

## Total Views, Personal or Not?

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Total views are personal in the sense that a person A, may feel at home with the set of articulations T, but B may not feel that way, but feels at home with U, and C with V. They may agree that they do not quite understand each other in spite of serious and honest efforts. That mutual understanding is limited in spite of all the efforts is, I hope, an indication of deep cultural differences. Differences studied by cultural and social anthropologists, by historians of ideas, historians of economics, by linguists, semanticists, even by social biologists and a host of others engaged in finding the specific roots of a total view, taking roots in a rather general sense.

The people feeling at home with T or U or V may profit significantly by listening to the tales of the researchers. They may, as a consequence, change their terminology and even some of their cherished views *under influences* by chance meetings with certain authors, traditions, and people. 'Chance meetings' in the sense of some arbitrariness involved, resulting in acceptance of views that are slightly inconsistent with the deeper views they hold. That is, the information of the students of the roots of a total view may furnish, for instance, the ecosophers with additional relevant material.

By saying that an ecosophy is something personal, one runs the risk of being interpreted as overestimating the personal roots of *the views* expressed. Or, in other words, underestimate the social, cultural, traditional, etc. roots of those roots. What the ecosopher has contributed personally should not be overestimated: yes, but not underestimated either.

There are students of roots who talk as if they believe in total cultural, social, (and so on) *determinism*: that 'the individual' contributes nothing, that the individuals are just puppets, moving and talking and deciding, determined by strings operated by cultures, societies, etc. Less dogmatic, there are researchers insisting that the range of personal, 'free,' decision is very limited, perhaps extremely limited. But even if

extremely limited, each person cannot but try to decide *on the basis of personal views*. "What does my religion ask me to do in this situation?" "What does Great Britain expect of me: attack the enemy or run away?" "What does my conscience tell me to do now?" The answers are in my opinion personal answers. And they normally differ. An ecosopher may perhaps ask "What is the best to do now from the point of view of contributing to the decrease of the rate of increasing eco-logical unsustainability?" I doubt that such a long sentence will form 'in the mind' of an ecosopher, but the main point is that whatever the non-personal roots of a decision, an ecosophy furnishes a personal aspect of decisive importance. When deciding, *we* humans decide, not cultures. Whatever we think of ourselves as enthusiastic traditionalists or individualists, does not in principle make a difference. In short, saying that an ecosophy is a personal thing does not imply any answer to the question which cultural, social, etc. determinants *influence* the views and decisions articulated, and the question to which extent there are *specific* personal traits revealed, traits mirroring individual traits of the ecosopher.

When I 'personally' attach some weight to emphasize the personal aspect of an ecosophy, it is due to the opinion that we all need to make clear to ourselves 'where we stand,' and never take for granted that somebody else can show us adequately where that is. We can learn from others, and learn about ourselves, but *with widely different backgrounds* we should expect differences in ecosophies, even differences that limit mutual adequate understanding. If I, for instance, choose some Spinozistic articulations, why should anybody else do exactly that? Why should they use a lot of time trying to understand Spinoza? If they do, it makes me glad, but it also makes me glad to see how an ecosophy may be worked out on a theoretical basis that is very different from mine. Cultural diversity is in danger! We need diversity!