



Krzysztof T. Konecki

Advances in Contemplative Social Research

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UNIwersytetu
ŁÓDZKIEGO

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Contents

Introduction	9
Part One – The Basics of Contemplative Research.....	25
Chapter 1. Identity Processes and Dialogicality of Self – the Problem of Anamnesis	27
1.1. Introduction	27
1.2. “I”	27
1.3. “Me”.....	28
1.4. Dialogue - ‘internal conversations’	28
1.5. Anamnesis	29
1.6. Anamnesis Work	31
1.7. Work on Identity	32
1.8. Conclusions	36
Chapter 2. Meditation for Social Scientists	39
2.1. Introduction	39
2.2. Epistemology of the Middle Way	39
2.3. Eightfold Path: Ethics and Cognition	43
2.4. Meditation Practice for Sociologists	50
2.5. Deconstruction and Reconstruction	53
2.6. Intuition for Sociologists	59
2.7. Conclusions	64
Chapter 3. Contemplation for Economists. Towards a Social Economy Based on Empathy and Compassion	69
3.1. Introduction	69
3.2. The Cult of Money according to David Loy	74
3.3. The Buddhist Economy according to Frederic L. Pryor	77
3.4. Towards a Social Economy	80
3.5. Conclusions	81

Chapter 4. The Problem of Ontological Insecurity. What Can We Learn from Sociology Today? Some Zen Buddhist Inspirations	87
4.1. Introduction	87
4.2. Zen Buddhist Inspirations for Sociology	90
4.3. Sociological Inspirations	92
4.4. What is Ontological Security?	99
4.5. Suffering	103
4.6. Greedy Institutions	108
4.7. Conclusions	114
Part Two – The applications	121
Chapter 5. Standing in Public Places: An Ethno-Zenic Experiment Aimed at Developing Sociological Imagination, and More Besides... . .	123
5.1. Introduction	123
5.2. Methodology	128
5.3. The Analysis of Auto-Reports.	132
5.3.1. Standing “Activity”	132
5.3.2. Thinking	132
5.3.3. The Strength of the Mind and Thinking—The Battle of Thoughts.	134
5.3.4. Mindfulness Appears	135
5.3.5. The Reactions of ‘Normal Others’	136
5.3.6. Reflections After the Experiment.	136
5.4. Conclusions	138
Chapter 6. Contemplating Technology in Qualitative Research	141
6.1. Introduction	141
6.2. The Research and Disputes on CAQDAS.	143
6.3. Perspective of the Research	146
6.4. Research, Methods, and Data	152
6.5. Explication. The Central Themes of All the Auto-reports	155
6.5.1. Overview	155
6.5.2. Technical Activities and Analytical Thinking	156
6.5.3. Parallel Paths of Thinking	160
6.5.4. Auxiliary Activities	161
6.5.5. Evaluative Thinking: Evaluating the Program and Computer Functions and the Comfort and Efficiency of the Work	161

6.5.6. The Issue of Concentration	162
6.5.7. Auto-observation/ Auto-reporting	164
6.5.8. The Perception of the Body	165
6.5.9. Emotions	167
6.6. Unique Topics	168
6.7. Physical Elements of the Situation	170
6.8. Conclusions	171
6.8.1. Methodological conclusions	175
Chapter 7. Experiencing the University	179
7.1. Introduction	179
7.2. Research, Methods, and Data	180
7.3. Research Results: Experiencing the University Organizational Culture	183
7.3.1. Experiencing Emotional States While Being at the University.	184
7.3.2. Experiencing the University Infrastructure and Its Services	187
7.3.3. Organization Participants' Routine Activities	192
7.3.4. Social Relations at the University	194
7.3.5. Unique Themes of Meaning Not Related to the Foregoing Ones	196
7.4. Discussion	196
Chapter 8. Hatha-yoga in Higher Education	201
8.1. Introduction	201
8.2. Yoga in Higher Education	203
8.3. Applications of Hatha-Yoga in Higher Education	205
8.4. Yoga Practice at the Course of "Meditation for Managers"	208
8.5. Conclusions	216
Chapter 9. Buddhism Zen and Qualitative Research	221
Part three – Technicalities	225
Chapter 10. Technical Aspects of Contemplative Research	227
10.1. Introduction.	227
10.2. Meditation	228
10.3. Self-observation.	229
10.4. How to Write Auto-reports	231

8 Contents

10.5. Zenic Experiments	231
10.6. Contemplation.....	233
10.6.1. Empathetic Experiments.....	234
Conclusions	237
Bibliography	243
Information about the author	259

