We usually approach the current state of crisis in terms of a problematic financial situation, which has a broader sociocultural or ideological impact on a second level of analysis. This is the mainstream approach to the crisis we have been facing within Greece, but also within Europe in general, over the last five years. To talk about crisis in Greek seems quite an easy thing to do, as κρίνειν, etymologically speaking, means to judge and to decide, and was firstly elaborated by Greek physicians, and secondly within the sphere of political-juridical action, and rhetorical deliberation. Nevertheless, the current use of the term seems to echo something quite different within the context of philosophical modernity, which has often been stigmatized by the awareness of being critical or in crisis. On a different level, the 17th and 18th centuries defined themselves as being “critical” times, that is times when critique and crisis, a decision regarding the humanity’s future, finally coincided. But very soon, Enlightenment optimism was put aside, as modernity from the 19th century onwards has perceived itself solely as the consciousness of crisis. Therefore, it seems that modernity, and even more so late modernity, has reflected upon its condition as a condition of crisis, as a “critical” condition. This shift in the understanding of crisis and the disentanglement of critique and crisis often led to the weakening of philosophical reflection on what is after all a state of crisis. The latter has often been identified as a state of degeneration, decadence and, philosophically speaking, loss of meaning and nihilism.

It is this complex semantics of crisis, and its historically situated juncture with philosophy, that this two-volume collection of essays intends to explore in order to generate the insight needed for the road ahead. Its aim is twofold: first, to introduce as many philosophical perspectives as possible on the topic of crisis – pragmatic, semantic and hermeneutical, normative and evaluative, religious and secular and, second, to bring forth the conceptual and historicophilosophical ramifications of the current discourse on crises – ecological, financial, European or global – so as to acquaint the reader with some of the chief debates on controversies surrounding the issue.

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PHILOSOPHY AND CRISIS

RESPONDING TO CHALLENGES
TO WAYS OF LIFE IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

VOLUME I
PHILOSOPHY AND CRISIS
RESPONDING TO CHALLENGES TO WAYS OF LIFE IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

VOLUME I

Edited by

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With a Foreword by

João J. Vila-Chã

University of Ioannina, Sector of Philosophy
The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy
To the Memory of
George Francis McLean
(June 29, 1929 – September 6, 2016)
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Every book has a story. The story of these two volumes goes back to the International Conference on “Philosophy and Crisis: Responding to Ways of Life in the Contemporary World,” held at the University of Ioannina, Greece, on 28-30 July, 2013. The Conference was co-organized by the Sector of Philosophy of the University of Ioannina and by the Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (RVP) of the Catholic University of America. The objective was to bring together over one hundred philosophy scholars from twenty-one countries all around the world so that they could discuss the much-debated, within numerous disciplines, topic of crisis—an ambitious project in many respects. At that particular Conference, held in Greece in times of financial hardship, our challenge, as speakers and participants, was to succeed in approaching the topic in a distinctively philosophical manner. Earlier versions of the essays included in this two-volume work were presented and discussed at the 2013 Ioannina conference.

We owe a special debt of gratitude to all those who made this Conference possible: the Rectorate of the University of Ioannina and its former Rector Professor Triantafyllos Albanis, the Dean of the School of Philosophy Professor Katerini Liampi, the former Head of the Department of Philosophy, Education and Psychology Professor Konstantinos Petsios, as well as the former Head of the Sector of Philosophy and now Professor Emeritus Panagiotis Noutsos. We would also like to acknowledge the valuable contribution of Mrs. Panagiota G. Sioula, MA (Member of University Education Administrative and Financial Staff). Special thanks go out to The Joseph and Esther Gani Foundation represented by Mr. Napoleon Margaris, the Cultural Centre of the Municipality of Ioannina represented by Professor Mos. Elisaf and Dr. Maria Stratsani, as well as the photographer Mr. Konstantinos Ignatiadis and the music composer Mr. Dimitris Karagiorgos for giving the Conference a special artistic touch. We are also grateful to Dr. Dimitris Vartziotis, Mr. Konstantinos Zonidis, Mr. Petros Sepetas and Mrs. Helen Theochari, Mr. Nikolaos Prokos, Mr. Sotiris Ioannou, Mrs. Athina Kolionasios, Prassos Brothers, Mr. Vassilis Tsimis, and Mrs. Zeta Asikoglou.

Particular mention is due to those who contributed to the successful completion of this editorial project, especially Professor João J. Vila-Chã, Vice-President of the RVP, who made this publication possible, as well as the anonymous reviewers, who generously read the papers and offered their insights. We would like to extend sincere thanks to Professor Gail M. Presbey for her valuable help, to Professor Emeritus Jack Hogan, who kindly commented on language, and to Mrs. Emily Barone, PhD Candidate in Philosophy, who shouldered the language editing of these two volumes gratis. Last but not least, we express our sincere gratitude and appreciation for all of the hard work to Mrs. Panagiota G. Sioula, who offered much valuable help voluntarily, especially in the final stage of volume editing.
Recently, I have been looking back to the experience of Ioannina, Greece, in July, 2013 and witnessing the careful development of a challenging conference dedicated to the philosophical exploration of "crisis." Crisis has been of great importance for philosophy since its inception and all the more so since the famous lectures of Edmund Husserl in the early 1930s.

Let me begin by expressing gratitude to my colleagues at the philosophy department of the University of Ioannina, especially G. Maggini, H. Karabatzaki and V. Solomou-Pananikolaou. With their thematic conception and organizational skills, they set the tone for an insightful experience. It was because of the sustained efforts of our colleagues in Greece that numerous intellectuals were able to come to Ioannina, not only from all over Greece, but also other parts of Europe and the rest of the world. They shared their thoughts and ideas on a topic of true relevance to philosophy and philosophers across the globe.

One of moments that stands out from my time in Ioannina was when Dr. Solomou-Pananikolaou delivered a tribute to Professor George F. McLean (1929-2016), who, despite not being able to travel to Greece, was fully involved in the preparation and the development of the project. Professor McLean died in September, 2016 and we profoundly miss him. Indeed, we are still, and will continue to be, touched by the intuitions of this great master of perpetual aggiornamento in both thought and action. McLean made many wonderful contributions to the enlargement of philosophical horizons which reached towards a rapprochement between philosophical discourse and human experience as such.

Each paper included in these two volumes speaks on its own to the issue of Philosophy and Crisis; yet, inevitably there are considerable differences going all the way back to the genesis of interest in the topics treated here. Nonetheless, our wish is that the present work will serve as a renewed point of departure in the continuing effort to keep the philosophical conversation alive. This effort will contribute to the ongoing discernment of better ways to promote the human person and human values in the world. Today, perhaps more than ever, humankind longs for major and sustainable sources of inspiration for both reflection and action. We need a philosophy that is capable of remaining a source of meaning but also a relevant platform for the search for truth and justice in these complex global times. Indeed, a work on Philosophy and Crisis must be thought of as a reminder of the urgency coming from so many places where philosophy continues to suffer the consequences of an unjustified, and very problematic, cultural marginalization.
We are now seeing the importance of developing, in a philosophically grounded way, the ability to work within a frame characterized by a deep hermeneutics of meaning expressed in traditional forms of wisdom. These instantiations of culture, such as rituals, bodily practices, forms of social memory, storytelling, and many other narrative processes, are present in many cultures and civilizations. However, such a hermeneutical attitude does not preclude the continuous effort in the pursuit of universal structures that grant and sustain human existence in the world.

In order to face the challenges of the experience of crisis in our time, we must strive for a phenomenological clarification of diverse and different manifestations of the Spirit that inhabits human cultures and traditions. The crisis we are experiencing is multidimensional and yet refers us back to the “Origin,” to the source of meaning and identity, to the ongoing discovery of the human and divine Self. We can say, therefore, that the way forward might be inseparable from a renewed search for the most authentic and sustainable forms of personal and social development within the manifold conditions of today’s world.

We need to overcome preconceptions about philosophy that in many instances still function as impediments to a correct and proper understanding of the field as both an expression of life and a discipline. Philosophy must be engaged with deep reflection on the conditions of our own Lebenswelt. Thus, it must be related to the socio-political conditions required by the historical process of bringing in the powerful ideals of human freedom and dignity.

Part of the role of philosophy is to clarify the important imperatives of our age. One of these is interreligious dialogue and a process for encounter among diverse cultural and civilizational frames. The very idea of dialogue between cultures and religions becomes accessible only in terms of a hermeneutical platform. Such a platform justifies the communicative exchange between different Weltanschauungen in the context of the rich cultural diversity of the human family. Indeed, there is a deep communality to be found in the assumption that no other discipline is better placed for demonstrating the plausibility of an authentic dialogue between cultures and civilizations than philosophy. This seems, all the more, true when we realize that we are practitioners of philosophy in a perpetual Age of Crisis.

The question about the possibility of an authentic interreligious dialogue must include the recognition of philosophy as the discipline of the concept, the hermeneutics of established discourse, and a way of mediation. The latter grants access to both arcane myth and other forms of expression in the human process of searching for meaning. At the base of religious experience is a kind of “universal rhetoric” that is needed in order to better identify and understand the message it conveys.

With Hans-Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur, we can say that without a philosophical study of the metaphoric realm, which grounds all forms of religious discourse, and indeed of all human discourse, we might never be able to understand the position of the other. The other is understood in the authenticity of his or her concrete situation as a real being-in-the-world. The achieve-
ment of mutual understanding among human beings is something that becomes truly operative only at the level of what Ricoeur referred as the living metaphor. This is the expressive form that always points towards that realm of meaning which is and remains beyond linguistic and conceptual forms.

It is assumed that the human subject tends to articulate personal experiences in conceptual terms, that is, in linguistic forms that configure cultural and paradigmatic ways of achieving differences. Whenever I am trying to understand the experience of the other, I use concepts that are culturally situated and carry the particularity of my own vision of the world. Philosophy, therefore, is asked to play its proper role in the process of the (self- and) mutual understanding of persons and communities, cultures, civilizations and religions. After all, without a proper conceptual framework there can be no access to the depths of human experience.

This collective work on Philosophy and Crisis proves not just the relevance of the demands implicit in the technical uses of philosophical disciplines, but also the importance of recognizing the social and political impact of the philosophical quest as such. One of the most important challenges we face today is the integration of philosophy and experience, an integration that must be conceived in an open form so that even the mystical dimension of our experience becomes intertwined with the experience of our own social condition of being. As Levinas would say, of being-for-others. We must continue to search for new approaches to the proper role that each sphere of human life has to play within philosophy. In today’s culture, “religion” tends to have a rather divisive effect while philosophy still appears as endowed with the ability to convey a sense of convergent growth and development among individual human beings, as well as, entire communities of people.

In the cultural situation of our age, one that, perhaps, is best described as crisis, The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (RVP) continues to highlight the importance of promoting the causes of philosophy, particularly as these are focused on the search for truth and justice within the diversity of different cultural contexts. The aim of the Council is to promote multifaceted dialogue on issues pertaining to the historical constitution of different traditions of thought and values that give shape to cultures and civilizations. Attention, therefore, must be given to not only the Western tradition, but also to the rich and diverse traditions of other continents. This is accomplished by means of a continuous dialogue among the great cultural traditions of humankind. But at the centre of this pursuit must be, I believe, the search for forms and expressions of experience and thought capable of recognizing the real value and dignity of each human person.

Focused on the challenges and the opportunities associated with the experience of crisis, the meeting that we attended in Ioannina was transformed by the editors into the present work. It demonstrates anew the reasonability of the belief we share in the importance of working together with many others. Hence, our wish is that these two volumes may find many readers who, while going through the contributions gathered here, may be able and willing to encounter occasions to pause and to reflect and so evaluate their own actions
as citizens, not just of this or that political commonwealth, or culture and civilization, but also as a cosmopolitan citizen of the world.

We think that philosophy should never cease to focus upon the condition of being-in-crisis as a constitutive part of our being-in-the-world. This condition cannot be separated from the adventure of achieving togetherness, of projecting into everyday reality the kind of justice and peace for which all major religions of the world strive. In a world full of difficult and problematic situations, philosophy must continue to relearn the best way to be of service to the human cause and the continuous discovery of a new and better civilization.
Introduction

In the very first pages of his ground-breaking *Critique and Crisis: Enlightenment and the Pathogenesis of Modern Society* (1959), Reinhart Koselleck argues that “Europe’s history has broadened; it has become world history and will run its course as that, having allowed the whole world to drift into a state of permanent crisis.”¹ In the aftermath of WWII and in the middle of the Cold War, Koselleck’s statement and subsequent analysis did not sound as a mere diagnosis. In fact, it was rather a prognostic of what was to come for Europe and the world. By intertwining Enlightenment politics with its philosophy of history, the eminent German historian pinpointed the 18th century’s blindness to what is a self-conscious state of critique which would undoubtedly include a condition of crisis, as it is in effect co-emergent with it: “‘Crisis’ as a central concept was not part of the century of criticism and moral progress. And this is altogether understandable, given that the inherent dialectic of antithetical thought served to hide the intended decision of this thought-process.”² But if the moral dualism and the historical optimism of modernity at its peak rendered invisible the inherent link between critique and crisis, late modernity renders it more than visible in many ways: we no longer participate in the spirit of moral and historical optimism of our Enlightenment predecessors, as we have been, for a long time now, more than aware of the co-belonging of modernity with the spirit and the historico-political actuality of crisis.

Nevertheless, echoes of crisis, in the sense of a crucial point in time or a state of affairs in which a decisive change is impending, were already present in Socrates’ unceasing quest for a general definition of the moral virtues or even in his fundamental question “how should one live.”³ Still, modernity seems to have provided crisis with a proper meaning for our times, giving birth to something utterly new and unprecedented: the historicity of crisis. This new understanding of crisis incorporates both annihilation and revelation. As the *momentum or movimentum* between two continuous states of affairs, crisis is not only destructive, but also the sign of sudden, often unexpected, flourishing. Therefore, in order to fully unfold the hermeneutics of crisis, we have to go through a wide range of themes which manifest their importance not only for philosophy’s self-understanding, but also for the way in which we understand ourselves with regard to the challenges we face in our own ways of life in times of crisis.

We usually approach the current state of crisis in terms of a problematic financial situation, which has a broader sociocultural or ideological impact on a second level of analysis. This is the mainstream approach to the crisis we

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² Ibid., p. 158.
³ Plato, Gorgias 492d. Cf. Plato, Gorgias 500c; Republic 352d.
have been facing within Greece, but also within Europe in general, over the last five years. To talk about crisis in Greek seems quite an easy thing to do, as κρίνειν, etymologically speaking, means to judge and to decide, and was firstly elaborated by Greek physicians, and secondly within the sphere of political-juridical action, and rhetorical deliberation. Nevertheless, the current use of the term seems to echo something quite different within the context of philosophical modernity, which has often been stigmatized by the awareness of being critical or in crisis. On a different level, the 17th and 18th centuries defined themselves as being “critical” times, that is times when critique—first as a judicial term and second as a philosophical one, in other words, the rational power to decide upon the course of humanity’s progress—and crisis, a decision regarding the humanity’s future, coincided. Soon, Enlightenment optimism was put aside, as modernity from the 19th century onwards has perceived itself solely as the consciousness of crisis. Therefore, it seems that modernity, and even more so late modernity, has reflected upon its condition as a condition of crisis, as a “critical” condition. This shift in the understanding of crisis and the disentanglement of critique and crisis often led to the weakening of philosophical reflection on what is after all a state of crisis. The latter has often been identified as a state of degeneration, decadence and, philosophically speaking, loss of meaning and nihilism. But is “crisis” synonymous with decadence and loss of meaning? In the words of French philosopher and intellectual Michel Serres, the time of a crisis is the “time of the cherries” (le temps des cerises), that is, the time when a fruit is ripe, the kairos of maturation, in Plato’s and Aristotle’s sense. Taken in this sense, a crisis conceals and at the same time reveals the kairos of things producing a breach, or several breaches, in the long historical process. After all, Western philosophy from its birth in Ionia until now has acted either as a counselor or as an adversary of crises of all kinds, social, political, cultural and personal. But in any case, either by defending the current status quos or by suggesting radical countermeasures to these, philosophy has greatly contributed to the prognostic and diagnostic of crises. This is the sense in which we should comprehend Hegel’s well-known maxim that philosophy can be defined as the crisis of each epoch, expressed in concepts.

It is this complex semantics of “crisis,” and its historically situated juncture with philosophy, that this two-volume collection of essays intends to explore in order to generate the insight needed for the road ahead. Its aim is twofold: first, to introduce as many philosophical perspectives as possible on the topic of crisis—pragmatic, semantic and hermeneutical, normative and evaluative, religious and secular and, second, to bring forth the conceptual and historico-philosophical ramifications of the current discourse on crises—ecologi-

Introduction

cal, financial, European or global –so as to acquaint the reader with some of the chief debates on controversies surrounding the issue. The selection of essays is, therefore, guided by the need to satisfy these objectives.

Volume One opens with three papers by Evanghelos Moutsopoulos, Costas Douzinas and Panagiotis Noutsos, who each give us a prominent perspective on “crisis”: from the viewpoint of philosophy of history (Moutsopoulos), of Europe being an exemplary case for what we take to be the current European crisis (Douzinas), and also of ourselves standing before a situation of crisis in modern thought or in a state of creative “polyphonia” (Noutsos).

Part I, “The Hermeneutics of the Crisis,” addresses the issues and concerns regarding the semantic, epistemological, and hermeneutical stakes of “crisis.” The focus is here directed to the elaboration of the philosophy-crisis continuum (Soulez), and also on the charting of some differential accounts of “crisis,” both in terms of individual and social knowledge (Pournari). Moreover, two lines of thought are developed, which link the theme of crisis to those of openness (Apostolopoulou) and disruption (Koutsoumpos).

Part II, “The Multi-Faced Aspects of the Crisis,” turns to the multiple socio-cultural contexts where crises arise: from Detroit’s current critical situation (Presbey) and the role of US African communal ethics (Osei), to a potential “Eastern solution” to the West’s horizon of crisis (Mukherjee), and hence a perspective external to its cultural and conceptual framework (N. Sinha). This part of the volume invokes the global context of change and interaction within which the current crisis should be envisaged and dealt.

In Part III, “Global Crisis, Economy, Environment,” the authors illustrate some critical pragmatic parameters of what we usually refer to as “global crisis.” This includes a determined shift from already existing ideas and pre-conceptions to a step-by-step approach to the complex dialectics of crisis. More specifically, from a pragmatic vantage point, the authors of this part undertake the challenge of shedding light on the financial (Drosos, Peonidis), and environmental (Ozoliņš, A. Sinha) implications of today’s global crisis.

Part IV, “The Moral Aspects of the Crisis,” illustrates the philosophically dense relation of crisis with morality. Hence, the authors introduce different paths of investigation into the ethical and moral implications of crisis by addressing, argumentatively, the issues of moral error (Rose), judgments of practice (Mylonaki), decision-making (Aguas), moral values (Matthopoulos and Mantzanas), and finally, the role and significance of altruism in a world of ethnic and racist separatism (Karafillis).

The inherent link of “crisis” to practical reason is further examined in Part V, “Crisis, Values and Modernity,” where a more socially-minded perspective is introduced. This is achieved as far as the co-belonging of “crisis” with bourgeois modernity is concerned (Daremas), but also with regard to modernity’s particular ideological and political instances (Blasko, Grigoriou).

The following two parts draw the philosophical issue of crisis close to specific aspects of artistic and religious discourses. This is the case for the essays presented in Part VI, “Art and Crisis, Art in Crisis,” where the authors attempt to reconstruct a discourse on and of crisis in the context of artistic
creation, more specifically, in music and painting (Vlagopoulos, Zarra, Proimos). In the area of religious experience, the authors of Part VII of the Volume, “Religion and Crisis, Religion as a Remedy to the Crisis,” make a similar attempt. Questions such as the reintegrative role of faith in today’s world of separatisms and religious conflict (Nizhnikov), of “mystagogia” as a formative ideal (Chitoiu), and of experiences of transcendence, such as that of Byzantine Orthodoxy (Merantzas) and of late modern New Age spirituality (Dura and Damian), are investigated.

Whereas the first volume is dedicated to multiple philosophical approaches to the theme of crisis from a systematic viewpoint, the second volume is organized thematically and defends a more historically-oriented line of argumentation. In Part VIII, “Crisis in the Ancient World,” debates the terrain of crisis in the ancient world. Starting with more general accounts of the issue and with an eye to today’s overarching concerns (Robinson, Karabatzaki), the chapters in this part corroborate, with varying degrees of intensity and import, the thesis that crises are not exclusive to modernity and that we can indeed philosophically problematize crisis in a pre-modern setting. This is the case for pre-Platonic (Psarros), and also for classical Greek philosophy in Plato and Aristotle (Solomou-Papanikolaou, Tezas, Stavelas), as much as for Hellenistic philosophy (Lekkas, Protopapas-Marneli).

In Part IX, “Modern and Contemporary Philosophical Perspectives on the Crisis,” the investigation is further extended to modern and late modern times. In this light, a range of major thinkers, such as Spinoza (Bazac), Nietzsche (Poulakos), Spengler (Giannopoulou), Wittgenstein (Sakellariadis), and Ortega y Gasset (Eliopoulos) are studied with a close focus on the ways in which their philosophical questioning could be, and in some cases in fact is, applicable to the theme of crisis.

This range of studies on modernity and late modernity is further extended by contributions in Part X, “Contemporary Philosophical Perspectives on the Crisis: Phenomenology-Deconstruction-Virtue-Theory,” which draws from three major traditions within contemporary philosophy to critically deal with the theme of crisis. To this aim, several, often unexpected parallels or crossroads are studied in the work of Hannah Arendt (Tasis), post-WWII French philosophy (Prelorentzos), Jacques Derrida (Pirovolakis), Kostas Axelos (Roumkou), and last but not least, in Alasdair MacIntyre’s view of tradition and virtues (Mela).

The two parts that follow engage in two critical topics which are endowed with urgency and, often, with polemical intensity. Essays in Part XI, “Perspectives on the Current European Crisis,” address several aspects of what Europeans envisage at present as a state of crisis, both financial and in terms of identity. Philosophy can serve the purpose of revisiting the question of Europe—as a financial, cultural, and political entity—and this is what the authors of this part seek to do beyond the mere polemic. Phenomenology is one of the contemporary philosophical trends that offer useful insights into the current debate on Europe’s present and future (Maggini). Another course of arguments stems from questioning the rescuing morality underlying the standard-
ized solutions offered to the European crisis (da Silva). Another important issue is to question the rhetoric and imagery of Europe’s nation-states within the perspective of pedagogy and the prospective formation of a common European identity (Gotovos). Furthermore, no perspective on the current European crisis would be adequate without taking into consideration the genesis of a new type of capitalism on a global, but also European, scale, which demands a revised critical stance (Cloke). This claim to critique should always be accompanied by a claim to spontaneity and humour, which could act as a counterpart in the wrongdoings of the present (Paschalis).

The critical discourse on today’s Europe is further endorsed by a more topical analysis of the current Greek debt crisis in Part XII, “Greece in Crisis.” Authors in this part engage in divergent courses of thought and argumentation ranging from historical accounts of national crises and their role in the formation of the Greek State (Glycofrydi-Leontsini), to more pragmatic accounts of “Greek crisis” in financial (Chryssafis) or socio-political terms (Dimitriou, Pantazakos), and last but not least, in terms of moral psychology (Theologou, Leontsini). Finally, two further studies are dedicated to the diagnosis of today’s situation in Greece through the lenses of eminent Greek philosophers such as Kostas Axelos and Panagiotis Kondylis (Rantis), and intellectuals such as Christos Yannaras (Boundas).

The last part of this two-volume work embraces the initiative to include the work of young scholars, mostly Ph.D. candidates, in the philosophical debate on crisis from both systematic and historical perspectives. In these short essays, a wide range of themes are treated in a way that proves the authors’ argumentative rigor and intense philosophico-historical awareness.

Golfo Maggini, Vasiliki P. Solomou-Papanikolaou, Helen Karabatzaki and Konstantinos D. Koskeridis
PART I

Doing Philosophy in Times of Crisis
Crises in History: A Philosophical Approach

Evanghelos Moutsopoulos

The subject analyzed here is highly multidimensional, and therefore imposes complicated combinations and severe controls. Such a consideration appeals to all three generations that constitute the human substrate of contemporary societies: the ascending, the passing by and the departing generation, each one of which experiences, in its own different, but similarly feverous way, its concern about our common condition and itinerary. This is because we, by ourselves, shape tomorrow through today.

I have already envisaged this problem, trying to transcend the narrow a priori frames that, authoritatively and unilaterally, Vico (after Polybius), Bossuet (after Augustin) and Hegel (after Gerardo di Borgo San Donino and Joacin de Flores), have circumscribed, in order to insert into them the course of history, respectively as a series of recourses, as a broken line consisting of three segments and as a helicoidal circumvolution, not to take under consideration Collingwood and his followers with their insistence on the concept of historical intentionality as a subjective frame of history. I thus have had the possibility of seeking, with more ease and according to a less dogmatic method than theirs, i.e. a method consequent in regard to the nature of historical reality, and analytical as well as synthetic, a process, or rather an a posteriori resulting model of historical procedure, which the particular aspects of the historical course may finally confirm.

I intend to come back later to this issue. In the meantime, I deem it important to isolate a sentence from that text of mine, to which I impute a specific gravity, and on which I shall base the analysis of my conceptions. I quote “The more the historical consciousness of a society is aware of its eventual capacity to take advantage of its past, the more it is susceptible of being subject to crises.”

By this sentence, I defined a prolongation of the process concerning the excessive development of certain data in the field of artistic crea-

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4 Cf. Ibid., p. 206.
7 Cf. Moutsopoulos, “L’histoire comme tradition…” (cf. supra, n. 1).
tion, in distinction to what may be said about the field of historical creation. In the first case, one has to do with a quite confined finality, so that any excess in developing the data entails an evasion of the end development. The dynamic wealth of a work of art may be limited. But what about the unlimited wealth of history where from the historical consciousness is, in principle, capable of being unlimitedly fed? To my opinion, the importance of such a distinction for the issue in question consists in that it gives me the opportunity to relate it to the problem of crises, such as they surge in history; a problem which is now salient, since it continuously tortures us, perhaps because we navigate in an ocean of every kind of crisis.

Already, at the beginning of the twentieth century, Husserl noticed a crisis of the European sciences. In our days, we refer more and more, not only to the prominent economic crisis, but also to any kind of cultural case. Keynes’ revolution in economy has already been surpassed, like every other revolution. What remains to be defined and understood in such an ocean of crisis is not the nature of a concrete order of crises, but that of the very idea of crisis, whose every other crisis is a specific manifestation.

The extreme consideration of such a topic would consist in seeking a “metaphysics of crisis,” which has even been attempted by our contemporary thought. My personal epistemological approach to this topic may be qualified as being inspired by a rather positive intention. Only if one can formerly understand what a crisis, any crisis is as to its nature, it will be possible to investigate the specific nature of the historical crises.

What does the term crisis mean? I shall not refer to the various dimensions of this concept, logical and other, as many as the history of philosophy and of science allow to enumerate, neither to its own history, but merely to its initial epistemological meaning, that of discrimination, i.e. that of a process of distinguishing, if not even the evaluation of the differences between two or more objects of the consciousness, then between two or more aspects of the same object. After Descartes and Leibniz, Bergson has definitely shown that human intellect is, by its nature, adequately armed to analyze reality in such a way as to be able to influence it and impose itself upon it, before it submits it to its own conveniences, as well as to its own activities which aim at making use of it. Such analytical processes either imply or entail synthetic ones, according to which the consciousness may, beforehand or after a certain procedure, acquire a global idea of its own objectives, as well as of the convenience of its activities tending towards the accomplishment of its aims.

Further on, the term crisis, applied to a noetic procedure, covers not only an analytical activity of discrimination, but also an activity of comparison, and even a synthetic transgression of certain data, as Kant has shown in his
Critique of Pure Reason. In both cases, and in order to be efficient, i.e. to be valuable,\textsuperscript{13} be it precisely or in general, the crisis, in its initial meaning, implies the existence of an appropriate and acceptable element, thanks to which the objects of the consciousness which are tested will also be controlled. In other words, it claims a criterion. Such a criterion is supposed to derive from a reduction, i.e. a minimization of the common characteristics of the object submitted to discrimination, so that it acquires a status of permanence and stability. Under these conditions, such a criticism, without becoming itself of value, becomes a measure of the qualitative evaluation. Under such a capacity, such a measure results as an instrument of the investigation of reality which, apparently, changes every time the conditions of reference of the consciousness of it are themselves subject to change. By using a criterion, the consciousness is able to control every reality, the objective one and its own as well. In addition, from what precedes, it becomes clear that there is no crisis within a consciousness as far as it does not refer to reality.

The above considerations are relevant to the epistemological aspect of the issue. However, from here on, it is imperative that the same issue be examined from its ontological aspect. In any case, the nature of the problem claims its methodical examination from both viewpoints and according to both of its dimensions. By making and determining the field of application and the mode of conceiving the double meaning of the concept of crisis and of some other concepts directly or indirectly related to it, one succeeds in taking the first and necessary step in the direction of seeking the directly determining and determinable feature which may be attributed to the network which each and every crisis constitutes for the consciousness. Either this crisis is external to it, as its object, or immanent to it, as an experienced situation. This feature is the discontinuity.

By this statement, I have already slipped into the metaphysical domain of my inquiry. I only need to proceed through some more methodological definitions.

The question on discontinuity\textsuperscript{14} goes back to the Eleatic school and, of course, has never stopped to intrigue philosophers and scientists alike, under various forms of dispute, even during the twentieth century: at first, with the scientific opposition between undulatory and quantum mechanics; then, with the purely epistemological opposition between Bergson and Bachelard. I do not think it would be useful to lengthen my thoughts on that issue. I alluded to it just to emphasize the importance of the concept of discontinuity as an elementary feature without which any crisis would be unthinkable. I intend to investigate (i) on the general consistence of discontinuity, and (ii) its role in the functioning of every crisis; and after a necessary methodological parenthesis, (iii) on the very procedure of the crisis, both as an object of reference


of the consciousness and as an experienced state, in view of (iv) a final hermeneutic consideration of its specific expression as a crisis in history.

(i) I shall define discontinuity (a) as the manifestation of an interrupted presence, be it objective or relevant to self-awareness; and (b) as another presence wedging the former one, of which it automatically differentiates the unity by dividing it into two separate phases or aspects: that of before and that of after. Neither of them is exclusively and necessarily conceivable from a spatial, temporal, or even from a spatio-temporal viewpoint, since it is also possible that they may be conceived on a logical ground, i.e. as effects; and further on, existentially. Nonetheless, as far as crises in history are concerned, the notion of temporal depth within which they take place is necessarily taken into consideration. The term “interrupted presence” acquires here the meaning of a radical essential mutation, and, to refer to Plato’s Timaeus,15 of a transition from Sameness to Otherness. The probable periodicity of such an interruption does not change its nature; it merely transposes it from the level of the single and the once to that of the anew and the again.16 In addition, this interruption, while being itself something other, is not that “other” at which, within the process in question, the “same” may terminate; it merely introduces it. This is of great importance, for it confirms, in its own way, the reduction of the elements entailed by the continuity not to two only, but to three. Such a conception of discontinuity has enormous consequences on the hermeneutic of the concept of crisis; a hermeneutic which I intend to undertake.

(ii) Consequently, the importance of discontinuity in the functionality of every crisis becomes evident, as suppressive of a former continuity, with a significant difference: that whereas discontinuity itself conserves its otherness towards both phases of the presence it interrupts, it nevertheless co-mingles with them due to the fact that it entails them, without, however, bearing them potentially in itself. Discontinuity is not an interruption in se; it is, I repeat, the expression, the manifestation of an interruption, and such a difference is not without a logical consequence: it also extends towards the axiological difference between a mere interruption and an essential crisis.

(iii) One is thus led to determine the crisis itself, which, instead of being identifiable as an interruption, would precisely be the very negation of any interruptions, had it not been, itself subject to successive micro-interruptions,17 so that, as such, it is a dramatic ontological negation. Hence, in this context, a crisis does not emerge due to an interruption already existing, but because a potentiality of successive interruptions is inherent within a continuity; in other words, because there is a potential menace of such interventions. The actual interruption merely entails, as I already have stated, the transition from the “same” to the “other.” The potential menace of interruption rouses

the menacing presence after which it dramatically seeks (with a possible effect which sometimes is even really tragic), in order to conserve and enrich its identity and success for itself, through this combat, instead of a being-else, a more-being. It is for this reason that a crisis is scarcely thinkable outside of a consciousness, be it individual or collective, but in any case, a consciousness of existence. Even when physics and biology denote such situations, they refer to them according to a procedure of a conceptualistic prolongation and generalization of this fact.

This is the reason why I formerly stated my conviction about the need for jointly examining the issue under both of its dimensions, the epistemological and the ontological one, and about the need of a ceaseless transfer from one to the other. In any case, the analytical scientific method has, in its turn, contributed to forwarding the specification of the problem by formulating each time, at a quantitative level, the notion of the crisis of the critical point, a notion which the mere synthetic philosophical research and, above all, the research that moves at a qualitative level, would, even after Leibniz, as well as after the Sophists, in antiquity, have some difficulty to determine. Nevertheless, the notion of “critical moment,” which under only certain conditions is related to the notion of “critical period,” even surreptitiously introduced into the philosophical discourse, offers itself to valorization by the latter.

I shall not examine in detail whether the notion of “critical moment,” within the frame of a crisis, corresponds to a reality or merely constitutes a schematic notional condensation of some other reality which should be conceived of as a zone subject to contractions and dilatations. Besides, I refuse to repeat here what have I exposed and analyzed in details in some of my books. I just notice that also the reduction of this “kairic” zone to a single, minimum point is the privilege of consciousness, which is in position, during the combat it carries on for its own confirmation, to change and restructure objective data, conferring on them a meaning corresponding to the reality of its own presence.

(iv) The ground has, I think, already been efficiently cleaned out, so that an unhindered transition, towards the main aspect of the issue I am dealing with, may be possible. I have already formulated, in what has preceded, the statement that crisis, in general, is the experience of a menacing discontinuity. I shall now examine to what extent such a consideration may be applied to cases of crises in history. Two new subjects are emerging here, which I deem necessary to distinguish, so that I may indicate my position in respect to them. I therefore have, first, to dissociate the specific term “crisis in history” from the simple term “crisis” in its general meaning; and, second, to investigate whether at the level of the consciousness itself, the precise term “crisis in history” is but a pleonastic development; in other words, whether any crisis is necessarily a historical one.

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As for the first question, may I observe that the distinction between the general and the specified term resounds the prolongation a problem: that anything concerning the experience of a crisis by the consciousness may be aimed at the scientific objectification thereof? I deem that I have sufficiently dealt with it, so that, from the framework which the term “crisis in history” circumscribes, every kind of extra-conscious activity may be excluded. For example, the critical thermic point for the water to boil, does by no means constitute the expression of a real crisis. One has to do here with an epistemological digression, unless it affects the intentionality of the scientist’s consciousness, when proceeding to an experiment. Let me repeat it: A crisis which is not consciously experienced is not an essential one. This leaves outside of the adequate margin of the term “crisis” any scientifically stated turmoil that has no effect, at least upon the scientist’s understanding judgement.

As for the second question, that which consists in asking whether every crisis (economical, cultural etc.) can be only a historical one, I shall observe that, just as the term “historical crisis” is the product of a semantic restriction, it also admits alike a semantic amplification, so that according to the formerly accepted semantic pledges by “crisis” as well as “historical crisis,” one fundamentally means the same reality. In this sense, every crisis is a crisis of the consciousness, a crisis highly related to the continuity of existence. Nevertheless, and despite any semantic references which have been underlined, the specific term “historical crisis” has a particularly precise meaning that enables it to express a phenomenal or real blind alley during the process of a given society, with probable effects on several aspects of its future existence.

Understood under this last meaning, a historical crisis becomes an essential test to which a society that has gradually accumulated power through successive excesses or omissions, is submitted, i.e. either directly or by resounds, compressing superfluous powers impeding its normal historical survival into a unitary and consistent entity. However, as such, every society has its inherent feeblenesses whose automatic accentuation during its historical course has, as a further effect, the accumulation of elements whose provenance is due to a preceding, aimless loss of energy and which, progressively, constitute negative parameters for this society’s evolution; in other words, parameters impeding its normal development. Depending on variable circumstances, each society undergoing a test characterized as a historical crisis is obliged to come into conflict against such a function of parameters, the outcome of this conflict being almost always the strengthening of that society.

In the preceding paragraph I have willingly condensed the whole problematic of the historical crises. I now shall try to analytically distinguish the particular themes relating to crises in history under three successive aspects: the essential, the structural and the formal one, before I proceed to some final interpretations and evaluations.

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Of all these three aspects, a slight idea has already been given from a methodological viewpoint through the proceeding notional and methodological investigation. However, we are even more prepared to investigate on the essence of historical crises, which, due precisely to this preparation, will occupy us much less extensively than that of the other parameters of the issue. Each historical crisis appears as the reaction of the historical consciousness of a society, which becomes aware of a menacing interruption of its normal and orderly course towards its self-ascertainment. Such a menace may have its cause either outside or even inside a given society. It, nevertheless, always gets intensified due to the conflict between the effects of such a society’s weaknesses and the effects of its own activity that aims to intensify its presence.

In other words, at a certain moment, this society becomes aware of the incompatibility between its omissions and its aspirations. A new unforeseeable element or a network of new elements, issued for the first time or repeatedly, from inside that society, but which have been objectified to the extent that they now claim to be purely objective, tend to wedge disturbingly into the reality of the society in question, so that they alter its structure and render it, even provisionally, incapable of pursuing the normal course of its existence. The trial this society enters then consists in a struggle of rejecting this network in its totality or, at least, those of its elements which are the most dangerous and strange to its own nature, since even in the case that it had produced them itself, it had already rejected them during the preceding process of their objectification, and tries simultaneously to adopt and adapt to itself those elements which may be creatively absorbed by it, due to their adequacy to its nature.

The trial a historical crisis entails, succeeds to a sequence of preparation, which corresponds to the accumulation of data incompatible with the society in question, on the one hand; and, on the other hand, it precedes a sequence of release or decay, depending on the way in which a given society is in position to valorize to its own benefit the crisis through which it is going. In a negative case, the crisis will, of course, continue until it completely exterminates the society. It is remarkable that, although the society aims at its future restitution, it also scrutinizes its past existence in order to seek in it the criterion or the criteria which it may use to evaluate the elements it has to exclude and those it has to retain, eventually valorizing the latter. It thus becomes clear that the historical self-awareness of this society experiences a double orientation, precisely because it is the awareness of its own identity and of the need to confirm it as well.

What remains to be sought is the very sequence of the crisis. Any crisis in itself consists in a condensation and a culmination which, on its part, acts destructively, as I have already stated, but, also, simultaneously, as a favorable opportunity, i.e. differentially, as far as the historical reality of the society is concerned.

(v) From a structuralist viewpoint, if one accepts that the structure is, in general, the relation of the essence to the form, then the extremely simplifying model I have already used and which was perhaps sufficient to characterize the ontological parameter of the problem, is now totally unfit for the research
of the historical crises structure. At this level, one cannot neglect the complexity of these crises’ frameworks which constitute the foundations of historical coming to be, there is no difficulty about this point.

For the Ancient Greek thought, and for Vico as well, and for the continuators of the latter’s conception of history, including Bury, Nietzsche, Spengler and Toynbee, each historical society bears within itself the seed of its own decay. Its very flourishing state, its peak, its apogee, also marks the beginning of its eclipse. In this context, a historical crisis is hidden within the society’s peak, such a peak being understood as an exasperation, as a paroxysm. The manifestation of the crisis is merely delayed, so that it becomes perceptible during the sequence of decay. The only luminosity that slightly enlightens this desperately pessimistic and rather disenchanting, static conception is the probable statement that, within the same geographical area or elsewhere, another cycle of historical life is born, which will perpetuate the struggle for the existence of humankind.

According to the Hebraic originating Christian conception of the problem, which is openly dynamic, a historical crisis claims transcendent prolongations and, contradictorily, may be destructive and delivering simultaneously. The conception precisely admits the importance of the negation of the past, and its affirmation as well, but primarily accentuates the importance of this historical renovation of human societies. Essentially, the structural scheme which the universal history of human kind, as Bossuet,\(^21\) for instance, considers it, is not an ascending parabola, but a more or less a ascending broken line with intense deviations that precisely picture the succession of historical crises. As for Hegel, and partially, for Teilhard de Chardin who combines the spiritual course to the universal evolution, historical crises are bound in a structural chain which combines the circular historical course to the broken straight line one. Such crises are, for Hegel, as for Vico, clearly inherent and by no means allude to some transcendence in respect of human societies, and represent a dialectical necessity. On the contrary, for Collingwood,\(^22\) who reverts the Hegelian perspective, historical crises do not start from a universal cause, but from a subjective and personal one, so that from the person of a historical agent they spread out to a society in its whole.

Schematic and generalized as they are, these representations neglect the polyvalent character of historic reality. I would like to envisage a representation which corresponds to this character; in other words, which takes into consideration the polyphonic life of human societies, though not without having made previously a short halt at the usual attempt of categorizing history.\(^23\) an attempt starts from Hesiod’s work, but has attained huge dimensions since the nineteenth century. This categorization has been connected with the imposition of the term of historical period or era (the term of Hellenistic period, for


\(^{22}\) Cf. Moutsopoulos, “Historiologie” (\textit{supra}, n. 6).

instance, was invented by J.G. Droysen, just as the term Renaissance was coined by P. Lacroix. Such a process, however, is also connected to the concept of historical “century” or age (age of Pericles; of Louis XIV; of Enlightenment; Nuclear age). None of these periods corresponds to something precise. Each one of these historical categories is, in a completely different way, improper to qualify the historical object to which it refers. I think that Hegel’s influence is not at all alien to the prevalence of these categorized concepts. Hegel provides the example of this categorization by distinguishing three periods of the history of art (symbolic, classical, and romantic). It is impossible to proceed in the direction of a more malleable conception of historical crises without having got rid, beforehand, of the tyrannical survival of such categorizations which provide the necessary foundations of these schematic structural models.

Under this condition, and also under the condition to substitute the history of the categorized philosophical systems by a history of ideas in the sector of the history of philosophy, one is allowed to consider a historical crisis as a polyphonic event according to what I have previously stated. Each crisis is a kind of a drama implying its intensification and its catharsis. Music provides perhaps the most adequate structural representation of that kind of reality. This idea certainly astonishes, at the first glance, one who is still unaware of such a problematic. Yet, a further questioning may reinforce its representativeness. Indeed, the two respective essential characters of the historical course and of the condensation of the historical crisis envisaged as an opportune or inopportune moment, these characters being polyphonicity and dramaticity, find in the sphere of music their most totalized expression: polyphony, in that it itself constitutes a function of parameters which are born by each other, or through opposition, copulate with, and separate from each other, develop, degenerate, vanish and reappear with consequence, thus creating intensities and relaxations. As for dramaticity, it deals with the same elements which are thought of as appearing at different moments and survive until moments, different themselves, then conclude into a stretto, a contention of the frame within which they came into struggling with each other.

Consequently, one has to admit that the structure of historical crises is, explicitly, a “fugal” one. Without entering here into purely technical details concerning similarities and differences, I consider that the structural model I introduce secures an adequate representation of real situations which lead to historical crises and of their causes as well. Any simplifying schematization is thus avoided and the model proposed remains a functional one, without losing its plasticity and, above all, its rigorous unity.

(vi) I would like now, during the investigation of the third parameter of historical crises, the morphological one, to become even more concrete. This

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26 Cf. Moutsopoulos, “Historicisme...” (supra, n. 5).
is why I shall refer to tangible examples of historical crises which have been proved to be crises of self-awareness of societies as well. Dating back to pre-history, already the transition from matriarchy to patriarchy had been gradually completed, with intermediate stages as long as the transformation and the development of new techniques had lasted, with parallel particular survivals of precedent situations being inserted into new, through complex compensative systems of protection from the danger of excesses. One century ago, Frazer and half a century after him, Lévi-Strauss, starting from different points, have shown, each one in his own way, how much this crisis which extended into a spatio-temporal domain, has been materialized through forms of coexisting opposed elements. The crisis which is so much related to biological concerns was extended into some millenia due to the fact that the societies that experienced it lacked a developed historical self-awareness that could immediately allow them solve their problem. However, these same societies instinctively sought the guarantee of their identity and their continuity, thus defending themselves against the factor of the introduction of new techniques, through the conservation of elements proper to the past of each one of them.

Another major crisis which human kind has gone through was the one provoked by the advent of Christianity, and which, to my opinion, is a social crisis, and a moral crisis as well. Its historic spatio-temporal extension is due, in contrast to that of the previous one, to the developed self-consciousness of societies that experienced it. Indeed, it had been prepared for centuries, and it lasted for centuries as well. It displayed its preparatory and final stages and its opportune and inopportune resolution conditions alike. Its ideological model may be sought in other analogous reactions of the Greco-Roman world, ever since it contacted the Middle East. On the other hand, one cannot ignore that ideological superstructures which had expressed past situations of the ancient world did not delay the total domination of Christianity, whereas others facilitated and accelerated its extension.

A third major historical crisis is undoubtedly the one known under the denomination of industrial revolution, which is pluri-dimensional, since it displayed economic, social, moral, ideological and political aspects. It also had its preliminary stages which the so-called “great” history has not always considered necessary to register. Here again one observes a delay, before it was solved, and though of lesser importance, due to a more developed historical consciousness of the societies that first experienced it and to their unwillingness to reject their culture, so that they conserve at least a part of their identity. Very often, a political action accelerates, here and there, some precocious, untimely and biased solution. On the other hand, this very crisis is complicated by an ideology founded only upon the investigation of a particular society. Such an intervention is the by-product of the crisis that was further on, created by the technological revolution. In this case, the solution of the primary crisis is hindered, but, at the same time, also accelerated by its by-product, so that

the discontinuity is itself disrupted by several micro-disruptions and the crisis remains indefinitely unresolved. For example, to the industrial revolution, the revolution of informatics and its by-product, the ideology of globalization, complicate at an extreme degree a continuity within a discontinuity.

The examples which have been given in what preceded pertinently show the morphological specificity of each one of the respective and universally experienced crises. However, despite their differences, all of them claim the same structural consistency which echoes similar concerns of human consciousness; and despite dissimilarities, the same structural models are to be found during the micro-structural and micro-morphological analysis of a spatio-temporally historical crisis restricted. The menace of breaking the continuity of a society by the catalytic causes external to it, and its tendency to look after its own past in order to draw from it, illustrates its susceptibility to strengthening within it the certainty of its unaltered identity and its capacity to survive. For example, the longing for the complete recovery of democracy by Athens after the adventures of the Peloponnesian War, even by paying the heavy price of Socrates’ death, or the restitution of the French Republic after the dramatic end of the Second Empire, are historical crises of apparently restricted extension and consequences. They, nevertheless, present forms reducible to the malleable model I depicted.

My conclusion, after having analyzed a selected series of crises, consists in a slight variation which I shall formulate in comparison with my initial statement, which related the concept of historical consciousness to that of historical crisis. Let me repeat it: “The more the historical consciousness is aware of its probable incapacity to draw from its past, the more it seems to be subject to crises.” In the light of what has been said, this statement that focuses on the consciousness of apparently incompatible data, may be exposed as follows: “The more the historical consciousness is aware of its ability to draw out of its past, the more it is ready to overcome the crises which it may undergo.” A society which would ignore any crisis often salutary for it, would merely be a society in slumber or on its way. It is unthinkable that the historical renewal of a society presupposes its death instead of its will to survive by assuming the continuity of its existence through the continuity of its essence, so that it achieves its greater being to which it aspires.

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I would perhaps be allowed to stop at this point. However, by already referring to the complexity of the crisis which our contemporary society experiences at a universal level, be it at various degrees, and according to various circumstances, I suppose I have touched one of the major actual problems worldwide. This problematic is experienced by the universitary societies more intensively and more dramatically. The social historical consciousness provides the possibility not to envisage the fact of today’s university crisis as an isolated or unique reality. Universities have undergone innumerable crises since the Middle Ages. What is important to understand is that the actual cri-
sis is specific. There are similarities in what concerns the so-called “gap of generations” and the degradation, if not the loss of the scientific and moral weight of the persons involved. Differences appear in the social field, due to the tendency of democratizing education. Universities, being living organisms, need to develop inside as they develop outside. Their drama consists in the fact that they asymmetrically develop in either direction, and that, consequently, they are constantly changing, thanks to half measures only.

On the other hand, vocation for specific research has been replaced by a vaguely manifested mentality of professionalism, this being a necessary consequence of the general crisis our societies undergo. Such results are issues of concern for the very further existence of universities. Two solutions seem to be attainable in order to save what is remaining to be saved of science: either an urgent creation of adequate conditions for the securing of advanced studies within universities; or degrading universities into professional schools with a parallel transfer of their purely scientific competencies to research centers. The day a third solution, combining the former ones, will be envisaged is perhaps not far from us. Universities should not be deprived of their past, but also should not remain in their present deplorable condition. They need help from every direction, from above and below; a generous help such as they had often been given in the past. Hopefully, that brilliant past of, together with the safeguards of their identity may sustain our hopes for their future. Only then, the present crisis, that is still menacing their existence, will have gone away.
Notes towards an Analytics of Resistance

COSTAS DOUZINAS

On 17 June 2011, I was invited to address a thematic assembly on direct democracy at the Syntagma square occupation by the aganaktismenoi (indignados) in central Athens. After the talks and following usual procedure, members of the occupation who had their number drawn came to the front to speak to the crowd of 10,000. One man in the queue was shaking and trembling with evident symptoms of stage fright before his address. He then proceeded to give an elegant talk in perfectly formed sentences and paragraphs, presenting a complete and persuasive plan for the future of the movement. “How did you do it?” I asked him later. “I thought you were going to collapse.” “This is what I feared too,” he replied nonchalantly. “When I started speaking, I was mouthing the words but someone else was speaking. A stranger inside me was dictating what to say.” Many participants in the recent protests and uprisings make similar statements. Sarah, an Egyptian, tells her mother, after spending time in Tahrir Square: “I am not myself. I am somebody new that was born today.”

A youth in the Athens December 2008 insurrection adds: “I had been in demos before but never participated in a riot. It was something like an initiation for me and I have to admit I felt liberated. It made me feel like a regained control of myself.” This essay is a commentary on this “stranger in me” (a usual description of the unconscious), and forms part of a wider project which attempts to develop a radical politics for the age of resistance.

The Age of Resistance

In an interview towards the end of his life, Michel Foucault commented that “politics has existed since the nineteenth century because of the revolution.” “Now that revolution has disappeared,” he continues, “there is a risk that politics will disappear, unless one invents another form or substitute for it.”

Against the models of the Greek sage, the Jewish prophet and the Roman legislator, Foucault imagines a type of intellectual who would pose the question “whether the revolution is worth the trouble, and if so which revolution and what trouble.” If the revolution ended, what is the politics after the revolu-

4 Quoted in J. Whyte, “Michel Foucault on Revolution, Neoliberalism and Rights,” in B. Golder (ed.), Re-Reading Foucault: On Law, Power and Rights (Abington: Glasshouse, 2013), 207-228, p. 208. Whyte and Golder have rescued Foucault’s radical theory of law and rights against persistent attempts to present the late Foucault as a liberal supporter of rights.
Let us examine recent forms of resistance using examples from Greece, the most advanced and successful European case of resistance. Let us start with a brief description of novel or radically renewed methods of insubordination.  

1. On 6 December 2008, after the police murder of Alexis Grigoropoulos, a 16-year old pupil in central Athens, a massive, spontaneous, leaderless insurrection by pupils, students, and workers brought Greece to a standstill. Rallies and marches to Parliament, Ministries and police stations were accompanied by sit-ins, street happenings, interruption of theatre performances and discussions with the audience, the raising of a banner calling for resistance on the Acropolis, the occupation of the state TV studio during the news broadcast and the iconic burning of the Christmas tree in Syntagma Square. Banks and luxury shops were attacked, some looting was reported, and several cars and some buildings were burned, but there were no casualties. The insurrection prepared the eventual resignation of the right wing government and its defeat in November 2009, which gave a huge majority to Papandreou’s socialists and led to the ushering in of the neoliberal austerity measures. The similarities with the Paris banlieues insurrection of 2005 and 2007 and the London August 2012 riots, which also started after the death of young people following police action, were striking.

2. Athens, February 2011. While the Arab Spring was in full flow, 300 sans papiers immigrants from the Maghreb took refuge in Hypatia, a central Athens building, and staged a hunger strike. They had lived and worked in Greece for up to 10 years, doing the jobs the Greeks did not want to do for a fraction of the minimum wage and without social security. When the crisis struck, they were unceremoniously kicked out. After forty days, with several strikers in hospital with irreversible organ failure that could cause death, the government accepted the bulk of their demands, allowing them to stay in the country. A widespread solidarity campaign supported the sans papiers strikers. Their victory was seen as the first success of the anti-austerity resistance which was kicking off at the time of the strike.

3. Athens, May 2011. Following a solidarity rally with the Spanish indignados, men and women of all ideologies, ages and occupations, including the many unemployed, calling themselves aganaktismenoi occupied the Syntagma Square in Athens, opposite Parliament, and sixty other squares. Political parties and banners were discouraged, no leaders or spokespersons emerged. Daily popular assemblies and thematic meetings discussed all aspects of the political and economic situation and decided the next actions democratically. A number of working groups covered all major needs of the occupiers – food, health, security, media, entertainment, legal advice etc. The occupations were peaceful, but faced brutal police attacks. When the police finally removed the occupants in late July, the popular assemblies spread to suburbs and towns. Prime Minister Papandreou, unable to deal with the protests, resigned first in June, changing his mind after party pressure. His fate was sealed, however.

5 The following part is based on my Philosophy and Resistance in the Crisis.
He departed in early November, soon after people occupied the street where a military parade was about to take place and the President of the Republic had to flee. In the 2012 general elections and the 2014 European elections, the multitude of resistances adopted the radical left party Syriza as its parliamentary representation.

The multiplication and intensification of resistances can be understood through an exploration of the state of affairs to which they respond. Resistances respond to trends of globalised capitalism that have penetrated and shaped the whole world. This is why a brief exploration of the state we are in follows. It will move from the economic and social landscape of late capitalism to its biopolitical implications.

a. Postfordist Capitalism

Marx first introduced the concept of the general intellect and immaterial labour, the work and creation of the collective mind, science and technology. In Post-Industrial capitalism, immaterial production has become the major productive force. Industrial capitalism turned the concrete into abstract, the product into commodity. Post-Fordism turns thoughts, ideas and words immediately into material objects and products. The general intellect is no longer incorporated in machines, but in the lives of working people. Three consequences follow.

First, the nature of work has changed radically. Permanent work is on the way out. Part time, flexible alternate work and piecework, long periods of unemployment following short periods of work are now the rule. We must be flexible, adjustable, willing to learn, continuously improve our skills, knowledge and aptitudes. In the past, a “reserve army” of unemployed was used to push wages down. Technology, automation and the transfer of industry to the developing world have made a large number of people superfluous. They are the unemployed and unemployable, young and old, immigrants and refugees, those called “human debris,” or “no use humans.”

The second change is the extensive and violent privatisation of the remaining commons. The three commons of social life and culture, external nature and our own biological nature are systematically sold off. We must rent back from capital our common substance and our collective achievement. Everything that can be sold, will be sold and then hired back to us.

Finally, profit takes two new forms: rent for services and interest for capital. Late capitalism increasingly works through consumption funded by debt. People, companies and states must borrow to spend. Student loans and loans for personal consumption, enterprise loans and mortgages make most of us permanently indebted. Debt has become integral to life. It is not the great enemy many present, but the necessary lubricant in the economy of services. Debt as a social relation and moral concept has additional benefits for capi-
tal. The debtor is infused with guilt and forbearance; the creditor controls her conduct much more than the employer does the employee. The debtor is formally free but only if she commits her life to the mission of repayment and (moral and financial) redemption. Debt ensures the obedient conduct of the debtor, closing off possibilities of resistance. In this sense, our current predicament is not a debt crisis, but one of capital’s desire of debt.

b. Biopolitical Capitalism

The socio-economic changes are accompanied by a new arrangement of power. Biopolitics is the exercise of power on bios, life. It extends from the depths of consciousness to the bodies and souls of the population. Population control is supplemented by technologies of self that discipline and control individual behaviour. Biopolitical capitalism does not produce mere commodities for subjects, it creates subjects. The last thirty years give us a clear picture of the complementary processes of population and individual control.

Material, social, affective, ethical and cognitive strategies are involved in this process. During periods of economic growth, working people were inserted directly into the economy through private and public debt and consumption. The indebted worker accepts that freedom of consumer choice and personal responsibility are the main criteria of success. Proliferating individual rights support this socio-economic integration. Every desire could become an entitlement, every “I want X,” an “I have a right to X.” But this atomisation of the population is also Achilles’ heel of late capitalism. The worker can withdraw abruptly and even violently from leading the escalating spiral of desire, satisfaction and frustration. If one of the links in the integration chain breaks, the overall psychological and ideological architecture collapses. This can happen through the sudden loss of jobs, major deterioration in conditions of life or expectations, attack on personal or national dignity, frustration of desires or promises. It may erupt after an accumulation of humiliations or in response to an event that condenses a plethora of grievances.

Southern Europe is a textbook case of debt’s desire. After entry to the euro, the modernising governments promoted consumption and hedonism as the main way of linking private interests with the common good. People were treated as desiring and consuming machines. Easy and cheap loans, bribing people to transfer their savings into stocks and shares and the artificial increase of real estate values became the main instruments of economic growth, and the criterion for individual happiness and social mobility. The “obscene” father of psychoanalysis kept telling the Greeks borrow, “enjoy,” “buy,” live as if this is your last day. This consumer paradise of desire-satisfaction-frustration is pure nihilism.

Austerity violently reversed priorities in order to achieve the same objective of controlling populations through indebtedness and guilt. The banks’

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bailout and the increasing cost for servicing an increasingly unemployed and aging population added a huge sovereign debt to personal indebtedness. The population is now divided according to age, occupation, gender and race and radical behavioural change is imposed for the sake of “national salvation.” The politics of personal desire and pleasure turned into a strategy of saving the nation, its genetic information, by abandoning its individual members to the rigors of sin, guilt and punishment. This atomisation of the population was pursued first by the modernizing policies of supposed freedom of choice and personal responsibility through debt and consumption. Punitive austerity completes the project by turning the aggressive into the defensive individualism, the contemporary culmination of nominalism: only individuals and the Sovereign exist, confronting each other in an almost permanent state of exception. The victims of austerity are asked to adjust their behaviour to the “needs” of the nation and to be subjected to extensive controls, which aim at recovering social health. Austerity is an aggressive biopolitical correction. It covers every aspect of life, from the basics like food, electricity and clothing to health, education, social security and leisure.\(^7\)

c. Biopolitical Law

The legal system of late capitalism has changed in two complementary ways: most areas of private activity are increasingly legalised, while public services and utilities are released from their re-distributive aims and given over to the disciplines of the market. Laws are no longer the democratic expression of sovereignty or the liberal formalization of morality, but purely utilitarian instruments of governance, frameworks for organizing private activities, reducing market uncertainties and lowering transaction costs. This is a sad remnant of the honourable tradition of the rule of law. The law is expanding, but at the price of assuming the characteristics of contemporary society, becoming open, decentred, fragmented, and nebulous.

The dynamic of modern law –and of the metaphysics of modernity– was to open a distance, occasionally minimal, between law and the order of the world, the *ought* as correction of the *is*. Law was one form of the ideal, next to the other great normative horizons, religion, nation, socialism. Now, however, law’s distance from the social order is fast disappearing in the vast expanse of law-life. In Borges’ story of the cartographers of empire, the mythical cartographers asked to produce the most accurate possible map, ended with one the same size as the territory it mapped. Similarly, the law is well on the way to replicating life in its annals. This is a law with force but without normative weight, beyond the ideological preferences of ruling elites, masquerading as scientific policies.

The dynamics of biopolitical governance determine legal strategies. In periods of economic growth, the detailed and suffocating regulation of life is accompanied by an apotheosis of individual desire, expressed in the prolifer-

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tion of rights. When the priorities are reversed, the superficial freedom of the previous period becomes counter-productive. Police repression, extensive surveillance and the criminalization of resistance accompany an intensive effort to re-channel conduct. The repressive laws of the war of terror, now used against political dissent, and the invasive regulation of biopolitics do not contradict, but accompany and complement rights. Freedom and security, instead of being opposed, are the two sides of biopolitical neoliberalism.8

The stakes behind austerity are a top down re-arrangement of capitalism. Austerity has been used to reduce workers’ salaries, rights and benefits, while, at the same time, ensuring the continuing profitability of capital. The European elites had decided these reforms; the debt (public in the case of Greece, private in Spain and Ireland) offered a convenient pretext for their fast and brutal imposition and moralisation. The message is that people sinned in falling for the sirens of consumerism and must be punished. In the case of Greece, Mrs. Merkel acts like Freud’s cruel superego; the more you obey the more you get punished. “What does Mrs. Merkel want?” ask the Greek elites, but the lady keeps changing her tune. On some occasions, she wants Greece expelled from the euro, on others, she wants to keep the country in the Eurozone, and most often she does not tell. Like Freud’s question “what does the woman want?” no clear answer is forthcoming. But, as psychoanalysis teaches us, the continuous questioning keeps desire going. The desperate attempt to divine the desires and please Mrs. Merkel, the “ego ideal” of Greek elites, keeps piling new austerity on low income and unemployed Greeks, the only people who had no part in the creation of public debt.

A Philosophy of Resistance

How can we generalise these new forms of resistance? When does resistance arise, how does it work, can it ever succeed? Michel Foucault started the analytics of power. Françoise Proust, following Foucault’s seminal work, continued with an analytics of resistance.9 We will offer seven theses building on the work of Foucault and Proust, and relating them to contemporary instances of disobedience, insubordination and resistance.

Thesis 1: Resistance is a Physical Law of Being, Affecting Every Relationship

Resistance is physical: every force affected by another provokes a resistance, which thwarts the first without stopping it. Wherever there is power, in an intimate relationship or collectivity, in a university, company, political party or state, there is resistance. “This would be the transcendental of every resistance, whatever kind it be: resistance to power, to the state of things, to

history; resistance to destruction, to death, to war; resistance to stupidity, to peace, to bare life.”10 The resisting force accompanies the force it resists, but also confronts, destabilises and redirects it. Resistance is, therefore, inescapable, immanent to every relation. From the moment being takes form and figure or a balance of forces stabilises itself, it encounters resistances, which irreversibly turn, twist and fissure it. As the mirror of power, resistance is a relationship, a series of interactions amongst people and things. It keeps changing the balance of forces, disturbing power asymmetries, continuously re-defining and amending the position of the participants.

Resistance is, therefore, the condition of existence of every power relationship, and not a transcendent force or violence that befalls its site of intervention from outside. From the moment power appears, resistance accompanies it and marks the beginning of a new and specific history. It is in this sense that Gilles Deleuze, commenting on Foucault, writes “the final word on power is that resistance comes first.”11

**Thesis 2: Resistances are Situated, Local, Concrete and Multiform**

Resistance emerges in a concrete situation and reacts against a unique balance of forces. Resistance is local, arising on a specific site and a singular conjuncture. It is, therefore, difficult to develop universal principles of resistance, even though common trends in different sites of power may lead to similar reactions. Every situation and age creates new forms, strategies and subjects. Resistance reacts to the concrete circumstances in which it finds itself; it breaks down the basic constituents of the power constellation, analyses them and puts them together again in a different, new edifice that opposes or re-routes the earlier combination. This process feeds into power, too. The new, dissident configurations may be taken on by the counter-resisting dominant force and transfer from resistant to ruling positions.

**Thesis 3: Resistance is a Mixture of Reaction and Action, Negation and Affirmation**

Resistance is local and situated, it responds to a situation or reacts to an event. Reaction may turn into action, reply, retort, renewal. Reactive resistance conserves or restores a state of things which power has disturbed. Active resistance deconstructs the adversary’s arms and borrows, mimics or subverts their components. Using the enemy’s rules, it invents new rules and institutions, and occupies the space reactive resistance has cleared. When power promotes privatisation of public assets, resistance deconstructs the private/public dichotomy and promotes new forms of property, such as the commons. When power creates unemployment, resistance constructs new, cooperative, self-ruling forms of work and social activity.

Let us move to the current forms and strategies of resistance, and the ways in which they re-direct the balance of forces. The emerging forms react to the dominant modes of capitalist subjection: first, the expendable human or “homines sacri,” secondly, the bio-politically excluded, finally, the democratically disenfranchised.

The resistance of the contemporary “homines sacri” takes the form of exodus or martyrdom. Suicide, self-mutilation, hunger strikes, boarding the floating coffins that daily sink in the Mediterranean are characteristic responses of those treated as expendable, redundant, economically useless. The Arab Spring started with the self-immolation of Muhammad Boazzizi in Tunisia. The Athens hunger strikers, on the other hand, are the only immigrants who, against legal orthodoxy, achieved, through their collective action, a political resolution of their abject condition. In a biopolitical world, life exists as registered life; undocumented life without birth certificates and IDs, visas and work permits is not recognised. Minimum humanity is created through what the immigrants lacked: papiers, documents, files. To retrieve their life from this administrative void, they had to come to the threshold of death. The migrants reversed the plot of Hegel’s master and slave dialectic: by resisting their dehumanisation, they became human and free. In this sense, the sans papiers became martyrs, both witnesses and sacrificial victims. They confirmed something that Rousseau as much as Freud and Sartre knew: man is free to die of freedom, but only collective political action can lead to emancipation.

The uprisings of pupils, students and marginalised youth in Paris 2005, Athens 2008 and London 2012 reacted to the biopolitical combination of the injunction to consumer satisfaction and police repression. Here, the form is the spontaneous insurrection and riot, which often involves violence against property and looting. It arises after a violent event such as the killing of Alexis Grigoropoulos or Mark Duggan or after a long series of humiliations that exhausts moral patience as in the case of Boazzizi’s self-immolation. In Greece, no party planned or led the insurrections, no specific demands were put forward, no single ideology dominated. Politicians and commentators dismissed them as non-political criminality and blind violence. Alain Badiou, inadvertently copying Greek Premier Karamanlis in 2008 and British Cameron in 2012, wrote that the subject of riots is not political “composed solely of rebellion, and dominated by negation and destruction, it does not make it possible clearly to distinguish between what pertains to a partially universalizable intention and what remain confined to a rage with no purpose.”

The insurgents are people who exist socially but not politically. As their interests are rarely heard, accounted or represented, they must perform their existence, through the absolute negation of what exists. They did not demand anything specific, using Roman Jacobson’s “phatic expression”: they simply said “enough is enough,” “here we stand against.” Not “we claim this or that...

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right,” but the “right to have rights,” the right to resistance. This is politics at
degree zero, a first, but inadequate political baptism, in the emergence of po-
itical subjectivity. Caught between the demands of insatiable desire and bru-
tal repression, they performed the absolute freedom of acting out. When nega-
tion and affirmation, reaction and action cannot be synthesized, they remain
opposed, with violence as the link.

Finally, democratic experimentation was carried out in occupations and en-
campments, as well as in other forms of direct democracy. Citizens have
been disenfranchised by the decay of parliamentary democracy and the disap-
ppearance of serious alternatives in the rush of right wing and social democra-
ic parties to the mythical centre. The principle of popular sovereignty that
forms the foundation of many constitutions has turned into a legitimation
myth, as democratic government increasingly mutates into technocratic go-
vernance. Occupations and encampments reject corrupt politics and post-
democratic governance, abandon representation and the mandating of parlia-
mentary politics and experiment with new arrangements of political space and
time. The localisation in a square creates a new fluid and open spacing of po-
litical power, while the intensity of bodily and emotional proximity, created
by a common political desire, acquires the characteristics of an emergent con-
stituent power. The Syntagma multitude was the material coming together of
people in public with a common political desire: radical political change. The
demos returned to its original meaning as the plethos in assembly.

The first Syntagma resolution pronounced that “WE are not leaving the
squares before government, troika, banks, memoranda and those who e
x
ploit
 us have left.” This “we” contrasted to the “they” of the combined elites and
acted as a constitutional performatve. It spoke for the whole population,
which had rejected the austerity, but had been betrayed by mainstream politi-
cians. The productive energy of the multitude became,
temporarily, a constit-
uent assembly. It both mimicked and subverted the principle of representation
and state organization. Direct democracy characterised all aspects of the oc-
cupation. An elaborate network of working groups offered a microcosm of the
services of a democratic state operating under a strict axiom of equality. The
Syntagma occupiers were not the suffering and victimized population of me-
dia coverage. They were a resisting and active people who put into practice
direct democracy, and prefigured the necessary institutional reforms of a de-
mocracy to come.

Thesis 4: Resistance Changes Subjectivities and Constructs New Identities

Individual and collective subjectivities emerge in the interstices of relations of
power. Subjects are always subjected, subjugated to the dominant forces be-
fore they become free. Resistances unpick and re-direct the subject. At the
individual level, revolt lies at the foundation of self. For Freud, happiness

13 Douzinas, Philosophy and Resistance…, Ch. 6.
exists at the price of revolt. There is no pleasure without obstacles, prohibitions and interdictions, without law, injunctions and sanctions. The pleasure principle calls on the self to conform, to obey the law, to fit in the social order. But this accommodation to the world is accompanied like day by night by the transgression of prohibitions, the Oedipal revolt against the principle of power symbolised by father, sovereign and law. The autonomy of the individual emerges at the price of revolt. Legal and social prohibitions and injunctions open the route of revolt allowing the self to reach autonomous maturity. Revolt forms an integral part of the pleasure principle. But it is also part of the darker, timeless drive beyond the pleasure principle. The return of the repressed trauma forms part of the repertory of resistance.

Individual and collective dissident identities emerge out of acts of resistance. The tension between symbolic differentiations and hierarchies on the one hand and imaginary idealisations on the other disarticulates the psychic sense of normality. We become new subjects, the “stranger in me” emerges because my existence has misfired. When an unemployed youth realises that his condition is a symptom of the disease of the socio-economic system and not his own failure; when a sans papiers immigrant realises that her predicament is the symptom of a political and juridical system that divides and excludes; when a lesbian realises that the suppression of her sexuality is a symptom of a system of disciplining and controlling bodies; at that point subjects of resistance emerge. The negation following the failure of routine identities opens the road to the universality of resistance. It involves risk and perseverance, resistance is the courage of freedom.

This means, however, that one cannot become a subject of resistance simply through education or ideological training. Love and revolution come unannounced, like a miracle or an earthquake. One is hit on the head, like the blow of a coup de foudre; after that, nothing remains the same. Joining the uprising or the occupation, irrespective of ideological commitment, is more important than ideological pedagogy or indoctrination. A Turkish protester told me that the first time she found herself in Gezi Park, Istanbul, with her little daughter during a riot police attack with tear gas, she was paralysed with fear. Then, people pulled both mother and child back and gave them water and protective masks. Her first reaction was to push them away, unused to the caring touch of strangers. But, once she realised that people were trying to help and felt the force of solidarity, the fear left her; she came back to the occupation every evening.

Turning to our earlier examples, three forms of dissident subjectivity have emerged. First, the martyr, someone who, in order to exit dehumanisation and redeem existence, risks her life. Secondly, the rioter, for whom the uprising breaks the short circuit between insatiable desire and state violence and becomes a political baptism. Finally, the direct democrat, who takes over parts of her life and turns democracy from a system of representative government to a form of life.
Thesis 5: Resistance is a Fact Not an Obligation, an Is Not an Ought

Resistance does not simply apply values and principles, and does not have a predictable point of condensation and explosion. We do not resist in the name of something. It is not the idea of communism or the theory of justice that makes us take to the streets. Resistance is the bodily reaction to an overwhelming sense of injustice, the almost irrepressible response to hurt, hunger, despair. Resistance may involve a vision of justice, but this is not necessary, certainly not at the beginning.

Ideas are not the cause but the result of resistance. The ideas of justice, equality or communism are maintained or lost as a result of the existence and extent of resistance. Principles and values emerge in specific contexts as part of a resisting response to a particular configuration of power, and only later claim universal validity. For Nietzsche, morality is the absolutisation of a temporary balance of forces. In classical Greece, the logos was initially a philosophical weapon against the claims of elders and priests to power and authority. Christ’s teachings started as part of the Jewish resistance against the Roman Empire. Early Christianity was a small and persecuted sect before turning into a global religion, assuming the character of empire. Human rights started as legal claims of Europeans excluded from political rule before becoming universal principles of legality and morality. Today, they are paradoxically both the ideology of late capitalist empire and the cry of the dissident. All normative claims start life as particular strategies of resisting a local configuration of power in a particular place and time. Parochial provenance and local encumbrance are entombed in their foundations and carry the seeds of their dissolution.

Universal values and their expression in rights exist not in some ethereal normative space of law-books and international treaties. It is only when people resist power and defend themselves that a real conception of right comes to existence. It is not the existence of rights and law that make people stand up. It is because people have stood up, and still do, to defend their dignity that rights have been created and power minimally respects them. For the ordinary person, disobedience is the deeply moral decision to break the law. It is a “dangerous freedom.” In normal circumstances, morality and legality represent two different types of overlapping but not identical duty: the external duty to obey the law (in formal terms a heteronomous duty), and the internal moral responsibility that binds the self to a conception of the good (autonomy). Conflicts are usually solved in favour of law. In disobedience, the duties collide and morality takes over.¹⁵

Thesis 6: Resistance and Its Subject Emerge through the Exercise of the Right to Resist

While resistance is a fact not an obligation, the right to resist is the oldest, indeed the only natural, right. A legal right is justified and enforceable will. Whether private or public, the right to property or to vote, it appears as one, in-dividual, un-divided. It claims a single source, the subject’s will, a single justification, law’s recognition, a single effect, the will’s ability to act and shape the world. The modelling of political rights on property, however, contaminated their operation. As Hegel realized and Marx emphasised, a yawning gap separates the normative weight from empirical operation.⁴⁶ Formal right, the legal subject’s capacity to will, is theoretically limitless. But real people are embedded and embodied in the world of particularity. Property and normalized propriety act as quasi-transcendental preconditions, bridging the divide between formal right (the universal recognition of will) and its effective realization in the world. We are all legally free and nominally equal, unless of course we are improper men; in other words men of no property, women, colonials, or of the wrong colour, religion or sexuality.

At that point, will, the source of right, splits into two between that accepted and justified by law and a second, adopted by the dominated and the oppressed, for whom right is not about law and judges, a game they can scarcely play. It happens when men act against a system that, while claiming to represent the common good, has become an alien essence. Secondly, when an inner rebellion reacts to the widening chasm between universal vocation and particular belonging, and prepares the resisting subjectivity. The split in will and right in replicated is the resisting subject, who sees his inner rebellion, not as a personal inadequacy or failure, but as the symptom of the disease of the social order and its law. “Right Now” becomes a battle-cry, the subjective factor in a struggle, which asks to be raised to the level of the universal. It is the claim of the dissident against the abuses of power or the revolutionary against the existing order.

