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“With borders between
sciences then professions
shifting and blurring, is
professionalism at risk?”

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To all young professionals of those societies which still struggle for
freedom.

"My new-cut ashlar takes the light
Where crimson-blank the windows flare.
By my own work before the night,
Great Overseer, I make my prayer.

If there be good in that I wrought
Thy hand compelled it, Master, Thine -
Where I have failed to meet Thy Thought
I know, through Thee, the blame was mine.

One instant's toil to Thee denied
Stands all Eternity's offence.
Of that I did with Thee to guide,
To Thee, through Thee, be excellence.

The depth and dream of my desire,
The bitter paths wherein I stray,
Thou knowest Who hast made the Fire,
Thou knowest Who hast made the Clay.

Who, lest all thought of Eden fade,
Bring'st Eden to the craftsman's brain -
Godlike to muse o'er his own Trade
And manlike stand with God again!

One stone the more swings into place
In that dread Temple of Thy worth.
It is enough that, through Thy Grace,
I saw nought common on Thy Earth.

Take not that vision from my ken -
Oh, whatsoever may spoil or speed.
Help me to need no aid from men
That I may help such men as need!"

Sir Redyard Kipling, "My new-cut Ashlar", from "Life's Handicap", 1891.

With borders between sciences then professions shifting and blurring, is professionalism at risk?

A nature of pro: how gadgets civilization, holism of modern science and Buddhist epistemology may challenge our view on professionalism.

In our era of uncertainty, when not many are ready to accept it as a price for freedom, our belief in professionalism is becoming a weapon that cuts both ways. On the one hand, professionalism is indeed a certain value to rely upon, being a product of both Industrial Revolution and cyber epoch. But, on the other hand, may this thirst for certainty be a kind of psychological compensation when all values and virtues are profaned or called into question? On the one hand, professionalism is estimated so highly because it dates back to 18th and 19th centuries when sciences were finally separating from speculative philosophy and theology and when, subsequently, professions in our modern sense (as sum of skills, abilities and special knowledge) began forming. But, on the other hand, paradoxically enough, in the same 18th century Immanuel Kant showed that this ideal of absolutely independent science, freed from philosophical premises and based only on a posteriori discursive knowledge, is an illusion, as popular as it is self-contradictory. Later, at the turn of 20th century, holistic paradigms made things only more complicated (or clearer?) because they showed that sciences are not only methodologically dependent on philosophy (as Kant had proved in his theory of analytical and synthetic judgments a priori) but also inter-dependent on each other!

This led to shifting and blurring of borders between sciences as well as professions which of course were and are based on sciences. As if moving in an ascending spiral, science is returning to philosophy and all-science methodology to be united with them, and not like it was in Middle Ages (when philosophy dominated and did not testify its premises) but on the higher level of mutual criticism.

But as sciences changed so radically so must professions, despite all social inertia. And as science, rather than going to die, is going to be stronger and more adequate to our modern world by understanding that no knowledge, if taken separately, is sufficient to learn the truth, so professionalism is not going to die but to change. We were told that "God was dead"; religions have changed but not gone. Rather opposite is the

case now. Some say “unfortunately”. We were told the same thing about horse riding when cars appeared; about theater when cinema appeared; about cinema and books when computers appeared; about epistolary genre when web appeared etc, etc, etc. Nothing died; but everything changed. To put it even more sternly, what is the nature of pro - and to what extent it is reliable?

In the year of 1938 -well before our era of global culture and economy came into being -the great Russian scientist and philosopher of science Academician Vladimir Vernadsky wrote: “In our times, crossing the borders between sciences, *we specialize not on sciences but on problems*” (italics mine; in his article “Thoughts and comments on Goethe as naturalist”, 1938; the same analyses were repeated in his book of breakthrough “Scientific Thought as Planetary Phenomenon”, 1938). He knew what he stated. He was not only one of the leaders of Russian philosophical school called cosmism (sort of precursor of modern globalism) but primarily the man of the world and great biologist who himself created several new sciences (!) by merging fields of research never thought to be so close (radiobiology, biogeochemistry, radio-geology, biosphere sciences etc.). All these new sciences were created as synthetic approaches not by somebody's will or speculation but namely because they had *grown from real problems* scientists were trying to solve but failed. How to explain the extraordinary and even determining role of life, of living organisms in the geological history of the planet? To reply to this, Academician Vernadsky soon realized, one mustn't remain within separate fields of research or sciences but must go well beyond all frontiers and merge sciences by showing their interdependence. Thus new era of interdisciplinary research and hybridized knowledge began. Science ceased to be an amalgam of single cells (meaning fields of knowledge), whose borders were clearly defined, once and for all.

Here the crucial point was that new - synthetic, holistic and anti-reductionist - approach to reality appeared not as a result of some methodological improvement but as a result of taking broader subject for study. In other words, reality turned out to be too complex to be studied by simplistic reductionist methods so habitual for classical science (in which all sciences were strictly separated and rarely crossed). Method reflects reality no less than vice versa. The epoch of cumulative knowledge (16-19 centuries AD) did its job extremely well but it also entailed putting too much stress to the special at the cost of the

general. Specialized knowledge was based on special subjects classical science studied (be they plants, animals or planets), but accumulated knowledge needed to be explained and generalized. And that's precisely what happened. Deep specialization – biology teaches us – may lead you either to degradation or to progress, depending on choice you make.

What choice? If you choose just to proceed further, to go on like that, without changing much, you degenerate (like worms parasites); if you choose to converse your specialization into some new quality of knowledge (thanks to new methodology), you progress (like monkeys).

