

# God as creativity of the Universe

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Is it still worth talking about "God"? I do not honestly know, but, in spite of all doubts, for many people –and for myself- it is still a good way to speak about the deepest and best unspeakable Mystery of the universe, and an inspiring source of justice and peace in a world that needs them so much.

The word Dios (God in Spanish) (Deus, Dieu, Dio...), derived from the Indoeuropean root *deiw* ("light") is a metaphor: an expression that, beyond its meaning, refers us to the ultimate Mystery or to the first ineffable Reality. The same is true of the word God (or Gott...), derived from the Indo-Germanic root *gheu* ("to invoke"), and we could go on like this, from metaphor to metaphor, with all the words for God in the various languages. It would be a beautiful and humble, revealing metaphoric theology of the Ineffable.

"Creativity" seems to me to be one of the most evocative metaphorical concretions of the Mystery of mysteries, of the Real of all realities, of God. This was proposed more than a decade ago by Stuart Kauffman (1939-), a prestigious biologist, winner of the 1987 MacArthur "genius" award, researcher of complexity theory, in his own words a "secular humanist", visionary thinker on the frontiers of science. He categorically states to be an atheist of the theist "God" (Supreme omnipotent creator, personal Being distinct from the world), and with the same emphasis, however, he declares that today, when the 21st century is moving at a great speed, to save humanity and the community of the living, we need to discover and recognize the sacredness of the universe, and that the old word God can still be useful and necessary to refer us precisely to that sacredness and to live accordingly. But for that, it is necessary to reinvent God or the sacred (see his book *Reinventing the Sacred: A New View of Science, Reason and Religion*, 2008). I gather here, in a free manner, some of the fundamental points of the author's thoughts on this subject.

He says it is necessary "to reinvent the natural sacred or the "natural God". Evidently, for him "the sacred" is not opposed to "the profane", nor does "natural" mean anything subordinated to "supernatural". "Natural" designates all nature, the universe of all that exists, and "sacred" is all of nature as long as it causes awe, reverence, respect, responsibility. Take notice of each of these terms.

The recognition of creativity inspires, founds, sustains ethics. I contemplate reality inhabited, moved by the mysterious energy or creative dynamism, and I am full of awe. This awe takes me to reverence: O sacred reality in permanent movement, relationship and transformation, you make us to be and we make to be! O infinite circle with the center in everything, without circumference, without beginning or end! I worship you and invoke you in everything, beyond everything. This reverence moves me to an absolute respect for all beings and incites me to responsibility: everything calls me, challenges me, invokes me. Thou shall love thy neighbour as thyself, and thus, you will be yourself.

Universal creativity is not external to the universe. There is no external action or agent, there is no "God" acting from outside. Universal reality is self-creative, eternal or transtemporal. "Let it be made", says God over and over in the biblical myth of Genesis. Let everything make itself by allowing itself to be created by everything and at the same time contributing to creating everything, for we are both created and creators. That is God, "God enough", says Kauffman. It is more intimate and more infinite than any "God" imagined as a personal Supreme Being who, ultimately, is an anthropomorphic and "particular" God.

Creativity means that reality as a whole is self-creating through emergence, that fundamental phenomenon by which new forms or totalities emerge thanks to more complex organizations of simpler elements. Mysterious creativity by which more is created from less. Particles come together and create atoms, atoms come together and create molecules, molecules come together and create cells, alive!, cells come together and create tissues, organs, incredibly complex organisms, fungi, plants, fishes, birds, mammals, hominoid primates, hominids, humans... and whatever is yet to come, or whatever it exists but we still do not know it. Yet, we cannot help thinking that in the most simple of things existed the possibility of gathering into more complex

forms and thus create forms that were still unimaginable at the time. What is "the most simple"? It is potentiality.