Introduction

A mind is like a parachute. It doesn't work if it is not open.
(Frank Zappa)

The spirit of contemplation was available in Western culture since antiquity. We start our understanding of contemplation from the description of the sculpture by Albert Toft, "The Spirit of contemplation" (see Photo 1).¹ When we look at the sculpture we see a person sitting in a chair in a very relaxed position. She/he (we do not know exactly the person's gender) is naked, which means, that she/he is open, not closed or limited by any clothes. This nudity refers to clearing the body and mind; it is like looking for an *epoché*. However, we see the ancient ornaments on the back of the chair railing, thus the person is situated in an historical time. We also see a papyrus on the thighs of the person, which can mean that contemplation is connected with reading and writing. The hands rest on the chair rails, and the fingers are loose, hence contemplation also means relaxation. However, the knees are connected, which means that the mind is aware of the body, it is on alert, consciously keeping the knees close to each other. The mind controlling the knees indicates that it is here and now. The head is held straight and the person looks in front of her/him, with concentration visible on the face and in the eyes. The open eyes also mean that she/he is here and now.

Therefore, we could infer from these artistic intuitions and art work that contemplation is a concept referring to the mental activity of deep concentration on something, on some issues, on God, or any other object. It is connected also with reading and deep reflection. The artistic vision is based on the knowledge and on the idea of contemplation coming from the Western cultural tradition. This is not a pretense – it is merely a statement of the fact. The connection with reading and writing suggest that contemplation includes the act of reflection. It is not only a passive acceptance of the events going around the contemplating person. In reading a text, it is often an act of contemplation of the phrases, metaphors, and comparisons expressed in the language. It is an activity that helps to understand the Other, the Self and the World. It could also be an analysis and critique of the

¹ See George P. Landow picture of the sculpture by Albert Toft "The Spirit of Contemplation", <http://www.victorianweb.org/sculpture/toft/28.html> (accessed: 29.04.2017).

concepts and planning of actions. However, all these acts should be made in a solitude and in deep concentration, with insight into the self and mind. This is the reality of contemplation. It is not meditation; however, the meditation is the first step of a contemplative act.

Meditation has many meanings (see chapter 2 of this book). To define it we can take inspirations from Christianity, Buddhism and philosophy, as for example stoicism.

Meditation in Christianity is connected with contemplative praying. While praying, our body should be relaxed and calm but "...inwardly alert. The root of prayer is interior silence" (Keating 2002: 136). Another meaning is connected with *discursive meditation*, when some topics are reflected upon and some lessons are drawn from meditation to put later into practice (*ibid.*: 22).

The teaching of Buddhism could inspire us to see meditation as rather a concentration on some "points", whether they will be mantras, some important words, or breaths. The awareness of being here and now is a state of mind that produces some spiritual consequences. Zen Buddhism does not explain what should we think about or what are the consequences of meditation - generally "sitting" (zazen) is without any goal, it is "just sitting". This is the act of meditation without an object. We experience in practice the mind and body and nature as it is in the everyday "life-world", and what we get is experiential knowledge (Nagatomo 2017). The practice is more important than theory. While sitting with a straight body and observing our breath we are just aware of what is going on around us; however, we do not conceptualize it and we do not compare what we see with anything from the past. Our preassumptions, habits, and stereotypes are not important. We observe the world as it is. Therefore, we overcome our dualistic perception of the world and we suspend our judgments (*ibid.*). The idea of oneness is underlined in many schools of Zen Buddhism. Interconnectedness is a linguistic expression that gives hints how dualistic thinking could be replaced (Nhat 1999, 1976). There is the problem of individual self, which is *fundamentally refused* (by resignation from the concept) in Zen practice. The "I" can be realized only when we differentiate the "not I", but I is not invoked by "not I"; if we refuse this distinction there is still the "I" that has done so. Therefore, Buddhism resigns from the concept of "I", concentrating rather on real experiences of the here and now, instead of invoking a concept that obscures living experiences. Hence, Buddhist meditation clears the field of observation based on ego-logical distortions.

Thus, meditation could be an introduction to contemplation. The latter is also connected, in the Latin language, with the meaning of a clear place for worship. So, we can follow this suggestion and indicate

that contemplating means cleaning the mind. The cleaning of the mind is needed for further reflection (it could be achieved by meditation, as in Buddhism Zen), as it is needed to clear a place for worship. The word is very often associated with praying or some religious activities, as for example meditative reading of some sacred texts or prayers. In Christianity, while pondering upon a sacred text the reader could be moved affectionately and cognitively to the state of *contemplation*, i.e. resting in the presence of God (Keating 2002: 20). It is a kind of union with God, not reflective and passive. In *Spiritual Exercises*, Saint Ignatius proposed some consecutive techniques to achieve the state of contemplation, by:

1. Intellectual elaboration of the topics (discursive meditations).
2. Gazing at the object of imagination and seeing the persons from the Gospels.
3. Application of the five senses in spirit to meditate and develop spiritual senses (*ibid.*: 22).



