The MultiAlist System of Thought

Florentin Smarandache

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(philosophical essay)

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Abstract: The goal of this short note is to expand the concepts of 'pluralism', 'neutrosophy', 'refined neutrosophy', 'refined neutrosophic set', 'multineutrosophic set', and 'plithogeny' (Smarandache 2002, 2013, 2017, 2019, 2021, 2023a, 2023b, 2023c), into a larger category that I will refer to as **MultiAlism** (or **MultiPolar**). As a straightforward generalization, I propose the conceptualization of a *MultiPolar System* (different from a *PluriPolar System*), which is formed not only by multiple elements that might be random, or contradictory, or adjuvant, but also by accepting features from more than one basic system (UniPolar, BiPolar, TriPolar, or PluriPolar systems). PluriAlism is a closed dynamic system without neutralities nor indeterminacies, while MultiAlism is an open dynamic system with neutralities and indeterminacies. PluriAlism is a uni-system (formed by elements from a single system), while MultiAlism is a MultiSystem (formed by elements from many systems).

1. Introduction

Many casual interactions with non-Western peers from academics have opened my eyes during the past two decades to themes that – except for a few committed and non-biased specialists – are still approached superficially in what we still call *The Occident*. In our Western World, some Eastern ideas, principles, and actions remain misunderstood or wrongly judged, because we still have an obstinacy to fit them without nuances into our unique methods of thoughts. The frequent visits I made to the Non-Western World, to international conferences and scientific seminars, or post-doctoral in applied mathematical and technological research, provided me with an unmediated contact with these diverse cultures, allowing me to improve the understanding of their systems of thinking, and resulting in many traveling memories I wrote about their custom, religion, philosophy, history, geography, and life.

In this regard, *Zoroastrianism* serves as an illustration. Its somehow paradoxical aspects bedazzle most Western observers, making them confused when they try to categorize the religion among monotheistic, dualist, or pluralist systems. However, imposing concepts whose meanings have been referenced to other doctrines will not succeed in an attempt to fully define this religion, and rather than pointing out monotheistic or polytheistic features, or even prompt neutrosophic features – as I did myself in one of my scilogs (Smarandache, 2023, 84 et ss.) – would it not be more beneficial for thinking to broaden the current categories?

Alternatively, we may look in the Western philosophy at the *neutral monism*, which – to put it simplistically – holds that the mind and body are not two distinct entities, but are rather *composed of*

the same neutral "stuff", or as a fluid (indeterminate) margin between non-physical and physical (Smarandache 2023c). In this respect, David Hume proposed "impressions" or "perceptions" as primary realities of experience, while William James thought that the *neutral core material* is a "booming, buzzing confusion" called "pure experience", and Bertrand Russell, more towards our times, referred to the *neutral entities* as "sensibilia". *Neutral monism* is actually pluralist[1] in that it recognizes the existence of multiple such elements (as opposed to metaphysical monism), but it is monist in that it holds that the fundamental components of the universe are all of the same kind (against mind-body dualism). Since we do not fall strictly into the category of monism anymore, by accepting neutralities or indeterminacies – would it not be more beneficial for thinking to broaden the current categories?

In what follow, I will provide a few more examples of this kind; however, I have no doubt the readers can add their own examples to complete the picture. The examples are not limited, but the question persists: would it not be more beneficial for thinking to broaden the current categories?

It happened that I was reading a very recent study by Ethan Brauer once the sketch of an answer to the above question has settled on its own on the paper. Brauer's extensive paper addresses a completely different and narrow topic, but which can be expanded from its limited sphere – modal analysis of potential infinity. Brauer extended a theory of classical second-order arithmetic to include intrinsically well-motivated axioms for lawless sequences.[2] Free choice sequences are central to the intuitionistic theory of the continuum, but since intuitionistic analysis theorems defy the classical analysis, many mathematicians reject the concept. (Brauer 2023)

Mutatis mutandis, our quest is similar.

2. UniPolar, BiPolar, TriPolar, PluriPolar, and more general MultiPoar Systems. Definitions and examples

In this section, I will scrutinize definitions and meanings of the basic Western systems (of organization) of thoughts, and exemplify them, including scenarios from Eastern doctrines.