Right has therefore two metaphysical sources. As a claim accepted or seeking admission to the law, right is a publicly recognized will, which finds itself at peace with the world, a world made in its image and for its service. But secondly, right is a will that wills what does not exist, a will that finds its force in itself and its effect in a world not yet determined all the way to the end. This second right is founded contra fatum, in the perspective of an open cosmos that cannot be fully determined by (financial, political or military) might. “All the forms of freedom that are acquired or demanded, all the rights that are claimed, even concerning the things that seem to be of least importance, probably have a lost point of anchor here […] [in a man who prefers the risk of death over the certainty of having to obey] […] more solid and ex-

periential than ‘natural rights’. This drive to resist eventually confronts domination and oppression, including those instituted and tolerated by the first legalized will. These two conceptions of right, or of the universal manifest the confrontation of the death drive against desire and the pleasure principle. On one side, an acceptance of the order of things raised to the dignity of general will, dresses the dominant particular with the mantle of the universal. The second universality is founded on a will created by a diagonal division of the social world, separating rulers from the ruled and the excluded. It forms an agonistic universality, emerging from the struggle of the excluded from social distribution and political representation. The excluded and disenfranchised are the only universal today in a legal and social system that proclaims incessantly its egalitarian credentials.

Thesis 7: Collective Resistance Becomes Political and May Succeed in Radically Changing the Balance of Forces When it Condenses Different Causes, a Multiplicity of Struggles and Local and Regional Complaints Bringing Them Together into a Common Place and Concurrent Time

Resistance to power exists everywhere and keeps transforming relations of power and subjectivities. Uprisings go beyond their local, situated, regional operation and limited effectiveness, however, when they are compressed in their demands and concentrated in their appearance. Take the Taksim square occupation. It started with a few ecologists defending Gezi, the last green space in central Istanbul, from bulldozers and cement. They were soon joined by many other people and groups. Secularists protesting the government’s religious turn, Alevi rejecting the naming of the third Bosporus bridge, abandoned lovers, leftists attacking the neo-liberal turn, republican supporters of the state, Europeanist modernisers, single mothers, Islamists rejecting state diktat, feminists protesting macho culture, shop assistants sacked for no good reason, gay people and lesbians who want to kiss in public, young people who grew up with their parents in prisons, pickpockets, Kurds protesting the state’s attacks on language and culture, street kids, football fans, artists, low-paid families, street children, the unemployed, those who came to the square for fun, and finally those who cannot be included in any of these categories. They came from different social classes and income groups, various political ideologies and none, some with the most general of grievances, and others with specific, idiosyncratic complaints. They represented every section of the population; initially they had little in common, except for finding themselves together in the same place at the same time. Being together in a square and a park, sharing food, music and words, they were transformed from a motley crowd with many, even antagonistic, demands, into a multitude in the strictest sense of the term: a crowd with a common political desire in assembly. The squares are places of clearing and gathering, where popular will appear, sharing speech and action in a physical, not the metaphorical public sphere of

17 Foucault, op. cit., p. 263, fn 30.
opinion polls. The empty squares are our monument and the promise of a democracy to come.

When the Besiktas football club fans chanted “Erdogan you are the son of a whore,” women asked them to stop because several sex workers were in the square. The fans held a meeting and agreed to stop the chant. The following day a large banner appeared: “We, the whores: Erdogan is not our son.” It was the magical moment at which different energies, ideologies and complaints turned into one common demand: “Erdogan Go.” At such points, the solidarity of the governed rises from the particularity of the struggles towards a new right that emerges in practice and brings people together into a resisting multitude. Individual disobedience and isolated acts of defiance converge and become collective resistance.

Michel Foucault, commenting on the Iranian revolution, stated that “it is a fact that people rise up, and it is through this that a subjectivity (not that of great men, but that of everyone) introduces itself into history and gives it its life. [...] It is precisely because there are such [uprisings] that human time does not take the form of evolution, but that of ‘history’.”18 As long as the protesters ask for this or that reform, this or that concession, the state can accommodate them. What the state fears is the fundamental challenge to its power by a force that can transform the relations of law and present itself as having a “right to law.” In such cases, politics becomes the “prescription of a possibility in rupture with what exists.”19 After a long period when markets and pliant governments claimed that smooth uninterrupted evolution was the future of humanity, we have again entered a time of history and of political subjectivity of everyone and anyone.

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18 Ibid., p. 266.

“Philosophical Discourse”: “Speechless” or “Non-Judgmental” in the Face of the “Crisis”?

Panagiotis Noutsos

It has sometimes been written that “the inadequacy of the Greek intelligentsia in the face of the crisis” entails its “speechlessness.” If this general verdict is launched by some who seek to play Marx in place of Marx, the only thing that I can counter with is the codification of the polyphonic multitude of familiar interventions with the degree of “absence of judgement,” by which they are possessed. Moreover, I am invoking Marx, who himself often countered the “Myrmidons of mediocrity.”

It is polyphonic (and not “aphonic”) that the mapping of the proposals for the creation of a “counter-proposal,” within and outside the Eurozone, appears to be, with the “younger theologians of the crisis” in paroxysm, and with the commentators portraying society at home either as a “craft union” or as a “pyramid,” with the “best people” enthroned at the “apex” and the “populists” gathering at the “base.”

Which philosophical stance does not treat this country as a “lonely vessel” in the Mediterranean? Which can discern the international, European, and domestic division of labour and the social articulations which hold it together? Which does not cultivate the illusion of a “Greek Spring”? And so, which philosophical practice has available the most “toxic gas antidotes” in the field of ideas?

Which protects us from asphyxiating gases of every kind? For, as long as the “ideologies” are still functioning, those who engage in philosophical study—whether institutionally organised or otherwise—as a production of new theoretical knowledge about our worlds and a critical examination of the old philosophy still have plenty of work to do. I mean the de-mythologisers and not the legitimators of the reality which surrounds us. The aim of the former remains to achieve the self-sufficiency of those who take part in the educational/training process, teachers and taught, and, consequently, a sufficiently documented movement towards emancipation. For this reason, the involvements of this learning process, to which the Greek term “philosophia” continues to give meaning, cover—it clearly does, in spite of the widespread abuse of it—the whole of reality and of its possible worlds, without being exhausted in the mechanisms of education.

On such a journey, an on-going alternation of roles is suggested. When, that is, the taught worthily occupy the position of the teachers, and even surpass them. In this way they are able to drastically reduce the power-related side of the institutions of learning, without ever eliminating it, even if they undergo a course of “sleep learning,” from whichever side one is on. In this connection, the unforeseen items which escape the normality/normativeness of the functions of this learning are likely to multiply. Obviously, for decades
now, the institutions of publicity, “conventional” or “virtual,” have gone far beyond the limits of the school sphere, regardless of whether our present-day “scholasticism” is often the product of the “schole” –leisure-time– and not of the “scholeion.”

If, in this way, I am returning to “ideology,” I would stress that “philosophies” differ from one another as to their ways of handling it and the degree of their interpenetration. It is not simply a matter of formal disjunction in which one side denies the other. Such amateurism sprouts from both sides. Because, on both sides, practices of facile navel-gazing and the decline into specially constructed, insulating pipes are favoured. Consequently, rituals are brought to light of investing in academic gowns for “authentic” protection from the cold, such as to match “authenticisms.” In any event, particularly now when the maximisation of the forms of intellectual labour are a matter of record, the institutional distribution of theoretical knowledge does not inevitably lead to an ivory tower.

The relevant competence is judged, when and if it is judged, within the specialist “academic community.” That is, within a historically shaped “community” of many individual “communities,” which recognise as their common factor their capability of exercising a critique on everybody without exception. At the same time, they do not preclude, particularly as regards social and political theory, that their validation should be derived from the arena of the alternative options of society. Otherwise, “philosophizing” would be clearly hypotonic and would perform functions like the church or the courts: with functionaries who would provocatively wear a separate tunic with which to draw attention to their “authority.”

I have engaged in “joint philosophizing” in theatres and amphitheatres, in tavernas and hotel music-rooms or at popular fairs, in beaches or in woodlands, in beds and on couches, in buses and airplanes. Just as now, with you, in this room of eight square metres, with the “pensée unique” of our planet in my firing-line –and other things besides. We are concerned with serious things –we are not mending brikiia, little coffee-panis, as the Greek saying goes, in this gigantic “bricolage.”... As to my feelings, they are mixed, if I insist upon your interpolation, hearing or reading about the “philosophy of the draft law,” or about the “philosophy of the long skirt.” As to the “philosophy of gardens,” I will not conceal the fact that I prefer it to up-market “analytical philosophy.”...

For thousands of years now, the term “philosophy,” in spite of the recent abuses which it has suffered and suffers ceaselessly, is alive and well through the multifariousness of the philosophical style, and in spite of the predictions of its “end,” “Sub-philosophers,” “deputy sub-philosophers,” or “pretenders to wisdom” attempt to convert “surprise” into a yawn, in a world which has not yet properly woken up.

From a different viewpoint, functionaries of philosophising launch themselves against what they see and hear, intuit and understand. In other words, they set aside the generalised boredom, transform the “spectacle” into a springboard for re-thinking, and, principally through an adequate understand-
ing of their “worlds,” argue for the need of a change in them. They make a theme out of both the agoraphobic performance of the functions of today’s state and of the capabilities for liberation of the being. Rooted, then, and at the same time, radicals. They are learning the world, and at the same time wish to change it. They have penetrated professionally into the fields of social work, health, and financial affairs. They are evolving into business executives, in the “mass media,” education, “consultancy,” “alternative tourism” agencies, municipal organisations, etc.

Any form of “applied philosophy” can, of course, be assimilated by the market, which makes its appearance as an irresistible network of economic, political, and cultural earthings. The same thing is likely to impel to multiplied stimuli of alternative, and sometimes subversive, activity on the part of its subjects. The signifying practices, in this case, are not one-dimensional and manipulated. Their referentiality has as a feasible limit, each time, the “otherness” caused by the degradation of the being. For this reason, it turns towards the elimination of the “normalities” which render unavoidable the controlled earthing (and not only that) of behaviours and their “systemic” arrangement. Thus, through the multifarious “schools,” both of working and of available time, philosophising continues to resist a slump into forms of “hesychastic” inactivation. Because it discovers channels to think up new practices of “maieutics,” irony, and duplication of our worlds, however much “propriety” these deal in.

Briefly put, this is a case of self-confirmation of the historical being who renews, on each occasion, the organisation of contestation and difference. Perhaps this is the only “poetics of history” worth talking about which is not subjugated to the “end” of its object and, in a related way, of its subject, of history, and of its “shareholders.” With the only commitment from the past being an unwillingness for “philosophy” to be replaced by some briefly-burning geologism of Anglo-Saxon origin.... Even though UNESCO has found for it 18 November as a sole day of celebration; the rest of the days it celebrates for us, unsleeping and smiling, always an “antidote,” in its inn. The grandfather from Stagira says of his predecessor with the olive-presses that he showed: “ῥᾴδιόν ἐστι πλουτεῖν τοῖς φιλοσόφοις, ἂν βουλώνται, ἀλλ’ οὐ τοῦτ’ ἐστὶ περὶ ὧν σπουδάζουσιν... [it is easy for philosophers to be rich if they choose, but this is not what they care about].” But those who have designs on the future of philosophising target the focus of production of “antidotes.” Cogitamus, honourable managers! As to my good self, I can still distinguish between “authenticity” and “authority.”...
PART II

The Hermeneutics of Crisis
What Solution Could Philosophy Bring to the Crisis?
The Pathology of Idealization

ANTONIA SOULEZ

There are two senses of crisis: a positive sense, allowing a transformation in the future, and a negative sense; a degradation or decline, orientating men towards chaos or death. There is, to-day, a tendency to stress a kind of decline.

1. The Solidarity of Science with Culture That Underlies the Ethological Point, Husserl’s Conception of “Crisis”

   a) A cultural conception of science such as Kuhn’s one, for instance, deriving from his “relativist” theory of “paradigms,” tends to submit science to the same kind of collapse as culture, and make them, science and culture, dependent upon each other, for the best or the worst. Hence, one cannot expect from a science, so understood, a form of «Erlösung» (salute) saving knowledge from the ship wreck of rationality. They both get drowned in the same flood. Such a diagnosis could be seen as taking the Husserlian point of view, as regards the “crisis” in the sciences, in the background.

   That closed rationality of science, as a phenomenon, involved in the crisis of modern civilization, is something against which, on the contrary for Husserl, the philosopher looking towards science, should combat. That is a great idea in Husserl’s conception of the “crisis”: far from being the end of civilization (like Spengler thought), crisis is a conflictual moment in the “life” of Reason as such.

   Escaping a pessimistic appraisal of history, Husserl indeed confirms that the crisis, as a moment, is a symptom of a deregulated course of rationality, the essence of which is to be restored in its continuity. The crisis is an accident of history, whereas the ethical vocation of rationality is to irresistibly continue its work. So far, the decays one observes are only transitory symptoms of a great ill body, which the scientist and his Reason, once reevaluated, could heal. In this situation, philosophy, as a “historical faktum,” is in crisis, but its activity as an “idea of an infinite task,” is to incarnate the consciousness of this crisis. The “European crisis is rooted in the mistake as regards a certain rationalism,” its true meaning (Krise). The true “rationalism” is originally a Greek one. Husserl’s claim is to return to a Greek kind of rationalism, namely, as Patocka called it, “Socrates’ care of the soul.”

   b) Husserl’s plea for the life of science: What the reader retains from Husserl’s ideal view is, first, the universality of the appeal to Reason in the European world of sciences, and also the fact that philosophy is the praxis par excellence on which the “life” of cultural activity fundamentally relies. “Life,” here, means, not everyday life, but the tendency Husserl describes in the Cartesian Meditations (1929), as the very movement of aiming at the idea of sci-
scientific truth as a horizon of my consciousness. Descartes is said to have missed it because he stopped too early on the road towards truth, hence the urge for Husserl to radicalize Descartes’s evidence beyond the sole criterion of mathematical apodicticity.

2. Husserl’s Idealistic Confidence in Reason: Is a Self-Reparation Possible?

Husserl’s plea for the separation of philosophy (as an “idea of an infinite task” rooted in Greek philosophy) from culture, is the expression of a retard de la philosophie (J. Bouveresse): philosophy is late in its appraisal of facts. It stands behind the evolution of facts.

a) Musil’s point of view: The integration of science into culture is Spengler’s discourse, but as Musil has shown, it is at the expense of the method of knowledge (form and order). Like Husserl, Musil has deplored irrationalism as a failure of rationalism. Even later, in 1936, Husserl does not seem to have really paid attention to Spengler’s Decline, published in 1918 and criticized as early as in 1921. The “irrationalism” that is Husserl’s target is one that stems from an excessive confidence in the natural sciences, at the expense of the Geisteswissenschäften. Irrationality occurs when “Europe has lost its proper rational sense of life.”

On Musil’s side, the point is different. Better, then, is not to “understand” the “Decline of the West” too well. Rationality is the best “sheet anchor” (in French: planche de salut) to escape from “The Decline....” Between the shipwreck and the plank, choose the plank! Thus, rationality should not be included in the crisis wave. Musil also condemns the cultural assimilation of the sciences with the arts and culture, that Spengler bases on analogies. His critique is methodological.2 “Analogy,” as understood by Spengler, amounts to a mere world of affinities, in which everything resembles everything, without any principle of distinction.

As for Neurath, who, also in the same years, wrote an Anti-Spengler (1921): to understand too well amounts to participating in what should be denounced. Such a “participation” blurs essential distinctions to be taken into account in a methodological epistemological kind of comparison. The comparing and the compared should remain differentiated. Aiming at Spengler’s use of comparison, Wittgenstein, in one of his Remarks (in Culture and Value), whose affinities with Spengler have already been pointed out,3 has explicitly denounced as illegitimate and dogmatic the transfer of the characters

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1 Thanks to Golfo Maggini’s suggestion, my appraisal should perhaps be nuanced in the light of an article by C. Möckel, “Krisisdiagnosen: Husserl und Spengler,” Phaenomenologische Hefter (Neue Folge), 3 (1998), 34-60.


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of the prototype in comparison to the compared entity. Whatever its name or theoretical status, knowledge is this very principle of distinction that Musil wants to save, that Spengler endangers.

So far, to “resist” against Spengler’s decline is the very task of rationality, in as much as it includes a methodological device of saving the distinction between the comparing and the compared. There is no necessity to be inferred from any comparison, no Es muss sein that would proceed with necessity from facts. The conclusion that “it must always be so” presupposes that it was “already written.” Gilbert Ryle says the same thing against theories that echo the antique fatalism in “it was to be,” in which he sees a “menacing statement.” Against the Stoics, he writes “only conclusions can be logically inevitable, given the premises, and an avalanche is not a conclusion.” This is the core of Karl Popper’s famous criticism of modern historicism, in his Open Society from Plato to Hegel and Marx, putting necessity into contingency.

b) The problem: A philosophical crisis: That is why it is so important not to press too hard on the cultural aspect of science although science is part of culture. Husserl is right on this point. Science and philosophy attentive to science should, therefore, remain distantiated from culture. The problem, thus, becomes: how to be part of culture without being submitted to its logic of development, if there is such a “logic...”?

It should be noted that Husserl’s Krisis was coming to light in 1936, before the Second World War. It means a European crisis, in so far as it witnesses a loss of the critical activity of philosophy, and its fragmentation into objectivist domains of natural science, deprived of a “life.” The lack of a living Reason is, for Husserl, the symptom of the crisis, that is the separation of being and living, and, consequently, of signifying and aiming at a horizon of objectivity (what he calls Meinung; in French: visée). This separation is something that happens to Reason itself. Ultimately, the “Krisis” is the Crisis of self-consciousness in its critical activity, when Reason has lost sight of its own telos. Hence, a “metaphysical krach” (Musil). It is, thus, its responsibility beyond history and its accidental course, and thereby beyond culture. Hence, “the contemporary crisis of culture, in Husserl’s terms,” M.A. Banfi writes, “appears to be a philosophical crisis.” It is up to the split Reason to heal itself from its own being split.

On the other hand, the inclusion of science into culture bounds philosophy to espouse the rise and fall of culture itself, as we have mentioned in relation to Spengler’s view. The critique of culture is exposed to such a tendency. That is Adorno’s argument against the critique of culture. Escaping the circle of participation in the crisis by “understanding” the decline of culture (Adorno’s

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4 Culture and Value, cf. Vermischte Bemerkungen, 14-19 (1931), on Spengler’s method of comparison influenced by Goethe’s archetypal morphology.
argument against Spengler’s critique of culture), is not the right issue. Understanding the decline makes one even contribute to it.\footnote{See “Spengler after the Decline,” 1938. The “decline,” ultimately for Spengler, designates the “decline of the strength to think,” due to the necessary character of the course of history that the comparative morphology of civilizations is supposed to disclose. The 	extit{Decline of the West} (1918) looks like “a big storehouse, where you are offered the dried fruit the intellectual manager has swept up at little cost from the credits of the cultural bankrupt.” T.W. Adorno, 	extit{Prismes} (Paris: Payot, 1986), p 56; cf. 	extit{Prismen} (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1955); the English translation is mine.}

One should, therefore, avoid too strong a critique of an idealistic and universalistic conception of rationality, as it might lead, in the end, to such an inclusion. So far, it is to make us mind this slippery slope that Husserl struggled against this inclusion, by claiming the autonomy of Reason for the sake of a European ethical responsibility of science, arriving at the peak of its maturity, yet endangered by the cultural crisis as he saw it. How, then, could philosophy be immune to following the movement of the decline of culture? At what level should it stand in relation to the crisis?

c) The Pathology of Idealization: It looks as though the solution still lies in an idealization of “Life” itself on behalf of a supra-historical Reason, yet in the framework of a European conception of universality, of course, a particular conception of universality.

The idealization lies in the myth of the 	extit{telos} of Reason: Husserl’s solution remains speculative. Even though the culturalization of its praxis seems to be the great danger here, Husserl is trapped into the following alternative: either philosophy should be preserved as a universal activity, or it is bound to renounce itself. If, on behalf of Reason, Husserl’s ethical ideal of science sounds right, it, nonetheless, prevents us from figuring out ways of saving rationality without idealizing it.


Crisis is diagnosed as the loss of a “centre” when irrationalism pervades all, according to Husserl’s view. Strangely enough, this disappearing of a “centre” is exactly what Musil observes in the Austro-Hungarian Empire at the eve of the First World War. But, for Husserl, this centre is lost, whereas for Musil, it is our condition out of which only a principle of orientation can save us from our “amorphism” and moral indifference. Maybe, he writes,\footnote{Bouveresse, 	extit{op. cit.}, p. 279.} instead of making history the result of great animated causes carried by great men and acting from inside, one should, rather, believe that some solution could be expected “from the periphery” (contingent indeterminate, unpredictable little details...)!

For Husserl, this decentralization affects Reason and its telos. Yet, for Musil, whose general diagnosis on the crisis is not very different,\footnote{See J-P. Cometti on the convergence between their views on the European crisis of the sciences, in 	extit{Musil philosophe} (Paris: Seuil, 2001), p. 51, especially as regards the factuality} no telos...
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should ultimately motivate the orientation of Reason. It is not that Reason has lost view of the centre (The Transcendental ego), but that there is no such centre able to structure humanity by giving it an orientation. Reason is not intrinsically “orientated” by the function of a pre-existing telos, to which it would have ideally ascribed itself.

In reaction to the European Crisis, Husserl and Musil represent two very different philosophical answers. If they both rely on rationality, the difference lies in the claim of universality. What a central-European philosopher of the Austro-Hungarian Empire could experience reveals itself very differently from what a German-speaking philosopher of the idealist tradition thought about the same European crisis: a crisis of culture implying the crisis of values, of meaning and language, a crisis of modern science.

An answer is found in Franz Grillparzer’s novel (1848), which the musical “formalist” Eduard Hanslick recommended so heartily. The story of the poor Jakob the “Musician of the Streets” shows that even the idealist, the violinist playing on behalf of the purity of the absolute sound of music (who could play “without the notes”), is finally drowned with his instrument, in the flood of the Danube (1830) that carried him away, in a disaster compared, at the very beginning of the novel, to the flood of the Viennese mob, inundating the streets.

Note about Grillparzer’s novel: 1830 is the year when economical liberalism is in full expansion, bringing to the foreground the class of rich and dominating “bourgeois,” at the expense of the poor, and leading to the almighty system of the market that had to rule the society. Hence, the illusion, the “utopia,” writes the Hungarian economist Karl Polanyi, that the market could be self-regulating. The Marxist collectivist solution to the disastrous consequences of this autonomic machinery of the market opened a new era with a class-conception entrusting the exploited workers with the task of responding to the vital needs of social protection. This is the second movement Polanyi mentions, as being the indissociable counterpart in European countries of the time, of the foolish and unmasterable, self-regulated economic market, produced by the acute need for a social protection. A movement that is now lacking, he says, in our century, which explains the disintegration of the environment, sociality, and the cultural void of to-day. At the date of the novel, the of the sciences, the objectivity of which neglects the meaning dimension of rational research. In “The German as a symptom,” Musil also says that the German believes only in facts.


12 Let me, here, refer to Nancy Fraser’s conclusion to her lecture delivered on the 17th of May 2013 in the FMSH Paris Conference: “Penser global....” She wrote: “In many respects, today’s crisis resembles the crisis of the 1930s, as described by Karl Polanyi in The Great Transformation (1944). Now, as then, a relentless push to extend and de-regulate markets in labor, nature and finance is destroying livelihoods, rupturing communities, and despoiling nature. Nevertheless, the political response today is strikingly different. In the first half of the 20th century, social struggles surrounding the crisis formed what Polanyi called a ‘double movement,’ as a broad-based, coordinated resistance formed to protect
context is that of the year 1848. Note that, later, Kafka liked to recognize himself in Jakob’s character, and also his short writing “Josephine the singer.” Reading the story that is also Jakob’s own telling, Kafka sees it as the story of its own disappearing, a “destiny.”

In chapter 6 of his book mentioned above, J. Bouveresse argues for a difference of traditions between Musil and Husserl. Musil who, rather, follows the Machian tradition directed against the Kantian idealistic tradition, and whose side is naturalistic, shows that a philosopher of nature does not necessarily fall into the trap of generalized naturalization of all so-called rational activities, at the expense of Reason itself, as Husserl, at odds with positivism, indeed believed.

4. Universality in Question

Jacques Bouveresse states very clearly the Musilian far-reaching critique of historical determinism. His point is that rationality projected in the order of historical facts is a “superstition.” Wittgenstein said it, too. Against Husserl, he also rejected the illusory idea that philosophy could be a solution to the European crisis by founding the sciences. The difference is that, far from desperately re-iterating a Husserlian kind of wishful thinking of a philosophy solving the crisis at a speculative level in the ethnocentric name of a European (Greek) Reason, Musil, on the contrary, thought that the non-availability of a philosophy in the same years is the symptom to be interpreted, rather than the self-occultation of its telos. The absence of philosophy speaks for itself.

Irrationality, as Husserl says, is an aspect of an inner philosophical crisis, but what it shows, I think, is that, contrarily to what he assumed, the solution cannot be brought by philosophy. Philosophy, rather, shows its inability to escape irrationality, unless it renounces idealism instead of sticking to it. Its problem is the pathology of idealism, in other words, the myth of what Eugen Fink called, in the 6th Cartesian Meditation, the transcendental Spectator. Idealism, being a lost cause, has to be abandoned for another solution to the crisis.

Opposed to an idealistic conception of rationality, Musil also attacks historicist conceptions, as Popper did. Yet, Husserl did not believe in such a conception as a predetermined development of logic in History, but, rather, in the autonomic power of universalization of the Reason as an ethical Selbstbesinnung (notion of responsibility), which is more Kantian than Hegelian. As we know, Husserl was not so open to the historicity of history. Of course, this is not to say that he was indifferent to necessity.

society from the ravages of the market. Today, however, neoliberalism generates no such counter-hegemonic opposition, despite intense but ephemeral outbursts, such as ‘occupy’ and the indignados. Thus, we lack a double movement in Polanyi’s sense.”

13 Bouveresse, op. cit., p. 279; anti-historicism is equally shared by Popper and Musil.

14 His conception of the “phenomenal a priori” underlying relations between states of affairs (for instance, in the sentence “red and green cannot be together at the same place at the same time,” he writes that “cannot,” here, expresses a negative necessity because of a law –loi d’essence– of incompatibility irrigating contingency), not only could, but has ef-
To get back to Musil’s critique of universality, just remember the ironic passages on the “Parallel Action,” in which the search for the unifying idea that inaugurates its program, ends into the person of the General Stumm von Bordwehr, whose attitude could be “an ironic commentary of the last Husserl.”

As to the idealist tonality, Bouveresse is right to note, against the postmodernist trend of to-day, that, uttered in 1936, the Krisis sounds somewhat obsolete, compared to Musil’s or Wittgenstein’s earlier appreciations. “The very idea of a philosophical Europe is the result of a dererealizing process of abstraction.” The abstraction comes from sublimating representations, by putting representation of a fact or of an event, above the level of the fact or event, whereas representation comes, itself, from these facts or events. A kind of “disease”: isn’t Jakob “ill with infinite in a society that believes in finite things?”

5. Back to “The Spectator Included” (Hans Blumenberg): The Circularity of Understanding as Participation

a) The crisis is our condition: the reversed image of finding oneself carried away in the waves. One could argue, against Husserl, that the Reason as a Spectator is already entangled into culture from the very beginning, and that, as Hans Blumenberg writes, in his Schiffbruch mit Zuschauer, a study of metaphorology shows that the crisis is not necessarily the bad issue of a declining becoming, but the starting condition of Reason. In short, the crisis of rationality is at the very beginning rather than the result of a bad-in-itself destiny of Reason, a destiny Reason, overwhelmed by a declining culture, would have failed to understand by lack of lucidity. Hence, rather than being focused on universality as its telos, rationality could well be the understanding of the crisis as being our very-condition. Now, is the problem of rationality really consisting in the understanding of such a condition, given the so-called “destination” of Reason reflecting upon its “telos”? I doubt it. Let us first get back to this concept of the destination of Reason in light of the critique of a determinist conception of history.
b) Blumenberg’s motive of the entangled or engaged Spectator takes the exact opposite side from Husserl’s impassive “transcendental Spectator,” bound to objectify the eye of an overhanging, unsituated act of philosophy. Blumenberg has been, nonetheless, quite sensitive to Husserl’s concept of *Krisis*, but, in his reevaluation of the concept of “reality,” what he could not endorse and make his own is the Husserlian view of a reality as being immune to historical accidentality. That’s why he deliberately gave an historical inflexion to phenomenology.\(^{19}\)

Interestingly enough, this specific move, initiated by Blumenberg, prompts him to replace Reason with the work of art, as, he writes, art is the most dignifying refuge for this implausible Husserlian autonomy of Reason.\(^{20}\) Note that the best example that comes to his mind is Musil’s novel, and the ironic mode on which the novel mimes the scientific telling of history while it makes historical telling impossible as such.\(^{21}\) Following the reversed image of the boat entangled into the waves of an uncertain reality, one has, on the contrary, to understand that this entanglement is, as we have said, our condition. That is already Lucretius’ motive: life starts with man’s birth when nature expulses the baby out of the mother’s body. The baby is, then, compared to the sailor rejected on the sea side. Lucretius, in the 5th book of his great poem *improba navigii ratio tum caeca jacebat* (vers 1104), deplores the condition of man’s birth. Navigation shows the error of travelling. Blumenberg comments by saying that such traveling ends in self-punishment.\(^{22}\) Better would be, he says, to stay still on the sea-shore. Shipwreck is the metaphor for such disasters. All the 19th century was full of shipwrecks. Yet crisis and wars is not the same thing. The contrast between the *terra firma* that is supposed to represent certainty in life, and the waves or turmoil of contingency, turns into a totally different conception: the waves and turmoil are the real, and the *terra firma*, the situation of the rescued one, not of the Spectator. Rationality has now become the privilege of the survivor to the shipwreck.

Philosophy traditionally represents human navigation as an unceasing struggle against an unpredictable ocean of obstacles. The wave is “*us*,” V. Buckhardt writes: “we are that wave we want to know.” Lucretius’ Spectator is seen as the opportunity for men to take a rest, at a distance from the turmoil of life, yet the opportunity not to retreat from it, but to look at the theater of


\(^{20}\) One will notice in passing that this process of restoring the historical dimension to phenomenology would not be possible without the so-to-speak transfer of power allowing to go from the pseudo-autonomy of Reason to the autonomy of art vis à vis reality conceived as an artefact.


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the world, in other words, the ocean of matter with the disordered movement of atoms.

c) Now, is there anything like a Spectator distantiated from history who would not stand still above the world? Rather than a heroic conception of Reason (Husserl), as a moral faculty, we, indeed, need a kind of rationality fitted to a morale du résultat (Bentham), according to which the agent has to respond now in such or such circumstances, enlightened by ethical considerations such as the ones we find in Amartya Sen’s economical pragmatism, founded on the concept of “capabilities” (with Aristotle, Mill, Marx, and also Rawls’ conception of distributive justice, in the background). But I am stepping out of my competencies.

The nautical metaphor could be seen as double: on one hand, it refers to the moving water and waves, on the other hand to the boat shaken by the waves. If we look for a principle of orientation (on Schopenhauer’s recommendation) as Musil does, rather than to the factor of unceasing turbulence, the conception of how to cope with the problem changes.

From Aristotle’s prudence (phronēsis), or practical intuitive sense of possibility, to Descartes’ provisory morals, and to Otto Neurath quoting the latter followed with Quine quoting Neurath’s boat (“naturalizing epistemology,” see further), the image of finding one’s way in the turmoil is useful to express the recourse, by the social engineer, to guess, technique and a kind of skill (in Greek: mētis), in order to apply changes hic et nunc, without waiting for the implausible kairos, the supposedly “right moment” of the idealist philosopher. It contrasts with Husserl’s heroism of Reason, as well as with Kant’s so-called practical Reason, excluding all kind of guile and mischievousness.

Reminding the reader of his objections against Kant’s conception of practical Reason, Schopenhauer himself suggests the nautical metaphor in order to present in a vivid manner the analogy between the art of using, in chaotic conditions, one’s faculty of reason and the navigator’s use of the “map, compass and the sextant.” At the opposite of this technical use is the ignorance of the crew that sees only the sky and the sea, and lets itself go verned.26 This conception emphasizes, he says, what Cicero called prudencia and its influence on actions in life.

However, this “utopia” suggests, in Otto Neurath’s times and worldview, a non-delayed application of technical means, a social experimentation now. Neurath was a war-economist sympathetic to Marxism (or more exactly to Otto Bauer’s Austro-Marxism), who, in 1919, had participated in the Munich workers councils settled by the movement of socialization in Bavaria. His

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23 Echoing the call for a practical reason reevaluated; see, for instance, Schopenhauer against Kant (ref. further down).

24 That rejoins what Cohn-Bendit once called “The plausible utopia” (France Culture, interviewed on his recent book, on April 12th, 2013). See the Chilian film “No,” “No” to Pinochet reelection 1973, by Pablo Larrain.

25 Schopenhauer disagrees with Kant’s conception of the a priori character of the knowledge of the ethical value of actions, and thereby with what Kant calls Practical Reason.

26 A. Schopenhauer, The World as Will and Representation, Book 1, n° 16.
model was conceived for a socialist strategy of reconstruction in emergency-conditions, as in war-time, to be extended to peace-time society, and result in an administrative planned economy.

This strategy would, I think, correspond to the “second movement” as explained by Polanyi, this very kind of movement that is now lacking in our century. His comparison of Science with the “boat” is famous. It stresses the necessity to rebuild it while staying afloat in it. According to Quine who ignores the political lesson, it represents science and philosophy in the making, together on the same boat. Repairing the boat while sailing in deep sea means that remodeling the whole building from the start is in vain. Descartes’ tabula rasa (in the realm of pure thought) should, therefore, be abandoned, in other words, the Carnapian model of protocol pure and founding sentences, at the basis of the symbolic scaffolding of unified science, Otto Neurath sees as a modern version of Descartes’ tabula rasa. One cannot think the pure beginning, before language, syntax and the rest.

That Musil could have met Otto Neurath is a fact that corroborates the impression the reader gets from reading the novel. Social engeneering is at the heart of his great novel on the eve of the First World War, if one is ready to see the “philosophy that is contained in the novel” (as Jean-Pierre Cometti writes after Milan Kundera). Social engeneering seems to have lost its noble meaning. It is strange how, among some philosophers inheriting from the encyclopedic attitude towards sciences, typical of the end of the 19th century in the German-speaking world, covering so many fields as economy, urbanism, the history of ideas, sociological and anthropological matters, there was such an endeavour towards social engeneering. The development of expertizing, joined to specialization, seem to have been detrimental to the “interests of knowledge” (Habermas’ expression).

Conclusion

So far, my conclusion is that, a hundred years ago, when philosophy realized it was “ill” with idealism, the time had come, in “Vienna the red” (a socialism that lasted 10 years), for working out a solution, between the two wars, in order to protect the society against the bad effects of an economy ruled solely by profit. Unfortunately, WWII put an end to what Polanyi (see

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27 In 1913, Otto Neurath wrote a beautiful article, almost unknown from the French public, entitled “Descartes’s Lost Wanderers in the Forest,” I have commented in various studies that have been published. In French, the reader can refer to our Cahiers de philosophie du langage, on “Neurath entre science et guerre,” L’Harmattan, n° 2, issue coord. by E. Nemeth, J. Sebestik and myself, dedicated to the memory to Philippe Soulez, 1996. His “boat” is a direct emanation of Descartes’ provisory morals.

28 See above, my footnote in reference to Nancy Fraser.

29 There are two Descartes for Neurath: a bad one, the one looking for a tabula rasa in pure thought, and the Descartes advising a provisory morals in the realm of action, because, Descartes wrote, “action does not wait.” Neurath disagrees with this “dualism” and considers that thought also “does not wait.”
above) calls the “second movement.” The exile achieved the failure of the diffusion of what could have stopped the economy-market that is so harmful to a human society.

Richard Rorty wrote somewhere in his *Mirror of Nature* that the absence of any place in culture, for philosophy, its radical illegitimacy, is a situation one could trace back to the Greeks. I would say that it is, on the contrary, quite a good thing, if, finding no rest where it is settled— for instance in buildings made for her like universities—, philosophy maintains its “atopic” position, as Socrates would say in his times according to Plato, at odds with institution, a good thing, therefore, if the legitimacy of its place has to be proved at each step. The Greek model to keep in mind is not so much Husserl’s interpretation of an autonomous Platonic rationality, speaking for European values above contingency, as a force emerging from unceasing turbulences, never installed forever, and moving forward, like the pilot of the boat who, endowed with what Aristotle called the “sense of the possible,” tirelessly cleaves the way through the waves. More importantly, this does not mean participating in the decline, but rather, moving with the crisis, from the inside, and without security.
Crisis and Openness

GEORGIA APOSTOLOPOULOU

1. Preliminary Remarks

In recent years, ‘crisis’ has belonged to the everyday vocabulary of political rhetoric and of mass media as well. It seems that ‘crisis’ has become the key concept of understanding our situation at the beginning of the new millennium. We are facing different kinds of crisis, such as the economic crisis, the ecological crisis, the crisis of democracy, the crisis of institutions, or the crisis of values. Almost every human order considered as an organised bundle of activities includes its own potential of crisis. Nowadays, the economic crisis is the dominant crisis, since it seizes broad sectors of economic activities and its consequences disintegrate social life as well as the life plans of citizens. Nevertheless, the exclusive use of the term to indicate the economic crisis overshadows the broad history of its meaning.¹

Crisis and critique are characteristics of modern consciousness that is convinced of the immanence of crisis, as well as of the therapeutic results of critique. Altogether, it is not certain whether crisis provokes critique or whether critique causes crisis. The words crisis and critique have as their common origin the Greek verb ‘krinein.’ In fact, the term ‘krisis’ means, first of all, decision, discretion, and judgement. It has also the meaning of ‘crisis’ in medicine, indicating the acute phase of illness, when life or death will be decided. While the meaning of ‘krisis’ as judgement, as well as crisis, exists still in contemporary Greek language, crisis as erosion of an order is usual in other languages. It is plain that crisis and critique do need the ‘krisis,’ the judgement of truth and falsehood, or justice and injustice.

The main point of crisis, namely of the imminent disturbance of an order, concerns social life and is conceived as crisis by persons. Thus, crisis and the consciousness of crisis are indispensable aspects of describing crisis. It seems that there are times conceived as times of crisis. For the Middle Age consciousness, the uncertain and troublesome process of history has its hidden, stable reference to the transcendent plan of history. Modern consciousness considers critique and crisis as the characteristics of the modern epoch, which concern the foundations of social life. For modern consciousness, time is secular; it is only the time of human activities that are exposed to contingency and uncertainty. The philosophy of history, however, attempted to cover this uncertainty by contending the teleology of progress. But the last century destroyed this protective illusion and manifested that contingency, uncertainty and crisis characterise social life and human history.

Even though the economic crisis we are facing nowadays seems to disi-

tegrate social life and to put impediments on the life plans of citizens, the potential for human values is not exhausted and, at the same time, the openness of our shared world has not lost its meaning.

In what follows, I investigate the main aspects of this problem. Firstly, modernity is explained as a time of crisis and contradiction with reference to Hegel’s view. Following that, I consider the differentiation of power as a problem of our times. I dedicate the fourth part to the issue of the openness of a shared world.

2. Modernity and Crisis

Developing a public discourse on crisis presupposes that society has a representative centre of its identity at its disposal. That means, however, that society has a representative centre of its rational identity. Can we define such a representative centre for the society of our times, if we take into account the differentiation of rationality in science, economy, or technology? Since its origins in ancient Greece, philosophy has vindicated such a place for itself by arguing that philosophy leads the human to conceive that a life with reason and from reason is the authentic human activity. Consequently, rational thinking and dialogue should be the elements of the broader discourse concerning social and political life within the meaningful order of the Cosmos.

This self-understanding of philosophy culminated in Hegel’s philosophy of spirit. Hegel’s philosophy, however, also includes a theory of human spirit and of human identity at the turn of modernity. Thus, the question is whether or not we are to take into account his consideration of the modern condition of a human that is conscious of its freedom as a personal and shared existential feature. It is plain that the strong metaphysical demands of Hegel’s philosophy cannot be endorsed after Marx’s economic theory, after Kierkegaard’s Christian existentialism, or Nietzsche’s nihilism. Anyway, whether or not we criticise and reject Hegel’s consideration of the Absolute, we should still be careful about other absolute formations appearing in the society and politics of our secular times.

Hegel’s philosophy of modernity is important, because it describes the achievement as well as the contradictions of modernity, which are relevant for understanding our concrete situation. Modernity is, for Hegel, the epoch of the universalism of freedom. The concept of the human is universalised, since humans are conceiving that all humans are free, that the human as human is endowed with dignity. The significance of this principle consists in the self-consciousness of being free and endowed with dignity and, at the same time, of the mutual recognition of humans as humans. This is the principle of subjectivity of the spirit and of human life. Hegel, however, argues that this principle is also the principle of the modern state. In fact, the state is the achievement of modernity; according to its principle, it is the ‘political state.’

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Thus, Hegel describes the principle of the state, but he leaves open the question about whether or not the principle is realised. It is plain that Hegel was so confident about the principle of freedom that he did not guess that fear is not eliminated from history. This is the lesson that we draw from history after Hegel, which does not undermine the principle of freedom, but it corroborates our consciousness of responsibility.

Even though Hegel considers freedom as the universal trend of history, he asserts that modern society includes its own contradictions. On the one hand, civil society has developed the consciousness of freedom, as well as the concept of the free activities of citizens. On the other hand, the interrelation of needs and means for covering the needs causes the ‘accumulation of wealth’ and ‘produces rabble.’ Hegel explains that the result is double. Firstly, the feeling of right, the dignity to live through one’s own activity and work are lost. Second, working people contribute to the increase of accumulated wealth for the benefit of a few citizens. Hegel emphasises that facing this problem by means of practising charity is against the principle of civil society, namely against the feeling of self-esteem, of dignity, and of independence. Obviously, this does not mean that Hegel is against the value of charity, but it means that he does not endorse charity as a substitute for the principle of freedom, since it quasi-legitimises the contradiction. Hegel ‘describes’ the contradiction, but he does not offer a solution in terms of politics. Taking into account the condition of modernity, he holds that humans can fulfill their life plan in a free society as citizens of the political state. Thus, Hegel considers modernity as the epoch of a mundane crisis and describes this crisis in terms of political society. One could hardly doubt the significance of the political state in our times of crisis.

3. Crisis and Power

If we take these schematic remarks as the starting point of describing the crisis, we shall recognise some striking similarities. The crisis we are facing nowadays seems to be a crisis of the state caused by the confusion of power. The differentiation of power is so much developed that it puts aside the regulating and ruling power of the state. While the rationalisation of power was achieved through law, the differentiation of power is detached from the law, and it leads to a variety of manifest and invisible centres of power, which exert their activities over the state. The global nexus of economic interrelations, the possibility of individuals to escape taxes or the regulation of their activities, and the islands of economic privilege weaken the power of the law and of the state as well. Other centres, serving as evaluators or advisors of economic measures and activities, can abuse their dominant position and have an

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3 Ibid., p. 201.
4 Ibid., p. 200.
impact upon social life and state decisions. Let us consider how the state becomes alienated from society and how the state attempts to regulate the power of economic agents through the law.

While opinions differ on this, it is true that power is an anthropological category. Power means the ability of intervening in the course of affairs, the ability of creating objective frames of life. In fact, power arises in the human community, in the community of persons, when the individual has to exert its power over other individuals. Thus power needs Right and Law in order to be regulated as the power of humans, and not as a blind power over humans.  

In our times, the differentiation of power on a global level, as well as the interrelation of power beyond the states, indicates the limits of globalisation. We can understand now that globalisation does not mean the ‘worlding’ creation of a common world for all humans on the basis of freedom, of respect, and of quality of life. Or we may consider that this common world is still in process. Since history is not contemporaneous for all people, this shared world remains fragmentary. Anyway, we normally take into account the crisis of industrial and highly developed countries, such as the USA or the countries of the European Union. Even though focusing on these countries is justified, we ought not to forget countries that are not in crisis, because they have not yet achieved a level of higher economic and social development. I mean we should not forget the countries of Africa.

The economic crisis is a pragmatic-practical problem of the politicians and a problem of scientific theory. It is a problem of knowledge and not of morality. Its consequences, however, have a moral aspect, because they come in contradiction to the values of human culture. Poverty, existential uncertainty and unemployment as social phenomena threatening a broad number of citizens indicate the shortage of social responsibility on the part of the economic agents. Nevertheless, this consideration should not be interpreted as an argument supporting the illusionary conception of total planning.

At the moment, society seems to remain in contradiction with its values of community. This is not true in all cases. In contrast to the official and public discourse on the economic crisis, another discourse takes place almost at the silent margins of society. It is a discourse on the values of community and of family, such as love, solidarity, charity, encouragement, hope, prudence. But it is not only a discourse; it has the form of concrete activity towards suffering people that is inspired by these values.

4. **Openness**

The rhetoric of economic crisis disguises some significant aspects of crisis in the meaning of ‘krinein,’ of judging, of discerning and of deciding. Philosophical anthropology stresses that the human is always in crisis, namely in situations that urge judging and deciding, because its life form is not definite,

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as it is for the other living beings of this earth. Crisis, judgement, decision, and critique are characteristics of the human situation.

Helmuth Plessner, one of the classics of philosophical anthropology, has explained that humans exist in the openness of their world, including the interior world, the world of things and the shared world of persons. The openness of the world condition of the human is connected with his/her self-consciousness as ‘I’ that initiates the distance towards the self. The other living beings do have a self but they are not ‘I’; they stay at the self as the centre of their defined life-field. In contrast, the human as the ‘I’ does not exist in a defined life-field, but it exists in the threefold world condition. Thus, the life plan of the human is not defined from the very beginning. Therefore, the human has to carry out its life plan and to become what it is.

This openness indicates the contradictory freedom of the human. For, on the one hand, its world is open and offers a broad field of possibilities; on the other hand, this instability compels the human to create orders of life, which reduce the uncertainty of instability. While the creation of order corresponds to the urgent need for survival, it causes the richness of life, because the human can carry its life within culture and institutions. So, the development of human life is an activity which presupposes the judgement about the intended form of life, the creation, the reconstruction, or the new creation of order, since there is no closing order of human life.

This critical attitude towards order goes together with the self-understanding of the human, as well as with the understanding of world. Understanding concerns the development of self-identity and of communication. Nevertheless, its expression as a picture or view of the human or as a world picture has a practical significance, since it can contribute to understanding the concrete situation, the presuppositions for decision-making, or the values of our activities. Further, it can be a critical instance or a leading idea for social life; it may also inspire scientific theory. For instance, ‘homo economicus’ is a narrow picture of the human, which can be advantageous for economic theory, but it does not correspond to the picture of the human as a social being.

In fact, the conception of the human is both descriptive and normative, since it indicates the human being as a living being endowed with freedom and openness. It seems that the human condition is a permanent situation of crisis, even though it is not conceived as such. There are times of stable order and times of crisis of the concrete order. Nevertheless, the consciousness of freedom, of humanity and of openness remains the indispensable power over crisis.

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Theory of Crisis and Theory of Knowledge

MARIYA POURNARI

What is first required from a crisis-theory relative to the current situation is the evaluation of the most influential theses that purport to reveal crisis’s causes, consequences and possible remedies.

An examination of the current economic and humanist crisis needs to focus on its objective causes and operations that contradict, among other things, individual’s consciousness and social knowledge as well. In this framework, a theory of knowledge needs to correlate a theory of individual knowledge with social knowledge. Although, knowledge is intuitively identified with individual mental action, it is not quite evident how an individual mental content or process becomes a critical reproduction of the shared knowledge.\(^1\) In what way is social knowledge different from individual knowledge? What is social epistemology? According to the analytic view, social epistemology is a branch of traditional epistemology that studies epistemic properties of individuals that arise from their relations to others, as well as epistemic properties of groups or social systems. Studying such interpersonal epistemic relations is a legitimate part of epistemology.\(^2\)

Despite the insights gained through traditional social epistemology, there are still crucial questions that remain unresolved. This understanding conceives knowledge as essentially social; it is not clear, however, how concrete individuals, who construct an individual knowledge, which is by definition different from any other individual knowledge, produce social knowledge. However, it is not clear in what sense the dynamic character of knowledge is possible for contextual evidences, beliefs, and values to originate and apply in the minds of individuals alone. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to explore the relations between individual knowledge and social knowledge undertaken in social contexts of crisis. It requires a theory of knowledge in tune with the contemporary reality which fosters relevant social change. Within this framework, it reverts to one area of a dialectic Marxist theory of knowledge. This concerns the relation between the crisis-ridden nature of capitalist economy with the subjective and necessary manifestations of these objective developments at the level of social consciousness and knowledge.

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Theories of Crisis

There are some alternative explanations of the current crisis. 3 The first one holds that the crisis has originated in the financial sphere, due to extremely high levels of debt, rampant speculation, a permissive monetary policy, the loosening of rules governing borrowing and lending due to deregulation, and so on. The crisis is the outcome of policy mistakes. The implication of this approach is that the crisis could have been avoided if different policies had been chosen. 4 The question that arises is that, since crises are a recurrent and constant given of capitalism, obviously, there must be some structural reasons that prevent them from learning their past mistakes, that is, that force them to continue making these very mistakes.

A second alternative explanation of the crisis is the underconsumption-thesis. In this view, crises are caused by a long-term fall in wages against a rise in labour’s productivity. 5 Lower wages, it is submitted, instead of increasing the rate of profit, cause it to fall because of failed realization, first in the consumer-goods sector and, second, from the consumer-goods sector to other sectors. Therefore, according to this explanation, lower wages are, thus, the cause of the crisis.

Unfortunately, this is not the case. Marx had invalidated this thesis in the second volume of Capital. 6 In Marx’s times, as it is also nowadays, the crises are preceded by a period of high wages and, thus, the relatively high consumption and realisation of commodities was true. If lower wages cannot decrease the average rate of profit, they cannot be the cause of crises. If capitalism resorts to lower wages in times of depression and crisis, these wage-cuts are a counter-tendency only temporarily holding back the fall in the average rate of profit, rather than being its cause. Causes must be sought elsewhere.

Since lower wages cannot be the cause of lower profit-rates and crises, the theoretical possibility opens up of reversing the causal relation, that is, for the crisis to be the cause of lower wages. This brings us to a third alternative explanation, one that identifies the cause of crises in higher, rather than lower, wages. This is the profit-squeeze Marxist approach to crises, but, curiously, it is also the essence of the neoliberal approach to crises. According to this, the changes in the financial system that caused the speculative bubble were, in their turn, caused by the need to reduce the share of labour in the national income. 7

Empirical refutation is important, but even more important is theoretical invalidation. Two points can be mentioned. First, profit-squeeze theory, just as

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the underconsumptionist conception, is a redistributional theory which, as with all similar theories, implies a constant quantity of new value produced. Then, the rate of profit decreases because it is implicitly assumed that the total value to be redistributed remains the same. However, the profit-squeezed theory cannot explain the inception of the depression and crisis because it presupposes a stagnant or decreasing production of surplus-value. Therefore it presupposes what has to be explained. As Marx claims, “nothing is more absurd [...] than to explain the fall in the rate of profit by a rise in the rate of wages.” Marx’s theory of crisis highlights the basic contradiction leading the economic crises and, consequently, falling wages and labour’s decreasing purchasing power as an attempt to halt the fall in profitability. Similar to the rise in the profit-rate, starting in the 1980s, in spite of the rising organic composition of capital, this is probably due to liberalization of the financial and capital-markets and to the great speculative boom starting around the beginning of the 1980s, which led to a much greater rise of profits in the financial than in the non-financial sector.

To sum up, both theoretical and empirical investigation has provided substantiation for the thesis that a crisis’ ultimate causes is the tendential fall in the average rate of profit of the productive sectors. Wage-movements can explain neither the crisis nor the cycle.

Nevertheless, putting internal critique aside, one should be aware of each of the views’ political and ideological ramifications. If lower wages determine crisis, higher wages are the way out of crises. And, if higher wages determine crises, lower wages are the way out of crises. Crises are, at least in principle, avoidable. If they are not avoidable, it is because “mistakes” have been made in wage, fiscal, monetary, and so on and so forth policies, or because labour has not been able to impose better work and living conditions on capital. The reformist matrix of this redistributional view is clear: if the system is reformable, a different system is not needed. However, if crises are a constant feature of capitalism, we need a theory that theorises their unavoidability, their necessity. This is exactly what the Marxist explanation does, by focusing on the decreased production of value due to technological innovations and the concomitant rising organic composition of capital as the ultimate cause of crisis. Given that this is a constant of capitalism, the necessary, constant and unavoidable way capitals compete with each other, crises are unavoidable. In the former case, the system does not tend objectively and necessarily towards crises. The possibility is created to conceptualise capitalism as a system being or tending towards growth and equilibrium. In the latter case, the system tends towards crises through the economic cycle. In the former case, the system is inherently rational. Labour is deprived of the objective, rational base for its fight. This fight becomes a pure act of voluntarism. In the latter case, the system is irrational and labour’s fight to abolish it is then both rational and the conscious expression of an objective movement, the tendency the system

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has to supersede itself. The choice of one crisis theory rather than another is an individual one. Given the different class-content of the different theories, this choice places the individual theorist on one side rather than the other in the struggle against capitalism.

Theory of Knowledge

A crisis-theory focusing on its objective causes and operations considers, among others, how the contradictory objectivity emerges at the level of individual consciousness. Also, it requires the development of a theory of knowledge consistent with Marx’s wider theoretical opus, and it may be suitable for the development of an account of those aspects left unexplored by Marx, in tune with contemporary reality, attempting, thus, to foster radical social change. One of the features of this theory would be the inquiry into the crisis-ridden nature of the capitalist economy, that it not only discerns the causes of its recurrent crises and the reasons why they must occur, irrespectively of the intentions and the behavior of the economic agents, but that it also relates the objective working of the economy to the subjectivity of the social agents, that is, to the subjective manifestations of the contradictory objective foundations of the economy. Within this framework, two areas of a Marxist theory of knowledge would be of great interest. The first one concerns the relation between the crisis-ridden nature of capitalist economy with the subjective and necessary manifestations of these objective developments at the level of social consciousness. It requires the development of a theory of individual and social knowledge.

In the process of providing answers to these questions, other debated issues have to be explored, such as the problem of whether and when the production of knowledge is identified to the production of value and surplus-value. The reason is, according to a nowadays widespread notion in contemporary capitalism, that the economy rests more on knowledge-production (mental) rather than on “material” or objective one. The term “material” must be put in quotation-marks, because, all production (including mental) is to be considered as material in the sense that it is the expenditure of (real) human energy. The difference is in the outcome, that is, whether the outcome is an objective transformation of the reality outside us or a transformation of our perception of that reality, and in this sense, it is a mental production.

This area of research deals with the question of whether the knowledge produced under capitalist relations is suitable for application to a period of transition to a society of a different kind. An important role is ascribed to a specific type of knowledge, the natural sciences and techniques. In this connection, it should be mentioned that the theorization of the production of knowledge, both in general and in particular under capitalism, has been impaired by the acceptance of two epistemological dogmas; namely, that the mental processes (knowledge production) are independent from both body

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9 Carchedi, Behind the Crisis, pp. 192-207.
and society. Orthodox-Marxist theory avoids these theoretical pitfalls, but, in its dogmatic rendition, has created some problems of its own, principally the idea (a) that knowledge-production is a reflection in our minds of a material and natural process and (b) that social knowledge is a simple summation of individual knowledge. The thesis of rejection of “reflection-theory” and the emphasis placed on the class-determination of knowledge, however, seem to run into the difficulty because classes apparently do not express necessarily a theorization of their own interests, so that knowledge, being amenable to be used by different classes, seems to be, in fact, class-neutral. These are deemed to be sufficient grounds to reject the Marxist thesis of the class-determination of knowledge. Instead of class, information or services are deemed to be the specific and characteristic features of modern societies. Accordingly, the notion of a class-divided society has been displaced by that of “information society” or “service-society.” If knowledge is not class-determined, then the working class cannot or does not necessarily produce its own view of reality and, thus, its own view of the crisis-ridden nature of this system, which, in turn, deprives the working class of the theoretical guide in its struggle against capitalism. The thesis of the class-neutrality of knowledge has, thus, devastating effects on the struggle for a radically alternative form of society.

**Individual Knowledge**

The distinction between concrete and abstract individuals would be the basis for a theorization of individual and social knowledge. Individual knowledge is the view of reality from the perspective of the concrete individual. Social knowledge is the view of reality of social groups. Characterisations such as “intellectual labour” versus “manual labour” are inadequate and theoretically unfounded. Likewise for the distinction between “mental” versus “material” labour. All labour could be considered as material, because the expenditure of human energy is itself a material entity. At the same time, all labour is intellectual, because humans are not automata who act without thinking.

By introducing the notion of ‘transformation,’ we can distinguish between two types of transformation: *Objective* transformation is the transformation of objective reality outside our consciousness. *Mental* transformation is the transformation of the knowledge of objective reality or of previous knowledge. It could be thought that the objective transformation is material and the mental transformation is non-material. However, both require the expenditure of human energy, and are, thus, material processes. The opposition between material and mental labour is incorrect. For the same reason, material labour cannot be contrasted to immaterial labour. Marx does refer to “immaterial labour” only once, but it is clear from his opus that this should not be taken literally.

It follows that objective transformations are material transformations of a reality that lies outside us, and mental transformations are material transformations as well, occurring with learning, that is, with changes in human cog-

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nition and consciousness, both of the reality outside us and of our previous knowledge. Objective transformations are the transformations by labour-power of the means of objective transformation and of objects of objective transformation. Labour-power is the capacity to transform objective inputs. Mental transformations, or knowledge transformations, are the transformations by labour-power of knowledge contained in the labourer’s labour-power, of the subjective knowledge, and of the objective knowledge, into the new knowledge. Objective knowledge is both the knowledge contained in the objective means of mental transformations and the knowledge contained in other mental producers’ labour-power, inasmuch as it has not become an input of our subjective knowledge, that is, inasmuch as we have not yet known it. The knowledge contained in labour-power is both the means of mental transformation and one of the two mental objects of mental transformation. Mental transformations are the self-transformation of knowledge. The labour-power is, here, the capacity to transform knowledge. Mental transformations can be either individual or social. Individual mental transformations transform the individual knowledge and consciousness into a different individual knowledge. Thus, they transform individual subjectivities. Social mental transformations transform social knowledge, the knowledge shared by the members of a social group, into a different kind of social knowledge. They transform social subjectivities.

Hence, while individual knowledge is subjective, new individual knowledge is a mental transformation and, thus, transformation by labour-power, of subjective and objective knowledge. Since thinking is a constant process, individual knowledge is a constant process of becoming something different from what it has become. This applies also to social knowledge, knowledge shared by many concrete individuals.

From a person’s or a group’s perspective, the knowledge of other individuals or social groups is objective knowledge, inasmuch as that person or group does not know it. From the point of view of other persons or groups, our knowledge, inasmuch as it is unknown to them, is objective knowledge, which is transformed by them into their subjective knowledge, when they use it as an input in their production of knowledge. The moment we transform objective knowledge by making it our own, we transform into our individual or social knowledge, into our individual or social subjectivity. When we interact with other individuals, our subjective knowledge becomes part of their subjective knowledge, which then exists outside us and, from that moment on, becomes independent of our knowledge and, thus, becomes objective knowledge for us. Thus, mental transformations are a two way process: they are transformations of objective knowledge into subjective and back from subjective knowledge into objective, according to who is the producer of knowledge.

Marx distinguishes two stages in the production of knowledge, which actually correspond to two stages of mental transformation, since the production of knowledge is always the combination of mental and objective transformations. The first is observation, the socially filtered sensory perception of the real concrete. The result is the imagined concrete, a “chaotic conception of
reality,” which is transformed through conception into concrete-in-thought, a more structured and articulated view of the imagined concrete. In reality, observation requires a previous conceptual framework and conception requires a previous observation. However, we can start our conception on the basis of our previous observation or vice versa.

The distinction between objective and mental transformations is only analytical. In reality, objective transformations require mental transformations and vice versa. However, in dealing with objective transformations, we disregard the mental transformations needed for them, and vice versa in dealing with mental transformations, we disregard the needed objective transformations as the first step in the analysis. Labour, and thus a labour-process, is always the combination of both types of transformation. They cannot exist independently and can realize themselves as a labour-process only conjointly and contemporaneously. But a labour-process is either an objective labour-process or a mental one, depending upon which type of transformation is determinant. The nature of this process is empirically given. Thus, in the production of a car, it is the objective aspect of the output that is empirically given and, in the production of a concert, it is the mental aspect which is empirically apparent. However, this rule is not always accurate. What appears decisive for the issue, is the social validation of the product. This social validation occurs at the moment of exchange. Thus, for example, a book is produced and exchanged primarily because of its mental content and its objective features are necessary, but subordinate to the mental content inherent in the book. Both aspects are potentially present in the outcome before the exchange, but only one realizes itself and becomes, then, a determinant aspect. We can say that the outcome of an objective labour-process is an objective commodity and that of a mental labour-process is new knowledge. But we should be aware that these are the determinant, and not the only, aspects of that outcome.

If the labour is both concrete and abstract, both concrete and abstract labour can be both mental and objective. But what is the relation between objective and mental, concrete and abstract labour? The abstract labour is not equivalent to mental labour; it is always material and is an aspect of both objective and mental labour. The same holds for concrete labour which is also always material and an aspect of both objective and mental labour. The production of knowledge, as a mental transformation, is objectively determined by objective transformations only in the case of objective labour-processes and not in the sense that mental transformations are always determined by objective transformations. At the level of society as a whole, a level of abstraction which comprises all labour-processes, both mental and objective, each labour-process is determined by the whole of the rest of society. Thinking is neither determined by being, nor is knowledge determined by material reality. Rather, each labour-process, including the production of knowledge, is materially determined, because it is determined by all other objective and mental labour-processes and, thus, by all other objective and mental transformations that are material processes. It is in this sense that the production of knowledge, besides being itself material, is materially determined.
Social Knowledge

As we have said earlier, the key to conceptualizing social knowledge is provided by the distinction between concrete and abstract individuals. As a first approximation (d1), we can say that knowledge is a commonly shared subjectivity that can reproduce itself irrespective of which concrete individuals share it. This commonly shared subjectivity defines a knowledge-group, a specific group of abstract individuals. These individuals are abstract individuals because abstraction is made of their specific way of internalizing and reproducing that knowledge. Thus, social knowledge can also be understood as the view of reality from the perspective of knowledge-groups.

The question is: how can concrete individuals, who produce an individual knowledge which is by definition different from any other individual knowledge, produce social knowledge? This is possible because concrete individuals undergo, from the first moment of, and throughout, their life, a process of internalization of social phenomena, and social phenomena are transformed from actually existing social phenomena into potential ones, existing in the concrete individuals’ consciousness and individuality. If a certain social phenomenon is internalized by different individuals, inasmuch as different individuals internalize the same class-content, its class-content becomes the common element unifying the different consciousnesses. Subsequently, when concrete individuals engage in individual phenomena, they transfer to those individual phenomena the potential to actualize social phenomena again and, thus, the class-content inherent in those phenomena.

It is this potentiality that becomes realized if individual relations become social relations; in other words, if concrete individuals become abstract individuals on the basis of some socially relevant common features. It is for this reason that, as elements of a concrete individuals’ knowledge, social phenomena are amenable to being actualized again, possibly in a different form, in a different realm of reality, and with a different class-content due to the process of determination. Knowledge is, thus, social (d2), when it can reproduce itself irrespective of which concrete individuals share it, in the specific sense that different individuals share the class-content of that knowledge.

Some individuals become a social group’s intellectual representatives who do not think in isolation. On the basis of their social practice and their class-collocation, they interiorise the knowledge produced by the other members of that group and rework it to produce their own knowledge. The emergence of the representative knowledge is the result of the interaction among all members of knowledge-groups, including the intellectual representatives.

Thus, social knowledge has a realised social content, namely, the representation of the interests of a specific knowledge-group. There is no ideologically neutral knowledge. The reproduction of social knowledge is, at the same time, the transformation of social interests into a commonly shared view of reality. The formation of social knowledge is also simultaneously an ongoing attempt by each group to impose its own view upon that of other groups through the knowledge developed by the intellectual representatives, up to the point
where, possibly, the social content of that knowledge undergoes a radical change. That social knowledge has become the theoretical expression of a different group’s or class’s interests, so that those intellectuals become representatives of other groups. As a first approximation, social knowledge has been defined as a commonly shared subjectivity. As a second approximation, social knowledge has been defined as knowledge that can reproduce itself through the principle of substitutability, that is, irrespective of which concrete individuals share it, in the specific sense that different individuals share the class-content of that knowledge. The third and final definition is that knowledge is social when it can reproduce itself irrespective of which concrete individuals share it, in the specific sense that different individuals share its contradictory class-content, as represented by the class-content of the representative knowledge, irrespective of the specific way each concrete individual internalises and reproduces that class-content.

It follows that the process of formation of social knowledge is a specific instance of a wider process, of the struggle between the two fundamental classes: capital and labour. The two fundamental classes can be theorised at the highest level of abstraction in terms of the capitalist ownership-relation, so that labour is composed of all those who do not own the means of production. Due to the two opposite rationalities inherent in the ownership-relation, all the potential and realised phenomena manifest the contradictory social content of social beliefs and consciousnesses. Even radically antagonistic movements, for example, women, racial minorities, students, and the ecologically-focused, are, indeed, elements of labour as a class. Classes are born at the level of production (of value and surplus-value), so labour is internally fragmented by capital and made internally contradictory. Capital and productive labour are an indissoluble, dialectical unity. However, the labour ability can produce an alternative conception of reality and a dialectical class-theory of knowledge-production. This, in its turn, is a necessary precondition for the development of a theory of crisis and, thus, for a successful fight against capitalism and crisis.
Breaking Models: 
Crisis and the Hermeneutics of Reflective Disruption 

LEONIDAS KOUTSOUMPOS

Nowadays, it is commonplace that the term crisis has negative connotations, like economic recession, poverty and political instability. As these lines are being printed, such aspects of crisis affect the life of many people around the world, such as, for example, citizens of Greece during the current debt crisis.1 Without underestimating the importance that these recent difficulties play in people’s everyday lives, this paper analyses a more detached, abstract and mundane notion of crisis that seeks a wider understanding of the term.

Such a broadening of the horizon can be achieved by looking back to the etymology of the term. As the word defines, every crisis is a turning point: “a vitally important or decisive stage in the progress of anything.”2 It is the anticipation of a decisive change that is imminent or the critical point in the course of events. The etymology of the word goes back to the ancient Greek word κρίσις, which derives from the Homeric verb κρίνω, meaning to sift, to separate, to pick out or select, and finally to decide and sometimes, interestingly enough, to interpret.3 The etymology also goes back to the Proto-Indo-European root *krei- “to sieve, discriminate, distinguish.” It starts to become clear that some kind of cutting, distinguishing and separation takes place during a crisis, in its original meaning.

Having this in mind, I would like to distinguish two types of crises. The one is slow and creeping, when one can identify warnings, and the other is rapid and sudden, and thus unforeseen. Two examples that can give a quick grasp of what is at stake, but are not going to be analysed much further here, are the 2009 Greek Debt Crisis, which is the outcome of an accumulation of reasons that have been piled up in Greek politics and world economies and, for this, some analysts anticipated its bursting, and the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake, which could not have been predicted, or, at least, not in the same way as the Greek Debt Crisis.

This paper deals with the second type of rapid and sudden crisis (although, as it will soon become clear, in a much smaller scale). It analyses one specific characteristic of crisis, which is the disruption that it causes in the usual flow of everyday life. The argument suggested here is that this painful stoppage has an inherent positive effect of triggering a thoughtful reflection on everydayness. This reflective disruption should be seen as a chance to rethink one’s habits and readjust possible routes in life by breaking existing models of be-

behavior. For this, it has an inseparable practical aspect of ethics. By rethinking the everydayness of life, one can react and change this way of life.

It needs to become clear, straight from the beginning, that this argument is very different from the popular view that sees crisis as an opportunity for gain (money, power, fame etc.). This viewpoint quite often quotes the Chinese etymology of the term weiji, consisting of two characters (危机) that can be read as ‘danger’ and ‘opportunity.’ This viewpoint has been exploited by economists and politicians around the world, causing, arguably, more crises than it has ever healed. On the contrary, the point discussed here is the structural characteristic of a sudden crisis causing some breaking or disruption which leads to reflection. In this sense, the breaking of an existing model will be described through the term 'reflective disruption.'

In order to illustrate this argument, a case study will be used to provide empirical data for discussion. Methodologically, this will be done in the level of a micro-sociological analysis of ethnomethodology: the study of peoples’ methods. I will draw this case study from a place where I am accustomed to being at home: the architectural design studio in a school of architecture. What follows is a mundane incident of everyday life from the place where architects learn how to design. The ways that people spontaneously react in moments of crisis will be examined, as well as the way that reflective disruption becomes a constituent part of handling a moment of crisis, no matter how small or trivial this is. A philosophical analysis of the whole incident and the notion of reflective disruption will follow, leading to some concluding remarks on the role that reflective disruption can play in times of large scale crisis.

An Ethnomethodological Case of Crisis: Breaking Models in Architecture

The case study that follows is a real incident documented at the School of Architecture at the University of Edinburgh and it is part of wider research that focused on education and ethics. The data gathering took place during the academic year 2005-2006. The data consists of video and audio recordings of everyday educational activities. This material was used when, afterwards, these activities were revisited in order to study specific incidents in great detail. The case study that follows has been ‘translated’ in detailed transcripts. Following, mainly, the transcription techniques of Conversation Analysis, the transcripts present, not only the teachers’ and students’ words, but

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4 See for example USA Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice’s statement: “I don’t read Chinese but I am told that the Chinese character for crisis is wei-ji, which means both danger and opportunity. [...] And I think that states it very well. We’ll try to maximize the opportunity.” G. Kessler, “Rice Highlights Opportunities after Setbacks on Mideast Trip,” The Washington Post, 19-1-2007, sec. “World” (http://www.washingtonpost.com/wpdyn/content/article/2007/01/18/AR20070118011881.html).

they also provide additional information about the context, the time framework and overlaps, as well as some emphases (e.g. numbers in parenthesis stand for seconds of pause in speaking flow).6 Pictures have also been extracted from key frames of the action to illustrate the incidents and provide visual evidence of the educational activity. The detailed transcripts that have been produced reveal the complexity and plurality engulfed in these educational mundane activities.

So, let us imagine a design class at a school of architecture. It is during the first year mid-term review on a small house project. A student (Alistair) presents his work to two tutors (Bob and John) – these are pseudonyms to protect the subjects’ privacy. The student has pinned his drawings on the partition walls of the design studio and he is sitting in front of the tutors, describing his design. Next to him there is a table full of models, and on a chair there is a laptop with a 3d model. The tutors and a group of students (behind the tutors) are sitting opposite Alistair. The focus of this excerpt is at the point of disruption caused during the educational process, when one of the tutors accidentally breaks the student’s model.

![Image 1]

Bob: Where did this form (.) come from
  ((B points towards the plan))

Alistair: A:mm (1)
B: How did you generate that (.) floor plan
A: (1) Firstly (2)
    ((A turns to the other side and grasps a model))
    I made (.) I wanted to have a cantilever over the thing (1) and so I originally had
    ((A puts the model back)) ((A turns back to the drawings and points to the plan))

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6 Here, I have used the transcript techniques offered by Emanuel A. Schegloff, in his online transcription project “Transcript Symbols for Conversation Analysis” (http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/soc/faculty/schegloff/TranscriptionProject/page1.html).
a square building with this projecting of it, an entirely square projection and
((makes a square with the pencil over the plan))
when I started organising rooms in (. I::: decided that I wanted to
balance this by having the same shape on the other side (. just a kind
of (0.5) creates a kind of (1.5) hhhhhhh I’m saying kind of and I
promised myself I wouldn’t do that
((A exhales violently))
B: I don’t mi::nd
A: No (.) I think (.) that’s just a (thing)
B: What I am not understanding is (0.5) thii::s: (2)
((B bends over and takes in his hands the model that A held just be-
fore))
A: That’s the way up
((referring to the upright position in which the model should be
seen))
B: At which point did we go (0.5) Hso:::y:::
((makes the gesture that imitates the cutting of the knife over the
model (Image 2))) ((B looks instantly at the drawing on the wall and
makes a second gesture of cutting at the second angle of the build-
ing))
A: Yeah am (.) no that was that was just em (0.5) I was be:nding metals
downstairs ((A turns to his drawings)) ((turns to the tutors))
at the workshop (0.75) and the angle bender wouldn’t bend all the
way (.)
((A gestures imitating the movement of the angle bender (Image 3)))
so I had to slight eh (. ) come to this shape here( ) like this (.) I felt it
((turns to the drawings and points to an angle in his plan))
(would lead) to more interest to the design, just be (. ) otherwise it
would project
((gestures imitating the projected block))
a block and I didn’t want to project a block=
John: =Where is this model?
A: This is the projected block
((turns around and takes another small carton model from the table))

J: The metal one ("CLACK")
((The sound of breaking is heard))
((B breaks a piece of the model he was holding (Image 4)))

A: (2) Ha, you broke it (0.5) that is not the first time
((A turns to the broken model)) ((the students from behind start to laugh))

B: (I wasn’t actually wanting to...)
A: Last time you actually did
J: Hhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh
((J burst into laughter and at the same time takes the model that the student was holding in his hands))

B: (Shit)
A: Hhhhh (.) don’t worry I am not bothered (1) you taught me that (.) I am not
((A student laughs from behind))
((Alistair rubes his nose with his hand)) ((J puts the model down))
I am not bothered (you ....) (.) you can break (it more) =

J: Can you see that we cannot communicate through the: the:: drawing that we
((B puts the model down))
have here)

A: I understand (0.5) but (.) it’s very much (.) I mean (.)
((turns and looks at his drawings)) ((turns back to J))
this is not the final thing=
((turns back to his drawings)) ((turns back to the tutor))
J: I know but

((review goes on))

The mini-crisis described in the abovementioned incident is the breaking of a physical model that took place during the review. The disruption caused by the break is interesting, exactly because of the reflective attitude that it caused by referring back to a similar past event. The disruption came to interrupt a flow of dialogue in which Alistair started defending his choices, in response to Bob’s question, to justify ‘where did the form of the plan come from?’ His answer was quite vague, without being able to communicate all of his ideas that led to the specific shape of the plan. In particular, there was a difficulty in understanding because he described his ideas on a preliminary orthogonal model, while the plan that was pinned on the wall was not orthogonal. Bob pointed this out by taking the original model and asking Alistair to explain the angles in the form. He also used the gestural metaphor of a knife (imitating at the same time the sound of cutting) that cuts the orthogonal model into its current angles. Alistair’s reply focused on the fact that he could not bend the metal model, at the same time putting the blame on the metal angle-bender that “wouldn’t bend all the way.” Alistair, according to his words “had to come to this shape.” When John asked to see that metal model, Bob broke the other model, that he had in his hands, interrupting the discussion about the shape of the overall plan. It is quite obvious that the breaking of the model was an accident. But this was not the first time. What could have happened during the previous breaking?