Photo 1. Picture of sculpture by Albert Toft “The Spirit of Contemplation”
(Victorian Web, <http://www.victorianweb.org/sculpture/toft/28.html>, accessed: 31.07.2017)

When we start research, we usually prepare the conceptualization of the research and we review the literature to create a basis for our scientific endeavour and to refer to the existing knowledge. The review of the existing knowledge has some features of contemplation; however, it is not exactly contemplation. The conceptualization of future research provides for the categorization of the approaches to the problem, and categorization of the main definitions of the phenomena under study. We usually look for errors and omissions in the previous research and analysis. Usually our methodology is based on the assumption that we should look for errors and our professional obligation is to correct them and improve the procedures and concepts of the research to approach and attain better conclusions. However, in this way we follow the same assumptions, similar concepts, and methodological procedures and we do not question the assumptions of the existing knowledge. We do not sufficiently *contemplate* the state of the research and of the researcher's self in order to understand how we are shaped by the past, by the situation, and by the internal conversation of the self that is the product and the active component of the situation in the World in which the person is thrown at some historical moment.

Deep contemplation of the situation could be the epistemological choice for social scientists. It is a fundamentally different approach to the research, where the investigator is researching the object but also the situation of research and her-self/him-self. Contemplating is a dual way of the approaching the truth. It does not mean that the researcher is mentally divided; just the opposite, she wants to be complete and achieve the unity of being as *a researcher-human being* and *an element of the situation* (psycho-social and historical). The researcher who uses, for example, participant observation for her research is observing the activities and social situations of the participants. However, she is also under the influence of the situations and activities of the observed participants (Rowan 1981). Her 'observation spectacles' are created by the historical moment and by the actual situation. Contemplating enables researchers to see how the mind works and creates the images and reports from the field - what is available for the mind and what is silent or repressed because of the dominating rhetoric of description and rhetoric of feeling? The dominant emotions are different in different historical moments and situations (Elias 1994). Empathy and sympathy usually follow the socially-accepted and available rhetoric. Contemplation of these relations of the situation, rhetoric, mind and self shows how the situation is co-produced by the researcher. Contemplation is not only analysis, it is also an ethical choice of stopping here and now to see the situation clearly and reporting it with

the all reservations that could be the result of the mindfully-observed interaction of mind, self, and situation at one historical moment.

The understanding of events and experiences from the past requires historical empathy (Endacott and Brooks 2013; see also Woroniecka 1996, 1998/2003). The researcher should think about this empathy as a historical concept; it was differently understood at the beginning of 20th Century and in mid-20th Century.² Moreover, historical empathy should take into consideration the following three aspects:

1. “- Historical Contextualization - a temporal sense of difference that includes deep understanding of the social, political, and cultural norms of the time period under investigation as well as knowledge of the events leading up to the historical situation and other relevant events that are happening concurrently.

2. - Perspective Taking - understanding of another’s prior lived experience, principles, positions, attitudes, and beliefs in order to understand how that person might have thought about the situation in question.

3. - Affective Connection - consideration for how historical figures’ lived experiences, situations, or actions may have been influenced by their affective response based on a connection made to one’s own similar yet different life experiences” (Endacott and Brooks 2013: 43).

Understanding the historical context is very important to situate the lived experience and actions of the individual plus feeling the affective experiences referred to her own life experiences. However, we think that that aspect should be considered more carefully. It should be done through the *contemplative autoanalysis* of the researcher, to show if her lived experiences have anything common with the experiences of the analysed individuals. If we do not do this, it is difficult to be empathetic historically. If we do so, we can develop some insights into the personal experiences situated in the historical perspective. Moreover, by *contemplative autoanalysis* we can see that the past experiences of the Other and our attitudes to them could teach us about today’s situation, which we experience in our own life.

Contemplation was a part of stoic philosophy. We could learn a lot of lessons from this philosophy. Antique tradition is still alive (Hadot 1987/1995, 1998), even if we do not agree with a particular view. The stoic philosophy elaborated very well the ethical issues of human life. To behave ethically we need to be masters of ourselves and control our emotions and style of life. To do so, we should practice

² See <https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2015/10/a-short-history-of-empathy/409912/> (accessed: 31.07.2017).

prosoche (προσοχη) – which is a practice of constant attention to our deeds and behaviours. We should maintain an attentiveness to our desires, a permanent state of mindfulness. By being attentive, we could behave morally and according to the laws of the nature and attain happiness. “Attention (*prosoche*) is the fundamental Stoic spiritual attitude” (Hadot 1995: 84). We can always appeal to reason to avoid illusions and surrendering to emotions (Marcus Aurelius 2002, Book 2.8).

