

THE PHILOSOPHICAL NARRATIVE OF ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

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This study examines the problems of the sustainability of the global economy in the context of the criterion of individual usefulness, as used in economics. My starting assumption is that self-interest and self-centeredness have become the economic organising principles in the worldview that can be defined in the time concept of modernity. I will point out that taking into account the space-time aspect is of outstanding importance in the examination of the core aspects behind the reactions to the problem of sustainability.

A prerequisite of a wellbeing model that is sustainable in space and time is a worldview whose aspects cover the entire comprehensible environment and whose identity concept includes identification with past and future communities. The broader, both in space and time, the context is in which man can interpret himself and his acts, the better man will see his acts' consequences and the feedback received to them. Consequently, I would encourage the reinterpretation of the relations between sustainability and welfare/wellbeing in an economic equilibrium defined along a new set of principles.

The renewal of society and the economy and mankind's rediscovery of the cosmic order will be examined with priority given to values like cooperation, universal sympathy, caring and cosmic responsibility. Inspired by these, the homo oeconomicus can interpret himself and his existence in a new or very ancient identity, and as a projection of this, the economic paradigm can be redefined as a monumental/holistic narrative whose overall concept goes beyond materialism's individualistic concept of development and welfare (wellbeing) and, in a cosmic sense, makes the sustainable equilibrium between the individual and his natural and social environment understandable in the wellbeing freedom of the state of being.

Thus, in the context of sustainability, my assumption goes beyond the differences between viewpoints and makes it inevitable to leave the framework of conventional economic analyses. In the identification of the reactions to equilibrium related challenges, it is also inspired by the "creation continua" ("continuous creation") worldviews of ancient times and demands that the analyses of equilibriums that are sustainable in the long term and on a global scale should also involve the principle of usefulness, as interpreted "on a cosmic scale", i.e. on a time horizon that goes beyond the space and time of individual existence.

Keywords: sustainability, welfare/wellbeing, equilibrium, consequences, usefulness

1. Introduction: Identity and Happiness

*As I dig for wild orchids in the autumn fields,
it is the deeply-bedded root that I desire,
not the flower. (Izumi Shikibu)*

If we look at the economic and social events of recent years with proper sobriety, it seems inevitable that we should take into account the criticisms¹ of economic sciences coming from everywhere, including decision makers. Even more so since solutions that are vary far from best practice and often nearly contradict "requirements" have become more and more widespread.

At the same time, in a 2013 study, co-authors Sapienza and Zingales point out, referring to the findings of surveys carried out by the American Economics Association, that academic economics has a decreasing influence on public opinion, to which Bod (2013) adds that „the intellectual clarity of thought frameworks and the professional aesthetics of the deduction of scientific truth are secondary to success, as understood in a political sense.” Naturally, Bod also considers it desirable that the economic policy decision maker community should have a clear economic theory to rely on.

The 2008 crisis triggered profound changes – and this has not only shaken faith in the mainstream, at the same time pushing it towards heterodoxy, but, in a broader sense, even began to challenge the limits of the economic model itself, of the market. In a special tone of meaning – in a more comprehensive interpretation – these problems can also be associated even with the crisis of the world concept.

The challenge is thus truly tangible: there is a call for re-interpreted economics, which is characterised less by intellectual elegance and more by a down-to-earth approach, i.e. the opportunity for quick feedback from practical experience and a more broadly understood theoretical horizon. „If that is achieved, economics – admitting the limitations of science – will be able to more directly interpret and, circumstances permitting, even support decision making processes than it has done so far.” (Csaba, 2013)

As, having permeated the entire human living space, the logic of economics that inspires and appreciates growth is unavoidably approaching the ultimate boundaries of its operation,² the attempts made at reinterpretation are gaining an ever increasing importance³. A welfare model that is sustainable in both space and time presumes a world concept whose aspects covers the

¹ Reference is made primarily to Nobel laureates, for example, Gunnar Myrdal, according to whom it is desirable that young economists should have the courage to reject many of the empty, irrelevant and sometimes conspicuously inappropriate doctrines and theoretical approaches and will have to select what is really practical and useful – and they will then find that many old and well-known arguments and theoretical theses become useful if they are placed in a new frame.” (Myrdal, 1957)

² Norwegian philosopher P.W. Zappfe uses the example of the giant deer (*Megaloceros giganteus*) to show that exaggerated growth renders survival impossible; the advantage became a disadvantage and a cause of destruction.(Zappfe quoted by Knut-Zsolnai 2005:28)

³ “It is because the phenomena with which economics deals is so narrow that economists are continually butting their heads against its boundaries.” (Hicks 1979:12)

entire comprehensible environment, and generates its identity concept from the interrelations of the network of individuals.