From Alistair’s accusation that this was the ‘second time,’ we can understand that, obviously, Bob and Alistair had experienced a similar incident, where, most probably, Bob must have previously broken Alistair’s model on purpose. This time, though, we can assume from Bob’s apologetic attitude that the incident was accidental, the specific piece of the model just fell apart in Bob’s hands. His apology, which is almost inaudible, says something like ‘I wasn’t actually wanting to...’ and was interrupted by a third attack by Alistair, who says: “Last time you actually did!” Emphasising on the word ‘LAST,’ in order to make the reference to their previous incident even more explicit. This fact made John burst into laughter which made Bob feel that he had to emphasise once more that it was an accident by saying ‘shit,’ a casual expression to make the atmosphere even more relaxed, since it sounded like he was talking to himself, although he was in public.

Some background context in the tribe of architectural teachers can be enlightening: breaking a model can be seen as a strategy of re-representation or

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8 There is also a notion of shame and guilt in Bob’s response. According to Bernard Williams: “If guilt seems to many people morally self-sufficient, it is probably because they have a distinctive and false picture of the moral life, according to which the truly moral self is characterless.” Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy (London: Fontana Press/Collins, 1985), p. 94.
a way of re-structuring the existing elements of a project, in order to arrive in
a new outcome. Image 5 shows such an example, where, at the left, is a stu-
dent’s proposal and, on the right, the model after the tutor’s intervention. The
above situation has rather different connotations that can be understood only
through a familiarity with how delicate the situation is, the explicit interfer-
ence of the teacher on the student’s material work (drawings, sketches, mod-
els). Usually, the students are very much attached to the work that they pro-
duce and they cannot accept someone else’s interference in it. At the same
time, teachers can be notorious for adopting disparaging attitudes towards stu-
dents’ work, especially by writing with permanent (red) pens on finished
drawings or by using the scalpel to ‘improve’ a model; or, even worse, by lit-
erally tearing apart ‘unacceptable’ drawings and breaking into pieces ‘objec-
tionable’ models. Such situations often end up in *proper crisis*: students cry-
ning over the remains of their work, and tutors frustrated about the students’ incompe-
tence.

The whole incident has to be contextualized in a specific ‘culture of break-
ing’ in the design studio that is (painfully) familiar to the members of this
community. In contrast, tutors in other conventional lecture-type educational
processes are much less engaging with students’ material work (for example,
tutors in the University of Edinburgh are advised *not* to lean over the student’s
notes in order avoid entering their ‘private space’). It is also quite common
that tutors, in the latter case, go through some sort of training (e.g. Effective
Tutoring) that provides such ‘tips’ or rules of conduct; while, in the design
studio, the tutors do not go through any type of training about teaching and
they are merely basing their tutelage on their experiences of the educational
process, since they were students themselves. In this cultural group, ‘break-
ing’ is a disturbing (for the students), marginal practice that causes a sort of
crisis in the class, but, nonetheless, it is part of the ‘studio culture.’

![Image 5: A model that has been torn apart by a tutor -before (left) and after (center and right)](image)

In the case under examination, we do not see this issue happening in its
possible extremes. On the contrary, the whole incident is quite amusing, not
only for the fellow students, who burst into laughter while watching the inci-
dent, but also for the tutors, and even for Alistair himself. Nevertheless, the
disruptive effect of the breakage of the model is still strong, since it actually
interrupts the educational process. When Bob breaks the model, the dialogue
that was taking place beforehand pauses and gives its place to an intervention
of a reflection about the meaning of the breakage.
The interruption of the flow of dialogue towards the understanding of the shape of the floor-plan gave place to a reflection about the meaning of the model breakage. The passage from the one discussion to the other was unexpected and came suddenly with the sound of the breakage, a two-second pause and Alistair’s exclamation note: “Ha, you broke it!” The shift in the dialogue was declared by a second bold statement by Alistair “That is NOT the first time!” causing the laughter of the other students who were sitting behind the camera.9

The amusing character of the whole incident, and especially the explicit laughter that erupts from the students and John when Bob is accused for committing the ‘same crime’ twice, is a revealing scene. The disruptive character of the incident is revealed through the surprise that is expressed by the laughter of the students and the tutor towards Bob. According to Buckley, “the need for surprise underlies incongruity explanations of laughter. We live in an orderly world and expect things to line up according to established patterns. When they don’t we might find the incongruity amusing.”10 Although surprise is not a necessary or sufficient condition for the cause of laughter, we can see how important it is for our disruptive situation of local crisis.

We can also see that the breakage of the model led to a new breakage; the disruption of the dialogue. In this latter case of breakage, the roles between the teacher and student were somehow inverted. Before the breakage, the tutors were somehow ‘attacking’ Alistair, asking him to justify his design decisions and rationalise his vague descriptions. During the disruption that occurred with the breakage, the roles changed, giving the opportunity for Alistair to ‘attack’ Bob. After the return to the ‘normal’ discussion about the project, John once again ‘attacked’ Alistair for still being unclear with his presentation. Although, here, the usage of the terms ‘attack’ and ‘defence’ are exaggerated, they describe a twist in the ambience of the dialogue that is easily noticeable by everyone. For example, it is not trivial that the students actually started laughing after Alistair ‘accused’ Bob, actually enjoying the reversal of the roles, with the student teaching the teacher a lesson.

Nevertheless, the inversion of the roles did not last long, since Bob’s apologetic words made Alistair change his attitude from ‘authoritative teacher’ to ‘good student,’ reassuring Bob that he does not mind or that he is not bothered. By this fact, he was showing to Bob that since the last time, when Bob broke his model, he had ‘learned a lesson.’ Actually, despite Alistair’s claim that ‘he is not bothered,’ this is not the case. On the contrary, one could speculate that the breaking made him upset, which could be implied by the fact that, when he made this statement, he was rubbing his nose (a classic self-adaptive gesture that, according to body language interpretations, shows the disguise of a lie).11 But the important thing here is not whether or not he

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9 Note that the whole incident was recorded on video by Alistair’s fellow students.
11 Nevertheless, according to Dr. Peter Bull, “There is no Pinocchio’s nose of lying. It doesn’t mean that if you touch your nose in a certain way you are lying. And if it did peo-
learned a lesson (a fact that we can never be sure of), but that he was able to discuss and be reflective upon the breaking, even in a comical situation like this. This ‘moral lesson’ was externalised explicitly when Alistair said to Bob, ‘You taught me that,’ emphasising the word ‘taught.’ This makes clear that Alistair tried to emphasise his understanding of the previous situation as a lesson with ethical implications, since it was externalised in a reflective way. In addition, in order to demonstrate the fact that he can endure the breaking of his work, he invited Bob to ‘break it even more.’

This second incident of model breakage also allowed Alistair to reflect (again) upon the past incident (which was a proper crisis) and express this reflection openly. Obviously, after the first (past) incident when Bob broke his model, Alistair must have given some thought about the whole issue and maybe he even discussed it with his classmates. The fact that he reacted immediately, when the new breakage had happened, shows that he still had feelings about it. Nevertheless, the fact that he referred to the whole thing with humour, offering a funny take on the issue, reveals his appreciation of the previous ‘moral lesson’ that he had and, in this sense, a new crisis was avoided.

Breaking Models in Philosophy: Reflective Disruption

“I put my hand, let’s say, into my pocket to take my watch out. I discover that my watch is not there; but it ought to be there; normally my watch is in my pocket. I experience a slight shock. There has been a small break in the chain of my everyday habits. […] The break is felt as something out of the way; it arrests my attention, to a greater or a less degree.”

Gabriel Marcel, The Mystery of Being

If we try to analyse the abovementioned ‘crisis’ in terms of philosophy, a quest for the etymology of ‘reflective disruption’ can be revealing. For accomplishing this, I shall break it down to its constituent components. ‘Disruption,’ according to Oxford English Dictionary, is the action of ending or bursting asunder; the violent dissolution of continuity; a forcible severance. It is related to the verb ‘rupt,’ which means to break or to nullify. It is generally a discontinuity in a flow or a process. ‘Reflection,’ on the other hand, is usually associated with the function of the mirror or, more generally, the quality of surfaces “to cast or send back (heat, cold or sound) after impact.” It also means the turning or directing on a certain course, or to bend, to curve or to fold back. But, here, I am interested in the following meaning: “to turn one’s
thoughts (back) on, to fix the mind or attention on or upon a subject; to ponder, meditate on; think of.” The adjective ‘reflective’ is the attribute of exercising thought, being meditative or thoughtful. Interestingly enough, reflection has an ethical connotation when it refers to persons, circumstances or actions, as to throw, cast, or bring blame, dishonour, credit, etc. on or upon them. “To cast a slight or imputation, reproach or blame, on or upon a person or thing; to pass a censure on.” This explicit evaluation and ‘conscious’ judgment that takes place, usually according to explicit rules, seems to form the basis of morality, as opposed to a rather more implicit notion of what I have elsewhere described as ethics.  

14 Here, though, my interest will focus on reflective activity that is the product of a disruption. For this, I am going to show that reflective disruption is a fundamental mechanism to produce ‘conscious’ evaluations according to explicit norms.  

After this short etymological inquiry, I will continue by examining the various possible understandings of disruption through a common threefold character of the term proposed by David Appelbaum.  

16 First of all, there is generally the experience of being disrupted, ‘a shock,’ ‘a break’ or a discovery similar to the feeling of when something is suddenly missing when it ought to be there (like Marcel’s watch in the opening quote). Second, there is the disrupted, the routine that acquires habitual and automated characteristics, since it is part of the everyday activity that has become a preoccupation about things. Thirdly, there is the disruptor, the incident that occupies the activity while it has stopped or paused, “clothed as arrest, ‘felt as something out of the way,’ a jolt of force that reveals the moment without giving itself away – a nontransparent event.”  

17 In the case of our educational example, the experience of being disrupted as a shock or break is caught in the consciousness in a sudden and unexpected way, mainly through the noise of the broken piece of the model. While Alistair turned back to take another model and hand it to John, he heard the breaking of the model, turned towards the broken model in Bob’s hands and stated ‘Ha, you broke it.’  

The disrupted, here, describes a discontinuity in the flow of an already established process that forms a routine. The flow of this routine, in the case of the design studio, refers mainly to the exchange of words in the process of educating architecture. Actually, this flow stands for a form of dialogue: a dialogue of words and gestures, which is beyond a mere monologue from the side of the teacher. It was an exchange aiming to reach a common understand-

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14 Koutsoumpos, “Inhabiting Ethics,” p. 133
15 Note the difference between reflective disruption and Shon’s term reflection-in-action. The former term is the reflection that follows a disruption, while the latter is the reflection that takes place during action without it being interrupted. D.A. Schön, The Reflective Practitioner (London: Temple Smith, 1983).
16 Here I use the threefold characteristics that Appelbaum uses to analyse the incident of the missing watch in the opening quote of Gabriel Marcel. See D. Appelbaum, Disruption (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1996), p. 45.
17 Ibid., p. 43.
ing; an understanding with each other, referring to the development of the project. In this sense, the discontinuity of this flow appears to cause a temporary ‘breakdown,’ a malfunction of the dialogue that appears as an obstacle of the educational process. This breakdown caused a pause in the discussion about the angles of the floorplan. In this sense, the dialogue between the teacher and the student of the example was disrupted.

The disruptor is the newcomer. It is the new dialogue that was parenthetically inserted amidst the discussion about the shape of the walls, and given the chance to reflect about the meaning of the old breaking. Behind the humorous discussion about the previous breakage, it was an ethical education that happened exactly within the disruption of the educational process. The ‘proper’ education of the practice of architecture gave place to the education of ethics in the practice, which actually is (or should be) part of the overall education of the practice. The disruption that happened did not actually stop the education; the education continued, but it became an education of the ethical understanding of architectural practice.

In this sense, the disruptor functions as a bracket that parenthetically inserts an uninvited intervention, which, although not always welcomed, can be extremely useful. Similarly to the typographical mark, the bracket makes an insertion by amplifying, explaining or digressing. It has the opposite function to the hyphen, which is used to connect different terms and elements. On the contrary, the bracket is disruptive in the text and allows a different, separate game to establish itself [temporarily] in the place of the overall dominant one. The rules of this new game are rules that, by contrast, force the revelation of the rules of the wider game. Arguably, this is one of the basic techniques of ethnomethodology, which seeks deliberate trouble-seeking situations that reveal the rules of everyday life. Garfinkel states: “Procedurally it is my preference to start with familiar scenes and ask what can be done to make trouble.”

The bracketing of disruption, although it defines a space, is not a closure of the educational process, but rather an opening to a wider understanding of what architecture is. The bracket of the disruption opens a metaphorical ‘space,’ which can accommodate reflection about the practice that was just interrupted. At the same time, it provides the necessary time to reflect again on ‘the meaning of the practice’ or ‘what the whole thing is about.’ In this sense, we can see that the disruption of the dialogue causes the explicit discussion about the meaning of the breaking of the model. As we saw in the

19 Appelbaum, here, makes an explicit reference to Husserl’s poetic description of brackets (Disruption, p. 81).
20 A similar study is discussed by Baker and Jones, when they write: “The cake of academic custom and the comfort of professional habit have created a highly conventional system of teaching...” P. Baker and J. Jones, “Benign Disruption in the Classroom: A Case Study,” Teaching Sociology, 7 (1979), 27-44, p. 29.
example, Alistair was quite relaxed and enjoyed the accidental incident by finding an opportunity to make fun of his tutors and himself. At the same time, though, we can imagine that, the first time, when Bob broke his model in purpose, Alistair must have been more anxious. That incident must have caused him much more deliberation and distress (it is not uncommon, as I already mentioned, to have students literally crying over the remains of their models or drawings, especially after or in combination with a harsh criticism).

In a quite different mode of philosophy, one can see some connections between the disruption of the flow of educational practice, as we saw in our case study, and Martin Heidegger’s expression: ‘a deficiency in our having-to-do with the world concernfully.’ Disruption, in this sense, is a section of an established continuity. Arguably, this notion of disruption as breakdown has influenced much of the poststructuralist literature of the notion of ‘cut’ or ‘coupure.’ It is beyond the scope of this paper to examine this vast topic in detail.

Instead, I will focus on the way that Koschmann, Kuuti and Hickman associated Heidegger’s expression with the general term of ‘breakdown,’ since it refers to the disruption of ordinary ways of conducting our everyday activities that usually do not require our awareness, because I find it to be relevant to the notion of reflective disruption discussed here. When these non-reflective practices are disrupted, the awareness focuses, again, back to the practice, by ‘lighting it up’ or offering ‘new views’ about it. The three abovementioned authors also explained the connection between the Heideggerian notion of breakdown and that of Leont’ev and Dewey.

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23 Only as a hint I offer the following sources: according to Rune Mølbak, “Lacan understands the cut as the paradoxical rupture in the flow of desire (intensity/the Real) by which the subject discovers itself in a pure distance to what it is not.” Contrary to this, Deleuze defined the cut “negatively as that of which the difference, produced by the Symbolic, is thought to rob us.” R.L. Mølbak, “A Life of Variable Speeds: On Constructing a Deleuzian Psychotherapy,” *Theory Psychology*, 17 (2007), 473-88, p. 482. Such understandings of the cut (apart from Heidegger’s notion of breakdown) appear to originate also in Valery: “It is an extraordinary fact that we talk to ourselves and that this discourse is indispensable to us. [...] Who speaks? Who listens? It is not exactly the same person. [...] This voice can become (morbidly) a complete stranger. The existence of this speech of the self to the self is the sign of a cut. The possibility of being several is necessary for reason, but also used by it. Perhaps we take the image as other to the impulse of the mirror.” P. Valery, manuscript edition (Paris: Éditions du C.N.R.S., 1918-1920), Vol. 7, p. 615. Further back the concept is found in Hegel “the piety of the children with regard to their parents is in its turn affected by the emotional contingency of their having become form themselves, or in themselves, in the form of an other who disappears so as to attain a being-for-itself and a conscience proper to itself through its separation from its source – a separation in which this source dries up” (*Phenomenology of Spirit*, VI, A, Vol. II at 24). Both the last quotes were found in: P. Legendre, “Introduction to the Theory of the Image, Narcissus and the Other in the Mirror,” *Law and Critique*, 8 (1997), 3-35, pp. 13-14.
ont’ev, every action that is practiced long enough in a stable situation becomes a routinized operation which can, nevertheless, breakdown into its original constitutive elements in cases of unexpected reaction. Similarly, for Dewey (using Darwinian observations on living organisms), ‘breakdown’ appears through the fundamental concept of disequilibration, a state of unbalance that motivates living organisms to action in order to re-establish the desirable stability. In all of these views the world becomes visible when some notion of function (equipment, routine, balance) is unusable, missing or in the way; when its use is disrupted, things and their relative referential relation are revealed, contrary to everyday objects, which become part of the background.

Before closing this analysis, it has to be pointed out that the presented case study shows some limitations in the possible understanding of reflective disruption. A comparison with other case studies would reveal other important characteristics of the term. For example, when the breakage came into awareness, in our case, the main emphasis was given to the notion of responsibility, as well as the blame, for the breakage and the disruption. As I have elsewhere examined, this is not always the case. In other cases one can find examples of sympathy from the teacher; let’s say, if a student would have cut his/her finger with the cutting knife. Another characteristic that could be much different was the way that the disruption was absorbed in order to return to the normal routine. In the case of the design studio, the returning was sudden and unexpected, with John coming back to the original issue of the unclear presentation. John almost interrupted the disruption in order to come back to what he thought was the main issue that they should be discussing. However, in other cases, the situation could have been absorbed more smoothly during a wider period of time. Furthermore, what is ‘common’ in the case of breaking models in architectural education, sometimes as a deliberate tactic by the teachers, is perceived very differently by the student who is experiencing the breakage of his work. On one hand, the disruption can be ‘planned’ and be part of an educational strategy, aiming to attack some preconception, while on the other, breakage is perceived in a state of surprise, and, because of this, it can hurt the student’s feelings. But at the same time, this unexpected event that shakes the student’s perception of the world allows for a reconfiguration of the game that has already being established as a routine. As Appelbaum notes: “Disruption anticipated, prelabeled, and watched for, is disruption that cannot wound”27 or, at least, it does not hurt as much as the first time, as we can see from this particular incident.28

Finally, a remark should be made about the means used to handle and resolve the disruption in this case. Here, the whole issue was dealt with by talk-

26 See Koutsoumpos, “Inhabiting Ethics.”
27 Appelbaum, Disruption, p. 19.
28 See also the difference between the proverb ‘Accidents happen’ and Freud’s suggestion that there is no such thing as an accident, meaning that every slippage of the language reveals something about the self. See, for example, ch. 8 (entitled “Erroneously Carried Out Actions”) of S. Freud, A. Tyson, and J. Strachey, The Psychopathology of Everyday Life (London: Ernest Benn, 1966).
ing about the meaning of the breakage. All the way from the announcement of the disruption ‘Ha, you broke it!’ until the sudden return to the normal practice ‘Can you see that we cannot communicate through...,’ the issue was dealt with through externalising speech (verbalising): speaking out and talking over. However, in other cases, one can see that everything could have been dealt with silently. But of course, silence does not mean lack of expression whatsoever. Far from that, a rich expression of feelings like care and sympathy can be communicated through merely a network of gestures that can deal with very complex situations of disruption and crisis.

**Concluding Remarks**

This paper distinguished between two types of crisis: the slow and creeping one, in contrast to the rapid and sudden. By focusing on the latter case, it analysed one fundamental characteristic of this type of crisis, that is the reflective disruption to which it unavoidably leads. The paper presented a small and mundane incident of everyday life, and showed the various levels of understanding that reflective disruption can have, both in terms of the micro-socio-logical analysis of ethnomethodology and in terms of the wide view that philosophy offers. In both cases, what was highlighted was that, being struck by a rapid incident, a gap is created that involuntarily fills with reflection about the ‘normal’ course of things.

Reflective disruption is an opening of the possibilities to rethink what the ‘whole thing is about.’ It is a way of coping with the unexpected situations that break the everydayness of thought, learning and adapting. It transforms experience through reflection of one’s actions and, for this, it can lead to creative tension. And, despite the fact that it is a theoretical endeavor, it can motivate one towards a practical change of life.29

But can this small, humorous incident (which is hardly a crisis) compare to a large scale, complex event like the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake? Obviously, the similarities are numerous and perplexed. Still, though it should start to become clear that behind the tragedy of loss of human lives, beyond the material catastrophes and the huge destabilization that such a crisis can cause, the very basic core of reflective disruption remains the same. It is there as part of the process of grief and mourning that an individual and a society has to go through, in order to come out again standing. Japanese writer Hideo Furukawa describes very eloquently: “Many people did not see it [the earthquake] as a chance to learn and obtain something really important. They started pretending ‘nothing has changed,’ and it was too early. The tragedy was doubled or tripled by how and how people reacted without having

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time to think." The disruptive character of any rapid and sudden crisis allows for the challenging of the customary view of the world. Apart from revealing the limitations of our world, it gives the possibility for change towards the Other, which is not present, and, for this, obvious, beforehand. In this sense, the mundane study presented here can actually be of help in drawing of some conclusions about the overall cases of crisis.

The presence of reflective disruption in large scale crisis can also be seen in the case of Yoshitomo Nara, a renowned contemporary artist in Japan, who found himself devastated by the deadly earthquake and tsunami that destroyed much of his hometown, an hour beforehand, from the epicenter in Fukushima. Nara felt that doing art after such a catastrophe was rather pointless and superficial and, for more than a year, he avoided his studio, volunteering with quake-related relief groups. Nara says: “I became unable to draw. I guess everyone in Japan went through the same kind of emotional experience: I was so depressed that I couldn’t help feeling that what I’d been doing was totally meaningless and useless. No one needs art in an extreme situation, after all.”

Nara felt that he needed a reboot. Changing the medium of his art helped him to make a new start, so he started working on huge clay models. “I just wanted to put all my energy into hand-thinking, and I began to work on a massive lump of clay to make bronze sculptures. It helped: I accordingly recovered my hands for painting through this process.” He also decided to go back to the school where he had studied fine art, but, this time, neither as a student, nor as teacher. He just resided in the school, having access to the studios and he started working again next to the young students. Doing this for six months transformed his life: “It’s weird to admit this because I’m already an adult, but I feel I’ve just grown up,” Nara admits.

Furthermore, our understanding of the type of crisis which is slow and creeping can be enhanced from the rapid and sudden one. In contrast to the disruptive character of the latter, the former has a fundamental characteristic which is the disability to discern its various steps, since there is no sudden breakdown that allows reflective disruption to take place. It, rather, assimilates to a constant, slippery fall that drags one into a murky depth. Arguably, the current situation of Greek Debt crisis (during the writing of this paper) shows that Greek society has frozen, unable to understand the Gordian knot that it has in front of its very eyes. Shall the crisis come to an end through a similarly slow process of restructuring, or shall a new Alexander the Great show up to cut the knot at once? This is something to find out in the following years.

Nevertheless, learning from the disruptive character of the first type of crisis, one cannot help but think of a fictitious scenario about the second: what if

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31 Ibid.
32 Ibid.
each single citizen would take a deep breath, stand up, and pay close attention to one of the numerous and indistinguishable steps of the fall? This would disrupt his everydayness and would trigger reflection. Such an attitude could reconsider the course of things, and undoubtedly challenge the long standing and unquestionable ideologies of our times. It would create a possible opening towards a fair world and against a foreclosed society.
PART III

The Multi-Faced Aspects of Crisis
How the Selfishness Ethics and Ideology of Ayn Rand Have Undermined American Socio-Economic Stability: Analysis and Prescription from an African Communal Ethics Perspective

JOSEPH OSEI

“Massive poverty and obscene inequality are such terrible scourges of our times [...] that they have to rank alongside slavery and apartheid as social evils.”

Introduction

Contemporary socio-political philosophers and philosophers of culture should not fail to note that attempts by the US President, Barrack Obama, to deal with “The Great Recession” and to mitigate the socioeconomic inequalities he inherited in 2009. However, his efforts have been met with strong skepticism and opposition from political conservatives and ideological libertarians. They accuse the President of attempting to transform the US into a European-style socialist state through economic redistribution, considered a violation of their rights to private property guaranteed by the US Constitution.

This ideological conflict should be of philosophical interest to contemporary socio-political philosophers and philosophers of culture in particular, given that it calls us to question important cultural values associated with conservatism and challenges us to critically examine libertarianism as a social philosophy. This examination might help to find a sustainable solution to the ongoing crisis.

Responding to this challenge, this paper argues that economic redistribution is not always wrong, as assumed by Ayn Rand, Ludwig Von Mises, John Hopers, Robert Nozick, and other popular defenders of conservative ideologies and libertarianism. The paper also argues that the ongoing economic crisis in the US with repercussions in Europe fueled by the growing socio-economic gaps etc., call for a philosophical intervention in the form of a well-considered, ethically sound and rational economic redistribution model. Further, it is argued that the traditional ethics and economic practices of the Akans of Ghana—presumed as a paradigm case for traditional African communitarian ethics— is a suitable case study for showing how socio-economic gaps could be prevented or mitigated through communitarian ethics emphasizing collective wellbeing, the virtues of compassion, reciprocity, and contributive justice, as a complement to distributive justice.

Section I: Conceptual Analyses

Three related concepts: Communitarianism, Communitarian Ethics, and Communitative Justice are analyzed in this section, in anticipation of the discussion in subsequent sections. The process involves articulating the similarities and the differences between African and Western perspectives.

A. What Is Communitarianism?

‘Communitarianism’ (from the African perspective) is the worldview in which the existence and value of the community are perceived to be more important than that of the individual member. Within the African conceptual scheme or worldview, the community is both ontologically and epistemologically prior to that of the individual. This means that, whereas personhood is defined in Western metaphysics in terms of rationality, will, memory or a similar static quality, it is defined in African metaphysics in terms of the community. In the now famous idiom of Professor J.K. Mbiti, the African view of the person is best expressed as, “I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am.” Similarly, the Akans express this in a proverb that states “Ye wo nipa to oman m,” literally meaning that a person is born into a community and not the other way round. In other words, personhood is meaningless in the absence of community. In the words of the renowned Ghanaian anthropologist, Bishop K. Sarpong, “A cultureless person is a contradiction in terms. [...] The person is born into an existing culture. There is nothing he can do about it.” Both Africans and Westerners may claim to be living in communities, but, whereas the African sense of community is rightly depicted as organic, the Western sense is rather in-organic; meaning it is just a collection or association of individuals coming together to form a society to protect and to promote their individual and rational self-interests, as noted in Western social contract theories including those of Rousseau, Hobbes, Locke, Mill, and John Rawls.

Thus, whereas the African worldview moves from the ontology of society to individuals, the Western worldview moves from individuals to society. The ethical implications of this African worldview are worth exploring next.

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B. What Is Communitarian Ethics?

Given the above conceptions of African and Western worldviews regarding the relation of the individual to society or the collective, it should come as no surprise that their ethical beliefs and practices would also differ. Generally, priority is given to individual rights over their duties to the community or society within the Western understanding of society.

Accordingly, individual rights, in the Western context, are not merely antecedent to society; they are also the raison d’être or justification for the existence of society. The only or primary function of any legitimate government, as articulated especially by Western conservatives and libertarians, is the protection and defense of individual rights. Although the ethical aspect of the African worldview includes individual rights, they are considered secondary to the duties of the individual to society. As Menkiti puts it,

“In the African understanding, priority is given to the duties the individual owes to the collectivity and their rights, whatever these may be are seen as secondary to the exercise of their duties.”

African ethics is, therefore, properly conceived of as communitarian in the sense that it is aimed primarily, though not exclusively, at protecting and promoting the wellbeing of the community of which one is a member. This conception is best articulated by Akan Philosopher, Professor Kwame Gyekye, who maintains,

“In African morality, there is an unrelenting preoccupation with human welfare. What is morally good is that which brings about— or is supposed, expected, or known to bring about—human well-being. In a society that thrives on harmonious social relationships, what is morally good is what promotes social welfare, solidarity, and harmony in human relationships.”

The wellbeing or prosperity of the individual is, therefore, regarded as dependent on the wellbeing of the community. In short, the individual cannot prosper unless the society prospers, implying that the good of the individual is a function of the good of the society concerned.

The distinction between African and Western ethics is best represented in the work of another Akan and Oxford educated philosopher, Dr. Ben Oguah. Reflecting on the traditional ethos of the Fantse, a subset of Akans of Ghana, he states, “The Fantse system of ethics is essentially anti-egoistic, [where] egoism is the ethical theory that each individual should seek his own good and not the good of his neighbor.” Similarly, Oguah dismisses the Western mentality that states, “Each one for himself and God for us all” as both selfish and self-destructive. The Fantse, on the other hand, rejects egoism because “the summum bonum (or the highest good) of their moral philosophy is not

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individual happiness, but “the welfare of the society as a whole.”\footnote{Ibid., p. 220.} What he says of the Fantse is equally true of other Akans, and, by plausible extension, true of all traditional African societies.

For the African, therefore, an action, behavior, or policy is considered good only if it maximizes the wellbeing of the community, while indirectly benefiting individuals within it. Conversely, selfishness and other acts of omission or commission that undermine the wellbeing of others or the community as a whole are considered evil. These and similar moral teachings are reinforced with several maxims, taboos, songs, and Ananse (or spider) stories, in which the selfishness of Ananse, the clever but immoral protagonist, always leads to unbearable hardships and humiliation to him as a lesson for everyone.

Given their potential for deterrence, the need for such precepts becomes urgent, especially in times of economic hardships when the temptation to seek one’s wellbeing at the expense of others or the community becomes very intense. Consequently, kindness, sharing, compassion, hospitality, reciprocity, and solidarity are stressed, in such times, with maxims to the effect that each person is his brother’s keeper. The rich and powerful are particularly reminded with targeted maxims such as “Se wamma wo yonko antwa nkor a, wo nso wontwa du.” “If you do not allow or make it possible for your neighbor to reach nine, you can never reach ten.”\footnote{Ibid., p. 221.}

Further, virtues such as sharing, reciprocity, hospitality and solidarity are stressed with maxims within communitarian ethics to the effect that selfishness is not only a vice, but also dangerous to the stability and peace within the community and in its relations with other communities. This explains why, in spite of the abject poverty, there are hardly any homeless and hungry people in traditional Akan societies and hospitality continues to be practiced commonly in spite of Western egoistic influences, and unbridled capitalism for over 400 years. That explains why, in 1983, when over one million Ghanaian immigrants in Nigeria were deported at short notice back to Ghana, the International Red Cross, UNHCR, Catholic Relief, Oxfam and other NGO’s, who brought tents, blankets, food and medicine etc., in anticipation of a humanitarian disaster in Accra experienced this pleasant surprise: there were no homeless or hungry deportees for their shelters or food. Virtually all of the deportees, mostly Akans, had gone back to their respective hometowns or had been picked up by members of their extended families or hometown ethnic communities residing in the Accra area.

C. What Is Contributive Justice?

The idea that everyone ought to contribute their fair share toward the burdens and challenges of their society is by no means a novel concept, but, as far as I know, the term ‘Contributive Justice’ has not been used in Professional or Applied Ethics, nor in Social or Political Philosophy discourse; and one looks
in vain for it in any Dictionary of Philosophy, Encyclopedia of Philosophy, or even in any Encyclopedia of Ethics. The concept is implicit in the objection Socrates raised in response to the suggestion from his friends that, if he desires to escape from the unfair punishment imposed by the state of Athens, they would help him to escape. Socrates rejected their suggestion, arguing that, for all the benefits he had received from the state, including security, education, and the opportunity to educate the youth, he owed the state a reciprocal duty of obedience to the states’ laws, even if the law was bad or had been misapplied as in his case. To do otherwise, he argued, would be unjust, as he would be undermining instead of contributing his fair share to justice in the state. The concept is also implicit in the first part of the Communist maxim articulated by Karl Marx: “From each according to his means, to each according to his needs.”

Although the concept is not new, it occurred to me as I was researching for a public lecture on Occupy Wall Street that the common goal of the protestors, like those of Marx and Jesus, falls under the term ‘Contributive Justice.’ I was then tempted to take credit for being the first to introduce the term to public discourse. Further research, however, revealed that I was not the first; it had been introduced to public discourse at a public lecture in Canada in 2010 by the Italian economist Stefano Zamagni:

“Contributive justice is the responsibility each of us has to contribute to civil society, and to our collective wellbeing. [...] It matches a person’s obligations with his or her capabilities and role in society.”

Evidently, contributive justice is not the same as distributive justice. However, no theory of justice as fairness can be complete without Contributive Justice, since justice as fairness requires, not only fairness in distribution, but also fairness in contribution to common resources for preventing as well as alleviating debts and other burdens on society. Thanks to Milton Friedman, corporations and CEO’s in free markets have no moral qualms for not contributing their fair share to society, since he argues that businesses or corporations have no social obligation beyond maximizing profit for their shareholders.

It was for this and other aspects of his economic theory that Friedman was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1970.

Though they might not necessarily use the term ‘Contributive Justice,’ the demands of the political activists associated with Occupy Wall Street and similar groups in Canada, the US and Europe represent nothing short of Contributive Justice. Their motto at their website reads, “To end the greed and corruption of the wealthiest 1 percent of America” and similar injustices.

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They are demanding that the top 1% of the economic ladder or the billionaires and millionaires who have benefited most from the system by virtue of Republican deregulation, tax-cuts for the rich, and trickle-down economic policies and political corruption, among other things, now pay their fair share of taxes to address the nation’s deficits and other obligations. The protestors have been inspired by the widening socio-economic gap, the fierce opposition from Tea Party Republicans against Obama’s pro-middle class and pro-poor policies, and also by fair-minded rich people such as the billionaire Warren Buffet, who admits that many rich people like him have not been paying their fair share of taxes.19

Section II: The Role of Randian Selfishness and Libertarianism in the Crises

Although it would be both inaccurate and unfair to blame the ongoing socio-economic crises in the US on any single individual, there is incontrovertible evidence to show that the ethics and ideology of extreme selfishness and individualistic ideas popularized by Ayn Rand have played a significant role in the process leading to the crisis. The evidence can be seen through her numerous literature, movies like Atlas Shrugged, the print and electronic media including the web, and through many conservative philosophers, media elites, as well as some prominent conservative and libertarian philosophers influenced by her ethics and ideology of selfishness and rugged individualism.

A. Influence of Ayn Rand and the Moral Objectivists

Ayn Rand, the ex-Communist Russian–born philosopher and artist who migrated to the US in 1926, could not have imagined the potential impact of her views on Americans from the 1960’s, on the 21st century. According to a joint survey conducted by the Library of Congress and the Book of the Month Club, Atlas Shrugged is the second most influential book for Americans today after the Bible. Her faithful disciples in the US –the so-called ‘Moral Objectivists’– have been vigorously promoting selfishness as a virtue through their vibrant websites, public lectures, and classrooms, as well as youth seminars and social media. Rand denounces even such long-held Judeo-Christian and Western philosophical virtues as ‘altruism’ and ‘self-sacrifice’ for others as irrational ethics, while upholding and promoting selfishness as the only rational or objective form of morality. Any ethical system that asks you to sacrifice your own interest for the interest of others or the wellbeing of your society, she argues, is not only inhumane but also irrational. Selfishness or egoism, she explains, will never ask you to exchange your self-interest which is a greater value, for the interest of others which is a lesser value.

“Therefore selfishness is the only morality that is conducive to human life, personal happiness, and social harmony. It is the only moral code that provides an objective foundation for the protection

of individual rights—and thus for the establishment and maintenance of a fully free, fully civilized society.”

Many moral philosophers, including Professor James Rachels of the University of Alabama, attempted to correct Ayn Rand and her adherents for confusing ‘rational self-interest,’ which is a virtue (consistent with cooperation with others) with ‘selfishness,’ which is a vice that implies excluding or undermining others’ interest. Similar attempts to correct her and her adherents by another outstanding moral philosopher, James P. Sterba of Notre Dame University, have borne little or no fruit. Instead of denouncing her conceptual confusion and moral ‘heresy,’ many scholars, including philosophers, economists and politicians, have adopted her ideas and transmitted them uncritically to students or applied them in national policy formulation and decision-making, and have, thus, facilitated their negative impact on the US economy and partisan politics.

In 1987, The New York Times referred to Ayn Rand as the Reagan administration’s “novelist laureate.” Despite Rand’s untraditionally Republican stance as a pro-choice atheist, the political figures who cite Rand as an influence on their public views are most often conservative Christians, libertarians, and members of the Republican Party. On the 100th anniversary of President Reagan’s birth, McLaurin, the producer of the film version of Atlas Shrugged, said:

“I can think of no current film more deserving of the inaugural award as we mark the 100th anniversary of President Reagan’s birth and reflect on the ideals that not only influenced Ronald Reagan but an entire generation as Atlas Shrugged.”

Explaining why they chose this film, the Director said that it highlights the principles of individual responsibility, optimism, and freedom. Further, he claimed, “the novel shaped President Ronald Reagan’s personal, professional and political life.” The influence on the conservative and libertarian minds has been so massive that it has been called a “revolution,” as seen in the title of a book, written by two of adherents, Free Market Revolution, after Ayn Rand’s Ideas Caricatured Big Government. This popular book was published with the support of The Ayn Rand Institute in 2012.

During the 2009 protest marches by the Tea Party against Obama’s financial bailouts and the proposed Healthcare Reform etc., some of the protesters were seen on national TV displaying huge posters reading: “I am John Galt”; the hero in Rand’s Atlas Shrugged who was opposed to any form of govern-

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24 Ibid.
ment assistance to the poor. Most of the rest advocated, above all other values, liberty and constitutionally-limited government, just like Ayn Rand and her followers.

The list of Ayn Rand’s prominent admirers or followers includes recent Republican presidential candidates for the 2012 election and other leading Republicans. Another is Paul Ryan, the presidential candidate who later became Mitt Romney’s running-mate. He boasts about being responsible for drafting four conservative pro-business and pro tax-cuts-for-the-rich budgets, with little or no room for the working class and welfare beneficiaries. He brags publicly about how much his ideas have been influenced by Ayn Rand:

“...I grew up reading Ayn Rand, and it taught me quite a bit about who I am and what my value systems are, and what my beliefs are. It inspired me so much that it’s required reading in my office for all my interns and my staff. We start with Atlas Shrugged. People tell me I need to start with The Fountainhead then go to Atlas Shrugged [laughter]. There’s a big debate about that. We go to Fountainhead, but then we move on, and we require Mises and Hayek as well.”

Another Ayn Rand follower is Supreme Court Justice, Clarence Thomas, noted for his opposition to Affirmative Action that has benefited him and thousands of other African Americans like him to transcend their socio-economic circumstances. The ex-Fed Chairman Allan Greenspan, who served almost 20 years from 1987 to 2006 under three Republican presidents, Reagan, Bush Sr., and Bush Jr., has been well-known and praised or discredited as the brain behind the conservative economic policies, including ‘the trickle-down economics’ and anti-working class interest, tax-cuts for the rich and other conservation pro-rich policies partly responsible for the Wall Street bubble and the great economic recession. What most people may not know is that Allan Greenspan also admits Ayn Rand’s influence on his philosophy. Greenspan states in his own book, The Age of Turbulence, “Ayn Rand became a stabilizing force in my life.” He goes further to explain that it had not taken long for them to have “a meeting of the minds – mostly my mind meeting hers” – and in the fifties and early sixties, I became a regular at the weekly gatherings at her apartment.”

This list of Ayn Rand’s adherents is by no means exhaustive. But it is enough to show that her influence has been not only among conservative movie goers and readers of her numerous novels, but more so, among the top politicians, statesmen and public economists in the country, since at least the early 1970’s.

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B. The Ideological Influence of Mises Foundation

The Austrian economist Ludwig Von Mises did not only read Rand’s books, but was so impressed with some of her ideas and attacks on the masses that he wrote, in praise of Rand:

“You have the courage to tell the masses what no politician told them: You are inferior and all the improvements in your condition which you take for granted you owe to the efforts of men who are better than you.”

Mises views, as this quote illustrates, are not only disrespectful of the masses and the poor, but are also racist within the US context, where the vast majority of the poor, for obvious reasons, happen to be Blacks. Yet his exclusivist ethical and ultra-right political ideology continues to influence the American public through educational foundations or centers such as The Mises Institute and Foundation based at Auburn University, Alabama. This Institute and similar ones in the nation have been some of the less-known but powerful weapons undermining progressive social policies aimed at benefiting the poor and the needy through welfare, education, and even health care, especially among racial or ethnic minorities. Mises Institute scholars advocate laissez faire or unfettered free markets and extreme individual rights, as well as minimal government, arguing, “they are necessary for the defense of liberty.”

The one-time presidential candidate Pat J. Buchanan, also noted for these and similar extreme right-wing views, is among the past laureates of this ideological institute. Another laureate of the Mises institute is Congressman and 2012 Republican primary candidate Ron Paul, known for his opposition to almost every form of federal relief, including Affirmative Action, educational grants or financial aid, welfare, bailouts, food stamps, and even relief for the victims of Hurricane Katrina. He told a Time’s reporter, “When I discovered people like Mises, to me they were geniuses.” His son, Senator Rand Paul shares similar views on hampering the social and economic progress of minorities.

C. Influence on Mainstream Philosopher John Hospers

The possibility for extremist views to penetrate mainstream philosophical thought and practice is usually limited, given the critical or self-reflective nature of philosophy as a second-order discipline. The extremist ideologies of both Ayn Rand and Mises, however, found a powerful channel through the well-known mainstream American philosopher, John Hospers. His biographer Daniel Sayani explains that, when Dr. Hospers was young, the popular view within his family and the country was that government was an interference

with freedom and prosperity. He, however, defended the opposing view and remained a Democrat until he met Ayn Rand in 1960, while attending a Conference of the emerging Libertarian Movement in New York. After several meetings with Ayn Rand, she got him to read her main book, *Atlas Shrugged*, which Hospers claimed first opened his eyes to libertarian political thought. Rand also introduced Hospers to Mises, who also gave Hospers copies of his books extolling the values of extreme libertarianism and Republicanism.\(^{31}\)

In *Atlas Shrugged*, Ayn Rand divides society into looters and non-looters. The looters are proponents of high taxation, big labor, government ownership, government planning, regulation, and redistribution, while the non-looters are inventors, successful business creators or the superrich.\(^{32}\) Comparing government taxation of the rich for unemployment benefits and similar assistance for the poor and needy to theft, he states, “The theft of your money by a robber is not justified by the fact that the robber used it to help his injured mother.”\(^{33}\) The terms “robbery” and “theft” are Hospers’ synonymous expressions for what Ayn Rand calls “looting.”

This background information provides the explanation for why such an otherwise mainstream philosopher could defend extreme individualist views and state *inter alia*, “any tax collected by the government beyond what is necessary for individual protection and national defense is robbery.”\(^{34}\)

**D. Influence on Harvard Professor Robert Nozick**

The Harvard Professor of Philosophy, Robert Nozick, was showing interest in Left Wing ideology and socialism until he encountered libertarian defenders of capitalism, including F.A. Hayek, Ludwig von Mises, and Ayn Rand. The encounter with Ayn Rand eventually led Nozick to renounce those views, and “to shift his philosophical focus away from the technical issues in analytic philosophy and toward political theory.”\(^{35}\) This shift resulted in his main publication, *State, Anarchy, and Utopia*,\(^{36}\) which, ultimately, made him the champion of the conservative movement in the mid-1970’s to 80’s, and an admired defender of libertarianism against the onslaught of liberalism unleashed by John Rawls’ *Theory of Justice* (1971). Hitherto, Rawls’ theory had been enjoying unquestioned national and international acclaim as, by far, not only the greatest work in social and political philosophy since Plato, but also as the greatest defense of liberal philosophy and liberal policies ever.

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34 Ibid.
Nozick’s main argument against Rawls’ theory is that Rawls’ theory unjustly requires economic redistribution from the rich to the benefit of the poor. Rawls’ theory, he concluded, is therefore unjust, since it violates the rights of the rich who are (presumably) entitled to their wealth, given his three principles of ‘Justice as Entitlement: Justice in Acquisition, Justice in Transfer, and Justice in (actual or aspirational) Rectification.’\textsuperscript{37} Nozick also maintained that the right to private property cannot be overridden on any moral ground by the state to meet the needs of the poor or other needy people through a graduated income tax system, because the right not to be taxed to help the needy is more or less an absolute right.\textsuperscript{38} Like Ayn Rand and John Hospers, Nozick maintains, “Taxation of earnings from labor is on par with forced labor.”\textsuperscript{39} Further, Emmett Barcalow, author of \textit{Justice, Equality, and Rights}, points out the Randian influence on Nozick’s philosophy when he observes: “For example, Nozick states that taxing people to pay for government programs they don’t want is equivalent to forcing them to work for the government or for others.”\textsuperscript{40}

What Nozick and like-minded libertarians fail to acknowledge, according to Barcalow, is that the decisions taken for graduated-income tax to help the unemployed, underemployed, the handicapped, and other needy people to meet their basic needs for food, medicine, housing, and basic education etc., were not taken by dictators or absolute monarchs. They are decisions taken through the legitimate democratic processes in their own state or government, which involves them either directly or indirectly through their elected representatives. Consequently, their counter-argument to the right of the government to tax them commits the fallacy of False Analogy. The government, through the IRS, is only asking them to pay what has been agreed upon, constitutionally or democratically, through representatives they have directly or indirectly elected by their own votes. Government tax policy in a democracy like the US, therefore, cannot be analogous to stealing their money or to coercing them, like armed robbers, to give up their money. Calling a legal tax “theft” is not just a rhetorical dysphemism that seeks to mislead people; the underlying argument must be charged with the Straw Man Fallacy.

The scope of Ayn Rand’s influence through the media, politicians, economists and philosophers is hard to measure. However, from the foregoing discussion, it is clear that no thorough and objective explanation for the ‘Great Recession’ and the growing socio-economic gap in the US can be offered without reference to the impact of her ideas, as well as to those she influenced.

\textit{Section III: Distortions of Protestant Ethics}

Economic historians, including Max Weber and Christopher Dawson, have identified the Protestant Ethic among the significant factors for the growth of

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., p. 151.
\textsuperscript{39} Nozick, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 169.
\textsuperscript{40} Barcalow, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 132.
capital and the success of the Industrial Revolution. It helped to mitigate the existing socio-economic gap in Europe by promoting more savings, less spending, and charity towards the poor. Subsequently, it made possible the rapid 18th century development of Europe, followed by that of America.

Unfortunately, not only is Protestantism in decline in Europe, the Protestant Ethic is no longer the paradigm ethic among Christian preachers and theologians even in the US and Africa. The paradigm has shifted in favor of speculative eschatology about the Second Coming of Christ among US Evangelicals and fundamentalists, as seen in the frenzy for the Left Behind books and movie series, and the so-called Prosperity Gospel. Their emphasis is more on individual accumulation of wealth and excessive spending on luxuries and vacations as proof of God’s blessings than on significant sacrifices beyond minimal charity to help the poor. For example, the Black Republican Party candidate in the 2012 presidential election, Herman Cain, began to soar in the Republican pools when he publicly stated, “If you are not rich and you are not working, blame yourself.” One might be tempted to dismiss this observation as a post hoc fallacy; except that blaming the poor for their condition, instead of the unjust socio-economic system is a major sub-thesis within the Ayn Rand selfishness ideology.

Section IV: Akan/African Communitarian Principles for Mitigating Socio-Economic Gaps

The ethical system of the Akans of Ghana, West Africa, represents a paradigm case of African traditional communalistic ethics. It emphasizes principles of reciprocity, mutual help, compassion for the needy—especially strangers—, respect for others and their rights, distributive justice, and contributive justice as defined in Section A above and discussed below.

A. Contributive Justice for Maximum Fairness

Akans teach and practice contributive justice principles as a complement to distributive justice. The aim is to ensure that no one, rich or poor, royal or commoner, gets away with failing to contribute their fair share toward the common good. Contributive justice is a fundamental moral principle in Akan Traditional Ethics and is applied toward many different communal efforts, as the following examples demonstrate:

1) Contributive Justice and the Akan Tax System: Contributive justice is evident in their graduated income tax system. Akans believe in the fairness of graduated income tax and practice it, and this is routinely reflected in their

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42 Newsweek (May, 2004).
44 www.CNN.org, Tuesday, October 18, 2011.
fund-raising activities for any communal project. So, for example, when taxes are due, the Asantehene (the most powerful traditional ruler among the Ashante, and other Akan groups in Ghana) ensures that his top executives and paramount chiefs pay higher taxes than their subordinate chiefs, who also pay higher than the elders representing individual clans and families. Members of the royal family, nobles, and the well-to-do are strongly warned against refusing to contribute their fair share toward the needs of their communities with this maxim: “Odehwe anko a, akoa dwane; meaning, “If the royal fails to fight in a battle, his subject runs away.”

In justifying this method of taxation, Akans appeal to the Argument from Analogy based on the uniqueness of each finger and their corresponding functions. They argue that, since our ten fingers are not the same and have different functions as determined by their unique heights, positions, strengths, and dexterity etc., it is unjust to expect the ring finger to perform the role naturally suited for the thumb. Similarly, it would be unfair to ask the rich to pay less than their fair share, just as it is unfair to ask the poor to pay the same amount as the rich. In effect, Akan traditional philosophers agree with Christ’s maxim: “To whom much is given, much will be expected.”

2) Contributive Justice in Marshaling Resources for Wars, Emergencies, and Development: Akans’ commitment to the Principle of Contributive Justice is also evident in how they marshal human and material resources for urgent and important projects. These include contributions towards inter-ethnic wars, emergencies, and communal labor for town and village development projects such as building schools, hospitals, roads and market places. While those who excel in sacrificial giving are publicly honored as an encouragement to others, free-riders are directly or indirectly censured by public shame, as deterrence against indifference or contributive injustice.

Within the Akan ethos, the Principle of Contributive Justice is given priority over the Principle of Distributive Justice. The rationale is that distributive justice becomes necessary only where resources are limited. So, if contributive justice succeeds in producing enough resources for everyone concerned, including the greediest and the neediest persons, there would be no need for implementing distributive justice policies.

B. Distributive Justice for Maximum Fairness

Long before John Rawls’ Theory of Justice, Akan elders were cognizant of factors like human rationality, our (predominant) self-interest, and the need for a distributive mechanism that ensures fairness by a method that is functionally equivalent to putting on ‘a veil of ignorance.’ One example is evident in the rationale and the method of disbursing yams, grains of salt or rice among Akan women, or meat as part of a communal meal among the youth. The maxim guiding the disburser is this: Kyadee ntu bi; meaning literally, “The one who disburses any X cannot choose any portion.” The explanation

or justification is that the disburser, unlike the others, does not make a choice since this person has to wait till all others have chosen their portions to take what is left-over. Therefore, not knowing which portion will be left for him/her in the end, he is compelled out of rational self-interest to be as accurate, objective, and as impartial as possible in disbursing X. His condition is, therefore, analogous to the rational actors who decide on principles of justice behind the veil of ignorance in ‘The Original Position’ that Rawls articulates so well in his theory of justice as fairness.46

Following the examples of Akan elders, American authorities, and others in analogous positions, will be well-advised to present rewards to those who voluntarily and unselfishly practice distributive justice as fairness at public functions and through mass media, to reinforce this important ethical principle. Among other important outcomes, the living condition of the least advantaged in society will be better even if incomes are unequal, since the poor can expect to benefit from the graduated income system that ensures that the government will have adequate resources to assist needy members of society in meeting their basic needs, including food, health, shelter, and basic education.

Section V: Reinforced Communalistic Virtues

Contemporary child psychologists and moral education experts have confirmed what Aristotelian moral philosophers and traditional Akan parents and educators have long known and applied in child moral education and crime prevention: that it is not enough to provide the child with a list of do’s and don’ts, but that it is more important to train the child, through a system of rewards and punishments to inspire good habits that eventually lead to the formation of virtuous character.

A. Part of Early Childhood Education

Akan moral educators, like Aristotle, recognize the problem of akrasia or incontinence; the problem of knowing that X is right and yet not being able to do X, and continuing to do Y, which one knows to be wrong. Contemporary moral psychology has not only confirmed the reality of this problem, but has also corroborated the moral thesis that, without character training in their formative years, the youth tend to become extremely vulnerable to the problem of akrasia.47 Through analysis or proverbs, maxims, puzzles and Ananse stories etc., Akan children are trained in moral and intellectual virtues. These include critical thinking and effective decision-making skills, after due deliberation consistent with what virtuous persons would normally do or avoid. Consequently, Akan youth presumably are better prepared against temptations and extremist behaviors than their counterparts in other cultures or societies that do not stress virtuous character formation in the formative years of their youth.

46 Rawls, op. cit.
B. Public Shame as Deterrence

It is now also known that court fines and short-term imprisonments are not enough to deter gangs from violent crimes or the Martha Stewards and the Raj Rajatarnams of the business world from insider-trading, and other acts of selfishness, greed, and corruption. Rajaratnam as a Wall Street hedge fund tycoon was fined over $63 million in penalties recently. Without any sweat, he paid it in full within two weeks. His sentence of 11 years, although consistent with the sentencing guideline for such crimes, is likely to be reduced on appeal and by ‘good behavior’ in prison, and, therefore, is unlikely to deter people of his type who pride themselves in risk-taking.

Moral psychologists are beginning to recognize what traditional Akan moral ‘experts’ have known for centuries, that the most effective instruments for deterrence for many people are not necessarily court fines or prison terms, but the sense of shame that accompanies their arrest, trials, and sentencing. This is particularly true if the offender is shamed publicly within their respective communities—with no blue dots or jamming squares on TV screens to help them hide their humiliated faces, especially from people who know them. Emory University psychologist and theologian, Professor Charles Hackett (1997) has called for a paradigm shift from guilt to honor-shaming in fighting crime and other antisocial behavior, because:

“[The criminals] aren’t motivated by guilt; they are driven by shame. The shame of failing a gang initiation [for example] has a far greater impact on a youth’s behavior than time in jail. They will do anything to avoid letting the gang down.”

The often frantic and futile efforts to hide their faces from the camera and the public are also significant. Such efforts unintentionally reveal that, in spite of their selfishness, they still have a sense of community within them; for, unless they had some sense of community in their hearts or minds, they would not care to be exposed publicly.

Cultivating a sense of shame and self-discipline are some of the benefits of Virtue Ethics as taught and practiced within Akan Traditional and Aristotelian ethical systems. Given these recent studies in moral psychology and philosophical ethics therefore, Akans have every good reason to reinforce the teaching and practice of communalistic virtue ethics, and to recommend them for America and other countries or cultures dealing with selfishness, greed, corruption and unmitigated socio-economic gaps.

Section VI: Discussion of Opposing Views

The discussion of opposing views, at this stage, will provide additional insight into the nature of Akan Communitarian Ethics and why it should be part of

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48 “Intimate Ties Revealed in Emails,” Huffington Post (06/22/2012).
the solution to the ongoing economic crises and its social consequences, and for preventing similar ones in the future. For example some critics might wonder:

A. Is This not a Turn to Communism or Socialism?

Critics who think the recommendation for integrating some aspects of communalistic ethics into American culture is a call to communism or socialism. However honest their intentions, they wrongly assume that communalism is equivalent to communism or socialism. Unlike these ideologies or socio-political philosophies, African communalism is consistent with individual rights – including the right to private property. Akan ethics maintains that having a need for X does not entitle one to X, if X is another person’s private property, including food. The Akan argument in defense of private property is “Dee adee wo no na odie, nnye dee ekom de no.” In other words, it is the owner of property X who has the right to consume it, but not the hungry. The owner may be asked to share X with the hungry out of compassion, but cannot be forced or coerced by society to give X away, with the exception of emergency situations that call for overriding private rights. The Akan traditional courts will readily adjudicate and impose sanctions against such unethical and illegal behavior for deterrence and will aim for the protection of individual rights and dignity, as well as for the protection of their incentive for hard work.

B. Will it Work?

Critics might also legitimately ask: “What makes you think that any aspect of Akan Communitarian Ethics will work to prevent or correct the widening socio-economic gap in the US when John Rawls’ Theory of Justice as Fairness has failed to prevent or mitigate such a gap?” The early John Rawls’ Difference Principle, published in 1971, had a loophole that was not recognized or discovered by the early Rawls or his critics in the 70’s or 80’s. In more recent years, however, the loophole has been identified and covered or minimized with the help of his critics and colleagues, Amarta Sen and Nussbaum. For example, the mature Rawls now states: regarding the second part of the Difference Principle:

“What (2a) does not permit is a change in social and economic institutions that makes life better for those who are already well off but does nothing for those who are already disadvantaged, or makes their life worse.”

This kind of loophole is certainly among the main issues to which the Occupy Wall Street Protest Movement has been reacting. Such loopholes help

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50 Gyekye, Essays on African Philosophy.
the superrich get away with minimal or no tax burdens. As a correction, Martha Nussbaum has maintained that the concern of the Difference Principle should include raising the wellbeing of the least advantaged in light of substantial freedoms and incorporating it into Rawls' first principle, The Principle of Liberty. What is needed, in her view, is “a commitment by citizens and governments to a threshold of real opportunities below which no human being should fall, if she is able to rise above it.”53 Amartya Sen also argues that the liberties in Rawls' Principle of Equal Liberty, if they are to be meaningful at all, should be capabilities or substantial freedoms.54 This is explained in terms of real opportunities based on natural and developed potentialities through education or training. Additional support will be (nonpartisan) governmentally-supported institutions that will enable political deliberation and planning over one’s own life, and for the nation and others.

Another limitation of Rawls' Principle of Liberty from the communitarian ethics standpoint has been identified by Alasdair MacIntyre in his After Virtue. MacIntyre criticizes both Rawls and Rawls' chief critic, Robert Nozick, and the Lockean tradition for their over-emphasis on the right of the individual to the common good of the community and the absence of Virtue Ethics arguing, “it is only within the community that the individual’s virtuous and fair contribution to their shared vision can become the basis for the concept of justice.” For MacIntyre, therefore, justice cannot be defined without reference to the community and the communitarian virtues nurtured within it. Justice bred in a communitarian ethics, then, is rewarding of the virtuous activity that enhances the common good of man, the social animal.55

His emphasis on virtue ethics within a communitarian ethos should be welcomed as a significant contribution for bridging the ideological gap between extreme statism and extreme (rugged) individualism. Akan communitarian ethics, then, should be seen as effective for not only helping to identify what is missing within the American ethos, but also for contributing towards an ideal socio-economic synthesis.

The hope that the synthesis will work is evident in how much the American public generally appreciate their leaders for their public communitarian ethical claims. These famous claims include: “Ask not what your country can do for you, instead, ask what you can do for your country”;56 “It takes a village to raise a child”;57 One thing I know, “‘We are all in this together’ is better than ‘You are on your own’.”58 President Obama introduced himself to the world of politics saying, “There is not a white America and a black America,

57 H. Clinton, “It Takes Village to Raise a Child.”
58 B. Clinton, The Democratic National Convention (DNC), 2012.
there is the United States of America.” In his nomination acceptance speech as President for the second term, he also stated:

“As Americans, we insist on personal responsibility, and we celebrate individual initiative […] free enterprise. […] (But) we’re not entitled to success. We have to earn it […]. We also believe in something called ‘citizenship,’ a word at the very heart of our founding, a word at the very essence of our democracy, the idea that this country only works when we accept certain obligations to one another and to future generations.”

While the average American citizen may not know that such ideas are representations of the communitarian ethos or worldview of their leaders, as pragmatics, they will welcome such changes, provided they significantly mitigate the gap and thereby make their society more stable, progressive, and more beneficial and just or fair for all.

**Conclusion**

The importance of finding communal ethics principles and strategies to prevent or minimize widening socio-economic gaps, as discussed in the foregoing, should not be lost on countries or cultures currently dealing with such gaps. Neither should it be lost on those that are not currently experiencing such gaps. For, as the wise Akan elders have warned, “If you hear that your neighbor’s beard is on fire, you should run and fetch water to protect your own.” Admittedly, Rev Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. articulates the maxim better when he states, “An injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” Similarly, when South Africa’s beloved ex-president, Nelson Mandela, was asked why he had come out of retirement to London to address the Conference of Ministers on ‘The Campaign to End Poverty in the Developing World’ he said:

“Massive poverty and obscene inequality are such terrible scourges of our times that they have to rank alongside slavery and apartheid as social evils. […] As long as poverty, injustice and gross inequality persist in our world, none of us can truly rest.”

Mandela’s call to action is not limited to statesmen and politicians. It extends to all contemporary philosophers and other concerned intellectuals who believe in the transformative potential of communitarian ethics—which includes principles of reciprocity, compassion, and contributive justice—to make a significant contribution toward preventing or mitigating massive poverty and obscene inequity through rational and fair methods of economic redistribution.

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61 Mandela, “Speech on Poverty.”
Crisis, Dispossession, and Activism
to Reclaim Detroit

GAIL M. PRESBEEY

The theme of a 2013 gathering of philosophers at Ioannina, Greece, was “Crisis,” and certainly there are reasons to focus upon that theme. The Greek economy and political system were under strain. While the government implemented austerity measures, Greek citizens took to the streets to defend their jobs, pensions, and way of life. At the same time, in Detroit, city services were drastically cut. The city had to apply for a federal grant to hire back some of the fire fighters it had laid off due to budget constraints. Schools were being closed as an unelected Emergency Manager (and he appointed by the state’s Governor) took over the purse strings and decision making of the city schools. Since then, the Emergency Manager of Detroit had the city declare bankruptcy, and Judge Rhodes agreed with the plan to reduce the city’s debt by giving the largest creditors vast landholdings in the city, in exchange for forgiveness of some of the debt.

Many Detroiters took to the streets to protest their dispossession. But the concept of “crisis” is sometimes used and abused by capitalist opportunists and political manipulators, who see, in peoples’ temporary paralysis and confusion during a crisis, an opportunity for quick gains. “Crisis” can, therefore, be problematic. Yes, it can be an “opportunity” as the popular saying goes, but for whom?

In their recent book, Judith Butler and Athena Athanasiou discuss the concept of dispossession in all its complexity, in the context of enforced austerity measures in Europe and a global Occupy movement. Such reflections on dispossession are relevant to understanding the Israeli takeover of Palestinian lands and Palestinian acts of resistance, the landless peasant movements in Brazil and other parts of Latin America (El Movimiento Sin Tierra), and many other movements throughout the world. In the United States, discussion of dispossession clearly applies to the immigrant and border crisis on the U.S. and Mexico border. But, in this paper, I will use their reflections as a springboard for analysis of the imposition of an Emergency Manager on the City of Detroit and the subsequent bankruptcy hearings for the city, which, along with the mortgage and foreclosure crisis, and now recent water shut-offs, have resulted in dispossessing the poorest of the poor from their modest possessions. However, Detroit is also the scene of a robust response, as people take to the streets in acts of solidarity to demand their city back. As Athena and Butler caution, activists should not fall into reinforcing the disastrous concept of per-

sonhood reinforced by possession. There are other ways of engaging with each other politically to forge a common cause that escape the negative aspects of “possession.”

Athena Athanasiou starts out the book’s discussion with a careful critique of the concept of the “liberal self,” understood as autonomous and impermeable. Instead, we humans have a fundamental dependency upon one another. This dependence can leave us open to pain and injury, but it can also enable us to do much if we can coordinate our efforts with others (2). Judith Butler agrees with this critique, and points out that the concept of “dispossession” clarifies how we actually depend on others in a sustained social world, that in fact the self is social (4). These ideas are not new; Aristotle referred to humans as political (or social) animals, and pointed out that humans organized themselves into social units in order, not only to survive bodily, but to thrive and find human fulfilment. Contemporary communitarians like Alisdair MacIntyre also have explained that acknowledging our vulnerability to injury, and our dependence on each other, is a necessary step in our taking stock of reality and our insight into what it means to be human.3

Athanasiou explains that all of our lives have some precarity; we are all exposed to dangers of injury, violence, and indebtedness. However, in our contemporary world with systemic racism, the logic of dispossession is mapped onto our bodies (18-19). Butler confirms Athena’s point with reference to Orlando Patterson’s study of the “social death” involved in slavery, as well as Achille Mbembe’s discussion of those left to die through negligence, or Ruth Wilson Gilmore’s study of those (as in California’s African American and Latino youths who struggle with unemployment, and end up disproportionately in prison) who must live with a higher risk of mortality (19). She adds that this notion of “precarity” is aimed at a certain population or demographic, which is told that it has no choice but to become acclimatized to insecurity. Such persons receive the message that they are expendable or are fully abandoned. They have a damaged sense of their future, and are more likely to experience illness, or even mortality (43).

Unfortunately, it is all too easy to find examples of this kind of treatment of Detroiters and of other African American city populations in Michigan. Infant mortality among African Americans in the state is very high. Life expectancy is dramatically lower for African Americans. The incinerator located in Detroit brings with it higher asthma rates for Detroit’s children. It is easier, both financially and socially, for white Michiganders to move out of African-American majority cities and neighborhoods to places with lower crime and violence rates. White populations, thereby, for the most part insulate themselves from the levels of precarity experienced in the cities and neighborhoods. But, even if white Michiganders move into Detroit, in search of art, music, culture, or the new housing developments there, they may still be able to insulate themselves by concentrating on living in and recreating in the are-

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as of the city given inordinate resources, such as more policing, better working street lights, and more grocery stores.

But not all white Americans coming to Detroit do so to seek out the insular experience. Some come especially to be in solidarity with those struggling to survive. These (often young) people seek out the neighborhoods where they, to a great extent willingly, share in the precarity of their neighbors—although, due to being citizens, they may not fear being taken out of their beds in the middle of the night by ICE agents as are some of their neighbors. Some of these new Detroiter come to grow food and community, and to grow food through growing community, and vice versa. They care about their neighbors’ kids and do not want them to be gobbled up by a prison industrial complex. Judith Butler calls this “being solicited out of oneself,” and she sees it described in the philosophical works of Maurice Blanchot and Emmanuel Levinas (71).

Whether we find them in the cities or the suburbs, and whatever race they may be, Butler and Athanasiou caution us not to capitulate to current narrow ideas of the “good life” that revolve around “property ownership, commodity fetishism, consumer excitement, securitarian regimes, national belonging, bourgeois self-fashioning, and bio-political normalcy” (30-31). In other words, if one owns or rents a condominium guarded by a private security firm, with fences and alarm systems, in a neighborhood with close access to shopping, dining, and entertainment choices, while asserting a middle class patriotic gender-conforming identity, the real “good life” might still elude you.

How can we understand the bodies of protestors moving themselves to a position of blockading the business of dispossession? Such bodies, Butler notes, clearly have some kind of “presence,” and Athanasiou adds that such political activism makes “present” a hidden, or taken-for-granted, normative and hegemonic understanding of person, property, and propriety (14-15). Athanasiou gives as an example Rosa Parks, who refused to move out of her bus seat, and, thereby, resisted the neoliberal assignment of her to a precarious place (that is, as African American, she might at any moment have to give up her seat on the bus to a white person) (21-22). But both Athanasiou and Butler are careful to ensure that such acts of presence are not interpreted as acts of agency of an independent self, cut off from and not beholden to others. It will be self-defeating to try to counter dispossession by asserting robust possession in the individualist vein (33-37). And, they do not want metaphors of “movement” to marginalize those who are not able-bodied.

Baxter Jones has been wheelchair-bound since he suffered an auto accident in 2005. But that has not stopped him from being active in the Occupy Detroit Movement, as well as a member of their Eviction Defense Committee. He, himself, lost his house after his injury led to the loss of his job. More recently, he was one of 19 people who blockaded the entrance to Homrich, a company that had won a $5.7 million contract to shut off the water to houses that were in arrears of paying their bills. The group of blockaders included

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folks of many different backgrounds, all committed to ensuring that all Detroiters received water they needed for hygiene and health. Over 18,000 families had their water turned off. While the Water Department insists that three-fourths of these families had water restored within 48 hours, that leaves many people with a lack of services. Many face large bills for service and little way to pay. In some cases, responsible, rent-paying tenants suffer as unresponsive landlords leave bills unpaid. In other cases, the Water Department’s own records are faulty, and they were, for the most part, unreachable. Those who did reach them were told that payment “plans” were only available to those who paid at least a third of their bill in cash up front. There was no relief for those who had no way to pay.

Those who gathered to engage in civil disobedience at Homrich explained their rationale for choosing that site. They asked, why did the Emergency Manager decide to solve the seeming insolvency of the Water Department by hiring a company whose only capacity was to shut off the water to individual residences? After all, the forty largest businesses owed more to the Water Department than all of the rest of the residences did. But the Emergency Manager did not contract with any company who had the ability to collect from those corporate accounts. Rather, they contracted with a company that aimed at those who lived in poverty. Homrich and the Water Department emphasized that Homrich workers did not only turn off people’s water, but their job was also to turn water back on (and, thus, they charged protestors with prohibiting their workers from turning people’s water back on). This was surely a ploy to paint the protestors in a bad light. In reality, those who protested did so to help others who needed water, and so, with their own bodies, they tried to prevent a disaster.

Many involved invoked the memory of Charity Hicks, a mother who had resisted the shut off of her home’s water, noting that she had not been properly notified by the Water Department. Police arrested her for obstructing the process of her water being shut off. Charity Hicks was someone who could get angry, but she was also someone who emphasized the importance of finding motivation to action in one’s love of people, not anger. She channeled her energy for societal change by traveling to New York City as part of an effort to draw the U.N.’s attention to the water shut-offs. Activists convinced U.N. workers that the shut-offs were a violation of people’s human rights. Tragically, while in New York City, Charity Hicks was knocked unconscious, and then died, due to a hit and run driver.

Back in 1962, C.B. Macpherson’s study of “possessive individualism” of the European Enlightenment (especially as articulated in Hobbes and Locke) showed how concepts of full personhood were based on the white male who was a property owner. In fact, if there was no property, there was no “individ-

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ual,” Butler notes. Frank Cunningham has recently re-introduced Macpherson’s insights with our current moment in history in mind. Since his article, written in 2000, Cunningham has explained that Macpherson was critical of encouraging people to consider themselves as “owners” of their “powers.” This ontological understanding of self is at the core of capitalism’s possessive-individualist ontology. After all, inequalities constrain work choices. But, if I conceive of myself as possessing the right to freely exchange my work power for wages, the coercion involved in constraining circumstances is out of view. However, Macpherson did not advocate communitarianism, because he did not conceive of people belonging to discrete communities. Rather, he was an advocate of developmental individualism (instead of possessive individualism). According to Cunningham, Macpherson’s neo-Aristotelian ethic was that everyone should receive the resources they need to develop and exercise their powers. That means we each would have a right to expect others to help us to develop and exercise those powers, and that, reciprocally, we should help others to develop and exercise their powers as well. He called this view developmental individualism, in contrast to possessive individualism, which had as its emphasis the right to exclude others from the use of some property, and emphasized negative liberty, that is, freedom from obligation.7

In the context of Dewey and American Philosophy, James Albrecht elucidates a perspective on the self, similar to that of Cunningham and Macpherson. Albrecht describes this nuanced position of “individualism,” understood as inherent relationality. The “self,” according to William James, Ralph Waldo Emerson, John Dewey and Ralph Ellison, can only be understood in relation to community. As Albrecht explains, the pluralist metaphysics of James and Dewey, convinced that the classical liberal idea of the self is false, understands experience as the result of mutually transforming interactions, contingent and in flux. The relational concept of self makes sense of the need for our engaging in collective efforts of reform.8

And now, what about global crisis? Because, indeed, as William Robinson states, “We face a global crisis that is unprecedented in terms of its magnitude, its global reach, the extent of ecological degradation and social deterioration, and the scale and means of global violence.”9 With fears of collapse and/or social control looming, certainly our global capitalist world is, as Robinson says, unstable and crisis-prone. And yet, capitalist companies are known to use “crisis” to reinforce their control and/or to seize an opportunity for vast profits.10 And so, to a certain extent, we must remain calm and cool-headed in

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10 See, for example, N. Gunerwardena and M. Schuller (eds.), Capitalizing on Catastrophe: Neoliberal Strategies in Disaster Reconstruction (Lanham, MD: Altamira/Rowman and Littlefield, 2008).
a crisis, and see the larger picture and the long term, so that we do not get frightened into making rash decisions.

Robinson thinks the current crisis in global capitalism is due to overaccumulation; that is, that world markets cannot absorb the products being produced by the world’s workers and businesses. The reason for that underconsumption is the downward pressure on people’s wages and the high unemployment which leaves so many people in our world unable to buy even their own necessities, let alone other consumer goods, since the recent economic crises. There is an inability or unwillingness of the current global economy and governments to incorporate the needs and wishes of the majority of humanity, who want meaningful work and human flourishing, and this leads, as well, to a social crisis.11 This crisis is misdiagnosed as a problem of the U.S. government’s unwillingness to do what it takes to ensure all of its’ citizens’ flourishing. According to Robinson, the U.S. government’s actions show it to be a pawn of global “casino” capitalism. For example, ever since financial deregulation, global elites impact the world’s economy in a predatory way, by growing the “speculation” economy instead of the productive economy.12 In fact, current real estate practices, coupled with racism, have led to growing wealth gaps between white and black Americans, with banks recouping their losses while individuals are unable to save their homes from foreclosure.13

Detroit was fortunate to have a philosopher dedicated to pondering the deeply entrenched problems of the city. Grace Lee Boggs, who, after having received her Ph.D. in Philosophy from Bryn Mawr in 1940, pursued her interests in politics and justice, and came to Detroit where she married Jimmy Boggs, and the two of them devoted their lives to building community.14 She founded the Boggs Center, or more fully, the James and Grace Lee Boggs Center to Nurture Community Leadership (http://boggscenter.org/). This organization is tireless in both its activism to change the city, as well as in its incessant interrogation and discussion of the daily unfolding of the people’s challenges and struggles in the city. But Boggs did not see herself merely as a problem solver. She wanted to build community, and nurture the individuals who make up that community. Boggs recently passed away at age 100 on October 5, 2015.

Many of the new programs springing up in Detroit started as ideas in the Boggs Center, or were directly or indirectly influenced by its philosophy of

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11 Robinson, p. 5.
13 D. DeSilver, “Black incomes are up, but wealth isn’t,” PEW Research Center, August 30th, 2013 (http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2013/08/30/black-incomes-are-up-but-wealth- isnt/).
societal transformation. But there are also a lot of independent players and not all of the projects can be attributed to Boggs herself or the Boggs Center. There is always a question of funding for start-up costs for projects. Shall the self-reliance movement rely on its own sources for start-up money? Or can it take contributions from the government or private foundations? If it takes money from others, how will these start-up projects be able to protect themselves from the undue influence of the donors in the shaping and running of its programs?