The following quote is concise summary of the concept of attentiveness and its subject:

Discard your misperceptions. Stop being jerked as a puppet. Limit yourself to the present. Understand what happens – to you, to others. Analyze what exists, break it all down: material and cause. Anticipate your final hours. Other people’s mistakes? Leave them to their makers (*ibid.*: 7.29).

In this quotation we see very important features of the stoic philosophy: indicating our limitations and giving exhortations (the idea of being the subject of illusions, dependence on the opinions of others, the necessity to analyze the causes of things, the idea of getting used to death and the idea of being non-judgmental).

Stoicism tells us to control lust and desires:

Upon every accident, remember to turn toward yourself and inquire what faculty you have for its use. If you encounter a handsome person, you will find continence the faculty needed; if pain, then fortitude; if reviling, then patience. And when thus habituated, the phenomena of existence will not overwhelm you (Epictetus, *The Enchiridion*, 10).

Controlling one’s emotions and desires is compatible with the laws of nature. To control their emotions, the stoics developed some contemplative techniques. *Procheiron* is a technique of memorizing quotations and sayings to keep *at hand* prescriptions for solving some issues. We should always have these rules at hand to apply them in the everyday life. Thus, contemplative practices are tools that serve to keep life going according to the harmonious principles of the world. The philosophical maxims that we remember and have at hand can be used in moments of anger, sadness or fear. *Hypomnemata* is another technique connected with writing the exhortations to ourselves to behave morally and according to reason (Hadot 1998: 30–34). We should analyse what depends on us in a concrete way and what does not, and abandon the things and problems that do not depend on us. This is one of the basic rules of stoicism. Things that do not depend on us belongs to the natural

world (of causes and effects) and are not associated with our free will, when we can choose between good and bad.

Also important is the evening contemplation what we have done during a day:

The spirit ought to be brought up for examination daily. It was the custom of Sextius when the day was over, and he had betaken himself to rest, to inquire of his spirit: "What bad habit of yours have you cured today? What vice have you checked? In what respect are you better?" Anger will cease, and become more gentle, if it knows that every day it will have to appear before the judgment seat. What can be more admirable than this fashion of discussing the whole of the day's events? How sweet is the sleep which follows this self-examination (Seneca 1928: 36).

Thus, in stoicism contemplation is directed on coping with life. First, we should concentrate on ourselves and analyse our perceptions and emotions with a rational mind; and later on others to our perceptions and emotions in relation to the laws of nature. Being attentive to the present is the secret of spiritual exercises. We can concentrate on the micro things at the level of everyday life, which gives us a door to the conversion to cosmic consciousness. Every moment is a part of cosmic universal law (Hadot 1987/1995, 1998).

The contemplative practices that were developed in ancient philosophy, mainly in stoicism and epicureanism, were continued and developed in Christianity. Attention to oneself is a very important part of the sermon of Basil of Cesarea. His idea of *Prosoche* is based on Platonic and Stoic concepts. We should watch over our soul, see its beauty, and avoid sins and correct our activities (Hadot 1995: 130–131). Saint Antony practiced *prosoche* and he said to his disciples: "Live as though you were dying every day... In the same vein, Marcus Aurelius wrote: 'Let your every deed and word and thought be those of one who might depart from this life this very moment' (*ibid.*: 131). Saint Antony recommended following contemplative practice: writing notes about the movements of the soul. It had for him a therapeutic meaning: "Let's each one of us note and record our actions and the stirrings of our souls as though we were going to give an account to each other" (quoted in Hadot 1995: 135). Writing is then a contemplative act and technique.

The incorporation of the ancient contemplative traditions can be noticed in the writings of Saint Dorotheus of Gaza, which integrated stoicism in the Neoplatonic perspective of the world. He described spiritual perfection in stoic concepts. The *apatheia* concept is especially meaningful here: "For Dorotheus of Gaza, *apatheia* is the end result of the annihilation of one's own will: 'From this cutting off of self-will a man procures for himself detachment [*aprospatheta*], and

from detachment he comes, with the help of God, to perfect *apatheia*” (*ibid.*: 136). This cutting off of one’s own will is connected with not watching what we want to watch, not joining the conversation that is underway, not asking the cook what he is preparing for dinner (*ibid.*).