But specialization helps little even if we take this sort of chicken-or-egg problem – who comes first: Method or Reality? The very nature of reality somehow told Academician Vernadsky and other system thinkers to choose empirical holistic generalization as a main method; or some kind of the latter, a priori given, allowed them to grasp the nature of reality? Since no fact in science is given as pure object, without conceptualization, the said problem seems to be eternal and must be put aside as nonscientific. But once we free ourselves from the lure of specialization, we see that Science in general, as itself, may transcend its borders to grasp its nature just like particular sciences it contains did to grasp theirs. I mean that Science (as it relates to Art, Philosophy and Religion) mustn't withdraw into itself if it wants to reflect upon itself and if its key problems like Method/Reality correlation cannot be solved from within science. Specialization, especially when overrated, often means dead-born thinking and lack of adequate self-esteem.

It is well known that holistic and universal paradigms appeared in religions, magic and art long before they were adopted by the classical science (time lag is really great!). So to find new look on reality (recognizing it as total thing rather than merely dissecting it) science needs not to specialize further (thus only aggravating problems) but to go beyond itself to wider fields of philosophy of science, art and even theology. These are the peaks, which the priority of "specialization on problems" might lead science to.

Of course Academician Vernadsky understood it too well that this tectonic shift in methodology of science would soon affect other spheres as well. New abstractionist nonlinear art was being born before his very eyes. Revolutionary discoveries in crystallography, mineralogy and non-Euclidian geometries (from Riemann to Einstein and Minkowski) made science and art as close as they never were before. In economy too the

narrowly specialized knowledge of manufacture's workman was being challenged by broader engineering knowledge (in Germany, England, France and US). His fellow cosmists were offering systems of global religion to embrace the spiritual heritage of all humanity, over and above national peculiarities, however important.

In sport since 16th up to the end of 19th century professionalism was too relative to be a driving force: elites who practiced sport were mostly amateurs and certainly not got any money for it or cooperated around it (so-called sport of gentlemen).

In diplomacy too during the same period it was not a rare case that amateurs (writers, scientists, warriors) were carrying out diplomatic missions -and certainly not without great results.

In the history of literature too - up to the end of 18th century - writing books was not considered profession at all, but it would be a boldest statement ever to say that world literature since Homer till Earl of Chesterfield and Voltaire was not professional in one sense or another!

But never before these counterpoints were so intense and so intensely debated than they are in our times. Still 2 paradigms clash: national versus global (policy, economy, religion), reductionist versus holist (science), direct realism versus universal realism of abstractionists (art), and, ultimately, dualist versus monist (philosophy and again religion).

However the counterpoint, in any we see the common feature, for any implies implicitly the good old question: what's more important -the general (universal) knowledge or special knowledge? Like many artificial questions of the kind it feeds itself by itself despite inner contradictions it contains (or rather thanks to them). In modern science neither special knowledge is given without universal one (take a criterion of ecological validity, according to which any particular theory/phenomenon is built-in into broader contexts to give particulars their dynamics and meaning) nor vice versa (universals become speculative loops without cumulative empirical data). As empirical discoveries are built up, a need of new theory arises to explain all known facts, which otherwise mean nothing than just facts. Moreover, specialization (collecting new facts whilst seeking no place for them in all-scientific matrix) is itself an idea, but any idea is universal by nature. So specialization cannot be canonized, being in fact and logically an illusion: it is a special kind of universal knowledge - either free one (if it is taken consciously) or enslaving one (if it is taken subconsciously).

It is like Margaret Thatcher telling to Michael Gorbachev that there's only 1 economy, free one, and not 2 ones - free and planned, planned one only being a degrading form of the former. Likewise specialization is fooling us falsely pretending it is independent. But nothing can be independent from conceptualization, as quantum mechanics and psychology of language and perception clearly demonstrated.

So if I generalize (any data) consciously, by inducing general conclusions from special details, I understand (albeit never wholly!) not only thanks to which laws of thought and a priori taken paradigms I do it, but consequently how to go back, meaning how to deduce special knowledge from broader laws/contexts/theories. If, on the other hand, I insist that there is such thing as objective special knowledge, I in fact do the same thing I've described but do it subconsciously being led by paradigms I neither grasped nor critically thought out.

Furthermore, a desperate attempt to identify specialization and science is too a dodge: science is based on the unity of Method and Object, so there must be no contradiction between them. Yet science deals mostly with generalities not with particulars, with which rather art, religion and some schools of philosophy deal. Academician Vernadsky stressed this point over and over again in his books and articles ("Works on philosophy of science", Moscow, Russian Academy of Sciences, Nauka, 2000, in Russian language; «Труды по философии науки»).

Yet in our era we know one phenomenon, which is primarily based on specialization and may be called no less than new religion: professionalism. We all believe in pro: but hardly everyone tries to understand its origins.

Above I have already described how at the turn of 20th century borders between professional spheres in science began shifting and blurring, as sciences as themselves started merging.

Borders of professionalism began shifting even more in our world-wide-web era: off-line and on-line NASA projects (in which astronomers from all over the world, be they pro or amateur, are asked to collect data on stars, planets and meteorites and present it to NASA); on-line journalism of bloggers (especially in countries where free media are suppressed or partly under pressure); e-commerce (which often requires from users to be kind of accountants); new generations of simplified photo and video cameras (which make millions partly photographers); TV serials, TV

contests and reality shows (in which even a little bit talented person may become a famous actress/actor).

In economy as a whole we too are witnessing that specialization-based professionalism is losing and leaking. In our post-industrial era economic schools are still debating what was resolved by life itself long ago. Left ideologists, being demonized by the "glorious past" (theirs? - capitalists were pioneers of industrialization!), keep insisting that "hard" economy (various industries and their complexes) is a key factor for growth. Liberals, on the other hand, show that, all theoretical debates notwithstanding, industry versus services problem has been already resolved by economy itself. The case is in modern economy's natural genesis (take post-Second World War era) namely "soft" economy (services, e-commerce, stocks, banks and like) proved to be real growth factor. Advantages of soft/information-based/knowledge-based/innovative economy include the dynamics, speed and openness (manoeuvrability) of interactions between people. "Hard" economy, with its over-specialization of pros and clumsy capacities, is a far cry from what is really needed in our ever-changing, ever-accelerating world.

