I achieve unity with it to a certain extent" (Karcavin, 1992). He explained that if "I" sees a green tree trembling in the wind in the distance, then no matter the greenness, shape, movement, sound of the tree, or even the spatial distance between "I" and the tree, it is actually "I" (non-physical body) Self, is the personality of "I", if all this is not in "I" thought, my knowledge, that is "I" itself cannot know it ("I" cannot be separated from any content of "mine", the content of "I" must be "I" itself). But in the unity of "I" and "tree", "I" is still "I", and the tree is still a tree; they maintain their own certainties in the fusion, which means that when the personality self knows or perceives, a co-qualified field will be formed between him and the other-being, into which the two devote all their own qualities to internalize each other's content and enrich each other's existence. Of course, since the non-perfection of created being the self and the other-being do not fully accept and absorb each other in co-quantification, the field of co-qualification as a "flexible space" that can be large or small, But Karcavin sees the power of devotion in it more in terms of religious feeling: only when the self (personality) and the other-being reveal themselves to each other and dedicate themselves to each other, can they truly achieve unity. Karcavin also criticized intuitionism for essentially dividing individuality and otherness, and criticized phenomenology for implying the theme of subjectivity. He emphasized that only in the identity of individuality existence, individuality and otherness freely move in themselves without any limitation for each other. Moreover, the occurrence of the entire cognitive process is based on the innate original unity between individuality and otherness, but this unity is often not perceived by individuality before the beginning of the cognitive activity, until this unawareness of the original unity is split by the act of knowing itself. The two maintain their own determinacy in opposition and enrich themselves and restore (relative) unity in mutual devotion.

The place where cognitive activities take place—the field of co-qualification is both the field of personality and the field of otherness, that is, both the individual itself and the other itself. Therefore, in the process of cognition the personality and the otherness become a higher unity, and this higher unity has the same structure as individuality; that is, it is also individuality. But this higher individuality is not outside the personality and the otherness, not some "third one" but the individuality, the otherness, and the unity of the two, which Karcavin calls a symphonic individuality or a harmonious individuality because the participation of individuality in it is like a note in a symphony, not only producing its own

tone, but also forming a higher harmonious melody in the perfect fusion of all the notes. The same is true of the unified structure of individuality. The higher unity of higher individuality includes individuality and otherness. The revelation and realization of higher unity by the cognitive activities of individuality and otherness form the relative relationship between higher individuality and lower individuality. The “high-level” individuality will also become the “low-level” individuality when it realizes the higher individuality. In other words, with the continuous expansion of personality recognition and the scope of communication, the degree of unity will continue to increase, and the individuality level will rise accordingly until the world merges into a whole personality and a harmonious individuality. Thus, in the theory of individuality, Karcavin regards the existence of the world and even the entire universe as a symphonic harmonious structure, and each individual in the world is therefore inherently consistent and interrelated, and bears the common goal and mission of the Orthodox faith—fully deified, individualized in the Logos person, united with Christ in the divine humanity. Karcavin’s concept of harmonious individuality is seen from the inside as a conciliarity with the Russian Slavic tradition of harmony thought; in addition, the theory of harmonious individuality is also a social thought, which expresses another unique Russian mind, which is rooted in spirituality tradition believes that the important value created by personal communication is a special mode of Christian communication. “Only when a person pursues God and joins in communication with God can he truly enter into communication with other people.” (Khoruzhy, 2020) Harmonious individuality emphasizes the dual subjectivity in each individual, who is not only himself, but his existence and communication are the realization of the higher individuality individualized in him. It affirms that human interaction is always a simultaneous conscious or unconscious expression of the consciousness of the social group. Karcavin pointed out that any social group, no matter how big or small, once they have the same beliefs and feelings, recognize common objects, and recognize the same ethical and legal norms, they are already qualitativeizing the harmonious individuality or social individuality, that is, making the higher individual’s consciousness realized in one’s self-awareness (self-knowledge and knowledge). From the perspective of sociology, harmonious personality interprets and integrates the diversity and differences of different social groups and cultural types, and even puts forward the concept of harmonious development that conforms to the spirit of modernity, such as globalization and human community. But the concept of harmonious individuality is eventually rooted in the universalism of the Russian national Orthodox faith and its belief in Slavic special cultural type and historical mission; it seeks to establish a complete and unique Russian theological system for the ecumenical mission of the Russian Orthodox Church (Zhang, 2000). Berdyaev criticized the collectivism manifested by this concept as the suppression of freedom and provided a metaphysical basis for enslaving people. It is worth mentioning that the idea of harmonious individuality, which pursues the

organic integration of super-individuals, had an important influence on Karcavin's political concept; he was active in the Eurasianist movement and for a period of time became a representative of classical Eurasianist theory.