However, contemplation is not associated with withdrawing from the world. It is not connected with quietism or passivity in the lifeworld. It is rather connected with the creation of a new perspective and new way of acting. Contemplation could be connected with engagement in worldly affairs (Walsh 2016: 31-32). Generally, contemplation is associated with the psychological work of the mind. The mindfulness movement also underlines this kind of understanding (Kabat-Zin 1994, 2005). However, contemplation could be a real transformation of the subject by releasing the cultural filters of perception and the opening up of our perspective to the Other and to the Self, Society and the Nature. This helps to see the social world more holistically.

Contemplation could also be seen as a model for community development. Mindfulness based intervention (MBI) is such a method. During the meditation practice in MBI, relations are co-created. There is an ethical component of being together, which also has a *sublime* and aesthetic component. The body that is in the present and becomes open to observe, together with the mind work, show that non-doing is a kind of model whereby a lack of hierarchy and non-pathologizing approach can be practised and has the effects on the individuals (McCown 2016). A community can arise, with friendship as the basis for the social relations, from the individual and singular efforts of contemplation. We can lose self-boundaries and enter of the state of belonging to one another (*ibid.*: 122-124).

At the same time however, we should bear in mind that the concept of *community* should be carefully and rationally contemplated. Being together, mutual influencing each other, co-creation, belonging to others, and *being one* could have under, some conditions and in some historical moments, fateful effect for individual freedom. We could lose the sense of individuality and the ethical responsibility of an individual, singular person. When the community does not respect the ethical freedom of individuals, but only the communal one, this can lead to internalizing an authoritarian attitude instead of a community one based on friendship. When the individual “I” is subordinated to the general “Me” there can be no rationally and ethically-based decisions

by individuals, and the community is corrupted by the one sidedness, i.e. the lack of the desirable balance between individuality and community (Koestler 2006). Contemplation could be a non-revolutionary way of protecting the democratic mentality and freedom of individuals. The collective, nation, or state should be contemplated to see and feel the amount of freedom it gives to us. However, we should also remember that some kind of contemplation as a mindfulness practice originating from Zen Buddhism could be used as a way to increase efficiency and profit in business companies (Saari and Harni 2016).³ Therefore, we should also look into this kind of contemplation to examine the roots and context of its use.

Contemplation of an ideology that uses the concept of historical necessity as an excuse for terror could protect us against 'easy theorizing'. However, contemplation could lead us in the wrong direction if it is based on an ideology and we are not able to suspend our basic assumptions for our activities. If some activities create suffering under the one ideology that we believe in, we are more prone to justify the assumptions and sufferings. The motives of the individual become not important. The direction of the movement, party, and history becomes logical and justifiable. Rubashov, the hero of the book by Arthur Koestler, did not question his basic assumptions (*ibid.*: 76). Rubashov's fear of meeting with the history machine was tremendous, but in reality, it was a fear of meeting with the self and accepting responsibility for past choices and deeds done under influence of the communist ideology.

Contemplative practices can also be used pragmatically to solve social problems. It is used for therapy and/or the resocialization of persons unadjusted to society. There is the *Morita Therapy* that uses Zen Buddhism inspiration. This therapy is not directed toward intellectually solving the psycho-social problems, but to experiencing the reality as it is. The psychological reality should be accepted. The modification is not connected with repairment of the psyche by cognitive processes. It is rather by connecting the already-accepted wishes and drives of the person with his responsibility for life activities. It stresses the importance of awareness of being, acting and accepting the natural course of life.

³ "...the way Zen spirituality is used in entrepreneurship education shows the inventive sweeping logic of capitalism: it broadens its own boundaries by assimilating criticism that seems to come from outside it. In this case, the countercultural and at times decidedly anti-capitalist ethos of Zen Buddhism was deterritorialized and annexed to the very conditions of productive work in the general economy. This also highlights the way capitalism not only 'represses' in the sense of suffocating human life, but creates human reality and cultivates its productive forces" (Saari, Harni 2016: 114).

Morita proposes four phases of the therapy:

1. Isolation-rest/absolute bed rest (often one week resting, when the patients relieve themselves of the stress and daily tiredness and finally experience inner conflicts, boredom, and idleness);
2. Light occupational therapy (patients perform simple tasks such as walking, touching the soil, observing the garden);
3. Heavy occupational therapy (patients perform more complicated tasks e.g. cleaning, fixing the furniture, cooking etc.);
4. Complicated activity therapy in preparation for actual life/social reintegration (some of these activities are done outside of the residential therapy buildings) (Morita 1928/1998: 35; Ishiyama 2003).

