Does the Epistemologically Different Worlds Approach Become a Solipsist Philosophy at the End?

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Abstract

This paper treats the Epistemologically Different Worlds perspective, created by Gabriel Vacariu and presents a problem which the public may find at a first glance upon the theory: if there is no causal relationship between the mind and the body does this theory reduce itself to a sort of solipsism? My solution to this approach is multilayered: in the first approach I present the method employed by the philosopher while constructing his theory, showing that it is well grounded in the empirical sciences; the second approach consists of several pieces of content of his theory which seem to be designed to eliminate any form of suspicion; in the third and last approach I tackle the strong solipsist view which doubts the method and contents presented before, as well as the existence of an “outside world” by arguing that it is more beneficial to adopt, if not the EDWs perspective, at least any other.

Keywords: Epistemologically Different Worlds, paradigm, solipsism, method.

For some time now, Gabriel Vacariu has been working on a new paradigm, meant to satisfy the problems and directions in today’s scientific struggles. As with most good ideas, it began to be considered by more and more people and I believe it will continue to gain recognition as time passes. Therefore I have taken upon myself to treat if just an inch of the theory in this article, in order to facilitate the understanding of his work.

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Upon hearing or reading at first glance about the Epistemologically Different Worlds\(^2\) perspective, without a proper study of the subject beforehand, one may find some of its aspects queer. One such problematic issue seems to me the following reasoning: “If ‘Being’ is a EW and the body is an ‘It’ in the Macro-EW and there is no causal relation between the EDWs, then, do we not fall in solipsism?”

If one should perceive Vacariu’s paradigm as presented above I believe it would have crippling effects as it would do the philosopher’s work no justice at all. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that the argument seems to put a possible reader in defense. Thus I shall discuss this problem throughout the article and present the arguments that should refute any such debate from occurring. In doing this, I shall evoke three types of arguments: the ones that are based on the method that the philosopher employed in order to create his paradigm, showing that he could not “lose the world” as he does not have a pure top-down approach, but rather stays well grounded in experience since he systematically draws information from the empirical and theoretical sciences; the ones that are based on the theory itself, such as the rules he imposes and the way this paradigm divides the world as we know it, since some of them are designed to ensure the exact same grounding and the fact that there is more than one mind out there; and the skeptical argument, showing that even if one should cut the causal relation between the mind and the body, it wouldn’t necessarily cause his or her theory to become a solipsist one, since there is just enough reason to adopt this view as there is to adopt the exact opposite, while the non-solipsist one I would find to be a much more sensible and productive approach.

Before I start my argumentation, it should be noted that this problem is not the most striking one. That is to say, Vacariu’s paradigm presents a lot of problematic aspects, like the lack of causality between the micro particles and the macro particles (as they belong to EDWs), or the equivalence between epistemology and ontology. I believe that these aspects are discussed at length by Vacariu in his books and I do not wish to reiterate his arguments without just cause. I may appeal to them, however, where it so suits my own argumentation.

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\(^2\) Further on I shall use Vacariu’s abbreviation for this: EDWs.
I. The Method Argument

It is my belief that in order to lose the world and the minds outside one’s own, the enquirer must start from the very basic ontological presumptions and work his way down to reality. A top-down approach seems to me impossible to carry through. There have been several trials, but I think that the audience would find (and did find) them unsatisfying for today’s scientific and day-to-day requirements. Let me remind the reader of the Cartesian approach, as it seems the most well-known. In this sense, the well-known “Cartesian Circle” seems to stand tall and still occupy the minds of philosophers to this day. I do not wish to go into details, but it would seem that doubting one’s sensory information to the point of removing it completely from knowledge leaves the skeptic with a huge problem. Let me just point out the fact that the famous “I think, therefore I am” could be further doubted to « x does something, thus y exists », where y may be x, which would ultimately leave the thinker with « x does something ». Furthermore, to appeal to a higher entity for certainty was acceptable in Descartes’ day, but today I believe one should not rely on any such improvable facts. From my viewpoint, the fact that some philosophers came to understand the Cartesian Circle via a psychological approach, rather than a rational one3, seems to show the problems a thinker may run into if he or she adopts a top-down approach to explaining the world.