Take a post-Communist Russia in late 1980s/early 1990s, when many pros, being professionally rigid specialists, faced a problem of changing professions, problem only few succeeded in resolving in the end. On the other hand, many amongst most successful Russian businessmen in 90s were not economists at all, being former physicists, engineers or mathematicians.

But speaking philosophically, we must acknowledge that this great shift from "hard" economy to "soft" economy - and to certain understanding that "hard" economy may be modernized only through "soft" economy - would never happen, had a value of mutual trust not been accepted by capitalist community. Industrial ethics is based on guarantees, certain capacities and predictable results to be shown. Information-based soft economy ethics is not about guarantees; rather, it brings risks and often only long-term results thanks to flexible adaptive strategies of development it forms. All these are impossible without trust, and namely trust, as Francis Fukuyama then economical neuroscience showed, is a key factor for sustainable growth. The higher the level of trust in a society, especially when caused by religious values infiltration into culture and behavioral patterns, the higher the likelihood this society will prosper economically, other things being equal. Knowledge is venture business;

innovation is venture business; stocks, trade and banks are all based on analyses of probabilities; and high quality service needs culture as its precondition. So in soft economy almost everything is uncertain; yet everything is possible, professions changing and merging including.

Vide: Fukuyama Francis "Trust: the social virtues and the creation of prosperity", NYC, Free Press, 1995; "The neurobiology of trust", by Paul Zak, Scientific American, 2008, June, v. 298/6, pp. 62-67.

Take banking system, which began forming only in 13th century in Venice, Florence and Genoa thanks to slowest but certain acceptance of money-lending by Catholic Church (at least practically or should I say pragmatically?). First through Jews then by themselves Europeans began understanding that speculative capitals and money in general - like any THING in this world of ours - cannot be identified with evil or sin, for both evil and sin come from IDEAS, ideas being just mental media, with which to perceive the world. Money is no more evil than its nonexistence - only THE WAY we treat or use money makes it good or bad, depending - once again - ON OUR CHOICE not on phenomenon itself. As Americans used to say, when someone fires at you, gun is not to be blamed. That was how some Venetian aristocrats and some French Temple Knights became first bankers. But this mental revolution - when ideology not ontology is seen as source of misconceptions - went perhaps not deep enough, for it took 600 years more before banks became prime not secondary movers of economy!

Vide: Fischer David Hackett "The Great Wave: Price Revolutions and the Rhythm of History", Oxford, NYC, Oxford University Press, 1996, pp. 33-34, 57-63.

Invention of banks, notes, bills, checks and paper-credits let speed up trade and economy as a whole, widen them by legitimizing mediators and free them from locally/stereotypically thinking products makers. Again professions began merging as their borders began shifting and blurring, and new hybrid professions appeared. This trend of disengaging more and further from so-called "real" industry may mystify Lefts of course and be cursed by them, but history of economy just proves them wrong. Something totally different from Lefts' ideals was happening. The more abstract money became (remember first it was natural exchange, then products and golden, fur or fine textiles equivalents), the quicker and wider trading relations went - until the whole world became a trading place. And the quicker the economy is, the more free time people gained.

These freer people in a wider world found themselves learning to trust one another, as people traded above all frontiers, whether cultural, ethnical, religious, political or professional. Then trust, being, as we saw, a driving force for a normal economy, only pushed this spiral further to make economy operators more mobile, reactive and sensitive. The vicious Marxist formulae product - money - product was being replaced by qualitatively new one: money -product - money, which legitimizes investing. Money indeed was a convention, but it was a convention to trust.

In such an economy products do not disappear or become secondary (as Lefts fear); rather, they just change: information (say, technology, know-how or ad) becomes in no lesser extent a product than engine or clothes. In such an economy professions too cease specializing; rather, they start widening, interweaving and mixing, being challenged by various and hard-to-predict contexts. Profession is no longer a rigid scheme applicable in all cases; rather, it must be a meta-language or matrix, which can rearrange its elements once circumstances or challenges change.

When in 13th century Jews, Knights of Temple and Italian city-states opened banking era, they knew what they did and why they did it: for to trade, which they were masters of doing, meant to trust but at the same time to have a quick and flexible system of checking notes. But to have such a system was impossible without abandoning the literal approach to means of exchange. Commodity means were eventually being replaced by money and credits. For Florence, Genoa and Venice, which traded from Moorish Spain to southern Russia and Middle East, it was just inevitable. CREDIT in Latin means TRUST (vide: Onions, [226]-[227]).

Quite predictably such institutions as banks came into being in free law-abiding societies, secular city-states, politically modest and rational as they were, and not, contrary to socialists, at the cost of industry (Professor Fischer, *ibidem*).

This history of money, from products equivalents to electronic money of e-commerce, brings some new understanding of the nature of abstraction. In abstraction we may of course lose the very object, which we start from, but it is more interesting to see what allows us to avoid doing so. I think this *conditio sine qua non* is no-reductionism-friendly atomism that is searching for atoms - elements - of the given object without trying to reduce object to them. But what elements economy

consists of? Economy starts when at least 2 operators meet. One wants to buy; another to sell, and that's how interaction is born. It is extremely interesting that economy starts exactly where religion ("relation" in Latin, vide Onions, [754]) starts, namely at the point I -not I, I and another, with the only difference economy requires that "another" be sensible/detectable/visualizable. So if we take INTERACTION as economy's element (atom), we may see that this object is saved at every stage economy passed during its evolution. Even nowadays, when money and banking system as a whole have been becoming more and more virtual, INTERACTION (between economy's subjects) remains as economy's CERTAIN element!