The goal of the therapy is concentration on the activity, regardless of the symptoms and fears that the person experiences. The focus of perception changes from the self to the activity.

Another very important kind of contemplative practices are used in the *Naikan Therapy*. *Naikan* means “looking inside”. It is connected with the observation of self and experiencing feelings. The observation is done from the perspective of another person, in the Japanese context it is usually a mother (Ozawa-de Silva 2006, 2015). The *Naikan* therapy is a contemplative activity based on the Shin Buddhist practice *mishirabe*, which was adapted by Yoshimoto Ishin so as to use this technique at prisons to reconvert criminals to the society. The technique was also used effectively in therapy for alcoholism, pachinko addiction, and drug addiction (Ozawa-de Silva 2007: 413). The therapy is based on the one-week long staying in seclusion to concentrate on the past deeds and to undertake some reflections of them. The practice consists of following steps: “(1) what the client received from that person, (2) what he or she gave back to that person, and (3) what trouble he or she caused that person” (*ibid.*: 214). The mind is usually preoccupied with the ego, so looking at the self from the perspective of a significant other (a mother) could change the way of thinking and feeling.

The research shows that people after the therapy: “(1) change their perception of others; (2) change their perception of themselves; (3) feel a strong sense to be more helpful to others; and (4) realize that one’s problems are not objective, they are not external problems but, rather, problems of one’s own perception” (*ibid.*: 418). We can see that adaptation of the spiritual tradition of contemplation could have, both individually and socially, healing effects. The concentration on love of other people and compassion, which are features of Buddhism, can be transferred to everyday life by therapeutic practice, and thus change the lives of treated patients. The contemplative therapy shows that

we are dependent on others and that the root of the suffering is not in the external conditions but in the perceptions and attachments of the individual. This far-reaching insight can touch the deep self (Scheff 2014) and can be liberating and healing.

Contemplative research could be associated with phenomenology (Bentz 2016: 50-51). If we look at some phenomenological procedures they could remind us of contemplative study. *Epoche*, which is used to expel our filters of the world's perception, is similar to meditative and contemplative practices. When we apply *epoche* we "bracket" the assumptions that come from science and our methodological assumptions and previous research, then we "bracket" the assumptions from our culture and everyday life. Later, while doing research we can reconstruct the universal structure of the phenomenon as it appears in our perception in different situations, without basing them on the previous knowledge. Other procedures include imaginative variations, horizontalizations, and horizontalization (*ibid.*: 53). Imaginative variations refer to the possibilities of situations, conditions in which the phenomenon could appear and exist. We, as researchers, try to reconstruct these possibilities in our mind. Horizontalization refers to seeing the phenomena in the situation from different observation points, to see what the phenomenon could mean from many perspectives of experiencing it. Horizontalization (without a 't') is a technique that allows to put at the centre of observation the aspect of the experience that seems to be important for the phenomenon, but is not initially within the horizon of experience (*ibid.*: Rehorick and Bentz 2008: 16; see also Bentz and Shapiro 1998: 99).

For Valery Bentz, phenomenology could be somatic. This means that we can observe our body from inside and describe both our tensions and our releases of tensions that could be meaningful and transforming. A person could thus transform her life and perspective of seeing the world (Bentz 2016: 53; Rehorick and Bentz 2008). Some somatic experiences could be associated with trauma or unfavourable family conditions, and they need corrections through special physical training or the work on the body. According to Valery Bentz "Through somatic phenomenological inquiry, we are able to release the personal accumulations of power distortions such as trauma, ego, money, and sensual decadence, thereby opening the space to plug in to the transcendent. As it happens in the phenomenological *epoche*, we can make space for our deeper beings to emerge" (Bentz 2016: 60-61).

This transformation of perspectives and self could be achieved also by practicing hatha-yoga, which helps to see the emotions and attitudes from embodied perspectives. The deep bodily experience and awareness

of it could help in dealing with emotions, removing the emotional and bodily blockages. Sometimes, it can lead to personal development and, under some conditions, even spiritual accomplishment (Konecki 2016).

