

Review of: "Jan Smuts' Theory of Holism as an Uplifting Philosophy for Philosophical Counseling"

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First of all, thank you for your invitation to review this interesting reading.

The article has the quality of shedding light on the thinking of the philosopher Jan Smuts in relation to his concept of 'holism', a neologism which he is credited with creating. The contribution of the article is enriching in relation to the literature on this subject, which, as the author notes, remains underdeveloped and under-exploited, whereas the thought of Jan Smuts seems to be influential and important for the history of philosophy.

In my opinion, the article adds considerable value to the established literature on Jan Smuts theory of holism, and has the potential to be a good contribution to the journal. However, in its present state, the article would (in my opinion) deserve to be reworked, via some additions and modifications, which I will recommend below, in three main points.

- The article presents itself, in its abstract and introduction, as highlighting the potential 'practical' philosophical implications of Jan Smuts' theory of holism (notably with the example of 'logic-based therapy'). In the introduction, it is written: 'In this essay we will briefly explored philosopher and Commonwealth statesman General Jan Smuts' theory of Holism as a potential uplifting philosophy which can be of use for philosophical practitioners to guide their counselees "for confronting problems of living"'. However, in the core of the article and in the development of its ideas, the potential 'practical' implications of Jan Smuts' theories remain underdeveloped and far too implicit. No link is really developed explicitly between Smuts' theory of holism and its practical perspectives, which leads to a certain dissonance between what is presented (and promised) in the abstract/introduction/conclusion, and the article as a whole. I invite the authors to dedicate a full part of the article to the potential practical implications of the presented theories, in a more explicit way, so that the article can fulfil the function that has been presented in the abstract (and that it does not merely constitute a theoretical statement on Jan Smuts' philosophy). This important dissonance represents (in my opinion) the principal limit of the article in its current version.
- The previous remark requires the author to make (more or less) substantial additions to the article, which may represent a constraint on the word count limitations. This difficulty could be overcome by reducing some other parts, for example, by deleting content that does not seem to be necessary, in the sense that some information does not add value to the whole article and its function (as presented by the author). This is particularly the case for some historical

information, in the 'historical background' section. For example, the authors write: 'In terms of his political views, Smuts was an avid supporter of internationalism - the idea of international government - and was fierce opponent of totalitarianism. He exercised this belief in internationalism by being one of the two principal drafters and architects of the covenant of the League of Nations. Smuts' holistic philosophy is evident in the pivotal role he played in the foundation of the League of Nations and later the United Nations (see Hancock, 1962)'. It seems important to note here that the description of Jan Smuts' political commitments does not contribute to the development of the article as presented in the abstract, nor should it represent something 'positive', which might in some way want to enhance Smuts' character in the eyes of the reader, rather than to expose his ideas (with neutrality). In my opinion, it would be better to reduce the 'historical background' part, so that it only feeds the meaning of the article, without giving unnecessary information. The part 'The Roots of Smuts' Holistic Thinking' also seems to me to contain too much of historical accounts. Although describing the historical context is always important, the article should not put too much emphasis on the description of historical narratives, and focus more on the substance of Smuts' thinking (and its practical implications, as promised).

- I invite the authors to further nuance the historical background (in terms of history of thought) of the creation of the concept of 'holism' (in the section 'Smuts' Theory of Holism'). In the first two paragraphs of this section, it is first described that Smuts originated the word 'holism' as an academic concept, and then that this concept is now common 'across many fields of study'. I would be cautious here, because while Smuts is indeed the originator of the neologism 'holism', the thinking about what characterizes this concept (without naming it) largely precedes Smuts. The description of 'holism' as a philosophical concept originated by Smuts should not mislead readers into thinking that Smuts was the first to introduce the idea that there is a whole whose value is different from the sum of its parts. This idea is very old in philosophy, and also precedes Smuts in other fields, including sociology and epistemology (see for example the works of Durkheim, to name a few). I think it is important to add some nuances in this section, avoiding overestimating Smuts' contribution to the history of thought. Similarly, in the sub-section 'The Relationship of Parts to Wholes', I would invite the authors to nuance a bit, by providing more references to philosophers prior to Smuts who contributed to this idea (which might include more bibliographic research). This idea is indeed very old in philosophy and can not be (implicitly) presented as born with Smuts.

To conclude, I think it is really essential that the content of the article is more in line with the promises made in the abstract (as well as in the introduction and conclusion): in its current version, the article presents itself as an attempt to relate Smuts' philosophy to its potential 'practical' implications, whereas the content of the article corresponds more to a philosophical-historical description of Smuts' concept of 'holism'.

I thank the journal and the authors once again for this interesting read, and encourage the authors to continue to shed light on the concept of 'holism', which certainly deserves more than what is present in the current literature.