

SAR: Where Science Meets Humanity and Faith for a Better World

Miro Jakovljević

Science, Art and Religion (2022): 10.5005/jp-journals-11005-0023

“We must learn how to place morality and responsibility ahead of politics, science and economy”—from Vaclav Havel’s speech to the U.S. Congress

Dear Colleagues and Friends,
Welcome to the *Science, Art, & Religion*, the Summer/Autumn 2022; Volume 1, No. 2–3. Our VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous) world¹ is now confronted by the devastating consequences of the war in Ukraine, the 3 years of COVID-19 syndemics, the frightening challenge of climate change, and an increasing economic recession and emerging potential global famine. This unprecedented cluster of atrocities shows devastating effects on the total health and well-being of populations across all low-, middle-, and high-income countries. Here I would like to remind us of the words of Viktor E Frankl² at the end of his book *Man’s Search for Meaning*: “For the world is in a bad state, but everything will become still worse unless each of us does his best. So, let us be alert—alert in a twofold sense: since Auschwitz, we know what man is capable of. And since Hiroshima we know what is at stake.” You have probably had many times opportunities to see and read the table on which was written “Mind the gap.” This phrase is aimed to warn us to escape possible dangerous consequences. However, have you ever thought about empathy gaps and intergroup empathy bias and dyspathy and how to overcome divides, conflicts, and possible tragedies rolling on the horizon? Unfortunately, many people feel less empathy for strangers who belong to a different racial, political, social, or religious group in comparison with strangers who belong to the same group.³ What is more pathological is intergroup dyspathy manifesting in feeling pleasure in response to out-group members’ adversity (*Schadenfreude*) and displeasure in response to their success (*Glueckschmertu*) and which is commonly associated with discrimination and readiness to harm others.³

Empathy is a basic human capacity that manifests itself in different ways in different cultures, contexts, life scripts, and stories.⁴ It is a way of creative, sensitive, and meaningful being in the world, a vital quality of civilized life, and a powerful agent of positive transformation when practiced daily, background for brotherhood in humanity. One of the

Department of Psychiatry and Psychological Medicine, School of Medicine, University of Zagreb, Zagreb, Croatia

Corresponding Author: Miro Jakovljević, Department of Psychiatry and Psychological Medicine, School of Medicine, University of Zagreb, Zagreb, Croatia, Phone: 385992255535, e-mail: jakovljevic.miro@yahoo.com

How to cite this article: Jakovljević M. SAR: Where Science Meets Humanity and Faith for a Better World. *Sci Arts Relig* 2022;1(2–4):141–142.

Source of support: Nil

Conflict of interest: None

essential SAR journal missions is to promote cooperation between science, art, and religion in Bosnia and Herzegovina and educate for a better world, public and global well-being, compassionate society, and empathic civilization.^{5,6} Science, art, and religion as historically autonomous human activities are grounded on different beliefs, principles, methods, interpretations, and conclusions. Inspiration for our “Hero’s Journey” involves (1) making synergies between different ways of thinking and bridging methods of research and knowing the world and life; (2) bridging world views, different cultures, frames of reference, and practices; (3) promoting a tradition of good neighborliness, togetherness, and solidarity (“*zakon dobrog komšiluka*”), a culture of empathy, global humanistic self, public and global mental health and mutually enriching. To paraphrase the love definition of Viktor E Frankl empathy based on love is the only way to understand the innermost core of other human beings, to see which potential is in them, which is not realized but yet ought to be actualized, and to make them come true. We truly believe that the “triad of empathy with reason and cooperation make a great combination” to be a source of energy that motivates, inspires, and mobilizes people to create compassionate societies and empathic civilizations instead of clashes of civilizations.

We are particularly appreciative of stellar articles in this issue relevant to the culture of empathy and brotherhood in humanity. Bosnia and Herzegovina is the right place for applying the strategic harmony model,⁷ brotherhood in humanity,^{8–11} and promoting principles of empathic civilization. Empathically integrated sciences, arts, and

religions in creative dialogues as allies can significantly contribute to the healing of the broken spirit of Bosnia and Herzegovina and promote ideas of a compassionate society and empathic civilization. We are also grateful to all other colleagues for their contributions to this issue.

With kind regards and best wishes to all of you to stay well and be safe.

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