2.1. Monism: all is one

Monism is a philosophy and metaphysical doctrine that postulates a single, ultimate, cohesive reality. The universe is composed of a single, overarching 'idea' or 'substance', or only one ultimate deity, <A>. Everything else is just a manifestation of this one reality/substance/deity. This is a **UniPolar System**,

i.e. *<A> = ∞*, where <A> is an 'idea', a 'substance', *et caetera*, and ∞ is 'world', 'reality', 'all'.

The monist schools of philosophy claim that either everything is material (materialism) or everything is mental (idealism), and abolish the distinction between the body and the mind in favor of explaining all phenomena as expressions of a single unifying principle.[3]

Christian Wolff coined the term 'monism' in the eighteenth century in his work "Rational Thoughts" [German Logic] (1728): "we must admit of one necessary, self-existent Being" (Wolff, 1770). Wolff delves further into the systems of mind-body connection in the "Psychologia Rationalis" (1734). He believes in the validity of Leibnizian monadology, but only applied to ideas, refuting the monistic panpsychism that is central to Leibniz's metaphysics.[4]

[1] Griffin, N. (1998). 'Neutral monism'. In *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Taylor and Francis. Retrieved 23 Dec. 2023, from https://www.rep.routledge.com/articles/thematic/neutral-monism/v-1.

[2] Which leaded Brauer to a theory that is called MCLs.

[3] O'Conaill, D.(2019). 'Monism.' In The Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Taylor and Francis. Retrieved 21 Dec. 2023, from https://www.rep.routledge.com/articles/thematic/monism/v-2.

[4] Hettche, Matt and Corey Dyck, "Christian Wolff", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2019), Edward N. Zalta (ed.). Retrieved 17 Dec. 2023, from https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2019/entries/wolff-christian.

Looking back in time and towards the East, monism has been widely discussed in connection with the Indian philosophy, particularly in "Uttara Mīmāṃsā" (also known as "Vedānta"). Many schools of thought have emerged out there, all basing their doctrines on the authority of the same corpus known as "Prasthānatrayī".

In Hinduism, the idea of Brahman — the ultimate reality or supreme cosmic power — is frequently connected to monism. Most Hindus follow monastic principles and hold that Brahman is everything and everything is Brahman.[5] The philosophy of Advaita Vedānta, which is frequently referred to as a type of absolute nondualism, also reflects this viewpoint.

In one accessible simplification, one can reduce the monism to two types: a substantive monism, in religions like Buddhism and Hinduism in the East, or philosophers like Spinoza in the West, and attributive monism, with sub-tyes as idealism, physicalism, or neutral monism. The first reduces the reality to a single substance, or states that the world is only varied because this one substance exists in plural forms, while the second asserts that there is a one category of being that encompasses a wide plurality of distinct objects or substances.

Despite being essentially monistic, attributive monism appears to be rather pluralistic, but substantival monism is strongly hostile to pluralism.

In that it reduces the physical cosmos to a single principle, pantheism is similar to monism: "Pantheists are monists" (Owen, 1971, 65), even though the pantheist deity is imperfect, expanding and continuously creating, or also extending beyond space and time in panentheism — a conceptions of God present as well in some Christian confessions — therefore surpassing the simplification of monistic attribution.

2.2. Dualism: all is two

Dualism explains the world (or reality) by two fundamental, diametrically opposed, and irreducible principles. In religion, it generally refers to the conviction that the universe was created by two ultimate antagonistic forces, gods, or groups of angelic or demonic creatures. Since dualism is a system formed by two contrasted parts, this is a **BiPolar System**:

i.e. $\underline{<A> + <antiA> = \infty}$.

where <A> is an 'idea', a 'substance', *et caetera*, <antiA> is its opposite or negation, and ∞ is 'world', 'reality', 'all'.

I would probably not be wrong if I affirmed that this system is for ages a dominant worldview in Western way of thinking, with Descartes and Hegel being the first two figures that spring to mind, completed by Kant's cognitive dualism, which distinguished between the faculties of sensibility and understanding, . Examples of epistemological dualism include being and thought, subject and object; and, on the other hand, examples of metaphysical dualism being matter and spirit, body and mind, good and evil.

Glancing eastward, we observe that most historians of religion use the ancient Iranian religion Zoroastrianism as a clear case of eschatological dualism, advocating that it is based on two conflicting principles: Ahura Mazda, the deity of light and truth, and Angra Mainyu, the destroying enemy.