The starting point of this study is the happiness research of alternative economists, whose findings “*verify that the happiness of people is determined not by the abundance of material assets but the richness of interpersonal relations.*” (Zsolnai 2010) It was in this context that I sought possibilities for the reinterpretation of identity, and I examined the focus of the new self-image as related to the ability of interpreting happiness beyond the boundaries of the self-centred happiness concept, in the context of happiness realised in mutual dependence.

2. The Ethos of the Identity

„For the Greek Stoic Chrysippus, ethos is entirely congruent with nature's laws: 'Living in accordance with virtue is equivalent to living in accordance with experience of what happens in nature – for our natures are parts of the whole.'” (Long 1983: 192)

A starting thesis of this study is that the more complex the horizon of man's self-image – identity⁴ – is in space and time, the more likely it is to contain the feedback required for free action; which reflects, in the broadest sense, the logic that interprets and operates responsibility awareness based on the knowledge of the goal and meaning of existence.

The rightest individual identity is the one which sees the community with which it identifies not only as a community that exists in a space but which also extends this sight in time, and thus identifies with past and future communities. (Boulding 1966)

The sustainability of the dynamic balance of the economy is examined in this paper in the reinterpretation act of the harmony of existence, which, in essence, presumes the reinterpretation of the self-image of the economic subject, in a new approach to ethics and temporality. At this point, the problem of the sustainability of the economy primarily arises as an issue of narrative ethics, which, owing to the phenomenological approach, becomes understandable as the problem of the temporalisation of “the other”. In reality, however, the temporal perception – the temporalisation – of the other, the stranger – as a core problem of ethics – can serve (besides being intellectually exciting as the system of coordinates for contemporary economic ethics) as an inspiration for the comprehensive renewal of the model of existence, as man can become a conscious and responsible subject of the economy mostly if man is aware of and experiences the elementary network of interrelations of existence – in the context of the most comprehensive responsibility awareness.⁵

⁴ Identity – which “in the case of economic actors, is the process of the construction of life goals based on some interrelated group of certain cultural attribute(s), which enjoys priority over other sources of goals” (Castells 2006:30) – is, in reality, the key factor that determines behaviour, as social actors consider their own identity as the driving force behind their acts. (Nagy 2008)

⁵ Gálosi points out that this temporalisation entails the temporalisation of ethics itself. “Put very simply, the majority of philosophical ethics used to be nearly completely insensitive to time for a long period. At least in the sense that they failed to give an active role to ethical problems in the constitution of temporality. This changed drastically in the first half of the 20th century. Perhaps it was by Lévinas that this was done for the first time, by making the other temporal.” (Gálosi 2017:107) “The most intimate relationship of the self with itself is in that it is responsible for them in each moment, that it is their hostage. I can be responsible for what I did not do, and I

I am also responsible for the other person's responsibility. I carry the other person, I am responsible for him. It is, therefore, obvious that the human subject, besides inferiority, also announces my first born position. My responsibility is non-transferable, no one can be my substitute. This is the very point: the identity of the human self is determined by responsibility, i.e. waiving the self, which is otherwise assumed to be independent, which waiver is identical with the responsibility borne for the other person. Responsibility, which is only mine, and which I cannot shake off. This burden is the highest dignity of the chosen person. It is not exchangeable, I am myself only to the extent that I am responsible. I stand up for everyone, but no one can stand in my place. This is what makes my identity, rooted in me as a subject, inalienable. (Lévinas 2008:47)⁶

Temporalisation⁷ as a context may become important in the economic discourse in two senses: if it can raise to itself the problem of self-interpretation of economics – the possibility of coordination between disciplines –,⁸ and the concept of existence, as interpreted in the responsibility-freedom-happiness triad can be redefined, implying the possibility of interpretation of the specific triad as consubstantial in a higher quality of the approach framework, in a broader temporality interpretation.⁹