Let’s first look at education. Detroit Summer, which has run for many years, was a direct project of the Boggs Center. The idea was to have youth engage in learning activities through coordinating volunteer teachers in the summer, and, thereby, to avoid the “summer slump” which happens to all students. This is much worse for low income students, when they lack educational opportunities in the summer. In the summer of 2012, their programs were sponsored by The Youth Connection, which is a local nonprofit, and funded by the National Summer Learning Association.

Now, the Boggs Center is incubating another educational project, the Boggs Educational Center Charter School. This is an interesting development, because, for a long time, activists involved with the Boggs Center were against charter schools as alternatives to the public school system, arguing that charter schools were, for the most part, corporations that had profit as their goal. They lured the best students away from the public school system, leaving the public schools with an unruly and underachieving student body that would be neglected. Also, charter schools did not have to pay unionized faculty who had job security like those in Detroit Public Schools, meaning that teachers could be underpaid so that the charter school could make profits. Despite this criticism of charter schools, the public school situation in Detroit seems mired in problems. The few schools that served as promising alternatives to business as usual, such as Catherine Ferguson Academy (which had a thriving urban gardens program for its pregnant and young mothers), were radically altered, or closed altogether, under the Emergency Manager law.

In this context, the Boggs Educational Center decided to take advantage of procedures for setting up charter schools in order to open a school of its own, based on the pedagogy of John Dewey and Paolo Freire. Young teachers, disillusioned with the Detroit Public Schools or unemployed, became teachers in a school that uses radical pedagogy (boggseducationalcenter.org/). In a city with 47 percent functional illiteracy, where three-quarters of the youth do not graduate high school, and with a city having faced a $300 million deficit (in 2009), these dedicated teachers decided to open a school devoted to “nurture- [ing] creative, critical thinkers who are empowered to contribute to the well-being of their communities.” Community will be the students’ classroom,

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the founders of this school assert. They call it “place based education.” Literacy will not just be measured by tests, since literacy is “a skill that goes beyond competence in reading and writing and includes media, technology, and even our emotions.” This ability to communicate in all these ways will overcome the muteness our society exercises when it comes to youth of color.

The project team for starting the school consisted of Julia Putnam, who attended Detroit Summer as a teenager in 1992 and is a writer, Amanda Rosman, who uses her law background to help the school get chartered, and Marisol Teachworth, an activist and ESOL teacher. The school opened in the Fall of 2013, and completed its first year of teaching, not without some challenges, but, overall, it has worked well and has now been in operation for three years.17

The Boggs Center has given a lot of support to the urban garden movement in Detroit. Given the high unemployment rates and lack of nutrition, as well as the available vacant land, the urban gardening movement has taken off in Detroit. For example, Brightmoor, an area in Northwest Detroit to which many interested in urban gardening have moved, has 7,737 houses, down 1,602 units from 1990. It has an eleven percent vacancy rate of standing houses. Almost half of houses in Brightmoor are financed with subprime mortgages, and almost half of Brightmoor residents pay more than thirty percent of their income for housing.18 However, those interested in urban gardening on vacant lots have not been allowed to buy more than one adjacent lot, since the city government will only sell to those who say that they will build in-fill housing. So, farmers squat on land that they do not own, which falls short of sustainable standards.

At the same time that the city drags its feet when it comes to passing legislation or engaging in practices to encourage urban gardens, in a park, downtown private funders have created, from a torn-down historic building, Lafayette Greens, funded by Compuware and designed by Kenneth Weikal Landscape Architecture, a downtown city block re-creating a Disneyland-style mock urban garden, at least tipping its hat to the idea that Detroit is becoming famous for its urban gardening movement.19 One of the newest and very beautiful parks in Detroit, the development of the riverfront, was likewise funded by private donors. The Detroit Riverfront Conservancy gets donations from individuals and corporations.


The project of getting people together at the grassroots, knowing each other, finding strength in leaning on each other, finding confidence to challenge the status quo that is tearing communities apart – that is the activism that is ongoing in Detroit.
Philosophy and Crisis: 
An Eastern Solution

ASHA MUKHERJEE

Introduction

Philosophers have addressed the crisis at almost every juncture of thought, though different crises may have been of varying natures. In the 19th century, Europe has faced a crisis in the sense that Western history, which was developed on the foundation of thousands of years, that is, its culture, religion, philosophy and arts, was collapsing. The ground on which human existence depended was totally shaken and the being of human existence became meaningless. The crisis was indeed a crisis of Western Reason, the unchallengeable faith in Western Reason as the principle of reality and the ultimate criterion for philosophical inquiry. Marx also saw, as a necessary consequence of the control of Western Reason, the alienation of humans from themselves in the process of mass industrialization.

It is accepted by almost everyone that crisis originated as an inbuilt feature of the Western concept of Reason. If this is acceptable, then the simple way out would be to work out a way to come out of the Western concept of Reason. A number of attempts have been made by different Western thinkers in last three centuries, especially by French thinkers, but most of them are found to be unsatisfactory. Without going into the details of these attempts, I raise the question of whether the crisis is really European, as Husserl has discussed.

If it is European, then, by implication, we may draw a conclusion that the rest of the globe does not have any crisis. Or, even if it has, it is not the same crisis which Europe has. But, if the crisis is a universal crisis, then we need to address it more seriously and find out the roots of the crisis before we try to solve or avoid it. We try to look at the Eastern concept of Reason to solve the crisis, especially using K.C. Bhattacharya’s ideas and propose an Advaitin solution agreeing with Daya Krishna, who uses a well-known phrase from Sartre and says:

“All Western cultures have been reduced to the status of ‘objects’ by being looked upon, that is, observed and studied by Western scholars in terms of Western concepts and categories that are treated not as culture-bound but universal in character. In a deep and radical sense, therefore, it is only the West that has subtly arrogated to itself the status of subject-hood in the cognitive enterprise and reduced all others to the status of objects.”

The Crisis of Western Reason and Its Foundation

European nihilism in the nineteenth century was an explicit cry for the futility of Western Reason. The foundation for Western philosophy, culture, religion, and arts, which was developed for thousands of years, was collapsing and shaken. Human existence became meaningless and questionable. Freedom to everything and of nothing is the will to desire everything and abandon everything at the same time—“nothing is true, so everything is allowed!” This crisis was indeed about Western Reason. Nietzsche named it the “logic of decay and disruption.” Philosophy and academic life became meaningless, theology was destroyed, and everything was taken up by science, technology, trade, business, and political and economic enslavement without any future vision, and with a lack of morality. The twentieth century was mostly devoted to confronting nihilism and denying Western Reason along with its history, without any grand plan. The main question was how to overcome nothingness, which was born out of the crisis of the death of the Christian God, and Nietzsche tried to overcome this by replacing it with “the will to power.” In 1910, Tolstoy saw the limitations of European civilization; it not only destroyed itself but also poisoned Africa, India, China and Japan through the science and technologies of Western Reason. Indian scientist C. K. Raju has discussed in detail how Western Reason along with its history has poisoned India. He holds responsible the Western education system, prevalent in India since colonization, which has four characteristic features: scientific illiteracy, a “Trust the West” attitude, the idea that the West is superior in all respects and hence must be imitated, and a bypassing of the critical examination (for example, alternative philosophies) that makes people culturally blind by teaching them to avoid contact with all “other” knowledge and views, as it is contaminated.2

It was the assumption of European reason that reality and new knowledge were separated and need to be brought together into a unity. An object is always an object in relation to a subject. Being is supposed to be objective when it is a matter of inter-subjectivity. The subject is the agent or the “Self” who knows the Being, and the Being is the object of knowledge. Reason plays the role of distinguishing between subject and object. Once it is distinguished by reason, it is also to be unified, as Hegel has shown, by negating it again and again. The question is how we can transcend the object–subject distinction, and also Reason which negates again and again. This is precisely the question Kalidas Bhattacharya (KDB) is asking and trying to solve by using the wisdom from classical systems of Indian philosophy in his philosophical framework to get away from the crisis of Western Reason. Western Reason taught us that the distinctions are absolute, but they are not absolute. Nihilism resulted from distinctions and mistaking Nothing for Being. As long as we believe that reason is the sole means to approach reality, nihilism is going to stay, but if we can find out other ways of being one with reality,

2 C.K. Raju, “Escaping Western Superstitions,” talk at the BHU international seminar on Transcultural Asian Modernities.
where there is no subject–object distinction, then perhaps we can find a way to solve the crisis of Western Reason.

French post-modernists have attempted alternative ways to approach the philosophy of crisis by confronting and overcoming the tyranny of reason as nihilism. Edmond Husserl, Max Scheler, Martin Heidegger and Karl Jaspers, all had witnessed World War I. Husserl’s *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* and Heidegger’s *Being and Time* were reactions to the crises, intended to look for meaning in concrete individual human existence and its fate in the face of these crises, while experiencing the world of actual life. In the 20th century, Henri Bergson, Max Scheler and many others were against objectification and the materialization of reality; reality was not closed but open by its own being. It is primarily due to the veil of reason that reality is covered and closed to us. But, due to the overwhelming power of Reason and its history, Scheler, too, could not pursue his novel mission to overcome European Nihilism. Heidegger, in 1923, wrote to one of his students, Karl Lowith:

“For several semesters, the following words of van Gogh have been haunting me,

I felt with all my power that the history of humanity is just like a grain of wheat. What would be the matter even if that grain were not planted to grow and bloom? It will be grounded and will become bread. The very one that is not grounded is pitiful!”

World War II ended with two atomic bombs blasting in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, as if they were the “ghosts of Western Reason.” German cities and culture were destroyed, universities were closed, but French philosophers like Merleau-Ponty, Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, through their phenomenology and existential philosophy, raised crucial questions of body and embodiment. Michel Bouvard maintains that Europe will be rejuvenated by Asia through new sciences and technologies, presupposing that Asia does not have the Western Reason. The question is “is or was there any crisis in Indian Philosophy” and how and by whom was it responded? This is an extremely important and crucial question, but I would not discuss this here, although this also has been felt by Indian minds and philosophers especially during the past two centuries. They also have responded to the crisis. In this paper, I would basically concentrate on the European Crisis, which is primarily the result of Western Reason, and how its alternative was suggested by illustrious Indian minds –Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya (KCB) and his son Kalidas Bhattacharyya (KDB). We cannot deny or ignore Western Reason, and yet we want to explore philosophical approaches to be liberated by crisis so that we can “experience and be in tune with” primordial reality without much use of Western Reason. It is with this intention that we look at KCB and KDB’s philosophical contributions.

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The Transmission Crisis and an Eastern Solution

The Crisis of Reason, which was faced by Europe in the Nineteenth and Twentieth centuries, is faced by many Asian countries today with the far reaching impact of Western education and globalization.

One can get some idea of the impact of Western Reason on Indian Philosophy by the following passage written in 1960:

"Indian philosophers of last sixty years have almost enjoyed the same background of Western philosophy as their contemporaries in the West with additional advantage of a fairly good grounding in Indian philosophy which their opposite members in the West almost completely lacked. Yet, all the new movements in philosophical thought in this century have originated in the West. Isn’t it a cause for reflection that Indian Mind did not respond in creative manner to its philosophic encounter with the West? [...] If the older generation was a pale reflection of Oxford and Cambridge at the turn of century, the younger seems no better. It prides itself as much on being Moorean, Russellian, or Wittgensteinian as its predecessors did on being Bradleyan, Hegelian or Kantian. And if someone has gone to Germany —well, he is a Husserlian or Heideggerian, if such barbarisms be permitted.”

But KCB is considered by all as an exception with a fair idea of originality, as a “difficult” thinker to grasp, and often “unintelligible” with a difficult style. But his illustrious son Kalidas Bhattacharyya develops KCB’s ideas with a much more simple style, without losing the originality and rigor of the content. KCB argues for subject and object both as questionable fact without being able to assert their unity or dualism. He rejects the universalism of reason or of religion:

“It is sometimes forgotten by the advocates of universalism that the so-called universalism of reason or of religion is only in the making and cannot be appealed to as an actually established code of universal principles. What is universal is only the spirit, the loyalty to our ideals and the openness to other ideals, the determination not to reject them if they are found within our ideals and not to accept them till they are so found.”

Unlike Kant, he never believed that modern science is the ultimate epistemetic paradigm. He claims that philosophy gives no information. “Metaphysics, or more generally, philosophy including logic and epistemology, is not only not actual knowledge, but is not even literal thought.”

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“unique notion of ‘demand’ with which he links up epistemology with axiology in an unprecedented manner in the history of thought.”

There are four grades of Theoretic consciousness: Empirical, Objective, Subjective and Transcendental. Philosophy, according to KCB, deals with the last three, the content of pure thought is objective, subjective and transcendental attitudes. While discussing the subject object relation, he explains that it could be of three ways; unconstituted by consciousness (subject), or constituted by consciousness, or, along with consciousness, constituting some kind of unity, and they are found in knowing, willing and feeling. The idea of the Absolute is a demand in the sense that there is a kind of unintelligibility in all three modes of relatedness, and the contradictory character is displayed in knowing, willing and feeling. The idea of Alternative Absolutes demanding to be realized arises in KCB.

Kalidas Bhattacharya’s book Alternative Standpoints in Philosophy was published in 1953, but did not draw much attention until 1979, and has been out of print as it was burnt in some accident only after a few years of publication. His main contention is simple but of extreme significance. He finds conjunction problematic. Most of the problems, including those of knowledge, can be solved if conjunction is not valid, as it leads to incompatibility. Knowledge is always knowledge of something –of an object– and this “of” is not of identity, like the city of Kolkata or the city of Chicago, but of the object, being known, and is a close unity between them. The relation between self-consciousness and consciousness of the object is of exclusion. Thus, we find the close unity of the two terms, and yet they are opposed to each other. The usual solution suggested by most of the Western philosophers has been either the absolute reality of the subject, or the absolute reality of the object, or the denial that there is any opposition between the two. And there has also been a movement from epistemological objectivity to metaphysical objectivity, suggested by Descartes and Kant. All of these solutions lead to antagonism and exclusiveness in one way or the other. To put it more precisely, the fundamental question for KDB is “can we conceive a unity of elements which is opposite of each other?” KDB’s answer is a big “yes” which he calls the “Logic of Alternatives.” He argues that disjunction is such a unity –united and yet opposite to each other. The difficulties occur only because all of the philosophers thought that unity could only be of the conjunction type. But, if this were true, there would have been no unities.

Reality is given to us, but only through knowledge do we know the reality. How does knowledge take place? In the “knowledge situation,” the knowledge is apprehended in the subjective, and the object in the objective attitude.

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The subjective attitude is withdrawal into subjectivity. This withdrawal has to be withdrawal from something, and this something is the object. Withdrawal is rejection and negation in a wider sense. Rejection implies a refusal to unity, so in knowledge of the object, there is refusal to unity. And yet the strongest of all things is that they have formed a unity, knowledge of the object is a fact in which the two contradictories have formed a unity. How could this impossible thing take place? This is the fundamental problem which he calls “the problem of knowledge,” which has been the concern for the whole of his life. Usually, “knowledge of the object” consists in either reducing subjectivity to the object, or the object to subjectivity. The items united in “knowledge of the object” are antagonistic. Subjective knowledge is a contradiction. Again, the subjectivity and objectivity do not stand apart—they are united. This unity is also as evident as the subject and the object. This unity cannot be conjunctive, as suggested by Hegel, and normally understood. If it is taken conjunctively, it would exclude each other being contradictory. Therefore, it is not conjunctive, but it does not imply that it is not unity at all. There is another form of unity; the unity of alternatives, a unity which, as opposed to the conjunctive type, may be called disjunctive, and is expressed in the form either A or B. KDB argues extensively that knowledge-object unity can be looked at from this disjunctive point of view, and he takes pains to show that all philosophers who admitted both the contradiction and the unity between the knowledge and the object have actually taken the unity as disjunctive, though none of them have clearly stated so. The nature of disjunctive unity definitely has some kind of togetherness. But togetherness of two alternatives is different from ordinary togetherness. It “means that both cannot be real together.”

Again,

“A disjunctive judgment is not merely the thought of one alternative plus the thought of another, it is rather a unitary thought of the two alternatives. It is not merely thought of A and the thought of B, it is thought of AB, where A and B are the alternatives.... The whole thing is a single unitary thought, though it involves two thoughts.”

We also find a kind of closeness between disjunctive unity and knowledge and object. Just as in a disjunctive judgment a negative supposal is predicted on a positive one, the relation between alternatives is like “on the table an inkpot is absent.” The table is characterized by the absence of the inkpot, so one disjunction is asserted by negating or rejecting the other alternative. It is claimed by KDB that the unity formed between a positive and a negative is more intimate that the unity between two positives. By disjunction, what is meant here is that each member is alternatively real, which means that, along with the rejection of one alternative on the basis of the other, there is, at the same time, admission of the existence of its possible alternatives, and in that admission, the other alternative stands alternatively rejected.

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10 Ibid., pp. 138-139.
In relation between the two elements in the disjunctive judgment is the fact that the negation of each alternative is predicated on the other. In a disjunctive judgment, we find unity of incompatible realities, though alternatively. If A is real, B has to be rejected, but this B is also alternatively real if A is rejected. In case of disjunctive unity of knowledge and object, it means that, if knowledge is real, object is rejected and, alternatively, if the object is real, the knowledge has to be rejected. We cannot have knowledge and object at the same time. Thus, in a disjunctive judgment, there is a disjunctive unity of alternatives –subjective and objective attitudes are alternatives forming a disjunctive unity. Each attitude is valid but only alternatively. The objectivist and subjectivist philosophies can both be constructed, and are valid, but alternatively. Both are real from a trans-disjunctive togetherness of alternatives, and there is no reason to prefer one view as a more intelligible account of the knowledge situation than the other. Actual, philosophy, which is triter than this, is either from the subjective or from the objective point of view, not from both. Idealism and objectivism are such alternative systems, each is absolutely valid on its own ideology, and the ultimate logic is alternation. This view he calls “Alternative Absolutism –each is absolute, but alternatively.”

Conclusion

It is argued that all of the problems of knowledge can be solved if the conjunction is not valid, or there was no incompatibility. Conjunction is always problematic and leads to incompatibility. Disjunction, either as exclusive or inclusive, always gives a wider perspective to solve the problems, a unity of oppositions. Knowledge is always knowledge of something, of an object, and this “of” is not of identity like the “city of Calcutta,” but of the object, and of the fact of being known and of a close unity between them. In knowledge, either the subject knows the subject-self, becomes conscious of itself, or knows the object, becomes conscious of the object; but, in both cases, the relation is of exclusion, leading to the crisis of reason. But often we do not realize that, in both cases, there is a close unity of two terms although they are opposed to each other. How can this be explained? The usual solutions in philosophy have been either accepting the absolute reality of the subject (Idealism), or of the object (realism), or denying that there is any opposition between the two (dialectical attitudes). Kant and Descartes made a move from epistemological objectivity to metaphysical objectivity and, therefore, could not provide a satisfactory solution.

Can we conceive of a unity of elements which are in mutual opposition to each other? KDB’s answer is “yes.” And he shows that disjunction is such a unity. It is unity, and yet maintains this opposition each of the other. The difficulties occur only because all the philosophers thought that unity could be of the conjunction type, but if it was true then there would have been no unities. We can note the similarities with KCB, his father. Togetherness of unrelated

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11 Ibid., p. 153.
or undifferentiated elements is exhibited, not by conjunctive relation, but by the disjunctive unity of opposites, as found in disjunctive judgment itself. Disjunctive judgment suggests that there is no reason to prefer either of the disjunctions and that both are to be asserted, but only alternatively. These three logical alternatives, the subjective, the objective and the dialectical attitudes of reality, each is further marked by one or the other of our conscious functions of knowing, feeling and willing. In our subjective attitude, it is knowing which predominates, in objective, it is feeling, in dialectical attitude it is willing: this gives rise to three kinds of philosophy: subjectivism, objectivism and absolutism. Each is valid, but only alternatively. KCB spoke of the absolute as alternatively of three forms; truth, freedom and value, assimilating with the alternation of knowing, feeling and willing respectively.

However, for KDB, ‘Truth’ and ‘Absolute’ were synonymous. In all of his later writings, he emphasized that Truth (Absolute) has to be formulated in different, alternative ways, equally good or bad, equally valid or invalid, equally true or false. Where there is no preferential treatment among these alternatives, there is thus absolute alternation between them: A or B, A may reject B or B may reject A. But when KDB explains with examples, he uses two words; “reject” and “ignore.” In my view, this he does with the purpose, as KDB has a preference for subjective and transcendental; “The objective attitude merely ignores the subjective,” not in a position to ‘reject’ the surplus of subjectivity, which is the source of transcendental freedom. KDB, in his late stage, realizes that the “Logic of Alternatives” entails the rejection of the alternative view. “One has to identify himself with one or the other of the different alternative ideologies –for all of them cannot be accepted.”

Our attitude towards other alternative possibilities will be mere acceptance of their plausibility. KDB, in his later work in Bengali Bhartiya Sanskriti O Anekanta Vedanta, works out the distinction between acceptance or “admitting a legitimate possibility” – asvikrta grahana (a weak sense of acceptance) and side by side “acceptance as commitment” – svikrta grahana (a stronger sense of acceptance). He argues here for an apparently paradoxical view, that one can be committed to more than one fundamental philosophy, and he takes pain to relate and develop a richer concept of freedom, this svikrta grahana could not be accommodated in his logic of alternatives. KDB writes:

“alteration is intelligible only at the transcendental level. [...] At the level of nature, the level, i.e., of our normal daily life, there is no question of alteration [...] disjunction at the level of nature is always provisional; it is only at the transcendental level (at any of its sub-levels) that alternation can be, and often is, final disjunction.”

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At the lowest level, one has negative freedom—“freedom from...” The naturalist accounts of freedom are of this kind, and a higher level is reached by transcending nature; a provisional reality of nature or even ‘the natural’ could be a mode of the transcendental itself. Within the transcendental, KDB admits to many levels. The point conceived by both Bhattacharyyas is the novel idea in the history of ideas. Kant and Husserl stop at the primal stage of transcendence. Even Advaita-Vedantins, the champions of transcendentism in Indian Philosophy, stop at a point beyond which further transcendence is possible, according to KDB. Freedom, as opposed to negative freedom, begins at the level of transcendence. One just stands conscious of one’s status as a free, conscious being but not in the additional sense of consciously doing anything else or knowing anything else. The Advaita-Vadantins or the Mahayana-Buddhists offer this kind of truncated freedom, but for KDB the positive freedom is “freedom to...” “Freedom to ...,” in the full-blooded sense, is achieved at the level higher than the truncated freedom; “a free attitude to everything in the world, it is free integral embrace all through; pure consciousness as pure act.” Philosophy, epistemology, and logic, all are meta-level studies and alternative possibilities. One may experience the absolute meta-level as silence; either thinning non-stop withdrawals or as a self-contained state. The second alternative is the alternative of whole hearted commitment; all at the same time, as in “freedom to...” The third epistemic alternative is “the different philosophies are the final alternatives and there is no ulterior unitary grand pedestal from where one could view these philosophies as alternatives,” the fourth is, “that at one and the same time one stands actually committed to all of these philosophies.”

The last two grand alternatives “offer themselves only to be rejected, but why we cannot say.” (It rejects the disjunctive unity of alternation, perhaps.) It needs to be all inclusive and, again and again, alternation at every stage, leading to further transcendence and further alternation, leading to “absolute positive freedom.” This Freedom to Everything and of nothing is the willing to everything and rejecting everything at the same time. Here, we find an extremely suggestive clue to the new solution to our problems, which are discussed in this paper.
Crisis of Post-Modernity: 
Nature and Remedy

NEELIMA SINHA

Introduction

The present era, termed as the ‘Post-Modern era,’ supported by positive sciences and modern technology, is experiencing a dynamic social, economic and political force, which lifts humans out of many fears and uncertainties from the primitive past and more recent medieval prejudices. However, the ‘solid gains’ are not enough, as these achievements have challenged, and are constantly challenging, the credentials of human belief and their applications in the areas of moral, religious, social, economic and other fields of life. This situation lands man in new and more gnawing fear and uncertainty. I view this fear and uncertainty as the most miserable crisis of this post-modern era.

To proceed, I would like to examine, first of all, two basic concepts of ‘Crisis’ and ‘Post-Modernity.’

Crisis

‘Crisis’ (from the Greek term ‘krisis’), as per its dictionary meaning, is a time of great danger, difficulty or confusion when problems must be solved and important decisions must be made.¹ In its most popular meaning, ‘crisis’ is an event or situation of a complex system which is unstable and dangerous, or expected to lead an individual, group, community, or whole society to an unstable and dangerous situation.

‘Crisis’ has the following defining characteristics:

1. Crisis is an event or situation of complex systems. Simple systems do not enter crises. We can speak about a crisis of moral values, an economic or political crisis, but not a motor crisis.

2. It is, usually, understood that Crises occur abruptly, with little or no warning. These are surprising or unexpected.

However, this is a wrong notion. Of course, we find various natural crises; those are inherently unpredictable (volcanic eruptions, tsunami, etc.), but the nature always sends some signals for these ‘unexpected events,’ albeit the human being is still developing its sense to understand the warnings.

3. Crises bring a sudden change in the present situation. It is usually perceived that crises are deemed to be negative changes in the security, economic, political, societal, or environmental affairs. These lead towards the destruction of a positive phenomenon. These are a threat for the existence of a particular group or society and its important goals.

¹ “Crisis,” in Oxford English Dictionary.
But there are scholars who hold that the vast or sudden change caused by a crisis is ultimately very positive or productive. According to Venette, Crisis is a process of transformation where the old system can no longer be maintained.  

4. Crisis needs an immediate and vast change in the old system.

5. Crisis occurs due to poor functioning or mal-functioning. Hence, crisis is not a ‘total collapse’ of a particular system, but it is an indication for change in a system or function. Crisis indicates that a system is still functioning, but not in proper manner.

6. But, at the same time, it is very difficult to decide that what type of change is required because change in entire old situation is neither possible nor accessible. In that ‘bundle of situations,’ there may be at least a few situations which must be preserved for growth, progress and various other reasons, hence, a total or radical change in the present situation would not be possible, at least not all at once.

7. Crisis occurs due to malfunction, hence there must be reasons for this malfunction or poor functioning.

8. Hence, to save the group or community an immediate remedy is required.

There are, mainly, two types of crises: (a) Physical Crises, (b) Crises in thought process.

Usually, scholars deal with crises as ‘Physical Phenomena,’ and make two groups of crises, named ‘Natural Crises’ and ‘Man-made Crises.’ It is thought that natural crises occur in nature due to nature’s own course, and man has almost ‘no control’ over these events (e.g., volcanic eruptions, tsunami, etc.) while man-made crises occur due to human efforts. But the environmentalists know that most of the crises that we face are created by human beings. Usually, we do wrong things for right reasons, e.g., we make dams on rivers for the sake of development, which may result in (and often results in) flood. The effect of our inability to attend to the likely results of our actions can result in crisis. Hence, it is a difficult task to make a water-tight-compartment between ‘natural’ and ‘man-made crises.’ However, it may be said that man-made crises are crises which occurred due to the thought process of human beings, creating chaos-like condition in the outer world.

Without entering this debate of whether each and every crisis is directly or indirectly man-made, we can assume that at least the most fatal crises of present day are somehow resultant of the thought process of human beings. Again, this may be a subject of vast debate over whether crises are mere a ‘physical phenomenon’ or whether these may be treated as ‘non-physical’ too; but, without entering even this debate, this paper will enter into a discussion over ‘crises in our thought process’ or ‘the crises occurred by/occurring in our thought process’ during the present era, which are termed as ‘crises of post-modernity.’

Thus, to understand the problem, we shall have to examine the trends of ‘Post-Modernity.’

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Post-Modernity

There are various meanings of the term ‘Post-Modernity.’ Sometimes, it refers 'post-modern philosophy,' sometimes ‘post-modern art and culture,’ but generally it is used to describe the economic and cultural state or condition of society which is said to exist after ‘modernity.’

As a time frame, post-modernity, for a group of scholars, starts with the end of the Second World War, while a few others argue that post-modernity took place during the last two decades of 20th century. There is a group which opines that the last decade of last century witnessed the ‘end of post-modernity’ and that the present era may be named as the ‘post-post-modern era.’ However, even those who term present era as the ‘post-modern era’ admit that there is a remarkable difference between the last decade of 20th century and the first decade of 21st century. Hence, without entering the dispute to distinguish, we may divide the ‘era of post-modernity’ into two broader heads of ‘early post modernity’ and ‘later post-modernity.’

Being students of philosophy, we are not much concerned with the time frame of ‘modernity’ or ‘post modernity’; rather, we shall focus on the characteristic features of ‘modernity’ and ‘post-modernity.’

Let us consider first, ‘What is post-modernity?’ Etymologically, ‘post-modernity’ is an era which starts ‘after the era of modernity’ or ‘after the modern-era.’ Sometimes, post-modernity is portrait as a ‘reaction against modernity.’ Then, questions arise: ‘what is the modern era?’ and ‘what are its characteristic features?’

‘Modernity,’ which represents a large and dense current of thought, emerged during the period of Renaissance in Europe, having individualism, Mechanism, transform-ism, and Rationalism at its core. It refutes custom or tradition, history, stagnation, dogmas (and, derivatively, beliefs and faiths too), and all set norms of medieval European society. In Europe, modernity refers a post-medieval historical period which moves from feudalism towards capitalism, from religious fundamentalism towards secularism, from farming towards industrialization, from dogmas towards rationalism. Rationalism, empiricism, Marxism and existentialism are the most important European philosophical thoughts of the modern era.

‘Modernity’ is characterized by ‘progress,’ ‘industrialization,’ ‘rationality,’ ‘Marxism,’ and ‘colonialism.’ ‘Nationalism’ is a reaction against ‘colonies’ and is a characteristic feature of early post-modernity, while ‘globalization’ is a slogan and program introduced during the ‘later post-modern era.’

These trends of modernity were not restricted to Europe or the West; rather, due to the British and other European Empires, they spread over the other parts of the globe, effecting the cultures and the social-economic-political set-ups of the regions, especially those of the European colonies. Thus, modernity occupied a huge space on the globe.

But, parallel to those, these ‘other parts of the globe,’ which embraced modernity either willingly or non-willingly, have their own culture, custom and philosophy; hence, the ‘modernity’ got a ‘vivid-face’ in amalgamation
with local factors. This amalgamation gives a clumsy face to modernity, having radically opposed colors and contradictory objectives.

The ‘modern era’ was distinguished as an ‘era of science,’ while the postmodern-era is described as ‘an era of technology.’ As technology demands a strong unified effort towards a definite goal, it compels an aspirant to eliminate each and everything which is not useful for his/her own interest. This sort of ‘pragmatism’ converts each and everything into a ‘useful commodity,’ destroying human values, individual relationships and the emotional life of a human being. It is true that ‘man is a rational animal,’ but this ‘rationality’ cannot be explained only in terms of ‘reason.’ ‘Rationality’ always demands a balance attitude between ‘reason’ and ‘emotion,’ which distinguishes a man from a machine like computer, and any other ‘living being.’

This sort of pragmatism destroys the age-long institutions of ‘marriage’ and ‘family,’ resulting in the problems of single parenting, neglected parents, fatal individualism, loneliness, and so on. Not only that, as human personality is an integrated force of three factors – knowledge, action and emotion – this destruction of family and emotional life of the human being gives birth to split-personality and many other psychological disorders.

Globalization is the latest program of this post-modern era. It is claimed that the latest communication and information technology is webbing a global community, which makes countries members of the global village. Globalization appears to be a useful axiom of the post-Marxist world. It can be translated into deregulation and privatization, causing the rapid growth of trade, investment and capital markets which are tying countries together. Thus, Globalization is mainly a program having economic growth as its sole theme. Now it has been well-observed that globalization has opened a door for economic growth and enhancing financial prosperity for a particular class and some of the particular countries of this ‘global village,’ but, at the same time, it frustrates the deprived or ‘less-having’ mass. It could not be doubted that this ‘global village’ has an uneven face and soul on various fronts of its structure (e.g. education, finance, sovereignty, culture, health, environment, ecology, etc.); it is a great challenge for globalization to provide ‘equal opportunity’ to all. Hence, the ‘program of globalization’ seems to be turned into the ‘program of inequality and injustice,’ giving birth to religious, cultural, political and other types of terrorism on one hand, and, on the other, the excessive thrust for ‘wealth and economic growth,’ causing ‘corruption’ as a global phenomenon.

*The Remedy: The Philosophy of Total Vision*

These days, the entire world and all of humanity is constantly facing various threats to its existence, such as war, terrorism, environmental disasters caused

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by environmental imbalance, decaying family and social values, etc. The philosophy of total vision, which paves the path of freedom and fearlessness, provides a man the strength, not only to bear these miseries, but it also gives him strength to fight against these evils.

There are two great pillars upon which all human well-being and human progress rest: firstly, the inner world of the human being, and secondly, the outer world in which a man is bound to live. Though modern sciences, which claim to be the most powerful tool of human progress, deal with both aspects of human life, the inner self as well as the outer world of man, by its own method of scientific analysis, these studies and efforts are still to get a better result, as the modern man appears to be more self-centred, more harassed and more frustrated.

In this peculiar situation, the Vedic philosophy of ancient India provides a comprehensive tool to overcome these crises of the post-modern age. The Upaniṣad-ś, the most developed and well-known concluding part of Veda-ś, developed, ages ago, the art of living named as ‘adhyātmavidyā,’ which reconcile the inner world of man and the phenomenal world of out-side. According to Vedānta philosophy, the inner world of the human being, or any living being, is neither merely a part of his physical body (as portrayed by modern psychology) nor is it totally different from this phenomenal or outer world. Indeed, according to Vedānta philosophy, the entire universe is pervaded by one and only one spiritual power, known as ‘ātman’ (the self). The vidyā and avidyā (knowledge and ignorance), ātman and anātman (self and non-self), Brahman and jagat (the Ultimate Reality and the phenomenal world) are not different, but are basically one and non-dual. The partial view, or the avidyā, presents the partial world-view which portrays the world in diversity, but the Brahman-Vidyā, or the ‘proper knowledge,’ presents the world in its totality, where all opposition and contradictions emerge into oneness. The brahma-vidyā, spiritual in nature, is known as ‘adhāytma-vidya’ or ‘spiritual-science.’

The Mundakopaniṣad classifies knowledge into two broad heads of aparā vidyā and parā vidyā. The aparā vidyā contains the knowledge of this mundane world, acquired by all of the means as stated in modern epistemology. All disciplines of human knowledge, either be it physical sciences like physics, chemistry, etc. or mental sciences like psychology, and even all studies

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5 Compare: ‘How one should live’ –Socrates.

6 Mundakopanisad 1/4.

about religion and all the knowledge displayed in *Upaniṣad* or *veda* are placed under the head of *aparā vidyā*. This *aparā vidyā* may be classified under two heads of material science and spiritual science. Further this ‘material science’ is sub-divided into two more heads: 1) ‘physical science,’ or sciences which deal with the world of outer experience in which a man is, or for that matter all beings are, bound to live, and: 2) ‘mental science,’ which deals with the inner world of man, or, for that matter, of the entirety of living beings (e.g. Psychology). The spiritual science contains all of the knowledge displayed in religion, but it does not restrict itself to religion only.

This classification can better be shown by the graph given below:

![Knowledge (Vidyā) diagram]

The Spiritual Science has its own method, different from material science. It is the method, not the subject matter, by which spiritual Science is distinguished from material science. From its very beginning, human knowledge adopted two ways of thinking: Reason-based Method, and Mystical Method. Spiritual Science, though it is said to be more dependent on mysticism, restricted itself neither to the reasoning nor to mere mysticism. Though it starts with reasoning, it crosses the boundary of reasoning and sense experience. This method of Spiritual Science is well versed in the *Upaniṣad*: “from whence words, and all the senses including reason fails to reach.” Spiritual Science or *adhyātma Vidyā* crosses the bar. This Spiritual Science has great utility even in the phenomenal world, as it is based on a principle that the entire world is an expression or manifestation of one, and only one, ‘Reality,’ which is pure Existence (*sat*), pure Consciousness (*cit*), and, pure Bliss (*ānanda*) —The *Saccidānanda*. Obviously, the method of Spiritual Science is applicable in the very spell of life, and even beyond it.

A clear cut line of demarcation can be drawn between Material Science and Spiritual Science. The Material Science starts with sense-experience; it deals, only, with the problems of this phenomenal world, which is a subject of sense experience. Sense experience is the source and limit of these sciences.

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8 Mundaka 1/5.
Adopting the method of analysis, it divides the world into small spheres and uses it to see the things in its particularity. On the other hand, the Spiritual Science has a ‘total vision.’ It looks the things in ‘totality.’ The Upaniṣad-s teach about vidyā and avidyā.¹⁰ To see things in their particularity’ is called ‘avidyā’ and to see them in their real nature, that is to say, in totality, is called ‘vidā’. It is further stated that a person who knows the world in its totality acquires deathlessness, amṛṭatva, as he knows the real nature of the Self, its immortality.¹¹ This amṛṭatva gives birth to abhay, fearlessness, the strength to fight against evils.

Modern Science is constantly searching for the unity between the diverse areas of experience, as well as the areas beyond it. This is the reason for which a scientific theory is considered to be more successful, which is applicable to the vaster area of human experience or beyond it. The Upaniṣad-s succeeded to resolve the problem, as they find a single and un-dual reality running beneath these diversities, as stated in the Vṛguvallī of Taittirīyopaniṣad. Elucidating this Upanisdic idea, Swami Vivekananda says, “There is really no difference between matter, mind and spirit. They are only different phases of experiencing the one. This very world is seen by the five senses as matter, by the very wicked as hell, by the good as heaven, and by the perfect as Good.”¹² How does this miracle take place? Swami Vivekananda argues,

“How does this miracle take place? Swami Vivekananda argues, “Just as the (other) mind or the modern European mind, wants to find solution of life and of all the sacred problems of being by searching into the external world, so also did our forefathers; and just the European failed, they failed also. But the western people never made a move more, they remained there; they failed in the search for the solution of the greater problem of life and death in the external world, and there they remain stranded. Our forefathers also found it impossible, but were bolder in declaring the utter helplessness of the sense to find the solution. [...] There are various sentences which declare the utter helplessness of the senses, but they did not stop there; they fell back upon the internal nature of the man, they went to get the answer from their own sole, they became introspective; they gave up external nature as a failure, as nothing could be done there, as no hope, no answer, could be found; they discover that dull, dead matter would not give them truth, and they fell back upon the shining sole of man, and there the answer was found.”¹³

This spiritual science advocates for ‘samyak-jñāna,’ or ‘total vision,’ hence, this spiritual science provides a tool for the development of the total-vision or samyak-jñāna. The philosophy of samyak-jñāna presents a comprehensive view of life, a vision for non-dualism, where the difference between

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¹⁰ Śvetāsvataraopaniṣad 5/11.
¹¹ Isopaniṣad 9-11.
self and non-self is abolished, and man gets freedom from his narrowness and wicked ego. With the development of this total vision, one knows the real nature of the self. The development of this total vision overcomes the various crises of present era, like war, corruption and terrorism. On the other hand, the awakening of this total vision exhilarates the forces of social harmony and world peace.

It is often argued that _Isopanisad_ is a religious concept pertaining to ancient Hinduism, and it has nothing to do with the recent developments of the modern and so called ‘secular world.’ It is misconceived also that this ‘Spiritual Science’ is speculative in nature and has no practical utility. To overcome these misconceptions, one should ponder over the following verse of the _Isopanisad_:

“He who restricts himself to avidyā (knowledge of the empirical world) is wandering in the dark, but one who denies this world of appearance is wandering in darkest.”

_Upaniṣad-s_ consider the world as māyā, but this māyā is not an illusion. Māyā is mere a statement about the facts which are seen in the world around us. It refers the inner contradictions involved in our experience of world and in our knowledge of it. These contradictions will remain, so long as we remain at the sensate level, so long as we fail to take into account the ātmā, the self behind the non-self, the one behind many. Yet all of our experiences and knowledge in the sphere of māyā are experiences and knowledge of ātmā coming through the sense organs; hence, they are not illusory, but true.

Indeed, this spiritual science moves in two directions: 1) the direction towards the physical world, and; 2) the direction towards the meta-physical world. Running towards its first direction, it crosses through all of the material sciences and collects all of them with in its arena by its own method. Ascending towards its second goal, the revelation of the Ultimate Reality, it dissolves itself in mysticism. Hence, it provides, successfully, a tool or method for the knowledge of the Ultimate Reality, as well as how to deal with the practical problems of daily life.

This method of Spiritual Science is well displayed in the method adopted in the _Veda and Upaniṣad_. The _Veda and Upaniṣad_, on the one hand, contain the ancient Indian theories which are more admired in the areas of modern Physics, Chemistry, Maths, Medical Science and so on, and, on the other hand, _Veda and Upaniṣad_ are found to be more relevant and useful for mental healing. Indeed, _Veda and Upaniṣad_ are religious as well as philosophical texts. As religious texts, they discover the truth of the inner world, and as philosophical texts, these synthesize the science of the inner world with other sciences of the outer world, to present a unified vision of total reality. The _Veda-s and Upaniṣad-s_ do not speak of any ‘supernatural element,’ rather they speak of a ‘super-sensual revelation.’

The term ‘Total-Vision’ is primarily coined by Swami Vivekananda, which is, somehow, a translation for the word ‘samyak-jñāna,’ variously used in In-

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14 “andham tamah praviṣānti yah avidyāmupāsate.”
dian philosophy from its very beginning. The traditional epistemology, be it Indian or Western, distinguishes between proper or scientific knowledge and the knowledge acquired by a common man in his daily life for the sake of his practical purpose. Philosophy, though usually it does not dare to disregard this ‘day-to-day knowledge of a common man,’ is always indulged in the search of ‘proper knowledge,’ which may satisfy the human intellect and may help him to progress towards a higher goal. The Indian philosophy, which has a major goal to provide the human being freedom from the miseries of life by means of spirituality, divides all disciplines of knowledge into two classes: ‘proper knowledge’ and mere ‘knowledge.’ The ‘samyak-jñāna’ is the term used there for ‘proper knowledge’ for which Swami Vivekananda coined the term ‘Total Vision.’

The vision to understand the world in its totality is called ‘total-vision.’ As it is stated in the Upaniṣad, there are five stages of consciousness: the physical body (annamaya kośa), the vital-force (prāṇamaya kośa), the mental or the inner world (manomaya kośa), the conscious stage (vijñānamayakośa), and the full bliss (ānandamaya kośa). These five states are the manifestation of one and only-one, non-dual Reality, the Sacchidananda Brahman, the pure existence, the pure consciousness, the full bliss. To see all of these sheaths (kośa), all of the diversities, in its real nature, as the manifestation of the one and unified Reality, this Sacchidananda is called the ‘total vision.’ Adhyatma vidyā provides a method by which one can acquire ‘Total Vision.’ The Guru, which acquires, in Indian tradition, the place of God, shows a person the path of total vision. This process is well demonstrated in Yama-Naciketa samvāda (dialogues) of Kaṭhopaniṣad.

When a man acquires this total vision, he attains the Ultimate Freedom (mokṣa) and the fearlessness (the abhaya). There are three types of Freedom: the freedom from physical evils, the freedom from mental bondage, and the freedom from intellectual hindrance. Freedom (mokṣa) and fearlessness (abhaya) are two key words taught by Upaniṣad, which makes a man eligible to fight with all of the evils of the world. Swami Vivekananda says,

‘... strength is what the Upaniṣad speak to me from every page. This is the one great thing to remember, it has been the one great lesson I have been taught in my life. Strength, it says, strength, O man, be not week. ‘Are there no human weaknesses?’ –Says man. ‘There are,’ say the Upaniṣad-s, ‘but will more weakness heal them, would you try to wash dirt with dirt? Will sin cure sin, weakness cure weakness.’ [...] Ay, it is the only literature in the world where you find the word ‘abhīh,’ ‘fearless,’ used again and again; in no other scripture in the world in this adjective applied either to God or to man. [...] And the Upaniṣad-s are the great mine of strength. Therein lays strength enough to invigorate the whole world. The whole world can be vivified, made strong, energized through them. They will call with trumpet voice upon the weak, the

15 Taitriyopaniṣad, Bhriguwallī.
miserable, and the down-trodden of all races, all creeds, all sects, to stand on their feet and be free. Freedom—physical freedom, mental freedom and spiritual freedom—are the watch words of the Upaniṣad-s.16

These two terms—‘mokṣa’ and ‘abhay’ are ethical terms. Ethics is a concept which has its meaning in the context of society.17 The society, or even the world of which a person is part, is a word of change and death. A man has craving for eternity and deathlessness. The craving, and its satisfaction, is the Ultimate goal of a philosophy, and also for a religion. Vedic philosophy and religion provides a solution to this problem. For this purpose, it provides two paths of ‘pravṛtti’ (action) and ‘nivṛtti’ (going out of the action). The path of action or pravṛtti gives ‘abhudaya,’ social welfare, through the efficient control and manipulation of the physical, political, economic, and the entire social environment, while the nivṛtti ensures ‘nihṣreyasa,’ spiritual freedom through an equally efficient control and manipulation of the world and the inner life.

The ‘pravṛtti’ and ‘nivṛtti,’ the personal perfection and the social well-being, the inner spiritual world and the outer phenomenal world; though these appear to be the opponents of each other, in fact are the supplements of each other. Both of them are the two sides of a single coin. When the total vision arises, this duality or the ‘perpetual conflict’ vanishes and a man becomes ‘the knower.’ This unique feature of total vision is clearly explained by Jagad Guru Samkarācārya in the very opening paragraph of his commentary on Srimad Bhāgawad Gīta:

“Two fold is the dharma as taught by the V edas, one characterised by the pravṛtti (action) and the other characterised by nivṛtti (inaction). Both together constitute the stabilizing factor of the world, and the two causes of the abhudaya (worldly welfare) and nihṣreyasa (spiritual freedom) of all beings.”18

Conclusion

The present millennium, which is termed as the ‘Post-Modern Era,’ though it claims to run a multi-dimensional program for human development, is basically an economic program, having the concept of the ‘Global-Village’ at its core. This programme of ‘Globalization,’ at a glance, looks like the Indian concept of ‘vasudhaiva kutumbakam’ (let the entire world be a family), but, indeed, it is different from it. It gives birth to various ethical problems due to its materialistic vision. At present, we have no option but to accept it; but this wind of Globalization, flowing over the world, must have a more value-oriented face. It must be more anthropocentric, more altruistic, and must be spir-

18 “Dwividho hi vedokto dharmah, pravṛttitilakṣaṇo nivṛttitilakṣaṇaṣcā kāraṇam, prani-namsaksad abhudayanihṣreyasahetuh,”
ritual. The teaching contained in following passage may give a right direction to this economic programme:

“sri, wealth, is the product of intelligent labour; it comes from the efficient yoking of knowledge to productive enterprise; and it does not come by any other means, magical or mystical. Pure science is knowledge, *Lucifera*; when it flows into the applied field of invention and discovery and develops technological efficiency, it becomes wealth and power, *fructifera*. This is the only source of material wealth for man, and on his freedom from want and fear in external world. But freedom from want and fear in the external field of life does not constitute the totality of his welfare. Disintegration, or want of integration, in his inner life will turn his external success in defeats. Hence, to make his *sri*, wealth, flow into true *vijay*, victory, he must take the help of the science and technique of religion to obtain knowledge and mastery of his inner environment; thus only can he achieve total victory over want and fear. This is the true welfare of man, *paramśreyah*. And a society of such men and women will be a society where justice and moral evolution, *dhruva niti*, will reign supreme and steady.”

Although it is true that the humans of the present millennium have learnt much from history, that history is a victim of deconstruction (Jacques Derrida). True, humans have acquired much of their development, but this narrow development has thrown humans into the reign of frustration, terror and uncertainty. Thus, humanity needs a constant spiritual counselling, the counselling of this Spiritual Science, which is neither the intellectual property of India, nor an ‘ethnic verse.’ The philosophy provided by *Veda* and *Upanisad* is a *Sanātana Dharma*; ‘the way of life’ (*dharma*) suggested for ever (*sanātana*).

PART IV

Global Crisis, Economy, Environment
Markets, Commons and the Dystopia of “Spontaneous Order”

DENIS G. DROSOS

The notion of “spontaneous order,” the mot d’ordre of neoliberalism after Hayek’s Constitution of Liberty, is a concept originally coined by Michael Polanyi. As opposed to constructed order (taxis), spontaneous order (kosmos) is supposed, by Hayek, to denote the social order produced by the market alone, without any government-directed plan or corrective intervention.¹

Hayek’s notion of “spontaneous order” is presented by him as having its roots in the Scottish Enlightenment.² Indeed, the sources of such an idea can be traced back to Mandeville’s paradox of private vices turned into public benefits,³ and to Adam Smith’s critical reformulation of it into what he called “unintended consequences.” Yet, in the transition from Adam Smith’s “unintended consequences” to Hayek’s “spontaneous order,” there is a missing link. Actually it was Michael Polanyi who first coined this notion. Hayek, although there is clear evidence that he was acquainted with Polanyi’s work, has never acknowledged his indebtedness to him.⁴ Nevertheless, Polanyi, with no influence from the Scottish Enlightenment whatsoever, has made use

of the device of “spontaneous order” in a way, from which Hayek’s usage silently but distinctively departs. Dealing with the problem of whether scientific knowledge and research should or not be independent from political overall aims, Polanyi defends the freedom and independence of the scientific process, and claims that scientific communities should be given the freedom to commit themselves to their particular research interests. This would result, so he claims, in a spontaneous process of the mutual fertilization of ideas and knowledge, which would result in an unplanned benefit for society at large. Such development is not conceived as limited to scientific research alone, but it is applicable to many fields of social activities, such as the production of common law, the free market exchanges, and the formation of languages.

Three very important premises are distinctive of this conception: 1) **Persuasion** is crucial; spontaneity is not conceived as an automatic passive mechanism, but entails the active endeavor of the participants to formulate arguments and persuade the other members of the communities. Scientists are obliged to formulate their hypotheses in convincing arguments exposed to public scrutiny, critique and verification. Lawyers are obliged to provide foundations for their judgments, based on the interpretation of precedents. Producers are obliged to persuade consumers that their commodities meet their needs, in a context of a perfect competition, etc. It is worth noting that such processes of persuasion are akin to and even form the keystone of Smith’s conception of sympathy. 2) **Society** at large is never conceived as a “spontaneous order” in itself. For Polanyi, there is rather a pluralism of “spontaneous orders” at work in free society, together with other instances of orders that are not spontaneous. What is at stake for Polanyi is to show that a totally planned society would be detrimental both to individual freedom and to the search for truth. To put it in other words, the overall commitment of society to a predetermined common claim of truth would be at risk to result in a tyranny, inhibiting the free intercourse of plural “spontaneous orders.” Yet, he never seems to suggest that a model of overall “spontaneous order,” forged at the image of the marketplace, for instance, should be an eligible self-sufficient alternative to a planned model. Nothing could guarantee that partial and peripheral spontaneous orders would necessarily result in an overall social spontaneous order. 3) Polanyi introduces a distinction between **private** and **public** freedom. Private freedom refers to the free pursuit of individuals’ free chosen aims, irrespectively of their being beneficial or not to society, while public freedom refers to the conscious commitment of individuals to public values and ideals aiming towards a free society. The latter relies on the moral responsibility of all citizens, and their commitment to what Polanyi refers to as “spiritual realities.”

5 M. Polanyi never seems to conceive of society as whole as a spontaneous order; he never mention a spontaneous order of society, limiting his interest in spontaneous orders in society (law, science, production in a free market). See Jacobs, “Michael Polanyi and Spontaneous Order, 1941-1951,” p. 22.

6 This distinction is introduced in the essay “The Growth of Thought in Society,” *Economica*, 8 (1941), 428-456, p. 428. Public freedom is more characteristic of liberal societies
Interestingly, while ignoring the Scottish Enlightenment tradition, Polanyi provides a scheme of society where free markets alone cannot guarantee the felicitous outcome of a general harmony and order, being just one of the partial spontaneous orders at work. Society is not to be conceived at the model of markets, and not all selfish attitudes are to be tolerated or, even less, vindicated, as a vehicle of public benefits. Public responsibility is imperatively required, and this is not a mechanic outcome of the spontaneity of the markets. The latter could not and should not be considered as the general model for any social bond tying society together. Polanyi seems to put his finger on the awkward problem of spontaneous and not spontaneous orders—markets and commons—working together in a tense, and even crisis-ridden, cohabitation.

Hayek, on the other hand, promotes a vision of the free society conceived as a “spontaneous order” in itself. The keystone of such a conception is modeled on the market place and catallaxy, as the general social bond. As “money is one of the greatest instruments of freedom ever invented by man,” any social relation between free people is reduced to catallaxy. Any other bond mediating, correcting or regulating catallaxy would be a falsification of free-

and implies that all members of society act on belief in “mental objects” such as truth, justice, and love of humanity. Public liberty is meant to set limits on irresponsible private liberties. Whereas Polanyi initially appears to locate public liberty in ‘spontaneous orders,’ he later seems to move to a more comprehensive understanding of ideal objects (and corresponding public liberties) as extended in the wider society and not being confined to spontaneous orders. M. Polanyi, “Foundations of Academic Freedom,” The Australian Journal of Science, 11 (1949), 107-115; rpt. in The Logic of Liberty (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1951). On the deployment of Polanyi’s ideas on this issue, see Jacobs, “Michael Polanyi and Spontaneous Order, 1941-1951,” p. 21.

7 Such thinking as a pure, and unmixed “market society” historically has never existed. Markets are everywhere mediated by historically constituted forms of commons. By the conventional notion ‘commons’ I mean, all the range of social relations, not totally reducible to marketisation. Markets have always been functioning mediated, limited or animated by social forms such as politics, familial ties, cultures, traditions, languages, values, religions, manners, morals, knowledges and even alternative forms of production and exchange, and mostly political institutions and civil and civic relations. Such relations are not immune to marketisation, and the borderline between marketised and non-marketised sphere is perpetually subject to changes. Such changes are never indisputable and never without leaving a heterogeneous remainder of non-marketised relations. Even market itself cannot work without a set of rules and regulations, the implementation and observance of which is a political issue. It would be an illusion akin to totalitarian rather than to liberal thinking, to imagine that all plurality of social forms could, or even worst, should be reduced to a uniform canon, be it a religious doctrine, a planification project, or even the ‘pure’ market order. For a good illustration of this, see the seminal work by M. Polanyi’s older brother K. Polanyi, The Great Transformation, debunking the myth of ‘self-regulating’ markets, and pointing out the irreducibility of society into market. K. Polanyi, The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001). See esp. Part Two: “Rise and Fall of Market Economy; I. Satanic Mill,” Ibid., pp. 35-135.


dom, a remnant of “tribal ethics,”\textsuperscript{10} an offspring of “constructivism”\textsuperscript{11} leading to serfdom and totalitarianism. Any sense of commons should be extinguished and eliminated, so that markets alone should be the one and only regulator of social order. Such an order is named by the Greek word \textit{Kosmos}, as opposed to any other non-spontaneous order, named also by the Greek word \textit{Taxis}, which is tantamount to unfreedom.\textsuperscript{12} When it comes to ethics, morality is reduced to a functional supplement of the catallaxy system.\textsuperscript{13} It would be inaccurate to see Hayek’s vision at his nominal value, as “the only” alternative to a completely planned and collectivist economy. Such a system could be considered, for so many reasons, as ineligible and obsolete, without having to adhere to Hayek’s principles. Hayek’s real enemy is any social arrangement intermingling with pure catallaxy, whether consciously intended or even spontaneous. In a really pluralistic system of overlapping spontaneous orders, one could easily imagine spontaneous practices coming from the sphere of the ‘commons,’ not reducible to the logic of, or even inventing alternatives to, the free market. Hayek is adamant in condemning such eventualities, as marks of spontaneous “tribal ethics.” Such practices should be cautiously prevented and severely oppressed. Thus, it is not spontaneity against constructivism, but a particular model of spontaneity (that of the markets) against any other mode of sociability, spontaneous or not, at which Hayek aims. This attitude seems to ironically account for his deliberate, as much as awkward for a champion of liberty, recourse to a series of authoritative, anything but “spontaneous” administrative regulations for the safeguarding of his cherished freedom of the markets.\textsuperscript{14}


\textsuperscript{12} “Attempts to ‘correct’ the order of the market lead to its destruction” (Hayek, \textit{Law, Legislation, and Liberty}, Vol. 2, p.142).

\textsuperscript{13} “A system of morals also must produce a functional order, capable of maintaining the apparatus of civilization which it presupposes” (Hayek, \textit{Law, Legislation, and Liberty}, Vol. 2, p. 98). Such system of rules should be accepted “without question” (\textit{Ibid.}, Vol. 1, p. 105). As there is no room for any conception of rules on a basis wider than that produced by the market order, “the test of ‘universalizability’ applied to any one rule will amount to a test of compatibility of the whole system of accepted rules...” (\textit{Ibid.}, Vol. 2, p. 28).

\textsuperscript{14} See Hayek’s suggestions for a constitutional reform, in Hayek, \textit{Law, Legislation, and Liberty}, Vol. 3: \textit{The Political Order of a Free People}, pp. 113-149. The idea is that “… the powers of the majority must be limited.” This is the logical outcome of the definition of competition: “Competition is, after all, always a process in which a small number makes it necessary for larger numbers to do what they do not like, be it to work harder, to change habits, or to devote a degree of attention, continuous application, or regularity to their work which without competition would not be needed” (\textit{Ibid.}, p.77). Thus, not surprisingly, “In a society in which the spirit of enterprise has not yet spread, the majority has power to prohibit whatever it dislikes, it is most unlikely that it will allow competition to arise” (\textit{Ibid.}, p. 77). This results in a distrust of democracy. “I doubt whether a functioning market has ever newly arisen under an unlimited democracy, and it seems likely that unlimited democracy will destroy it where it has grown up” (\textit{Ibid.}, p. 77). Very telling has been his speech in Chile, during Pinochet’s dictatorship, in favor of authoritarian regimes protecting markets’
marks of an ambitious, radical and all-embracing theory, with quasi-totalitarian pretensions. As Hayek claims the heritage of Adam Smith, one is entitled to check his conception of “spontaneous order” against the background of a theory articulated two centuries before him in a totally different context.

Mandeville has put forward the idea that human industry could thrive and the economy could flourish, when individual action is fueled by selfish passions rather than by moral concerns for the public interest. Using the parable of a hive, Mandeville meant to show that humans do not need (no more than bees) to be moved by lofty moral motives, so that the outcome of their economic actions may be beneficial to the whole society. Challenging his contemporaries’ efforts to reconcile private interests and virtues, Mandeville argued that, in a commercial society, traditional morality was made redundant, if not detrimental to both economic improvement and social order. To put it bluntly, Mandeville’s ambivalent irony cut through the Gordian knot of early modernity; if public benefit is reduced to economic flourishing, then the best way to achieve this is to let private vanity go unimpeded to stimulate human actions.

Mandeville’s paradox has proved very intriguing and inspiring for the thinkers of the Scottish Enlightenment. Adam Smith in particular gave it a nuanced reception. Deconstructing Mandeville’s paradox, Smith tried to divorce the idea of economic “spontaneity” from the idea of moral redundancy.

To put it as briefly as we can, in his Wealth of Nations (WN), Smith draws a sketch of a self-regulated exchange economy. In a commercial society with an extended division of labour, everyone acts as a commodity producer, and earns his living by satisfying the needs of others, while his main concern is his own interest. Thus, an unintended order is produced, via the interplay of impersonal forces of the market. In this way, a virtuous circle of competition, allocation of resources, increase of industry and productivity, and cheapening of commodities, results to the benefit of all, the lower ranks of society included. Thus far, Hayek’s claims to A. Smith’s legacy seem to be vindicated and justified. But if we look at the big image, things begin to change. The target of Smith’s criticism was not, and historically could not be, neither a system of planned economy, nor a mixed economy regulated by any principles of social justice. What his target really was, is stated explicitly by him. An entire book (IV) of the WN is dedicated to the critique of the “Mercantile System.” What is the “Mercantile System” and what is wrong with it, according to Smith? In theory, the mercantilist doctrine maintained that the wealth of a nation consisted in the amount of gold possessed by it. In practice, this system consisted in the monopolization of entire sectors of the economy by great companies, assisted by government policies. What was obnoxious to A. Smith’s eyes, was the concentration of economic power in few hands, and its political counterpart, the subordination of the government to the particular interests of the liberties better than democracies, El Mercurio, San Diago, Chile 19 Avril, 1981 [cited by R. Cristi, Le libéralisme conservateur: Trois essais sur Schmitt, Hayek et Hegel (Paris: Éditions Kimé, 1993), p. 12].
monopolies. Against this hideous combination of private rapaciousness and public corruption, Smith articulates his idea of a “system of natural liberty,” based on unimpeded economic competition and impartial government at the service of commerce, and not of particular shopkeepers.\(^\text{15}\)

Furthermore, in his *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (TMS), Smith addresses a severe critique against Mandeville’s idea that improvement in commerce is necessarily fueled by individual vice. Smith provides a new understanding of morality, based on an unending process of mutual recognition, moral judgment and accountability, through sympathy. Any agent is at the same time a spectator of the conduct of others and of his own. Moved by his/her desire to gain the approbation of others—which, for Smith, is one of the strongest desires of human nature\(^\text{16}\)—any agent is interested in moderating his/her natural preference for him/herself and is engaged in a kind of “bargaining,” searching for compromises that would accommodate his/her self-love and the recognition of others, by benefiting them. Through this “commerce of sympathy”\(^\text{17}\) and mutual moral judgment, the idea of an impartial spectator is formed, a kind of imaginary higher tribune of moral judgment, an “inmate of the breast,”\(^\text{18}\) to whom any actor is accountable. By this interplay of persuasion, imagination and self-command, a set of moral standards is established, and inductively the rules of justice are produced.\(^\text{19}\) Thus, A. Smith provides an


\(^{17}\) This felicitous expression was coined by E. Heath, “The Commerce of Sympathy: Adam Smith on the Emergence of Morals,” *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 33 (1995), 447-466.


\(^{19}\) Furthermore, the moral agents are not to contented to gain the approbation and the praze of other, but they are stimulated to become praiseworthy: “The love and admiration which we naturally conceive for those whose character and conduct we approve of, necessarily dispose us to desire to become ourselves the objects of the like agreeable sentiments, and to be as amiable and as admirable as those whom we love and admire the most. Emulation, the anxious desire that we ourselves should excel, is originally founded in our admiration of the excellence of others. Neither can we be satisfied with being merely admired for what other people are admired. We must at least believe ourselves to be admirable for what they are admirable. But, in order to attain this satisfaction, we must become the impartial spectators of our own character and conduct” (Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Book III.2.3). Regardless of whether this process results in producing unintended consequences compatible with free market order, it certainly is not reducible to a preconceived system of rules meant to be functional to such an order. Thus moral agents are not conceived as trapped in a selfish pursuit of vanity satisfaction, resulting in a conformism, but they could and should be engaged in a virtuous circle of moral development. Although this process is not dictated by any authority, it is open to wider moral values and is not reduci-
account of moral development, which may be compatible with, but not reducible to the market relations. This is not a set of a priori constructed rules for the smooth function of the “spontaneous” market order, but a parallel, complex process of moral development, where spontaneity results into normativity and so on. It is noteworthy that such “moral order” is not reducible to the “market order,” as it is built on a continuum of intersubjective intercourse, in which agents are engaged both qua merchants and qua persons. In civilized society of independent and propertied individuals, it is not just markets, but also commons that are partly organized and regulated through the workings of sympathy. Persuasion, imagination, and self-command entail and reform what is indivisibly common: language, values, moral standards.

Smith seems to provide a modern understanding of moral community, on the basis of mutual recognition between independent individuals, unlike the traditional community, based on pre-established hierarchies and bonds of dependence. Moreover, Smith seems to ascribe great importance to the agent’s moral and intellectual competencies, as a requirement for his project of natural liberty. That is why, in the so called “alienation passage,”\textsuperscript{20} he suggests a public education system as a remedy for the growing incapacity of the bulk of working mankind, doing the same repetitive, mechanical movements all day, as a means to practice their imagination, to engage in dialogue, and to partake in sympathetic moral sentiments. \textit{Commercial society} is vindicated as a civilized society (the terms being used interchangeably), in the measure that economic improvement is attended by moral development of independent and responsible individuals. We cannot fully understand this Smithian proviso, unless we realize the nature of its economic context; simple, real commodity production, based on private property, where each individual relates to the others both as commodity owner and as moral agent.

Summing up, Smith’s “unintended consequences” was a complex conception of sociability, entailing an elaborated moral theory. The context of Smith’s unplanned social order (his “system of natural liberty”) entails:

a) a commercial society, before industrial revolution i.e. a society where individuals related to each other as merchants exchanging real commodities (goods and services) of equal value, serving each others’ needs;

b) that the agents of economic exchanges are the very moral agents, i.e. they are natural persons related to each other both economically and morally;

c) that monopolies of economic and political power are to be eliminated, and perfect competition prevails;

d) that shared uncommodifiable goods and services, such as education, culture, intelligence, are to be safeguarded by the state, so that every member shall be intellectually and morally capable to partake on an equal basis in an

overall process of checking his/her selfishness, through sympathizing with others;

e) that both spontaneous and intended corrective process are engaged, aiming towards the general welfare and permitting moral development.

Not a single one of such preconditions is met in Hayek’s conception of “spontaneous order”:
a) in modern post neoliberal counter-revolution economy, under the reign of financial and banking capital, commodified financial products rather than real commodities are produced and exchanged;
b) exchange takes place between impersonalized corporations and not individual persons, and morality is reduced to the rules of the legal system;
c) markets are monopolized, where giant firms have privileged access to the government’s decision making and regulation;
d) any concern for the public’s moral and intellectual education of the lower ranks is severely ruled out as unacceptable encroachments upon the supposedly free function of the markets;
e) while “spontaneous order” is the cherished war cry of neoliberal rhetoric, its policies are imposed via a ferocious and unprecedented government interventionism, entailing a tremendous concentration of power in the executive arm, and disrespecting any sense of democratic, social, or moral balance.21

Against this background, Hayek’s ideal of “spontaneous order” seems to get entangled in a vicious circle of fatal contradictions. While demonizing the “public sector,” the latter turns to actually functioning as a mechanism of redistribution of resources in favor of banking, hedge funds, and all sorts of virtual economy services. While spontaneity of market forces and individual initiative is eulogized, the “barriers of entry” and the “barriers of exit” in economic activity never were raised so high; at the same time, all anti-trust policies protecting competition are banned.22 Instead of liberal and “spontaneous” allocation of resources, safeguarded by non-interventionist government policies, what we see in reality is a kind of restoration of mercantilism, which has been the main target of A. Smith’s critique. It sounds ironic to call such a state of affairs a “laissez-faire” policy. What is more, no kind of “order” seems to result from this regime; the speculative bubbles of the virtual economy render the global economic system more vulnerable and crisis-ridden than ever. Even more, the prevailing anti-crisis policies are very revealing of the limits of the neoliberal regime. The ultimate ratio of such “there-is-no-alterna-


ative” policies seems to be the salvation of a bankrupt financial sector, through state interventionism. And, while both the dismantling of the welfare state and the defamation of any concern about social justice are not unexpected, being the deliberate targets both in theory and in practice, what is more interesting is that even the principle of individual property itself is jeopardized, and very often openly disregarded. This is evidenced in cases of fiscal ‘emergency’ (as it is actually the case in Southern Europe), when real estate property is overtaxed, and, as a result, a considerable population of homeowners run the risk of becoming homeless, after having been jobless. Thus, while taxation is in principle blamed as an unfair interference in the working of markets, in actu taxation turns out to be a salutary measure, whenever the government is called to rescue the “too-big-to-fail” banks from bankruptcy, i.e. from the free working of the laws of the market.

Ironically enough, neoliberal dogmatism is at odds with a crucial dimension of A. Smith’s legacy, i.e. his moderate synthesis of individual freedom in commercial society, balanced by civilized sociability, never totally reduced to market exchange, and perpetually evolving through a dynamic nexus of inter-subjective and open morality. Neoliberalism has the traits of a radical ideology, aiming at purifying social reality from any moral, political and constitutional instances not conformable to its ideal. It is a predicament of all radical ideologies to have recourse to self-defeating practices in their ambition to construct reality according to their principles. After the failure of collectivism, it was the turn of neoliberal radicalism to contradict its principles in the face of such a stubborn thing as facts. The lip service to spontaneity only makes the contradiction even more flagrant.

Against this background, the dilemma of “markets vs state” turns out to sound misleading, and the real line of confrontation seems to be “financial corporations and state vs commons.”

It could be argued that we should not blame Hayek’s theory for the vicissitudes of economic reality. Such a line of defense, nevertheless, would be no

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more convincing than the outdated pro-Soviet apologetics: “the theory is perfect but there are some “weaknesses” in the application.” Social ideas have an anchoring in real historical context; otherwise they are just mind games. And the narrative of “spontaneous order” –a genuine offspring of a century of ideologies– has a totally different meaning in such different contexts such as 18th century Scotland and 21st century Wall Street economics. In the latter case, neither “spontaneity” nor any “order” sound as anything but as euphemisms, mystifying a wasteland of dystopia.

The resulting economic disorder is commonly attended by social disintegration and a permanent moral crisis, which is less reminiscent of the Smithian dream of a system of natural liberty, than of the Hobbesian nightmare of bellum omnium contra omnes.
The Dirty Hands Problem in a Democratic Context

Filimon Peonidis

An Old Idea

Not many people outside of philosophical circles would count the dirty hands problem among the causes of major political and moral crises. Nevertheless, as I shall argue here, there are good reasons for it to become a matter of serious public deliberation in a modern democratic polity. It would be convenient to approach the dirty hands problem within the context of an old and influential line of thought that can be exemplified as follows: being heavily involved in politics (including democratic politics) and, in particular, serving in high office implies the loss or the compromise of one’s moral integrity.

Plato in Socrates’s Apology gave first a bold statement of it:

“...And please do not get angry if I tell you the truth. The fact is that there is no person on earth whose life will be spared by you or by any other majority, if he is genuinely opposed to many injustices and unlawful acts, and tries to prevent their occurrence in our city. Rather, anyone who truly fights for what is just, if he is going to survive for even a short time, must act in a private capacity rather than a public one” (31d-32a).1

In this passage, Socrates holds that a righteous person should stay out of politics if he wants to remain righteous, or even alive. His admonition concerns democratic politics, but not the ideal form of government Plato described in the Republic. Philosopher-kings do not run the danger of losing their souls or their lives just by exercising political power. For Plato, even the noble lies they are occasionally led to disseminate do not seem to blemish their impeccable moral record (414b 8 - 415d 2).

A modern version of the same idea is stated in Max Weber’s famous lecture Politics as a Vocation, first published in 1918.

“...Anyone who seeks the salvation of his soul and that of others does not seek it through politics, since politics faces quite different tasks, tasks that can only be accomplished with the use of force. The genius, or the demon, of politics lives in an inner tension with the God of love as well as with the Christian God as institutionalized in the Christian churches, and it is a tension that can erupt at any time into an insoluble conflict.”2

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Here, the loss of integrity is expressed in Christian terms, as suggested by the references to the soul and the Christian God. The idea is that a politician cannot resort to the use of force and at the same time aspire to be a good Christian.

A third version of it appears in Jean Paul Sartre’s stage play *The Dirty Hands*, which came out in 1948. In a crucial passage, Heoderer, the head of an imaginary communist party, addresses Hugo, a younger idealistic comrade who openly questions him, as follows:

> “Purity is an idea for a yogi or a monk. You intellectuals and bourgeois anarchists use it as a pretext for doing nothing. To do nothing, to remain motionless, arms at your sides, wearing kid gloves. Well, I have dirty hands. Right up to the elbows. I’ve plunged them in filth and blood. But what do you hope? Do you think you can govern innocently?”

What Heoderer says, and to which Socrates and Weber would possibly concur, is that you cannot exercise political power and remain morally innocent. Innocence, justice and a good Christian conscience are admirable traits but they are for the politically idle.

The Idea Revisited

This idea requires further elaboration. Why are those in power likely to compromise or forfeit their moral integrity, while those who stay out of politics do not run this danger or, at least, they run it to a lesser degree?

One can distinguish two modern answers, which refer to two distinct morally alarming situations.

According to the first, governors are more prone to corruption than the governed. Corruption occurs when bearers of political or public power give priority to the satisfaction of their personal interests or of the interests of those who are close to them, at the expense of the discharging of the duties and the obligations associated with their office. It can be argued that those in power are able to harm or benefit large numbers of people, that they deal with huge sums of money, that they can bend the rules or pull the strings more easily than ordinary folks, that they are accorded a great deal of publicity and so forth. Thus, the argument goes, it is very likely for them to yield to the temptation to use their powers, capacities and privileges for their own gain or benefit. That is why they run the danger of easily compromising or forfeiting their moral integrity.

Corruption is undoubtedly a severe social and political problem, since it defies rule of law, gives rise to serious injustices and undermines democratic self-government. However, it is not a problem for moral philosophy, given that there is a consensus that corruption as a social practice is morally blameworthy. It is a form of callous selfishness or depravity applied to the public

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sphere. The real problem is not how to condemn it or to show why it is wrong—these can be easily done—but how to fight it. This is not moral philosophy’s main concern. What matters most concerning the suppression of corruption is to design and pay deference to institutions in order to prevent it, and to have efficient law-enforcing authorities to combat it.4

Yet, corruption is not the only reason for losing one’s moral integrity. According to a different approach, bearers of political and state power sometimes have to make decisions, which, although they are supposed to serve widely shared collective goals, their implementation requires the use of morally reprehensible means that no one would tolerate in ordinary life situations.5 In contrast to the more widespread cases of corruption, dirty-handed politicians and functionaries do not act motivated by self-interest, but, rather, end up doing things that are morally wrong, despite the fact that they intend to promote public ends which their citizens endorse. The problem seems unavoidable, since it does not arise from a possibly controllable personal disposition such as greed or ambition, but from the very structure of the situations with which politicians must deal.6 Most of these situations are usually understood as generating dilemmas, the best possible solution of which requires politicians to perform acts that would be out of bounds for ordinary folks.

However, it is not only the victims of political leaders who suffer. The fact that politicians or other state officials often have to be involved in serious wrongdoing to bring about widely shared collective ends has a negative effect on their moral integrity. If this term, as Susan Mendus notes, means “standing by one’s most fundamental commitments,” then “a person who loses or sacrifices integrity will feel both that he has abandoned the values he stands for and that he has associated with evil.”7 Actually, in the case of the well-intentioned politician or functionary, the necessity of doing evil to achieve a good or at least desirable state of affairs for her own people is a constant source of moral guilt. Although her intentions are noble, she has to get her hands dirty,  

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4 Ancient Greek democrats were aware of these dangers. Among the measures they took to minimize them were the delegation of judicial power to large citizen bodies that could not be easily bribed, the establishment of short terms for all officials along with an obligation to give a public account of their proceedings, and the implementation of a rotation system, which allowed all citizens to alternate in crucial political posts. See, among many others, P.J. Euben, “Corruption,” in T. Ball, J. Farr and R.L. Hanson (eds.), Political Innovation and Conceptual Change (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 220-246; K. Conover, “Thinking Through Political Corruption: The View from Athens,” Buffalo Law Review, 62 (2014), 69-117.