An ongoing conflict exists between the good, spiritual realm of light and the bad, material realm of darkness, according to the ancient Iranian religion of Manichaeism.

Furthermore, as its name says by ityself, *dvaita* — the Sanskrit word *dvaita* actually means 'dualism' (Flood, 1996, 245) — is a dualist school of *Vedanta*, asserting that there is an everlasting separation between the particular self and the ultimate, in opposition to the *advaita* (non-dualist) philosophy. Although *dvaita* was dualist in that sense, it proposed an autonomous God named Vishnu as the ruler of the independent and separate entities of matter and soul. More specifically, *dvaita* recognized three absolute and eternally existing entities: God, souls (*atman*), and primordial substance (*prakriti*).

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[5] Leeming, D.A. (2014). 'Brahman.' In: Leeming, D.A. (eds) Encyclopedia of Psychology and Religion. Springer, Boston, MA. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-6086-2_9052.

2.3. Trialism: all is three

Trialism was introduced in philosophy by John Cottingham as "a grouping of three notions" (Cottingham, 1985, 219), an alternative viewpoint to Descartes' dualism, with the addition of sensation next to mind and body: "It turns out that there are features that belong to the mind alone, features that belong to the body alone, and what may be called hybrid features - features that belong to man *qua* embodied being" (*Ibidem*; see also Cottingham, 2021).

Trialism is thus a system formed by three contrasted or entirely different parts, and similarly, *trichotomy* is a division of three opposites (or entirely different) two by two things.

A three-poles system was also proposed by *neutrosophy* (Smarandache 1995, 2013), which operates with three independent opposites, found in equilibrium: <A>, <neutA>, and <antiA>, called *Neutrosophic Triad*. All 'ideas' <A> are considered in conjunction with their opposites or negations <antiA> and the range of neutralities <neutA> between them, while <nonA> is the collective term for the ideas <antiA> and <neutA>. In neutrosophy, the three poles may be fluid two by two.

The balance between <A> and <antiA> rests on <neutA>. In other words, <neutA> is imagined as a buffer zone between <A> and <antiA>:
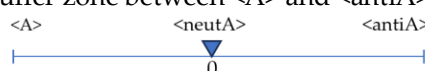
Moving <neutA> to the left, or to the right, i.e. if the neutral/indeterminacy part is pushed towards <A>, or <antiA> (the indeterminacy degree increases), then one of them gets stronger (having less indeterminacy), and the balance gets in disequilibrium:
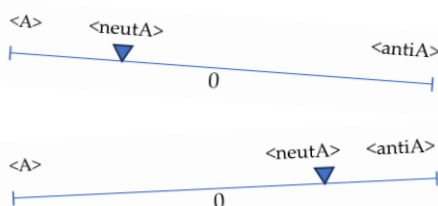
Based on neutrosophy, the associated **TriPolar System** can be described as:

$<A> + <neutA> + <antiA> = \infty$,

where <A> is an 'idea', a 'substance', *et caetera*, <antiA> is its opposite or negation, <neutA> is the range of neutralities between them, and ∞ is 'world', 'reality', 'all'.

I point out here no more than that the neutrosophy is an extension of both the ancient Chinese Yin-Yang philosophy and dialectics (Smarandache 2013), and also remind the reader that the trialism was associated with Christianity as well, e.g. for holding that human beings are composed of three separate essences: a body, a soul, and a spirit.[6]

2.4. Pluralism: all is plurality

Pluralism is a wordview of plurality, used in philosophy to contrast with monism (the idea that everything is one), with dualism (the idea that everything is two), and arguably with trialism (the idea that everything is three). Pluralism can be defined as a system in which more than two (arguably three) groups, principles, states, ideas, *et caterea*, coexist. This is a **PluriPolar System**:

$<pluriA> = \infty$,

where <pluriA> means more than two (arguably three) 'ideas', *et caetera*, and ∞ is 'world', 'reality', 'all'.

In metaphysics, pluralism is the idea that reality is actually made up of a variety of substances found in nature, while in ontology the concept describes various forms, kinds, or modes of existence.

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[6] This understanding stems from taking 1 Thessalonians 5:231 literally: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Buddhism is given as an example of a pluralistic religion. Many Buddhist traditions do not declare a single ultimate truth and recognize the validity of multiple paths to enlightenment, advocating conversation and understanding with people of other faiths.