I consider, therefore, that the actual question is not whether a sustainable economic model can be founded upon the responsible and rational doctrine of an economic actor who is capable of respecting moral patterns that tames his rationality but, far rather, how the renewal of the identity of the homo oeconomicus can be triggered. It is because sustainable economy is a logical nonsense in the combination of rationality, as defined in the homo oeconomicus approach, and the usefulness criterion, as understood "here and now".¹⁰ The precondition of

can assume suffering that does not belong to me." (Lévinas 2001:181)

⁶ It is important to realise that the Husserl relationship is turned upside down by Lévinas: it is not the Other that can be traced back to myself but I am the "Other's Other", which carries the particular asymmetry that the other is unreducible: without him, there is no world experience, nor self-experience. (Sajó 2008 : 62)

⁷ „Symbolic orderings of space and time provide a framework for man's experience. The relation between universal world time and the partial times of particular worlds is interpreted as the analogy of the relation between infinite space and finite spatial positions and measures. Temporal forms or spatial locations structure, in human societies, not only the group's representation of the world but the group itself; these symbolic orderings, are constitutive of every community's life. People attribute meanings to space and time congruent with the overall worldview of their community." (Segesvary 2004:30)

⁸ Due to space restrictions, I cannot analyse the notion of reality constructed by action motivations restricted to rationality in this study, even less can I examine the mode of existence which has proven unsustainable in the context of this exclusiveness. However, I would definitely seize the opportunity to redefine the system of relations between rationality, responsibility and freedom inspired by Schiller. "The first appearance/manifestation of the mind in man does not also mean the beginning of his humanness. His humanness will appear together with his freedom, but the first thing that the mind does is make his sensual dependence unlimited." (Schiller 2005:237) ... "the only way to make the sensual man rational is to first make him aesthetic." (Schiller 2005:230)

⁹ In this context, it is worthwhile to compare Kant's autonomy concept – which, in reality, unites freedom and the law, and identifies autonomy with the ability of the will to create laws for itself – with Lévinas's "responsibility that overflows freedom" (Levinas 1972:77). While, in the Kantian interpretation, we can be filled with pride when we think of the moral law that lives in us (Kant 2004:193), Lévinas shows a neutral attitude to this aspect of responsibility. However, it is possible to get a new concept of happiness, that of the test of existence, as a syncretisation of these two concepts. (For more, please see: Beavers 2001 and Dekens 2002)

¹⁰ In this study, I will only touch upon the relations between identity and abundance/scarcity. One elementary aspect of the self-image is the system of conditions in which the individual interprets himself/herself. Besides,

an economy that can be sustained in the long term – a complex balance of existence¹¹ – is the approach renewal in which the current conventional virtue concept becomes understandable as rationality (“usefulness”¹²): in essence, the approach of the subject who is capable of interpreting and experiencing the consubstantiality of virtue and rationality and of identifying himself or herself with the environment outside of him or her, and his or her economic doctrine that is derived from this approach.

It is in this scenario that one can assess the practical importance of the knowledge of asymmetrical mutual dependence, which, to quote Peter Kakol, “preserves the asymmetry required for individual creativity and the idea of mutual dependence, which is indispensable for social solidarity.” (Kakol 2004: 136)

The challenge about the renewal of the field of economic discourse is nothing less than interpreting the absoluteness of the conceptual content of rationality in its inner relativeness. What we consider useful and rational depends on our approach¹³, and our approach is time (and space) dependent.

Consequently, the reinterpretation of the identity of the economic subject in a broader time-space context is of essential importance also because considering temporality as an entity implicitly entails the automatic broadening of the horizon of interpretation: the manifestation of the cause-effect chain, logically, not only contains the context of the result/consequence but also makes it transparent. This means that value of usefulness and, in the broadest sense,

the orientation of the self-image is also of fundamental importance, which, in essence, is nothing else than the selfishness-responsibility axis. The broader the responsibility horizon is, the broader the identity is and the stronger the ability is to interpret himself/herself outside of himself/herself.