5 I do not consider the case of a leader who pursues a goal not shared by her people through morally reprehensible means as a dirty hands situation. This appears to be a clear-cut instance of abuse of power.

6 It should be noted, however, that these bearers of political and state power and their followers may not be motivated by greed, vengefulness or pure malice but they are often self-deceived into believing that morally questionable means they use will in fact bring about much appreciated ends they desire to. On the relation between self-deception and wrongdoing see L. Thomas, “Self-Deception as the Handmaiden of Evil,” Midwest Studies in Philosophy, 36 (2012), 53-61.

and this cannot but leave a stain on her moral conscience. There is roughly a plausible description of the dirty hands problem, first formulated by Michael Walzer in 1973, which came to strengthen the views of those believing that political morality can never reach the level of purity of private morality. From here on, I will focus exclusively on an assessment of the dirty hands problem.

Undoubtedly, there are efforts to deal with this problem within the frame of normative ethics, but this line of thought is not very promising, not because of philosophers’ inability to put forward elaborate arguments, but for the simple reason that philosophical moral theories are not popular with the general public, and this is unlikely to change in the short run. Philosophers of different persuasions might come up with sophisticated solutions to the problem. Certain utilitarians are expected to urge politicians to do what will have the best possible consequences for the greatest number and live happily with it. Alternatively, deontologists could possibly argue that certain decisions made by politicians are right regardless of their consequences. Philosophical objections notwithstanding, however, we cannot expect ordinary folks to embrace utilitarianism or any other philosophical moral theory. Making one’s hands dirty is a public problem with tremendous repercussions for significant numbers of individuals, and it must be approached in a manner the body politic could understand and possibly endorse.

To avoid any misunderstanding, I do not assume, here, that moral philosophy has nothing substantial to contribute to the issue examined. On the contrary, I find Kai Nielsen’s suggestion “[w]hen we know that there are several evils, not all of which can be avoided, we should always go for the lesser evil, but what the lesser evil is can be determined on the scene and contextually” extremely helpful for someone who cannot but get her hands dirty.

However, what interests me most is a host of questions that are relevant to the dirty hands problem but cannot be properly answered by moral philosophy. Who should be involved in crucial political decision-making, dealing with dirty hands situations? Should there be any institutional constraints on the use of evil means to achieve desirable collective ends? How should a polity react if it realizes that its leaders or high-ranking officials have badly handled a dirty hands situation? These are questions belonging to the realm of political philosophy.

Along these lines, I propose to situate the problem in question in a democratic context and offer some thoughts as to whether it is more easily avoidable or controllable when political power is shared by the many. It should be

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10 I take also for granted that simple expressions of regret or sorrow for reprehensible actions or omissions politicians think inevitable do not amount to a satisfactory solution of the dirty hands problem. The crucial issue here is how these actions that have so many spillover effects are to be avoided, not how their perpetrators feel about them. Cf. D. Runciman, Politics (London: Profile Books, 2014), pp. 33-47.
noted that this is not the usual approach. Reading Machiavelli, Weber, or even Walzer, one forms the impression that dignitaries resemble lonely Shakespearian heroes yielding to an unavoidable fate. However, things could be different in democratic politics.

**Historical Examples**

Before moving to my own proposal, I shall mention two examples, one from ancient times and one from the recent U.S. political history, where democracies did eventually manage to deal in a morally successful manner (and without relying on a comprehensive moral theory) with dirty hands situations, although they did not use this name to describe them.

In 427 BC, during the first phase of the Peloponnesian War, the island of Mytilene revolted against Athens. This event enraged Athenians, as they saw it as an act of gross ingratitude on the part of the islanders. The Athenian military force that was eventually sent managed to suppress the rebellion and capture its leaders. Then the assembly was convened to decide the form of punishment that should be inflicted on the Mytilenians. The verdict was harsh even by the standards of the ancient world: all male adults should be put to death and the remaining population should be sold in the slave markets. However, the next day many citizens started feeling uneasy with their decision and having second thoughts, since it was thought to be “cruel and monstrous to destroy a whole city instead of merely those who were guilty” (Thuc. Γ 36 4-5). Thus, they held a second meeting to discuss the case again.

Thucydides gave us an account of the debate that took place between the well-known demagogue Cleon and an ordinary citizen called Diodotus. Cleon urged the assembly to stick to its previous decision, putting forward a variety of arguments, one of which is directly relevant to the issue discussed here.

“If these people had a right to secede, it would follow that you are wrong in exercising dominion. But if, right or wrong, you are still resolved to maintain it, then you must punish these people in defiance of equity as your interests require; or else you must give up your empire and in discreet safety practice the fine virtues you preach.” (Γ 40 4-5).

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11 This line of thought also ignores the possibility of intervening with the conditions that allow or even provide important decision-makers with incentives to get their hands dirty. Cf. Coady’s point that “Machiavellian thinking has a tendency to obscure the fact that the background to political life is itself a fit subject for moral scrutiny and structural change, especially when it is that background itself that contributes to the alleged need for dirty hands.” C.A.J. Coady, *Messy Morality: The Challenge of Politics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2008), p. 89.

12 For an account of the dirty hands problem in ancient times which does not mention the debate concerning the fate of Mytilenians, see J.M. Parrish, *Paradoxes of Political Ethics: From Dirty Hands to the Invisible Hand* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), Part One.

What he actually said to his fellow-citizens was that, if they desire to pursue the prevailing collective goal of maintaining supremacy and control over their allies, they should act in disregard of the principles of fairness (παρὰ τὸ ἐκκός). Otherwise, they should abandon their claim to supremacy, opt for isolationism and be happy with the display of certain public moral attitudes while risking nothing. In other words, he told them that they were facing a dirty hands situation where wrongdoing was in his view unavoidable.

However, Diodotus was of a different mind, since he held that committing such a gross injustice was not necessary for securing the Athenians’ privileged status among their allies. His main arguments were that the Mytilenians had a right to secede and, more importantly, that such a cruel policy would not deter potential defectors. The reason is that if democratic citizens in other cities become convinced that death awaits them, even if they do not take part in a rebellion against Athens, they would be most willing to side with seceding oligarchs to increase their chances to survive.

The assembly was persuaded by Diototus’s arguments by a narrow margin, and decided to recall its previous decision and punish only the ringleaders of the rebellion.

The second example concerns the role of the publication of the Pentagon Papers in the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam. In 1967, U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara ordered the writing of a history of the Vietnam War from 1945 to 1967. The work was completed two years later by a group of analysts who were granted access to inside information, but it was not published because it had been classified “Top-secret – Sensitive.” However, in 1971, one of the analysts involved in this project, Daniel Ellsberg, gave the greatest part of this work to The New York Times, which started publishing excerpts from it. It was revealed that the American people had been systematically deceived by their governments, that policymakers were displaying an arrogant refusal to face reality and, worst of all, that they kept on sacrificing young Americans, not to win the war, but to avoid a humiliating defeat. In Ellsberg’s words “there was in Vietnam a whole set of what amounted to institutional ‘anti-learning’ mechanisms working to preserve and guarantee unadaptive and unsuccessful behavior.” From the point of view adopted here, U.S. authorities, like the Athenians twenty-five centuries ago, decided to get their hands dirty to secure their supremacy in the international scene. As is well known, the publication of these documents and the reactions it sparked contributed, among many other factors, to the changing of public opinion that eventually led the Nixon administration to end U.S. military involvement in Vietnam in 1973.

Suggestions

Presumably, by citing two examples, one cannot maintain that democracies always, or most of the time, have done their best to avoid the dirty hands problem or to make up for the wrongdoing that it implies. On many occasions, the Athenians treated their defecting allies with extreme cruelty, ruthlessness and ferocity. In modern times, the atomic bombings of the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 constitute a clear example of easily succumbing to the dire logic of a dirty hands situation, with terrible repercussions that still haunt us. The Truman administration was aware of the destructive potential of nuclear weapons, and it appears that it never gave any serious consideration to other options, such as making a demonstration to Japan’s leaders of what these bombs were capable of doing. One could also add more recent examples, such as the Iran-Contra affair or certain rights and due process violations in the fight against terrorism.

My claim is rather different. I believe that, if they really desire so, advanced democracies have the potential to avoid the dirty hands problem to a certain extent or to mitigate the harmful consequences ensuing from endorsing its basic structure. Their success is conditional upon acknowledging that this is a morally challenging issue that has to be dealt with seriously and responsibly within the public sphere, as well as upon the endorsement of the principle that serious wrongdoing cannot be condoned as a means to achieve desirable collective goals. This presupposes a change in many democratic people’s attitude to turn a blind eye to dirty hands situations and easily forgive those responsible for their occurrence, if the benefits accruing to them are tangible enough.

In particular, I maintain that, through constitutional provisions and ordinary legislation, a liberal democracy, which enjoys a long tradition of respecting human rights and the rule of law, can prohibit the use of certain morally appalling means (murder, torture, blackmail, certain forms of lying and deception etc.) that are likely to be used by the authorities to achieve morally justifiable public ends. Thus, public officials will be prevented from getting their hands dirty, irrespective of the collective goals that are at stake. In addition, it can develop a robust in bello morality, since warfare generates a huge variety of dirty hands situations. There is no doubt that setting public rules of this type is not an easy task. However, the formation of an overwhelming consensus among the body politic on the inadmissibility of certain means, which does not need to depend on the prevalence of a comprehensive moral theory, is a first step that needs to be taken.

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17 These prohibitions can gather public support once the public is convinced that things can easily get out of hand if authorities are allowed to resort to these appalling means even in cases of supreme emergency. Cf. Coady (*op. cit.* , pp. 86-91) who speaks about the dangers of abuse and corruption.
Nevertheless, the problem cannot be entirely solved through legislation for two reasons: (a) Conscientious officials may be absolutely convinced that on certain rare occasions, the achievement of public goals of the utmost importance will outweigh the harm done by the use of the prohibited means. (b) It is reasonable to believe that no legislative body can determine in advance all future dirty hands situations that are likely to occur and legislate accordingly.  

As far as the first issue is concerned, democracies can cultivate a certain public ethos, which would lead officials who have dirtied their hands to admit their deeds publicly and be prepared to face the consequences. This does not mean that the harm done will be avoided, but at least justice will be served.

Regarding the second issue, it can be argued that:

(i) In pluralistic democracies the more citizens are engaged in decision-making procedures pertaining to (not legally regulated) dirty hands situations, the more there may be who refuse to dirty their hands or who have second thoughts after the decision is made. The reason underlying this assumption is the epistemic superiority of democracy, an idea that goes back to Aristotle who argued that a deliberating multitude makes better decisions compared to one person or a small group with superior intellectual qualities. Today, there are various sophisticated theories about the wisdom of the crowds, but it seems that one necessary condition for achieving its epistemic superiority is to have genuine deliberation among differently minded people. One can assume that larger bodies, such as a parliament or another assembly, will make morally better decisions concerning the handling of dirty hands situations, provided that the debate takes place within a normative framework where the view that the end always justifies the means is not the prevailing one.

(ii) In a pluralistic democracy, where a wrong decision pertaining to a (not-legally regulated) dirty hands situation is taken by a handful of officials who act in secrecy, it is likely to be disputed and possibly rebuked in case it receives wide publicity. Publicity, supported by a constitutionally entrenched right to free speech, allows the expression of critical and dissenting views. If citizens realize that they, or a segment of them, are the victims of the author-

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19 To put it differently, public officials should be accustomed to view such transgressions only as acts of civil disobedience. The contrast between this honest and open approach and the current widespread tendency of dirty-hands politicians and functionaries to be secretive in their dealings, to try to stick to their positions of power at any cost and to rely heavily on associates and political friends to rescue them or take a bullet for them is more than obvious.


21 For an early robust defense of publicity, see J. Bentham, Political Tactics, ed. M. James, C. Blamires and C. Pease-Watkin (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), pp. 29-44.
ties’ wrongdoing, they will do something to change their plight or to make the authorities answerable to them. But, even if the victim is someone else, such as a foreign people, similar reactions can be provoked. In the Vietnam War, the victims were the American electorate, the military personnel and the Vietnamese people.

It should be stressed once more that there is no assurance that the people will always react in the above-specified manner. Nonetheless, if people start pressing for more publicity and for genuine wide deliberation over crucial political issues, it is highly probable that dirty hands situations—occasional failures notwithstanding—will overall be better handled than they are handled in authoritarian regimes or in democracies authoritatively ruled by elected elites.\(^\text{22}\)

The dirty hands problem cannot be entirely eliminated and, as it has been suggested, it can provoke serious political and social crises. However, it is my view that its placement and discussion within a democratic context could, under a jointly necessary set of conditions that have yet to be obtained, make it lose much of its sting, and allow us to minimize its harmful consequences that affect perpetrators and victims alike.\(^\text{23}\)

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\(^\text{22}\) It is clear that the conception of democracy that is presupposed in my argument gives substantial powers of deliberation and decision-making to ordinary citizens. As has been aptly remarked, “the democracy/dirty hands connection is only sustainable given a highly truncated, narrow, elitist version of democracy.” D.P. Shugarman, “Democratic Dirty Hands?,” in P. Rynard and D.P. Shugarman (eds.), *Cruelty and Deception: The Controversy Over Dirty Hands in Politics* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2000), 229-249, p. 244. However, this level of citizen participation has not yet been achieved in most advanced democracies.

\(^\text{23}\) I have benefited from the critical comments of two anonymous referees.
Global Values and Combating Global Crises

JĀNIS T. OZOLINŠ

Introduction

Although there are many other crises, there are four crises that the world faces that we wish to address, and these are economic, demographic, secular and social. The economic crisis is, to some extent, well known, since, in the past five years or so, people everywhere have become accustomed to hearing about the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) and its effects on markets and economies around the world. The world is still struggling with its aftermath, and, in many places, as austerity measures bite deep, the human cost is significant, as people lose their jobs and livelihoods. The second crisis is a demographic one, though it is by no means uniform globally. Plummeting birth rates, as well as increasingly aging populations in the West and also in Asia, will affect the ability of nations to maintain the economic prosperity that is required to support the greater number of old people. Raising the retirement age is not a complete solution since not everyone will be able to continue to work and the increasing demand for health services will create significant financial burdens on governments. Whether aging populations will be as much of a burden on the community as it is predicted to be is arguable, but, nevertheless, the demographic crisis is one that needs to be taken seriously. The third crisis, which we have called secular, is the increasing evidence of hostility, especially in the Western world, towards religion. While it is particularly virulent in the West, it is by no means restricted to the West, as the idea that religion is a private matter that should never be manifested in the public sphere is taking root, with few exceptions, around the world. Secularism, which purports to be neutral in relation to religion, seeks to eliminate all references to religion and religious values in the public sphere, claiming that the diversity of religious faith in the community means that agreement can only be reached with respect to public matters if religious views are bracketed out from discussion of them. This is a significant crisis because, while preaching tolerance of all views, secularism at its most aggressive is intolerant of religion. This results in the religious voice being denied a hearing in the public arena, and entails the loss of a significant perspective in the consideration of the many social and political problems facing nations. The fourth crisis is related to the third, but is independent of it. The social crisis arises largely in the West, but is not restricted to it, and concerns the rise of individualism and the focus on individual rights, as opposed to recognizing that human beings are social animals. Liberalism or, in its more radical form, libertarianism, holds that individual auton-

1 The exceptions would be in the Muslim world, where religion is not separated from the State. Probably the only truly theocratic states are Iran and Saudi Arabia. Vatican City could also be considered a theocracy.
omy is absolute and so individual needs take precedence over any other needs, provided that these do no harm to others. In practice, however, this means that individuals are almost unchallengeable in the claiming of rights. For example, a number of new rights have arisen that would not have been considered subject to rights claims in the past, such as the claim that individuals have the right to die at a time of their choosing, gay couples have a right to marriage and prospective parents have a right to select the sex of their child. The difficulty is that the claiming of many new rights leads, not to liberty for all, but, rather, to intolerance and totalitarianism, because the focus is on what is good for the individual, not for the community. Rights thus become simply subjective claims that are asserted, and since there is no genuine attempt at rational argument, such claims are sustained only by ignoring opposing views. This leads to intolerance of opposing views and, where the individuals have political power, the imposition of their will. A possible cause of this is the misconstrual of freedom as freedom from constraint, rather than understanding it as a freedom to choose the constraints under which one lives.

It may be objected that the four crises chosen are selective and so give priority to problems which, though important, are not as significant for human beings and indeed the whole planet as, for example, environmental crises. Environmental crises include such matters as climate change (which generally means global warming), the destruction of forests, the extinction of species, genetically modified foods, the loss of drinkable fresh water and the depletion of non-renewable resources. There can be no doubt that environmental crises are also deserving of consideration and it is acknowledged that the destruction of the physical environment would result in the annihilation of the human species as well as of life itself. The other four crises would no longer be relevant if the physical environment on which human beings depend is destroyed. The environmental crisis is deserving of treatment on its own and it would not be possible to do justice to it here. Climate change and global warming alone have generated much debate, not just scientifically, but from a philosophical point of view. Much remains to be said. While the environmental crises are significant and also need attention, the four selected crises remain to be addressed.

None of these crises are disconnected. We have already alluded to the connections between crises three and four, but all the crises can be shown to be connected to one another. Environmental crises are not disconnected from human activity, since the depletion of non-renewable resources is clearly linked with their consumption by human beings. Similarly, human economic activity has a direct effect on the degradation of the environment and brings about the extinction of species, as forest land is cleared and species have less habitat in which to live. The demographic crisis is also linked to the economic crisis, since the declining population can be linked to the lack of support for families, while the rise of the claim that people have a right to die could be linked to the economic costs of supporting an ageing population that requires significant health care resources. The economic crisis is linked to the rise of secularism, since it replaces a religious view of the aims of economic activity with
one which absolutizes profit. Instead of economic activity being for the greater glory of God through human fulfilment directed to the common good, it is directed to an abstract pursuit of profit for its own sake. God is replaced by profit as the end of human activity. While the pursuit of profit in order to provide investors with a return is offered as its justification, the creation of more and more abstract financial products suggests that profit derived from these is also abstract. Moreover, human beings are no longer motivated by religious beliefs to treat their neighbours as themselves and so to take care to be fair in their business dealings, but by a slavish and irrational belief in the market as providing a just distribution of the goods of economic activity. This relieves individuals from having to take any responsibility for their actions, since it is the will of the market that decides what an equitable distribution for the common good is. This also connects to a view about the near absolute right to property that is a hallmark of libertarianism and which is a symptom of the fourth crisis. Although libertarianism preaches tolerance and autonomy, since each individual is entitled to pursue his or her own individual good, in practice, this means intolerance of any viewpoint that proposes restrictions on autonomy and argues for a common good to which all are subject. The right to property is restricted, since the distribution of wealth is to be regulated. Religions which argue for the common good cannot be tolerated, since they oppose the libertarian view. It is evident that the four crises are interconnected.

In this paper, we can provide only the barest of sketches of the four crises and likewise what is suggested as a way forward is similarly only able to be sketched. In each case, what is suggested is a shift to values that propose that the aim of human activity is always human flourishing and that, for each individual, this aim is communal. The reminder that human activity is essentially moral is a contribution that the philosopher is equipped to make. Once the shift in values is accepted, in each case of crisis, there are specialists, such as economists, demographers, social scientists and others better equipped to propose solutions than philosophers. We shall proceed by providing a brief account of each crisis and some ways in which they could be addressed. It will be apparent that the position adopted will be a communitarian one in which religion is accorded a place alongside secularism. The analysis, therefore, is from the perspective of a particular position, which, broadly speaking, could be labelled a classical Aristotelian Thomistic position. We do not intend to argue for this position, but to show that the adoption of its values leads to a different perspective of the four crises. This in itself has value in analyzing the four crises.

Economic Crisis

The Global Financial Crisis (GFC) is well known to most people in the world and, as its name suggests, was global in its effects, even though it originated in the United States. We do not propose to go over old ground, since it is now some time since the GFC first manifested itself with the collapse of a number of major banks, financial institutions and enterprises, the best known of which
was Lehman Brothers, which filed for bankruptcy in 2008. Financial institutions and industries (such as the car industry) globally had to be supported through government subsidies that ran into many hundreds of billions of American dollars. These were initiated because allowing major financial institutions, such as Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae, to collapse completely would be financially disastrous for, not only the U.S. economy, but also the rest of the world. In the United States, the bail-out package called the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) provided up to $700 billion (USD). In the intervening period since the announcement of the package in October of 2008 and its closure two years later, the actual amount spent by the United States Federal Government was much smaller, as some of the funds were used to purchase assets and some of the money was repaid. The overall actual cost to the U.S. government is difficult to estimate, as market fluctuations in the value of assets and different ways of assessing the value of assets give different results.²

Recent turmoil in European countries, such as Ireland and Greece, in the aftermath of the GFC, illustrates the problems that a lack of regulation of the market can cause. Economies across Europe, as well as elsewhere, continue to struggle and there are fears that major European economies such as those of Spain and Italy could also be in trouble. In all cases, a common denominator has been that debt has risen while the value of assets to cover the debt has fallen, creating a financial crisis. Just as in the United States, Spain’s debt crisis was generated by a housing boom that resulted in many people taking on debt that they could either barely manage or cannot manage at all, resulting in defaults.³ In the case of Greece, the level of debt reached 170% of the GDP in 2011.⁴ If financial resources have been committed to housing, it is evident that there is less for other financial activity and so other goods cannot be purchased. This, then, has flow on effects as other parts of the economy stagnate and lead to corporations looking at ways of achieving cost savings. Generally this will be in the direction of cutting labour costs, which, in turn, leads to a spiral of unemployment and further lack of spending capacity, until the economy is brought to the brink of collapse. Where the government has already been living beyond its means by spending more than it takes in taxes, as a result of a slowing economy there are fewer taxes to be gathered and the only option remaining (apart from continuing to rack up debt) is to make large cuts to its own spending.⁵

In analyzing the causes of the GFC and the ethics of those who were involved in the financial dealings which brought on the financial disaster, an important question is the consideration of the purposes of the market. The conventional response is that the market exists in order to create profits from

⁴ See http://www.ekathimerini.com/4dcgi/_w_articles_wsite2_1_22/04/2013_495122.
⁵ Another option is to print more money, as the United States has been able to do. This is a dangerous strategy, however, as it can lead to significant inflation.
various economic activities. This is understandable when we think of various kinds of businesses run by ordinary people who need to make a profit in order to make a living. Making a living, however, seems to be a much more modest activity than making a profit. Making a living can be pursued through a variety of callings and will include providing services and labour. Generally, we think of those in trades and professions as making a living, but shopkeepers and those who trade in goods also strive to make a living through buying and selling various commodities. In order to do this, they need to buy goods at a lower price than that at which they sell them, thus having a sufficient margin between the two in order to be able to support themselves and their families. Profit is necessary in order that the trader make a living. Similarly, in a variety of other activities, profit is necessary in order to provide the necessities of life for oneself and one’s dependents. This will also mean sufficient means for a full life that allows for leisure and communal activities. The farmer in his field and manufacturer in her factory labour in order to grow food or make goods, such as clothes, that they then sell to others and so are able to support themselves. This is obvious and there are no startling new observations in this. The problem, however, arises when the aim is not profit to make a living, but where profit is pursued for its own sake alone. Productive activity, in which individuals exchange what they have grown or made with each other at a just price, contributes to the common good and to the good of the community. Here, however, the value that underlies economic activity is not profit, but the common good.

A fair price is one in which both parties are satisfied that they have received a just return in the exchange. That is, the buyer believes he has paid what the goods are worth, and the seller believes she has sold the goods at a price which covers her outlays, expenses and has a profit margin that enables her to make a living. This is, understandably, somewhat subjective, and so we have the market which allegedly provides a mechanism to ensure that prices are fair by adjusting them according to supply and demand, and to competition. The seller cannot charge too much, since the buyer can go to someone else, and supply and demand ensures that a balance is struck between the number of goods that are manufactured and those that are needed. Ideally, the market provides the conditions under which both buyer and seller are satisfied that their transaction is fair to both parties.

It is clear, however, that an unregulated market is far from being the “invisible hand” that ensures that neither buyer nor seller is exploited. The market does not act in an ideal world, since neither buyers nor sellers operate in a world where there is free competition between sellers to offer the best price and, in addition, a world in which supply as well as demand can be manipulated. Diamonds, for example, are stockpiled in order to keep prices artificially high. Advertising is an important tool in the manipulation of demand, so that creating a desire for diamond rings, for instance, ensures a ready market

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for diamonds and, if the supply is kept in check, prices can be kept high to ensure maximum profitability. On the other side of the coin, supermarkets have been well known to use their buying power to force suppliers to lower their prices.\(^7\) Though two examples do not make the case, there are numerous other examples that can be found of supply and demand being artificially regulated in order to maximize prices or minimize costs. The operation of the market is premised on both buyer and seller acting in a self-interested manner and this provides the mechanism by which fair prices are determined. Unfortunately, the assumption that the market acts as an invisible regulator that cannot itself be manipulated is manifestly false, given the ability of both sellers and buyers to create conditions that favour them in the setting of prices.

There are two fundamental differences between what is described here and what occurs in financial markets where financial institutions trade in financial products. Firstly, though profit might have some vestigial connection to the idea of making a living, because it is about making money from money, it is only concerned with profit for its own sake. Successful trading simply means increased profit for oneself. There is no concern about whether a price is fair or whether the buyer to whom we have sold is satisfied or not. It is assumed that she, too, will wish to make a profit and will sell to someone else at a profit. Secondly, the situation when we trade in financial products does not appear to be anything like the very basic and naïve account of the market. The idea that Adam Smith’s “invisible hand” will regulate the market so that it will result in a fair distribution of wealth is implausible.

The Global Financial Crisis not only caused the collapse of some very large and respected companies, but affected the lives of a great many ordinary people. Beginning with those who were enticed to apply for loans that they could not afford to repay, and ending with those who had money in superannuation or pension funds who saw their life savings disappear, the GFC affected nearly everyone. If the market economy always acts for the good of human beings, then it is fairly clear that it did not do so this time, unless, somehow, it is possible to argue that the pain and suffering of the poor, the working and middle classes was for the greater common good. Unfortunately, the unregulated market economy is not directed towards the common good, but to profit and, hence, is not at all concerned with the common good, understood as providing everyone with a just share of what is created by the productive labour of each working person. As Locke opines, wealth is created through productive labour.\(^8\) Classically, capital by itself creates nothing unless

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it is coupled with labour. Aristotle agrees, decrying charging interest in order
to make money from money.\(^9\)

While the complexity of modern economics makes the task of finding solu-
tions difficult, it is evident that a recognition of the fact that the market and
economic activity operates for the benefit of all people, would be a major re-
orientation in values. The capitalist needs the labourer, as much as the labour-
er needs capitalist; both have a vested interest in the success of whatever en-
terprise in which they are engaged. This suggests that the true aim of econom-
ic activity is not profit, but the common good. Thus, a broader view of eco-
nomic activity, focused not on the mere pursuit of profit, but on the well-
being of all, would require a valuing of the common good ahead of profit, and
therefore a fundamental reorientation of the market. The implication is that
profit is at the service of the common good and is not an end in itself. This
will require that the market is regulated in such a way that its basic aim is to
ensure that it serves the common good. The details of such a reorientation,
however, remain to be developed, though Bernard Lonergan, in his economic
work, has provided an analysis of what this would look like.\(^10\)

**Demographic Crisis**

Though not directly related, the GFC also brought into view the second crisis,
which has two elements. Firstly, particularly in the West, but not restricted to
it, are the falling birth rates in many European countries, as well as in other
parts of the world. The global population is projected to continue to grow, but
it is evident that it is slowing and more recent demographic projections sug-
gest that the world’s population will begin to decline within the next 70 years.
The second part of the crisis is the aging of the world’s population. Put to-
tgether, in many countries there is not only a declining birth rate, but, because
of increasing survival rates, an aging population. This means that, in a very
short time, within the next 50 years, the number of workers available to sup-
port the aged will have declined.\(^11\) Though this in itself may turn out to be not
the major difficulty that it seems to be thought it will be,\(^12\) there is, neverthe-

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\(^9\) Aristotle, *The Politics*, Book I, Ch. 10, trans. T.A. Sinclair, rev. T.J. Saunders, (Har-

\(^10\) B.J.F. Lonergan, *For a New Political Economy*, in *Collected Works of Bernard Lon-
ergan*, Vol. 21, ed. P.J. McShane (ca. 1942; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998);
lected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, Vol. 15, ed. F.G. Lawrence, P.H. Byrne, and C.C.
Hefting Jr. (1944; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999).

\(^11\) Pritchett and Viarengo argue that Europe is headed towards a demographic “fiscal
cliff,” where the number of workers providing resources for those not working, such as the
elderly, becomes too small to support them. L. Pritchett and M. Viarengo, “Why Demogra-
phic Suicide? The Puzzles of European Fertility,” *Population and Development Review*, 38

\(^12\) See, for example, Nancy J. Altman, who argues that there has been a decline in the ra-
tio of workers to retirees over a period of time from 16:1 in 1950 to 4:1 currently, with no
ill effects. This is because what is required is that the amount of wealth generated has to be
less, an obvious effect on the economy that will be experienced. The ramifications of declining birth rates and rising life expectancies are complex and it is difficult to predict their outcomes. Nevertheless, it is a crisis, particularly for countries that are projected to see their populations considerably reduced.

It is evident already that, in the developed world, population decline has been compensated by a shift to more a technology-based industry that does not rely heavily on a cheap labour force to produce goods. For example, much of the world’s textile industry can now be found in Asia, where the cost of labour is much less than in the developed world. Likewise, China’s economic growth has been largely built on its enormous labour resources, and the same may be seen, though not to the same extent, in India. Other countries, especially in Africa, with growing populations, may well provide the impetus for economic growth, while more developed nations seek to maintain their prosperity through technological innovation and scientific breakthroughs. Concentration on specialized areas requiring highly trained individuals would seem to be the way forward for countries with declining populations but highly developed education and research systems.

Though the economic problems associated with demographic decline seem to be capable of reaching a solution, a more pressing problem will be the provision of high quality health care for the aging population. It is evident that older people are much heavier users of health care services than young people and the question of the allocation of health care resources arises. This ranges from the drugs required by the elderly to keep various diseases at bay, to surgery such as hip replacements and finally to palliative care. In addition, there is the need to provide services such as visits by nurses and other health workers in their homes, as well as such basic necessities as cleaning and the cooking of meals. Some of these latter services are able to be provided for by the children of the elderly or other younger relatives, but, in many cases, they cannot. Most importantly, the elderly need companionship and the sense of belonging to the community to which they have contributed. This becomes difficult if the regions in which they live have fewer and fewer residents.

Associated with a declining population is the gradual emptying of rural areas, with younger people leaving to find work in larger population centres, leaving the elderly to maintain services in small towns. With the decline in the number of people, small industries and businesses are also forced to close, so that there are fewer options for those young people who might have wanted to remain. The overall effect is that, with fewer places of employment, young people who wish to remain are faced with unemployment, or, at best, underemployment. The situation for rural communities is very difficult.

sufficient to support the retired population and this does not depend on the ratio of workers to retirees. This seems to be right, but it does also depend on economic growth. N. J. Altman, *The Battle for Social Security: From FDR’s Vision to Bush’s Gamble* (Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley and Sons, 2005).

There are numerous reasons offered for the declining birth rates in most of the world and it is not our intention to discuss these. It suffices to say that European governments, as well as other governments, have begun to recognize the importance of arresting declining birth rates by providing incentives for women to have more children. Whether this is sufficient or whether there needs to be more family friendly policies adopted remains to be seen.

Encouraging immigration of skilled migrants is another means of increasing the population of those in younger age groups, though this may have significant ramifications on a country’s sense of identity. For example, a small country could rapidly lose its character and have its language and culture destroyed by a large influx of immigrants with a different language and culture. For large traditionally immigrant nations such as the United States, Canada and Australia, this is likely to be less of a problem, but tensions still arise between immigrants and more established citizens.

Dealing with the demographic crisis also demands a change in values. The importance of family is well recognized in Confucian cultures and within the Judeo-Christian tradition, amongst others. Filial piety is a key virtue, and the fourth commandment in the Decalogue enjoins us to honour our father and mother. Governments appear to recognize that the family is the cornerstone of the State, but seem reluctant to embrace policies which actively support families. For many young people, embarking on family life comes at great economic cost, as it is well-nigh impossible to support a family without two wages. A realization that the future of the community and the State depends on nurturing its children requires a re-orientation from liberal individualism to communitarianism. As a consequence, better ways to redistribute wealth to provide the requisite support for families need to be found.

Similarly, dealing with the aging population also requires a change to a more communitarian understanding of the relationships between the aged members of society and younger members. Provided that they are able to remain healthy, the elderly are able to remain productive members of the community long after they have retired. The conception of them as burdens on working age individuals is false; many provide unpaid childcare for their children, as well as financial support. Others lead productive and busy lives as volunteer workers for charities and support for community organizations. A more inclusive understanding of the dynamics of the community, as provided by a communitarian ethics, will help in minimizing the effects of the demographic crisis.

The Crisis of Secularism

Taylor, in his seminal work, describes three forms of secularism: the first involves the separation of Church and State, so that politics is practiced devoid of any connection to religion, the second sense is the absence of religion in

the public sphere, and the third is the sense in which belief in God is one option among many. In the second sense, the absence of religion in the public sphere is the result of the falling away of religious practice and belief, so that people no longer attend religious services and births, deaths and marriages are no longer occasions for celebrations involving religious ceremonies. This is certainly observable in much of Western society. In the third form of secularization, a form of humanism, in which there is no further end than human flourishing, emerges and provides an alternative to religion, so that religious belief becomes a particular choice. In this third sense, according to Taylor, there is, despite the absence of a belief in God, a sense of the significance of leading life to the full. Although he is right to point to the deep longings in human hearts for human excellence as characteristic of all human beings, because there are different belief and value systems leading to different consequences for believers and non-believers, adherence to religious beliefs seems to be threatening to non-believers. The vitriolic outpourings of, amongst others, Richard Dawkins, for example, provide some experiential evidence of this hostility.

Whatever the reasons for it, there is now an open animosity in many Western countries to religion and the values that it professes. This is evidenced in the persecution of the Christian Church, most commonly the Catholic Church, in the press and public media. Intolerance of a contrary view about so-called gay marriage, for example, is shrilly expressed and the possibility of rational debate is impossible. Similarly, there is little tolerance of Christian – or indeed any religious faith’s – views on matters such as abortion and euthanasia. The Christian church is routinely derided for holding to its beliefs. Views opposed to those found in the media are dismissed as out of step with the modern age. Religious views, it is asserted, have no place in the public arena. This makes it difficult to engage in discourse, since, in the secular public forum, it is held that it is impossible if one of the discussants insists on basing his or her arguments on values and beliefs that are supported by religious convictions.

We have not so far made an attempt to indicate what could be meant by the public square, since it is evident that this can have several meanings. Firstly, it is clear that one of the chief publics for any religion will be its own adherents. Thus, we can expect that pronouncements by the Pope, for example, will be listened to by many who profess the Roman Catholic faith. Muslims will listen to the statements of their Imams, Jews will listen to their Rabbis. Secondly, another audience will be provided by members of other religions who will also reflect on what is said by the leaders of different faiths, as their statements will also provide guidance on a variety of public issues. Interreligious dialogue is an important means of sharing common views, as well as different ones, amongst believers. This becomes especially important in secular societies that are hostile to all forms of religion, since a united front on an issue still carries some weight in its consideration. Other religions will also

look to other religious communities for support in the practice of their own faith. Hence, one public square is provided by a particular faith community and another, an enlarged one, is provided by adherents of other religions. A third public square will be formed by the widest social and political class. In general, when we speak of the public square, it is the widest and most general audience about which we are speaking. It is in this widest audience that the greatest variety of values and beliefs will be found, and the most trenchant criticisms of religious positions on various moral questions. It is in the widest public square that there will be least understanding of a religious position on any issue.

More broadly, it should also be recognized, as MacIntyre has pointed out, that there may be no common public sphere which shares a common understanding of the conceptual basis on which particular evaluations of global and local issues are made and on which discussion can centre, let alone in a particular faith, such as the Christian one. The reason for this is that there is no educated public which shares a common history, tradition or values. More broadly, it should also be recognized, as MacIntyre has pointed out, that there may be no common public sphere which shares a common understanding of the conceptual basis on which particular evaluations of global and local issues are made and on which discussion can centre, let alone in a particular faith, such as the Christian one. The reason for this is that there is no educated public which shares a common history, tradition or values.15 This will mean that any discussion of important issues cannot take place because the audience will not have sufficient apprehension, if any, of the concepts being used to elaborate a particular position to be able to understand the argument. What happens, instead of rational debate, says MacIntyre, is that opposing parties engage in assertion and counter-assertion, as well as negotiation and bargaining, with the result that the outcome is usually determined by a political elite.16 Decisions are made, not through rational argument, but through persuasion, manipulation of opinion and, in the final analysis, through the use of power. Another problem to which MacIntyre alludes is that the general public no longer have a sufficient breadth of education to be able to grasp the implications of the information that is being marshalled in support of particular points of view. Hence, arguments about the role of human beings in global climate change and what needs to be done to reduce the impact of human activities on the environment are little understood. Arguments, for example, for a Carbon Tax, which has been introduced in some countries, such as Australia, are hardly comprehended by reasonably educated people, let alone the general public.17 The same applies to debates about other controversial issues, which are marked, not by sophisticated debate, but by manipulation of public opinion.

One such controversial issue is so-called gay marriage. In most countries, marriage is defined as between a man and a woman, and is understood as the


16 MacIntyre and Dunne, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

17 It could also be argued that they are little understood by even educated elites. The effect of the tax in Australia on the reduction of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere over a period of time will be miniscule. This is not to argue that human beings ought not to be more mindful of how they look after the environment.
public acknowledgement and communal support of the commitment that the couples are making to each other. It is established as an institution, established for the nurture and protection of the children which are the product of that union. Intimacy between a man and a woman in a marriage has both a unitive function and procreative function. It is established as the cornerstone of community with these twin purposes. Arguments, if any are mounted, for gay marriage fail to recognize these twin purposes, concentrating solely on the unitive dimension. Rational argument is avoided and, instead, fictitious statistics are quoted claiming overwhelming support for gay marriage. Little actual evidence is provided.

As an antidote to secularism, philosophy is an important weapon because of its ability to be, to some extent, independent of religious or theological positions. That it is not entirely free from a theological position is captured by Austin Farrer’s claim that most people, whether they are willing to admit it or not, subscribe to some kind of crypto-theism. This is because, whatever philosophical stance a person takes on various questions of importance, it will have its roots in the metaphysical principles which he or she accepts. Farrer’s claim is that invariably these metaphysical principles will appeal to some idea of the Absolute or the transcendent and this can be used to lead persons to a conception of God. Whether Farrer is right about this or not, what is central is the ability of philosophy to provide a common space in which discourse can take place in the public arena and its unique ability to appeal to the canons of rationality. An important element in this, however, is not to hide the metaphysical presuppositions nor the values from which arguments begin. That is, though arguments for any position have to begin in a common space, this does not mean that the beliefs and values to which persons are committed are somehow to be ignored. An argument cannot be fully understood unless its presuppositions are also laid bare.

Religious viewpoints are not irrational, since it can be easily shown that every position, whether religious or not, is based on metaphysical principles. Indeed, Christianity has always claimed that it is based on the twin pillars of faith and reason. These are inseparable and, as Aquinas says, without reason we cannot be sure that what is held by faith is true. There is only one truth. If this is the case, then, provided that interlocutors are genuine in seeking debate about controversial matters, they will be prepared to listen to and dialogue with religious positions. The difficulty, however, is that opposition to religious points of view tend to be irrational.

The idea that debate in the public square has to be conducted with respect for all persons and in a spirit of openness is not new. Habermas, in his work on discourse ethics, has attempted to enunciate the requirements for genuine dialogue. Respect for persons is not simply a matter of politely listening to

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another, and then ignoring what he or she says, but engaging in rational argument. Arguments from a religious point of view can be at least as rational as any from a secular point of view and, if we take respect for persons seriously, we need to be prepared to engage with religious perspectives. What is crucial is that, if we are to live as a community, we need to establish the boundaries of what we hold in common and where we differ. In doing so, we are better able to reach, if not consensus, at least an understanding of the issues that divide us.

Social Crisis

Although it is difficult to generalize across all countries, since they will exhibit a diverse range of social structures, in those countries which profess to be liberal and democratic, there is a marked rise in totalitarianism when it comes to being tolerant of diverse viewpoints. This is not say that what is favoured is totalitarian government, rather, that there is a censoring of what it is permissible to say in public and what it is not. As we have already seen in relation to the crisis of secularism, the religious point of view is decried as not being appropriate in the public arena. Despite claims of value tolerance, the opposite is observed, and not of the kind intolerance traditionally discussed by philosophers, such as how far a liberal democratic state can ‘tolerate,’ in the name of democracy, groups who believe in the destruction of the democratic state. The kind of intolerance observed is the refusal to acknowledge that, on some issues, there are other equally legitimate points of view. In some instances, power or populism is used to silence opponents of what is held to be the majority liberal point of view. Normally, the majority view is also taken to be the enlightened and progressive one that upholds the autonomy of individuals. Moreover, where the professed majority view is in fact not the majority view, spurious statistics will be quoted at every opportunity that claim that the view being supported is the majority view. We have already mentioned this in relation to gay marriage, but the same tactic is also used in support of euthanasia. No tactic is left idle in the quest to impose a particular view.20

It is evident that not all countries in the West, in particular, have the same social structures, nor have they the same understanding of democracy. Although all could be considered, in some broad sense, liberal, some are more communitarianism than others. Some countries, such as the United Kingdom and the United States, value liberty and freedom over equality, and so tolerate high levels of income inequality, but as a result, also appear to be sanguine about high levels of poverty. The United States, for instance, is a nation with a significant disparity of income between the highest and lowest levels. Other countries, with a social market orientation, such as Germany, Italy, France, and Belgium, are more concerned with equality, and are willing to regulate

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20 It is not uncommon for both sides of a position to accuse each other of the tactics described here. If this is so, it makes it more urgent to ensure that there is a proper use of statistics and honesty in argument.
the levels of income so that there is less difference between income levels. Nevertheless, the same kind of intolerance of what are seen as non-progressive, non-enlightened positions on social issues also appear. Political correctness, which is the public face of intolerance, appears to have taken hold in Western European countries as much as in the United States and the United Kingdom; perhaps even more so, on some issues.

In non-Western countries, social crisis takes a different form and is the result of different kinds of pressure. For example, in China, corruption at various levels is difficult to control, and threatens social cohesion and civic harmony. Economic growth, despite policies designed to spread its benefits, has not been able to be distributed as fairly as it might be and the government faces a challenging task to distribute the goods of growth. Rising expectations of a growing middle class are also producing stresses and there are tensions as greater individual freedoms are sought by the younger generations. Unfortunately, the younger generations are not taking enough interest in their roles as citizens and so corrupt officials continue to thrive. In India, the caste system makes it difficult for the implementation of social policies that will improve the lives of women and children. Corruption is also a problem. The lack of tolerance in these countries takes a different form and is not the same as that in Western countries, though it can be expected that, as non-Western countries develop, they may also find themselves dealing with similar levels of intolerance in the name, paradoxically, of liberty and freedom. Our comments will be restricted to the problems arising in Western countries.

Contrary to the view of most commentators, it is not conservative politics which, as it is contended, leads to totalitarianism, but the liberal left, which seeks to eliminate all opposition to its position on various issues. The most obvious issues involve climate change (or global warming), so-called gay marriage, racism, euthanasia and abortion. Each of these issues requires serious debate and it is not our intent to do this here, but only to point out that it is not the so-called conservative side of politics — and here we can include such institutions as the Catholic Church — that seeks to eliminate discussion, but the politically correct left. Of course, it is abundantly obvious that a conservative position tends to want to maintain the status quo on most issues, and so can be judged to be constraining and repressive, but this in itself is not illegitimate. What would be illegitimate would the suppression of alternative points of view so that they cannot be expressed. Political correctness is one means that

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22 Zafirovski, for example, argues that it is conservative politics in the United States which seeks to repress and to constrain human rights and cites a number of authors, such as Talcott Parsons, Emile Durkheim, Herbert Spencer, Zygmunt Baumann, in support of the position that it is conservative politics that seeks to constrain and limit individual freedoms. While it might be true that conservatism seeks to limit freedoms, the liberal left, it is argued, seeks to suppress debate entirely. M. Zafirovski, “‘Libertarianism’ and the Social Idea of Liberty: Neo-conservatism’s ‘Libertarian’ Claims Reconsidered,” *Social Epistemology*, 25 (2011), 183-209.
can be used very effectively to silence any discussion of a difficult issue by deeming any alternative to the prescribed view on it as unthinkable. On the matter of climate change and global warming, for example, the evidence is not straightforward, nor is it clear to what extent human beings contribute to it. Prudentially, even if the extent of human contributions to global warming is unknown, it would be sensible to limit the extent to which human activity affects the temperature of the planet. One way of tackling this is to limit carbon emissions, but this is not the only environmental problem that needs to be addressed. It is important that human beings live in harmony with their environment and take seriously their stewardship of the earth, but this means that debate about how we minimize our effect on the environment should be wide ranging and not limited to one issue. Political correctness also affects debate about so-called gay marriage, an issue that, as we indicated previously, is cast as being about equality. This issue cannot be debated, since, for its proponents, there is no debate to be had. It is taken to be self-evident that marriage laws should be changed to accommodate same sex couples. Opposition is simply shouted down or ignored. In France, legislation was enacted to change the law, despite significant public opposition being voiced.

Racism is another issue on which political correctness prevents discussion. Another recent example was an incident in which a 13 year old girl called an Aboriginal footballer, Adam Goodes, an ape. Despite her later apology, this was taken to be a racist slur. Later, a sports commentator and President of the Collingwood football club, Eddie McGuire, against whom, Goodes team, the Swans, were playing also apologized for the racist slur. Unfortunately, following this apology, he himself on his radio program jokingly suggested that Goodes could be a candidate for advertising the new movie King Kong (about a very large ape that terrorizes New York). This latter indiscretion made world headlines. There is no doubt that, following the furor caused by the taunt by the 13 year old, it was a remarkably insensitive remark to make. What is problematic is that there was no debate about what constitutes racism, nor why calling an Aboriginal footballer an ape, was more offensive than calling a white Caucasian footballer an ape. If it is more offensive, then this in itself could be a form of racism. There could be no debate because what constituted racism was self-evident and did not require discussion, but rather a redoubling of corrective education in schools to prevent further instances of racism. While there is no disagreement with seeking to eliminate racism, it is the lack of open discussion of what constitutes genuine racism and what is simply mindless name calling that is to be deplored and it is political correctness which suppresses proper discussion.

The examples briefly discussed point to the rise of intolerance in the name of tolerance. Here, we have accused the liberal left of being responsible for...

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this, but it may be that it is equally the conservative right who are at fault. The lack of proper discussion and the rise of intolerance of opposing views is, however, a major crisis within society. The antidote to intolerance is more difficult to find. Education and encouraging civility within the community is perhaps one means of combatting intolerance. The recognition that there is more than one way of considering controversial questions is important, as well as respect for our opponents. Compromise is not always possible, but tensions between differing views are not always unproductive. In all cases, reason should be the guiding principle that structures debate.

We argue that a change to a more communitarian understanding of ourselves and our place in society is needed. This suggests that, in the global context, while we are not advocating the adoption of global values, nevertheless, a sense of solidarity with one another is needed if we are to value and respect each other. Intolerance and a lack of respect for views that differ from our own have to be countered by a realization that, in the case of all crises, an honest search for truth is required. If we are to have any chance of making headway in tackling the crises we have identified, a seismic shift in values is needed. Political correctness needs to be seen for what it is – intolerance and a blindness to that intolerance.

Conclusion

We have identified four crises that the world, perhaps more particularly, the Western world, faces. These were characterized as economic, demographic, secularist and social. It was proposed that the first crisis could be handled by a reorientation of the aim of the market towards the common good, the second, by the adoption of more family friendly policies, the third, by a recognition of the legitimacy of the religious viewpoint in the public square, and the fourth, by encouraging rational debate and open discussion. These are, none of them, particularly novel suggestions, but the crises themselves, taken together, require acting in concert, as well as the commitment to working alongside a diversity of views, each of which is of value.

In order to do this, a more communitarian understanding of our place within the world is required, one that understands that no individual can truly be herself or himself without relationships with others. This means a recognition of the social nature of human beings and that our identities are formed through our interactions with others. The first crisis, the economic crisis, did not happen because people were greedy or stupid, though it cannot be denied that these were contributing factors. It happened because various individuals did not consider their actions sufficiently in relation to others. A myopic concentration on profit led to it becoming the focus of all activity, forgetting that economics exists to serve all human beings, not just shareholders. It exists to serve not just shareholders, but all stakeholders, as more than just the employees, managers and owners of corporations, are affected by the decisions and actions that they take. The recent announcement in Australia by the Ford Motor Company that it will cease manufacturing cars in Broadmeadows and
Geelong (both in the State of Victoria) will affect, not just the Ford factory workers, but all of those who supply parts, those who provided lunches and others wider afield. In particular, it will devastate the Geelong community. It is not just Ford’s profits that are affected, but a much broader community. To combat the concentration on profits, a change in values is required towards a consideration of the common good.

The demographic crisis is also a result of individuals being forced to delay having children or not having them at all, because they do not have sufficient support from either families or communities to be able to confidently begin their own families. There are myriad reasons why people are no longer having children, but one of them is that, in a society which values individualism above all else, there is not enough support for couples to raise children. It is self-evident that a community will eventually disappear if it does not reproduce itself, hence it is imperative that an environment conducive to family life should be supported. This requires a re-orientation of what is most valued in a society from individualism to communitarianism. Once again, we need to see a shift in values.

A more inclusive society, oriented towards the community, will also go some distance in easing the differences which an individualistic, secular society exacerbates. While communitarianism itself does not assume a religious viewpoint, because it is inclusive, it encourages an understanding of the values and attitudes of others. Education has a key role to play in helping to construct a society which has a broad understanding of the values and beliefs of different religions and of the importance of the inclusion of all people in rational debate in the public arena. A more communitarian society recognizes the significance of the need to respect all persons and the potential contribution that they can make to the common good. This will include religious persons and their contributions.

Communitarianism also has a role to play in the easing of the social crisis. We can concede that there are large differences between the positions of conservatives and liberals on nearly every issue, but recognition of merit in an opponent’s position is enhanced if each is able to value the other’s position. This will be so if neither dogmatically insists on the truth of his or her position, but is willing to admit that no one perspective is ever able to see the whole truth. Humility in the face of the mystery of existence and of the complexity of human life is an attitude which goes some way to prevent intolerance and political correctness. Communitarianism is oriented towards the other and so to listening carefully to the views of others. Individualism is too self-absorbed and insistent on its own voice being heard and, to the extent to which a community is oriented towards listening to the other, it will be less inclined to political correctness.

The case for the importance of a more communitarian-oriented community as a step towards dealing with the four crises remains to be detailed. What

we have provided here is the merest of sketches and is largely suggestive. What is clear, however, is that the adoption of values more consistent with communitarianism is required. These need not mean that we have to find global values with which all will agree, but it does mean that we need to look more deeply for the values which foster solidarity, respect for persons, rational debate and care for one another. These will be found in every culture and tradition, though they will not always be recognizable to everyone. The identified four crises are serious and there are others that we did not consider. If we are committed to addressing them (and others), then the change in values is an important first step in galvanizing the will to work together for the common good.
Environmental Crisis: Challenges and Strategies to Achieve Sustainable Development

ASHOK KUMAR SINHA

Introduction: ‘Environment’ means a surrounding in which the external conditions influence the development or growth of people, animals or plants, providing living or working conditions, etc.

The earth is a unique planet of the solar system, as it has favorable conditions for the evolution and survival of various forms of life. Oxygen surrounds the earth with the layer of air, which is essential for all forms of life.

Thus, the environment in which a man lives consists of a physical, or non-living, environment and a biological, or living, environment. A change in physical environment brings about a change in biological environment.

Natural Resources: Rocks, minerals, soils, rivers and other water bodies, plants, air and animals are the gifts of nature or natural endowments. They become resources only when man locates them, or finds a use for them, or proposes to use them.

Challenges: Man has destroyed or damaged natural resources badly for his desires and needs, causing environmental degradation or crisis which is a matter of deep concern round the world, which have affected and also attracted the attention of every nation of the world. Global warming, the depletion of the ozone layer, environmental pollution, climatic changes, earthquakes, floods, droughts, cyclones, volcanic eruption, over-urbanization and the growth of the population, rapid industrialization, etc., are some of the major challenges within the environmental crisis.

Crisis: Development and economic growth activities are also responsible for environmental crisis. Thus, crisis is a phenomenon which leads to a dangerous situation, affecting an individual, group, society, or the entire community.

Sustainable Development: Hence, sustainability in the development and planning process should be a permanent objective, because development is also essential. A balance between the economic goals and ecology is the need of the hour.

Strategies: A proper and effective environmental management policy is essential for the upgrading of our environment, and for the survival of our civilization.

Objectives: The objective of this paper is to discuss the environmental crisis, such as natural hazards and disaster, in the form of challenges and strategies to meet these challenges, with a focus on sustainable development outcomes.

Environmental Crisis: Whether caused by natural processes of human factors, those events or accidents are called extreme events which occur very rarely, and aggravate the natural environmental processes to cause disaster for human society, such as tectonic movements leading to earthquake and volcanic eruption, continued dry conditions leading to prolonged droughts, floods, at-
Environmental hazards are those extreme events either of natural or of man-induced causes, which exceed the tolerable magnitude within or beyond certain time limits, make adjustment difficult, and result in catastrophic losses of property, income and lives. These create environmental crises.

For this, alternative terms like environmental stresses and environmental disaster are also used, in one way or another, to deal with the extreme events, whether natural or man-induced. But, actually, they are not same, and it may be said that hazards are generally taken to be the process, both natural and anthropogenic, which cause an accident and an extreme event or danger, whereas ‘disaster’ is a sudden, adverse or unfortunate extreme event which causes great damage to human beings and their property, as well as to plants and animals, disaster occurs rapidly, instantaneously and indiscriminately. Hence, in short, it can be said that environmental hazards are the processes whereas the environmental disasters are the results or responses of environmental hazards. The intensity of environmental disasters is always weighed in terms of the quantum of damages done to the human society. The hazardous environmental process always creates extreme events, but not all extreme events become disasters. These may become disasters only when they adversely affect human society.

Environmental Challenges: Natural hazards and disasters are normally divided into two broad categories on the basis of their main causative factors, which are known as environmental challenges. They are:

1. **Natural Hazards and Disaster**: It is further subdivided into the following two categories:
   (A) Planetary hazards and disasters.
   (B) Extra-terrestrial, or extra-planetary, hazards and disasters.
   (A) Planetary hazards and disasters. It again falls in two sub types viz.
   (i) Terrestrial or Endogenous hazards which include volcanic eruption, earthquakes and landslides.
   (ii) Atmospheric or Exogamous hazards; they also have two types:
        (a) Abnormal or infrequent events which include cyclones, lighting and hailstorms.
        (b) Cumulative Atmospheric hazards and disasters result in floods, droughts, cold waves and heat waves.
   (B) Extra-terrestrial or extra-planetary hazards and disasters. This category includes the catastrophic disasters caused by the collision between the earth and foreign bodies such as asteroids, meteoroids and comets.

2. **Man-Induced Hazards and Disasters**: This may also be divided into the following three sub-categories:
   (A) Physical hazards and disasters, including earthquakes, land-slides and soil erosion.
   (B) Chemical hazards and disasters, occurring due to release of toxic chemicals and nuclear explosion.
   (C) Biological hazards and disasters, including population explosion and eutrophication, etc.
According to the report of the United Nations Disasters Relief Coordination (UNDRO), about 90% of all of the reported natural hazards and disasters occur in developing countries or third world countries. It may be because of the fact that most of the developing countries are located in the tropical and subtropical regions of the world, where atmospheric processes very often cause numerous natural hazards and disasters, such as floods, droughts, forest fires and, of course, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes and cyclones, wherein the last three are also more prevalent in other parts of the world.

Rapid growth or urbanization, industrial expansion, agricultural development, population growth, the construction of high water reservoirs, and social development are continuously accelerating the frequency and magnitude of natural hazards and disasters in developing countries. These developing countries more or less chronically suffer from disaster. In a sense, they live with disaster. The achievement of development programs has often been destroyed and their future plans halted because funds had to be diverted to relief and recovery activities. It is true that a single disaster can strike a nation’s social infrastructure, damaging its feedback system to an irrecoverable extent.

There are numerous known and unknown, natural and man-induced causes for the above mentioned environmental hazards and disasters. However, a brief account of their causes, effects, and distribution is being presented here one by one, taking some important events out of them.

(I) Earthquakes: An earthquake is a major demonstration of the tectonic forces caused by endogenic thermal conditions of the interior of the earth. An earthquake is a motion of the ground’s surface, ranging from a faint tremor to a wild motion capable of shaking buildings apart and causing gaping fissures to open in the ground. The form of energy of an earthquake is that of wave motion, transmitted through the surface layer of the earth in widening circles from a point of sudden energy release, called the focus. The magnitude or intensity of energy released by an earthquake is measured by the Richter scale. Another scale of the measurement of the degree of destructiveness or intensity of an earthquake is the Marcella scale.

The place of the origin of an earthquake is called the ‘focus,’ which is always hidden inside the earth, but the depth of which varies from place to place. The place on the ground’s surface, that records the seismic waves for the first time is called ‘epicenter.’ These different types of wave lengths are recorded with the help of an instrument such as a ‘seismograph’ or a ‘seismometer’ at the epicenter.

Causes: Earthquakes are caused due to disequilibrium in any part of the crust of the earth. A number of causes have been assigned to cause disequilibrium in the earth’s crust, such as volcanic eruptions, faulting and folding, up warping and down warping, hydrostatic pressure of man-made water bodies like reservoirs and lakes, and, of late, the plate movements.

Distribution: The world distribution of earthquakes includes the Circum Pacific Belt, or Ring of Fire, surrounding the Pacific Ocean. The Mid-Continental Belt also represents epicenters located along the Alpine-Himalayan chains of Eurasia and northern Africa and epicenters of the East African fault zone. The
Mid-Atlantic Belt represents the earthquakes located along the Mid-Atlantic Ridges and its off-shoots.

Effects: An earthquake becomes hazardous or disastrous only when it strikes a populated area. The direct and indirect disastrous effects of earthquakes include the deformation of ground surfaces, the damage and destruction of human structures such as buildings, rails, roads, bridges, dams, factories, the destruction of towns and cities, the loss of human and animal lives and property, violent fires, landslides, floods, disturbances in electricity and the water supply, and in ground water conditions, etc.

(II) Volcanic Eruption: It is another example of natural terrestrial hazards, but, unlike earthquakes, volcanoes are both hazards/disasters and boons to human beings. Certainly, they destroy human settlements and agricultural frames, kill people and animals and destroy human properties, bring short climatic and environmental changes through their explosive central eruption, and spread hot gaseous and liquid lavas coming out of fissure flows. However, they also provide rich soils from agricultural purposes. Sometimes, in the beginning of the explosive force with smoke clouds, ashes and rock fragments thrown into the air cause loud sounds and earthquakes.

Causes: The water on the surface of the earth seeps into the interior through many cracks and fissures. When the water gets into contact with hot lava, it is dissolved in the latter. When this lava crystallizes, the dissolved water is freed with high temperature and pressure. When this water, in the form of steam, escapes out of the many holes, an explosion is caused. Later on, the lava also comes out of the holes.

The lava in the interior of the earth is subjected to a great pressure which does not allow it to melt. When organic action affects the earth’s surface, the sedimentary rocks rise in folds. The pressure on the lava is reduced at places which are zones of weakness. At these places, the lava is melted due to the reduction of pressure over it and it rises up, which results in the explosion out of the fissures. That is why volcanoes are found close to fold mountain ranges. Some scholars are also of the opinion that there are radioactive particles within the earth for which fragmentation also helps to generate heat and pressure. Movements of the plates along the Benioff zones are also considered as one of the main causes of volcanic eruptions. Volcanoes have been classified in various categories, which are based upon activities and types of explosion and ejected materials.

The material which is emitted out of volcanoes forms many types of land forms, which are also economically important.

Distribution: Like earthquakes, the spatial distribution of volcanoes over the globe is well marked and well understood because volcanoes are found in a well-defined belt or zone. Like earthquake belts, there are also three major belts, or zones, of volcanoes. They are the Circum-Pacific Belt, or Pacific Ring of Fire, the Mid-Continental Belt of the Alpine Mountain Chains, and the Mediterranean Sea and Fault Zone of Eastern Africa. The Mid-Oceanic Ridge Belt includes volcanoes mainly along the mid-Atlantic ridge.
Effects: Volcanic eruptions cause heavy damage to human lives and property through the advancing hot lavas, through the fallout of volcanic materials, through the destruction to human structures, such as buildings, factories, roads, rails and airports, dams, bridges and reservoirs, through the fires caused by hot lava, through the floods in the rivers, and through the climatic and environmental changes they cause. The formation of Tsunamis and Jökulhlaup damage standing crops and vegetation, too. The occurrence of landslides is also possible.

Atmospheric or Exogenous Hazards: The atmospheric hazards are related to weather and climatic extreme events. The atmospheric environmental natural hazards are caused by atmospheric processes which originate from within the atmosphere and, hence, those natural hazards are also called as Exogenous Natural Hazards. The extreme weather and climatic events may be divided into two main groups:

(i) Abnormal and infrequent events which last for a very short time, such as tropical cyclones (typhoons, tornadoes and hurricanes), severe lightning and fires.

(ii) Events which prevail for a prolonged period of time. Such events become hazards through cumulative effects such as droughts and floods, heat waves, cold waves etc.

(III) Tropical Cyclones: Tropical cyclones representing closed low pressure systems generally having a diameter of about 650 kilometers, having high wind speeds of 180 km to 400 km or more per hour, are among the most powerful, destructive, dangerous and deadly atmospheric storms on the planet earth. These are called ‘Hurricanes’ in the north Atlantic Ocean (mainly in the Caribbean Sea and the Southeastern U.S.A.), ‘Typhoons’ in the North Pacific Ocean, mainly in the China Sea, Eastern and Southern coasts of China and areas of India, and are called ‘Willy Willy’ in Australia.

Tropical cyclones become more disastrous natural hazards because of their high wind speed, high tidal surges, high rainfall intensity, very low atmospheric pressure causing unusual rises in the sea level, and their persistence for several days, or, say, about one week.

Causes: In low atmospheric pressure regions, cyclones are caused. Bjerkses’ opinion in connection with cyclogenesis is that the confrontation of air masses is like the confrontation of armies at war. Hence, he called the contact area of the two air masses a ‘front.’ He explained his hypothesis on the basis of polar fronts formed by the cold air masses coming from the north polar area, circulating in a counter-clockwise direction, and the warm air masses coming from the south and circulating in clockwise direction.

The occurrences of tropical cyclones are rhythmic in nature because they are restricted to certain seasons of a year and this varies from one region to another.

Distribution: There are six major regions in the world which are responsible for the origin of tropical cyclones. They are the West Indies, the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea, the Western North Pacific Ocean including the Philippines Islands, the China Sea and Japanese Islands, the Arabian Sea and
the Bay of Bengal, the Eastern Pacific Coastal Region off of Mexico and Central America and the South Indian Ocean off of Madagascar, and the Western South Pacific Ocean, in the region of Samoa and Fiji Island, and the east north coast of Australia.

**Effects:** The total cumulative effects of high velocities of wind, torrential rainfall and the transgression of sea water on to the coastal land become so enormous that the cyclone causes havoc in the affected area and, thus, tremendous losses of human lives and property are the ultimate result of such atmospheric deluges. The ‘storm surge’ or ‘tidal surge’ refers to the unusual rise in sea-level caused by very low atmospheric pressure and the stress of the strong gusty winds on the sea surface. These storm surges or tidal surges, when coinciding with high tides, are further intensified and, after intruding into the coastal land, cause the widespread inundation of the coastal area, and great damages to human lives and property. It can destroy buildings, transport systems, water and power supply systems, and it can cause the disruption of communication systems, the destruction of agricultural crops, domestic and wild animals, natural vegetation, private and public institutions, and so on.

**Cumulative Atmospheric Hazards:** This includes those events which are caused due to the cumulative effects of weather events, which can be prolonged for longer periods of time, ranging from a few weeks to several years, depending upon the nature of the weather events. These long events may result in floods and droughts.

**(IV) Flood:** Flood simply means the inundation of an extensive land area with water for several days in continuation. In fact, flood is an attribute of the physical environment and, thus, is a component of the hydrological cycle of a drainage basin. Flood is a natural phenomenon and is a response to rainfall, but it becomes a hazard when it causes colossal loss to human lives and property. Floods are also aggravated by human activities and, thus, flood hazard is both a natural as well as a man-induced or, rather, a man-accentuated phenomenon.

**Causes:** Natural factors of floods are prolonged, high intensity rainfall, meandering courses of rivers, extensive flood plains, breaks in slope in the long profiles of the rivers, i.e. a sudden change in the channel gradient at the intervening zones of foothill slope of the mountains and/or the plains, the blocking of the free flow of the rivers because of enormous debris provided by landslides and due to volcanic eruption, or merely the nature of river valleys and channels, etc. Anthropogenic activities, such as building activity and eventual urbanization, manipulate channels through the diversion of the river’s course, through the construction of bridges, barrages and reservoirs, through agricultural practices, deforestation, land use changes, etc., all caused by man.

**Distribution:** About 3.5% of the total geographical areas of the world are covered by flood plains which house about 16.5% of the total population of the world. The most notorious rivers of the world, in terms of devastating floods and resultant damage to natural environmental loss and loss of human lives and property, are the Ganga and its major tributaries, such as the Yamuna, the Ramaganga, the Gomati, the Ghaghara, the Gandak, the Kosi, the Damodar,
etc. (in northern India), the Brahmaputra (in north-east India), the deltaic segments of the Mahanadi, the Krishna, the Godavari, the Tapti, the Narmada, the Luni, the Mahi, etc. (all in India), the Mississippi and the Missouri of the U.S.A., the Yangtze and the Yellow of China, the Irrawadi or Myanmar, the Indus of Pakistan, the Niger of Nigeria, the Po of Italy, the Euphrates and the Tigris of Iraq, etc.

**Effects**: Enormous volumes of water and their consequent inundations in flood areas cause, specially in settlement areas, great loss of human lives and property, crops, plants and animals, the destruction of weak shelters, bridges, rails, roads, massive erosion, large scale riparian decay along the river bank, the shifting of channels and even of river course, the silting of beds, the deposition of sands, silts and clay in the flood plains, etc., which pose a serious threat to human society, to the distribution of water and the electrical supply, to the communication system and to the spread of epidemic diseases. But floods are not always hazards; rather, these are also boons because these bring rich, fertile alluvial soils each time and, thus, increase agricultural productivity.

**(V) Droughts**: Droughts are more deadly natural environmental hazards, because these are directly related to water, one of the three basic requirements of any form of life (water, air and food), and are indirectly related to food because crops and other plants and animals exclusively depend upon water. Droughts resulting from the accumulative effects of water scarcity cause extensive and enormous damage to agricultural and natural vegetation and, therefore, cause famine and the starvation of the human and animal populations of the regions concerned. It clearly involves an acute shortage of water for a long period, mostly due to deficiency in normal rainfall.

**Causes**: Droughts occur due to the variability of rainfall, a delay in the onset or an early withdrawal of a monsoon, a duration of breaks in the monsoon season and a real difference in the persistence of monsoons, the over-utilization and harnessing of ground water resources, the inability to harness, recharge and store rain water, as well as the substitution of cash crops in place of cereals, deforestation, etc.

**Distribution**: Drought-prone areas are the Sahel region of Africa, extending between hot and dry desert areas of the Sahara in the north and the Savanna region in the south and running from the western part of Africa through Mauritania, Senegal, Mali, Upper Volta, Niger, Nigeria, Chad, Uganda, and Ethiopia in the east. It is also called the Sub-Saharan Region. The drought zone of the Sahel is a tropical grassland and is characterized by a Feast or Famine climate. Drought is a very common natural phenomenon in Australia, with widespread spatial coverage.

In India, there are certain well defined tracts of droughts. These are:

(a) The desert and the semi-arid regions with approximately 0.6 million sq. km. This area forms a rectangle from Ahmedabad to Kanpur on one side and Kanpur to Jalandhar on the other.

(b) The regions lying east of the Western Ghats up to a width of 300 km. They mostly include the rain shadow area.
Other pockets of drought lie in several part of India, such as Tirunelveli district, south of the Vaigai River, the Coimbatore area, the Saurashtra and Kutch regions, the Mirzapur plateau, the Palamau and Nawada districts, regions of Bihar, the Purulia district of West Bengal, and Kalahandi region of Orrissa.

Effects: Droughts affect all types of life-forms in the biosphere ecosystem, because both plants and animals directly depend on water. Any shortage in the water supply adversely affects them. Thus, the impacts of prolonged droughts include ecological, economic, demographic and political aspects. Prolonged drought conditions in a given region change the biotic component of the natural ecosystem.

(VI) Extra Planetary/Terrestrial Hazards or Disasters: The catastrophic disasters caused by collisions between the earth and foreign bodies such as asteroids, meteoroids and comets are called extra planetary or extraterrestrial disasters or hazards.

Causes: This is possible due to the shifts in the earth’s axis of rotation, which causes catastrophic disasters affecting the earth. The geoidal shifts have also been assigned to extraterrestrial and terrestrial causes, such as the rapid rate at which the polar ice caps are melting, which may upset the rotation of the earth and produce instability.

Distribution: Possible on any part of the globe or from any part of space. In the past history of the earth, there are evidences of 120 such cases of collisions. Effects: Shift in the earth’s axis of rotation are possible, which may affect human beings, including emissions of enormous volumes of dusts, tidal waves in the oceans, shock waves, hurricanes, craters on the earth’s surface and rapid changes in the sea level, whereas climate change, biological extinctions, volcanism and cataclysmic landform changes are also possible.

(VII) Man-Induced Hazards and Disasters: Any environmental degradation induced by man becomes hazardous and disastrous when it assumes alarming proportion, and/or causes irreparable loss to human society.

Causes: These may be caused through a variety of human activities, both of intentional and unintentional character.

Distribution: It is possible anywhere where man is present, but the following are few important events of the world: The earthquake of 1931 in Greece due to Marathon Dam constructed in 1929, the start of earth tremors since 1936 around Hoover Dam of U.S.A. due to creation of Mead Lake in 1935, the earthquake of Koyna (Maharashtra, India) of 1967 due to the construction of the Koyna reservoir in 1962, etc. A marine disaster was created due to the leakage of 100,000 tons of crude oil from the huge oil tanker, which struck the Spanish coast near the prof of La Coruna and exploded on May, 12, 1976, killing most of the sea organisms. Other examples are the disaster of the nuclear installation of Chernobyl (USSR), the Bhopal Gas tragedy of Union Carbide factory in India in 1984, the dropping of atom bombs on the cities of Nagasaki and Hiroshima in Japan by the U.S.A. in 1945 that affected millions of Japanese population, etc.
Effects: These fall into three categories: Physical, such as earthquakes, landslides and accelerated rate of soil erosion, Chemical, such as the release of toxic chemicals, dumping and exposure at later dates of toxic chemicals, nuclear explosions, the leakage of crude oil from oil tankers into the oceanic water, etc., and Biological, such as population explosion and eutrophication, etc.

There is an instantaneous response in humans to help each other during the time of disaster. The social response to disasters is largely determined by the communications of media men, such as newspaper reporters. Thus, communications are of crucial importance in the assessment and reduction of disasters.

Strategies for Disaster Reduction and Management: The reduction of natural hazards and disasters and their management involves a provision for immediate relief measures to disaster-affected people, the prediction of hazards and disasters and measures of adjustment to natural hazards/disasters.

At first there should be a correct picture of the nature and magnitude of the disaster. Very often, the new media report their own misconception instead of reporting the real events. This is not done deliberately. The international communities should respond to the official requests of the concerned government only.

Priorities must be decided upon before undertaking the remedial and relief measures. Relief measures must be concentrated in the high density areas of the affected locality. Special rescue tools, communication equipment, heavy machines to remove debris, water pumps, cement, and technicians are more important than drugs and doctors, because the health dangers after disasters are predominantly environmental in character and not medical.

The management of natural hazards involves disaster research and disaster predictions. The predictions of natural hazards may be made in areas prone to a particular natural hazard, in terms of frequency, recurrence intervals, magnitude and dimensions of events, and the nature of their causative factors. Satellite and remote sensing are also supplying important information concerned with weather conditions, and physical and environmental factors can be utilized in disaster management.

The mapping and monitoring of natural hazards and disasters, and of global changes in environmental conditions, are very important aspects of disaster management. This requires in-depth study of hazard-prone areas at global, regional and local levels. The International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU) and other organization have launched several research programs to study the environmental changes caused by human activities and natural disasters, in terms of the mechanisms involved in the genesis of such disasters, their monitoring and their mitigation. These types of studies are very much helpful in the management of disasters.

Disaster research for the reduction and mitigation of natural hazards includes the study of the contributing factors and mechanisms of natural hazards and disasters, the identification and classification of both hazards’ and disasters’ potential, and the generation of a vast database which includes the mapping of physical components of the ecosystem, such as bedrock and surfi-
cial geology, soils, water resources and land use, and cultural components, such as the density of the human population, the population’s distribution, its transportation and communication systems, food, water and health facilities, and administrative facilities such as police and military. The significant aspect of natural disaster research is to prepare ‘Terrain Risk Area’ on the basis of remote sensing, engineering and electronic tools and techniques.

Education on disasters plays an important role in the program of disaster reduction. Education must be broad based and must reach everyone including the scientists, the engineers, and the policy and decision makers, as well as the general public through popular media, such as newspapers, radio and television broadcasts, poster displays and documentary films. In most of the countries, the responsibility to inform the public about the impending hazards and disasters lies with the governments and, thus, researchers and scientists must educate the decision makers, like administrators and police, through the following steps:

(i) To raise awareness about the hazards and disasters among decision makers and general public, and to train the decision makers to handle the situations created by disasters.
(ii) To provide information about the possible disaster well in advance.
(iii) To provide risk and vulnerability maps.
(iv) To persuade the people to improve the standard of construction so as to escape the disasters.
(v) To explain the disaster reduction techniques, etc. The Geographic Information System (GIS) and Aerospace Surveys Map help considerably in the natural disasters reduction and management program. GIS and Aerospace surveys help in the disasters management in the following way:

(a) By providing detailed maps of the problems areas.
(b) By providing historic information gathered from local people to researchers to better model the frequency and magnitude of events in an area.
(c) By providing a planning framework for local politicians.
(d) By providing disaster reduction planning based on past experience of the disaster, and awareness of the disaster among the public.