Another example might be the Bahá' Faith, which holds that all major faiths have the same spiritual basis, are descended from the same divine source (God), and differ only in their social teachings in accordance with the necessities of the eras in which they were revealed.

3. MultiAlism: all is open

We observed in the short, quick and without going into depth evaluation of the basic systems that we previously discussed that it is challenging to strictly include some non-Western doctrines (or even Western!) in one group or another. Certain doctrines/ideologies/ideas acknowledge several components from various systems. Some beliefs are classified as monistic, yet they clearly contain components of pluralism as well; others, on the other hand, are classified as nondualistic but cannot be classified as either strictly UniPolar, or PluriPolar systems. Nor the concept of nonduality, a common thread in Taoism, Mahayana Buddhism, or Advaita Vedanta (Loy, 1998), does suffice, being a rather fuzzy concept, which might finally include anything that does not fall into a BiPolar System of thought, regardless of distinctions, or mutations.

Numerous schools of thought have extensively examined the dynamics between the opposites <A> and <antiA>. These concepts are known by various names, including dialectics, Yin-Yang, Manichaeism, dualism, Dharma-Adharma, and many others. However, the neutral (or indeterminacy) part (<neutA>) between these opposites has rather either been ignored or retracted. The neutral or indeterminate, as I emphasized in my studies on neutrosophic theory (Smarandache 2002, 2013), usually intervenes in the dynamics (or conflicts) from one side or the other, tipping the balance in one direction or the other. The boundaries between the opposites can be either fluid (when there is some overlapping or indeterminate/neutral part between the opposites) or rigid (when <A> and <antiA> are clearly separated).

In Occasionalism, for example, the God is a neutral (<$neutA_1$>) between mind (<A_1>) and body (<$antiA_1$>), as a particular case, i.e. where one has only one dynamic, between <A_1> and <$antiA_1$> (one neutrosophic triad). In MultiAlism, one has dynamics between many neutrosophic triads:

(<A_1>, <$neutA_1$>, <$antiA_1$>), (<A_2>, <$neutA_2$>, <$antiA_2$>), ...

And so forth.

By convention let's use the prefix "*pluri*" when talking about the elements of a single system, and "*multi*" when talking about the elements of many systems.

Therefore, the **PluriPolar System** accepts and deals with the dynamicity of opposites, but not with the neutralities or indeterminacies between them:

<u>*<(pluri)A> + <(pluri)antiA> = ∞*</u>.

This simple observation instigated the idea of a generalizing and integrative construct into which to accommodate theories that mix parts from many systems. I unpretentiously call this construct **multialism**, and clearly differentiate it from **pluralism**, and consequently call the related system the **multialist system**, conceiving it as a **MultiPolar System** that accepts and is open to combinations of opposites and neutrals (indeterminacies), e.g.:

<u>*<(multi)A> + <(multi)neutA> + <(multi)antiA> = ∞*</u>.

The MultiPolar System accepts and deals with neutralities and indeterminacies between the opposites, but it is not necessarily to contain them. As such, the MultiPolar System is an extension of the PluriPolar System.

Let us test out two examples from religion before returning with more in-depth studies in later papers.

3.1. Zoroastrianism

Zoroastrianism offers a perplexing picture of a religion (about the state and prospects of the study of this religion, a must read is Stausberg, 2008) whose followers worship several sacred beings, called *yazatas*, in addition to a single deity, *Ahura Mazda* (or *Ohrmazd* in Middle Persian).[7]

These *yazatas*[8] —somehow remembering us the Roman tutelary deities *Lares*[9]— include natural objects or phenomena (earth, water, wind, sun, moon, etc.). Other individual deities manifest their presence, among which *Anahita* (fertility), *Armaiti* (right-mindedness), *Ai* (reward), or *Rasnu* ('justice'). Furthermore, *Ahura Mazda*'s faces strong opposition from the personification of evil, *Ahreman* in Middle Persian (or *Angra Mainyu* in Avestan). Its only goal is to ruin *Ohrmazd*'s good world.