Let me now point out the fact that Vacariu’s view does not start from his postulate that epistemology is the equivalent of ontology, but rather arrives at it through the analyses of applied sciences combined with I. Kant’s transcendentalist philosophy: “In fact, the EDWs perspective represents an extension of the Kantian transcendental philosophy [...]” (Vacariu 2010, 17). Thus, the philosopher starts from the three constituents of the Kantian epistemology:

i) The subject – observer of the interior, as well as of the exterior;
ii) The conditions of observation (or of having something);
iii) The object to be observed. (Vacariu 2010, 17).

Having these three notions in mind, he shifts his attention to Bohr’s dilemma, who sustained the fact that if the conditions of observation are changed, what appears to be the same entity will have different determinations. This problem emerges clearly from the wave–particle problem: “We recall Bohr’s principle of complementarity: we cannot observe the wave and the particle using the same measurement apparatus at the same time.” (Vacariu 2010, 265). Under these circumstances Vacariu effectuated his shift, explaining the ontological differences (the entity’s determinations) which appear due to the epistemological changes (the conditions of observation). He will propose the unity of the two conceptions, which is to say: To change the conditions of observation means to change the object’s determinations. But how can an epistemological change affect the ontology of an entity? It must be said that this change does not enact itself only on the morphology or the appearance of an entity, but it also applies on its whole activity, as the entity will have a whole new action pattern. Moreover, the entity will start interacting with different entities than before the epistemic change. Therefore, one may say that if an epistemic change causes an ontological change, then the epistemology–ontology difference is wrong.

Judging by the aforementioned thought process, one may conclude that Vacariu’s first postulate does not come from a pure internal viewpoint, since, although his starting point is Kant’s transcendental philosophy, his next step is applying it to the empirical findings of scientists. In fact, if one would take an interest in Vacariu’s view of the Kantian philosophy, the reader would notice the following: “It has been shown that Kant’s perspective is wrong from a theoretical point of view (by the mathematical construction of the non-Euclidian geometries) and empirically (through Einstein’s general theory of relativity). Non-Euclidian geometries and Einstein’s physics do not involve human perception.” (Vacariu 2008, 98). Again, from this quotation comes clearly the idea that one must validate his or her presumptions through the findings of the sciences.

Pressing on, after the merging of ontology with epistemology, Vacariu points out the fact that in order to be, to have and to know one must interact with the object. Since people are not the only entities that exist, all knowledge and existence are depersonalized: “Human beings
are not the only entities that observe (interact with) other entities.” (Vacariu 2011, 29). That is to say that he will merge “to be” with “to know” and he will get “to interact”. Interaction assures an entities existence and its determinations. After he points out that from this point onward the notion of essence becomes void, he returns to Bohr’s problem and states the fact that not all its/Its interact. Of course, for any interaction to occur, any two entities must be in a [(spatio-) temporal] framework, which would lead the author to his signature EDWs. It would seem to me that this point stresses enough the lack of a solipsist approach on the world. The way Vacariu moves back and forth between the most abstract principles and the most empirical of problems even from the beginning should testify to the philosopher’s intentions of not ever loosing the ground from underneath his feet.

It should also be noted that Vacariu’s approach on the subject is not only a constant passing from interiority to exteriority but also from a top-down approach to a bottom-up one. The reasons would be the same as mentioned before, but this point would be of interest to a philosopher of science as the debate between these two approaches has lasted long enough. It is my conviction that whether one is a philosopher looking for metaphysical, ontological or epistemological answers to the world, trying to build a more coherent Weltanschauung, or a scientist, trying to figure out the laws of nature, one cannot adopt a strict direction of study. Thus, either one of the aforementioned thinkers must take on both approaches if they are to accomplish any sensible achievement. As noted by Einstein, although the role of the theoretical physicist is to emit principles and deduce their consequences, these must be extracted from nature: “The scientist must rather steal in a way from nature those

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4 Its stands for living entities whereas its non-living entities, stands for, as noted by Vacariu.