We can assume that contemplative study is the empirical orientation in humanistic and social science. If so, we can reconstruct the epistemology and methodology of this kind of research. Epistemology is connected with the question *how* to research the world that we encounter? However, what is 'this world'? We always face the ontological issue, even if we want to avoid it or dismiss its significance. Reducing the question of ontology to epistemology could be called the 'epistemic fallacy' (Porpora 2016: 80–81). However, in selecting an object of study we should know how it is situated in reality, and ask ourselves how we understand the reality and how we define it? If we study how the mind works and elaborates the subjective self and looking-glass self of the individual (Cooley 1922), we assume that mind exists and that the self exists, and that the self is more related to the perceptions of others. Therefore, assumptions about the others and their relations always exist, so some kind of sociality also exists. If we can learn something only about the selves and minds, we can then assume what this sociality is. The relations with the selves and mind define the situations and identities. Therefore, the sociality includes the situations and selves, and the individuals that define the relations and their meanings (Blumer 1969). The social world is created by definitions of situations, and its change is possible only by being conscious of what is going to be changed. *The causes* for the appearance of the selves are social in nature, and the shape of the selves are finally elaborated and maintained by the mind. The person that is aware of these relationships is conscious of it. So, consciousness is also assumed, but the consciousness could have many other objects to be conscious of. The objects are real, at least in the consciousness of the person. The sociality could be such an object.

Awareness of the existence and creation of something also assumes its changeability, so changing refers to impermanence. These briefly expressed arguments show that ontology is always present in our scientific endeavours. Even if we do not express it openly, as happens in positivistic and neo-positivistic social sciences, we always assume, in the background, what the reality is and also its structure.

So what then is contemplative ontology? According to Renteria-Uriarte, contemplative ontology "...posits that the assumed outer world, perceived by the researcher, and the ordinary mind, from which it is observed, are nothing but two distinct manifestations of the same inner and deep consciousness that can be realized by meditation or contemplating techniques" (2016: 142). Mentality is included in the

all reality that we study, and if we are going to understand the other person from her perspective and the interconnectedness, it becomes an essential (assumed) feature of reality.

So, for the analyses that are made in the book, we could define contemplation at this moment as follows:

Contemplation is a kind of activity that leads to a certain state of mind, and at the same time, it is a method of obtaining knowledge about some objects at the present time, and also about getting knowledge itself, here and now, by mindful insight into the perceived (and also imagined) phenomena or objects, and also into the self.

This book consists of 10 chapters. In chapter one the book begins with considerations concerning identity processes. These are processes through which we become social beings and take on specific social roles and realize specific moral careers. We experience the social order *normally*, coveting it in our process of knowing, and we achieve this by following its rules and norms. This is established through identity processes, which construct the images of an individual in an active way. There is also analysis of the *anamnesis* process, i.e. recalling the obvious but unnoticed phenomena; this involves the awareness of the dialogue of the self (inner conversation), which has been historically excluded from the colloquial consciousness in favour of hierarchical and collective thinking, and in our particular Western civilization by the conviction of a necessary “distinctness” and uniqueness of the self in the world, where paradoxically we experience an ever-progressing uniformity.

The second chapter describes how the practice of meditation can explain a lot about society. Although we seem to be alone while meditating, concentrating on something or nothing, we understand society based on the experiences and diverse interpretations of meditation. In this chapter we consider what we, as social scientists (especially psychologists, social psychologists and sociologists) but also philosophers, can get from the practice of meditation and philosophies of meditation. We explore the main advantages of meditation as an epistemological practice, especially those coming from Buddhism. The main aim is to gain insight that helps us see the changing nature of the mind and its creative nature, which is without essence. Observing how the mind work yields many inspirations for analysis of the connections between the mind, self, and society, and its “empty nature” (no-mind, no-self, no-society).

The third chapter is a presentation of the Buddhist approach to the economy and what we can learn from it. It demonstrates David Loy's analysis of the meaning of money from the Buddhist perspective. Money becomes a reality symbol and an ego symbol. The chapter also presents some conclusions from Frederic Pryor's analysis of Buddhist prescriptions to the economic system. Stress is put on compassion and ethics, which show the ubiquitous interconnectedness that works for the well-being of the whole society/societies. The Buddhist approach to the economy is connected with pro-social values, compassion and concept of happiness.

The fourth chapter examines the topic: Can we learn about the art of living from sociology? Sociology teaches us that we are the part of a broader group called society. We are taught that that society should be first described in order to be understood and/or explained, and that the cognitive function is the most important part in understanding the role sociology should play in a democratic and modern society. Is this understanding (cognition) enough? How can we get more to better our quality of life and live a wholesome life from studying sociology or society using a sociological perspective? Is sociology a tool for the art of living or it is just the play of "sophisticated" intellectuals? In this chapter we analyse the approaches of Robert Merton, George H. Mead, and Anthony Giddens. We also reconstruct the structural conditions of the art of living and happiness, analysing the concept of greedy institutions by Lewis Coser. We analytically connect the structural conditions of work in contemporary greedy institutions (working on projects) with the loss of ontological security. We analyse the displacement of the meaning of work, career, autonomy, time structure, identity, privacy and happiness. We try to use a Buddhist inspiration to analyze issues of suffering and, associated with it, so called 'ontological insecurity' and the welfare of the individual and/or society.