¹¹ I consider it important to highlight the consequences of the fact that the current mainstream economic concept interprets the desire for balance inside its own system of concepts, mainly focusing on balance between demand and supply, and ties this balance to “here and now”. Along the mainstream model, a mechanism operates which generates unbalances in relation to time, the environment and even the – now global – economy. All this leads us to the conclusion that the problem of balance must be reinterpreted in a far broader network of interrelations, which – besides the reinterpretation of the interdisciplinary approach to the economic aspect – presumes a complex approach renewal. At this point, we can make mention of Buddhism, which creates the environment from the harmony of the inner world of the subject, as a manifestation thereof. At the same time, I consider it an exciting challenge to apply the operation of the Sanskrit language as our model. The phonemes of the Sanskrit language display the totality of the operation of the Universe, and a balance context can be modelled from the knowledge of the functions of the vowels and consonants. „These Vaidik-Varṇas are eternal and represent in themselves and their variations all the possibilities of articulate speech in all languages. The vowels are continuous sounds... The consonants are particular interruptions of those sounds. They cut short the vowel sound but cannot themselves be sounded without vowels. And for this reason the vowels are known as the Śaktis of the consonants.” (Woodroffe 2008: 64)

¹² It must be emphasised that the profane – and, in its exclusiveness, nearly pejorative – interpretation of the term “usefulness” ceases to exist if we start to use this term in a broader and more universal – cosmic – meaning. This would also be justified by the fact that the cosmological development of our days very consistently suggests that the circumstances we are used to cannot be maintained without taking the remote parts of the universe into account, and that our ideas of space and geometry would become totally invalid if we ignored the remote parts of the universe. Our everyday experiences – including the minutest details – are intertwined with the largescale characteristics of the universe to such an extent that it is nearly impossible to think and talk about the two separately. (Hoyle 1970: 359)

¹³ „The rationality of a style of reasoning as a way of bearing on the truth of a class of proposition does not seem open for independent criticism, because the very sense of what can be established by that style depends upon the style itself.” (Hacking 1985:155)

interest can be assessed in temporality and, moreover, temporality makes it possible for interest to become a carrier of some value beyond itself.¹⁴

In the chain of consequences – on the time horizon – the process-context becomes the basis of interpretation, and the self-directed point-like nature, which makes itself absolute, carries the potential to surpass itself.¹⁵ At the same time, it is in this potentiality that freedom, in its broadest sense, gets manifested, which, in essence, becomes a complex structure of existence (or an element thereof) in the manifestation of itself, surpassing itself – in its concreteness – if its self-image comes close to having a point-like nature.¹⁶

The aspects of interpretation/assessment are defined by the coordinates of time and space, and the lack of aspects is Totality itself, since it carries all existing aspects as totality. The lack of aspects, therefore, does not mean the lack of values: on the contrary, it displays the value maximum in the context of Existence. The question, therefore, is this: to what extent does the concretisation of this value maximum – Totality, Freedom, the Absolute –, i.e. the Model of Existence, carry, and to what extent does it reflect and display the maximum of values¹⁷? The more it does, the more sustainable the model is. Temporality, therefore, does not carry a meaning in itself but, paradoxically, in its own being possible to overcome. In the self-image

¹⁴ It is worthwhile to refer to Foucault at this point, according to whom modern societies, when they create their social order and legitimate it, no longer refer to transcendental values that are given "from above" and are predestined, but regulate moral rules in a rational manner. (Foucault 1990). It is in this very aspect that the concept-dependent nature of rationality becomes essential. What we consider as useful or rational always depends on the actual concept. Therefore, "we cannot argue that alternative systems of thinking are better or worse than the mainstream, because the statements in which our argumentation is embedded only acquire meaning through the actual method of argumentation applied." (Fehér 1986) A concept is always approach-dependent, and the value quality of an approach is shown by the extent to which concretisation makes the underlying potential get manifested – which becomes transparent in temporality.