In the history of language too we see the same law. At the dawn of writing, when Sumerians proposed cuneiform and Chinese invented hieroglyphs each sign meant conception not letter or syllable (rarely the latter was the case). But as language systems developed, sign became more abstract - and already Phoenicians, Etruscans and early Jews and Greeks invented syllabic and alphabetic systems, in which signs meant just letters (sounds' approximations), with meaning appearing only on the higher levels of abstraction (phonemes, words). Or in the history of poetry the more abstract poetry is, the greater the role of sound, the more sensuous poetry becomes. So object is not lost, only enriched. Modern Western poetry (American, Russian, French), with its minimalism, playfulness, Oriental sensuousness and provocative culture is a case in point. Never before poetry was so observant and careful, reflecting upon itself, searching for its atoms as well as for roots in music, early religion and human emotionality. In refusing a narrative, often a rhyme, a moral admonition, and, at the same time, in appealing first to human psycho-physiological states and only then to formal intellect modern poets turn rather into sort of ancient priests, thus returning to the very dawn of poetry, thus grasping its nature. So to obtain power upon oneself one must cease being oneself in a sense, must go into decay in order to rearrange oneself, in order to be again.

Dematerialization of money, of information in general in the world-wide web has been only pushing things further. But again, since virtual information is eternal (being saved, asked for and used for ever), instead of losing it in cyber space, we only make it more and more real (interconnected with the rest of the world). Not least because web itself is transformative for minds in search of info: Method lies within an

Object. Vide: David Rosenboom "Propositional music", in Arcana-1, NYC, Granary Books, Hips Roads, 2000, edited by John Zorn, pp. 227-230.

So-called stock universities, whether it concerns trade or exchange stock, can offer to you courses, from 1-month to 1-year, which teach you how to buy/sell currencies or shares after analyzing markets and their comparative dynamics by means of models/graphics quite understandable to almost any postgraduate, be she/he professional financier or not.

Tele-bank system of making transaction throughout the world makes us partly bankers (at least for our own and our relatives' money).

New generations of mobiles, which keep on combining and developing new and new functions, not only make our lives easier (in communicating, calculating, photographing, informing aspects and so on) but also make them emotionally and intellectually richer, at least when it comes to time management, epistolary expression and formal thinking. I-phones, then I-pods then I-pads help us all become managers, at least of our own lives or maybe more. One of paradox of professionalism is that to become professional you must be ready for it. Any knowledge, any ability, any skill, as psychophysiology showed, may be obtained only when some development-friendly schemes of perception already exist. Answer is partly contained in the question. But, on the other hand, no one is fully ready for anything whatsoever. Theory, however logical and adequate, may predict experience not replace it. So devices/gadgets civilization we all are living in creates not miracles but some living matrix/creative/ provocative and stimulating space, in which it is just easier to get ready to become pro in some future to come.

To become managers of our own lives is of fundamental significance for any profession. Here we have a channel through which values can come to professionalism despite all attempts to reduce it to strictly technocratic model. Deep knowledge and vast experience may and must enrich personality but they cannot replace it. Personal discipline, responsibility, honesty and emotional maturity (universal values) are as important for any professional as experience and special skills are, not least because these values are no less than filters/models for getting this very experience!

In science this approach has a correlation called all-scientific methodology. Thanks to greatest men of science of 20th century (Karl Popper, Thomas Kuhn, Georgy Schedrovitsky, Ilya Prigogine, to name only

some) we now know that at the deepest level of being there exist universal models/schemes/matrixes of being (fractals, fluctuations, synergies etc.), which cause universal methodology to appear to deal with various subjects, their nature/contents/peculiarities notwithstanding (system theory, synergetic theory, nonlinear dynamics and so on). Here again there is rather Science (one and united) than sciences (allegedly independent and allegedly contently unique).

In modern theater too traditional understanding of professionalism works no longer. For instance, New Drama and so-called "doc" (documentary) drama not only continue developing experimental theater tradition of mixing theater with other kinds of art (including but not exceptionally video and sound installations and dancing) but also attract more and more amateurs to make action more and more documentary however shocking. Art starts separating from the primary actor (author), becoming just an artful space, for ANY OTHER ACTOR to act in. In the end, action-ism is too a theater, theater which goes out to streets - just like in 15th century no less than church service went to streets to become theater. Sometimes doc drama does even play the role of journalism, especially in countries where normal channels of communicating political message to the public are either blocked and/or profaned...

The same process of mixing and combining genres have since early 1990s been occurring in so-called new opera (take Moscow New Opera) and avant-garde opera (take avant-garde colossus John Zorn's perhaps the most unusual multi-CD project "Moonchild"). Modern dancing too is opening up dogmas of classical ballet to ethnic dancing, rock and jazz dancing schools.

In both cases amateurs or professionals from other spheres are called on to participate in what is meant to be superposition of arts. But one example of new professionalism is perhaps exceeding all the rest...

Wikipedia project I consider as the most successful in this regard. The initial skepticism of academic circles turned out to be unjustified. In spite of some imbalance in its content, various mistakes and some disruptions in its dynamics, Wiki has not only survived but opened chances to millions of experts throughout the world, as well as students and free researches, who otherwise must wait for years to be institutionalized and recognized by academia. Let alone the speed, at which this noosphera-like project is (and is being) realized: Academician Vernadsky might only dream about it when in late 1930s he invented this conception of

noosphere, the sphere of NOOS that is Mind (in Ancient Greek), the latter being a natural result of biosphere's evolution and global recognition of universality of scientific laws. Minimal but strict supervision as well as allowing for free authors themselves to correct each other's mistakes did so well that by now, after only 10 years since its foundation, Wiki has become one of the most reliable scientific sources world has ever had. In 2010, embracing nearly 280 languages, nearly 17.000.000 articles and nearly 92.000 active contributors, Wiki is already a real realm of free thought and scientific experience collected not through traditional institutes but THROUGH TRUST to people, *their formal professional features disregarding*. This is a classical example of self-correcting device/system. Pro correct not pro, becoming more open; not pro correct pro, becoming partly pro. It was for humanity like creating some new universe - intellectual, virtual one in this case: just to have a faith in human being and nature and to believe that in the end all different or sometimes even contradictory vectors will counterbalance each other. And that's exactly what happened! And fascinatingly so! What was initially thought to be a nightmare for professional science has become a competitor to Encyclopedia Britannica, this living legend of Western thought.