The fifth chapter describes and analyses an ethno-Zenit experiment consisting of standing motionless in public places (for example, at the entrance to a shopping mall, in front of a petrol station, a bank, a shop, or on a street corner). The research was inspired by an ethnomethodological approach to lived order and psychological knowledge - derived from Buddhism - on how the mind works. Some inspirations from symbolic interactionism were also adopted. The experiment was aimed in the first instance at discovering the basic assumptions underlying our everyday activities. A second and more important goal was to deconstruct the work of the mind, especially with regard to the process of the looking-glass self and of 'producing' emotions. The chapter also discusses the self-study method (ethno-

Zenic experiments) applied to deconstruct the mind as part of a lived order in a certain location and – in the wake of that – mindfulness.

The sixth chapter deals with the problem of the relationship between the contemporary usage of technology in qualitative research and analysis of data in sociology (using technical devices such as computers and software) and the sociological mind. The research and analysis of social relations and social worlds are very often conducted using the technology that we define here, in a very broad sense, as methodical and technical procedures, software, calculating devices and technical devices for the observation of the World and recording data, and devices for the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data. Technology could be used as instrument for analysing the “external world” (through an instrumental use of technology) by the “independent” sociological mind. This is an attitude that is a part of the modernistic approach to “society”.

Here we also analyse the role of technology in *producing* sociological knowledge, while taking into consideration the historical, political, and ideological dimensions of the phenomenon. The production of knowledge is done by individual sociologists, who are immersed in the social world of sociology, and the process is performed in the here and now by particular sociologists using the technology of procedures and material devices. We also analyse *the technology in use* and the experiences of technology that produce the knowledge.

The questions addressed in this chapter are as follows:

1. Do sociologists, in their thinking, depend on the technology they use in researching society, or is the technology only instrumental to their “independent sociological mind”?
2. Is observing/being aware of the use of technology in every moment a liberating strategy for a sociologist?

These problems are analysed via the phenomenological explication of experiences of using the CAQDAS technology (Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis). It was used the concept of Richard Hycner for our analysis of qualitative data, in our case the auto-reports from the sessions of use of technology to analyse qualitative data. The auto-reports idea comes from the inspiration of the contemplative inquiry model of social science.

The seventh chapter examines the issue of how the organizational culture of a certain institution is being experienced, by reconstructing the leading themes coming from auto-observation and descriptions of it. Instead of investigating how it is perceived or how its values are verbalized, the study undertakes to analyse the actual experiencing of certain spaces and social relations, as well as how these are

being conceptually embraced therein. To do so, phenomenological methodology and the analysis of qualitative data—adjusted to the research framework at hand—have been employed. Throughout the observation of bodily and mind responses, the lived experience under scrutiny has been given a leading role in determining whether and how research preconceptualizations should be superseded by the perceptions of the organizational reality under study, as seen and experienced by those who actively partake in the institution at hand.

Chapter eight deals with the problem of adaptation of hatha-yoga contemplation practice into the system of higher education. There are some problems with including yoga into the curricula of higher education institutions, and these are described mainly in the USA and Polish contexts. The body has been almost excluded from programs of teaching. There is a large gap between the theory and practice. However, the body could be an active subject (*actant*) in learning and perceiving the reality. It could be used to teach philosophy, psychology, sociology, management, and other courses. Students could achieve embodied knowledge, and not just the opportunity of gaining an intellectual knowledge coming from and through the mind. I am a sociologist and I describe my experiences with including yoga in teaching sociological and psychological subjects in a Polish University. The results from auto-reports of students show that by hatha-yoga practice students could see the connection between the body and mind concerning the production of emotions, which could be important in teaching *techniques of stress reduction, sociology of emotions, psychology of emotions, philosophy of body, management, coaching* or other subjects where emotions and the body are important factors in an activity.

In chapter nine I show how, based on the concept of Valerie Janesick, contemplative inquiry connects with the Zen Buddhism. I describe how her book (2015) and her concepts support the ideas expressed in our book.

In chapter ten I describe some technical aspects of contemplative inquiry. It is important to know not only the basic assumptions of such research and to have theoretical preparations, but also to know how to do self-observation and self-reports. This chapter describes to some extent the procedure of Zen experiments. All these techniques lead finally to contemplative cognition, whereby we can reconstruct our participation in constructing the phenomena that we are experiencing and researching.