In disasters management, the adjustments of human populations to natural hazards and disasters are essential, which include changes in the attitudes and perception of individuals, society, and institutions towards natural hazards and disasters, increased awareness of natural hazards and disasters, provisions for really and timely warnings of natural hazards and disasters, land use planning by identifying and demarcating disaster-prone areas and discouraging the people to settle in such areas, provisions for compensation of losses of lives and property through insurance schemes so that people may prepare to evacuate their homes, villages and cities in the wake of timely warnings of possible hazards and disasters in a particular area, and other such provisions for disaster preparedness, etc.
In any form of management, the organizational structure plays an important role. In disaster management, the co-operation between the government and the people is a key factor. Therefore, the organizational structure should be designed in such a manner that the government agencies and common people can support and co-operate with each other. Various organizations starting from national, state, district, panchayat, and village levels, should be formed to combat the hazards and disasters. These organizations should include persons befitting to a particular level. An Organization at a National level should include: the Prime Minister, the Union Minister, the leader of the opposition, and five experts of disaster management; at a State level: the Chief Minister, the Minister, the leader of opposition, experts, the Army Chief of that region, etc.; at a District level: the Collector, the Superintendent of Police and the Chief Officer-in-Charge of various district departments of the government; at a Panchayat level, the Sarpanch and the Executive Member, the B.D.O. and other Government members, and the Officer-in-charge of that area; at a Village level: two experienced senior citizens of the village, two women, five young executives, two members each from the ST/SC, etc.

The objective of these organizations for disasters management is to integrate both government agencies and common people together and to bring them on to one platform for the optimization of the disaster management program.

Apart from these organizations, the government can create a specific Ministry for Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction. This Ministry would be responsible for the relief, rescue, rehabilitation, and reconstruction program during the pre- and post-disaster period. The state governments can have a similar type of ministry, too.

Each organization mentioned above should have its own fund to be utilized for disaster management, and under no circumstances should this fund be transferred to any other fund, or be utilized for any purpose other than disaster management. And, above all, a strong will, rare courage and intellect, true dedication and honesty are essential for any type of disaster management.

Sustainable Development: Considering the above mentioned facts, it can be said that with the pace of development and man’s wrong activities, the natural resources are becoming less damaged or about to come to an end, which is also causing environmental crisis. This is a big question of survival for the future generations to come.

The answer to the above question is certainly sustainable development, which, according to World Commission on Environment and Development is “Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” It denotes the state of resources that can be maintained indefinitely. The expanding human population has imposed excessive pressure on the natural resources. If the current practice of utilizing natural resources continues, the future generation will have less chance of getting sufficient food to eat, space to live in and pure air to breathe.

The Reduce, Reuse and Recycle (3-R) approach emphasizes minimization of resource use, using them again and again instead of passing the resource on
to the waste stream, and recycling the materials helps in achieving the goals of sustainability. It reduces pressure on our resources as well as reducing waste generation and pollution.

Ancient India always had an environmentally sensitive philosophy. No country, perhaps, lays as much emphasis on environmental ethics as Indian ethics. Man is taught to live in harmony with nature and to recognize that divinity prevails in all elements, including plants and animals. Mahatma Gandhi’s sayings and life style are signposts for sustainable environmental development through human service, ahinsa (non-violence), sarvodya (uplifting of all), self-realization, etc. These thoughts are of immense importance for sustainable development, which is also the need of the hour to save our resourceful environment for our future generations.
PART V

The Moral Aspects of Crisis
Crisis, Moral Errors and History

DAVID EDWARD ROSE

Introduction

In this paper, I intend to investigate the specific nature of moral crisis and whether or not a moral crisis is, strongly, different in kind from a moral disagreement or, more weakly, a special case of moral disagreement. A moral conflict is a disagreement about the truth of a statement or an assertion, and its resolution will not necessarily (but may) involve normative and practical consequences: a change in law, social institutions or individual behaviour. Intuitively, crisis is initially comprehended as a crucial or decisive temporal moment which is unstable and is characterized by a conflict awaiting resolution that will result in a critical revision of central values. Crisis, one may suppose, differs from simple moral disagreement because of the urgency of its resolution. It is not just disagreement, it is an urgent disagreement, in that it is a demand that can quite quickly spill over into political action. The resolution of a moral crisis, whether it be different in kind from or a special subset of moral disagreement, may well lead to normative and practical consequences.

Characterizing the Nature of Moral Crisis

Crises are nearly always material or historical facts, such as the demand by women for the vote pre-1918 (in the UK), and the lobbying for the Abortion Act of 1967. In both of these cases, customary or traditional values were pitted against “progressive” or rational reasons and the moral demand was accompanied by political action (protest, disobedience, violence). Had the demand been made historically earlier, it is not uncontroversial to assume that it would have been silenced; that is, it would not have counted as a demand, because the interests it expressed had no “rational” correlative in the dominant moral language. What they said would not have counted as words. So, the women who demanded a vote were seen as “hysterical” or “unnatural” and, therefore, “unreasonable” and “irrational.” until the culture of reason could accept their demand as intelligible (in the UK around the turn of the 20th century). And such denial of the demands of the women would have been supported by conventional meanings of the social fabric (it is natural for women to occupy the home) and more sophisticated metaphysical positions (the religious separation of gendered duties).

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1 Langton sees this as a true cultural problem as concerns contemporary feminism. The voice of women is “silenced” because their assertions are not considered assertions at all, but the statements of the deluded, the emotional, the hysterical and so on. See R. Langton, Sexual Solipsism: Philosophical Essays on Pornography and Objectification (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), ch. 1.
However, at the same time, moral crises are distinguished by the protestor’s voice harmonizing with deeper central values of a culture. The demands are not so easily silenced as those of the hysterical and the idiosyncratic. Crises are interesting because the demand made cannot be easily dismissed by the dominant moral discourse, because the crisis reveals a conflict at the heart of the language. With both examples above, the emergence of the rationality of the values of liberty and equality comes into conflict with the wider moral language that supports them. The demand for the right to vote made an appeal to central values, equality and liberty, which come into conflict with the traditional metaphysical and religious commitments of the culture. Oddly, though, those very values of equality and liberty were founded in and extrapolated from that very particular moral tradition. Equally so in the case of abortion whereby reproductive technological advances, egalitarian policies and the secularization of society mean women have, for the first time, a demand to take their own bodies as self-owned. Here, the values of autonomy and private property are also, to a large extent, derived from a specific moral tradition.2

Crisis, it seems, reveals the broken nature of moral culture and occurs when that language is in need of revision. It is distinguished from other moral problems in that its resolution is characterized by urgency and the willingness of the agents to risk for their demands to be met. Compare the movements for female suffrage with the moral problem of assisted suicide. If the government were to enforce a law against assisted suicide, one may well disagree and assert that it rests on moral error, but be unwilling to use political action to demand that politicians recognize their error. The conflict is just not urgent enough to demand political action in the case of disagreement. Moral crises, on the other hand, are very much characterized by the need to resolve them practically as well as theoretically, and such disagreements are often accompanied by political and practical action.

Let us take two steps back here to dissect the nature of moral disagreements which are best understood as crises. A disagreement in moral discourse is characterized by a conflict between individuals or groups who claim that “it is right to X,” in contradiction of others. So, “it is right for women to have the right to vote” and “it is right that women do not have the right to vote.” It is assumed that, like science, such questions are susceptible to resolution and are not, like desires or preferences, arational. To reduce the question to a conflict of preferences and not reasons is to make it akin to two agents arguing over whether cheese is delicious or not. Such conflicts can only be resolved through force and coercion, not reason, and ultimately undermine an appropriate understanding of moral discourse.

Moral crisis is therefore akin to moral disagreement in that there exists a felt conflict between the shared values of a culture. As has been mentioned,

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2 The development of moral discourse here alluded to only implicitly is probably best compared to MacIntyre’s discussion of traditions. I believe his characterization owes much to Hegel as does the idea of progress which motivates my own understanding. I do not have space, unfortunately, to argue for it directly in this essay. See A. MacIntyre, Whose Justice? Which Rationality? (London: Duckworth, 1988), ch. 18.
the values of equality and liberty which ground the demand for universal suffrage are the very values of the tradition which they oppose. The traditional interpretation of these values and the progressive interpretation of the values of a culture are in opposition, so one could describe the rational axiology of a culture as conflicted.

Over and above a simple moral disagreement, a moral crisis seems to be very much historically situated. The disagreement over whether lying is ever permissible is ahistorical. However, had women demanded the vote in the sixteenth century, their claim would have been unintelligible at the level of the dominant public, rational culture due to its incoherence with deeply shared metaphysical, religious and ethical commitments. In the twentieth century, the demand for the vote was intelligible because it harmonizes with rational values that were shared: equality, liberty and a new cultural fabric that grounds these values (the secular, industrial world). The claim is grounded in values that are undeniable to the opponents of the claimant; the participants now speak the same moral language and, hence, the progressive interlocutor has to be recognized as a moral partner. They are recognized as equal, rational participants in discourse.

Finally, to fully separate crises from mere disagreement, it is pertinent to identify the difference in urgency as concerns its resolution. When Ronald Dworkin wrote about pornography, he was concerned with free speech, and pornography was not a problem, as it was a minority issue. Society was able to tolerate a few perverts for the sake of free speech and equality of moral concern. However, as Langton has pointed out, pornography has become pervasive in our culture, and its objectification of agents is keenly and widely felt. Everyone now has access to pornography, and a resolution to the moral problem of pornography is demanded because to ignore it, to sweep it under the carpet, exacerbates the conflict and begins to ferment a possible violent outcome. Perhaps because of this urgency, crisis, as apart from conflict, is often accompanied by or instigates political violence. Issues such as the testing of five year olds in school or the issues surrounding assisted suicide, do not beget violence because tolerance and compromise can be accommodated. However, abortion, and the equality of genders, races and minorities often result in civil disobedience and direct action.

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5 There is an interesting aspect to this violence that links it with the issue of recognition. Hegel believes that recognition is a long drawn out historical struggle which begins either with individual violent conduct or war between states. And it is interesting to note how, prior to violent acts, silencing of other participants is the norm, and yet a violent demand results in recognition because the agent is prepared to risk his or her life for the sake of a value, thus displaying the Hegelian requirement for rational action. (One feels Emily Davidson throwing herself in front of the King’s horse in 1913 is a paradigm example.) See G. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press,
To summarize, a moral crisis is (i) a conflict between moral reasons in which (ii) both participants appeal to recognized elements and values of a shared moral culture; but it differs from a moral disagreement in that (iii) its resolution is urgent.

Conflict and Error

One assumes that, of the two opposing participants in a rational conflict, one or both are in error. The aim of moral discourse has always been conceived as, on one level, the rational negation of erroneous assumptions and arguments. Given the ahistorical, universalist and monist nature of modern ethics, such crises are seen as a species of one of three errors.

One, the error concerns a conflict of interests with moral obligations. Some putative moral reasons are not reasons at all, but are only apparently rational. Instead, they are preferences, interests and desires, and the language which sets them up as reasons is nothing but ideology. When a demand is made by the interests of some agents against the moral obligations of all agents, then there is a simple conflict between reason and desire. So, the ruling males believe they have reasons for not extending votes to women, but these are just masks for their own interests. The moral language of such cultures, the language one must speak to be rational, is revealed to be ideological in the sense that it expresses the interests of a class or group exclusively and in isolation from society as a whole. Rational discourse will reveal which are real reasons and which are mere expressions of interests.

Two, the error arises from badly articulated problems, but problems which are ultimately reducible to core moral values. With abortion, we recognize that historical and traditional principles of the sanctity of life muddy the discursive water, and we really need a full blown rights theory and a proper metaphysics that assigns or denies personhood to the foetus. Once we have the appropriate language and concepts, the conflict will supposedly disappear.

Three, the error is the result of a conceptual or metaphysical error. Reasons have a proper language which is universal and required for the rational expression of reasons. Conflict can be due to the bad articulation and framing of a problem in imprecise and ambiguous language. In other words, because ethics is itself ahistorical and universal, crises must belong to the temporal world of change and, hence, incorporate some sort of error. So, for example, seeing the foetus as a soul is an ontological error that has normative consequences for the rational discussion of the permissibility of termination.

In all three cases, moral discourse seeks to bracket off the historical nature of these conflicts, rendering it insignificant to the actual debate. Crises, though, arise when there is a need for the revision and reinterpretation of a

community’s central values. The value of moral crises may well be in their contribution to the project of thinking, as they seemingly function as a motor of historical-ethical revisionism (as was the case with equality in the suffrage demand and liberty in the abortion demand). Ethical crises may occur when the very concepts of our ethical reasoning are in need of revision, and not just our articulation and expression of them. Crises seem to involve a need to develop one’s moral language and so are significantly different from simple moral disagreement.

The nature of modern moral philosophy is apparently an obstruction to conferring the appropriate status on moral crises, though. One needs an ethical theory which is sensitive to these understandings, yet one which resists the urge to fall into a simple historical relativism whereby moral language is relative to the historical culture which grounds it. Most modern ethical theories are not.

**Historicism of Moral Language**

The elements, reasons and values of our moral language are primarily constituted as a cultural *a priori*. These values are imposed by a subject on his or her experience in order to make the experience intelligible. These values are, for the most part, coexistent and plural. One can respect another’s autonomy whilst maximizing overall utility or welfare, but sometimes they will conflict. Sometimes, it is impossible to be consistent or even to be faithful to all of our values at once; there is only so much “social space” in our society. Sometimes, the values will relate to each other illogically and oddly due to their historical manifestations. Sometimes, new moral problems will often bring into stark relief those background values which inform our judgements and force us to re-interrogate them as grounds to our moral judgements. Novel ethical issues will force us to evaluate the substantial manifestations of equality, liberty and other procedural values or even, at a lower level, substantial, historical values. So, for example, abortion is a real moral issue in a society where medical technology (where cost is minimized and safety maximized), religious traditions (the traditional Christian echo which places the quickening at conception unlike the Muslim faith) and women’s material equality (women make decisions for themselves) collide to raise the problem of re-evaluating the concept of the liberty of a specific group in a tradition that has for a long time silenced them. To look at the problem divorced from these understandings is to corrupt what is actually at stake. Moral crises are *shot through* with historicity. For Hegel, such moral problems are motors of history and he thinks this is what allows us to perfect our moral discourse.

Hegel prescribes objective determinations of the will from one’s social and cultural identity. He realizes that the nature of the good cannot be created

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8 What follows is a very succinct summary of Hegel’s ethical thought as it appears in the pages of *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*. 
from the abstract thinking of the mind consistent with universal norms. Instead, the moral subject must begin from existing moral values and institutions, because his constraint of objectivity involves the idea that the good must be intelligible to the judgements of his cultural peers. Recognition of the rightness of his action is necessary for him to be treated as a free agent. Those values the agent finds himself thrown into are those that make rational moral thinking possible and are, then, the ground of his own evaluation and the starting point of his own revisionary project.

Moral thinking is a socially immanent enterprise. The substantial understanding of others, as derived from their social identity and also of oneself, is the objective freedom of the agent. The objective freedom of an agent is the institutions, moral values, social fabric, roles, civil, economic and political structures, and so on, that guarantee his or her identification as a subject of his or her own deeds and his or her recognition as a moral agent (and not as an animal, a very young child, a slave and so on). So, for example, capitalism, the family and the Christian tradition are all forms of objective freedom: they assign roles and duties that determine how we behave in certain situations and, in behaving in accordance with their dictates (or, at times, violating them), we are able to be, and also be understood as, a moral agent. Such objective determinations will differ from age to age, area to area and, as it is constituted by various concatenations of class, geography, age and so on, from person to person.

One simplified way to understand Hegelian ethics is as a one-dimensional relativism: a moral assertion is true or false relative to a system and code of values, goods and rules institutionalized in a community. Even given the erroneous nature of such an interpretation of Hegel (Hegel is not a relativist), such a position has immediate problematic consequences. First, the reason why pornography, abortion, euthanasia and environmentalism are widely discussed is because there exists no agreed consensus on such issues. Moral crises present themselves as problems to be solved because there is no such agreement nor easy way to convince those who would espouse contrary statements (as there is when we talk about the wrongness of breaking promises and of harming people without good reason, even if we disagree on moral theories, metaphysics, politics and religion!). Second, relativism—simply because there is no shared consensus—would have nothing to say about such issues and would be quietist in ilk. ‘Wait for a standard consensus to form and then cohere with it,’ is a rather uninspiring moral philosophy. Third, there would be no way to make inter-cultural (as opposed to intra-cultural) evaluations: I can criticize those like me, but I cannot criticize those unlike me as they operate under different values and norms, and are products of a different history.

For these reasons, relativism is hugely unappealing, but, as I have already said, Hegel is no relativist. Moral judgements are not transcendental, nor products of a priori thinking, nor even laws consistent with the science of human nature. They are contingent, products of an historical tradition, and cut across the politics, social values and economics of a particular community. However, there is a further story to be told. Hegel has two axes of evaluation
to apply. To the question, ‘Is X good or right?’ the first dimension (the cultural constraint) is to see whether the statement coheres with the centrally agreed and rational values of the culture to which the statement is presented, the social and moral fabric of the agent’s culture. The second axis (the autonomy constraint) asks whether the existence of the institution, practice or creed maintains, supports or reproduces a state of affairs that inhibits or supports the procedural requirements of modern moral discussion, that is autonomy, independence and equality. A society with an institution of slavery is worse than one which does not have such an institution on this model. Of course, it rests with the superior culture to explain why, to bring the other culture into line with its thinking and such a task is historical and not merely rational: the words require the economic reforms, the aid and the educational system that would support them. And such an enlightenment needs to be self-realized and not through an operation of putative moral force.9

Hegel expresses these with two terms of art: the agent’s objective freedom consists in his or her institutional identities, social roles, traditional values and economic, material existence. The question, then, is why Hegel understands these objective determinations of one’s identity as a liberation or a freedom. These roles and values make possible the agent’s moral, rational action: they define what is intelligible, and what is to be admired and admonished. Subjective freedom is the freedom to act in accordance with or to break with the principles and requirements of one’s objective freedom and to satisfy one’s own personal projects, desires, interests and so on. The agent’s subjective freedom is the capacity of the agent to achieve what he or she sees as a worthwhile project or a valuable life within the limits of the values and requirements of objective freedom. So, not only does the agent ask whether or not his or her action is appropriate to the expectations of his or her peers, but also whether the expectations of his or her peers are appropriate to him or her. The agent asks himself or herself if he or she feels at home in such a culture, whether his or her individuality can be adequately respected in such a culture with all of its traditions and values. Moral language, its concepts and topics, is a form of objective freedom.

Morally good reasons are those that are justified by the interpersonal values of a culture, and those in which the subject can find their own autonomy and equality respected through the expression of their own freely chosen projects and aspirations. Yet, this still may not be enough, because human beings immersed in culture can be coerced into believing that they are at home in roles which do not violate the procedural limits of moral discourse, but may still be morally problematic. Human sacrifice, whereby the victim has won the honour of being sacrificed in open competition with all members of the community, seems to be one such case. Therefore, we require one last limit on possible interpretations of the requirements of moral behaviour. There are values which are operative in our practical reason that appeal to one’s identity,

9 Hegel, Elements of the Philosophy of Right, § 57A.
not only as a member of a specific class, nor only as a member of a specific society nor people, but also and above these as a member of the human race.

Modern moral philosophy is often challenged by its attempt to obfuscate the distinction between obligatory and supererogatory actions, or its requirements being too demanding, or its demand for disinterestedness. Moral requirements must be tempered by the integrity of the agent, his or her projects and needs, and ultimately his or her nature, that is the interests in self-preservation and a happy life, but they are given sense through the objective freedom of moral language. Moral language is an aspect of objective freedom: my personal, subjective freedom can be increased or decreased by the institutions of education in my culture, but also by the language available to me and the reasons such language embodies. A culture with a substantial and robust understanding of autonomy is better for the individual than one with an opaque and ambiguous understanding of it.

We can now, on the basis of the brief outline of Hegel’s social ethical approach, describe three axes of moral interpretation. The objective freedom of moral language is required for the freedom and rationality of the individual, but it has to meet these requirements:

1. its concepts and practices can be justified to others in terms of publicly shared values (the cultural constraint);
2. the personal roles and practices it prescribes do not violate the basic needs which ground the development of all human societies and generate human association (the minimal naturalism constraint);
3. the subject is able to express his or her personal individuality as an ongoing project which has been freely endorsed and chosen and is respected by others. The subject is able to feel at home in a culture where personal integrity as an individual, expressed as his or her autonomy and recognized via respect from others, is possible (the autonomy constraint).

Moral crises occur when either (2) or (3) is made impossible for an individual. The impossibility is not just an incoherence, but a simultaneous urgency for change. However, instead of moral language being rejected, one finds that the individuals and groups can make an appeal to (a), but so can their opponents; as is the case with slavery or human sacrifice. Hence, (1) is not to be rejected, but to be refined by the norm of coherence. (1) has to cohere with the demands of (2) and (3) to be a form of objective freedom. Female suffrage shows how the idea of a self who is autonomous and free, and hence has a right to participate in government, is a requirement of the modern self, yet comes into conflict with institutions of familial hierarchy. The problem with abortion is the demand that women as well as men are entitled to control over their own natures and bodies, in line with the demand for autonomy.

One can now begin to understand this in terms of Marx’s concept of ideology. An ideology is the self-understanding of a group or class who sees itself as having interests in isolation and separate from the aims of society as a whole. With a moral language, it is justified as a form of objective freedom,

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yet when we recognize ourselves as agents with interests that are separate from those interests which are permissible and coherent with the moral language of our age, and yet these interests are coherent with emergent or other values, and hence demand attention. This cannot be subjective or idiosyncratic because they must be expressed in terms which can be grounded in some part of the moral culture. The language of the demand cannot be wholly other, otherwise it is not a crisis.

Conclusion

Moral crises occur at the level of a culture’s moral language. Either concepts are not yet available for the articulation of the problem or the substantial cultural idiom is inconsistent with the values of that culture. So, one may not be able to understand the need for autonomy (as the Ancient Greeks did not), or the understanding of equality (an equality of an ontological distinction) is unable to resolve demands from subjects who are not covered by its understanding. Such crises reflect a failure of a culture’s moral language. When the agent cannot feel at home in a culture’s moral language, it is because the obligations and requirements of that language are incoherent with or violate either other interests and needs rational to the culture as a whole, or the obligations frustrate the naturalist personal integrity of the agent. At such a point, the language of a culture is incoherent and in demand of revision. We do not know what moral norms require until we work them out through historical struggle.

For example, abortion becomes a pertinent moral issue when the demand by women for the self-ownership of their bodies and their projects, which is consistent with modernity’s central values, comes into conflict with the traditional basis of moral language, the Christian tradition. The crisis is only felt when there is enough surplus wealth and women in employment, such that the need for self-ownership of one’s body becomes a felt need, rather than a theoretical nicety. The resolution of the demand will be the emergence of new moral terms and concepts. Moral crises are not the protest of the unreasonable or the irrational, but are the immanent voice of those who seek what the moral culture promises. Thus, a true moral crisis occurs when the group subject cannot feel at home in the moral language of their culture. 11 Examples would include the Suffragettes, animal rights activists, environmentalists and anti-capitalists. All of these groups for a “we” subject and articulate their claims in terms of values shared by the dominant moral majority. So, the anti-capitalists, for example, appeal to the need for personal autonomy, which was the supposed justification of private property by the liberal tradition (and Hegel himself). They cannot just be silenced or termed irrational.

11 It must be a group. Luther and Socrates are idiosyncratic and unique. They are what Hegel calls world historical individuals. They basically appear when moral discourse has broken down completely, not when it is need of revision. A group is important for crisis because one requires others, even a small minority, to recognize the rationality of one’s claims and to share them against the moral majority.
All that has been shown here is that it may be a mistake to reduce moral crises to conceptual errors or simple moral conflicts. They are a specific phenomenon and one that allows us to refine our moral language and make moral progress. They are, therefore, significant.
In Greece, the current crisis has disrupted many things, among them, the way we talk about what we do. Before the crisis, we would say: “We do not pay a visit without bearing gifts,” “We help those in need,” “We support our children even when they are old enough to support themselves,” “We are hospitable to foreigners,” “We go on strike when our working conditions demand it,” “We do not pay for our education and our healthcare,” “We talk about politics in public,” “We do not put up with fascism,” etc. After the global financial crisis hit Greece, the means of sustaining such practices began to fall apart. A fair number of people no longer can afford the etiquette of gift bearing. Most parents cannot support their adult children. Workers can no longer afford to go on strike. Universities and hospitals have been forced to introduce fees in their public services. Citizens can no longer assume a shared background of democratic thinking that will allow them to talk openly about politics. A Nazi party has been voted into parliament, etc.

As expected, the disruption of these practices tends to render obsolete the above descriptions of what we do. This is not the end. The disruption in our practices has also brought about a disruption in the very way we describe what we do. It is as if a silence fell on our way of describing what we do; like snow falls on street noise. We have not just stopped talking about what is going on, one will contest. Surely, we are not silent in this sense. On the contrary, we constantly talk about it, but it seems that all that is going on now is the disruption. The silence is not a lacuna in the describing, but a notice of the disruption of what used to be describable. Thus, it is not what replaces the spoken word, but what falls on it and covers it. To be more precise, in Greece today, there is a particular sense in which we no longer talk about what we do. It is in this sense that we talk about the crisis.

In what follows, I will attempt to make sense of this particular disruption; the disruption in the way of describing what we do. To do this, I will move along the lines of the following trajectory.

First, I will sketch an account of the way we talk about what we do, or else, about our practices. I will suggest that thought of our practices is thought of the way we live along the lines of thought of life as such. Thought of life, Michael Thompson argues in his groundbreaking Life and Action, has its own logic; a logic delineated in terms of what he calls natural-historical judgments. Roughly speaking, these are expressed in general sentences of the form “The S does/is/has/etc. A”; as for instance, “The Beluga whale travels

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1 What this we refers to is a question I shall purposefully leave unanswered until the end of this paper.
for about 1.5 miles during a dive.” In the first part of this paper, I will suggest that our judgments of our practices should be understood along the lines of natural-historical judgments; i.e. as descriptions of the form of life that humans live.

To echo Donald Davidson’s celebrated article, one might think that these judgments give us no more than the social-conceptual scheme which organizes the natural-empirical content of our life. The reason, one might think, is that, in fact, individual people go on living, even in the face of the radical disruption of their practices. How, one will ask, can I explain this, if I assume that judgments of practice are mere representations of the logical form of human life? In the final part of this paper, I will attempt to answer this challenge. To do so, I will revert to Jonathan Lear’s *Radical Hope* in order to illustrate how, when the judgments that make sense of our shared social practices are disrupted, what breaks down is our life. In Lear’s choice of words, when the nexus of our practices falls apart, there is a sense in which we can say that nothing happens. And yet, I will try to show that I can explain the possibility of individuals going on living in the face of the radical disruption of their practices, without abandoning the belief that living is not something that is available to us independently of the way we live.

1. Thought of Our Life

As I said above, before the crisis we would say things like: “We do not pay a visit without bearing gifts,” “We help those in need,” “We support our children even when they are old enough to support themselves,” “We are hospitable to foreigners,” “We go on strike when our working conditions demand it,” “We don’t pay for our education and our healthcare,” “We talk about politics in public,” “We do not put up with fascism,” etc. In this section, I will try to bring forth the distinctive logical structure of these judgments; that is, the distinctive way in which subject and predicate are held together in the nexus of these judgments.

One thing we may notice about these judgments—judgments of practice, from now on—is that they may be transcribed into judgments like the following: “It does not look good to pay a visit without bearing gifts,” “It is our duty to help those in need,” “To be a good parent is to support one’s children even when they are old enough to support themselves,” “It is noble to treat a foreigner finely,” “Workers have the right to strike,” “Free education and healthcare is a requirement of justice,” “Talking openly about politics is an end in itself,” etc. That is, in these cases, instead of talking about what we do, we could have talked about what is one’s duty (or unconditional obligation), what is a requirement of etiquette, what is part of one’s practical identity, what is a

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Judgments of Practice and Ways of Life

requirement of virtue, what constitutes a right, how a thick value is realized, and, finally, what one’s (infinite) ends here and now are. These and similar concepts draw from different corners of ongoing moral philosophical discussions, but, at some point or another, most of them have been posited as the source of the most fundamental demands with which an individual is faced. That is, on some conceptions, the source of the most fundamental demands with which an individual is faced is a principle of unconditional requirement; on others, it is a principle of instrumental requirement; on others, it is one’s conception of oneself as a bearer of a practical identity; on others, it is one’s socially and culturally shaped conceptions of excellence; on others, it is an area of obligations and liberties that arises out of the confrontation of one person qua person with another; on yet others, it is a battery of conceptions of goodness or rightness that essentially involve descriptions of how things actually are in the world; and, on others, it is the capacity of the agent to set for herself (infinite) ends. A rich and vast literature surrounds each of the foregoing topics, and proponents of the respective views delve into complex and interesting debates with their opponents. In what follows, I will not go into these discussions.

I will, instead, be content to note that the judgments of practice are what judgments of various sorts of normativity may be transcribed to, even though they themselves do not contain any explicitly normative vocabulary. Nothing in the superficial grammatical structure of judgments of practice betrays any hint of normativity. In fact, grammatically speaking, these judgments are entirely non-normative, one would think; they simply describe what happens to be the case. As we saw above, explicitly normative judgments are easily transcribable into them. Could there be something special in the logical structure of the judgments of practice, something that explains the fact that explicitly normative statements may be transcribed into them, even though they themselves have none of the grammatically recognizable normative elements? In what follows, I will pursue this hypothesis by examining some features of the structure of these judgments.

The first thing to note about the structure of the judgments of practice is that the subject is in the first plural. “We help out our children...,” “We go on strike....” (Of course, we could have said we who live the life of Greeks, but this would not have changed things dramatically. Of course, we predicate

5 See, for instance, some of the Kantians in practical philosophy.
6 See, for instance, some of the Humeans in practical philosophy.
8 See, for instance, some of the neo-Aristotelians in practical philosophy.
9 See, for instance, some of the so-called Right Libertarians, such as R. Nozick, Anarchy, State and Utopia (New York: Basic Books, 1974), but also some of the Left-Libertarians, such as M. Otsuka, “Saving Lives, Moral Theories and the Claims of Individuals,” Philosophy and Public Affairs, 34 (2006), 109-135.
things of those who live the life of Greeks, but it is written in these judgments that those who indeed live the life of Greeks have, themselves, access to these judgments; i.e., can say things like “We who live the life of Greeks...” Hence it is that I take the “We do/are/have S” to be the form of these judgments. The judgments seem perfectly ordinary, and yet there is a difficulty in spelling out what it is which this “we” refers to. For instance, that when we say that we go on strike when the working conditions demand it, we say something about the public and private sector workers in Greece. Notice that we do not refer to all the public and private sector workers. Even when successful strikes were genuinely possible in Greece, strikes were usually not 100% successful. It was very rarely true that all public and private sector workers went on strike in Greece, but it was nevertheless true to say that “We go on strike when the working conditions demand it.”

One could suggest that the we nevertheless refers to most individuals of a certain class that also fall under the predicate. Thus, one could say that, when it still made sense to say “We talk about politics openly in public,” the we referred to most of us who live the life of Greeks. Thus, there would be nothing special in the structure of these judgments. Even this much is not true. It would be naive, if not absurd, to assume that, when it made sense to say “We talk about politics openly in public,” the we referred to what most Greeks were doing at the time of the utterance. Of course, we talked about politics in public, but was there ever a particular time at which most of us were doing so? If there was, is this what our judgments are supposed to capture? The answer is no, and the reason comes out if we reflect on a certain feature of the predicate of these judgments: Judgments of practice connect a subject in the first plural pronoun with a predicate in the simple present tense. We say “We help out our children...,” “We go on strike...,” and the predicate in the present tense here does not pick out an activity that is performed at or throughout a particular time. Rather, the predicate picks out a unity of particular activities, which, in turn, are taking place at or throughout particular times.

The predicate picking out the unity of particular activities is not situated in time in the same way that these particular activities are. For example, when things were still non-critical in Greece we would say things like the following: “We do not pay for our education and our healthcare, and so I did not pay for my daughter's college education last year”; or, “I will not pay for my son's surgery next fall, we do not pay for our education and healthcare”; or, “I am not paying for my tertiary education as we speak because we do not pay for our education and healthcare”; “I did not pay for my daughter's college education last year”; “I will not pay for my son’s surgery next fall”; “I am not paying for my tertiary education.” The I-judgments here are judgments of activities which extend or are placed in time in a way that is different than the way our judgments of practice are. The activities predicated of the I in the I-judgments are linked with their subject in time in a way that allows us to ask the question when, and receive an answer that places the activity at issue in a particular point in or period of time. I say “I am not paying for my tertiary education,” and I am speaking of an activity that started at some particular
point in time, will end at some particular point in time, and is extending throughout a particular period of time. In the case of these I-judgments, the connection between the subject and the predicate is a connection that holds either at a particular point in time, or for a particular period of time. We may say that the activities thus represented are individual time-specific activities.

In the case of judgments of practice, the connection between the subject and the predicate is a connection that holds together in a unity a manifold of activities. Thus, the connection between subject and predicate in judgments of practice is general over time and agents. That is, an indefinite number of individual time-specific activities fall under both the subject and the predicate of the judgment of practice. Now, the specific way these activities fall under both the subject and the predicate of the judgment of practice is seen in the examples above: “We do not pay for our education and our healthcare, and so I did not pay for my daughter’s college education last year”; or, “I will not pay for my son’s surgery next fall, you see we do not pay for our education and healthcare”; or, “I am not paying for my tertiary education as we speak because we do not pay for our education and healthcare.” In the first example, what the agent is about to do is represented as the conclusion of reasoning that starts from the thought of what we do. In the second case, what the agent did is represented as understood in light of what we do. In the third case, what we do is represented as the agent’s reason for what she is doing. In these examples, we see that individual time-specific activities fall under the general predication of our judgments of practice in the sense that they are explained by these time-general predications. These time-general predications explain in the sense that they give the agent’s (syllogistically representable) reasons for engaging in these individual time-specific activities.

Before I continue with a problem, let me pause to sum up what has happened so far. We said that our judgments of practice are what explicitly normative judgments may be transcribed to, and yet they themselves do not seem to contain any explicitly normative vocabulary. We sought to explain this fact by positing a hypothesis. The hypothesis was that there must be something distinctive in the logical structure of judgments of practice that explains the distinctive normative power they have. We set out to explore this hypothesis. The first thing we noted about the structure of these judgments was that these judgments are general (the first person plural is in the position of the subject), but that the generality in question is neither universal (for the relevant set of individuals each time) nor statistical. In our attempt to offer evidence for this, we noted another feature of these judgments, i.e. that their predicate is in the simple present tense. We took this to signify that the predicate in judgments of practice is general, in the sense that it gives unity to a manifold of activities. We then asked what the sense might be in which a manifold of activities might be united by the general predicate in our judgments of practice and we noted another feature of these judgments. That is, that what we do is connected with what we are/were/will be doing, as explanans is to explanandum, and, what is more, in the way that the reason giving explanans is connected to the reason bearing explanandum.
Let me now continue with a problem. We started our quest for an explanation of the distinctive logical structure of judgments of practice, and we ended up with something that characterizes our judgments and the explicitly normative judgments alike. After all, the explicitly normative judgments may be taken as explanda of individual time-specific actions. Why assume that there is anything special in our judgments of practice, then? Why not assume that our judgments of practice are no more than fallen or corrupt forms of the explicitly normative judgments?

In what follows, I will argue that the reason that we should not assume this is that there is something distinctive in the way that our judgments of practice explain our individual time-specific activities. Our judgments of practice explain our individual time-specific activities by showing that our practices are actualized in the individual time-specific activities they explain, in the same way that generalities about life are actualized in the individual living behavior that they explain. This is to say that the judgments of practice are distinctive qua judgments, because they fall under the genus of representations of life, in which the individual falls under the general in a very distinctive way. In the following section, I will try to clarify this way by saying a bit more about the representation of life in general.

2. Thought of Life

Let me start this section with a brief preliminary note. It might seem awfully wrong, to begin with, to say that thought of practices is not governed by the same logic as thought of other things. Thought just is thought, one might think, and the laws of thought pertain to it qua thought, and not qua thought about this or that particular subject matter. This argument puts together two notions that should be kept separate: content and subject matter. The laws of thought pertain to it qua thought independently of the content, but not necessarily independently of the subject matter. As Frege, for instance, showed, thought of a concept is governed by different rules of inference than thought of an object. When, for instance, the issue is thought of an object, it is irrelevant to the logical form whether it is of this or that object that the thought is about. The content of the thought cannot affect the logical form of the thought. The subject matter can. The claim here, then, is that, when our thought turns to our practices, it is not governed by the same rules that govern our thought about other things. I suggested above that thought of our practices is distinctive in that it is, in the first instance, thought of our life; and thought of our life has a distinctive logical structure, in so far as it is thought of life. That is, in thought of life, subject and predicate are linked together in the nexus of the judgment in a distinctive way. In what follows, I will follow

12 As Michael Thompson puts the same point “Thought as thought, takes a quite special turn when it is thought of the living—a turn of the same kind as that noticed by Frege in the transition from thought on an object to thought of a concept, from Aristotle is wise to The wise are few” (Thompson, Life and Action, p. 27).
the lead of Michael Thompson in explicating the logical structure of thought of life. This will ultimately help with the question of the previous section: i.e. what it means to say that our judgments of practice are a species of representations of life.

The distinctive logical structure of thought of life is reflected in what Michael Thompson calls natural-historical judgments. These are general judgments of the form “The S is/does/have/etc. A.” To take a concrete example, when we talk about the life of the beluga whale, we say things like the following: “The beluga whale is a small, toothed whale that is white as an adult,” “The beluga whale holds its breath underwater for up to 15 to 20 minutes,” “The Beluga whale travels for about 1.5 miles during a dive,” “The beluga whale lives in frigid Arctic and sub-Arctic waters,” “The beluga whale has a life expectancy of 25-30 years,” “The beluga whale carries its baby for about 14-15 months,” etc.

These judgments, like our judgments of practice, have a generality that is not reducible to either universal or statistical generality. Thus, when we judge of the beluga whale that is travels for about 1.5 miles during a dive, we do not judge of every x, that if x is a beluga whale then x travels for about 1.5 miles during a dive. Surely, there are plenty of beluga whales which travel much less than that during their many dives. The truth of the judgment that “The Beluga whale travels for about 1.5 miles during a dive” is not thereby threatened. The generality of natural-historical judgments is not statistical either. When we say that “The beluga whale has a life expectancy of 25-30 years,” we do not necessarily talk of what happens to most beluga whales. In fact, it is possible that, during certain times, most beluga whales are killed by hunters before they reach anywhere close to 25-30 years of age. And yet the truth of the judgment that “The beluga whale has a life expectancy of 25-30 years” is not thereby threatened. When we say of the beluga whale that it does/is/has A, we do not talk of all beluga whales or most beluga whales. We do not, that is, talk of a quantity of individual beluga whales in the way that we would talk of a quantity of individual objects. Obviously beluga whales can be treated as quantifiable, but the point here is that, when we judge that “The beluga whale is/does/has A,” what we judge of is not something general in terms of quantity.

Now, Michael Thompson suggests that what we judge of is something general, in the way that the beluga whale life-form is general over the individual beluga whales. But what does this mean? When we say that the beluga whale carries its baby for about 14-15 months, our thought both describes and explains what is going on with individual beluga whales. We may understand why an individual beluga whale is continuously growing bigger over an extended period of time after it has reached its maturity, if we learn that the beluga whale carries its baby for about 14 to 15 months. What is more, like our judgments of practice, what the beluga whale does/is/has is what the individual beluga whale should do/be/have. To put it slightly differently, if an individual beluga whale does not do what the beluga whale does, this does not threaten the truth of judgments concerning what the beluga whale does. On the contrary, if an individual beluga whale does not do what the beluga whale
does, the fault lies in the individual beluga whale, and not in the judgment about what the beluga whale does. Let us take the example above and let us say that we know that the beluga whale carries its baby for about 14 to 15 months. If an individual beluga whale delivers its baby after 12 months of pregnancy, this does not falsify the judgment about what the beluga whale does. In fact, to say that the beluga whale carries its baby about 14 to 15 months is to say that, if an individual beluga whale delivers its baby sufficiently long before that, then there must be something wrong with that whale.

Michael Thompson hints at what is wrong with the individual living beings in such cases by calling them defective. This is not enough of an explanation. An artifact may also be defective. To say that the beluga whale carries its baby for about 14 to 15 months is to say that, if an individual beluga whale delivers its baby long enough before that, then the individual beluga whale (mother or baby) will fall short of what it takes to live. For instance, the baby beluga whale will not be safely brought into life; it will simply not be ready for the kind of life it will have to live. The sustenance of the life of the individual beluga whale (in this case the continuation of the life of the individual baby) will be endangered. The defect of the individual beluga whale that is falling short of what the beluga whale does is a failure in the living (of the life of the beluga whale). Thus, on this conception, it does not make sense to posit a sort of living which is a generic activity common to all living beings, and which remains, even when all the activities predicated of a certain life-form in the natural historical judgments, for some reason or other, fail. On this conception, life cannot be lived outside the several life-forms, in the same way that animality cannot be found in animals outside, say, their dogness or catness. And, thus, what it is for an individual bearer of a life-form to live a life at all is to live the life of its life-form; to a lesser or greater degree.

When the individual beluga whale is doing what the beluga whale does, it is actually living the life of the beluga whale. In other words, when an individual beluga whale does as the beluga whale does, it does not just do as it ought to do according to some external standard, as may be the case with the explicitly normative judgments; it actually lives the life of the beluga whale. It actualizes, as it were, the beluga whale life-form. Thus, we see that, even though there is no more to the life of an individual beluga whale than the life of the beluga whale, the reverse is not true. There is something more to the life of the beluga whale than the life of any individual beluga whale. That is, the life of the beluga whale is actualized in the living of an indefinite number of whales, as it is what gives unity to a manifold of whales.

I may say that, on this view, the natural-historical judgments express what an individual beluga whale must do to successfully live the life of the beluga whale; which is what it is for it to live, period.

3. Back to Our Life

I suggested that we should not assume that the judgments of our practice are merely corrupt variations of our explicitly normative judgments. I urged that
the judgments of practice are distinctively normative. I hinted that they are distinctively normative in that they are actualized in the individuals they explain, in the same way that judgments of life (natural historical judgments) are actualized in the individuals they explain. One may think that the special normativity involved in representations of life in section three above is not applicable at all to the representations of our practices. I said above that the failure of the individual beluga whale to live the life of the beluga whale is just the failure of the individual beluga whale to live, period. If the judgments of our practice are themselves representations of life, we should have to say that, for any individual bearer of the subject of these judgments (i.e. “us”), to fail to live the life of this subject (the life of “us”) is to fail to live, period.

This idea may now seem even more counterintuitive in the case of human beings than it seemed in the case of beluga whales. In what follows, I will present the philosophical perspective from which this position appears counterintuitive, and then I will offer an argument against this appearance.

First of all, one will object, in the case of judgments of practice, that we do not speak of what “the human” does/is/has, as we spoke of what “the beluga whale” does/is/has. We speak, instead, of what “we” do/are/have. In the example of the Greek crisis, one might say, we speak of us Greeks, or us who live in Greece, or us who live the Greek way of life. There is no limit to what may take the place of this “we.” This, the objection continues, reflects the fact that there are multiple ways to be human and to live a human life. We know this much, at least, since the rise of the social sciences like anthropology, one will readily claim. Surely, we who live the life of Greeks will suffer terrible losses when our (judgments of) practice(s) become obsolete. We will not, thereby, cease to live. We will continue to live, for there is something to living above and beyond the sum-total of our practices: the living of the life of the human being. One may keep on, living the life of the human being is represented in exactly the way that living the life of the beluga whale is represented. Thus, on this conception, the life-form of the human being is represented by the sum-total of judgments like the following: “The human carries its baby for no more than nine months,” “The human mates at all times of the year,” “The human needs several years of nursing before it can be on its own,” “The human needs daily feeding,” “The human sleeps for about eight hours a day,” “The human communicates through the use of language,” “The human lives in communities,” etc. Thus, even if one accepts that there is nothing more to living a life at all than actualizing a certain life-form, as I urged in section three above, one may suggest that living a human life is not represented by judgments of what we do. On the contrary, on this objection, human life should be represented in exactly the way that the life-form of the beluga whale is represented. On this conception, what our judgments of practice do is to merely reflect the organization of this human life-form in different ways. Judgments of what we who live the life of Greeks do, reflect the way in which we who live the life of Greeks have organized the material that is the life-form of the human being. The Spanish may organize this material differently, and so may the French and the British, and so on and so forth. For instance,
the humans that live the way of life of the Greeks communicates with its kind in a specific way that is different than it is elsewhere; or they feed themselves in a way that is specific to their society. On this view, the role of the judgments of our practice is to provide the scheme that will, each time, organize the content that is the human life-form, and which is available to us independently of the scheme. What we all have in common is this content. On this conception, then, when we speak of what we do, we speak of how we do what the human does, in the sense that what we do is a way of organizing what the human does, such that even if we radically fail to do what it is that we do, we will not thereby fail to live the life of the human being.

If our way of life, i.e. what the judgments of practice describe, is radically disrupted, we may still count as living a life; i.e. the life of the human being. This life will, of course, be rendered poorer by the disruption, but it will not be any less fitting for a human. On the contrary, it will be the core of what counts as the human life. It will always be possible for it to become richer again by the mere choice and appropriation of new practices.

In light of this possible conception, one will now ask: how will the view that I’m pushing here, the view that judgments of practice are themselves representations of human life, explain the possibility of keeping on living in the face of the radical disruption of what our judgments of practice reflect?

When we speak of what we do, we speak of how we do what the human does, in the sense that what we do just is what the human does in our case; such that, to the extent that we radically fail to do what it is we do, to this extent we fail to live (a human life). In my view, the analogue of a natural-historical judgment in the case of us humans is just the judgment of practice. The judgment of practice is the representation of the human life (it reflects the actualization of the human life), in the way that the natural-historical judgment is the representation of the life-form of the beluga whale (it reflects the actualization of the beluga whale life). And so, the judgment of practice is actualized in the individual it explains, in exactly the sense that natural-historical judgment is actualized in the individual it explains.

But, as I said above, the opponent will readily object, what we observe in times of crisis, like the current one in Greece, is that, even when a way of life is radically disrupted, there may be a certain sense (however minimal) in which life goes on. The opposing conception of judgments of practice claims itself capable of explaining this fact. How are we to ever understand this fact if we accept my view of the logical status of judgments of practice (i.e. as representations of life in the case of the humans)? If no such understanding is forthcoming, then my view cannot save the phenomena.

Contrary to what one might perhaps expect, this understanding is indeed forthcoming. In a philosophically mesmerizing book, Jonathan Lear attempts to make explicit just this understanding, by focusing on a particular case: the

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13 Of course there is a question as to when one counts as radically failing, but this is not my question. For my purposes it is enough if we accept that this possibility of radical failure is possible.
disruption of the way of life of the nomadic, hunting, warrior tribe of the Crow of North America with the advent of the white man. The Crow, contrary to some of their traditional enemies, survived the advent of the white man, and contrary to yet other tribes, did more than survive; they managed to find ways of living well. In his book, Jonathan Lear tells the philosophical-anthropological story of the disruption and the resumption of the life of the Crow. Lear centers his reading of this disruption around a phrase of the chief of the Crow, Plenty Coup. Plenty Coup, in his recounting of his story to a white man by the name of Frank Linderman, said:

“I have not told you half of what happened when I was young. I can think back and tell you much more of war and horse-stealing. But when the buffalo went away the hearts of my people fell to the ground, and they could not lift them up again. After this, nothing happened. There was little singing anywhere. Besides, you know that part of my life as well as I do. You saw what happened to us when the buffalo went away.”

“After this, nothing happened,” says the chief of the Crow. As my opponent may insist, even after the white man came and the hunting and warring were wiped out, the individual Crow went on living. And this surely must mean that they went on doing stuff. These doings must surely count as happenings. How, then, can Plenty Coup say that After this, nothing happened? This is an analogue to the question raised above about my view of the logical status of the judgments of practice. How can I explain that individuals may go on living, even after their way of life is radically disrupted, if I say that, to live at all is, for us humans, to live our way of life?

In a brilliant move, Jonathan Lear sketches the following answer to this question. People usually assume that the scope of our shared practices—what is reflected in our judgments of practice—reaches all the way to individual time-specific activities only in some cases; say, in cases of acting that display courage in war or justice in the dealings with others, etc. On this common assumption, most cases of mundane acts, like cooking, or washing, or walking, etc., do not fall under judgments of practice in our sense. Lear objects, it is crucial even to mundane acts, such as cooking and washing and walking, that they fall under the heading of practices. In his case study, it was crucial for the Crow woman cooking the meal before the battle that she could answer the question “What are you doing there?” by saying “I'm preparing my family for battle.” It is an illusion to think that cooking, or any mundane act, for that matter, does not acquire meaning by instantiating, or exemplifying, or falling under practices. In answering the question What are you doing there, the

14 Lear, Radical Hope: Ethics in the Face of Cultural Devastation.
15 Ibid., p. 2.
16 Ibid., p. 38.
17 An illusion that fails to grasp what Anscombe takes to be the mark of intentional actions: a particular susceptibility to a certain question why, that at some point or another is bound to end up in a judgment of practice or a judgment that may be transcribed in a judgment of practice. See E.E.M. Anscombe, Intention (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1957).
Crow woman “identifies the act by locating it in a larger scheme of purposefulness.”¹⁸ This larger scheme of purposefulness is what our (judgments of) practice(s) constitute, if held together. How are these (judgments of) practice(s) held together? They are, Lear explains, held together by the shared conception of what life is worth living for, or of what the good life is; or, to put it in yet another way, of what, in the case of the Crows, it means to be an excellent Crow.

When a way of life is disrupted, Lear tells us, what is going on is that this scheme of purposefulness, this nexus of practices, is suddenly disrupted; “and with it goes the possibility of identifying the [individual time-specific] act in this way.”¹⁹ In the case of the disruption of the life of the Crow, their conception of happiness could no longer be lived, Lear tells us.²⁰ What they went on doing could no longer be identified as the time-specific activity that it was, because the larger scheme of purposefulness within which it could be identified was now wiped out. In this sense, i.e. in the sense that the question What are you doing could no longer admit a proper answer, nothing happened. One will quickly object, is not the disruption of the possibility of living one’s conception of happiness something that, itself, counts as a happening? As Lear explains, a happening in human life counts as happening only from within a certain conception of what life is worth living, or a scheme of purposefulness. It is only within the warrior-hunting conception of happiness of the Crow that their individual time-specific doings counted as happenings. Things stopped happening for the Crow when the buffalo went away, in the sense that what it meant for things to happen in their lives could no longer be lived. We can say that what the Crow underwent with the disruption of their way of life was the disruption of the possibility of anything happening in their lives; and so the possibility of living.

Yet, one will object, and this brings me to the heart of the matter here, that individual Crows nevertheless went on living. Greeks nowadays do go on living. How can I or anyone suggest that a radical disruption in the way of life—in the practices—is a disruption in living itself? Why not assume, as the interpretation I’m rejecting has it, that there is something to living that lies outside all forms of life, which people go on enjoying even after their way of life has been disrupted? Because, as Lear argues, the fact that individual Crows go on living is not to be understood except in terms of their conception of what happiness is. Before the advent of the white man, the Crow had their lives centered on conceptions of happiness that had to do with the practices of hunting and warring. Take, for instance, courage. Courage, for the Crow, was understood in terms of excellent behavior in the face of death in war. When the conditions for war as they knew it were disrupted, what it meant for them to be courageous was similarly disrupted. This disruption should, on my interpretation of the logical status of judgments of practice, be understood as a

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¹⁸ Ibid., p. 39.
¹⁹ Ibid., p. 39.
²⁰ Ibid., p. 55.
failure in living. Individual Crows went on living. How could they go on living in the face of the disruption of their conception of happiness, in the face of the disruption of the nexus of their practices, in the face of their failure to live? How could they fail to live and yet go on living at the same time? How should we understand their capacity to go on living if not along the lines of the capacity of the beluga whale to breathe?

The answer to this, as Jonathan Lear shows, should be sought out in the Crow conception of what life is worth living, and the Crow nexus of practices that this conception held together. In Lear’s example, the capacity of the Crow to go on living can be understood as the thinned out exercise of their capacity to live courageously. The capacity to live courageously was, for the Crow, the capacity to live successfully in the face of the possibility of death in war. When traditional war became impossible for them, it simply became impossible for the Crow to live their conception of successful living in the face of the possibility of death in war. This, at least partly, constituted their incapacity to live. And yet, individual Crows went on living. Lear keenly observes, the Bildung of the Crow in traditional practices of courage was, at the same time, the Bildung of the sensitivity and the imagination of the Crow. The Bildung of their sensitivity and imagination was the Bildung of their capacity to live successfully in the face of a sort of death that had hitherto not been conceptualized or imagined: the death of their practices, i.e. of their fleshing out of their conception of how to live. That the Crow went on living was not a matter of living the naked life of the generic human life-form; it was a matter of being courageous, as it was their attempt to live successfully in the face of the death of their practices, and it could only be understood in terms of those very practices.

To bring the point home, we may imagine a courageous Crow ex-warrior thinking to himself, “I never run away from my place in battle, I will not give up now, even though I no longer know who I am and what I’m doing.” That is, even after the Crow practices were disrupted, a Crow who was successfully brought up to be courageous, was a Crow that was also inculcated with a thinner conception of how to live well; one that perhaps involved “not giving up,” “keeping on,” etc., and, more importantly, one that perhaps involved being able to phrase and re-phrase the question of “What to do” and “Who to be.” To put it in other words, the practices of courage, of successful living in the face of death in war, were exemplified by individual time-specific activities that were no longer possible once the Crow way of life was disrupted. What the inculcation or actualization of the practices in the individual Crows also involved was the inculcation or actualization of thinner conceptions of happiness. To learn how to behave excellently in the face of death in war is, after all, to also learn how to not give up in the face of what no longer makes sense. Thus, when the practices of the Crow were disrupted, even though the conditions of practicing war were gone, the conditions for not giving up in the face of what no longer makes sense were not gone. This thinner sense of one’s conception of the life worth living was what was preserved in the life of the Crow. It is this thinner conception which helps us make sense of the individu-
al Crows keeping on living, even when their life had stopped making sense. “I am a Crow; we do not give up even when things stop making sense,” we can imagine the Crow warrior saying; and this cannot be understood except in terms of the Crow conception (albeit a thin one) of the good life. It is only from within a conception of the life worth living, which is what our practices are held together by, that keeping on living may be understood, even when the practices that used to flesh out that conception are now gone. Judgments of practice, I may now say, reflect thick conceptions of the life worth living. Thick conceptions of the life worth living also involve thin conceptions of the life worth living. When our practices, the thick conceptions of our living, are disrupted, what may keep us going, what may make it possible for us to keep on living, are the thin conceptions of the life worth living. And this, the turning to the thinner conceptions of the life worth living, may be what sustains the possibility, and so the hope, of one day transforming these thin conceptions into thick answers to the questions of What to do and Whom to be.

Of course, it is never guaranteed that the disruption of the practices (thick conceptions of the life worth living) may leave intact the thin conceptions of the life worth living. And it is also not guaranteed that the thinning out of the thick conceptions of the life worth living will suffice to sustain living a life that stands a chance of being re-represented in thick conceptions of the life worth living. What is guaranteed, though, is that the possibility of keeping on living after the radical disruption of one’s practices (i.e. thick conceptions of the life worth living) can be explained by reference to what these practices are; i.e. thick conceptions of the life worth living; Bildung into which, or the actualization of which, also involves Bildung, or the actualization of thin conceptions of the life worth living.

Living, in the case of us humans, is living a form of life. A form of life is represented by the nexus of the judgments of practice to which the individual bearers of this form of life may have access. That is, and this brings me to the last point of clarification of the logical structure of the judgments of practice, a judgment of practice is actualized in the individual it explains in virtue of the fact that the individual has access to this judgment; in virtue of the fact, that is, that the individual can represent what she is doing by saying “We do A,” or “I’m doing A because we do A,” etc.

In other words, when an individual is engaging in a time-specific activity, it is actualizing a practice, or a thick conception of the life worth living, because the individual may represent (or identify) what she is doing to herself by judgments of the form “We do A,” or “I’m doing A because we do A,” etc. And to live a human life is to be able to, thus, represent what one is doing.

When one’s judgments of practice fall apart, when the practices of which these judgments are judgments are disrupted, the individual may keep on living. And this living can be explained as actualizing thinner conceptions of the life worth living that may survive the practices now gone. We do not need to explain the possibility of keeping on living after the radical disruption of one’s practices by reference to an idea of life as something that is available to us humans independently of the way in which we live it. On the view present-
ed here, our life just is our way of life. And our way of life is structured by our conception of what life is worth living. This, our way of life, is vulnerable in a certain way. It may fall apart on us, as the means of sustaining our practices may get wiped out. In the face of this collapse, we may go on living. Although, perhaps it will be an uncertain, frail sort of living. A sort of living that is still held together by a thinned out version of these practices, and so of the conception of a life worth living. Also a sort of living for which there is radical hope: hope that this thin conception of the life worth living will be actualized in new practices, and, thus, in new ways of making sense of what one does and what one is.
Ethical Crisis and Decision-Making: Karol Wojtyla on the Role of Reason and Will

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Introduction

The main aim of this paper is to highlight the role of reason and will in decision-making, particularly in times of ethical dilemma, which could lead to ethical crisis. The ethical theory of Karol Wojtyla provides a basis for this role of reason and will in making ethical decisions.

On the eve of the national elections, Kathryn received from an unknown person a sealed envelope. After the person had left, she opened it and saw a considerable amount of money and a list of names of some candidates for local positions. Apparently, the intention was to buy her vote or bribe her to vote for the candidates on the list. The money is almost equivalent to a week’s pay and it would certainly augment her family’s meager income. Kathryn struggled with her thought. On one hand, she needed money desperately, but she did not want to compromise her right to vote according to her choice. Would she keep the money and vote for the candidates on the list or return the money and vote according to her conscience?

Alvin was having difficulty getting his driver’s license released in the local transportation office. He was approached by an unidentified staff who told him that he can negotiate inside the office for the release of his license for some amount. Apparently, the money will be used as “grease money” inside. While Alvin does not like the idea of bribing people, he also does not want to be delayed in securing his driver’s license. He is torn between doing what his conscience tells him and what is the most expedient thing to do at that moment.

One morning, Karla discovered that she is pregnant again. This would be her sixth child in eight years of her marriage to Paolo, an on-and-off employee in a local department store. The thought of another mouth to feed and another baby to carry worried Karla terribly. But she does not want to abort the baby and discontinue her pregnancy. When she told Paolo about it, he told her firmly that they cannot afford to have yet another child, so he instructed

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her to go to the local clinic and request for a pill that would abort her pregnancy. Karla is undecided; she is torn between her husband’s decision and the baby she is carrying in her womb.

These stories are just examples of moral dilemmas that people encounter in their daily lives. Every day, we are confronted with different moral situations where we have to make a moral decision. The outcome of our decision will not only affect our own welfare; its consequences will have a far-reaching effect on other people and in the community or the society in general. Personal decisions do not only affect individual persons, they also affect other people and the community. The kind of society we have today is determined by our individual choices.

But, given the complexity of our modern living and the complex situations in which we find ourselves, the decisions are never easy, especially when those decisions involved ethics or morality. Decision-making, especially on ethical issues, is critical; it can either lead to the resolution of certain moral dilemma or to some positive result, or it can lead to more problems or difficulties. The moment of critical personal decision is a moment of personal crisis. While other people rely on their “gut feeling” or on the advice of other people, their decision will be somehow affected by many factors like culture, family influence, peer pressure, public perception, media exposure, school, religion etc., but ultimately it will be made by way of reason and will.

Ethical Crisis and Ethics

Personal decisions, whether they are moral, political or economic in nature, do not usually lead to crisis, but there are personal decisions that could become crucial and they could lead to crisis. Today, we are faced with different crises; there is “economic crisis,” “ecological or environmental crisis,” “political crisis,” “social crisis” etc. But what is “crisis”? Some people have the ambiguous notion that crisis is “chaos.” Somehow, crisis is related to chaos or it could lead to chaos, but this happens only when, in the moment, through indecision, the situation becomes disorderly and, therefore, chaotic. A political crisis could lead to chaos if, during the time when no political decision is made that can resolve a present political problem, the political situation is aggravated and can become disorderly and, therefore, chaotic. The same could be said of economic, social, environmental and even ethical crises.

The word “crisis” was derived from the Greek term “krises,” which means choice, decision, judgment, and “krises” was derived from the Greek verb “krinein,” which means “to decide.” In the legal, medical and rhetorical contexts, “krisis” could mean a turning point in a decision, a crucial or decisive stage or state of affairs. In this context, a choice or decision is a critical moment which could lead to something positive, productive, meaningful and successful, or it could lead to something negative, tragic, senseless, or a failure. But when does something or some situation become a crisis? There are several factors or elements of crisis.
First, crisis happens unexpectedly; it is always sudden. While, in some cases, it could develop gradually, but the way a situation or a state of affairs reaches its critical point comes always as a surprise or suddenly for the parties involved. Even if we try to anticipate when a situation or state of affairs will reach its highest or critical point, the moment it happens will still be a surprise. Second, because it comes so suddenly or unexpectedly, it disrupts the normal flow of things, or the normal situation or state of affairs. Crisis puts the situation out of harmony, it puts the situation is a state of imbalance. Third, since crisis puts the situation in a state of imbalance, then, it creates instability and uncertainty. In a moment of crisis, things are out of control; the situation is beyond the normal control of the parties involved. If the disruption of the normal situation and the instability that it causes are not addressed, then crisis could lead to chaos or disorder. At this point, the situation has reached its most crucial moment. This leads to the fourth element of crisis, which is the most important—it is a crucial moment that requires a choice, a judgment, a decision. The decision will be based on certain choices and the decision could either resolve the crisis or aggravate the situation.

Going back to our examples, the situations that Kathryn, Alvin and Karla experienced happened unexpectedly; they disrupted their normal lives and created uncertainty, and these situations all required crucial decisions on their part. They with struggled how to deal with their respective crucial situations, but they need to make a choice, a decision. Their respective situations have the potential of becoming personal ethical crises. How should they respond? How should they decide?

Our society constantly faces different “crises”—political, social, economic and environmental, to name a few. Hence, the society is always faced with critical or crucial moments. These “crises” in the society result from personal or individual crises, like those of Kathryn, Alvin and Karla. The choices and decisions that society makes are founded on individual or personal choices and decisions. Individual choices are at the foundation of society’s choices. Individual decisions affect the greater decisions of the society. Hence, if societal crises are founded on personal and individual crises, then the resolution of societal crises are also based on personal choices and decisions. The ethical crisis, therefore, that we may encounter in society is based on personal ethical crisis, and its resolution is based on personal decision.

From an ethical perspective, the moment of decision or choice of an individual is essentially an act of the will; decision is an act of volition. The object of the act of volition is a value which the will perceives to be good. The will, however, does not usually act alone, the will acts with the influence of reason. The object of the will is a value that it perceives to be good. Whether such value is truly good or not is beyond the power of the will; the will must follow the guidance of reason. Volition, which is the act of the will, follows reason, and the proper object of reason is the truth. The will, then, when it makes a decision, must choose, and its choice ought to be based on the truth, that is, the true value of its object.
Ethical crisis involves crucial decisions on ethical matters and issues and, since the resolution of crisis involves decision that ought to be right, then, it is important to consider the primary roles of the will and reason in resolving ethical crisis. Reason has a role in volition and, consequently, in decision making or making a choice. The successor failure of the decision/choice, especially in crises involving ethical issues, can be affected by reason.

Man is endowed with rationality, and this enables him to deliberate and make conscious decisions. He is also endowed with free will, and therefore can determine his own actions, their course and objectives. Rationality and free volition bring with them concomitant responsibility; since man is a rational and free agent, he is responsible for his actions. His responsibility as a rational and free agent does not end simply with his actions; he also takes responsibility for their consequences and for the quality of the choice that he makes. Everyday man is faced with situations where he has to make a choice, and some of these situations could be critical; hence, it is his moral obligation to make the right choice, to follow the good option from the variety of options at hand. Whatever he chooses and in whatever manner he chooses, he is responsible for that choice and for its consequences. The extent of one’s knowledge and freedom determine the extent of his responsibility; hence, the greater the freedom and knowledge, the greater the responsibility.

Morality is concerned with the goodness or evil of human actions, that is, of those acts done with knowledge, freedom and voluntariness. There are certain standards or norms that become the basis for judging a particular act to be good or bad and, likewise, they give the reasons why a particular action is morally good or morally evil. Regardless of the standard or norm we use to determine the morality of human act, a human act has a moral value, the value of being good or bad, right or wrong. Morality is motivated by the fact that people strive to be responsible agents of actions. Being responsible agents of actions starts with knowing which actions are good and which actions are bad. In times of moral or ethical crisis, one has to make the right moral or ethical judgment and decision, and such must be based on reason and volition. Although some people rely on feelings and emotions as the basis of moral judgment, such cannot be acceptable, because emotions or feelings are usually biased, irrational, or are just products of one’s prejudice, and social and cultural conditioning. If one wants to base his ethical decisions on the truth, then, he must not allow himself be swayed by his feelings and emotions, but, instead, guide his feelings and emotions by reason.

Wojtyla’s Ethical Theory

One particular philosophy that espouses the role of reason and will in ethics and on ethical decisions is that of Karol Wojtyla. In his account of ethics, he attempts to integrate the rational and experiential elements of the ethical act.²

² Karol Wojtyla is critical of certain formal and emotive ethics; he particularly criticizes the formal ethics of Kant and the emotive ethics of Scheler. His ethics is grounded on
The bedrock of his ethics is the act of the will which is grounded on the experience of efficacy. But the object of the will is the good which must be a perceived as a value by the person. Experience is the starting point of Wojtyla’s ethical theory. Experience is correlated with the good, which is the object of the will, and the truth, which is the object of reason. The good is not just an abstract value, it is an experienced value. But a good value must not only be experienced; the good, which is the object of the will, must be truly good. The morality of the act must be based on goodness and truthfulness. Ethical decisions, therefore, must be based on goodness, which is related to the will, and truthfulness, which is related to reason.

According to Wojtyla, every human action involves a particular lived experience, which he refers to as ethical experience. The actions and consequent decisions of Kathryn, Alvin and Karla, in our examples, involve and are based on their lived experiences. Lived experience is the awareness on the part of the individual that, when he performs or does a certain action, he is the author of such an action; he is aware that he is agent of action. Kathryn, Alvin and Karla are aware that they are the ones who will decide and act on their decisions and, therefore, they are also aware of their responsibility. Since one experiences himself and his own person as the agent or cause of the act, then he also experiences himself as the efficient cause of the moral good or evil associated with the action. Through this, he also experiences the moral good or evil of his own person. It is, therefore, usual to feel the full weight of one’s moral actions and decisions, because moral actions and decisions are directly reflective of the moral value of the agent, and that is the person. The full weight of moral action and decision is a lived experience. Kathryn, Alvin and Karla feel the full weight of their moral decisions, it is their lived experience. This kind of lived experience that is associated with the moral value of the action and decision is what Wojtyla calls ethical experience. For Wojtyla, there is a connection between lived experience and the act of the will. In the lived experience, that is, in one’s experience of himself as the efficient cause of his acts, one encounters the will immediately. Going back to our examples, the ethical import of the decisions that Kathryn, Alvin and Karla have to make cannot be separated from their personal lived experience; such personal lived experience, with its concomitant responsibility, is also an ethical experi-

Thomistic ethics, having been influenced by the philosophy of St. Thomas. However, he is also influenced by phenomenology, and through his own application of phenomenology, he also integrates experience into his analysis of ethics. Wojtyla’s ethical theory is based on a critique of Schelerian and Kantian ethics and an appropriation of Thomistic ethics. He analyzes the ethical positions of Scheler and Kant and offers his own way of doing philosophy of ethics along Thomistic lines. Cf. J.J.S. Aguas, Person, Action and Love: The Philosophical Thoughts of Karol Wojtyla (John Paul II) (Manila: University of Santo Tomas Publishing House, 2014), pp. 266-268.

The lived experience of responsibility affirms that the will is the psychological factor that constitutes the very essence of ethical experience.

The Role of Will in the Ethical Act

Reason and will are the two rational faculties of man, and they constantly work hand in hand. The will wills so that reason may know, and reason knows so that the will wills what it wills. In his analysis of the act of the will, Wojtyła follows the conception of St. Thomas about the act of the will. For St. Thomas, the act of the will has two basic sources of actualization: one is the nature of the will itself as an appetite or an inclination, and the second is the objectification of the goodness of an object by reason. In the first actualization, the will, which is an appetite in itself, manifests a natural inclination toward anything that is in any way good. The will has a natural inclination toward anything perceived to be good, like food, relaxation, education, friends, love ones, etc. Hence, the will is, in itself, a causal-efficient source of impulses in the human being. But the will is also a rational faculty; it is a rational appetite, and the will’s natural rationality of desire is actualized when the will conforms its motions or choices to reason’s judgment about the object of desire. The true goodness of the object of the will as evaluated by reason directs the inclination of the will. Hence, the will is actualized by the true good as assessed by reason. The various objects of the will are goods objectified by reason, and the will is in potency with respect to the good, and the potency of the will towards these goods is actualized by reason. It is the will that will make the decision even in the most crucial moments or situations, but such decision must be fully informed by reason. Hence, reason has a crucial role in the ethical act and in ethical decision making.

The Role of Reason in the Ethical Act

The object of the will is the good and the object of reason is the truth. The will naturally inclines to the good and reason apprehends the truth. It is the task of reason to apprehend or objectify the good. The result of this close interaction of the reason and will is that the true and the good, in some sense, mutually permeate each other. The true, known by reason, is good, and the good, willed by will, is true. Although reason apprehends the good in a speculative way when it defines the good’s essence, and since the good is an object of action, then, reason apprehends the good from the aspect of action. Reason also distinguishes among the different kinds of goods, namely bonum honestum, bonum utile and bonum delectabile. Bonum honestum refers to the good that conforms to the nature of a rational being because it is in keeping with what that being desires for itself, bonum utile is a good that is a means to an end, bonum delectabile is the subjective good of satisfaction or pleasure.

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Through these distinctions, reason guides our actions. Following St. Thomas, Wojtyla stresses the directive role of reason in human action. Such a directive role of reason in action is determined mainly by a holistic view of the human being, a part or faculty of which is reason. Reason is part of the whole human person and performs its practical functions within this whole. The superior and directive character of the function of reason is determined in a fundamental way by the fact that reason defines the good, which is the ultimate end of the human being and his action – the *bonum honestum*. This, according to Wojtyla, is what guarantees that reason has a directive role in human life. Reason sees to it that the good desired by the will is the real and true good and not just a delectable or useful good. Even the value perceived by the will must be a real and true value of the object which is desired by the will.

*The Act of Willing and Decision*

In the act of willing or volition, the self directs itself to an external object. Willing is an intentional act of the person and, in such an act, he orients and directs himself to an object outside of himself. The object of willing is always something desirable because it has a value; it is a good. The person never passively directs himself to an object; when one wills something, he moves toward the desired object. The greater the good or the value, the greater is its power to attract the will and, consequently, the person. The person’s predisposition to be attracted by the positive and authentic goods and values, his unreserved consent to be drawn in and absorbed by them, are crucial factors in determining the maturity and the perfection of the person.

Decision is more fully manifested in choice rather than in simple willing, because, in choosing, the person manifests his freedom and self-determination. Wojtyla points out that freedom is present and manifests itself in the ability to choose. This ability to choose “confirms the independence of the will in the intentional order of willing. In choosing, the will is not cramped by the object, by the value as its end; it is the will and only the will that determines the object.” Freedom, then, is both dependence and independence; it is dependent on the self because it is the self that decides through the will, and independent from objects since, when the self decides, it is never determined by the object.

For Wojtyla, decision is a crucial moment in the experience of self-determination; it is always directed toward a value and involves the readiness to strive toward the good. It is viewed as an instance of a threshold through which the person has to pass on his way toward the good. His decision is somehow influenced by his absorption of the good and is further augmented as he approaches the good. The more he is attracted to the good, the more decisive his actions become.

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Is it possible to choose anything we want? Can we decide on any matter we perceive to be good? While reason is oriented towards the truth, the will as a faculty of choice is oriented towards the good. For Wojtyla, however, choice is not an arbitrary shooting in the dark, but a deliberate selecting. The ability to decide and to choose is connected with another significant aspect of the will, that is, the reference to "truth." Here, reason has an important role because it is the one that determines the truth of the good that the will desires. He explains:

“The reference to truth forms an intrinsic part of the very nature of a decision and is in a special manner manifest in choice. The essential condition of choice and of the ability to make a choice as such, seems to lie in the specific reference of will to truth, the reference that permeates the intentionality of willing and constitutes what is somehow the inner principle of volition.”

Truth, as the object of reason, Wojtyla asserts, is what releases the will from the influence of the object, and enables the person to be precisely self-determining in his acts with respect to all possible objects. Because of the reference to the truth, the object that is presented to the person who makes the choice is presented through cognition, which is focused on truth. Objects of choice do not come to the person as forces or impulses that push or force him into action; rather, they come to the person as things with a determinate known value that can be compared with other things according to that same known value. So, the known truth of the object mediates the object and the will, so that values do not compel but are freely responded to by the will.

While it is through reason that the truth is known, it is the will that responds to truth. The will wants the truth in what it wills or wants. The will wants true goods, not things that appear to be good but are really not. Wojtyla stresses that to “choose” does not simply mean turning toward one value and away from others; it means making a decision, according to the principle of truth, upon selecting between possible objects that have been presented to the will. The orientation towards truth is essential to the will and to its power of self-determination. The recognition of the validity and truth of the intended object is part of the dynamism of the will, because choice and decision are preconditioned by knowledge of the truth. Knowledge, then, is the condition that not only enables but also influences choice, decision making, and, more generally, the exercise of self-determination.

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8 Ibid., p. 137.
9 Ibid.
10 Ibid., p. 140. “Knowledge is therefore a condition of the will. It is impossible to turn to values without knowing them. Knowledge of the truth about the object toward which the will is oriented is a fundamental part of the experience of value.” R. Buttiglione, Karol Wojtyla: The Thoughts of the Man Who Became Pope John Paul II (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), p. 147.
Wojtyla describes the will’s reference to the truth as the inner principle of decision and choice. Truth in cognition and the intrinsic orientation towards truth in the will are what make freedom and choice possible. In every willing, what is manifested is a specific dependence, a specific moment of “surrender to truth” even before the object is presented to the will for decision and choice. It is because of this surrender to the truth that the person becomes independent of the objects of his own acting through the moment of truth; this moment of surrender to the truth is contained in every authentic choice of decision making.