5 The reason I wrote spatio-temporal in brackets is that, for example, Being does not have any spatial determinations. Moreover, it could be speculated that there exist EWs which do not possess either determination. Having this in mind, I considered the needs of the reader that is not immersed in the EDWs paradigm and, in order to facilitate the understanding of the framework, I felt the need to mention the two best known determinations of the Macro-EW.
general principals which can be precisely determined, as he can identify certain general traits in bigger compounds of facts of experience.” (Einstein 1996, 15-16) Moreover, he continues with: “I have noticed that inductive physics asks questions to the deductive one and the deductive asks the inductive, and also the fact that the answer to these questions needs the straining of all forces.” (1996, 18). Having the testimony of a paradigm builder alongside the writing of M. Friedman, who studied the epistemology of science, who also concurs in his The Dynamic of Reason that the process through which one may build a scientific paradigm is a combination of bottom-up\(^6\) with top-down\(^7\), I would concur that one cannot build a sustainable paradigm through a metaphysical or ontological intuition or revelation and deduction, without having a close look at the world.\(^8\) Since Vacariu’s paradigm seems to gain influence bit by bit, I should dare say that he does not lose track of the scientific facts along the way, but rather that he constructed his theory through careful consideration of both the philosophical issues and the scientific ones. Thus, since I believe I have shown that through his method, the philosopher stays grounded in actual empirical sciences, fact that proves his method to be an adequate one for his task, I shall continue my argumentation with some in-theory ideas which would sustain the opposite of solipsism.

II. The Theory Argument

At the beginning of this section I would like to point out some aspects of Vacariu’s EDWs perspective. From my point of view, his theory should be seen as follows:

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\(^6\) From the raw facts of nature to the metaphysical intuition.

\(^7\) From the metaphysic principles to the explication of the world through mathematics.

\(^8\) It should be noted that in today’s world, one cannot know all there is about the world as such. Thus, for the creation of a paradigm, a scientist should have a look at the current beliefs in philosophy so that he or she would not try to build from principles that have been shown to be wrong, and a philosopher should immerse in the latest scientific findings so that he won’t build an expired or useless paradigm.
i) The first principle (Epistemology = Ontology) and its consequences which have been presented in the second chapter of this article;

ii) The Hyperontology\(^9\) which contains the second principle (The EDWs are.) and all that follows this principle;

iii) The Hyperrules\(^10\);

iv) The third principle, which presupposes a paradox and its consequences.\(^11\)

If one considers this division, the whole paradigm becomes more easily understandable. This, however, is not the division which the author necessarily employs in his books, but, for the sake of clarity, I urge the reader to keep it in mind when immersing his or herself in the theory. Having these things covered, let me point out the most striking aspects of the paradigm which should convince the reader that the EDWs perspective is not a solipsist one.

The first piece of content I would like to use has been actually presented to the reader in the previous chapter. It is the first Hyperrule and it states that: “Humans are not the only entities that observe (interact with) other entities.” (Vacariu 2011). From my perspective this is more of a consequence of the first principle rather than a rule, but nonetheless, it should be noted that the author dehumanizes knowledge. It would seem to follow the whole process of decentrallizing the human being from the centre of the universe started by Copernic, Darwin and Freud, whose theories not only move the humans out of the centre of the

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\(^9\) Through Hyperontology one should understand the ontology that treats all the EDWs as a whole, not each one in particular. This being said, one should tread carefully, as all the propositions are deduced, since no one can study all the EDWs simultaneously. The reason behind this is that, on one hand, attention is a serial process which limits our interaction with only one it/It or group of its/Its at a time and, on the other hand the fact that one must change the conditions of observation depending on the EW one studies.