¹⁵ If we look at the economic model of the past about 250 years, it becomes obvious that, on a timescale that man can perceive, it is possible to have strategies that function successfully from the viewpoint of temporary interests and concepts – but which, at the same time, can also prove even anti-life on a larger scale. I must emphasise that I consider the approach wrong and narrow-minded which draws a contrast between the responsibility of the contemporary economic subject and the behaviour of more irresponsible economic players of former eras. I say this because the question arises whether, for example, we can consider the behaviour of people shown in the heave of the economic prosperity of 100 years ago truly irresponsible behaviour, given the circumstances there and then. (It would be disputable to state that the man of the 20th century consciously polluted the ozone layer or he or she should have expected the current volume of car usage and its consequences as the population of the Earth was far lower than now, and there was no experience – and, consequently, no assumptions – about the effects of contaminating substances.) We are far safer saying that the behaviour of man 100 years ago was much more rooted in the feeling of responsibility as understood in the short term thinking of maximum economic rationality, i.e. that one is responsible for himself or herself and his or her own fate. The negative effect of this approach on life becomes conspicuous only in the system and chain of consequences, i.e. by time. In the truth of the moment (a point of time), there is no argument that could highlight future adversities to the same extent as the truth that is brought to the surface by time: the devastating consequence itself. We can see and sense this today, and we are experiencing a change in our responsibility awareness as a result. I consider it important to reconsider the approach framework of the subject of the sustainable economy and the identity that can be experienced in that approach framework in the context of temporalisation – partly to have a more accurate assessment but, far more, to be motivated to seek real solutions. Temporalisation helps us to get an overview, as well as inspires the redefinition of the point-like self-image in the complex space-time network of existence.

¹⁶ „*There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.*” (Shakespeare *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*)

¹⁷ See also Heidegger's interpretation of crisis, which he tied to the forgetfulness of being. (Heidegger 1994:143)

that displays timelessness, which gets realised in the momentary end product of endless cause-effect relationships – specifically, in the happiness of the responsibility of realisation.¹⁸

„In general, polar contrasts, such as abstract/concrete, universal/particular, object/subject, are symmetrical correlatives only so long as we think simply of the categories, themselves, as concepts, and not of what they may be used to refer to or describe. The moment we think of the latter, the symmetrical interdependence is replaced by a radical asymmetry. Thus the universal, abstract or (at the extreme) eternal is the common factor of diverse particulars, and since the latter also possess their differences, they are richer in qualities than the universal.” (Hartshorne 1970:980)

3. World Concept: the Problems and Art of Existence

„If unhappily we lose the measure in ourselves, we shall soon lose it in everything besides.”
(Shaftesbury, 1999: 8)

Identity is always multilayer: one’s self-image appears as an integration of several aspects, covering the most general problems that affect the given person, as well as the person’s own personal and individual life situation.¹⁹ In the broadest context, the basis of each self-image is society, which produces culture – whose role is to provide solutions to the problems, minor and major, related to social existence – as the response reaction to problems. At the same time, when problems that exist at the level of society are examined, it ought not to be forgotten that problem raising itself has a determining function. The problems of existence that a community faces will determine the direction of that community’s attention.²⁰ Logic is never created from scratch – not even if, based on the method, out starting points are axioms which we cannot surpass. These axioms mean the acceptance of some, already existing, mechanism; the mechanism of thinking or the operations of thinking, of which the appropriate ones are selected to recreate them, in the system of the given field. A system of axioms is always the result of the axiomatization of some preceding reality. What we can see in it, therefore, is the result of systematising activities, in which the nervous system, intellectual life and mutual social relations tightly cooperate. (Piaget 1973).

Consequently, the action motive of a given era is the intellectual content which comprises the appropriately significant reason for human activity, in the broadest sense of the term, and from which the form of existence – the concept of existence – automatically unfolds. The

¹⁸ „Religion values ethical conduct, which may involve delayed gratification, whereas consumerism directs us toward immediate happiness. Faith traditions stress inner satisfaction and a peaceful mind, while materialism says that happiness comes from external objects. Religious values such as kindness, generosity and honesty get lost in the rush to make more money and have more and “better” possessions. Many people’s minds are confused about what happiness is and how to create its causes.” (Dalai Lama 2017)

¹⁹ Pi  r   L  vy argued that four identities coexisted.

²⁰ The way in which a problem is raised always determines the solution. (For more on this subject, please see Major 2015.) And, in an expressly economic approach, see the argumentation of Wolfgang Sachs: “As so often, the definition of the problem already implied the solution. When low income is considered the salient problem, raising incomes is the key solution.” (Sachs 2000:6).

world concept, in which man interprets himself or herself, usually exists in the consciousness as self-evident, and whatever falls outside this evidence is deemed deviance²¹. From the examination of different eras of history, it becomes obvious that forms of existence continuously change, while different things become self-evident as time goes by²².

