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Total helplessness: A critical reconstruction of the concept of enlightenment in the philosophy of Uppaluri Gopala Krishnamurti

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ABSTRACT

This paper provides a critical analysis and reconstruction of the concept of enlightenment in the thought of the Indian philosopher Uppaluri Gopala Krishnamurti (1918–2007). The importance and significance of Krishnamurti's philosophy lies in the fact that he was one of the few Eastern thinkers to engage in a critical discussion with the traditional concept of enlightenment, while offering his alternative views on the subject. Over the centuries, the notion of enlightenment has significantly changed its meaning, becoming increasingly mythologised, just as the figure of the enlightened being has been deified. The title character sheds new light on the concept of enlightenment, pointing in the direction of a systematic rejection of the traditionally religious superstructure that had clung to it over time. The analysed views constitute a rendering of this religious phenomenon from the perspective of the naturalistic paradigm, pointing to its physiological aspect. Thus, from the point of view of the history of Eastern philosophy, his ideas have a strongly innovative character and their introduction to philosophical discourse may significantly change our understanding of the startling concept of enlightenment.

KEYWORDS

Uppaluri Gopala Krishnamurti; Jiddu Krishnamurti; Theosophical Society; enlightenment

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INTRODUCTION AND FIGURE PROFILE

Uppaluri Gopala Krishnamurti (1918–2007, hereafter U.G. Krishnamurti or simply U.G.) was a contemporary Indian philosopher. He declared that he had achieved a profound transformation, which he interpreted in a strictly naturalistic way, denying not only the religious or mystical dimension of his transformation, but also the psychological one, arguing for the complete biologisation of the transformative experience. U.G. himself denied the existence of enlightenment, suggesting that the state in which he found himself was a "natural state", which supposedly has nothing to do with the idea of enlightenment as it is presented in the Eastern soteriological systems.

This Indian philosopher was born into a wealthy Brahmin family in the port city of Machilipatnam in the state of Andhra Pradesh. His mother died seven days after giving birth, after which his father remarried and placed his son in the care of wealthy maternal grandparents. From childhood, U.G. Krishnamurti was brought up in the atmosphere of the Theosophical Society, whose grandfather was an important member and sponsor. The Theosophical Society was founded in 1875 by Helena Petrova Blavatsky (1831–1891) (Neff, 1937: 195–196) and Henry Olcott (1832–1907) (Olcott, 1895: 136, 195–196). U.G. himself, despite his rebellious character, was also a member of the Theosophical Society for much of his life, and it was this association that made it possible for U.G. to meet the most significant person in his life.[1]

The framework of this article does not permit for a detailed examination of the activities of the Society and relationship that U.G. has with it, but it is enough to emphasise that it was the first serious attempt — despite the peculiar views of its founders and members — to found a common core and to create a synthesis of civilisation between the Occident and the Orient, or more precisely between Christianity, Brahmanism, and Buddhism in their many forms (Santucci, 2005: 261–262). In the opinion of the Society, Christianity and Buddhism share a similar eschatological view. In Christianity, it is the Parousia, i.e., the belief in the second coming of the saviour, and in the case of Buddhism, we have a similar theory concerning the coming to earth of the Buddha Maitreya (Leadbeater, 1925: 51, 334–335), as the perfectly enlightened successor of the historical Shakyamuni, who will lead the sentient beings to the shore of the land of happiness (Walshe, 1995: 403–404). Both

[1] In case of U.G. Krishnamurti the Society create proper context that formed his main leitmotif, i.e., the desire to penetrate to the very core of the esoteric ideas and to see for himself whether or not they are really based on something real, or maybe they are just a game of appearances and imaginations. A more detailed description of the period that U.G. spent under the influence of the Theosophical Society and how it influenced his further life can be found in his autobiographical book *The mystique of enlightenment* (Uppaluri Gopala, Arms, & Bansal, 2005: 7–17).

of these doctrines, and thus the religious traditions from which they derive, were, in the Society's view, to converge in the person of the young Brahmin Jiddu Krishnamurti (1895–1986). It was in his teaching and activities that the ultimate synthesis of the messages of the major religions was hoped to occur (Lutyens, 1975: 21).