\(^10\) This notion has been designated by Vacariu. Again, the reason behind it is that these rules are to be kept when crossing from one EW to another and when doing the Hyperontology.

\(^11\) I consider this to be the ontology if the reader would allow me to use this term, as it has been removed from the theory itself. This part mostly consists in fact about Being since the philosopher also has extensive knowledge in cognitive neuroscience.
world, but also move their own centre. (Rorty 1991, 142). It should also be noted that through this rule we guarantee the fact that humans do not instate the EDWs but rather the very own its and/or Its and their interactions do that, thus avoiding a solipsist view.

I will only mention the next two Hyperrules for they do not necessarily help the argumentation, but their importance seems to force me to at least draw attention to them:

*The part-whole rule* – “[…] the whole and the parts cannot exist in the same place at the same time. From the viewpoint of the whole (an It), the parts do not exist.” (Vacariu 2011, 54) and the *Kant-Carnap rule of containment* – “The extension of some notions/principles initially constructed within a scientific theory that explains the phenomena from a particular EW₁ to another theory that explains the phenomena from another EW₂ are, in general, empty concepts/principles.” (2011, 30). While the first of these two rules helps divide and identify different EDWs, the second helps their study, urging the scientists to be aware that while some notions/principles may apply in two EDWs, this does not mean one ought to mix them up and just dismiss them as being a single EW.

The last Hyperrule is called *the body-brain law of evolution*. This rule is adopted since evolution is an important fact which must be considered during the study of any It. Thus, Vacariu states: “The cell and the human being follow the same rules of evolution. Both entities have subjectivity and we can call the ‘subjectivity’ of each epistemological entity, in general, a subjectivity that is equivalent with the identity of each entity. We use the identity for external and non-living entities, while the subjectivity for the living entities. From the EDWs perspective, the interactions constitute the identity of non-living entities, while the implicit knowledge represents the subjectivity in living entities. Each living entity has an implicit knowledge that corresponds to the physical interactions inside the body and brain. Without this implicit knowledge, a living entity would not be able to survive in any environment. This implicit knowledge is the result of the evolution of living species.” (Vacariu 2010, 55-56). Having this taken into account, the author presents the rule: “The brain and body have evolved together in a non-decomposable, intermingled couple, but in order for the organism to survive, the brain-body couple has to correspond to the ‘I’.” (2010, 54).
Although this rule seems a little disappointing at first glance, its implications are of the upmost importance. For example:

a) One cannot study either the Being or the It without taking into account the evolution of life;

b) One cannot study either of them without taking into account the evolution of the individual during his lifetime.

As an example meant to sustain a), I would remind the reader about the implicit knowledge such as any and every biological processes which take place in an It, which has been developed through evolution. As for b), any of the explicit knowledge would do, such as walking or driving or speaking which have been learnt during the evolution of the individual.

The reader might have noticed the implications which this last rule has for my argumentation: One cannot consider oneself without an It (a body) and, more than that, one cannot consider any It without a Being. This rule seems to be the best piece of content for my anti-solipsist argumentation, as it guarantees that i) I have a body, and ii) Anyone I meet which is alive has a mind. One might object to this rule, though, in many ways: either by sustaining the reductionist perspective and saying that any knowledge we might have is in the brain and therefore it might all be just a body, for example, or by sustaining that I do not actually meet anyone and it is all in my mind. I shall not give any counter-arguments to the reductionist perspective as Vacariu discusses it at length in his books. Concerning the other perspective I will dedicate the next chapter to dealing with it a more or less satisfactory manner.