The problem of existence of modernity is dominated by the priority of the development of science and technology, which has inevitable associations to a culture that conquers and rules nature to an increasing extent, and, in this culture, only such a human environment is considered possible which is more and more discrete from the natural environment, is increasingly safe and is ever more sterile, exists at an increasingly high level of satisfaction of material ("consumer") needs, in a world that is structured by an increasingly abstract fantasy of man, which is now on the loose and is changing without limitations²³. Taking all of the above into account we can say that economic expansion is not some accidental phenomenon of a culture, but an organic and, as regards its essence, indispensable accessory of economy (as understood in the paradigm of growth), and a peculiar consequence of a concept of existence. To be exact, that of a concept of existence which has taken man "out of the continual process of coming to existence", who can now experience the world as some strange facticity, as an *opus alienum*, not as an *opus propriorum* of his or her own creating activity. (Berger-Luckmann 1966:95.) Consequently, the roots of this out-of-balance concept of existence must be sought in the world concept of modernity, though this loss of balance can

²¹ The positivism of science expressly projects a concept of existence in the field of social sciences. From the system of axioms of this concept, which excludes normativism, comes, by definition, the absolutisation of the status of existence (the changes in it), even though the status of existence could also be something else – and there are a number of arguments that support the idea that in case cognition could also have a normative feature, the reality that is considered as exclusive could become the subject of examination as a consequence of an interpretation framework created by axioms, and, last but not least, in the analysis context of potential consequences – i.e. on the time horizon – it would become possible to raise and display a reality model that could produce different results. And all that would be done on the foundation of new axioms.

²² The process covers a series of historic eras, and can usually not be perceived in the timeframe of one generation. It is on a larger timescale that the actual differences can be identified – just like with different concepts of existence: one cannot be understood is looked at from the other. What is more, something that used to be deviant may become self-evident.

The content of consciousness in which man has ever interpreted himself or herself in his or her local reality shows extreme variability: everything from the most specific material goals to the most abstract ideas can be found, and this variability suggests that man's identity is born not along everlasting values but is the product of some culture in the consciousness. As a consequence, the interacting factors from which identity can be integrated become core. The individual can articulate his or her own identity inside the order of concepts created in the system of approaches belonging to the culture inspired by the problem of existence, so long as it addresses the problem of community existence and, within that, the problem of individual existence in the community. "In this respect, myths play a decisive role as myths are related to identity: they answer the questions of where we come from and where our place is in the Cosmos." (Assmann 2013:145) Or, as Michael Oakeshott approaches the matter: "Human beings are what they understand themselves to be; they are composed entirely of beliefs about themselves and about the world they inhabit." (Oakeshott 2010:14)

We can thus say that culture is the answer of the community to man's problem of existence, and this answer is neither some everlasting and permanent thing but is in continuous and dynamic change, as existence itself is also in continuous and dynamic change. It is so even if the pace of the dynamism of change does not become visible on the timescale of one single generation in more comfortable eras.

²³ Behind what can be perceived as an unconsciously irresponsible action-motivation at the individual level, there are always laws that exist at the level of society.

be interpreted, in the broadest sense, as the problem of self-identity generated by the concept of existence of modernity.²⁴

The central issue in the problem of existence of modernity is "development" as an abstract value form, which, by in essence becoming the foundation of all values, entirely dominates the concept of time in the conventional social and economic discourse space. In the context of the development principle, everything that is former on the historical time axis is, in essence and by definition, is less developed, more imperfect and more primitive, and man appear to himself or herself as the most developed creature ever. At this point, reference should be made to the distinction made by Johann Gustav Droysen that "the continuity of nature is repetition – the seed of wheat sown will grow out of the soil, blossom, develop a seed head, and produce seeds of the same kind" – by contrast, the continuity of culture has become conventionally understandable as the continuity of progressive variation. "Continuity in which all former things grow and get supplemented by later additions ('epidosis eis heauto'), as a kind of continuity in which the series of former shapes gets summarised in ever growing results, and the former shapes appear as elements of the total that is born. It is in this never-ending process, in this self-generating continuity that the general concept of time obtains its discrete content, as the infinite series of progressing transformations. It is the totality of the transformations and progress phenomena so manifested that we perceive as history." (Quoted by Assmann 2013:281)

It could be worthwhile to consider the time concept of cyclic continuity in the synthesis of the two opposed temporalities, which could be the most adequate framework of interpretation of the problem of existence of contemporary glob-local society, and from which a self-image could be derived, which is multilayer in both space and time.