For most of his life, U.G. Krishnamurti was influenced by his elder namesake, with whom he was often confused. J. Krishnamurti was a very peculiar character, and his biography crossed paths with that of U.G. Krishnamurti at many crucial moments. It should be noted that it is impossible to have a thorough understanding of whom U.G. was and of the meaning of his views without also referring to the intellectual activity of the most important figure in his life, which undoubtedly was J. Krishnamurti. This relationship resembled to an extent that of disciple and master, albeit was far more problematic. What distinguished J. Krishnamurti from the traditional gurus, with whom U.G. despised, was the feeling of inner integrity emanating from him, the extraordinary passion he showed during expressive speeches, and the novelty of the language, which was expressed in modern terminology, rejecting traditional hierarchical divisions and focusing on a direct insight that supposedly transforms man as a whole. All of this made J. Krishnamurti by far the greatest challenge for sceptical attitude of U.G. Krishnamurti. The aspiration for absolute autonomy, which characterised U.G. from an early age, was confronted with a hidden admiration for J. Krishnamurti's independence, and with a desire to penetrate his teachings. This dynamism of cynicism and admiration towards his namesake was one of the sides of the leitmotif of the internal conflict that U.G. struggled with for most of his life.

However, this article will not be concerned with complicated relationship between U.G. with J. Krishnamurti[2]. We will focus here only on the revolutionary views propounded by U.G. Krishnamuti himself. As we will see, U.G.'s ideas shed new light on the concept of enlightenment, which is so crucial from the point of view of his lifelong struggle with the philosophy of J. Krishnamurti.

The research method of the presented article involves critical analysis, and interpretation of available source materials.[3] These materials consists primarily of the available transcripts of interviews conducted with the title character,

[2] To fully explore the nature of this relation, it would require a separate article solely focusing on it.

[3] Academic writing that mentions U.G. Krishnamurti are almost non-existant. One of the few exceptions is U.G.'s friend and professor emeritus of philosophy J.S.R.L. Narayan Moorty, who has published several conference paper and essays on U.G. in his website: https://www.narayanamoorty.net (24.07.2022) and in his book: Narayana Moorty, 2013. In Polish language context, exception is the article written by Jacek Sieradzan, professor of religious studies (Sieradzan, 2017).

written in English and later published as books with U.G. name as it is main author.[4] Their interpretation is in necessity based on a form of critical analysis, as they concern strictly subjective and at the same time novel issues. For this reason, it is difficult to compare them adequately with the available literature on mystical or transformative experiences and interpret them through the lens of great soteriological systems such as Buddhism, although similarities can be found. In this way, the concept of enlightenment will be analysed independently of the traditional contexts within which it is most often presented.

IDEAS NOT BORN OUT OF THINKING

U.G. Krishnamurti while growing up in the atmosphere of the Theosophical Society, was inevitably imbued with the idea of "spiritual" self-realisation, which was the *summum bonum* of human existence in the view of all important currents of the Eastern philosophy and the Theosophical Society itself. The constant questioning of the value of this goal and, at the same time, the inquiry into the nature of the idea of enlightenment and the subject destined to achieve it, constituted the first and fundamental motive of his life. Here is a relevant quote:

> What is there: *What is that state?* — that was my fundamental question, the basic question — that went on and on and on. "I must find out what that state is. Nobody can give that state; I am on my own. I have to go on this uncharted sea without a compass, without a boat, with not even a raft to take me. I am going to find out for myself what the state is in which that man is." I wanted that very much, otherwise I wouldn't have given my life (Uppaluri Gopala, Arms, & Bansal, 2005: 15).

Based on available transcripts, we can come to the conclusion that questions about enlightenment and the possibility of achieving it were a "hot issues", which made the most serious difficulties of U.G.'s everyday life much less significant.