Long before Wiki came into being the same Left, dualist ideologists told us human beings that we were not to be trusted so Adam Smith's "invisible hand of the market" was no more than the dangerous illusion.

Yet real culture knows better, for again long before Wiki came into being, detective genre at its best (Edgar Allan Poe, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Lord Gilbert Keith Chesterton, Agatha Christie) predicted extremely well that so-called amateurs (in this case - private detectives) might leave so-called professionals (in this case - police) well behind them namely by... disengaging from pro schemes, models and attitudes, however sanctified by time!

Since Wiki moderators may remove only unethical and/or scientifically unverified texts (which contain no academic references), freedom counts for much indeed. What's more, these very criteria make amateur contributors partly pro, because namely verification and ban on subjectivism are classical requirements for any statement to be called scientific.

Abstract expressionism and modern art also are often called no-art by academia, or parody-like quasi-art, in which allegedly anyone may

express himself/herself without much knowledge or refined technique. Needless to say, here we witness traditional reproaches cast upon avant-garde since its very birth in the end of 19th century. Still such critics do not understand that their canons run idle. Avant-garde not only changes some techniques to create new masterpieces; it changes the very principles of art and esthetics as well as criteria to assess it.

Paradox of avant-garde, usually and sometimes rightly acclaimed as art of elite, is that by contextualizing and reducing to minimum minimorum its expressive methods, it is much more open to public and liberal than classics are. Public is invited as co-author, with methods of art becoming more and more available. Then availability is mistaken for accessibility. And this impression of accessibility forms the illusion that avant-garde is an amateur art which pretends to be professional. Yet classical criteria of harmony between esthetic stimuli and inner feelings (I like it/ I dislike it approach) and of comparing actual performances with golden standards or nature do not work in avant-garde.

In the end we have here a classical distinction between liberal value and democratic value: avant-garde is so demanding towards us namely because it is liberal rather than democratic. Democracy defines certain conditions, which, if met, tell you you're right (power of majority, rule of law etc.). Liberalism gives you a gift called freedom, which in itself is neither an answer nor a question but a provocation to develop or not to develop, to find answers by yourself, without however having any guarantee you'll succeed.

Since any knowledge is conceptualized due to psychology of human being (reality is not given directly), there is no such thing as pure fact or golden standard to steer by. Therefore the most interesting thing in art is to provoke anyone to fill the gap between known and unknown or even between known and unknowable by projecting one's own presuppositions upon the world. Of course, since its very dawn avant-garde was more human-oriented, more open to public than academic classicism, yet revolutionary enough, for abstract forms dominated in both minimalism and expressionism. As time went by, abstract forms were – and are – only becoming more and more abstract, be they musical, architectural or pictorial. Consequently, a good deal of interest was – and is – directed to elements, atoms of art, be they primordial sounds, colors, symbols. Art is deconstructed, sacral no more, yet still a mystery for everyone. Dissected this way, being extremely abstract (or too “real”, which is the

same thing - disengaging from image), avant-garde goes on turning into something less and less art in traditional sense. It neither teaches nor even entertains. It rather provokes people to fill its free forms with any PERSONAL content, thus appealing to the deepest level of human perception (to continuum of psycho-physiological states), thus saving art in our technocratic era.

Once you refuse considering melody, tonality and imitation of nature as canons for any artist, you face and enjoy the ocean, perhaps infinite one, of media with which to express yourself. Laws of art (proportions, colors, perspectives, notations) and certainly taste are still met and respected; freeing and freed are only objects to deal with, as art may be found in everything, everywhere, anytime. This universality, totality of art leads to the perfect unity of action, art and actor, which for ever was an ideal for various mystical schools throughout the world and which only in the beginning of 20th century was proved by quantum mechanics and since then is considered as fundamental scientific principle.

Only provocation itself is canonized in avant-garde. And even this is not wholly true, since provocation too may be mocked in avant-garde. This is extremely important, because it meets the famous Popper's criterion of truth (criterion of "falsification"): if theory cannot reflect upon itself, that is cannot test itself by its methodology, starting from the point it might be wrong, such theory can be called only partly true.

But provocation leads to development, either directly, through stimulating one's challenge taking culture, or indirectly, through drawing out one's inner contradictions, whichever they are... Avant-garde pushes you further exactly because it is neither liked nor understood right from the start by almost any given viewer/listener.

Spontaneity too is a key feature of avant-garde for understanding its development-provoking nature. The following is an example just how it works in avant-garde music (when comparative method is applied to find between music and architecture more profound universal principles).

"This idea (of Frank Lloyd Wright -M.M.) of working within a free form, guided by one's sense of proportion, not being able to tell how the form was created, as well as allowing for a free flow between inside and outside made sense to me metaphorically as I started to develop my musical and compositional vocabulary. I was exploring sound and texture within mostly free and structured improvisation, experimenting with different frameworks, playing with the balance of composed and

improvised material within a piece, and also trying to create an invisible seam between what was notated and improvised...

Both Wright and Threadgill likened the creation of their work to that of a living organism.