Overviewing this, at least in general terms, is important because if we realise that man's identity is not some mystic thing which is beyond laws and absolute but is shaped by clearly identifiable laws, it no longer seems hopeless to get rid of the tension between man's state of consciousness, which has been socialised by past motivations, and man's current actual status of existence. We have outgrown the Earth, which raises the issue of cosmic responsibility. "We are born for and of the Earth, through our birth, we inaugurate a cosmic existence... We must learn to direct our identities, emotions and life forces towards the Earth, find the connection with the Cosmos." (Lévy)

At the current point of our multilayer civilisation, which is considered as modern, it is obvious that the balance between human activity and nature's recreational processes has collapsed. Consequently, it would be extremely important to exactly identify this point, and to perform an exact examination of the temporal changes of the processes that precede and follow this point. Even more so, since unless the current economic trends take a full turn, the radical destruction of the earthly environment can only be avoided if the task of managing recreational processes is taken over by man from nature, which is no longer capable of performing this task²⁵. This means that, in the future, the operation of the economy has to be

²⁴ It is especially exciting to observe and contemplate on the continuous change of the position of man's centre of value creation in the context of changes in the concept of existence.

²⁵ So long as man had only a minor ecological footprint, nature could make do with the consequences of the shift of balance at a suitable pace, and human activity in essence remained without trace. Using appropriate physical

bidirectional, as opposed to its current unidirectional nature, i.e. resources should be dedicated not only to production but also to the recreation of nature.²⁶ All this raises the idea that a new discipline might be necessary, which can plan and control time-embedded ecological balance.²⁷

Using my thesis as a starting point that life is interaction, dynamism and, in the broadest sense, communication, i.e. the economy cannot totally position itself outside the environment and society, I would like to inspire and support the aim of making it the subject of appropriate scientific research to accurately define the system of circumstances that make the harmony of connections sustainable in the context of the environment, as it is understood in the broadest sense. A precondition of the achievement of this aim is to examine the conscious construction of human existence, including all possible forms of consciousness, which, in its functions of operation, entails and transfers the abstract meaning of a content that I can interpret in the context of “*the art of existence*” as a philosophy, as a rite, as aesthetics and also as caring and happiness that encompasses existence. In essence, the art of existence is the task horizon of the harmony that should be reinstated by the social mind. Because the art of existence is more than man’s rational responsibility taking for his or her environment. The art of existence seeks the meaning of this harmony that goes beyond itself.

“The sciences paint an impersonal and objective account of the world, deliberately devoid of ‘meaning’, telling us about the origins and mechanics of life, by revealing nothing of the joys and sorrows of living. By contrast, the creative arts encode the antithesis of the scientific world-view: an untrammelled celebration of that human subjectivity that divides us from the beasts; a unique expression of the human mind that sets it apart from the unfeeling whirl of electrons and galaxies that scientists assure us is the way of the world.” (Barrow 1995:1)

4. Summary Replacement

and mathematical means, by balancing the energies used, the process can be followed. On the one hand, man uses a certain amount of energy, as a consequence of which nature changes in a certain section of space. Nature reacts immediately – but the question now is whether man can use the energy that will turn the status quo towards the original balance, similarly to how it is done by nature, or at a quicker pace.

²⁶ The question arises: how does it differ from the already existing sustainability concept? The answer is simple: in the broadest sense, in identity itself. The emphasis is now on the retention/reinstatement of the balance and harmony of the environment, as understood in a cosmic sense: in other words, on the condition of existence – but it is not the condition of existence that is interpreted in the human context, but the other way round: man is interpreted as the condition of existence of the cosmic environment. The aim of the balance, which is in the focus of our attention, thus goes beyond man: it does not serve man but, turning things around, it seeks the mode of human existence which, quoting Piérré Lévy, is capable of “inaugurating a cosmic existence”. The question, thus, is whether the social mind, which is becoming ever more fashionable, can create the new framework of discipline, and, ultimately, whether this context appears in the base of interpretation that reflects complexity.

²⁷ A discipline that can partly measure and, as a result of inducing collective and individual consciousness, partly support the synchronisation of nature’s self-renewal with society’s life functions, the performance of the economy. The restitution of the synchronous movement of natural and social products becomes manageable mostly in the interpretation perspective of the social mind: if it is truly successful, by efficiently improving nature’s ability for correction, rehabilitation and, in the long term, guaranteeing ecological stability.