[4] U.G. never write a book of his own. All books signed with U.G. Krishnamurti's name as author are transcripts of the long conversations and interviews that he has with different people throughout his life. U.G. himself has repeatedly emphasised that he does not know what is in them because he has never read them. For this reason, some methodological caution about the books must be exercised, as they are subject to error, overinterpretation, and censorship. The most reliable source contains the numerous videos, which partially overlap with the content of the books and circulate freely on popular websites. Also notice the very interesting copyright note — or rather, emphasis on the lack thereof — in the introduction to each book (for example *The mystique of enlightenment*): "My teaching, if that is the word you want to use, has no copyright. You are free to reproduce, distribute, interpret, misinterpret, distort, garble, do what you like, even claim authorship, without my permission or the permission of anybody".

With the dramatic experience of the breakup with his family and the crisis of homelessness (Uppaluri Gopala, Arms, & Bansal, 2005: 19), U.G. came to the ultimate conviction of the futility of the questions he had been asking throughout his life, and thus come to the conclusion of the absurdity of all religious pursuits. This radical view was the consequence of an experience that he himself described as a c a l a m i t y (Uppaluri Gopala, Arms, & Bansal, 2005: 37). The nature of this experience was the source of his conviction about the validity of his ideas, which he claimed were not the result of deep reflection but some sort of direct understanding independent of linear thinking (Uppaluri Gopala *et al.*, 2002: 42). The path that leads U.G. to that direct understanding was in some ways similar to that taken by other seekers of enlightenment in the Eastern traditions. However, the expression of (anti-)religious realisation in his case differed dramatically from all other examples.[5]

In the first instance, it is necessary to look at the nature of the calamity that he experienced.[6] It was supposedly purely physiological phenomenon and was consisted of far-reaching mutations in the way his body functioned (Uppaluri Gopala, Arms, & Bansal, 2005: 43). U.G. Krishnamurti denied the existence of any religious or "spiritual" overtones in the transformation he experienced (Uppaluri Gopala, Arms, & Bansal, 2005: 43). On the contrary, according to U.G. Krishnamurti himself, it was the consequence of a drastic elimination, from the structure of the organism, any illusory concepts and their corresponding unreal entities, which in his opinion were: spirit, soul, self, mind, psyche, etc. (Uppaluri Gopala & Chrystal, 2005: 76).

According to the Indian philosopher, man is purely a physical organism, lacking not only an immortal soul but even a self or mind in the present life.[7] He regarded the idea of mind universally possessed by mankind as a myth (Uppaluri Gopala, Newland, & Bansal, 2005: 32), being an unfortunate consequence of man's psychological tendency to reify and then hypostatise the

[5] There are examples of similar radical figures in the Chinese chan tradition. One of the most flagrant was Linji Yixuan (?–866), founder of the Linji school of Chan. He was famous for similarly iconoclastic statements and surprisingly similar insights into the paradoxical relationship between enlightenment and the process of seeking it. Unlike U.G., despite much eclecticism, he remained within the tradition from which he came (*e.g.*, Watson, 1993).

[6] The category of "experience" is not precise here, since according to U.G. all experiences are conditioned by the prism of cultural knowledge, i.e., symbolic order (U.G. agreed here with the position of strong constructivism). The calamity of which U.G. spoke is precisely the negation of this order, i.e., of the structure that makes experience as such possible, and thus cannot easily be inscribed within the framework of what we understand as "experience". Perhaps a better term is the more objectively oriented notion of "event" or "fact".

[7] A similar convergence of views is present among representatives of eliminativism in contemporary philosophy of mind and cognitive science. Based on empirical data, they share a similar view of the unreality of the designations of such concepts as mind and consciousness (*e.g.*, Metzinger, 2009).

concepts he uses to name reality, thus creating "symbolic order"[8] that is so often mistaken for reality. This tendency also applies to the concepts and pronouns that the speaking subject uses in relation to himself. In this way, the individual falls into the illusion of the existence of an internal, separate subject of action and thought (Polak, 2018: 56). When, however, with the help of the great effort — and a lot of luck, as U.G. himself emphasised (Uppaluri Gopala, Newland, & Bansal, 2005: 79) — the organism in some unclear way frees itself from these mechanisms, then a reorganisation of the whole physical structure of human being takes place, and prepares itself to enter into, what U.G. called, the "natural state" in which the rhythm of life is no longer disturbed by the totality of symbolic knowledge to which, during his life, a given subject had access (Bhatt, 1992: 135). Here is a quote from U.G. that describes this state:

> The natural state is not the state of a self-realized God-realized man, it is not a thing to be achieved or attained, it is not a thing to be willed into existence; it is there — it is the living state. This state is just the functional activity of life. By "life" I do not mean something abstract; it is the life of the senses, functioning naturally without the interference of thought. Thought is an interloper, which thrusts itself into the affairs of the senses (Uppaluri Gopala, Arms, & Bansal, 2005: 53).