This makes the **Zoroastrianism** to Hintze to be both dualistic, polytheistic, and monotheistic (a "mixture of seemingly monotheistic, polytheistic, and dualistic features", Hintze, 2014, 225 et ss.), in an attempt to put an end to the debates in literature which went from defining **Zoroastrianism** as a "dualistic monotheism" (Gnoli, 1994, 480) to a "monotheistic dualism" (Schwartz, 2002, 64). Added to this are the interpretations of existence of a *Divine Triad*, or a *dialogical triad* in **Zoroastrianism**: "The Deity is also not a monadic one, but a dialogical triad (and there may be other aspects) who exists in relationship" (Louchakova-Schwartz, 2018, 481).

Furthermore, I observe the obvious neutrosophic features of *yazatas*: the balance between good and evil tilts according to their (neutrosophic) actions (*vedi supra*, 2.3).

In our approach, these characteristics makes the **Zoroastrianism** a *multialist* religion, including elements from all basic systems:

$\langle A\rangle$ [*Ohrmazd*] + $\langle$(multi)A$\rangle$ [deities] + $\langle$neutA$\rangle$ [actions of *yazatas*] + $\langle$antiA$\rangle$ [*Ahreman*] = ∞.

3.2. Vedanta and neo-Vedanta schools

Other instances of **multialism** are generated by the different interpretations of Vedanta. Independently, the Vedanta schools may appear utterly distinct due to significant discrepancies in ontology, soteriology, and epistemology.

Let us remind the main schools of Vedanta, and their interpretations: Advaita (non-dualism), Dvaitadvaita (difference and non-difference), Vishishtadvaita (qualified non-dualism), Dvaita (dualism), Suddhadvaita (pure non-dualism), Achintya-Bheda-Abheda (inconceivable difference and non-difference) (Isaeva, 1992; Clooney, 1993).

Coming closer to our days, modern developments (so-called neo-Vedanta) propagated the idea that the divine, the absolute, exists within all human beings. Acceptance of many kinds of worship is a key component of Swami Vivekananda's philosophy, an exponent of neo-Vedanta, emphasizing the idea of *acceptance* rather than *tolerance*. This neo-Vedanta school holds that no other types of worship are incorrect. Life is a quest trip from one truth to another, from a lesser truth to a greater one. The truth is not anyone's property, and the nature of all souls is truth. Actually, Vivekananda "reconciles Dvaita or dualism and Advaita or non-dualism" (Sooklal, 1993, 48).

According to Vivekananda, the perfect man possesses all the components of philosophy, mysticism, passion, action in right measure to create a harmoniously balanced whole (*Ibidem*, 42). To my understanding, the components are supposed to exist in a balanced (and hence *neutrosophic*) manner rather than just in their *plurality*, and yet being monistical manifestations of *one*,

i.e. $\langle A\rangle$ + $\langle$(multi)A$\rangle$ + $\langle$neutA$\rangle$,

which makes me consider it a *multialist doctrine*.

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[7]   Duchesne-Guillemin, Jacques. "Zoroastrianism". Encyclopedia Britannica, 8 Nov. 2023, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Zoroastrianism. Accessed 11 December 2023.

[8]   Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "yazata". Encyclopedia Britannica, 3 Apr. 2014, https://www.britannica.com/topic/yazata. Accessed 11 December 2023.

[9]   Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Lar". Encyclopedia Britannica, 14 Feb. 2018, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Lar-Roman-deities. Accessed 11 December 2023.

Conclusions

As an extension of the concepts of 'pluralism', 'neutrosophy', 'refined neutrosophy', 'refined neutrosophic set', 'multineutrosophic set', and 'plithogeny' (Smarandache 2002, 2013, 2017, 2019, 2021, 2023a, 2023b, 2023c), I introduced in this short note the concept of MultiAlism, to which corresponds a MultiPolar system of thought. A possible advantage of this system could free from ambiguities the other systems, especially the PluriPolar system, where *plural elements* – more or less equal – coexist or are tolerated to exist and contains their opposites, but not their neutralities or indeterminacies between them; while the MultiPolar system is open to accept in various combinations and mutations, the opposites and their neutralities or indeterminacies between them, from *more than one system*. In other words, the UniPolar, BiPolar, TriPolar, and PluriPolar systems are uni-valent systems (one excludes the other), whilst the MultiPolar System is a multi-valent system (it includes more than one system) and accepts neutralities and indeterminacies between opposites.

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