Conclusion

The critical situations in which Kathryn, Alvin and Karla find themselves are, respectively, moments of ethical decision; they are “crises,” in a sense, because they demand decision. But they have the potential of becoming personal ethical crises; that is, they could disrupt their personal stability or their moral balance. How should they decide? Considering all other factors, in the end, they have to decide on the basis of what their respective wills desire to be good. Such decisions must be based on the truth, and it is through the use of reason that one recognizes the truly good. Of course, such a notion of reason as the final judge of what is truly good assumes that everyone has the right reason and has the capacity to use his reason rightly. It assumes that all human individuals are capable of using their reason rightly, that they will be able to understand and discern the right course of action or the truly good option. “Crisis,” in this respect, is a challenge to reason; it puts reason right on the spot. And, in this situation, reason is not only confronted by “crisis”; it has to contend with the “kairos.” While “crisis” calls for a decision or an action, “kairos” demands that such decisions or actions must be at the right time, in the right moment. So, while “crisis” is a moment of decision, “kairos” calls to attention the “right moment” of such a decision. Ethical crises cannot be avoided, they are part of human experience, but they can be resolved through a decision of the will, based on true value or goodness informed by reason, and such decision must be at the right moment. Again, reason is called to task to make the right decision at the right moment.

As a final remark I quote Wojtyla,

“The moral life consists in attaining the truth in all our action and behavior, and activity by nature always aims at some good. Consequently the essence of moral life is the lived experience of the truth of the good realized in action and the realization in that action of the good subjected to the criterion of reason and thus placed in the light of that truth.”


Moral Values as Mentors to Confronting Contemporary Challenges

DEMETRIOS MATTHOPOULOS
MICHAEL MANTZANAS

Crisis and Values

The contemporary world is confronted by a constructive crisis, a crisis of values; a crisis assigned as a financial one, which, undoubtedly, is a crisis of virtues and moral values; a financial crisis that, in large part, is the result, not only of fraud from particular countries, although they should accept their responsibilities over their bad practices, but mainly of the financial planners’ and country rulers’ violating moral values. These moral values should be the keystone to those considered as the leaders of the world, virtues shaped in the beginnings of humanity that are considered as the foundations of civilization. Personal or governmental objectives have no reason to overcome these moral values, unless governmental officials place their own interests above worldwide interests. In this case, self-appreciation has been developed, not under the auspice of universal ethical values, but, rather, under the obedience of oppressive ones, values that deviate from the living rules and habits that nature carved over a period of millions of years, which have been applied all over the living constituent of our environment, providing living organisms with an inherent value.

Nature, over millions of evolutionary years, provided living matter with values and virtues recognizable by all organisms; diachronic values, not defined by human standards, which are responsible for the confrontations developed in nature, determining living organisms’ mutual relationships, the so-called ecosystems;¹ a set of values designated as inherent value that could be referred as “autaxia”;² and, lastly, a set of values that have to be assessed properly, particularly by humanity. This assessment, in order to be achieved accurately, owes that the assessor should be conscious of the systemic methodology required. Has this naturally provided inherent value, autaxia, been assigned to humans? Of course, it has. We, humans, belong to the living constituent of our environment. We are part of it and we are not above it. Thus, we, too, possess our own autaxia. The main concern should be whether or not we are able to assess it and to conceive our personal, but in the meantime social, obligation deriving from this inherent value. The assessment is definitely the result of our inner self, our ethical status and the way of responding to our daily life; a process immediately related to our personality, being the outcome of the

interaction between our genetic background and our sociopolitical environment.

Humanity spent thousands of years in the environment before becoming conscious that it could not modify natural conditions according to its will. By that time, humanity tried to conciliate natural conditions through rituals and sacrifices. Lines of evidence come from the cave paintings of Western Europe, made several thousand years in the human past. This initial forethought became the spark, alongside societies’ cultural unreeing, for the evolution of more systemic rituals that were finally developed into the known religions. Therefore, through religion, man aimed at conciliating those natural powers that contributed to his survival, while he was unable to intervene in them. The human mind, on its way to reaching reasonable conclusions, diverged from the lines at which religion was aiming and, as a consequence, philosophy was developed, while sciences evolved through the accumulation of knowledge. The human mind is a great natural gift reserved for all human beings. The notion of serial representation appears demonstrating that everything in nature is different, that every human being is different and powerful because he observes, he understands the differences and profits from them by coming to reasonable conclusions.

Spiritually developed specialists tried, through symbols and meanings, to elucidate notions that people were not able to understand. The linguistic development became the keystone to these specialists. The gradual transfer of vocal symbols to written ones gave them additional support. Under these new circumstances, colloquial speech, apart from being orally transferred, with the possibility of being weathered, was rendered stable over the ages. In parallel, man, being very close to nature, adapted living rules and habits that, through the passage of the time, developed into moral values known as ‘ethics’; virtues that guide his way in his daily life, a consignment passed to humanity’s progeny, modulated over the ages with regard to religious, social and technological development. Despite to their modulation, the fundamental beginnings, laid deep in the human conscience, under crucial circumstances, can be recalled in order to rejuvenate him.

**Hermeneutical Considerations**

The historical maintenance of ideas became the spark for the evolution of a new speculation. The time distance between the initial thinkers and those who, sometime in the future, sought the meaning of their work, imposes their analysis in order to become tangible. This process presupposes the development of a mental relationship between the initial thinker and the one who attempts

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to explain the ideas of the former. This was the reasoning for the development of hermeneutics, the ‘art’ of explaining the meaning of notions, that through apprehension, seek to understand, analyze and explain the meanings of all cultural phenomena. Initially, it was essential for the mental sciences, but, gradually, it became important to other sciences and arts. Through the notion of serial representation, the different points of view respond to that need for analyzing and understanding. The representation of various points of view, in different paintings or texts, evince our need for analyzing and understanding nature.

The beginnings of hermeneutical studies track down to the classical Greek philosophers, such as Plato and Aristotle. However, hermeneutics became a key science through the work of the German philosopher and theologian Schleiermacher, who embraces that hermeneutics “hunts the meaning not only of the written records but of colloquial speech as well.” According to Speck and Wehle, Schleiermacher accepts that there is a need for a “spiritual relationship between the interpreter and the creator, as well as an emotional transfer of the former to the emotional and spiritual status of the latter, in order for someone to apprehend the deep meaning of a text.” Later on, Heidegger radically transformed the apprehension of texts into the unlimited resource of human life. Under Heidegger’s consideration, apprehension is life’s keystone in an environment which we are trying to understand and interpret according to our purposes. Thus, the center of every human activity and practice is prevailed upon by ‘apprehending’ and ‘interpreting.’ We notice an interesting example of ‘interpreting’ in the critique of Art. We find the first attempts of interpreting or translating the artists’ work in texts in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. A great example is the transposition of Gustave Moreau’s paintings [Salome dancing in front of king Herod, 1876 and Apparition, 1874] in the French critics journals Gazette des Beaux Arts and L’Univers Illustré. Transposition-translation is an act of communication between different forms of art. An inner dialogue is established, for example.

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ple, between paintings and literary texts. The text becomes an interpretation of the artists’ views, reflecting his points of view and ideas. So, the notion of imitation and correspondence is a real attempt at translation or interpretation, using a diversity of aspects and techniques.

In the past, hermeneutics was a practical approach of ‘apprehending’ and ‘interpreting.’ However, nowadays, it could be characterized as interpretation, explanation, translation, or just apprehension, although it comprises the theoretical and applied aspect of the same notion, and is related to the physical human ability by which humans are trying to encounter their fellowmen and, in consequence, the entire universe.

The initial hypothesis of targeting to apprehend cultural phenomena, and its subsequent application to the entirety of human knowledge and practice, that is, to the various sciences, converge to the point that science belongs to the cultural part of civilization. It must be kept in mind that art aims at interpreting nature, while science aims at investigating natural phenomena, as philosophy does. Capra pointed out that science and philosophy, for the ancients, were identical notions aiming to harmonizing human life in nature, while, as from the 17th century, the goal of science has been to seek the knowledge that can be used to dominate and control nature. Meanwhile, we ought not to forget that nature is nothing else but the environment into which every living creature is, in constant action, possessing its ‘autaxia.’ The Impressionist Claude Monet, the greatest interpreter of nature in the nineteenth century, said ‘I paint as fast as I breathe,’” meaning that he could not live without painting constantly. Using colours, he tries to captivate the moment by depicting the slightest changes of nature in different moments during the day. In his serial works, he was oriented towards translating the differences between the various paintings. The theme is not important anymore, but the interpretation and reflection of this pictorial adventure is.

Well, then, how do living organisms conceptualize their environment? Of what does it consist? Which are its boundaries? These are questions that we have to encounter. In order to respond to these questions, undoubtedly, we will have to deal with hermeneutics in order to apprehend the notion of environment. According to Schleiermacher, we ought to come to a spiritual relationship with its creator. In other words, we have to dive deep, philosophically and religiously, but, in the meantime, also scientifically, into two aspects; the one being the notion of environment, while the other is the subject of apprehension, in other words our self being.

The environment is distinguished into natural, that is the structure and activity of nature, and anthropogenic, which is the result of human activity. The anthropogenic one is distinguished into structural and cultural categories. The cultural one is the result of human interest for solutions to natural phenomena

17 See Avgoulea, op. cit., p. 70.
that take place in his surroundings.\textsuperscript{19} The result of this search is the accumulations of knowledge, and man’s spiritual unreeiling, which implies his cultural uprising. This is the uprising that develops the idiosyncratic notion of the cultural environment, part of which is the spiritual heritage, that is, what the past inherit to the oncoming generations.

This spiritual heritage we all have to keep, transmit and interpret to the oncoming generations. In order for this transmission to be as effective and representative as possible, those who have taken this responsibility have to come to a ‘spiritual relationship,’ to a complete ‘emotional and spiritual concurrence’ with the initial creators,\textsuperscript{20} in order to share their deeper notions and attribute them properly, to the best of their ability, to the future generations. The French author and art critic of the nineteenth century, Huysmans,\textsuperscript{21} evocates, in his novel \textit{À Rebours}, written in 1884, the spiritual relationship between him and the French painter Gustave Moreau. Very fond of Moreau’s paintings, Huysmans is writing a novel trying to realize an effective and representative transmission-translation of the two masterpieces, Salome dancing in front of King Herod (1876) and Apparition (1874), for the future generations. The pages of the novel rejuvenate Salome, completing a spiritual and emotional concurrence between the initial creator (the painter) and the author.

Interpretation is the reification, via colloquial speech or shape configurations, of a scenery or idea that, in order to be presented, requires, initially, to be captured by the human senses and, finally, to be processed by the human mind. The incepted representations consequently can be expressed by various systemic methods, one of which is colloquial speech. In other words, they can be interpreted. The interpretation is a human activity that shapes in a defined framework. In interpretation, several activities intervene that refer to the liability of the person who performs it and, thus, this process develops relationships with moral values.\textsuperscript{22} It is needless to refer that, under these circumstances, notions such as dignity, correctness, practice, objectivity, and explication, which intervene into the process of interpretation, belong to what we all refer to as liability. Given the need for liability, the one who decides to perform the interpretation has to apply it on the basis of deep ethical values, otherwise the recipient of the interpretation will become obeisant of the former and will not benefit out of the interpretation. The interpretation can be expressed by either colloquial speech, written texts or by the arts. All means of expression require that the interpreter has to make good use of the means of interpretation. An additional prerequisite is a communicational identity of the interpreter with the creator of the subject under interpretation and with the mentality of the

\textsuperscript{20} Speck und Wehle, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 164.
\textsuperscript{21} Huysmans, \textit{op. cit.}
person he is addressing. This communicational process is a basic educational means.\textsuperscript{23}

Interpretation is attempted throughout our lifetime. All daily events are prone to interpretation. Our combinational ability is the main factor of effective interpretation. However, we ought to point that we, all of us are not positive recipients of all of the messages emitted towards us. By aging we all succeed to activate some sectors of our self-interpretation, that is, our inner self-ability to respond to the various stimuli we receive. As a result of this event, we sometimes should look for those who have the ability to analyze the retained presentations in order for them to become apprehended by us; in other words, to interpret for us the events of our surroundings. This search roots in the human desire to apprehend the real state of our experiences, be they natural or anthropogenic ones. Through the search for truth we try to develop awareness, so that our interest for the correct utilization of our daily activities may become a reality.

Under this hermeneutical activity, the issue of interest is not on the interpretation \textit{per se}, but on the interpreter’s mental and ethical status and, in consequence, on his personal aims and scopes.\textsuperscript{24} Alexander Cozens, a painter of the eighteen century (1785), invents a systematic method aiming at the transposition of every real point of view of a scenery, expressing his own interests and personal need to analyze the environment through a continuous hermeneutical activity.\textsuperscript{25}

\textit{Interpretation and personality}

The correlation between interpretation and the personality of its performer introduces us to the fundamental values that should govern the interpretive process. These values lean on both the philosophical site of hermeneutics and its relationship with ethics. The relationship between ethics and hermeneutics tends to be totally split under Cartesian dualism and the philosophy of Kant. However, the perception of events is closely related to the behavior of those who are in the process, too; thus, the importance of hermeneutics lies in the event wherein interpretation influences the process at the same level as the process establishes the framework of interpretation.\textsuperscript{26}

We have to bear in mind that everyone is a unique personality. Under no circumstances can we meet two identical persons. Everyone’s uniqueness is determined by his genetic background in relation to the rate at which the sociopolitical environment influences this background. These two factors, although they determine the framework within which everyone is capable of performing, in the meantime, they comprise the components that determine

\textsuperscript{24} Lundin et. al., \textit{op. cit.}, p. xi.
\textsuperscript{26} Lundin et. al., \textit{op. cit.}, p. xi.
the ethical values from which everyone builds his personality. Under these circumstances, the interpretation in which we are engaged is closely related to our ethical status, that is, the way through which we respond to our daily life or, in other words, to our inner self.

Ricoeur,\textsuperscript{27} in one of his early hermeneutical works, referred to the idea that hermeneutics drives from pre-apprehension to the apprehension \textit{per se} of an event trying to conceive its meaning through its interpretation. Conceiving the deeper meaning of every object, independently, whether it is of a theoretical or of an applied study, artistic or spiritual, philosophical or divine, presupposes to define a moral framework under which it will act. Leaning on this institutional conception, Lundin\textsuperscript{28} reported that Ricoeur alleged that hermeneutics, as a theory, provides us reasons to think that the Cartesian ‘\textit{cogito}’ leans on our inner self and not the opposite. Under this consideration, the philosopher who is directed by symbolisms minds to break out of the enchanted enclosure of consciousness of oneself, to end the prerogative of self-reflection.\textsuperscript{29}

\textit{Conclusion}

To confront the constructive crisis which we are facing nowadays, requires that personal objectives should be set aside. By setting them aside, we will achieve breaking out the enchanted enclosure of consciousness of ourselves. In order to set aside personal objectives, our self-consciousness should be governed by the eternal moral values with which nature has rendered humanity over the course of evolution.

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\textsuperscript{27} P. Ricoeur, \textit{The Symbolism of Evil} (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967).
\textsuperscript{28} Lundin, “Our Hermeneutical Inheritance,” in Lundin et. al., \textit{op. cit.}, 9-19.
\textsuperscript{29} Ricoeur, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 356.
Racism and Altruism in the Contemporary World: 
A Concise and Epigrammatic Review

GRIGORIOS KARAFILLIS

The contemporary western world, the world of the everlasting market, mainly in Europe, but also in Latin America and elsewhere, suffers from a painful financial crisis, which, so far, burdens the South European countries. Within this pessimistic frame, we examine, concisely and epigrammatically, the identity, the function, and the consequences of two classic human and institutional behaviors of racism and altruism.

Racism recommends a fundamental phenomenon of the individual and collective life, which, at the prehistoric and the older periods of history, was in effect as the decisive institution for the human relations all over the world. Since then, with fluctuations of its intensity during periods and in regions, it did not ever finally recede, while, during the last decades, it was strengthened with a particular dynamism that undermines the real possibilities, the prospects and the life of millions of human beings.

We should point out that the phenomenon of racism is presented from the dawn of the primitive organization of society and has a permanent historical life. In primitive communities, it is without doubt the tribes’ way of living that is meant to be the unique one. This is the reason that it would be rather unrealistic to suggest that the earliest human societies got engaged in racism. Thus, the fact is that these communities are functionally bound to race. In the passage of time and gradually in accordance with cultural evolution, the transactions and the marketing the racist framework began to be restricted. However, racism gains ground each time financially and culturally superior people get in touch with populations which are, or are considered to be, weaker or inferior, such as in the times of colonialism.

To be more precise, the term ‘racism’ is hardly recorded in the early thirties, and characterizes the method and the corresponding course of the Nazis, who used racial biology and anthropology in order to apply and justify their political program. In contemporary times, this has been considered an explosive social question. The rapid increase of population, the financial crisis and, mostly, poverty and loss of well-being led to the phenomenon of transference of a big number of people from Asia and Africa to Europe, the United States of America and Australia. These populations are confronting racism; they fall into the contempt of others and they suffer any kind of limitations, living in

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poor conditions of life, most of the time. Racism today appears as the social exclusion of people, but mainly as stereotypes of rejection and xenophobic attributes.\(^3\)

However, beyond these delimitations, we should look into the content of racism itself. Indicatively, therefore, we report that, in a precocious period for its analysis, racism is characterized as doctrine, according to which a national group is condemned as inferior from birth, while another is determined from birth as superior. Another definition for the term racism is the one according to which it recommends the theory at which the human characteristics and the faculties are determined by the race. It claims an intuition which defends the superiority of race, taking, of course, into consideration the relative elasticity of its significance. An interesting definition is that “somebody is racist when he is not interested at all or is not interested enough, according to morality, or is not interested with the equitable manners for the populations that are included in a constant racial team for which scorn, based on racial classification, exists.”\(^4\) Racism is “the imposition of unequal confrontation that causes the wish for sovereignty, based only on racial difference.”\(^5\) Racism “is always historically concrete even though it appears to have the same characteristics with social phenomenon.”\(^6\) Finally, we will regard as very important the definition that “racism is something that does not mix the convictions and our rationality or not, but the needs, the intentions, the preferences and our antipathies.”\(^7\)

We insist on and follow the previous definitions about racism because, from our perspective, they present the wholeness of the context and they include its fundamental characteristics. All of the concrete and previous general definitions, however, have already introduced us to the core of our subject. In order to go further, we are supposed to record and analyze the two most powerful relative models\(^8\) of racism under the view of their reinforcing and institutional approach: the reinforcing racism, therefore, presents inquiring inter-


\(^5\) Smith, “The Definition of Racism,” p. 34.


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est, because it is founded in the intention and the energetic action, while the institutional racism is propped in the social and the other structures of the system, and also connected with the precedent. In the reinforcing, racism it is important for us to delimit the intentional starting line of this particular phenomenon. Therefore, our first essential energy should aim at the foundation of this starting line; this is to say, to clarify and comprehend where from a person, who wants to harm somebody, acquires the particular volitional disposal. Surely, it is shaped through a corresponding culture in which “the other,” different but also similar to the other bodily, intellectual or mental faculties, are considered inferior. According to institutionalized racism, this is a social phenomenon and, as such, depends on the relations that are developed between the individuals and is under the force of the basic changes from which a country suffers. Consequently, no one can easily claim that we are talking about a natural phenomenon that is structured and restructured, is constituted but also changes. Racism does not have a core which is developing and that is why we cannot think about it ontologically. It does not follow any natural or world law of growth.

From the basic description of racism and the presentation of the two above models, which are the most powerful of its patterns, we reached concrete conclusions. More specifically:

- Racism has an institutional sub-layer, essential as a frame in order to function by itself, while the individual and collective actions construct and reconstruct subsidiaries of the system in question.
- In any case, racism cannot be supported or exist for a long time if there are not any motives or interests, that is to say, real and concrete or more widely and long-lasting.
- The person who suffers racism is, by all means, economically feeble, while this is considered to be contemptible culturally, and so he or she is treated as a scapegoat, aesthetically.

The former conclusions help us to include the fight against racism either as a restriction and reduction of its intensity or as dynamics for its progressive recantation, in the following frame, particularly:

1. The academic and political debate on racism and anti-racism shows a higher level in those broader concerns, beyond any kind of recognition about what is breed (or race) and what exactly is meant by this term, and it would also be important to consider the significance of social forces and networks which create and reproduce racism. The dialogue has two perspectives: theoretical or continued ability to find solutions to the issue of racism or the exclusion of such a phenomenon. It would be better to discuss more than this, the case of debate and dialogue on more aspects and practices against social exclusion, which reproduces inequality and, inevitably, leads to racism.

2. The objective of current societies and, concretely, of the Europeans for the restriction and lifting of the phenomenon of racism should become more dynamic and more radical. That is why an international co-ordination is required, via organizations and new institutions that will daily fight for the lifting of racism and the reform of society.
3. In this struggle of great importance is the question of multicultural education, but also the scientific and systematic programs for the comprehension of racism and the battle against it, particularly in the white communities between the workers, the poor and the middle class. In the avant-garde of this battle should be those who once were the greatest victims of the social system and they should not only seek to rescue themselves.

4. However, the main question we have to face is not simply the medicine for the restriction or the obliteration of racism. Its lifting is integrally connected with the picture that we have for the world we want today. In order to constitute structures that will not be oppressive, structures that will value, above all, human beings and the rescue of the planet in the limelight, it will be required to apply a big reform. Thus, we might have racial justice and not simply goof racial relations.

5. It is sure that the creation of a new society with genuine political and economic democracy is impossible without rooting out racism and the lifting of white superiority.

On the other side of racism, there is altruism. Altruism = a selfless interest (care) for the welfare and the happiness of others; in French it is altruisme, from the Italian root altru, which comes from the Latin alter = any other.\(^9\) Altruism\(^10\) is examined as a basic or a selective behavior of a person, which is concreted by the social motivation for charitable action. The questions are studied of whether it is the result of an emotion or a logical duty,\(^11\) if it follows the course of development or the natural choice; it is compared to selfishness and certain perspectives are also examined for its enhancement, for example the choice of groups. Its identity is characterized by the differentiated relationship between the contrasting sides, and the conclusion is the one that emphasizes the complexity of the matter and the difficulty of its implementation. At this point, we are mainly interested in the content of altruistic morality, which is centered towards the others as regards its implantation in children. For this reason, it is showing less interest in the structure and development of moral thinking, while it perceives sacrifice and duty as the foundation and essence of morality, particularly these acts of duty done for the benevolence of others. Consequently, ethical behavior in terms of altruism is identical with its own expression, which seeks social life in stability and which could be developed at an early age of a human development. Among

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questions posed above the one which is of particular interest is whether altruism is the result of an emotion or that of a logical duty.  

From the questions already posed, there is a special interest pertaining to whether altruism is the result of an emotion or a logical duty. According to our opinion, in the question of whether it is a reaction, a behavior or even a stance that is based on logic or the emotionality of humans, we would claim that, between two situations and procedures, there is always developed a differentiated relationship or not, a component which gathers all results and drives to conclusions. Kant’s and Nagel’s perspective of altruism, for example, focus on the exclusive support and offering of help to the other, which cannot be declined or be adopted as the only approximation of the matter. The emotional and, most of the time, direct altruistic reaction of man indicates the restrictions of the absoluteness of the previous claim. Moreover, we should keep in mind that the emotional reaction—which typically does not follow the logical rules—includes a reference to the normal, meaning that human reaction comes from a structured behavior that sources from the comparison of his actions, which were recorded many times in his past, but most importantly the ones of the historical man, which are transmitted or are experienced as a way and a stance in life. We could not claim that, every time, we are totally conscious and calm enough to behave in an altruistic way, given that, many times, we have to react instantly or even illogically. This is actually the proof that logic, which is obvious, cannot be denied or hidden, but one cannot also eliminate the impulsive reaction, which, most of the time, is central to what is a duty.

In the subject matter of the relationship between altruism and development, things become more complex, because there is a structural deficiency in the co-existence of these terms. The biological and the natural choice, via the everlasting development process, has proven to us that those who survive are the autonomous and the powerful, and not the weak and those needing help. If the latter was untrue, natural law would be declined and it would spread a

12 R.L. Campell and J.C. Christopher, “Moral Development Theory: A Critique of its Kantian Presuppositions,” Developmental Review, 16 (1996), 1-47, pp. 23, 24, 26. In a long scientific framework there were constructed three approaches of altruism: the sociobiological aspect based on the claim that there is a gene which provides the essence of altruistic behavior at least for the close relatives. The psychological theory is based on the claim that the motivation for altruistic behavior depends on the parameter of beneficence. Finally, the rational philosophical approach of the altruistic attitude is associated with the capacity for abstract perception and it is explainable in vase it ends as a true or false empirical result. See the critique of P.S. Penner, Altruistic Behavior: An Inquiry to Motivation (Amsterdam-Atlanta GA: Rodopi, Value Inquiry Book Series, 1995), pp. 29-30.

13 I. Kant, Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten, Werke, Band 6 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1983), pp. 74-76.

society of the weak, having the powerful on the side, but without being able
to discern which way we excluded them to the margin. As a result, we would
support the constant and marginal survival of the weak, not only in the natural
world, but also in the social world; survival and never domination. Under this
spirit, we could see that altruism in a society should be combined, primarily,
with the constant survival of those needing help and, secondly, of all the rest
who suffer in various ways, so as to present it as a moral stance and a value of
serving others, to make a value of choice, either through its influence or its
constant adaptation, or through that of the social groups.

The opposite term of altruism, that is, self-interest, is mainly regarded as
ccontentment as way of life, a process and a way of life that serves man and
develops society. At the same time, altruism is estimated as a negative as-
pect and is considered to be an obstacle to development. However, the history
of societies has proved much more than this. Selfish societies were developed
or altruistic, or also mixed societies. Even men are discerned according to
their altruistic or selfish character, in every case or in every place of action.
But the service sector is a place where altruism is more obvious, but not in the
respective primary and secondary conditions, because in this sector the nu-
merals are countable and any such type of behavior would refuse its existential
base. The selfishness of the altruistic choice of man is combined with the type
of the society in which he is formed, without, of course, excluding his differ-
etiation from his society. In general, humans are presented and operate more
like selfish beings, but, in theory, they would prefer to be altruistic. They do
not deny their altruistic duty to behave equally to others, as they do also ex-
clude the expression of the primitive duty of survival, while, on rare occa-
sions, they choose to be sacrificed in the name of others.

The common expression of altruism, which measures the morality or im-
морality of an action, is direct altruism. The criterion here is not always the
obligation of Kant’s orthodoxy for the action’s ability to be generalized and
following logical rules, but its immediate implementation without these, hav-
ing, as a unique motivation, serving others people’s needs. What is more im-
portant is the result of the action, which determines it as correct and the per-
ception that it is a duty or an obligation. In order to achieve such an action, or

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15 A. Smith, An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations, B. I, Ch. 2
(Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976); Lawrence A. Blum, Friendship, Altruism and Morality
Pareto, “Il massimo di utilita per una collettivita in sociologia,” Giornale degli economi,
Journal of Academy of Business and Economics, 7 (2007), 146-160; G.S. Becker, “A Theo-
ry of Social Interactions,” Journal of Political Economy, 82 (1974), 1063-1093; G.S. Beck-
er, “Altruism, Egoism, and Genetic Fitness: Economics and Sociobiology,” Journal
of Economic Literature, 4 (1976), 817-826; F.A. von Hayek, “The Pretence of Knowl-
extage,” in New Studies in Philosophy, Politics, Economics and the History of Ideas (Lon-
17 Blum, Friendship, Altruism and Morality, pp. 84-87. Cf. I. Kant, Foundation of the
for it to be achieved, the creation of groups was tried, consisting either with more or fewer altruists, in comparison to other groups where they were absent, so as to discern which group develops better or faster and if society, through such formations, is able to develop.

In conclusion of this concise and succinct examination of the conditions of racism and altruism, we note the following comments: Racism, at the level that we have tested the issue, does not include a number of intrinsic characteristics but appears to nominalize the established laws, the customs, and those practices that systematically reflect and produce racial inequality in the society. Racism is not just a personal problem, or a case of individuals. It is rooted in the organic structure that is maintained and perpetuated in a variety of mechanisms working towards racial inclusion or exclusion. These, in their turn, are supported by social institutions and cultural practices. Instead, at the examination of the identity and the function of altruism as a basic or selective behavior among individuals, we saw that it is founded on the social motivation for benevolent attitudes and actions. We have checked, also, if it is a result of an emotional or a logical task, and if it just follows the evolutionary prospects or the natural selection. We ended at the assumption that it is contrasted to selfishness and we explored some particular potential for improvement.

All the above conclusions, both for racism and altruism, indicate the complexity of these matters and their comparative operations. The financial crisis calls for their enforcement and their proper operation, while their analysis shows us, in our opinion, that the possibility of escaping and reducing racism, and choosing and reinforcing altruism is the correct and possible human behavior and stance.

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20 Headley, “Philosophical Approaches to Racism...,” p. 251.
PART VI

Crisis, Values and Modernity
The Crisis of Philosophical Thought
within the Crisis of the Modern Bourgeois World

GEORGIOS DAREMAS

The Forms of Crisis of Philosophical Thought

The history of philosophy shows that philosophical thought is under a perennial crisis, either brewing beneath a surface of tranquillity and authoritatively accepted doctrines or violently erupting and undermining the established philosophical beliefs of any given era.1 ‘Crisis’ is endemic in philosophy and in the variety of the forms of thinking which have striven to account for the structure of the cosmos because the emergence of the bourgeois world has brought in processes of continual change and the destruction of any erstwhile stable edifice upon which a static and unchanging conceptualization of the cosmos rested. In this regard, Marx’s diagnosis that the consolidation of the bourgeois world in modernity results in whatever is ‘solid to melt into air,’ that is, all that is fixed, rigidified, unquestioned to suffer its unavoidable overturning and demise, has turned into an indisputable premise for the comprehension of the ever-changing features of social life and of the series of ‘revolutions’ that have affected philosophical modernity.2

In particular, what has suffered inimitable collapse was the reigning, from late antiquity till early modernity, ‘cosmography’ of an eternal ‘Great chain of Being.’ This, of course, is the apt term of A.O. Lovejoy that supported a frozen cosmological hierarchy of the beingness of the world, organized according to the notional axes of continuity, graduation and plenitude.3 In its stead, novel conceptions emerged of a ‘multiple’ universe or even of a ‘multiply multiple’ universe4 privileging discontinuity, qualitative leap and contingency.5 The resultant fragmentary picture of a ‘multiverse’ split into unconnected

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1 I want to thank the panelists, the audience and in particular the panel’s chair Prof. João J. Vila-Chã whose incisive queries allowed me to connect the philosophical crisis with the current discursive forms of crisis expressing the economic, political and social crisis of contemporary Europe.
5 The ‘principle of plenitude’ enunciated by Lovejoy states ‘that every genuine possibility will be actualized,’ a fundamental tenet of ancient necessitarianism which was firstly and perhaps conclusively refuted by Duns Scotus’s doctrine of contingency. See A. Vos Jaczn, H. Veldhuis, A.H. Looman-Graaskamp, E. Dekker and N.W. Den Bok, “Introduc-
regions of being’ reinvigorated the philosophical demand for a search after the lost unity of the world. In tandem with the idea of a ‘plurality’ of worlds, the newly emerging modern world and its scientific spirit introduced a rupture in the old philosophical Parmenidean conception of an ‘identity of Thought and Being,’ a philosophical assumption that had been taken up by Scholasticism and encapsulated in the principle of adequoatio rei et intellectus.

The idea that mere thinking could, in an a priori and deductive way all by itself, provide ‘certain knowledge’ of the physis of the cosmos was revealed to be an unwarranted postulate. The radical questioning of such preeri-t natural philosophy was enhanced by the Cartesian turn to a self-doubting thinking subject, in search of a foundational basis for its very own existence and of its capacity to ground a secure grasp of what-is. With the Cartesian turn, a permanent chasm was grafted in the subject-object identity. Both ruptures in traditional philosophy reflect two dominant aspects of the ascendant bourgeois world: first, the emergence of a self-centred bourgeois individual who, in conditions of (mental) isolation (and socially unencumbered by the traditional communal web of interdependencies), could question ab initio his newly found status in the world; and, secondly, the constitutive experience of a powerful subject who can overcome the former passive and contemplative stance vis-à-vis his standing in the world and not only ‘posit’ nature (including his own self) as an object apart, but also to actively intervene, via science, technology and industry, in its transformation, ‘taming’ it according to his will and manipulating it at will.

This dual schism within the subject and between the subject and the object reflects two underlying developmental social processes taking place in the constitution of bourgeois modernity. The first involves the division of the self into a ‘private’ and a ‘public’ or ‘social’ self. Such a division of selfhood was the outcome of a process of the social differentiation of societas civilis from the state or political society. A sphere of ‘intimacy’ was gradually constituted that distinguished the inner life of the (bourgeois) individual from his public existence and socio-political status. The stress on the importance of social sentiments, like social approbation or esteem, characteristic of Scottish Enlightenment (D. Hume, A. Smith) and in J.-J. Rousseau is indicative of the gap that opened within the formation of individuality, and broadly expressed in the entrenchment of the distinction between private morality and social ethics. The other macroscopic process is that of secularization, whereby the collapse of the traditional theological worldview and the ‘abstraction’ of God from nature,
rendering the latter purely ‘inanimate,’ created but not permeated by the divine demiourgos permitted the ‘handling’ of nature, its carving out as an object in-itself, ‘subjected’ under an array of reifying scientific-technical treatments. In the philosophical plane, both newly generated philosophical ‘needs’ effectuated by the contours of the novel bourgeois world, the search for the lost unity of Being and the provision of a valid foundation for knowledge acquisition and a secure epistemological access to the subject-object intertwinement, became the primary conceptual imperatives in Husserl’s philosophical phenomenology.

Philosophical thinking is the attempt to present a systematic and coherent theoretical understanding of the essence of the cosmos, whether this is seen to be unitary, dual or multiple. We can speak of crisis in philosophical thought whenever, to use Thomas Kuhn’s felicitous expression, we evidence a “paradigm shift,” wherever an established doctrine has revealed its inadequacies and cul de sac, has stumbled upon unsurpassable aporias or it cannot address the emergence of new problems, new queries; in short, when many “anomalies” have gathered that taint the validity of its pronouncements.9

Every kind of philosophical crisis worthy of its name has presaged a philosophical revolution or so the proponents of the newer philosophical systems have regarded the overcoming of the formerly entrenched conceptual edifices. Cases in point can be considered to be Descartes’ revolutionary turn toward subjectivity as the only ground of theoretical certainty. Across the continent on the English channel, around the same time, we evidence Francis Bacon’s ‘novum organum’ or the “new science” (and ‘new’ at the time meant revolutionary in our modern sense)10 and, on his footsteps, the new materialist doctrine of ‘logical/empirical atomism,’ encompassing Hobbes, Locke, Hume, and John Stuart Mill as its culmination. Back to the continent, a new crisis in the established philosophical thought in the form of Leibnitzian and Wolffian metaphysics became manifest by Kant’s self-acclaimed radical “Copernican turn” and his critique of dogmatic metaphysics,11 and then again another crisis of critical Idealism by Hegel’s dialectical logic and the self-positing of the Spirit, followed by its own immanent crisis in the form of the young Hegelians’ critique and Feuerbach’s secularization of metaphysics in a ‘new religion’12 and consequent upon that of Marx’s radical re-orientation of thinking

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8 The same divorce of ‘God’ from nature applies also to ‘human nature’ itself. Though the latter is seen as ensouled rather than as inanimate, ‘God’ is newly conceived as an extrinsic, distant entity, an ‘incomprehensible being’ for both Hobbes and Locke instead of as partaking of the ‘corpus mysticum’ of medieval theology.


10 Bacon’s new science of nature begins “when man begins ‘putting nature to the question’ (that is, the torture),” i.e., the scientific mind actively interrogating nature rather than passively registering its features. R.G. Collingwood, An Essay on Metaphysics (Chicago: Getaway Edition/H. Regnery Co., 1972), pp. 238-239.


12 W. Breckman, Marx, the Young Hegelians, and the Origins of Radical Social Theory (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
from ‘heaven to earth,’ and to the sociohistorical conditions of world organization and the primacy of social ontology, and further on to Husserl’s phenomenology as the radical science that grounds any science, culminating in yet another post-phenomenological philosophical crisis, expressed in Derridean deconstruction, that has claimed insistently that deconstruction is the radical overcoming of the closure of Western metaphysics and its conception of Being as presence, even though it draws its sustenance from it. In a certain sense, the history of modern philosophy is nothing else than the successive history of philosophical crises.

The agency of crisis in philosophy is critique. Critique assumes a threefold character. Firstly, it emerges as self-critique through which the philosopher becomes other than himself, objectifying the very product of his/her own thought and relating to it as if s/he were an ‘external’ judge of the same thought-content positioned differentially to himself as producer of his work. This self-reflectivity, which presupposes a ‘dual self,’ an inner schism, a distant self within the self that allows for corrections, modifications and identifications of ‘blindspots’ and incoherences, it is reasonable to claim that it holds whenever the thinker adopts a ‘readerly’ stance vis-à-vis his text, when s/he is positioned as reader-interpreter of his own self-expression. The other form of critique is ‘immanent’ critique from someone else other than the philosopher, who, nevertheless installs him/herself within the thinking framework of the judged, adopts the guiding acceptations of the examined philosophical discourse, and thinks through the consistency of the claims and the consequences drawn as if s/he were similar to or in ‘empathy’ with the author of the discourse under consideration. This form of critique exhibits ‘good faith,’ for it does not impose an alien conceptual frame of mind on the judged discourse, but it judges and criticizes it in terms of standards posed by the discourse itself and, thus, the identification of logical contradictions and non-sequitur and the crisis resulting from refutation obtains a strong justificatory basis. The third form of critique is ‘external’ criticism, which opposes basic postulates and axioms of the particular philosophical thinking by furnishing its own cluster of fundamental premises, but it is necessarily joined with the judged discourse, shares a common interface by reference to a ‘third term,’ a tertium comparationis that operates as the evaluation standard of correctness, since, otherwise, the problem of incommensurability is unsurpassable. Critique, in its three forms, is none other than a sequence of judgements (kriseis) and syllogisms upon the discursive contents. In this regard, we can claim that there is an internal linkage of the two senses of (philosophical) crisis. The difficulties encountered by a philosophical systematic thought that evince its entrance in a crisis situation possibly leading to its eventual dismissal are brought about by a series of critical judgements that radically question or subvert its system-

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atic consistency, its logical validity or even its appeal to factual veracity.\(^\text{15}\) Because of the essentiality of judgement cum crisis, quite often the coherently organized philosophical reflection ‘builds’ in advance its own defences, that is, it meditates upon, with and against existing or possible objections and contentions that could vitiate its very own standing as a grounded doctrine. The consequence of this inherent necessity to guard against the refutability of a given doctrine, implies that every present philosophical discursive Reason inscribes within itself a relationship with the past, the previous forms of thinking with which it engages through critique, but, concurrently, it also relates itself to the future by fielding anticipatory arguments and counter-arguments in view of possible prospective objections raised against itself. This structure that sutures the past and the future with the present within the present resembles the essential structuring of the Husserlian concept of ‘experience,’ whereby any present situation of consciousness contains intrinsically the “retention” of a past and the “protention” of a future, of course, without Husserl himself advancing explicitly any suchlike similarity between the experiential stream of consciousness and the inner organization of philosophical consciousness.\(^\text{16}\)

_Husserl’s Pure Phenomenology as a Signpost of the Crisis of Modern Philosophy_

I will focus on Husserl’s phenomenology, and, in particular, on his _Logical Investigations_, as a paradigmatic moment in the ongoing crisis of philosophical thought. Husserl’s phenomenology presents itself as the radical emergence of a new “all-encompassing eidetic ontology,”\(^\text{17}\) and it is a luminous sign of a crisis in philosophy (especially of psychologism which was then and is still now a dominant philosophical system in various modern-day versions), for the previous philosophical systems were not aware of what they were doing.

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\(^{15}\) Husserl himself states that “[t]he revolutions decisive for the progress of philosophy are those in which the claim of former philosophies to be scientific are discredited by a critique of their pretended scientific procedure.” E. Husserl, “Philosophy as Rigorous Science” (1911) in Husserl, _Shorter Works_, ed. P. McCormick and F.A. Elliston (Sussex: Harvester Press/University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), pp. 166-168. We could, perhaps, connect the ‘double meaning’ of philosophical crisis with instances of socioeconomic and political crises if we assume as the essential defining characteristic of crisis, the inability of any process, situation or phenomenon to secure its conditions of reproduction or perpetuation due to the disintegrating effect of internal contradictions. In this sense, social contradictions are the harbinger of crisis in social reality and logical contradictions in that of philosophical/theoretical discourse.

\(^{16}\) The inner connection of past and future in philosophical consciousness considered as a transhistorical itinerary of any given ‘science’ is tacitly hinted upon when in Husserl’s consideration of Galileo’s place in the theoretical history of geometry, he remarks that for both Galileo and the subsequent philosophical situations there exists a unifying thread “worked on in a lively forward development [sequence of future states], and yet at the same time a tradition. [Continuity with the past]” E. Husserl, “The Origin of Geometry” (1936), in Husserl, _Shorter Works_, 255-270, p. 269.

by being tied to the factuality of the natural world and drawing their categorial frameworks from it, while they were deprived of a secure foundation for their a priori principles, since they lacked a systematic method validating their a priori scientific character. Husserl regards the whole history of philosophy as a failed attempt to achieve its ultimate aim; that is, to elevate philosophy to the status of a ‘rigorous science.’

Husserl defines the domain of philosophical thought to be any systematic reason that searches for truth. Philosophy has as its highest telos the arrest of truth and its rational grounding. Consequently, philosophical and scientific reason is inherently teleological and distinguished from other forms of discourse by this very purpose. At the same time, philosophy (which originates historically with Plato) is called upon to provide a foundational basis of the ‘unity’ of sciences which investigate particular regions of Being. Husserl espouses both the Platonic thesis of ‘Being is One’ and Leibnitz’s philosophical demand for mathesis universalis. Reflecting on the history of philosophy, Husserl pontificates that philosophy has not as yet succeeded to fulfil its purpose; namely, to achieve the transcendental grounding of truth and of the unity of sciences, taking on the character of a systematic and “rigorous” science, analogous to the exemplar of the science of pure mathematics. In essence, he claims that philosophical thought has remained ‘thought’ without succeeding to make the transition to a systematic science and this inability encompasses even Kant’s thought. Since, philosophy in its different construals has not yet accomplished the fulfilment of its purpose, it follows that it is defective, incomplete, and, thus, suffers from an ongoing crisis.

So, phenomenology emerges as a sign of crisis, of the impasse in the former modes of thought and, at the same time, it appears to be the solution of the crisis by offering a new model of overall comprehension of the theoretical understanding of the world, including all possible worlds, by demarcating rigorously the sphere of ideality from that of facticity and presumably providing the requisite ‘secure foundation’ for epistemology, since ‘pure phenomenology’ conceives of itself as the ‘science of sciences’ or the necessary a priori grounding of any and all sciences.

A third sense of crisis can be interrelated with the two forms of ‘crisis’ hitherto mentioned; i.e., critical judgement and epistemological crisis in the Kuhnian sense of a paradigm shift. This is socio-historical crisis, in the Marxist sense that a social contradiction has become generalized so that a basic social relationship under crisis cannot reproduce itself or enters a process of decomposition. There is a double connecting thread between the epistemological and the socio-historical senses of crisis. The first aspect is that both forms of crisis evidence turning points, where the previous states-of-affairs have be-

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18 Husserl, “Philosophy as Rigorous Science,” p. 166.
come obsolete, or they are pregnant with ‘anomalies’ or inherent tensions and the process of their unfolding or reproduction is interrupted or enters a qualitative new phase. The other connection is that the emergence of an epistemological crisis could be associated or even be genetically traced to result as a consequence of a sociohistorical crisis situation or to reflect isomorphic basic components of its structure. So, the relationship between the two types of crisis is that they appear ‘distinct but inseparable from each other,’ and this resembles the mode of connection between the ‘transcendental ego and the natural ego,’ which, as Husserl stresses, “[m]y transcendental ego is thus evidently ‘different’ from the natural ego, but by no means as a second, as one separated from it in the natural sense of the word,” to an inner association of two distinct attitudes of an identical ‘ego’ that reveals the illusion of ‘transcendental duplication.’

I will not expound on the inner dynamics of the perennial crisis of the bourgeois world, but, at certain points, I will ‘correlate’ Husserlian philosophical pronouncements and aporias with significant sociocultural contexts that ‘intimate’ underlying general crisis situations and phenomena endemic to the bourgeois world.

**The Crisis of Philosophy as a Crisis of Its Unity**

Husserl explicitly acknowledges that modern philosophy is in deep crisis in its being both fragmented and lacking an absolute logical ‘foundation’ and inherently calls for a ‘new beginning’, found at last in phenomenology as the novel solution to philosophy’s decline. Phenomenology’s telos is to suspend the fragmentation of philosophy by providing an absolute foundation and a logic of systematicity, interweaving the disparate regions of philosophy and, thus, realizing the ancient Platonic ideal, as well as reviving the Cartesian program that sought the unity of the sciences and the absolute grounding of phi-

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21 In a recent attempt to reconstruct the essential components of Husserl’s phenomenology as a whole by an analytical philosopher, there is a curious ‘excision’ of the category of the ‘transcendental ego,’ not even mentioned once in the text as if it does not play any role in Husserl’s thought. J. Hintikka, “The Phenomenological Dimension,” in Smith and Smith (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Husserl*, 78-105. It is true that in the first edition of the *Logical Investigations* the concept of the ‘transcendental ego’ is absent and its integrative function is assigned to the concept of the ‘unity of consciousness.’ But, in the second edition, Husserl, in a remarkable self-critical recognition of his error, rectifies his omission and acknowledges the existence of “pure ego” as the necessary center of the *self-evidence* attached to the ‘I am.’ E. Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, Vols. I & II, ed. D. Moran, trans. J.N. Findlay from the 2*th* German ed. (London: Routledge, 2001 [1913/1921]). Hereafter abbreviated as *LI* followed by v. (volume) I or II, numbered Investigation, ch. (for chapter), § for paragraph and page number. The quote is in *LI*, v. II, 5*th* I, n. 6, p. 352.
22 “The decline and hopeless fragmentation of philosophy since the middle of the nineteenth century calls for a newer beginning and new Cartesian meditations. Phenomenology as their conscious resumption and purest result” (E. Husserl, Syllabus for the Paris Lectures on “Introduction to Transcendental Phenomenology,” in Husserl, *Shorter Works*, 78-81. p. 78).
losophy, but has gone astray. In this regard, Derrida is in error when he claims that the Husserlian phenomenological project strives to transcend Western metaphysics, but it is ineluctably mired within metaphysics by its intention to ground a “theory of knowledge.” For it is Husserl’s deliberate purpose that phenomenology must salvage metaphysics in the form of prima philosophia, not at all to demolish it in the name of a post-philosophical thought. Husserl, in his London Lectures, claims programmatically that transcendental phenomenology is logic’s apogee, “an absolutely valid universal logic, and that is transcendental phenomenology” that leads “to the totality of the a priori sciences” and that “[i]t leads also to an a priori deduction of the system of all the categories of being and thereby to that of the system of the a priori sciences” [emphasis mine]. Such an a priori deduction of all the categories of being is nothing else than the epitome of ‘formal ontology.’ There is a certain revolutionary extravagance in the claim that phenomenology will provide ab initio the deduction of ‘all the categories of being’ independently of Being itself (this is the sense of apriorism) and, in disregard of its concrete examination, since the totality of facticity (the empirical existence of nature and society) must have undergone methodical reduction in order to reach the realm of ideality. This is an impossible and self-contradictory project to excise the effect of material being in the attempt to conceive pure ideality per se. But phenomenology’s radical stance to offer a new ‘science of sciences,’ in place of whatever has existed hitherto, resembles, in tenor at least, the revolutionary bourgeoisie’s aspiration in its struggle to abolish the feudal past and the ancien Régime, to construct a totally new world, to build the modern world from scratch by realizing the ideal utopia of a novel universe of universal freedom and equality.

Husserl executes a formidable critique of Psychologism, which is the reigning philosophical-scientific ideology of the modern bourgeois era, originating in Locke’s doctrine of ‘general ideas,’ in the extreme nominalism of Bishop Berkeley, in Hume, in J.S. Mill and culminating in various ‘psychologistic’ Logics of his time. Husserl is not against psychologism per se, but

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24 E. Husserl, Syllabus of a Course of Four Lectures on “Phenomenological Method and Phenomenological Philosophy” (1922), in Husserl, Shorter Works, 68-74, Lecture IV, p. 73.

25 This idea of the bourgeois world building itself from scratch, breaking loose from the old traditional fetters (and the image of the bourgeois person as a ‘self-made’ individual whose property is the outcome of his ‘own’ efforts, hard labor and talents, not the effect of an ‘aristocracy of birth,’ of ‘patronage’ or of ascriptive status) shows striking parallels to Husserl’s criticism of contemporary sciences as acquiescing unreflectively to traditional shackles and thus unable to provide by themselves the ground on which they could stand solely by themselves. As against this dependency on accustomed ways of thinking and in congruity with the bourgeois world’s sense of self-constitution, “transcendental phenomenology is not a theory [...] it is a science founded in itself, and standing absolutely on its own basis; it is indeed the one science that stands absolutely on its own ground” (my emphasis). E. Husserl, “Preface to the English Edition of Ideas” (1931), in Husserl, Shorter Works, 43-53, p. 46.
against psychologism seen as an epistemological standpoint. Logical Psychologism is criticized for relativism, for scepticism, but, above all, for ‘psychological hypostatization’ of the concept, of concept-formation and of logical laws. Psychological ‘hypostatization’ means that the concept as ‘general name’ is taken to be an offshoot of the intuited objects perceived by consciousness. Psychologism’s basic error consists in the obliteration of the fundamental distinction between the ‘laws of the real’ and the ‘laws of the ideal.’ As Husserl puts it, “[t]he basic error of Psychologism consists, according to my view, in its obliteration of this fundamental distinction between pure and empirical generality, and in its misinterpretation of the pure laws of logic as empirical laws of psychology.”

‘Pure’ refers to a priori laws, logical principles and theorems, whereas empirical generality is generated inductively. So, phenomenology posits the existence of two distinctive kinds of laws, logical laws on the one hand, and empirical laws, either causal or probabilistic, on the other hand. These distinctive kinds of laws are located in two distinct realms of being. Here, we have arrived at the ontological quintessence of phenomenological philosophy. Husserl argues that phenomenological thought discovers a ‘categorial split’ in the essential structure of the cosmos. There are two categories of objects: real objects, which are always individual, and ideal objects, which are singular universals. The universal “is a thing thought of by us: it is not therefore a thought-content in the sense of a real (realen) constituent in our thought-experiences.” A thing thought of by us’ does not mean invented by human thought, but possibly conceived by reflective insight. The universal as a ‘unitary concept’ has an objective existence, not a thing-like status, but as object for thought, that it is discovered, but not created ex nihilo as if it were the mind’s product generated by productive imagination. The basis of this fundamental division is a split in the category of ‘being.’

“[W]e do not deny but in fact emphasize, that there is a fundamental categorial split in our unified conception of being (or what is the same, in our conception of an object as such); we take account of this split when we distinguish between ideal being and real being; between being as Species and being as what is individual.”

This categorial split translates the conceptual unity of predication into two different sub-species according to whether we affirm or deny ‘properties of individuals’ or affirm or deny ‘general determinations of Species.’ “This difference does not, however, do away with a supreme unity in the concept of an

26 “[M]y struggle against Psychologism is in no wise a struggle against the psychological grounding of Logic as methodology, nor against the descriptive-psychological elucidation (Aufklärung) of the origin (Ursprungs) of the logical concepts. Rather, it is only a struggle against an epistemological position.” E. Husserl, “A Reply to a Critic of My Refutation of Logical Psychologism” (1903), in Husserl, Shorter Works, 152-158, p. 153.
27 Ibid., p. 156.
29 Ibid., p. 250.
object.” Whether we predicate the red colour to one, many or all red objects does not affect the unitary character of the ‘red’ species concept.

The categorial split of the objectivity of Being into real and ideal objects reveals the co-existence of two distinctive worlds, though not necessarily separate from each other, since the ideal world is often inscribed on the real objecthood of facticity. The species-concept ‘redness’ is irreducible to the ‘red moment’ of a ‘red house’ and it is not created by an aggregation of many similar ‘red instances,’ as empiricism or psychologism believes, but ‘redness’ can be extracted from the single instance of a ‘red moment’ if it is intuited by a suitable phenomenological act. The logical form that pertains to the ‘ideal unity’ of species-concepts that grounds its specific sort of universality is ‘the A (in specie),’ not the logical form of ‘all As’ that describes the ‘universality of range.’ ‘The A’ may possibly invoke a particular A, but it is not dependent on it or it can be conceived without it. A triangle is a possible instance of ‘triangularity,’ but ‘triangularity’ as a species-concept does not entail any correlate inner or outer intuitive content. This is the meaning of Derrida’s paradoxical statement in the Specters of Marx that ‘visibility in-itself is invisible.’

Concepts as ‘ideal unities’ are objects (of perceptual or cognitive acts), but not things. They lack being, in the sense of materiality or immediate presentness, but they do ‘exist,’ inscribed or traceable in thinghood, if only they are cued in by specifically intended acts of reflection. Actually, the act of reflection that identifies the species-concept is a ‘form of abstraction.’ Husserl, in a methodical way, disambiguates two forms of cognition in immanent consciousness. The first form is perception that, in a ‘straightforward’ way, apprehends the sensible objects as they appear within consciousness in the form of “percepts.” There is a higher level where we have ‘perception’ of ‘states-of-affairs’ that are results of founded acts, that is, they presuppose some acts that are based on ‘originative’ intuitions. States-of-affairs involve categorial forms of acts, synthetic ones, since states-of-affairs are relational unities, not directly perceivable, but consisting of conjunctions and disjunctions of parts in wholes. This distinction in two levels correlates with two forms of abstraction. One type of abstraction is the “setting-in-relief of some non-independent moment in a sensible object.” Focusing on the nose in the face of someone exemplifies such an act of abstraction (from the rest of the face). As against this abstractive act, the other form of abstraction is “Ideational Abstraction, where no such non-independent moment, but its Idea, its Universal, is brought to consciousness, and achieves actual givenness.” By this act of abstraction, we have a “universal intuition” of the ‘nose’ as such. Not the cognisance of this or that particular nasal feature, but of the essence of what the nose is, i.e., its universal identicalness, regardless of the possible infinite instantiations of particular noses.

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30 Ibid., p. 250.
31 “And visibility, by its essence, is not seen, which is why it remains epekeina tes ousias, beyond the phenomenon or beyond being.” J. Derrida, Specters of Marx (New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 125.
The gist of Husserl’s critique of logical psychologism’s construction of the essence of a concept is that it lacks the comprehension of its ‘unity’ and, thus, it misses its species character and consequently it conceives the concept as a mere ‘general name,’ designating the ‘extension’ of the real particulars subsumed under it. There is a twofold problem with the logical procedure of concept formation employed by psychologism. Since it recognizes the existence of only single real entities, its mode of arriving at generalities, that is general concepts, predicates, attributes through which objects can be classified and known, is a process of identification of “ likenesses” shared by objects. “Likeness” can only give us a certain range of a dispersed multiplicity of objects having a common feature. But mere likeness of entities, or the “objective possibility of recognizing all members of the range to be like one another,” does not suffice to give unity to this range for thought and knowledge. For “a possibility, it is nothing for our consciousness, unless we think of it and grasp it. But such a grasp would [...] presuppose the thought of the unity of the range” and so the range itself would already “confront us as an ideal unity.” Without the prior unity of the concept, any ‘extension’ of the attribute would be limited to a finite range of subsumed things, lacking the objective possibility of subsuming ‘all’ like things under it. The transition from the finite range, ‘finite’ since it is based on the empirical given, to the ideal infinity of extension, where all suchlike things must be necessarily subsumable, would be illegitimate. Even if the possibility of encompassing ‘all’ members of the range is asserted as a unificatory criterion for the concept, it would still be insufficient, for “[e]ach attempt to transform the being of what is ideal into the possible being of what is real, must obviously suffer shipwreck on the fact that possibilities themselves are ideal objects. Possibilities can as little be found in the real world, as can numbers in general, or triangles in general.”

Consequently, empiricism’s attempt to dispense with Species as ideal objects, by stressing their extensions, fails, for “[i]t cannot tell us what gives unity to such extensions.” A second major difficulty confronted by the psychologistic account is that each object belongs to a plurality of “circles of similars” and that these “circles of similars” must be distinguished among themselves. Without a previously given “Specific Unity” we cannot avoid a regress in infinitum. Different similarities connect objects and these are different in kind. So, to establish ranges of objects, “similarities of similarities” have to be identified and so on in infinitum. Even though Husserl accepts the idea of the ‘unreality of attributes’ in not having an independent substance, he castigates J.S. Mill for failing “to see that the unitary sense of a name, and of every expression, is a Specific Unity” and not merely a range of objects whose unity is the unity of a verbal meaning. Logical empiricism’s

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34 Ibid., p. 243.
36 Ibid., p. 244.
inability to conceive, let alone to ground, the ideal unity of a(ny) concept, reflects the bourgeois individual’s incapacity to subordinate his or her self-interest under any idealized common good and, thus, form communities of purpose to realize the Good in unison. For this reason, the liberal rule of law that guarantees the ‘unity’ of political society is experienced as a constraining force that restrains the individual through punitive law, instead of being seen as a public/political condition of possibility for the exercise of personal freedom, at least in those polities where law-making has not yet been severed from the democratic input of citizens. The ‘unity’ furnished to the independent individuals of civil society by the rule of law is a mere formal unity, provided by the common subjection to the law, devoid of any substantive socio-political interconnection. In Husserl’s parlance, such formal unity constitutes an “aggregate” or a ‘mere coexistence of any content,’ not a true “whole.” The aggregate is a ‘mere form of thought’ that does not intuit any objective unity and “it stands for the correlate of a certain unity of reference relating to all relevant objects.”

As a consequence of the categorial split, there is the world of facticity, which is studied by the various empirical sciences, and the realm of ideality, where logical laws, concepts, truth ‘exist,’ and of whose interconnections pure logic, i.e. pure phenomenology and formal mathematics deal. All concepts are singular ‘ideal unities,’ they are species-forms or universals and rest within the realm of ideality. Husserl is careful and denies the attribution of any kind of ‘conceptual realism’ to concepts as ‘ideal unities’ as the Scholastics did, being misled by “metaphysical hypostatization.” The realm of ideality is prior and beyond the categories of space and time, and, thus, it is both space-less and timeless, and its logical truths are consequently immutable.

Quite a few commentators (including Derrida) use the term ‘omnitemporality’ to describe the timelessness assigned by Husserl to the truth-meaning of the concepts of which ideality consists. Stricto sensu, this is erroneous. Infinite time still belongs to and presupposes the order of temporality, and, thus, the possible experience of a world. Whatever is ‘in’ time is exposed to empirical contingency, and so its apriori character is lost, its truth-validity is marred and its foundational value annulled. This sphere of ideality is what Derrida calls ‘spectrality,’ a zone of ‘ghostly absent presence’ that follows the living like shadow.

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40 “Metaphysical hypostatization” is to assume that the species-concept “really exists externally to thought” whereas “psychological hypostatization” is committed when the assumption is adopted that “Species really exists in thought” (Husserl, LI v. I, 2nd I, ch. 2, § 7, p. 248).
41 In criticizing Sigwart’s view of ‘truth’ (dependent on an intelligence that thinks it), Husserl contends that “it makes no sense to give truth a date in time, nor a duration which extends throughout time” (my emphasis). LI, v. I, Prolegomena, § 39, p. 85.
42 Despite Derrida’s critical demotion of Husserlian phenomenology as belonging to the ‘phono-logocentric’ paradigm of metaphysics, he acknowledges unhesitatingly the ‘debt’
Strictly speaking, the realm of ideality is located in the nowhere within the now-her of a possible categorial intuition. The ontological division of Being, through the phenomenological categorial split, suggests that at its basis lurks the perennial philosophical schism between subject and object; the modern disruption of the Parmenidean identity of thought and being, both plausibly conceived as distant conceptual reflections of the social dissolution of the organic bond integrating individuals in wholesome communities; a disunity of communal co-existence with its resultant opposition between the individual and his/her community, brought about by the divisiveness inexorably associated with the consolidation of the principle of private property and the chorismos into ‘mine’ and ‘yours’ that pits one individual against the other.

Husserl tries to mitigate the tension produced by the subject-object opposition by claiming to be both a ‘realist,’ in accepting the external, independent existence of reality, and an idealist, in the sense that access to the givenness of the ‘ideal realm of concepts’ is only possible via thinking acts of reflection that self-evidently validate the truth, i.e. the self-identical ideal meaning of specific concepts, grasped by intentional acts that take place in the consciousness. It must be stressed that the ideal realm is not produced by thought, but merely ‘constituted’ or discovered by it, since ideality is independent from human thinking and transcendent to it, unrelated to the specific features of ‘human nature’ and it would continue to exist even if the human species became extinct. This argument undermines psychologistic relativism that ties the realm of conceptuality and ‘pure logic’ or makes it relative to any given philosophical anthropology. Pure phenomenology requires the suspension of ‘all reality,’ the independence from any form of world-constitution, for this is the necessary condition that vouchsafes the unconditional or a priori character of the truth of ideality. As Husserl has put it in his correspondence with Dilthey, “[a]ll objective validity, including even that of religion, art, etc., refers to ideal, and thus to absolute (‘absolute’ in a certain sense) principles, to an a priori which, as such, is thus in no way limited by anthropological-historical factualities.”

owed to Husserl in that “the radical possibility of all spectrality should be sought in the direction that Husserl identifies, in such a surprising but forceful way, as an intentional but non-real [non-réelle] component of the phenomenological lived experience, namely, the noeme. [...] This non-reality [non-réellité], this intentional but non-real inclusion of the noematic correlate is neither ‘in’ the world nor ‘in’ consciousness” (Derrida, Specters of Marx, p. 257, n. 6).

43 Idealism, in Husserl’s sense, is meant not as a metaphysical doctrine but as “a theory of knowledge which recognizes the ‘ideal’ as a condition for the possibility of objective knowledge in general.” Husserl, LI v. I, 2nd I, p. 238.

44 The concept as the ‘what’ of presentation is not a real part of the psychological content. “It is meant but not produced, in our thought.” Husserl, LI v. I, Prolegomena, § 39, p. 87.

45 The scientific investigator “does not make the objective validity of thoughts and thought-connections, of concepts and truths [...] he sees them, discovers them” (Husserl, LI v. I, 1st I, ch. 3, § 29, p. 226).

The unlimited character of the realm of ideality is populated by the principles, laws and rules of ‘pure’ logic, laws like the law of non-contradiction, of identity, etc. Since they are absolutely uncontaminated with anything pertaining to facticity and thus not exposed to contingency endemic in the totality of facticity, their truth-value is eternal and they must be taken as the indubitable foundational basis of the knowledge of (possible) Being. In this regard, ‘pure’ phenomenology, by methodically intuiting the logical essences, furnishes the ultimate secure ground that philosophy had been lacking up to now. At the same time, the diverse empirical sciences have been employing such logical principles and laws in the investigation of their concrete theoretical objects. Their common use of an identical set of logical principles and rules suggests that, despite the plurality of theories and scientific objects, the sciences share a logical/epistemological basis that provides for their unity. Any kind of theoretical assertion, surmise or propositional judgement has to submit to such logical rules if it wants to claim access to valid truth.

The whole Husserlian argument stands or falls on the condition that the phenomenologically intuited logical aprioris do not presuppose anything at all. Nevertheless, there are certain difficulties with his aprioristic doctrine, which I will try briefly to expose. Husserl’s method of analysis is descriptive, not deductive or inductive. So, he proceeds to identify and elucidate basic logical distinctions without deriving them from anything else, but assumes them as indisputable. This is already a problem, for, in order to constitute ‘pure logic’ as the ‘science of sciences,’ its logical categories must be somehow established rather than be applied as ready-made ones. The identification of logical distinctions necessarily passes through semantic analysis in order to pin down, in an exact way, the differences in meaning borne by the logical distinctions. He introduces a fundamental logical distinction, dividing ‘universal judgements’ “into individually universal judgements such as All men are mortal, and specifically universal judgements such as All analytical functions can be differentiated or All propositions of pure logic are a priori.”47 ‘All men are mortal’ is deemed to be an individual universal judgement. Why is that so? That it is a universal judgement, there is no doubt about it. But why is it ‘individual’? ‘All men’ is a clear reference to Man as ‘species.’ In that regard, it should be ‘specifically’ universal. But if it were defined as a ‘specifically universal’ judgement, then the concept of Man would belong to the sphere of ideality where species-concepts throng, and that means that a pragmatological worldly condition would participate in ideality as it ought to be (‘redness’ for example which is a species-concept certainly presupposes inexorably a coloured world). So, Husserl, to keep the field of a priori concepts uninfected by pragmatic considerations, drives an illegitimate wedge, bifurcating the concept of ‘species’ into a species (‘specifically’)/non-species (‘individually’) polarity by definitional fiat. Furthermore, the truth-value of the judgement ‘All men are mortal’ entails the element of necessity and absolute

universality (it does not accept exceptions) and, thus, shares the two characteristics of the *a priori*.

Another sense of the proposition could be that ‘all men’ as species is meant to express the ‘individuality’ of the species and, thus, is legitimately considered as an “individually universal” judgement. But the idea of ‘all men’ as an individual species is made possible only on the condition that *other real* species exist, on the basis of which and in juxtaposition to which, the ‘individuality’ of the species Man is revealed. So, a *material precondition* is required in order to render the logical definition and the logical distinction that Husserl introduces, true and valid. But this is *impossible* in Husserl’s framework, because logical concepts and their distinctions absolutely cannot rest on anything located in the real world. The phenomenological trick is to bracket knowledge of the entire natural and socio-historical world in order to achieve purity and, thus, accede to the *a priori* of the realm of ideality, but *suppose furtively the result of knowledge of the existence of the world and employ it in delimiting the contents of the ideal realm*. Even the use of such a fundamental category for Husserlian phenomenology, that of “possible worlds” for which ideal objects are valid, can attain its meaningfulness only if a ‘real world’ can be hypothesized to exist in contra-juxtaposition.

Another deficiency is revealed in Husserl’s systematic founding of pure logic. The essence of the logical concepts exists in a state of in-itselfness. Logical concepts cannot be affected in their essence by other logical concepts; they do not exist relative to each other or under any kind of reciprocal influence. To describe “all men are mortal” as an “individually universal” judgement entails the proposition’s logical content to partake necessarily in the grid of animal species’ manifold. Additionally, there is logical ambiguity because there is a hidden ‘logical’ taxonomy behind such supposedly isolated judgements. If ‘all men...’ is an individually universal judgement, what is the logical status of a proposition like ‘All animals are mortal’? The ‘animal’ stands as the *genus* to the *species* ‘man.’ Is it, then, a ‘specifically universal’ judgement vis-à-vis the *individually* universal proposition ‘All men...’ or is it an ‘individually universal’ judgement in regard to the higher up proposition of ‘All life is mortal’? Husserl parades traditional logical distinctions without having examined their logical cogency that would have required immersion into the material conditions that support their formulation. A fundamental logical category is the genus/species relationship often employed by Husserl. Genus is a higher concept than species, in that it includes it. Do we ascend from species to genus or do we descend from genus to species? Phenomenologically speaking, we must ascend from ‘species’ to ‘genus,’ since the process of reduction by abstraction starts from the immanently given per-

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48 The genus/species relationship belongs to the “category of object” and it is dealt by “the *pure (a priori) theory of objects as such*” (Husserl, *II*, v. II, 3rd I, intro., p. 3). That means that the genus/species couplet is a pure categorial form transcendent to any real content. But without any reference to *materiality* or ‘facticity’ we can never know what is what and what kind of relation may hold between them. Either they are vacant ‘names’ thus mere marks or their formal ‘content’ is the product of definitional decisionism.
ceptual datum. The perception of the ‘red’ moment must be given in order to intuit reflectively the species concept ‘redness’ and only then to intuit by abstractive ideation the generic concept of ‘colouredness.’ But Husserl does not remain faithful to his method. He constantly posits first the genus (of “intention,” of “primary contents”) and then ‘descends’ to the specifics of the species.

Husserl claims that the ideal meaning meant in the intended expressions is ‘identical to itself.’ He writes:

“It can be an identical subject for numerous predicates, an identical term in numerous relations. It can be summed together with other meanings and can be counted as a unit.” As self-identical, it can in turn serve as the object for many new meanings. [...] A meaning can be treated as self-identical only because it is self-identical. This argument we find unassailable.

Surely, it is ‘unassailable,’ since it is a blatant tautology. The whole point of Husserl’s ‘argument’ was to demonstrate the essential character of the self-identity of ‘ideal meaning’ that remains invariable across contexts and unaffected by spatiotemporal determinations, since it is located outside of any space-time coordinates. What is the proof for such self-identity of meaning?

“A meaning can be treated as self-identical only because it is self-identical” (my emphasis). The point is to know whether meaning is self-identical, not if it can be treated as self-identical. For it can be treated as ‘self-identical’ even if it is not self-identical due to name fetishism, when the meaning is hypostasized in the name, as, for example, when the term ‘freedom’ is taken to signify the same meaning in Ancient Greece, in the 17th century liberal discourse and today. Moreover, even if we assume that the self-identicalness of meaning can be surmised by its successful treatment as self-identical, Husserl has not proved that it is being treated as self-identical, for it begs the question on the self-identity of meaning, since the treatments of meaning as self-identical are premised on its being self-identical. Behind such dogmatic conception of the ‘self-identity’ of ideal meaning stands the uncritical acceptance of the logical law of identity (A=A), without Husserl having ever confronted the profound criticism against this law voiced by Hegel.

A last point that strikes directly at the heart of the logical a priori concerns the elementary logical form of ‘pure’ logic, the propositional form of ‘S’ is ‘P.’ Husserl thinks that this “ideal form” is valid a priori, regardless of the

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49 “[T]he descriptive genus ‘intention’ (‘act-character’) displays specific differences, flowing from its pure essence” (my emphasis). Husserl, LI, v. II, 5th I, ch. 2, § 10, p. 96. ‘Desiring,’ ‘willing,’ ‘wishing,’ etc. ‘flow from the pure essence of intention’ not the reverse, let alone that in the generic “pure essence” all species act-characters must have been ideationally dissolved. For the genus “primary contents,” see Husserl, LI, v. II, 6th I, ch. 7, § 58, p. 304.

50 It is obvious that the prototype of the logical concept is the ‘number’ since ‘ideal meanings’ are ‘units’ that can be ‘counted’ even ‘summed together.’


“infinitely many ways” it can be ‘materialized’ or ‘specified’ and he proceeds to make a most crucial claim “that we are not completely free in such specification, but work confined within definite limits. We cannot substitute any meanings we like for the variables ‘S’ and ‘P’.” No doubt. But what is the a priori logical truth of this ‘logical’ formula, if ‘its definite limitations’ (thus, its rational determinateness) rest exclusively and necessarily so, on the types of “specification” it can accommodate? This means that this logical form per se is devoid of validity (and universality), it is an empty formula that becomes validated on condition that appropriate grammatical forms and subject/predicate connections are referenced or “substituted” for its marks. Thus, it is the totality of the world of ‘facticity’ that determines whether and how this ‘ideal form’ obtains logical sense and a valid embodiment. Husserl’s thought is trapped in the chasm of the subject-object divide. While he comprehends correctly that the ideal is grafted on the real, he cannot grasp that the real is also inscribed in the ideal, for, in that case, the absolute validity of ethereal ‘pure logic’ and its foundational basis of philosophy, falls to the ground.

The Husserlian philosophical program, by autonomizing truth and logic from the totality of the empirical facticity, by excluding the temporal from truth and infinity, seems to gain a permanent hold over the suchlike carved out domain. As Adorno pinpoints incisively, such a philosophical stance is subtended by a proprietorial relationship to such self-enclosed turf. A highly abstract ownership relation seems to hold between phenomenology’s theoretico-vista and the enclosed domicile of the treasured truths of the ideal realm. This obliges us to raise the question of ‘who are the possessors of such inestimable truths.’

Husserl’s narrowing of the set of those capable to accede to truth is shown when he counters Erdmann’s scepticism, where truth becomes validated when it is based on the agreement of everyone. By ‘scepticism,’ Husserl means the denial of the ideal objectivity of the concept and, consequently, its validation in the sceptic regard is only possible through the collocation of the subjective understanding of everyone. Husserl questions the appropriateness of such an epistemological conception in demanding such universal certainty and raises the question “whether truth may not rather be the appurtenance of a select few than possessed by everyone.” Such a concep-54

55 LI v. I, Prolegomena, § 40, p. 100.
cepts, i.e. an ‘aristocratic intelligentsia’ can only possess truth, an ‘aristocracy’ that includes pure mathematicians and some logicians (obviously Husserl himself), but not all logicians and philosophers, since most of them have been misled into psychologism and empiricism. The technocratic aspect concerns the special methodical training required to learn to “attend” to the content of the presentations of consciousness, to identify ‘ideality’ from within the concrete object apprehended by consciousness. Husserl acknowledges the “major difficulty” that confronts the phenomenological method, whereby insights of essential truths are derived from immanent intuitions and this raises obviously the issue of the ‘testability’ of their correctness.

The solution he proposes to this interiority problem, which concerns nothing less than the very truth of phenomenological philosophy, is that “[t]hese insights can be tested and confirmed only by persons well-trained in the ability to engage in pure description in the unnatural attitude of reflection.” This solution undermines at once the claim about the ‘self-evidential’ character of direct grasp of intuited essences. It means they are not “self-evident” at all, but necessitate the mediation of specialists trained in “phenomenological purity,” so as to authenticate the genuineness of the intuited conceptual contents. “Well-trained” suggests the idea of a hierarchy of competence in phenomenological purification of intuition and presumably an official credentialization of the relevant degrees of competence or the institution of a body of experts as the validating forum of successful intuitions of essences.

Such philosophical conceptions reflect the exponential growth and rigidification of the social division of labor in late bourgeois society, where the division between abstract manual labor and specialized intellectual labor has been entrenched. Truth, logic, knowledge, mathematics, philosophy has become the special preserve of the “few select” scientific experts in the relevant domains. As for the rest, the great majority of ordinary women, they comprehend the world under the ‘illusion’ of the “natural attitude,” believing the intuited objects in their consciousness to be none other than real perceptual replicas of the things externally located ‘out there.’

Integration, Manipulation, Alienation

ANDREW BLASCO

“We live today in the age of partial objects, bricks that have been shattered to bits, and leftovers. [...] We no longer believe in a primordial totality that once existed, or in a final totality that awaits us at some future date.”