But what exactly put U.G. in this new state of freedom from symbolic order? It is worth noting that the questions about the nature of enlightenment that U.G. asked himself throughout his life did not receive any satisfactory answers, either during or after the transformation that is discussed (Uppaluri Gopala, Arms, & Bansal, 2005: 29). On the contrary, it was in the course of constantly questioning all possible answers, these questions revealed their meaninglessness. An unanswerable question is not actually a real question, but only a cluster of words with a question mark at the end, properly grammatically structured but semantically meaningless. According to U.G., the process of searching burns itself out without finding anything that could satisfy it (Uppaluri Gopala, Arms, & Bansal, 2005: 115). This burnout violates the very foundation upon which man's psychological structure rests and enables him to function in a symbolic order as if that order corresponded one-to-one with reality.

According to the Indian philosopher, the moment when most important existential questions are burnt out, is the moment when a process of

[8] The phrase "symbolic order" can be interpreted in this context as equivalent to the concept of illusory representation (s. māyā). In traditional Hindu philosophy, this concept means divine play or magical representation, but U.G. in his reflections referred to the root of the term māyā, which, among other things, means "to measure" or "matrix to measure" and thus also to define and name *ergo* to create a symbolic order (Uppaluri Gopala *et al.*, 2002: 59).

disintegration of personality start to occur, including its very foundation, which is the sense of an existence of a separated subject. The sense of duration of the narrative centre — The Self — around which the conscious life of man is organised disappears. This centre is therefore not an independent and permanently existing point of reference, but only a kind of mirage of meanings, which originates from the entering into the domain of language and is based on a symbolic order of society and culture. This structure has its weaknesses however, because it necessarily rests on the existence — or the hope of the existence — of an ultimate goal that defines the individual as well as the community. In the U.G.'s view, without this transcendent purpose, the structure loses its *raison d'être* (Rao, 2007: 214–216).

This goal in any society is generally set by religious thinking, which is the only one capable of meeting the demands of transcending the transient world. The question of why it is religion that constitutes the ultimate cornerstone of the entire symbolic structure of societies as well as particular individuals seems legitimate in this context, but the limited volume of this article makes it impossible to examine it adequately. Right now it's sufficient to point out that religious thinking has always accompanied mankind, and even today function in human consciousness as, among other things, political theories that, according to some researchers, have their origin in religious thinking (*e.g.*, Schmitt, 2006). Man, being caught up in the illusion of a permanent, separated self, is a being incessantly trying to cross beyond the limits of his own perception and immediate desires. He feels the need for means to cope with the awareness of the temporality of his separated being. This awareness of transience and the final end can be the main root of all religious aspirations because it constitutes the most puzzling enigma of life and the horizon of rational reflection (Malinowski, 1948: 29).

The goal, however, cannot exist without a clearly defined path that leads to it, and if that path proves to be ineffective, then the goal itself begins to appear as a mistake or even a fraud. In the case of U.G. Krishnamurti, we have an example of an extremely radical approach of search for all possible paths to enlightenment and consequently coming to the conviction that none of them was the right one (Uppaluri Gopala & Maverick, 2005: 57). According to him, they do not lead to any conclusion, they are not a straight path from point A to point B. Rather, they are just a dreary going around in circles without any point, with a faint hope of reaching the desired goal, which in fact has no chance of success (Uppaluri Gopala *et al.*, 2002: 126). If we were to refer to Buddhist terminology, the tragic conclusion in this case may correspond to the paradoxical synonymity of the process of "spiritual" practice (sansk. *sādhanā*) with the vicious circle of suffering (sansk. *saṃsāra*), from which it was originally supposed to be a deliverance. Religious aspiration, which constitute the ultimate goal of human existence collapses in the moment of this identification,

resulting in the breakdown of the symbolic structure upon which the edifice of the human psyche arises. Only then, following U.G's line of reasoning, in a state of total helplessness does the final liberation of the organism occur, along with a slow process of disintegration of the psyche and reintegration of the "natural state" of the physical organism. This process is not accomplished without the difficulties, challenges, and pain that must be overcome by the unyielding aspiration. Here is a relevant quote:

> All those to whom this kind of thing has happened have really worked hard, touched rock-bottom, staked everything. It does not come easily. It is not handed over to you on a gold platter by somebody (Uppaluri Gopala & Maverick, 2005: 38).

Without coordination from the false centre, all the senses and the way of the functioning of the human body changes. The process of constant over--interpretation of incoming stimuli that goes beyond simple survival functions is no longer present. The resultant state is characterised by greater sensitivity to stimuli and a much more efficient way of dealing with the challenges of daily life. The human body, no longer having to deal with imaginary problems, can fully focus on meeting its basic biological needs and thus making life a very simple process (Uppaluri Gopala, Arms, & Bansal, 2005: 118–119).

PHYSICAL ASPECTS

U.G. Krishnamurti meticulously discussed all physical transformations, which had begun at the point where his doubts and search came to an end. This description is as valuable as it is novel, since it avoids the terminology present in the traditions of Hinduism and Buddhism. Instead, it uses the modern western terms and demonstrates a consistent meticulous attention to detail. Assuming that U.G. is telling the truth,[9] it means that this original mode of expression makes a case for the possibility of an exhaustive description of the fact of enlightenment from a purely naturalistic point of a view, and thus, at least theoretically, make it possible to investigate into it with the help of the natural sciences. Such an approach can free the concept of enlightenment from the aura of mystery, while still treating it seriously.

Another important turn in thinking about the nature of enlightenment is connected with the elimination of romantic visions and terms traditionally misused in describing internal transformation. Usually words like happiness, bliss, love, divinity, etc., have no strict definitions and thus are easily used for populist propaganda and marketing, without adding anything of value to

[9] Not only that U.G. is not deluded or a con man, but also that what he declared is in fact the state of affair.

the discussion — which is especially true in regard to modern teachers of "spirituality" and what U.G. himself ironically describe as "the holy business" (Uppaluri Gopala *et al.*, 2006: 24-25). In U.G.'s description of the calamity, we observe not only the avoidance of the use of meliorative terms, but also a fierce fight against them and warnings of potential manipulations with their help (Uppaluri Gopala *et al.*, 2002: 98); (Uppaluri Gopala, Arms, & Bansal, 2005: 38). The Indian philosopher points to the absurdity of all positive attempts to describe enlightenment using these imprecise terms. They aim at describing a state which, after all, is characterised by getting rid of the symbolic--conceptual grid, in relation to which concepts such as love, happiness, divinity, etc., could have any meaning. If enlightenment means the liberation of the organism from the influence of the symbolic order, as we previously noticed, then this liberation must also operate in the dimension of positive experiences — as well as negative — and this means that the vague terms cited above do not apply to the description of such a state.

This overcoming of the meliorative terms as well as philosophical and religious terminology of the East is an important part of U.G.'s philosophy. This process was initiated by the aforementioned J. Krishnamurti. However, it was only U.G. who, going one step further, has undertaken a far-reaching and systematic deconstruction of the traditional terms, replacing them with purely physiological descriptions that appears in the first book of U.G. Krishnamurti's talks, namely *The mystique of enlightenment*. This book contains detailed descriptions of all the transformations experienced by its protagonist during the period of his calamity. It is noteworthy how multifaceted were these transformations, as they touched every sense of the body. Here is a description of the beginning:

> Then began the changes — from the next day onwards, for seven days — every day one change. First, I discovered the softness of the skin, the blinking of the eyes stopped, and then changes in taste, smell and hearing — these five changes I notice (Uppaluri Gopala, Arms, & Bansal, 2005: 32).

It seems that the structure of his organism has changed, as well as all the senses, which, without the coordination of a narrative centre, began to function independently and in the highest state of readiness.