3. Time in the Personality

In a general sense, Karcavin's discussion of time in the theory of personality is still within the framework of the classical philosophical proposition—thinking and being. And like Augustine, he maintains the close connection between time and thought or self-consciousness (Huang, 2005), and further directly recognizes that time, especially in its perfect full-time form, is self-consciousness, the existence of personality itself. He argues that treating space-time as pure form would lead to the existence of “empty” time and space, which is unthinkable and that once existed is stripped of its own spatio-temporality then the determinacy and recognizability of its content will also go hand in hand. If it is lost, the theory of individuality will fundamentally fail to be established. Since time and space are neither abstract forms nor outside of existence, the understanding of time and space should start from the “inside” of existence and return to the understanding of the existence of all unified individualities, rather than conversely defining individuality by observing time and space. From this standpoint, Karcavin sees the influence of the strong split of the individual self-consciousness on the individuality itself in the process of revealing its own self-movement. It leads to the extinction of the objectified content of the self without really entering the realm of non-being, and the personality is caught in an infinite circular movement between being and non-being, the “evil infinite”. Specifically, Karcavin believes that the self-consciousness of individuality forms a fractured and distributed self-unification structure, and the split-unification cognitive activities of individuality at each moment create a new “I” and a new “Mine” corresponding to the new “I”, the content of “I”. “I” is not a single but a distributed unity at each moment, with “my” content that is not “I” and is not outside “I”. The past moment is gone but did not become a non-being; it is stored as a memory in the content of “mine” waiting to re-enter a moment to be “me” to be resurrected, the future moment is not yet realized, but it must somehow pre-exist in the personality in order to open itself up at some point in the future. In addition, although every moment is constantly forming a new “I” and its peripheral “mine” content, this “I” has not fallen into the abyss of non-being in the gap between moments and has not become something else, the “I” at different times is not the same but still the same personality, because the existence of personality is the existence of all unity, and contains everything in itself, because the divine being has become determined by the image of this personality. This definite original unity will run through the entire moving process of individuality, so that the individuality is still the same unity as the original unity in the split, and the individuality in the corresponding development and change is always the same individuality. Of course, after the split of the personality, the split parts will be uni-

fied so that the conscious activity of the personality can continue, but because of his own non-perfection, he is unable to restore the complete unity, and “I” is only a relatively unified image. “I” at any moment is not a “single” personality but a multiplicity of unity, “many” as “one”. The self realized by personality at different moments is limited content, becoming a specific content moment or moments expressing an aspect of personality; for example, a person is mainly a “philosopher” at some moments, a “politician” at some moments, a “father” at some moments and so on. But all these aspects cannot be fully expressed at the same moment, and other “moments” of the personality can only be contained in “this moment” in the form of “contraction”, waiting to be transformed into reality or re-entered into the future to be resurrected at a certain moment.

Karcavin constructs the multiple unified structures of individuality in time. Individuality is not the simple addition of each moment, but is always the whole content of the moment in each dimension. More often, we find that Karcavin cuts individuality with “moments” to capture individuality and “pin it down”, presenting moments to us as “samples” of individuality, and doing so with no fear of compromising the integrity of the personality. He repeatedly emphasizes that individuality as a multiple unities has a special relationship with moments as whole and part: individuality is both individually each moment and the unity of all moments, that is, each moment is individuality itself, and in itself can express any other moment as well as the whole individuality. In this way, each moment is all moments of the personality and the personality itself, but each moment has a different relation in itself with respect to all other moments; there are relational differences between moments but all as one personality. Furthermore, due to our non-perfections, a moment is in practice always symbolic, i.e., its expression of a complete personality or other moments is only in a potential way, whereas in reality, it can only express certain moments to varying degrees, our knowledge usually only recognizes personality through a specific aspect, through a symbolic moment or moments. Therefore, the content of our knowledge is always limited, but based on the symbolic meaning of the moment and the inner unity within the personality, the knowledge can always be infinitely expanded. Karcavin pointed out that transcendent and mysterious phenomena such as spells, prophecies, and omens are completely “symbolic connections” acting on all existence. He said that it’s also why many major scientific discoveries are often “accidental”, and even can be attributed to some absurd reasons. He criticizes the use of linear thinking to define motion and the use of causality to define phenomena, and believes that this is a rigid cognitive model that prevents us from correctly judging the world of individuality. He cites Bruno’s geometric figures to illustrate the “stationary movement, the movement’s stillness” of the structure of individual existence. We need to imagine that the movement of the personality is emitted from an invisible center to the circle, where it becomes a point in reality and back to the center, and then again to the point on the circle that is the neighbor of the previous point. The activity of individuality

is always a “radius” straight line but is finally realized as a circular trajectory, and the connection of adjacent points on the circle is more based on its common connection with the center of the circle. From this, Karcavin argues that the multiple unities of individuality is not a mechanical and physical time process from the split to unity, but maintains the unity from the beginning to the end of the movement. Personality movement is continuous and it is the multiplicity of all moments in each moment of the process (Karcavin, 2013).

4. Concluding Remarks

“The real personality is conciliarity” (Gulyga, 2000); the world that Karcavin saw was never the world of the individual but the organic unity beyond the individual, which was the harmonious individuality. Each individual in existence contains, in addition to having an image of itself, each other inherently; that is to say, the individual realizes the whole of existence in a condensed manner at each moment in himself and reveals to each other the truth of existence—Godman or individuation. Whether it is self-recognition or mutual communication of individuality, they are all organic differences based on the foundation of unified existence. Karcavin believes that in the end, the world’s individuality will realize the perfect image of the Trinity through the entire historical process of consciousness development. This is certainly a “leap of faith”, but the internal consistency and triune structure of all individuals revealed by the theory of individuality is an excellent combination of phenomenology and dialectics. It provides new ideas and inspirations, which are worthy of continuous exploration and research. In particular, the concept of harmonious individuality is not only an idea of individuals, but its organic structure provides the metaphysical basis and methodological guidance for the establishment of a social group with full subjectivity. Its specific impact on the Eurasian movement in the historical process still needs to be further examined. In addition, Karcavin’s theory of individuality also involves the discussion of physicality, a topic that is now an important symbol of modern philosophy, but Karcavin’s individualized body construction, which represents the Eastern Christian discourse system, has not received enough attention, it is still necessary to carry out further research on Karcavin’s personality theory in this area in the future.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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