One of the key ideas of Wright's philosophy pertained in what he called "organic architecture": the building growing out of the site, out of materials that fit with the site, out of the function it needs to serve, without imposing a design, rather, letting the design create itself. He explained it this way (in his "Collected Writings", v.1 (1884-1930), 1992 - M.M.): "An architect must "grow" his building from his motif, so that his building is just as natural an expression of thought and feeling directing power toward ultimate purpose as any tree or any engine for that matter... Things of themselves begin to proceed from generals to particulars - they begin to build of themselves, to develop, emerge, and take inevitable form, *forcing nothing, imposing not at all* (italics mine; we will return to this fundamental motif below, discussing how Buddhist epistemology may influence the new professionalism we defend - M.M.)... There is destiny inherent in every chosen motif and it finds destiny anew in your hands guided by imagination to your heart's desire". During my composition lessons Threadgill talked about organic composition - starting with a small cell or musical phrase and allowing a whole composition to grow naturally, through an infinite number of permutations, out of that initial material, including the form or structure of the piece. This lesson of Henry continues to be the basis for my approach to composing and improvising - *allowing/ following this organic growth*" (italics mine; in "Aural Architecture: the Confluence of Freedom" by Myra Melford, in "ARCANA ONE: musicians on music", NYC, Granary Books, Hips Road, 2000, edited by John Zorn, pp. 121-122).

Again we see in this an ethos of avant-garde: trust the world... the rest will follow.

To be professional in avant-garde does not mean to abandon classical techniques, theory of complementary colors or notation; but it does mean to widen reality by recognizing reality is everything, everything which may come to mind, however absurd it may seem at the moment. And therefore it does mean turning everything into art objects! It reminds me of the famous philosophical postulation: there is nothing in mind which cannot be in reality. In other words: being determines consciousness but being as itself (existence of things and preconditions of it), not actual

self-implementing being, like Marx held. To simplify, OK Pollock, it is said, just poured oils onto his canvases, not spending hours before them like Rembrandt or Goya did; but this very act of pouring oils matters as itself, as act of freedom, as act of pushing art further out of its borders, as act of seeking for elements of art, as act of seeing art from afar.

Pollock was also professional in a traditional sense; he COULD INDEED paint nude or horse; the problem was by then it made sense no more. Something absolutely different was needed, as world faced post-war skepticism and cold war fatalism. For human being under social pressure and in case of deep moral trauma traditional art of order, plain beauty and representation was just not enough. The deeper the cause of anxiety and instability, the stronger must be the cure. Which means the closer it must be to the realm of irrationality.

As on Pollock wrote the outstanding American expert in the history of world art Horst Woldemar Janson: "... he came to regard paint itself, not as a passive substance to be manipulated at will, but as a storehouse of pent-up forces for him to release.

The actual shapes visible in our color plate (famous "One" - M.M.) are largely determined by the internal dynamics of his material and his process: the viscosity of the paint, the speed and direction of its impact upon the canvas, its interaction with other layers of pigment. The result is a surface so alive, so sensuously rich, that all earlier painting looks pallid in comparison. But when he releases the forces within the paint by giving it a momentum of its own - or, if you will, by "aiming" it at the canvas instead of "carrying" it on the tip of his brush - Pollock does not simply "let go" and leave the rest to chance. He is himself the ultimate source of energy for these forces, and he "rides" them as a cowboy might ride a wild horse, in a frenzy of psychophysical action. He does not always stay in the saddle, yet the exhilaration of this contest, that strains every fiber of his being, is well worth the risk. Our simile, though crude, points up the main difference between Pollock and his predecessors: his total commitment to the *act* of painting (italics Janson's - M.M.). Hence his preference for huge canvases that provide a "field of combat" large enough for him to paint not merely with his arms, but with the motion of his whole body" (Professor H.W. Janson "History of Art", 3rd edition, NYC, Tokyo, Harry N. Abrams, 1986 [first in 1962], revised and expanded by Anthony F. Janson; p. 696).

For Rothko too without interdependence of worlds our world exists only as an illusion: hence his works WORK only if we grasp how his famous rectangles influence one another, ascending to something new...

In Helen Frankenthaler's "Blue Causeway" we see a classical example of respecting an observer to such an extent that he/she is given a full freedom of interpretation. "The shapes may mean one thing to the artist, as is indicated by the title, but may suggest something totally different to us" (ibidem, p. 714).

Dubuffet took a further step by imitating/modeling an art of children and insane. Thus he sharpened the problem of professionalism once more: who is painter after all, if such "primitive" art is no less art than Michelangelo's? "But appearances can deceive; the fury and concentration of Dubuffet's attack should convince us that his demonic female is not "something any child can do" (ibidem, p. 714-715). And revolution is here indeed: as painter himself recognized, his purpose was to show that beauty is universal value, not exclusive or idiosyncratic (ibidem).

Here Author is no longer just a source of art: acting author or just existing one is himself/herself an art no less than art itself. It reminds us of Foucault's idea of philosopher (philosopher's life, biography) being in no lesser extent a philosophy than his/her philosophical works themselves. The role of chance, legitimized in action painting, takes us even deeper in rediscovering/recreating the world - to the very trust to being: if you have a faith in freedom/world/humanity, even the category of chance/randomness is seen as a God-given gift. If God gives us genuine freedom, everything's possible however strange prima facie.

As Professor Janson wrote on Arshile Gorky: "Everything here is in the process of turning into something else" (ibidem, p. 695).

This priority of being over epistemology is as well characteristic for existential philosophy; so it comes as no surprise that abstract expressionism was created under its influence, and was born in America, the freest country on earth, and is more adequately called "action painting".

Pop art went even further in playing with borders of professionalism/amateur art. And in pop art too everything was and is seen as worthy paying artistic attention to. For pop art the most ordinary has no lesser poetry and mystery than lonely hero has, or God - or angelic woman.

Thus the quintessence of pop art is what I may call a rehabilitation of ontology, which opens up art for laymen, which brings fundamental

questions to them, questions otherwise not even likely be put. And contrary to the myth, it is done not through the simplification of methods (meaning through lowering of professional standards) but rather through minimizing and refining of them. Take Demuth, take Indiana or take Lichtenstein. Minimalism (art to express maximum or triggers for maximum by minimum of means), both as school and as Method, opens up gates to everyone, as usage of ad, cartoons and comics clearly demonstrates. But other fundamentals of pop-art, like refinement of methods, culture of provocation and iconography of images, require from both artist and observer no less, if not more, preparation and self-involvement than classics did. It's again like the difference between democracy and liberal idea: both are about public, but democracy is ascertaining for public (majority is most likely to be right) whereas liberalism is demanding (no one is wholly right, so you must develop if you want to be right at least to some extent). Rothko may seem to be primitive, comparing with, say, Matisse or Giotto, only for someone who just sets... observer aside as well as author himself!