On the second day, U.G. Krishnamurti began to experience sensual data as it is in case with a little child, i.e. without the constant mediation of concepts. Feeling like newborn, he was unable to recognise even such simple perceptual data as the taste of a simple dish. After some time, the condition returned to normal and U.G. Krishnamurti regained full access to his memory, but now it functioned as if in the background of his consciousness and emerge only when an external need appeared (Uppaluri Gopala, Arms, & Bansal, 2005: 33).

On the third day, the sense of taste and smell changed. Each smell seemed unbearable, and while eating U.G. Krishnamurti could only taste one dominant ingredient (Uppaluri Gopala, Arms, & Bansal, 2005: 32–33).

The fourth day is about changes in vision perception. U.G. felt as if his eyesight was changing the degree of sharpness without his will. It made him feel as if what he observes was happening inside him. Also on that day, spontaneous blinking stopped completely (Uppaluri Gopala, Arms, & Bansal, 2005: 34).

The fifth day is a similar change to the previous day, but it concerns the sense of hearing. U.G. began to think that all sounds had their source inside him (Uppaluri Gopala, Arms, & Bansal, 2005: 34).

On the sixth day, U.G. lost the ability to recognise the elements of his body as an integral whole. Since then, the image representing the totality of his organism disappeared from his consciousness, and what remains were only separated points where the body touched the environment, which together did not form any overall mental representation (Uppaluri Gopala, Arms, & Bansal, 2005: 35).

After a period of seven days, in which each successive day focused on the change of a particular sense, a clinical death lasting almost an hour occurred, which was repeated periodically in the later years of his life. The following paragraph attests to this:

> So, the aperture was trying to close itself, and something was there trying to keep it open. Then after a while there was no will to do anything, not even to prevent the aperture closing itself. Suddenly, as it were, it closed. I don't know what happened after that. This process lasted for 49 minutes — this process of dying. It was like a physical death, you see. Even now it happens to me: the hands and feet become so cold, the body becomes stiff, the heartbeat slows down, the breathing slows down, and then there is a gasping for breath. Up to a point you breathe your last breath, as it were, and then you are finished. What happens after that, nobody knows (Uppaluri Gopala, Arms, & Bansal, 2005: 36–37).

U.G. has claimed that since that time, his body had begun to manifest androgynous characteristics, in which the left side corresponded to the female sex and the right side to the male sex. It appears that his body has regressed in some important aspect to the state before gender diversification. If Krishnamurti is to be trusted, the excerpts of the analysed transcripts make a case for the idea that entry into the symbolic order can stop or intensify hormonal management and the development of secondary sexual characteristics. Here is the relevant excerpt:

> And then the sex hormones started changing. I didn't know whether I was a man or a woman — "What is this business?" suddenly there was a breast on the left-hand side. All kinds of things, it went on and on and on. It took three years for this body to fall into a new rhythm of its own (Uppaluri Gopala, Arms, & Bansal, 2005: 39–40).

Furthermore, convex glands of various colours supposedly appeared on his torso and neck, which apparently corresponded with descriptions of attributes of Hindu deities and allegedly correlated with energy centres inside the body, known from the Tantric philosophy. However, their descriptions concerned the specific nature associated with changes in the functioning of glands and internal organs, not the non-physical "spiritual" clusters called chakras. One of U.G.'s interviewer describes his and other people observations on the appearance of U.G.'s body in the following exalted fashion:

> Up and down his torso, neck and head, at those points, that Indian holy men call "chakras", his friends observed swellings of various shapes and colours, which came and went at intervals. On his lower abdomen, the swellings were horizontal, cigar--shaped bands. Above the navel was a hard, almondshaped swelling. A hard, blue swelling, like a large medallion, at the base of his throat. These two "medallions" were as though suspended from a multicoloured, swollen ring — blue, brownish and light yellow — around his neck, as in pictures of the Hindu gods. There were also other similarities between the swellings and the depictions of Indian religious art: his throat was swollen to a shape that made his chin seem to rest on the head of a cobra, as in the traditional images of Siva; just above the bridge of the nose was a white lotus-shaped swelling: all over the head the small blood vessels expanded, forming patterns like the stylized lumps on the heads of Buddha statues. Like the horns of Moses and the Taoist mystics, two large, hard swellings periodically came and went. The arteries in his neck expanded and rose, blue and snake-like, into his head (Uppaluri Gopala, Arms, & Bansal, 2005: 40–41).