"It would not be an exaggeration to state that the anthropological approach is becoming ever more mainstream..., because when the ideas of renewal and rearrangement begin to have such strong and general impacts in the field of science, the same is preceded by troubles and crisis phenomena, which render the foundations on which we have so far built questionable and obsolete." (Ritter 2007:8)

This study examines the forms of social coexistence, which are shifting from the self-centred life model towards one which gives preference to relationships by giving priority to novel attitudes, in a new interpretation, in contrast to the chronotopos of the "broad present" (an expression by Gumbrecht 2010:80)²⁸, in a new or, by contrast, very old²⁹ time concept.

In the broadest sense, this paper discusses the constitutive elements that determine social interactions and innovations in the network of relations of the contemporary social mind³⁰. Focusing on the sustainable social models, I wish to interpret the new narratives of life quality and happiness in the integrative framework of commitments, in the network of interrelations of connections, understanding and the self-image. Consequently, this study analyses the possibilities of reinterpreting the concept of the self-image of the economic actor in the redefined network of relations of the individual, the community and the cosmos³¹, along new anthropological principles.

"As sciences always seem to presupposes a tacit anthropology as their own world view base, the first thing to do is to define who man is; and as sciences do not undertake to come up with this definition, this man-science must be separated from their methods, and be made superior to individual fields of science, as a metaphysical task, to provide fields of science with a uniform point of reference, in which the diversity of their truths can amalgamate." (Ritter 2007:12)

In this study, I will, therefore, not attempt to examine alternative economic models applying rules that are independent of man but, on the contrary, I will use the set of concepts of the subject who defines the rules and the reinterpreted meanings of concepts, to point out that the economy, which is embedded into the environment, can work only along a state of

²⁸ We no longer leave anything behind, we are living in a continuously expanding present of simultaneities, where the border between time horizons is fading, where the desire to make past worlds a present reality makes us elaborate techniques, thus the memories of the past become overlapped with the present in an increasingly complex manner. (Gálosi 2017:49) Consequently, it is becoming less and less possible to prevent the "overtaking" moment from finally narrowing the elements of transcendence to elements of immanence. In this context, it is exciting to reconsider the identity of the subject, as well as – in the most general sense – the interpretation (time) horizon of responsibility. Self-consciousness becomes realised in the time experience. "It is important that, in this context, not even the pure ego appears as the archetype of *something existing* but as a function: the 'ancient self' (Ur-Ich) is the immanent organising principle of temporal manifestations, which must ensure the original self-reference of the flow of consciousness." (Takács 2011:154)

²⁹ Plus ça change – plus c'est la même chose. (The more things change, the more they stay the same.)

³⁰ „...sooner or later, it is ideas, not vested interests, which are dangerous for good or evil." (Keynes 2007:384)

³¹ „Nature teleologically directs organic processes to their destined perfection. It establishes the norms that things developing in time must follow if they are to attain their projected end. The more comprehensive term cosmos constitutes the ordered totality of being that coordinates those processes as well as the laws that rule them. Cosmos includes, next to the physics of organic beings, the ethos of personal conduct and social structures, the nomos of normative custom and law, and the logos, the rational foundation that normatively rules all aspects of the cosmic development." (Dupré 1993:17)

consciousness of the individuals which is not expressly restricted by the penalties imposed for the breaching of rules and the resulting costs but also the knowledge that destroying the environment, in the broadest sense of the word, is nothing else but self-destruction. Par excellence, the way out of the current economic and social chaos is not in setting up barriers but, on the contrary, in pulling down barriers and in strengthening consciousness³²: in the knowledge of mutuality, the intertwining of elements.

“What is the ultimate goal of mutuality? On the one hand, to fortify social relations, (...) on the other hand, the goal is for each subject to get the opportunity to implement their own life plan and thus be happy: in the Aristotelian sense, to experience Eudaimonia. This is freedom in the positive sense.” (Bruni – Zamagni 2013: 20)

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³² „The U.S. and India, for example, have solid governmental institutions, but many of the people involved lack ethical principles. Self-discipline and self-restraint of all citizens — from CEOs to lawmakers to teachers — are needed to create a good society. But these virtues cannot be imposed from the outside. They require inner cultivation. This is why spirituality and religion are relevant in the modern world.” (Dalai Lama, 2017)

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