From simpler elements Creativity makes emerge new more complex, qualitatively different forms, irreducible to the elements from which it emerged. New more complex forms that obey different laws and have different properties which are not explained by the laws that govern the more simple forms from which they emerged. "More is different" (P.W. Anderson, Nobel Prize in Physics). Biology is not explained without physics and chemistry laws, nor by them alone. Spirituality cannot be explained without biological laws or by them alone. Life emerges from physics and chemistry, but it is not reducible to them; mind emerges from neurons, but it is not reducible to them; conscience emerges from the brain, but it is not reducible to it. Molecules are not reducible to atoms, nor a living cell is reducible to simple molecules, nor the chimpanzee – nor the bird, nor the fish, nor the plant- to a mere set of organs. Nor the intelligence or the conscience of a transhuman being that might one day emerge would be reducible to our species Sapiens. And yet, more complex does not in any case mean superior, or more important, or more worthy.

Creativity also means that absolute determinism does not exist. The self-creative universe is an open reality. Future is unpredictable, because we cannot know all emergent factors that will shape it or all new laws that it will abide by. All phenomena –meteorological, economic, political...- is the result of a an infinitely long and complex series of interlinked causes, and every phenomenon, no matter how insignificant, is at the same time the beginning of another incalculable series of factors that could, in the end, cause floods or droughts, harvests or starvation, empires and revolutions, and alter history. The final result is always the unpredictable fruit of creativity.

Sacred creativity that links everything with everything in a cosmic body entirely created and creator. A body in which each form is a whole made of parts, and at the same time it is a part of a greater whole. A body in which every part is an agent and every action is creative, for better or worse (if we can call "creation" an action that creates hunger and misery, war and destruction, so many things that make us shudder). A body in which all beings are, in communion, co-agents of Creation or of the eternal and infinity Creativity.

The metaphor of creativity evokes an ultimate Mystery, a primordial Reality, an eternal Presence that transcends all contrast between matter or inanimate energy and immaterial spirit: the original reality is at the same time, eternally, creating itself "spiritual matter-energy" and creator "material spirit". It is the transcendence of the immanent universe and the immanence of universal transcendence. Creativity does not exist but in the forms that are creating themselves, and the forms exist only insofar animated with creativity.

The metaphor of creativity takes us, thus, beyond a crude pantheism in which all beings would be parts of "God" and "God" would be the sum of all parts. Creativity could be reconciled with panentheism (in Greek "pan en Theó" = "all in God"), insofar as all beings are in God, but without imaging that God is Something or Someone in whom we are. Creativity could perhaps be better expressed in the term theoenpantism ("Theós en panti" = "God in everything") – neologism that I take the liberty of proposing- , insofar as God is in beings as the mystery of creativity or the power to be-make that animates them.

Thus, the divine metaphor of creativity points to beyond both theism and atheism, "it could bridge the gap –says S. Kauffman- between those who believe in some form of God and secular humanists like myself who do not". "We need something else", he adds, "a new type of sacred space". I believe so. In these present times of profound cultural transition, we certainly need to overcome the old theism and the old religious creeds that, in their literalness, have become untenable, but likewise we need to overcome, in Kauffman's words, "the spiritual wasteland" in which we now are.

In a nutshell, the North American biologist and philosopher proposes a new vision of reality, of science and also of religion, of the sacred or of God: "a new God –he says- not as transcendent, nor as an agent, but as the very creativity of the universe". And he summons us all to a mystical

and ethical-political look beyond scientific positivism and religious dogmatism (which is another form of positivism).

But, why should we continue using the equivocal name God to refer to the sacred of the universal reality? S. Kauffman responds: "because God is the most powerful 'symbol we have created' ". I do not know if it is a sufficient reason, but the fact is that millions of humans designate with the metaphor "God" (in all its versions) the most real, the most sacred and unspeakable of all that is real: the creativity that animates it and challenges us.

In any case, the question is not about using one word or another one, of substituting one name for another one. It is neither a question of believing or not believing something. It is about creating, about letting us be created and being agents of sacred creativity, that is to say, that wherever there is war we bring peace, wherever there is hatred we bring forgiveness, wherever there is death we bring life, and wherever there is destruction we bring creation.

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