All of these and many other transformations took place over the course of several days, but it lasted several months to eventually bring the body into what U.G. described as a "natural state" in which the expression of the body's innate intelligence is no longer suppressed by the totality of knowledge derived from culture and tradition (Uppaluri Gopala, Newland, & Bansal, 2005: 38–39). Here is the last quote:

> So, the mechanism is functioning in an automatic way, but with extraordinary intelligence of its own. You cannot match acquired intelligence with the extraordinary intelligence that is there. It knows what is good for it. Don't call it "divine"; there is an extraordinary, tremendous intelligence which is guiding the mechanism of the human body, and its interest is protection. Everything it does is to protect its survival — that's all it is interested in (Uppaluri Gopala, Arms, & Bansal, 2005: 129).

Assuming that what was quoted corresponds with a state of affairs, we can deduce that all these extraordinary changes that U.G. went through come down to the organism's attempt to adapt itself to function in a world from which it was not separated by a grid of symbolic and conceptual representations.

FINAL REMARKS AND CONCLUSION

U.G.'s statements often take the form of apparent paradoxes. A statement such as: "Wanting to have pleasure all the time creates the pain here" (Uppaluri Gopala & Maverick, 2005: 73), may appear at first glance to be unintuitive or improbable. Nevertheless, if we take a closer look at the reasoning behind such a declaration, we may find it difficult to reject. The fundamental assumption underlying this and similar ideas is U.G.'s conviction — in which he agrees with Buddhism — about the impermanence of private experience and its constant change as an indisputable fact (Uppaluri Gopala, Newland, & Bansal, 2005: 94). By definition, a pleasant sensation is the one that the subject wants to happen and to last, thus we can argue that the conceptualisation of any sensation as pleasant is at the same time an expression of a silent opposition to its inevitable transience. We can say that the very process of conceptualisation, i.e., of applying a conceptual framework, is at the same time a clumsy attempt to petrify the ephemeral experience, which already creates an internal conflict and strain in the body and therefore automatically transforms pleasure into pain. In the context of this understanding, the mere naming of a pleasant sensation as pleasant begins the process of transforming it into something that is rejected by the body (Uppaluri Gopala, Newland, & Bansal, 2005: 54). Following this line of reasoning, we can conclude that a supposedly enlightened being does not conceptualise any sensation, and thus does not seek to extend it beyond its natural duration. As such, the pleasurable (and painful) experience is experienced with greater naturalness, and thus does not involve any possible damage to the organism (Uppaluri Gopala *et al.*, 2006: 72). This leads to a radical conclusion that, in this context, enlightenment can be understood as the freedom from demand of permanent pleasure first, and only secondarily and by consequence, from pain.

The whole problem lies in the fact that from a perspective of a person entangled in symbolic order (and in this context there is no such a thing as a "person" outside symbolic order), the very search for enlightenment is in fact, just another subtle demand for permanent pleasure, and therefore freedom from pleasure must also contain freedom from search — and the whole concept — of enlightenment (Uppaluri Gopala, Newland, & Bansal, 2005: 16). We can say that according to U.G. the process of "spiritual" development is, at its most authentic core, a process of radical emancipation from all forms of "spiritual" authority (Bhatt, 1992: 15) and paradoxically from the notion of "spiritual" development as such, with pursuit of enlightenment as its ultimate goal (Uppaluri Gopala, Arms, & Bansal, 2005: 197, 201). As a summary, it is justified to conclude that authentic spirituality is, at it is ultimate core, indistinguishable from a criticism and rejection of every possible form of spirituality. An example of this paradoxical attitude may be seen in the following

statement of U.G. in which he somewhat humorously but still insightfully summarised his views about this issue: "To realise that there is no enlightenment at all is enlightenment" (Uppaluri Gopala, Arms, & Bansal, 2005: 197).

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