In terms of sociology avant-garde is closer to horizontal dimension of society; classics to vertical model.

Iconography of pop art again and again sharpened the sacramental question of human perception - what's real then? Image and reality... objects and contexts, when free and when inter-dependent... Pictures tended to be less and less pictures, becoming rather objects, like in Stella's works, then just actions, like in action-ism (ibidem, p. 716).

Jazz too played its role in avant-garde painting: for instance, William Williams and Karel Appel were under its profound influence. Yet we remember that strict professionalism came to jazz world quite late: even in bebop era many jazz gods didn't know notation, let alone early jazz masters of swing. It is of special interest that in 1980s jazz, being challenged simultaneously by rock and by pop music, survived precisely because it stopped being only jazz. It had been developing by transcending its own borders that is by incorporating elements of rock, electronics, folk, classics and many other genres until it experienced its several renaissances in 1990s and later (from symphonic jazz and minimalism to the whole cosmos of avant-garde "Down Town" jazz).

Back to modern painting, another proof of priority of being yet another proof that professionalism is broadening not narrowing is that for modern painters all materials and textures are as paramount, or equally as

important as image is, both for Pollock and Rothko, to name but few. Art is content, art is technique, but both technique and content are nothing if materials are either inadequate or just bad. Art materials become artful materials in hands of a master, yet materials form a channel for art to remain total, monist, ever-green and all embracing – and open.

That was how it worked when Color Field Painting was born: "... Paul Jenkins... in "Phenomena Astral Signal" the liquid medium has been made to flow in currents of varying speed and density. The resulting veils of color may be gossamer-thin or have the rich depth of stained glass. No spattering, no dribbling betrays the painter's "action"; *the forces that give rise to these shapes seem to be of the same kind as those governing the cloud formations in a wind-swept sky and the pattern of veins in a leaf*" (italics mine; *ibidem*, p. 715).

This obsession-like perfectionism when artist does not even differ fundamentally between content, technique and materials leads us to such an important dimension of modern art as art of environments, assemblages, installations: the whole world as art object we here praise (*ibidem*, p. 721). From art of happenings (events themselves as art) conceptualism arose...

"Conceptual art challenges our definition of art even more radically than pop, insisting that the leap of the imagination, not the execution, is art. Since the works of art are incidental by-products of the imaginative leap, they can be dispensed with altogether; so too can galleries and, by extension, even the artist's public. The creative process need only be documented in some way – usually in verbal form or by still photography or cinema" (*ibidem*, p. 722).

Take the famous – and famously provocative – Joseph Kosuth's chairs as a peak of the approach (3 chairs stand together but one is thing, second is photo and third is vocabulary's article): were they nothing more than chairs? But what about the triangle of Frege, one of semiotics' fundamentals, according to which no phenomenon is given as sign separately, thing separately and conception separately but only together? So chairs are chairs no more? So Kosuth in fact reached gropingly some (previously thought to be) mysterious border at which the group of objects miraculously or just logically turns into art! Artful space, which Ancient Greeks were only exploring, by 1970s had been enveloped fully by conceptualists when they had pushed art to its elements and its blurring and shifting borders.

To be art, to remain art, art must be not art in a sense (meaning must learn how to reflect upon itself).

Long before Immanuel Kant revolutionized Western thought by proving that in order to grasp the nature of things ("thing-in-itself") one must first of all free oneself, as far as only possible, from the power of conceptualization mechanisms (say, language; "thing-for-us") which are just tools to describe our world, Buddhism invented its theory of being, postulating roughly the same. For Kant trying to resolve this contradiction or any of such contradictions discursively (infinity versus finiteness; freedom versus necessity; God exists versus God does not etc) is absolutely useless (any thesis may be proven equally successfully; theory of antinomies). Hegel, very critical to the theory of antinomies (which he called "cushion for an idle mind"), went further, for he corresponded and made interwoven not only being and epistemology but all such contradictions within dialectical pairs by ascending to their origin at the generic level. Thus he married - third time fundamentally after St. Thomas Aquinas and Leibniz - theology and philosophy. For generic level means the universal existence of things (absolutely inalienable feature) and ultimately... divine creation and providence (Kant's transcendent level). So again Buddhism came to almost all such conclusions long before the 18th century. And this led Buddhism to a very original conception of human activity, professional activity including. Buddhism, as well known, started from the point of human suffering, trying to define the nature of it. We suffer because there is always a lag between pure fact (BEING), which is never given to us in its original form, and our conceptions, which are just means for understanding being, but means inescapable, nevertheless. So the greater the distance between being and gnosis, the stronger the suffering is. And reversely, the closer understanding to being, the less the suffering is. Sure we humans often tend to hide ourselves from (painful) truth by producing more and more conceptions, which from some point start explaining rather one another than facts. But, according to Buddhism, however painful truth (of being) may be, to epistemologically hide oneself from it would be far more painful in comparison. There are not only millions of misleading media to deflect us from truth further and further, but at the same time we have plenty of contrary ones, from dreaming and meditation to feeling of divine presence. For more details vide: Cleary Thomas, Aziz Sartaz "Twilight Goddess", L., Boston, MA, 2000, chapters 2-12.