Either way, I would like to present to the reader another piece of content extracted from the paradigm which would deny the solipsist view. In the division I proposed earlier, the next important aspect of the theory would belong to the third principle – the postulation of the Being EW and its paradox: “Being is an entity and an EW at the same time.” (Vacariu 2011, 55). This paradox has been postulated because of several empirical problems like the fact that one cannot interact with his or her own mind or another person’s mind, the fact that cognitive neuroscience has been having some trouble with the localization of the functions that we can identify in our mind etc. In any case, the paradox assures us that any process or entity we would like to place in this EW becomes identifiable only on a conceptual level. In understanding this, one must
keep in mind the part-whole hyperrule. All these processes and entities become mental states. Also, it guarantees us that the Being has continuity in time. So, all the problems concerning the identity of the self and others as such become irrelevant since as long as one has any mental state, one is his or her own self. Concerning what one might attribute to the Being, life seems to be the most important aspect to this argumentation: “Mind (the subjectivity) and life have the same ontological status.” (2010, 79). It should be noted that the author signals that nothing seems to interact with life, thus it cannot be attributed to any of the pre-EDWs perspective places or any of the previously mentioned EDWs. He also studies the definitions of life and he finds the next two opinions to be the most spread: either life emerges from a cell or organism (2010, 79), or life is a process of the living organisms. (2010, 83). The first definition fails to satisfy Vacariu’s paradigm, as emergence is a pseudo-concept which breaks the Kant-Carnap rule, while the second seems to be a tautology. Because of this, the author shall convey that life corresponds to a cell or organism and that it seems to be a kind of process. Even more so, the philosopher shall compare life to implicit knowledge since this too is a process of which we are unaware of activating and sustaining and, since we cannot interact with either of them, the author shall place life alongside knowledge in the Being.

This position that life occupies in the EDWs perspective seems to help in my endeavor. The reason is that, again, if one should encounter an It, one must realize that it has a corresponding Being. Any living organism, be it unicellular or plant or a person will have a mind of its own since it has the corresponding process of life. Also, it should be noted that any organism will have a Being for as long as it is living. The EDWs perspective does not allow any Beings running adrift. Once the

12 And by these places I refer to either what one would call the microcosm or the macrocosm.

13 It should be noted that Vacariu would not accept the phrasing “placed in the Being”. This is due to the aforementioned paradox and the fact that Being has no spatial dimensions. The correct phrasing would be “Life is Being”, or “Knowledge is Being”. For the sake of clarity I shall try to refrain from adopting too much of the jargon employed by the philosopher.
organism dies, the Being that corresponded to that particular It will disappear into Hypernothing\textsuperscript{14}. This stands to also prove the fact that although the Being is different from the body, it has nothing to do with the religious idea of a soul, as it does not linger after death.

After these few arguments presented in this chapter, I believe I have proven that there is no problem of the other minds, as it is called\textsuperscript{15}. There is still the strong solipsist account that would state that maybe we do not have any access to anything exterior to our minds at all. Maybe all the mental images and sensations are purely imaginative. Although I consider that nobody would still hold this view, it is nevertheless part of the solipsist problem and I shall address it the best I can in the next chapter.

\textbf{III. The Skeptical Argument}

First of all, the reader should consider the strong solipsist view for a second. Let us imagine that we have accepted the EDWs perspective. Thus I am the Being that corresponds to my body. This Being is not causally connected to the body since one is an EW and the other one belongs to an EDW, the Macro-EW. Any sensation I have is melted in a mental state, alongside with all the processes I am unaware of such as every action it takes in order for me to breathe, or life itself. Moreover, at any given state I also have different emotions and thoughts. All of these are melted down into one indivisible mental state, since we know that the paradox does not allow us to take any process or entity that is placed within the Being to be taken separately except purely conceptually. This should, from the solipsist’s perspective make me doubt any sensation I

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\textsuperscript{14} Hypernothing is a term employed by the philosopher in order to designate the “space from between” the EDWs. It is very important to note that it is for pure conceptual reasons that the author uses this term, as it has no existence: between any two EDWs there is nothing but the conceptual relation of correspondence – no space, no time, nothing. It is called as such since it belongs in the Hyperontology section, because of the necessity of thinking of two or more EDWs at the same time.