So the origin of suffering is fear, fear of seeing truth as it is, freed from conceptualization, which is a sort of psychological defending mechanisms. The further, the more: as conceptualization progresses, it creates a closed world of its own, in which only grains of truth remain and which, despite of it, does not contradict with itself. World is cared for no longer. Why to care, if one has one's own, made out of thoughts? This secondary world (world of descriptions, world of narrative) Buddhism called illusion (MAYA), for it is only loosely concerned with BEING. Contrary to popular myth, Buddhism holds narrative as illusion, not the object of narrative. Pure being, freed of stereotypes of perceptions and models of manipulations, is Nothingness, absolute Freedom (NIRVANA), which means nothing is added (to being). Only then comes either non-being (destruction of being) or illusion (descriptions of being).

So only being is trustworthy, which entails it's better to follow the world than to try to change it artificially to make it fit with anyone's expectations/visions/stereotypes. Moreover, even these changes are illusions, too. World just is; visions change.

This follow-the-world strategy causes a quite distinguished way of learning. For a Western mind, up to the 19th century, to learn was mostly to analyze, to vivisect, to subdue in order to control; for Buddhist mind to learn is mostly to see, to witness and to enjoy. Sure it has nothing to do with conformism, for you may change whatever you find worth it, but at the same time you must remember you change mental constructions/ conventions not reality. As we saw, everything is real (once it comes to mind), but with varying extents of reality, from myth, the lowest extent, up to the pure fact that something exists whatever it is (the highest extent of reality - absolutely non-destroyable significance of existence). For Descartes, cogito, ergo sum, I think, therefore, I exist. For Buddhism, I exist (the most fundamental fact), the rest just follows. Or it does not. Buddhists learn from the world, letting it just evolve, seeing it growing - until it.. outgrows itself perhaps (conception of no-doing -U-VAY). Once one intrudes, the whole picture is already gone, leaving us with only some details, little sheens of truth as they are, to establish our views upon. Indeed we even SEE through lenses, but why always to multiply them by epistemologically disintegrating patterns of being/reality?

Next step is a problem of (self-) identification. When one identifies oneself with oneself or with any of one's activities, professional including,

what exactly one identifies oneself with? With illusions one does so or with being? Hence we have a radically distinguished conception of professionalism. According to Buddhist maxima, if you want something be done right, just forget it. It means if you want to be really free from models of perception and apperception, albeit never fully in this limited world of ours, you mustn't fully identify yourself with yourself or your activity. If you do the opposite, then, first, you may lose the distance of observer, therefore, criticism; second, you fool yourself, because when you deal with yourself or any of your activities, you deal with just images of reality not reality; third, you start thinking of reality in terms of your profession, which is absurd. As these stereotypes feed one another, you are losing the touch with the world. Instead you have your own. But according to the Godel's theorem of truth, no true system of axioms is closed; reversely, when system of axioms is full (closed), it is false. So the only way to remain in touch with truth is to be open (not full), which in our case of professionalism means... not to remain fully professional (fully identified with your activity) but always to hold your eye upon multitude of contexts of this activity.

In language too we see how demythologization of reality works. According to the famous philosopher of language Ludwig Wittgenstein, language is a double-edged knife: on the one hand, it is unavoidable (as a mechanism of interpreting the being), yet on the other hand, it may be so misleading, so enslaving even, we may mistake it for the very subject it is supposed to describe. We are usually taught that reasoning/ thinking determines language; it is quite understandable. Language reflects the mechanisms of thought as well as the culture in which it forms. But simultaneously the reverse is true: since early age we cannot even think in other way than in language, which limits and filters reasoning fundamentally. Language is determined, being itself a determiner. It creates a vicious circle, and only the deepest insight into the nature and mechanisms of language (say, some meta-language) may help break it...

Another fundamental law of language (already mentioned above) is so-called Frege's triangle, which unites object (thing, denotation), its description by sound and letter (sign) and vocabulary's article (sum of meanings, designate). And since no description is full yet object itself is never given as a pure phenomenon freed of description, Frege's triangle, being of course a universal model but far from being a final clue, only sharpens the problem of reality/realities... If world we see is just a

product of competing descriptions, the only fact unmistakably REAL is that everything exists, albeit on different levels of freedom. That is why it is so useless to try to understand reality from one's corner, totally or partly ignoring all others. Profession is challenge, not an excuse or final destination. To get knowledge, abilities and skills is only to start developing, aiming at outgrowing all these qualities, at accepting the whole being. Been understood or not, being simply is, non-reducible to any of its models, thus showing understanding is perhaps the most attractive illusion humanity has ever had.

One of means of developing this new synthetic professionalism Buddhism itself offers. U-VAY model of behavior presupposes kind of as-if-reality, namely allegedly meaningless activities when one devotes oneself to something neither pragmatic nor even fully reachable. Take childish games, these precursors and predictors of modern economy, of some mathematical models and family relations, or take esthetic activities, when we decorate our life for irrational reasons, or learning of exotic or ancient languages, which are only media of pure science or self-development. For Western mind the labor of Sisyphus is a symbol of divine punishment, sent to this Corinthian king for having escaped death. For Buddhist mind it is a plain nonsense. To escape death (to break the circle of SANSARA) is a must for everyone. Moreover, anyone must be Sisyphus in doing seemingly senseless labor, for it is exactly the way how to escape death (to change oneself in order to defeat death)! If you want to be stronger, freer, keep on discovering Americas, on rearranging models of your activities, on thinking about origins of things, on translating and retranslating Bible as well as all other sacral sources, all past efforts notwithstanding. If you want to be professional, be free from this desire and your professionalism in order to include it into your personality, avoiding the opposite happening when personality is being included into your profession, which leads to the loss of/for both.

Vide: Ruth Benedict "The chrysanthemum and the sword", NYC, 1946.

So simultaneously, you cannot understand being directly as we cannot stop thinking, but if you just go on conceptualizing, you'll lose the world. Likewise in any profession, you cannot be a professional without special knowledge and skills, but if you just go on deepening into your profession, you'll lose the very subject of it, for it is connected with being, which is always more than any or sum of its parts.

Like life. Like we ourselves. Like everything we believe in.