\textsuperscript{15} This problem states that one cannot be sure whether anyone but him or herself has a mind of his or her own, or any “internal life” or “internal feelings” whatsoever, as one can never experience these other minds.
have. Moreover, since there is no (special-) temporal continuity between
the Macro-EW and my Being, there should be a difference between
when my sensory organs come into contact with a stimulus and when I
perceive this within the Being.

Having this picture in mind, one should consider whether within
this paradigm there is any chance of having any objective sensations.
Since the Being is not causally connected to the Macro-EW, the altering
of my mental state at moment $t_1$ into the mental state at $t_2$ is not caused
by whatever stimuli my body is subjected to, but rather it is changing on
its own without any cause whatsoever. How could I have any assurance
that there exists anything other than the Being?

This seems to me to resemble somewhat the predicament in which
Descartes found himself while employing the skeptical method. But alas,
we cannot invoke any benevolent God which would grant us anything
since in the EDWs, the benevolent, omnipotent, omniscient God cannot exist
due to the very notion of attention which is a serial process: “As human
attention is a serial process, the human subject cannot simultaneously
observe EDWs.” (Vacariu 2008, 113). If attention is a serial process and I
cannot observe two or more EDWs simultaneously, how can I believe
that there could be something as a being which is omniscient? The good
part about this is that I do not face an evil spirit that would try and
deceive me either, since nothing can interact with the Being. Therefore, if
nothing changes my mental states and they just change on their own,
why should I consider that Vacariu went astray anywhere along his
reasoning? Is there anything that would make me rather consider the
fact that I have imagined each and every bit of information generated by
science with which I do or do not agree or any of the sensations I have
experienced? Since I cannot find any reason to doubt all my experiences
so far, I cannot find any doubt concerning the existence of a world
outside my mind which is more or less the way it was portrayed by my
mental states. If this is correct, then all I have to do is ensure myself that
if I were to adopt or create a paradigm of my own I should pay attention
to my line of reasoning so that I should not lose the world in the process.
But I have already ensured myself of that via the argumentation in the
second chapter of this article. Should I trust the data Bohr collected?
Well, since experimental science has set its ground rules so that anyone
may reenact any one discovery in order to check that information, and since generally, except for the borderline cases, human beings tend to be alike, I believe I should trust them. And if, by any chance, they should turn out to be wrong, I believe I should try and build anew.

The reader may find this last part of my argumentation less rational and more emotional and optimist. I believe this to be the correct approach, since the strong solipsist view seems to me to be a game, more of a psychological playground rather than a rational way of thinking, since, after one has accepted this line of thought, he or she should not speak or generally do anything since it would be pointless. What point would there be in me trying to convince the reader that you do not have a mind and you are just a figment of my imagination? Moreover, I believe any such skeptical exercises that go beyond the common sense, to be unproductive. If the world does not exist, why should I try to find out its natural laws when I could just make up some new ones? Thus, I conclude this chapter, since I feel that I have treated this most hilarious worldview as well as I could, demonstrating that if one is to accept the strong solipsist viewpoint, one could just as easily adopt the opposite, which, through centuries of scientific discoveries and some clear thinking would evolve in the EDWs perspective.

IV. Conclusions

In the end I would like to remind the reader that this article is not to be viewed as a development of the EDWs perspective and neither is it intended for the ones who have immersed themselves in the theory, but rather for those who know little of it and would inquire whether a proper study of this paradigm would be worthwhile. Thus, I intended to show one of the opinions which might arise at a first glance, that at one point the theory seems to take a turn for solipsism, and deal with it accordingly, by dismissing the doubts any possible reader might have.

During writing this article, several pieces of information and questions raised which I would consider worthy of future development: the paradox – whether it is truly necessary to postulate the Being as a EW and an It; the way, if any such are, one should employ Ockham’s
Razor, since every living thing seems to have a corresponding EDW, fact which greatly increases the number of EDWs; and the status of the theoretical sciences – since we do not have a causal relation between our bodies and our minds, what could guarantee us there is an actual difference between a scientific article or book and any fictional creation, and what would this difference be?

REFERENCES