The importance of human existence and experience is often exaggerated. All too often, the significance of what we do is grossly overstated in an effort to regard ourselves as exquisitely meaningful and uniquely individual creatures who belong to the most developed species that has ever dwelt upon the face of the earth.

Self-awareness, self-reflection, and interiority frequently amount in practice to little more than solipsism on the cultural level, if not on the species level as well. We typically utilize these aspects of our being to erect and be the crown of creation. We thus conduct ourselves as if we were so exceptional that there was nothing else in the world within which we live that could be compared with us—or at least with the people who look like us and wear similar clothing.

In this vein, the uniqueness of personality that is so precious to Europeans is claimed to demonstrate the inherent superiority of our own specific culture and civilization over others. From another perspective, however, it shows itself as merely a modification of the sameness that marks us all as possessing, on the whole, an inability to grasp that we share much in common—very much in common—with all that we see around us, whether that be the dust of the Earth, those who speak a different language and perhaps worship in a different way, the stars that shine in the night sky, or the insects buzzing in the summer air. After all, have we all not been created from stardust?

But perhaps the saddest of all is that the world that we have made for ourselves in the name of civilization is today characterized by little more than the dissemination of knowledge and information, in order to produce ignorance and foster the manipulation of the many by the few. Public events are reported for the sake of entertainment and diversion, not to improve the quality of supposedly democratic society. Education is used to make us forget what is important in life, not to gain insight into the world that we have created for ourselves. Solidarity is encouraged so that imagination and diversity can be suppressed, not to foster belonging and a sense of community. A concern with public morality is transformed into support for narrow ideological views, adventurous foreign wars, and justification for universal surveillance, not to

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enhance civic responsibility and private ethical commitment. The hope of many of our leaders is that we become lost in what we believe we already know, instead of questioning the perennial link between faith and reason. We are not expected to come to a better understanding of the world in which we live that is both more profound as well as more accepting of those who do not resemble us, because—as we are taught—we have already learned all that is important about freedom, justice, and human fulfillment.

Aristotle remarked, in one of the most famous passages in the history of Western thinking, that all men desire to know. Unfortunately, this may no longer hold true, for today virtually everyone apparently wishes to be deceived and alienated. People now seek entertainment so that the superficiality and ignorance they crave will be enjoyable as well. And, even in those situations when they appear to search for information, it is all too often the case that they do so for the sake of diversion, not for knowledge or wisdom. In this way, we have trivialized such serious existential issues as faith, personal commitment, identity, and a sense of our place in the world, whereby they have been rendered harmless, insignificant, powerless, of no account, and even useless. Our lives have—at least to this extent—become void of insight, vision, and wonder, which have been replaced with a dull satiation.

As we address these matters, it will be useful to keep in mind Louis Althusser’s observation that we exist today in the form of an objectivity in which we encounter our essence in the appearance of a non-human essence. We should also remember a cogent remark by Jan Patočka concerning the crisis of European sciences that Husserl addressed in his final works; namely, we are now living a crisis of humanity that has rendered us blind and no longer able to understand.

The first sentence in the program statement of the 2010 World Congress of Sociology declared that “Determination is dead in the social sciences.” The statement went on to claim that we all are aware that human beings are “not completely dominated by” social structures, social mechanisms, and forms of reproduction, and that change “to a large extent depends on human action and imagination.” However, this proclamation conveniently left open the question of the relative roles of action and imagination in social change, did not specify the range encompassed by “not completely dominated by”—as if there were no substantial difference between 1% and 99%—and seemed to take it for granted that action can typically be imaginative in a positive sense. There is no doubt, however, that we are fully justified in asking whether imagination, in a far from positive sense, can indeed not foster the type of action in which one makes oneself subservient to another—or even takes one’s own life.

4 See http://www.isa-sociology.org/congress2010/.
5 Can imagination not be destructive, leading us away from positive change and fulfillment in any accepted meaning of the term towards emptiness, meaninglessness, and suffer-
Unfortunately, declarations about the death of determination all too frequently seem to indicate that determination is, in fact, alive and well. Pretty statements about the positive role of human imagination in social change, in fact, have very little to do with demonstrating the death of determination for anyone other than s/he who already wields unchallenged power over others and is able to determine the lives of those others.

But why does such an ideology exist, and why is it so commonly accepted today, when we live in a so-called postmodern civilization in which individualism appears to reign supreme? The answer I propose is that it exists to serve the structures of power that typify a society in which things as well as people are reduced to objects that exist solely in order to be manipulated, used for the purposes of another, bought, and sold. Perhaps this is the case particularly with those very individuals who feel themselves so very much in control of their isolated lives, as if they have been determined to think that they are not determined through their acceptance of the ideology that individuality as it exists today is essentially free, independent, and in control of its fate.

In our consideration of the significance of the individual today, it should be noted, in this regard, that Heidegger fundamentally transformed Husserl’s important notion of intentionality. Briefly stated, Husserl’s position in this respect is that conscious activity is always directed towards something, thereby consisting of both subject and object poles in respect to the emergence of meaning. Heidegger, in contrast, does not question the existence of things, although he does not reduce them to objects (opposed to a subject). In addition, he regards the attitude adopted towards Being, which he defines as “care,” as fundamental to human existence. His entire early concern with existential analytic as it is developed in Being and Time is indeed centered on care, and he defines the very essence of human existence as care instead of as women and men who are supposedly the sole beings for whom existence matters.

There is an interesting point that follows upon Heidegger’s transformation of intentionality into care, insofar as care itself undergoes a transformation as a consequence of the exercise of power over the world in which we live by those who seek possession, control, and ownership of it. In such circumstances care may perhaps be better described as the attitude of those who exercise power towards those over whom they, in fact, exercise power. The analysis of human experience which Heidegger encourages us to carry out thus transpires in respect to the being who is concerned with the being over whom s/he (seeks to) exercise(s) power. In the conditions of the exercise of power, existence as such is thereby not a concern with being as such—as if being manifested itself in some a-historical and a-social location in terms of a fantasized

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life-world in general, without structures of power and ownership in which all were free and equal individuals. The object of concern would, then, rather be the existence of that which is possessed and the being over whom power is exercised in order to insure that possession. That is to say that care is to be understood as concern with the effective exercise of power and the successful possession of things in the world in which we live.

Under conditions of the exercise of power, the description of experience in terms of care matters to those who are concerned with their exercise of power over others for the sake of their appropriation of the world in which we live. It is as if we have returned to the world of the Ottoman Turkish Empire, in which the masters spoke of their subjects as “sheep” to underline how the flock had to be cared for so that they could provide wealth for the satisfaction of the masters.

Although Heidegger clearly accepts the significance of human individuality, he regards human existence as thoroughly social and historical. However, even if we accept that human existence is thoroughly social, it is nevertheless regarded in modern market society, particularly in its extreme American-style form, as being individual in its essence, regardless of Aristotle’s comments to the contrary concerning essence. That is to say that the ideology of today’s market societies proclaims that human beings are essentially individuals, which is reflected in the view of human rights typical of modern civilization. In this regard, perhaps it would be revealing and insightful, instead, to agree with Aristotle to the effect that the only so-called substantial differences between individuals involve non-essential elements. If this is the case, then today’s cult of individuality turns upon what is non-essential in the human being, for the things that make us different from each other involve, so to speak, the matter, not the form – the clothing and not the flesh – of human being. Only angels as individuals constitute species of their own.

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7 The philosophical development of Heidegger’s existentialist notions has perhaps been most greatly influenced by the work of Søren Kierkegaard. Kierkegaard’s ideas concerning our subjective relation to truth, our existence in the face of death, and the temporality of existence, coupled with his passionate affirmation of one’s individual being-in-the-world, have indeed served to shape basic Heideggerian concepts. One fundamental difference between these two thinkers resides upon the fact that Kierkegaard emphasizes Christian thinking and the individuality of human experience while Heidegger sharply differentiates between philosophy and religious commitments and undertakings, at least after the early 1920s. See, for example, H. Dreyfus, Being-in-the-world: A Commentary on Heidegger’s Being and Time, Division I (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1991), Appendix.

8 See Aristotle, Met. 10.1054b: “that which is different from something is different in some particular respect, so that that in which they differ must be the same sort of thing; i.e. the same genus or species.” In Aristotle in 23 Volumes, Vols. 17, 18, trans. H. Tredennick (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1933, 1989). Also see 1058b: “matter does not produce [essential] difference; and for this reason, too, individual men are not species of ‘man,’ although the flesh and bones of which this and that man consist are different. The concrete whole is ‘other,’ but not ‘other in species,’ because there is no contrariety in the formula, and this is the ultimate indivisible species.” Differences of this type involve attributes that are peculiar to the individual – they do not involve one’s essential nature as a human being.
Focusing upon the individual differences that separate us from each other—as is done in proclamations concerning the sanctity of the individual citizen/consumer and declarations about the sovereignty of individual imagination—thus diverts our attention from the essence that we share in common, as human beings who share a world in common. The market-created individualism of consumption for the sake of identity not only focuses our gaze upon what is of no essential importance in our lives, it also constructs a sense of individual significance upon the basis of what is of secondary importance in terms of what it means to homo sapiens. It creates a sense of meaning that may be said to be hollow because it ignores—even rejects—what is of the greatest significance in life insofar as what is essential has a greater importance and meaning than what is non-essential. It breaks the essential bonds that link us together for the sake of differences that reside upon what is non-essential, thereby reducing the individual to a means of consumption—or a consumption machine, as Deleuze and Guattari might say—who exists for the purpose of serving the accumulation of power and wealth by those who control the market in market-style society.

It is also useful for us to keep in mind Aristotle’s statement that all actions are done for a specific aim, which may be defined as the “the Good in each particular case.” Aristotle observes elsewhere in the *Metaphysics* that “For it is the apparent good that is the object of appetite, and the real good that is the object of the rational will.” That is to say that, not only does the reduction of human beings to consumption machines serve a purpose that is good in some respect, it is good in terms of both desire and rationality— we both want it and justify our actions in terms of what is supposedly reasonable. Furthermore, this is not a good in a relative sense because it gives meaning and purpose to the action in question, which is to say that the good is a cause in an absolute sense for the activity in question. In the case of modern individuality, however, this cannot involve what is good for the individuals who are reduced to consumption machines, because they are thereby made to serve the purposes of those who not only command power over the process of reduction, but accrue power from our own actions. As Aristotle succinctly notes, “in the case of things produced [or modern individuals—A.B.] the principle of motion (either mind or art or some kind of potency) is in the producer.” He also states instructively that “in many respects human nature is servile.”

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9 This point is reminiscent of Deleuze and Guattari’s notion of the creation of desiring machines, as discussed in *Anti-Oedipus*, with an added consideration: individuals as desiring machines are created and manipulated by what appear to be hidden and unknown forces beyond their control. Social forces connected with the exercise of power within a specific social construction thus come to be regarded as cosmic forces that express the being that is manifest in human existence. For the original discussion of desiring machines, see G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*.


When the non-essential differences between individuals (which in the present discussion concern the particular commodities they consume) become the turning point of social and political ideology and practice—as is the case in advanced Western market society—and the individual is thereby reduced to serving the accumulation of power and wealth by those who control the market, the essential meaning of “the individual” or “individuality” is altered. It no longer involves the early modern notion of the rational individual with a given set of rights and obligations, who selects what s/he should and will do after deliberation and judgment.\textsuperscript{15} The full significance of an individual human life, with its desires, ambitions, hopes, virtues, and principles, has instead come to reside in the consumption of commodities, regardless of whether that means knowledge, love, designer clothing, or workman’s tools, which are purchased on the market for the sake of someone else’s satisfaction—that is, for the sake of increasing someone else’s power over our own individual and social lives. The cause of individual existence—that which may be described as the source of its meaning and development—thereby lies in something else that is concerned not with the welfare and goodness of given individuals, but rather with power over them by someone else.

This state of affairs may be described in classical Aristotelian terms as follows: The purpose of individual existence, which is the goal towards which individual life is directed—or that which draws forward the movement and development of individual existence—is to facilitate and serve the power that others exercise over it for the sake of their own private advantage and gain. Moreover, this comprises an act of love in which an individual willingly gives her/himself to that which is the meaning of his/her life—to that which is perceived as good for them. But, instead of this act of love being the fulfillment of one’s own life, it objectively comprises a sacrifice or negation of oneself, whereby one reduces the significance of his/her own life for the sake of fulfillment in the life of someone else. However, since this remains an act of love—albeit an act of self-deception—the individual does it willingly in the belief that the consumption of commodities is the paramount activity in which one becomes what one is in respect to the ultimate possibilities of human existence.\textsuperscript{16}

Such reduced creatures may be said to find meaning in their lives through the consumption of meaning, not in the creation of their own meaning. They do not find meaning in their lives through reason, judgment, and experience shared with others, but rather by being filled from the outside by a significance that supports and promotes the structures and exercise of power in society. Very simply stated, they absorb what is told to them concerning the meaning and purpose of their lives, and they act accordingly as they search for their ideal commodities.

\textsuperscript{15} This in fact cannot be the case because both the meaning of and control over one’s life comes from the outside—from those to whom we submit by our own heart’s desire. Indeed, in many cases—and perhaps most typically—both the scope and purpose of rational deliberation are reduced to such an extent that such deliberation is stripped of the meaning it originally possessed.

\textsuperscript{16} See Aristotle, \textit{Met.} 12.1072b.
This is the paramount example of alienation—from self and from society—in today’s advanced market society. Solidarity, civic-mindedness, patriotism, and commitment within such a society and amongst its members constitute integration for the sake of—and in the service of—inequality and subjugation.

This, in general terms, also constitutes the mechanism whereby power infuses the substantiality of alienated individuals in an alienating society with submission masked as liberty, such that individual potential is transformed into the potential to serve the expansion of the power that dominates for the sake of another’s fulfillment and private satisfaction. The very existence of the alienated individual is thereby possessed, so to speak, by the exercise of power in society.\textsuperscript{17}

This transforms the processes of change and development in an individual’s life into means that serve the power of another and bring that other a sense of private pleasure. Change and development are thus no longer means that serve and promote one’s own good,\textsuperscript{18} and imagination becomes an instrument of self-deception. Moreover, the reduction of individual life to the consumption of commodities in market society goes hand in hand with the reduction of social life as well. In such circumstances, civil society becomes as great a myth as the self-responsible, rational individual insofar as the latter has ceased to exist—if it ever in fact existed in modern market society.

A kind of deformed and debased practical wisdom that accompanies the exercise of power under the guise of free choice in market-style civil society accelerates the drive to possess and consume commodities. This promotes the process through which the essence of alienated individuality is constituted, such that what is detrimental to the well-being of both the individual and society is considered to be the highest good. We may thus say, in a somewhat Heideggerian vein, that what may be referred to as “being consumed by commodities” is not only a possibility of the existence of human beings, but the predominant possibility of human beings in advanced market society today.\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{17} Van Steenberghen’s summary of act and potency—esse and essentia—and the role played in the interplay between them by the infusion of infinite being—or a completion of Aristotle by means of the Platonic notion of participation—casts useful light upon the mechanism through which individual potential comes to promote the individual’s submission to power. See F. Van Steenberghen, Aristotle in the West: The Origins of Latin Aristotelianism (Louvain: E. Nauwelaerts, 1955), pp. 185ff. See also F. Van Steenberghen, La philosophie du XIIIe siècle (Louvain: Éditions Peeters, 1991), esp. Ch. VII.


\textsuperscript{19} For example, Heidegger, in his Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy, discusses science as not merely an occupation, but rather as a way in which our human essence exists. Science does not merely involve what may be called learning the tools of the trade and finding appropriate employment, but rather taking up in one’s own life the specific presuppositions that one who moves in the circle of scientific research must bring along with him/herself in order to be a scholar. See M. Heidegger, Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy (Bloomington-Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2009), “Introduction,” Section 2.
In terms of a sense of personal engagement as members of market society, we may say that the fact that we are dominated by the power exercised through commodities is no longer merely a matter of choice, as if we could somehow opt out of the grasp of commodities by choosing an alternative lifestyle or being more selective in our purchases. The reduction of liberty and personal fulfillment to opportunities to sell, purchase, and consume means that the submission to power becomes our fate in the sense that it is the predetermined mode of our existence. There is no individual personal freedom in the world of commodities—their very existence demands that we become consumed by them in an act of self-sacrifice as we endeavor to purchase and consume them.

One cannot merely struggle against such alienation from self as one would struggle against some beast or monster, as Beowulf wrestled with Grendel or Odysseus fought the Cyclops, as if we all could become epic heroes in freeing ourselves from the grasp of an alienated society that would feast upon us. The enemy we have to overcome is within us, in the very makeup of our souls and bodies. We are not simply subject to external power and violence, but rather create our own submission—indeed, our participation in being dominated is necessary because force cannot rule alone. It is our very being-in-the-world that ensures our submission to that to which we are supposed to submit.

In an ironic analogy with Heidegger, one may say that history consists of the history of alienation in the terms of individual identity. One could thus very well argue that Euro-American history consists, not of the supposed concealment of Being, but of the oblivion of the individual—that is, the redefinition of the essence of individuality into a consumer of commodities—for the sake of the unlimited expansion of the commodity market in today’s society. Alienation, in this sense, is thus merged with individual identity to such a degree, in this type of society, that it has become a typical element of individual substance. It has become an essential characteristic of what it means to be an individual consumer of commodities as a subset of homo sapiens.

Heidegger has written of how German critical philosophy, especially Neo-Kantianism, regarded Aristotle as an exponent of naive metaphysics. See “The Reception of Aristotle’s Philosophy,” in M. Heidegger, Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle, trans. R. Rojcewicz (Bloomington-Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2001), p. 5 ff. We might say that the power exercised through commodities does much the same as what Aristotle was accused of. Analogously to how Aristotle has been viewed as a naive realist, citizens as they have been reduced to consumed/consumers may be regarded as accepting the power-neutrality of commodities such that they believe that their subjugation comprises their fulfillment. They naively believe in their individual freedom because they can shop whenever and wherever they want to.

For a useful discussion of the mechanism whereby we exist in order to obey—including a sense of intrinsic necessity—see G. Therborn, The Ideology of Power and the Power of Ideology (London: Verso, 1980), pp. 93ff.

This issue arises in Therborn’s discussion of ideology. See Therborn, op. cit., p. 2.

To struggle against alienation thus entails struggling against what we are and have become through our integration into society. It is not a question of somehow preserving one’s own decency while seeking—in some “imaginative” fashion that promotes “progressive” change—some way in which to alter the range of possibilities offered by the supposedly “external” world to the sovereign individual—as if the overcoming of alienation were just another product on the market of human potential available for our selection. Alienation exists within us as the original sin of the commodity-eater—as part of the very fabric of our being after our Fall into the vale of commodity society. The process and structures of alienation that we see in the supposedly external world can only be overcome and eliminated as we eliminate them in the ways in which they exist within ourselves. We have to change ourselves in our efforts to change social structures and end the exercise of power in the service of private possession and control, for what we are today as individuals is destined to make our children as alienated as we are, if not more so.

Alienating social structures have indeed become fused with the substance of individuals to such a degree that a supposedly “free imagination” typically does not—and, indeed, perhaps cannot—challenge the current forms of existence of either social forms or individual identity. Those who deny determination conveniently overlook the fact that imagination today in market society is seldom concerned with anything other than finding the best shopping opportunities, deciding what to watch on television, selecting what to post on Facebook, or determining one’s preferences in online pornography.

Today, some of the more imaginative individuals concerned with change in such a society are to be found among the so-called Tea Partiers in the United States, who claim Barack Obama is a Communist and present changes merely in the medical insurance system in the United States—not in the medical care system itself—as losing the battle to socialism. Others of the same ilk are those who argue, if that word may be used, that private citizens need to have access to military-style firearms so that they can protect themselves against world domination by the United Nations Organization. This is what imagination has been reduced to for countless tens of millions of people living in the paragon.

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24 If we wished to allude to the Biblical story of the Fall of Adam and Eve, we could say that this describes the hereditary state of sin into which we have fallen as we have given ourselves over to a world in which relations between people have become relations between things.

Sisyphus thus continues to be the image that perhaps most accurately describes our times, just as it was for Camus. Life is worth living only as an endless struggle, just as Sisyphus was condemned for eternity to roll a boulder up a hill only to watch it roll down again to the bottom as he neared the top. This absurdity is of such a scale that we must revolt even though we will never reach our goal of a liberated future. We must struggle to overcome alienation because we live in a world in which the fact of alienation is inevitable in each and every individual life.

25 One should certainly not forget that the pornography industry has been one of the principal engines driving the development of the digital technology underlying the emergence of today’s “knowledge society,” in which individuals are supposedly empowered to attain heights that have seldom be seen in history.
of market society, which proclaims the virtues of liberated individualism as key to a meaningful life for all people everywhere.26 Perhaps the most we can say concerning the quality of such imagination is that people often do the best they can with what they know—which is thankfully little from the perspective of those who wield power.27

This casts Heidegger’s appeals for an “openness to being” in, to say the very least, an ironic light: today’s cult of individuality in market-style societies promotes individuality as it has been forcibly reduced to openness by virtue of the fact that individuals have been emptied of what is essential in human existence. Instead of the “authentic openness to being” that supposedly characterized pre-Socratic philosophy and for which we should search again today, as Heidegger claims, perhaps it would be more appropriate to describe market-dominated and commodity-filled individuality in terms of an “inauthentic openness” which consists not merely of an openness to being, but, more importantly, of a susceptibility and submission to power.28 This is an openness which, by its very openness, not only conceals, but also empties the one who has been opened by the force brought to bear by an inherently violent social order. Heidegger thought that tragedy on such a scale was a positive element in pre-Socratic thought,29 but I would suggest that it is rather one of the most characteristic—and far from positive—elements of modern market society, in which everything and everyone exists to be bought and sold.30

Individuality, as it is typified in market-dominated societies—perhaps especially in its Anglo-Saxon version and in the world shaped by that vision—exists so that power can be exercised upon it. And because the exercise of
power is mediated by the fascination with what can be bought and sold, and because the significance of individual life is to purchase and consume commodities—and be itself a commodity—the exercise of power is concealed by the illusion that commodities are possessed and selected for consumption through personal choice. The exercise of power over the individual is thus presented as the personal choice of the individual for the commodity s/he wishes to possess, consume, and use. And even though this exercise of force is violent by nature—insofar as it is conducted with no regard for the well-being of the consumer—the violence brought to bear upon the individual is thereby disguised as individual freedom.

Evald Ilyenkov observes in a reference to Johann Gottlieb Fichte that the type of philosophy one chooses depends on the type of person one is. He states that everyone is attracted to a philosophy that corresponds to the already formed image of her/his own thinking, finding in it a mirror that fully presents everything that earlier existed in the form of a vague tendency or an indistinctly expressed allusion.31

We may say that those attracted to the philosophy of radical individualism are those who have already been seduced by fetishized commodities—and they are ready to reduce themselves to commodities as well. Indeed, the individual as presented by today’s cult of individuality has already been reduced to a commodity. Not only does its inherent significance turn upon the images of power and satisfaction associated with a society that has become dominated by market forces, its deepest inner meaning is completely framed in respect to the access to commodities. Moreover, it itself is a commodity that is available for purchase and sale on the market. It has been created specifically as a commodity that makes possible the market in other commodities, in support of the expansion of the power of a capital owning elite.

“Freedom” is thereby reduced to the selection of commodities. “Personal worth” is defined in terms of the degree to which one has transformed oneself into what s/he has bought and consumed. “Virtue” is defined by the ability to make a clever purchase, whether that be an intimate deodorant spray or, apparently, elective public office.

The meaning of individuality is today so completely bound to the reduction of the world to what can be bought and sold, and to the subsequent market in commodities, that the substantiality of the individual is inseparable from that of commodities in general. It is distinguishable from other commodities only by its ability to purchase and consume commodities itself in an apparently voluntary way. We could describe it as an empty shell or an empty bag of skin that acquires a determinate being only by being filled with the fascinating purchases it consumes.

Perhaps those who have the power of individual imagination in market society, and denigrate the fact and force of determination, have chosen to sell...

themselves to those who wield power, seeking some sense of fulfillment in being possessed and consumed by those judged to have superior purchasing power.
Parliamentary Democracy in Crisis: Thoughts on the Origins of Its Pathogenesis and the Attempt at a Normative Re-Conceptualization of It

CHRISTOS GRIGORIOU

The economic crisis that rages both in Greece and in south Europe has brought forward a considerable crisis of political representation. Democracy and its political personnel seem today to be bitterly, and I might add inauspiciously, depreciated, with the political ascension of militant antidemocratic parties and practices being only the most conspicuous testimony of this crisis. I am not willing, of course, to trace the political, historical or sociological roots of this development, I will just attempt to place it in the context of modern practical philosophy, suggesting that some of the pitfalls into which democracy has fallen can be related to a certain conceptualisation of democracy. I will then try to depict some possible ways out of this paradigm and present some attempts towards a richer appreciation of democracy.

To sketch the plan of this article, I propose, at first, to present the Economic Theory of Democracy of Downs. It is a well-articulated and quite fertile example of an economic conceptualization of democracy, which, I think, is to be blamed for many of the pathologies of our political system. Then, I will consider two of the most eminent attempts towards a normative reformulation of the concept of democracy. I will focus initially on the Theory of Justice of Rawls and then on Between Facts and Norms by Habermas. For both of them, democracy is not just a procedure, but the right form of government, intimately connected to what morality would also point out as right.

I realize that, at first, the project outlined above runs the risk of taking a manichaeistic form, with Downs playing the role of the evil and Rawls with Habermas that of the good. So, I hasten to observe that the choice to present the work of these three thinkers suggests not only differences but also elective affinities that allow a coherent and a more or less continuous narration to

1 The “enraged” of the Spanish and Greek squares also questioned directly the legitimacy of the political system, attacking bitterly the symbols of Democracy, while, long before, the high levels of abstention from elections and the augmenting political indifference was a clear warning bell for the crisis we are referring to.

2 See J. Habermas, Between Facts and Norms, trans. W. Rehg (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1996). The title of the original is Faktizität und Geltung. A brief but comprehensive presentation of this work is found in K. Kavoulakos, “Rule of Law and Democracy in Habermas,” Axiologika, 13 (2000), 70-103. Parousis’s work [M. Parousis, Deliberative Democracy and Communicative Ethics (Athens: Indiktos, 2005)] treats a subject relevant to mine and probably on broader terms as far as it concerns the work of Rawls and Habermas. Parousis traces some of the pathologies of representative democracy such as in the transformation of citizens to voters, the autonomization of administration, the sharpening of social inequalities and the formation of the so called two-thirds society, and, last but not least, the professionalization of politicians.
show up; a kind of fertile debate and evolution of ideas. Besides, in the end, I will conclude this article with some critical remarks on Rawls and Habermas, as I do not find their conceptualization of democracy sufficiently satisfactory in the face of the present crisis.

Politics as a Market

From the outset, the title of Downs's work on which I focus (Economic Theory of Democracy) speaks volumes about his methodological premises and analytic tools. Downs's purpose is to build a theory of government following the workings of market and thus to portrait homo politicus in the image of homo economicus. As far as the concept of democracy is concerned, what must be stressed from the beginning is that the term is used in a descriptive and not a normative way. The whole democratic structure provides, thus, the selection of government through elections conducted at stated periods, the right of one vote for each citizen and the party competition for the ascension to power, are all taken as facts rather than as values, as the given environment in which political parties and citizens interact.

Here, then, we have the two poles of the theory with which we are interested: citizens on the one hand and parties on the other, which, let it be noted, are also understood as coalitions of individuals. Government, in this context, is nothing more than another party, which happens to be in power. As in the case of markets, what weaves a complex political network are relations of exchange and competition. Citizens exchange their votes for party programs and anticipated profits from them (what Downs calls “utility income”), while government and opposing parties compete for political support and power. We have, in this way, politics transformed into a market, a field dominated by rational individuals seeking to maximize profits. Rationality is here understood strictly in a typical sense, in terms of selecting right means for given ends, in terms of classifying and weighing of alternatives.

This reduction of political relations to economical by the acknowledgement of exclusively individual goals, boasts of transforming politics into a positive, predictable science with no “metaphysical,” that is normative, blemishes. It builds a theory that does not attempt to prescribe any common good or to describe a collectively binding concept of prosperity. Downs is downright concerning the fact that his theory can tells us nothing about what government should or should not do. Collective goals are achieved and political virtues displayed only as a second level attendant of a kind of political egoism. Since parties want to obtain the vote of rational voters, their behavior must be predictable, and thus their declarations and acts must correspond. Parties are thus forced into honesty; they are obliged to honor their promises.

3 Quite interesting is the fact that there exist empirical studies that refute the basic premises of Downs’s theory, the premises that regards the self interested motivation of individuals and parties. For an elaborate refutation of the economic models of citizenship see T. Christiano, The Rule of the Many (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996), 131-164.
The Mandevilian hive seems to become seasonable once more and the epigram “private vices, public virtues” to acquire new force.

If typical rationality is the one pillar of Downs’s system, doubtless, the other is the principle of uncertainty. Downsian rationality operates, and thus acquires its special character, in an environment of uncertainty, constitutive for modernity, that regards both voters and political parties. Uncertainty refers to the lack of positive knowledge about the past, present or future and is intimately connected with the complexity of modern societies, the extended division of labor that characterizes them, and the consequent, unavoidable inequalities of income, position and influence. It is this concept that gives politics its special character, in Downs’s theory. Voters cannot always know what government does or is intending to do, and even less how its policies are going to affect their income. They are also uncertain as to how their votes are going to affect the result of the elections or how the others are going to vote. Parties, on the other hand, are unsure as to how their measures are going to affect the income of citizens, how the economic environment is going to react to them or what the opposition will do, etc.

Uncertainty points at voters ready to be guided and, accordingly, at those who are eager to influence them and profit from their uncertainty. Government and opposition hire experts to listen to public opinion and will and propagators to manipulate it, while, on the other hand, groups of interests, more certain as to which governmental action would promote their interests, are eager to show themselves as representatives of this will, and thus promote their special interests.  

Because, given the uncertainty of both voters and government, it is rational for the last to promote the interests of those who are more positive as to what they want. The conclusion to which Downs comes is quite impressing: rationality, in conditions of uncertainty, forces governments to consider some voters, those who are certain of their interests and preferences, and thus eager to influence others, as more important than those who are more indecisive or are unable to exert such influence. The ideal of equality of influence, to which the institution of universal vote aspired, is, in fact, grossly subverted.

Closely related to the concept of uncertainty is that of information. Downs’s analysis of the role of information in modern societies deepens his analysis about uncertainty and rationality, and validates his conclusions about real political inequalities. In fact, what constitutes these inequalities unavoidable is the fundamental inequality in the diffusion of information in society. Information is the only cure for uncertainty: the means through which a citizen can diminish uncertainty, make rational choices and influence politics in the direction of his interests. But this information has a cost— even if that is the cost of time needed for its acquisition and elaboration— and, as a result, the amount of information one can acquire is closely related to his place in the division of labor (and so does his capacity to take advantage of this information and cultivate it). A lawyer, for example, does come across, as part of

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4 In this game of persuasion participate also those that Downs calls “favor buyers,” those that offer money or favorable propaganda to the government in exchange for its favor.
his every day routine, a wide, larger amount of politically relevant information than a farmer, and he does have the capacity to take advantage of it easier. In this context, the one regarding information and the cost of acquiring it, Downs observes that, for some people, abstention from the elections may be the most rational choice—if the cost of voting is higher than the expected benefits.

Towards a Democratic Principle of Equality

In contrast to the above sketched theory, moving in an individualistic direction, Rawls’s theory of democracy is a holistic one; it forms part of an overall theory of justice which seeks to establish a standard for a just distribution of rights and duties in the context of society (including a just distribution of the benefits and burdens of social life). In this context, the concept of democracy is reformulated in normative terms. Rawls’s theory does not aspire to depicting the hidden rationale of a working system, as Downs’s theory does, but to setting an ideal applicable in modern societies.

Getting right to the core of Rawls’s Theory, the two principles of justice he sets forth are the principle of liberty and that of equality. The first principle refers to a set of basic liberties (political ones, liberty of conscience, freedom of speech and assembly, liberty of conscience and freedom of thought, freedom of the person, the right to hold personal property and freedom from arbitrary arrest and seizure) which must be acknowledged by everybody and which are to be extended as far as their mutual compatibility allows. While this first principle holds an indisputable priority over the second—Rawls introduces what he calls lexicographical priority—it is the second principle, and especially the principle Rawls calls the “principle of difference,” that forms his major contribution to the theory of justice and democracy.

Rawls finds his way to the principle of difference after discussing what he calls the “system of natural liberty” and “liberal liberty.” For the partisanship of natural liberty, every disposition of wealth and income is legitimate, and just as far as every legal obstacle in the pursuing of social position has been raised and a typical equality is scrupulously observed. The motto, as it is well known, goes: “careers open to everybody.” The liberal conception of the principle of equality goes a step further. What is, under these terms, demanded is a fair equality of chances, where fairness refers to the mitigation, through state and legal intervention, of the effect that class differences have on the prosperity of each individual. The idea is that those who have the same talents and willingness to use them must have the same prospects of success, irrespective of social contingencies. This, in practice, would mean the prevention of the excessive accumulation of property and wealth, and the maintaining of equal opportunities of education for all.

Rawls’s intuition, which leads him to what he terms the democratic interpretation of the principle of equality, is that natural abilities are, from an ethical point of view, as arbitrary as social assets; natural abilities, besides, Rawls hastens to observe, are not as independent from social status as they may appear. The principle of democratic equality, thus, keeps the requirement of a
fair equality of chances and enhances it with the principle of difference, according to which “social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both to the greatest expected benefits of the least advantaged.”\textsuperscript{5} Thus, this conception of equality aims at blunting social and economic inequalities, without, however, introducing a levelling project. In Rawls’s conception, natural talents are to be considered as a common asset for the benefit of society. It is indeed quite interesting for our purposes that Rawls considers his principle of difference as embodying in concrete terms, in the terms of justice that is, the much neglected principle of fraternity.

What is of major importance is the emphasis Rawls places on the fact that these two principles are realized through political and legal institutions, forming part of a purely procedural justice, the criterion of justice existing within the rules that cement the system of institutions, and not in the actual result and distribution of shares. The redistributive project of Rawls does not aim at the satisfaction of known persons with given desires and needs, nor does it aspire at a targeted redistribution with certain results. Rawls does not limit himself to the formulation of the principles of justice; he also proceeds with the application of these principles in the institutions of a just society. I will confine myself to a brief reference to the chapter referring to political justice, where the concern for liberty intersects with that for the blunting of economic inequalities. In this context, the principle of liberty transforms itself into the principle of equal participation, which requires that “all citizens are to have an equal right to take part in and to determine the outcome of the constitutional process that establishes the laws with which they are to comply.”\textsuperscript{6} What I want to stress here is that, besides the typical provisions of a constitutional democracy, Rawls places a strong emphasis on the fact that inequalities in private means can, in substance, cancel equal political liberties, allowing the advantaged to steer public conversation, influence law making for their benefit and, thus, adulterate public will. For this reason, and in order to secure the fair value of equal political liberties, Rawls seeks for correctives. He thus favours a wide dispersion of wealth and property, the regular provision of governmental money for public discussions and the funding of parties from the state budget.

Rawls, however, makes it clear that political liberties, as his whole theory of justice, apply to institutions only, and are not meant to acquire any republican correlation, making political participation an ideal worth absorbing the whole energy of active individuals. In a well structured state, as Rawls puts it, only a small fraction of citizens is to devote its whole time to politics. The principle of ‘each person a vote’ is not a value in itself, as, often the interest of the least advantaged –it remains the standard of Rawls– would be best promoted by giving priority to the opinion of certain people. In any case, what

\textsuperscript{6} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 194.
seems, for Rawls, to be the major value of political liberties is the securing of the individual liberties.

The way Rawls founds his theory is involved in a quasi-tension to which we must attend. On the one hand, Rawls chooses to revive a contractual tradition with all its normative connotations, considering individuals not only as a priori free and equal, but also as moral agents; individuals, that is, that have a sense of justice and are ready to honor the fair terms of their agreement. On the other hand, in his “original position,” he incorporates elements from the rational choice theory—the ground on which Downs raised his theory. He thus describes individuals who are mutually indifferent (more elegantly put, individuals with limited altruism) as called to decide which principles would best satisfy their interests. In the words of Rawls, “they strive for as high an absolute score as possible. They do not wish a high or a low score for their opponents, nor do they seek to maximize or minimize the difference between their successes and those of others.” Rawls thus attempts the reconciliation of what he calls the rational and reasonable. It is an attempt to introduce normative aspects into a society conceived as unalterably pluralistic; a society that can no longer enforce collective goals on individuals and groups, but must respect their different individual or collective identity and integrity.

The device Rawls uses to effect this reconciliation, to get, in other words, normative conclusions from prudential judgements, is the prescription of limitations and conditions for the process of decision making. This is the role of Rawl’s famous “veil of ignorance,” a veil that is meant to exclude any partiality of the individuals in their own favour, in favour of the persons they represent or even in favour of their generation. Not only are people considered as equals from an ethical and political point of view, they are, in a way, stripped of every identifying trait, referring neither to their social status nor to any physical and mental abilities and traits; they are called to decide on the

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7 I am referring to the contractual founding of the theory and not to the method described as “reflective equilibrium.”
8 Rawls goes as far as to say that his theory of justice is part of a theory of rational choice. It is a statement that he later regrets [see J. Rawls, Political Liberalism (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), p. 53, n. 7], distinguishing strongly between rational, having to do with which is the selection and ordering of individual ends and the right adaptation of means to ends and reasonable, referring to a kind of moral sensibility that allows cooperation in the context of society. Rawls thinks rational and reasonable complementary and distinguishable. See also Justice as Fairness, where he argues that in the way he sets up his original position, rationality is subject to the reasonable which holds the absolute priority. See J. Rawls, Justice as Fairness (Cambridge Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2001), p. 82.
9 The persons in the original position value their interests in terms of primary goods relating to basic liberties, chances and income (those goods are in a way themselves means for promoting the special life plans of each individual).
11 The veil of ignorance is introduced along with some “typical constraints of the concept of right.” Thus the principles that people can choose must have general form, universal application and be publicly acknowledged as the Supreme Court for ordering the conflicting claims of moral persons.
principles of justice without knowing their rank and status in society, but also ignoring their intelligence, physical strength, their specific concepts of good or their specific psychological predisposition. 12 We have, thus, Rawls’s intuition about natural inequalities (as arbitrary) transferred into the natural position, and its limitations, in a way, forcing rationality to comply with justice.

The question with which Rawls’s invention of the original position reaches its climax is why rational individuals seeking their interests under a veil of ignorance would choose the above mentioned principles of justice, and especially the principle of difference. Rawls’s answer is summarized in the standard of maximin. The individuals, says Rawls, would not choose with a utilitarian standard, they would not choose those principles of justice that would maximize the average utility, because, not knowing their place in society, they would risk losing everything. In contrast, it would be more reasonable for them to choose those principles that maximize their share of social primary goods, in case they ended up with the minimum of them, in case they found themselves among the least advantaged in society. It is the standard of maximizing the minimum (maximin), choosing with the assumption that it is one’s worst enemy who will place one in society. This standard of distribution, the standard defined by the principle of difference, is also better from an equal distribution of the social original goods, because it would ameliorate the prospects of all.

From Representative to Deliberative Democracy

The way Rawls forms his original position has an awkward result; while the social contract device points to a kind of agreement between contracting parties, and thus someone would be tempted to picture it as an ideal democratic procedure, the description of Rawls’s original position and the introduction of the veil of ignorance make each member of that state interchangeable with any other and thus the principles of justice could just as well be deduced by one person:

“Therefore, we can view the agreement in the original position from the standpoint of one person selected at random. If anyone, after due reflection prefers a conception of justice to another, then they all do and a unanimous agreement can be reached.” 13

Habermas pointed critically at that monological character of Rawls’s theory and, instead, promulgated and founded an intersubjective, discursive ethical and political paradigm. 14

12 In the classical theories, the individuals of the natural state were psychosomatically complete.
13 Rawls, A Theory of Justice, p. 120.
The difference, however, between Habermas and Rawls is more like a "family dispute," it is a debate between people who move in the same direction and share the same deeper convictions. The radical difference is, of course, with the Hobbesian and, accordingly, the rational choice theory, which understands society as a conglomerate of independent individuals seeking their personal interests. This kind of action, called instrumental or strategic by Habermas, can only describe a part of human activity which relates to the structures of markets and administrations. Those are the fields that ensure the material reproduction of society and which, indeed, have known an unprecedented progress during modernity. But man is not solely an “economic animal” and society not just a sum of its individuals. In fact, the functional structures of bureaucracy and market (Habermas uses the term system) depend on a larger nexus of relations that ensure social integration and the symbolic reproduction of society. It is what he calls lifeworld (Lebenswelt), the ground on which morality, institutions and values grow. According to Habermas, this larger social horizon has also known an unprecedented rationalization during modernity. The end of traditional metaphysical and religious systems, Habermas believes, has freed a potential of rationality hidden in language, and has left us with no alternative but to found social coordination on rational deliberation. Thus, Habermas introduces the famous discursive principle, according to which: “only those norms are valid to which all affected people would agree as participants in rational discourses.”

Lifeworld is regulated and organized by communicative action, which, in contrast to strategic action that is oriented towards success, is oriented towards understanding. Not only are we not to take strategic action as comprising our whole activation, it is rather parasitic to communicative action, while the tendency of the system to colonize lifeworld is reproved as responsible for all modern social pathogenesis (lawlessness, corrosion of social bonds, alienation, moral decadency and social instability). In any case, communicative action is the field of autonomy and solidarity, while such an aforementioned system is characterized by heteronomy and self-regard.

The discursive moral principle seems to be modelled after an ideal democratic procedure, which, in the case of morality, is internalized. Democracy finds its actual flourishing when this (discursive) principle is externalized in institutions and gets to refer to law making: “the democratic principle states that only those statutes may claim legitimacy that can meet with the assent (Zustimmung) of all citizens in a discursive process of legislation, that in turn has been legally constituted.” In the context of this democratic principle, we see individual and political autonomy founding one another. Political rights legitimize the legislation and enforcement of the law, but also presuppose the concept of a legal subject equipped with actionable subjective liberties. Indi-

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15 The phrase comes from Habermas himself and the above mentioned article. See, Ibid., p. 110.
16 Habermas, Between Facts and Norms, p. 107.
17 Ibid., p. 110.
individuals, in this way, see themselves not only as addressees of law, but also as authors of it.

Habermas’s politics and theory of law is articulated on a scale of three levels, which seems not only to deepen but also to broaden the claims of a normative deliberation. He acknowledges the need for a standard democratic procedure which guarantees the basic liberties (the existence of competing parties, periodic elections with universal suffrage, etc.), he stresses the need to enhance institutional deliberative processes (mostly parliamentary processes) with what he calls “a reasonable quality,” that is a high level of discourse, assuring reasonable results, and finally takes a step further, by setting next to the institutional forms of deliberation and formation of public will a broad informal public sphere.

The concept of the public sphere, the locus of public opinion, forms a central preoccupation of Habermas’s thought from the very first of his writings. Its basis is civil society, a general public, which creates its social space through an unbiased communication between equals. The public sphere is an unofficial, unorganized and open communicative structure – belonging thus to lifeworld –, which serves as a sensitive antenna that perceives new problems and perspectives. Habermas writes,

“Here, new problem situations can be perceived more sensitively, discourses aimed at achieving self-understanding can be conducted more widely and expressively, collective identities and need interpretations can be articulated with fewer compulsions than is the case in procedurally regulated public spheres.”

What this emergence of a general public to the political arena seems to be is the responding of democracy to an extended, extremely complex and pluralistic society, composed of people with different identities, world views and needs. Habermas understands this process as a way of reviving the concept of solidarity, which now is reinterpreted as solidarity between strangers “who concede one another the right to remain strangers.”

Habermas sketches a “two-track” deliberative politics, where the official level of parliament, ministries and parties must take care to have an open ear to the information coming from civil society. On the other hand, however, civil society must never aspire to exert the role of the lawgiver or the politician, as its role is not to implement laws or make decisions; its sphere of action is limited and, to the agents of civil society, is acknowledged as the right to exert influence, but not to exercise political power. Habermas does not wish to see the unofficial sphere of politics replacing the official sphere under the ideal of a self-organization of society from below. Law making and political decisions must acquire their legitimacy through the institutionalized democratic procedures. A comment here: the character of public opinion to which Habermas aspires is crucial. By this term, Habermas does not wish to denote

19 Habermas, Between Facts and Norms, p. 308.
just the sum total of private opinions. Public opinion seems to transcend private opinion, as Rousseau’s general will transcends particular wills. However, Habermas, as Rawls before him, does not wish to appeal to a content, to a common good, transcending private interests, but to a certain procedure; here, the ideal is described in terms of an ideal communicative action where the most convincing argument prevails. Thus, Habermas refers to a qualitative public opinion that scrutinizes different proposals, information and reasons. That public opinion is, according to Habermas, entitled to claim a legitimate influence upon the political system.

**A Critical Synopsis**

To sum up, Downs in my article represents an individualistic paradigm of theorization on democracy, which consciously aims at rejecting any normative understanding of democracy and, of course, any appeal to a common good, stressing the complexity of modern societies and making uncertainty the fundamental and crucial characteristic of it. In this context, he depicts a politics of dissimulation, rather, in which it is the analysts and manipulators of public opinion who rule, while government is capable of supporting itself only in so far as it can flatter and bribe a majority of voters. Thus, the Downsian paradigm vindicates, I think, the two major enemies of democracy: passivity on the one hand and demagoguery on the other. As a result, it undermines social coherence and corrupts both the political personnel and citizens. It makes democracy a procedure convenient for the smooth operation of the market economy, but completely inappropriate when it is mostly needed, in times of crisis.

Rawls’s and Habermas’s work, on the other hand, is here presented as an attempt to reinvigorate a normative understanding of democracy. This, however, is done without losing from sight the peculiar character of modern pluralistic societies and the challenges it poses for democracy. With this environment in view, both writers ground their philosophical schemes on what may be termed “procedural reason,” a reason that can only prescribe processes for determining the validity of beliefs and action norms and not particular contents, tangible goals for society. They can, thus, answer the challenges posed by the individualistic paradigms and articulate holistic programs for modern societies, without returning to what seems to them as outdated, old metaphysics of society or the individual.²⁰

Rawls and Habermas, in this article, are posited as accomplishing, in a way, a complementary work, each focusing on one of the two major pillars of every normative conceptualization of democracy: equality and rational deliberation. On the one hand, Rawls’s theory is highlighted for its emphasis on equality on both the economic and the political levels. We referred to the link-

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ing of democracy with a redistributive program that blunts socioeconomic inequalities and also to the relevance of these socioeconomic inequalities with what Rawls calls the fair value of the principle of participation. Habermas’s work, on the other hand, brings forward the potential towards deliberation, understanding and consent that binds individuals in society and renews the concept of popular sovereignty, relating it to the workings of the public sphere. With his work, Habermas in a way which has special importance for democracy, accomplishes an important transition from an individualistic paradigm, or if you wish a monological one, to an intersubjective or a deliberative one, weaving a close interrelation between private and political autonomy.

It must here be remarked that the present article does not do justice to Rawls’s or Habermas’s full work, or even to the totality of their contribution to the theorization concerning democracy. I consciously neglected the so called political turn of Rawls and his Political Liberalism (where from his concepts of “public reason” and “overlapping consensus” present extreme interest for our subject), as well as the famous exchange of opinions between himself and Habermas. As for Habermas, I do not consider his thoughts concerning the crisis of Europe and his plea for a Constitution of Europe. A complete appreciation of the practical philosophy of the two thinkers would, of course, have to take these works into consideration, too, but such a task would exceed by far the limits prescribed to this article.

Before closing this article, some critical comments on Rawls and Habermas are, I think, necessary, as both writers leave us, in the end, with a sense of a rather poor conception of citizenship. Citizens, in fact, are left with a small share in the government of their societies. In the case of Rawls, they are treated, once more, merely as voters, and even in the context of Habermas’s civil society, they can only influence politics, but not formulate it. They are, in neither case, able to envision, suggest or promote collective aims. Downs’s homo economicus seems to have been replaced by an equally abstract homo juridicus, who stands as in awe before the intricate legal system, as homo economicus does before the complexity of markets; a man understood as a legal subject and scarcely as a politically active persona, actuated by a true democratic spirit. This would be the desideratum of a democratic education, and nothing is becoming more obvious, in our distempered times, than the lack of

21 This was the subject of Habermas’s presentation in the World Congress of Philosophy held in Greece in 2013. For this preoccupation of Habermas, see Crisis of the European Union (Cambridge, Mass.: Polity Press, 2012).

22 For an attempt towards a richer account of a normative appreciation of citizenship, see T. Christiano, The Rule of the Many. Christiano, after having refuted the economic theories of democracy, elaborates what he calls the choice of aim model of citizenship which he couples with a conception of deliberation as a necessary prerequisite for such choice. Doppelt’s critique of Rawls, from the perspective of a Marxist humanism, is also quite interesting in this context as it imputes Rawls conception of agency of being quite partial. It treats individuals as consumers rather than as democratic subjects able to control the goals set by production or the conditions under which they participate in the labour process. See G. Doppelt, “Rawls’s System of Justice: A critique from the Left,” Nous, 15 (1981), 259-307.
such an education and such a spirit. In fact, the eminent proceduralism of Rawls’s and Habermas’s theories may help to broaden the dominion of democracy, answering the needs of multiculturalist, pluralistic societies, at the cost, however, of making democracy a lifeless procedure, unable to engage the devotion of citizens. I am thinking of whether it would be wise to start thinking of democracy again as a value in itself, and not merely as a set of institutions and processes, as a good necessary for human happiness and prosperity in modern societies, and this, of course, without sacrificing the valuable achievements of legal civilization.

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25 The attempt to systematize the basic democratic values, with reference to the First Democracy made by P. Woodruff in First Democracy: The Challenge of an Ancient Idea (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), could provide some ideas as to the content of this value. Woodruff defines democracy in relation to seven ideas which he traces in ancient Athens: liberty from tyranny, concord, the principle of legality, natural equality, wisdom of the citizens, deliberation without special knowledge, general education. Of major interest is also what Woodruff calls the idols of democracy; what democracy is not. In Woodruff’s view, these idols are of three kinds: voting, the principle of majority, the principle of representation.
PART VII

Art and Crisis, Art in Crisis
At the turn of the twentieth century the environment in Vienna was crucial in defining Modernism in more than one domain: philosophy, psychoanalysis, poetry, painting, architecture, design, and music. Common to all manifestations of Viennese Modernism has been some kind of linguistic turn, involving the thematization of language and the questioning of its limits. However, one should distinguish between First and Second Viennese Modernism. Hofmannstahl, Altenberg, Schnitzler et al. represent the former; Kraus, Bahr, Trakl, Wittgenstein, Schoenberg, Webern et al., the latter. Typical of the Second Viennese Modernism was a radical critique of language in philosophy and the arts, with solipsism as the arch-danger. Schoenberg’s path typically went, first, through a First-Modernism phase. Then, for more than a decade (roughly from 1908 to 1921), he lived through a serious personal, spiritual and creative crisis. His philosophy of music after 1923 (after all about Schoenberg’s theosophical and Schopenhauerian strains of thought are said), the one revolving around the central notion of the “musical idea,” shows more parallels to the so-called Semantic tradition of Schlick and Frege than to Wittgenstein, with whom usually he is, rather impressionistically, paired. De-
spite Schoenberg’s lifelong attempts to define this central notion of “musikalischer Gedanke,” this much should be, nevertheless, clear: for Schoenberg, the laws of musical thought are but the laws of thought simpliciter; thoughts inhabit a Platonic (sc. Swedenborgian) heaven; they are imperishable and independent from the fact that somebody thinks them; they relate to musical works as a whole; they are objective, like Fregean thoughts (i.e. they are non-real but objective, which makes them comprehensible by all rational beings). At the same time, all things related to historical and/or subjective constraints concern a distinct level, that of the presentation of ideas; this is what Schoenberg called “Stil,” the notion paired to “Gedanke.” The goal of understanding—and making one understand—music connected Schoenberg to his audience, his pupils, and the great composers of the past, fending off the (typically for Second Viennese Modernism) perceived threat of solipsism.

Schoenberg’s Conception of the History of Music

In 1930, Schoenberg gave a lecture in Prague under the title “Neue Musik, veraltete Musik, Stil und Gedanke.”8 One can also find the distinction between “Stil” and “Gedanke”9 in 1950, in the title of his famous collection *Style and Idea.*10 What he meant by “style” is more straightforward than “idea”: The concrete mode of presentation (or “Darstellung,” as he calls it elsewhere)11 emerges in a natural, non-intentional way; it is something like a composer’s “fingerprint,” conditioned by her age, her spatio-temporal limitations or, as Schoenberg put it, her “Lebensform”; hence a typical temporal paradox, in Schoenberg’s own words: “At least, [Bach’s music] was not out-

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7 Cf. A. Schönberg, *Stile herrschen, Gedanken siegen: Ausgewählte Schriften*, hrsg. von A.M. Morazzoni (Mainz: Schott, 2007), p. 208: “[...] consider the totality of a piece as the idea: the idea which its creator wants to present” (original emphasis). This, of course, creates serious mereological problems, which I cannot discuss here. (I will keep throughout the German form of his name [Schönberg] only when referring to bibliography in German.)


9 “Gedanke” can be translated in English as both “thought” or “idea.”

10 The earliest use of the distinction, if I am right, is in a manuscript note dated 5 September 1923: “Stile herrschen, Gedanken siegen,” in *Stile herrschen, Gedanken siegen*, p. 12.


12 The temptation is here too to think of Wittgenstein and his “Lebensformen”; it is only that the term gained in popularity and was identified with Wittgenstein after the publication of the *Philosophical Investigations*, in 1953. Before that, the term has a long history in German philosophical writing: the Grimms mention the word in 1834, and famous users include Nietzsche, Spengler, Eisler (the philosopher, father of the composer), and especially theorists in the tradition of the ‘verstehende Psychologie’ originating in the work of Dilthey, like Eduard Spranger, author of the best-selling *Lebensformen* (1914).
moded forever, as history shows; today, their New Music [=the musique galante] is outmoded while Bach’s has become eternal.\textsuperscript{13}

Now, where did this clear distinction between style and idea come from? Though it is difficult to say, this bears certain similarities to the Fregean distinction between meaning (\textit{Sinn}) and reference (\textit{Bedeutung}), whereby the same reference could have various meanings or modes of presentation; furthermore, a thought (\textit{Gedanke}) might remain the same against many different concrete utterances or sentences. Of course, in music, there can be no distinction between (musical) language and external reality—a route to which is defined by reference/Bedeutung. Instead, a musical thought should be taken as the ideal musical content, of which that which is actually heard, i.e. the specific mode of presentation (for Schoenberg: the style), is but its earthly mirroring, as it were.

\textit{The “Gedanke”}

The most important term in Schoenberg’s talk about music is by far the “Gedanke.” As Neff and Carpenter\textsuperscript{14} showed, although Schoenberg was preoccupied with this notion as far back as 1906, it was only in 1923, parallel to the invention of the twelve-tone system, that he began expressing himself in writing on it. In a manuscript note from 1931, one can read: “Musical thought underlies the \textit{laws and conditions valid for all other of our thought}; in addition it has to take into account the conditions resulting from the [musical] material.”\textsuperscript{15}

Let me linger for a while on Schoenberg’s treatment of the laws of musical thought \textit{qua} laws of thought \textit{simpliciter}. This is a bold step, considering the dominant tradition in the German-speaking world, namely Kant’s dissociation of music from all but sensory aspects due to its lack of words, and, ironically, for this very reason, Schopenhauer’s exceptional positioning of music as—what could be described as—the seat of \textit{intentional} content (\textit{locus classicus}: “[music is] the inner nature of the will itself.”\textsuperscript{16} Schoenberg’s move consisted, first, in bringing music onto a par with thought in a general sense; this was a price he was willing to pay so that he could treat music—or this, I think, was the hope—as on a par with laws governing \textit{conceptual} content (in Schoenberg’s original parlance these laws were “Faßlichkeit” and “Zusammenhang”). Time and again, Schoenberg’s prose gives the impression that the

\textsuperscript{13} Schönberg, \textit{Stile herrschen, Gedanken siegen}, p. 205.


\textsuperscript{15} “Das musikalische Denken unterliegt den \textit{Gesetzen und Bedingungen unseres sonstigen Denkens} und hat hiebei noch die aus dem Material ergebenen Bedingungen zu berücksichtigen” (A. Schoenberg, \textit{The Musical Idea and the Logic, Technique and Art of Its Presentation}, p. 303; Schoenberg’s emphasis, my translation).

conception of musical language and thought which he developed over the years also went as close to *propositional* content as possible. In a 1948 text under the title “Connections of Musical Ideas,” he refers to musical “connectives” that allow for the “fluency” of musical ideas. He thus distinguishes musical ideas from connective musical parts, similarly to a theory of Grammar. (Already, medieval term-logicians had distinguished categorematic from syncategorematic words, roughly the “logical constants” of modern logic). Musical discourse, Schoenberg seems to be saying, is held together by something like an *inferential* structure (Schoenberg’s term is “fluency”) – which brings it even closer to language.

Back to the “Stil/Gedanke” distinction: remember that, as far as sentences, written or spoken, are concerned, the reason that Frege distinguished *sense* or *thought* (Sinn) from *meaning* (Bedeutung) was to account for the possibility of co-referential expressions having the same content, i.e. expressing the same thought; in music, where reference is unthinkable (or highly improbable), Schoenberg’s mode of presentation is not just an aspect of the one (the right) side of the thought vs. reference distinction, but a new distinction altogether: mode of presentation (=“Stil”) vs. thought (=“Gedanke”).

**Objectivity of the (Musical) Idea**

One cannot stress enough the importance invested by Frege and Schoenberg in bulwarking the objective quality of (musical) thought against psychologism (Frege), or the subjectivity of aesthetic judgments (Schoenberg). Let me start with Frege. What exactly did he find so annoying in psychologism? The fact that psychologism –in the form of post-Diltheyan contemporary philosophical psychology– identified the Subjective with the Non-Real, and the Real with the Objective. Thus, the mere allocation of thought to the Subjective *ipso facto* undermined that thought’s claim to validity. Frege’s answer was to distinguish between, on the one side, subjective-and-private representations (*Vorstellungen*), of which the material was provided by the senses; on the oth-

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17 “Musical ideas are such combinations of tones, rhythms, and harmonies, which require a treatment like the main theses of a philosophical or [space left for another word] subject. It poses a question, sets up a problem, which in the course of the piece has to be answered, resolved, carried through. It has to be carried through many contradictory situations, it has to be developed by drawing consequences from what it postulates, it has to be checked in many cases and all this might lead to a conclusion, a *pronunciamento.*” *Style and Idea: Selected Writings of Arnold Schoenberg*, ed. L. Stein (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), pp. 287-288.

18 Cf.: “... one would, accordingly, best proceed along the line of *grammatical principles*” (*Ibid.*, p. 287).


er, thoughts (Gedanken), which belonged to what Frege called “the third realm” of all things, being at the same time objective but not real in the common sense.  

21 “Objective” is explained by Frege as “something that is exactly the same for all rational beings, for all who are capable of grasping it [fassen].”

Thoughts are independent from the act of thinking. Thoughts that have not been thought yet could be thought in the future. Their objectivity is the condition of the possibility of inter-subjectivity. Thoughts are not private. Quite on the contrary, their being objective makes them accessible to all rational beings.

The analogy with Schoenberg is striking: he felt the same pressing need to secure the objectivity of musical thought against any version of subjectivism. The two subaltern notions to the musical idea, i.e. coherence (“Zusammenhang”) and comprehensibility (“Faßlichkeit”) are not related to some subjective ability of the listener; they acquire their legitimization from the objectivity of the musical idea. The accessibility of objective musical ideas regards both the listener and the composer (i.e., virtually every rational being). The objectivity, and, hence, the accessibility of musical ideas wards off the danger of solipsism, and allows for musical communication in all directions, namely between Schoenberg and his pupils, between Schoenberg and his (ideal) public, and, last but not least, between Schoenberg and his ideal interlocutors in music history, i.e. great composers like Bach or Beethoven.

More on Schoenberg’s Conception of the History of Music

The following could be a summary reconstruction of Schoenberg’s conception of the history of music, based on his 1930 lecture: hoi polloi confuse causes with effects; the cri de guerre “Neue Musik” is based on the pseudo-scientific belief of the “pseudo-Historiker” and their credulous bystanders, that this battle-cry is enough to usher in a new period in the history of music; to take an important historical example, the Classic period was preceded by what was then the New Music (i.e. musique galante); the followers of the fashionable New Music then considered J.S. Bach’s music as outdated (veraltet); in this, they failed to understand the real causes of musical change, the ones leading to the “evolving variation” (Schoenberg’s key-notion in his description of the Classical style); similarly, the “pseudo-Historiker” of today fail to understand the real causes that make twelve-tone music unavoidable,


23 The “pseudo-Historiker” are the villains in the Schoenberian conception of the history of music. They play a role similar to that of the “Journalisten” in Kraus’s world.
but by no means subversive or disruptive, in relationship to older music; what they finally fail to understand is that any important music is New Music, whereby “New” refers mainly to Ideas, as opposed to Style.

In other words, what the “pseudo-Historiker” fail to understand is the deeper continuity in music-historical time beyond apparent discontinuities, whereby the gluing element is provided by the atemporal quality of musical ideas (the most often cited phrase from this Schoenberg text reads: “An idea can never perish” (Schoenberg’s emphasis).24 The objective nature of the musical ideas guarantees their accessibility, as well as their immunity from the flux of historical time. Schoenbergian musical ideas “never perish” (vergehen) and they seem to belong to the same “third realm” as Fregean thoughts do. What does change is the outer form, the historical-time bounded style.

Seamless Transitions

In a 1950 interview,25 Schoenberg says, elaborating on the “dissonance problem” (English in the original):

“[B]eauty is only a secondary evaluation. I think the main point is to understand what tones mean. Accordingly I would say that comprehensibility, the relation of tones with one another, is the deciding point. And may be that one calls this—or one is entitled to call this—beauty, if the relationship becomes very clear.”

The question he was answering regarded his opinion on changing tastes regarding musical intervals. After the part of his answer cited above, he went on to present a nutshell history of the gradual acceptance of intervals as consonances; in the beginning, “not even thirds were considered as consonances.” Exactly before the cited part, he makes the stunning declaration that “[he is] not very good in history of music”; then the even more stunning one: “I make up history, generally, myself, whether true or not. I try to find out how it could have been.” In other words, in what could literally count as a parodist reversal of a typical academic approach, Schoenberg-the-composer commences from his actual understanding and uses it as a foil in tracing back music history. In this, accessibility to the work of the great masters is guaranteed by the musical-idea interface, and this should provide him with all the confidence he needs. Instead of modifying his ideas to fit the ways of the past (this would

24 Cf. the last sentence in his text “Gesinnung oder Erkenntnis?,” in A. Schönberg, Stile herrschen, Gedanken siegen, p. 133: “Der Gedanke hat keine Zeit, darum kann er ruhig warten; aber die Sprache muß sich beeilen!” A repercussion of this conception for the history of music based on the centrality of the Musical Idea can be found in Webern’s lectures Der Weg zur neuen Musik (1960); also in both of his Greek pupils, as indicated in Nikos Skalkottas’s unpublished manuscript text “Collection of Ideas” [Perisylloge ideon]; and in Christos Perpessas’s notion of “res simplex” (a notion equivalent to the Musical Idea). See P. Vlagopoulos, “Harilaos Perpessas and the Quest for the Res Simplex: Notes on Arnold Schoenberg’s Doubting Disciple,” Μουσικός Λόγος Online (2013) (http://m-logos.gr/issues/i0000/a0006-vlagopoulos).

25 See Schönberg, Stile herrschen, Gedanken siegen.
count as relativism), he would rather modify the past to fit his grasping of musical ideas (in which the ideas of the great composers of the past are comprised). Because musical thought is, for him, time-transcendent, the objection of anachronism cannot be even raised.

By the way, does this make him an anti-realist about the past?26 I do not think so. Beyond the fact that, in this interview’s citations, a glimpse of Schoenberg-the-ironist might be visible—the target of his irony being the rather naïve American journalist who keeps addressing him as “Mr. Schoenberg”—, we should see his “history make-up” remarks as a kind of ironical comment on historical discourse, his perennial target being the “pseudo-Historiker” (now in the guise of this specific journalist!). The irony would relate, if I am right, to the observed asymmetry between their claim of scientific standard and their final poor understanding of what really matters in music history, i.e. the real causes of music-historical change, knowledge of which is available only to those who understand the music of the past, i.e. those who grasp the ideas in works of music.

Again, Schoenberg’s anti-psychologism; his equating of musical thought with thought simpliciter; his project of securing inter-subjective access to musical content across the contingencies of time and place; his placing of the musical idea in a kind of Platonic/Fregean Third Realm; all situate Schoenberg—even à son insu—in the long Semantic Tradition initiated by Bernhard Bolzano and soon thereafter brought to fruition by Gottlob Frege.

Crisis?

Let me add a concluding remark to Schoenberg’s conception of history with the help of the semantic models Reinhart Koselleck suggested were operating in the use of the word “crisis,”27 as well as a very useful comparison of Schoenberg’s to Marx’ project. Koselleck’s three models are: A. World history as a continuous crisis or history as a “Weltgericht,” B. Crisis as the bridge (or “Schwelle”) to every new era, and C. Crisis as a clearly futuristic notion, originating in theological-eschatological last crisis (=Last Judgment) discourse. Now, the problem with Marx, continues Koselleck, is that he has been operating with two crisis models, without ever being clear about the distinction: when he is explaining the way history moves through successive capitalist crises, then he was operating with model-two; when he is anticipating history’s unavoidable path leading to the victory of the proletariat and the coming of the classless society, he was operating with model-three. Something similar to that could be said about Schoenberg: on the one hand, his Stil-Gedanke distinction, the one favoring a conception of history moving through seamless transitions, rather than upheavals, point towards a model-one conception of

26 In other words, is it the case that he believed that past could change as time passes, because of the evidence about the past can change, as time passes, which is anyway, according to the anti-realist, the only defining criterion (i.e. the evidence) about what the past is?

music history, in such a way that, ultimately, the crisis aspect becomes secondary to the continuity aspect. On the other hand, the radical quality of his atonal and twelve-tone music, as well as its sheer difference to whatever preceded it, brings out the disrupting aspect that is suggested in the “tonality (final) crisis” catchphrase, and points towards a model-three conception. Perhaps the tension between these conflicting models could be eased—and eventually vanish—through meticulous listening, as well as participation of the audience: now this, i.e. the training of the audience to the difficulties in grasping new music (not only the one by Schoenberg), was obviously Schoenberg’s motive for the Verein für Privataufführungen project; this was also the anticipated result in everybody involved in the successful experiment of the ten open rehearsals of the Kammersinfonie, op. 9: at the end, people in the audience were excited because they felt they had understood the work in every detail. Nevertheless, it is worth remarking that Schoenberg himself, unlike Adorno, did not use the word “crisis.” Instead, he used to speak about “the emancipation of dissonance,” while his overall discourse was one emphasizing continuity and tradition, rather than disruption and novelty. One can also get a glimpse of this attitude in the respectful and, as it were, collegial tone in which Schoenberg’s imaginary dialogue with the great luminaries of music history was bathing: among them, the Classics, Bach, Brahms, Josquin (all named in the 1930 text). His understanding of innovations as turning out to be actually seamless transitions upon analysis (an analysis putting the musical-idea notion in its center) is, I think, what earned him the famous characterization by Willi Reich of a “conservative revolutionary.”

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28 The same tension could be also responsible for Schoenberg’s displacement toward neoclassicism in the years to follow his 1930 lecture.

Kazimir Malevich (1879-1935) in and under Crisis: The Return from the ‘Non-Objective World’ to the Figure during the Period between the World Wars

ILIANA ZARRA

The Suprematist Malevich and the “Leap to the Vacuum”

Kazimir Malevich, when launching the movement of Suprematism in 1915 (Fig. 1), was elevated as one of the dominant figures of geometrical abstraction of the first half of the twentieth century. It is a case of an anti-mimetic art, without common-place objects and earthly images, having as basic motifs geometric structures, painted in solid colour and suspended in a boundless non-structured illusion of space. As Suprematism was not merely an act of ‘pure painting,’ but the absolute expression of a new world,¹ his creator promised the possibility of a total transformation of the perception of the world through this new art, as expressed also through the manifestos of the era.

In 1918, Malevich closes the circle of the production of suprematist works with White on White (Fig. 2) and, until 1926, he has been elevated to being one of the leading figures of left-wing Russian art. It is an era when he abandons painting, and is dedicated to the teaching and writing of theoretical and philosophical works. From 1923 to 1926, he is the designated director of the Leningrad Institute of Artistic Culture (INKhUk), and, immediately afterwards in 1927, he travels to the West, in order to bring the public of the Europe in contact, not only with Russian non-objective painting, but with his theoretical thinking as well.

The Return to Representational Painting

Hence, up to this point, it becomes apparent that, in the late phase of his life and creation, he did not cease to be an ardent proponent of the philosophical and visual doctrine that he himself had introduced.² Still, utterly suddenly, safer upon his return from abroad, and after several years of abstention, Malevich also returns to painting. However, he does not return to his non-objective art, but to the topics which he had developed prior to reaching the ab-

² See more in I. Zarra, Episodes of Artistic Regression in the 20th Century: An Interpretative Attempt (Thessaloniki: Epikentro, 2011), pp. 193-273, where someone can also find the older literature.
stract Suprematism, and along with these he reinstates the figure. In particular, these are works superficially similar to the geometrical figures of the peasant in the rural landscapes of the pre-revolutionary period, for the creation of which he had borrowed the expressive modes from the traditional art of icon painting (Fig. 3) and from cubism. In fact, the works of the ‘second’ rural line, painted between 1928 and 1932, bear false datings (1909, 1910, 1913, and 1915), which date them back to his pre-Suprematist phase.

According to scholars, the abandonment of abstract art and the return to representational painting by Malevich constitute one of the least studied problems in the history of the avant-garde. Indeed, what is the reason why this ambitious creator abandons abstraction and yields to a previous imagery and art style? If, as it was made apparent, Malevich endeavoured to communicate his new visual system in which he identified art and life, would he really wish to remain in history through the works which brought him back, prior to the ‘leap to the vacuum’?

Nevertheless, some of the current figures do not, actually, bear any relation with those of the 1910’s. In these works, humanoids, isolated or in groups, whole-body or torsos, able-bodied or without members, are shown, for the most part, without features on the face (Fig. 4-5). With regards to the structure of the composition, there are dominant horizontal and vertical axes, resulting in up-right and rigid figures, absolutely vertical to the surface of the painting, erect, usually front-facing, precisely vis-à-vis the viewer. Lastly, another significant feature of the pre-War period is that the figures, now, are not in interaction with the strictly ‘regulated’ environment, which is often defined by successive colour zones or diagonal geometrically organized fields. They are not occupied with any activity; they do not bear any complementary object (Fig. 6). They merely stand frozen still and their oval faces have dismissed any human feature, with the consequence that no thought is exposed, no expression depicted, no mental state manifested. It is a totality of works that is problematic, which causes crisis in the very scholarly thought of art history, and usually, unfortunately, constitutes the object of tangential reference by those scholars. In which case, either the adversity of the access to the meaning of these compositions is recognised or, when they are interpretatively approached, the relevant appraisals of the experts are contradictory. Specifically, at times, the late physiognomies are described as ‘visionary creatures

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4 J. Golding, “Malevich and the Ascent into Ether,” in *Paths to the Absolute* (Princeton: Thames and Hudson, 2000), 47-80, p. 80. John Milner observes that is only recently attracted the attention it deserves (Milner, *op. cit.*, p. 198).
of another kind, and the canvasses at issue are appreciated as possessing an incisive and magnificent vigour and, at other times, in contrast, a great part of the specific production is described as ‘tentative’ and ‘awkward.’

In order to attempt a new interpretation, we have to take into account, firstly, the personality of the creator. As arises from his overall life and is pointed out by the international literature, a permanent and steady interest thereof was to stay in history in a flattering way, not hesitating, for this reason, to bias the mode of the reception of his work for the coming generations with the appropriate interventions. Secondly, in order to avoid a dry form-analytical interpretation, which, as was shown, has been contradictory, we have to integrate these works within their political context.

From the beginning of the 1920’s, with the constitution of a new artistic group, bearing the name Association of Artists of Revolutionary Russia (AKhRR) he will play a catalytic part for the re-emergence of representative realism. As a matter of fact, from the second half of the decade, this will be elevated to the dominant artistic constellation, having direct state support on its side. Its significance lies in that it set the tone, to a significant degree, for what eventually constituted the official doctrine, Socialist Realism. In its brief declaration from the summer of 1922, the group clarified its intention to represent ‘... the life of the Red Army, the workers, the peasants, the revolutionaries, and the heroes of labour...’ thus rendering the true image of the events and not abstract inventions which degrade the Revolution, before the international Proletariat. In 1924, a short while after Lenin’s death, political repression begins to be manifested in all facets of cultural activity, reaching the point at which, in the second part of the same decade, the avant-garde is interpreted as the principal enemy of Soviet totalitarianism. Ever since, the actions for the marginalization of avant-garde elements, such as the humiliations, the arrests and the exiles of the undesired creators, shaped an atmosphere in the art world which was poisoned by permanent controversies, scandals and denouncements.

For Malevich, in particular, during this period, the situation is becoming increasingly difficult, as he loses all of the public positions that he held. Gradually, he becomes subjected to a regime of fear and distress, which dominated the emotional atmosphere of art circles. While it is characteristic that the reception of his individual exhibition, which took place in Moscow at the

5 Milner, Ibid., p. 199.
9 Quoted in Wood, Ibid., p. 275.
10 Antaskina, op. cit, p. 580.
end of 1929 and presented his late rural series along with the early one, was nothing but positive, the critic of the exhibition will identify his art, as well as that of other left-wing avant-gardes, with the art of the pre-revolutionary bourgeoisie. A terribly ironic fact, if one recalls to mind that equally Malevich, in the first conception of his thematic, as also V. Kandinsky, in his own compositions, evaluating the art of icon painting much higher than academic painting, projected it as the symbol of the spiritual superiority of the Russian province, which precisely resisted the materialistic world view of bourgeois rationalism. Through this path, the two pioneers of abstraction also justified their orientation towards non-objective art, as the latter was unbound by terrestrial objects and, hence, capable of healing the ill soul of the materialism of the bourgeoisie.11 The continuation of the story for Malevich is known. Immediately following his individual exhibition, the Director of the Tretyakov Gallery, Fedor Kumpan, was sentenced to imprisonment for a long term, precisely on the grounds that he had exhibited these works,12 while Malevich is arrested and is detained in October and November of 1930 under the suspicion that he is a German spy. With regard to the experience of his imprisonment, what the artist confided to his colleague Pavel Filonov is enlightening: "... AKhRR wanted to completely destroy me. They said ‘Do away with Malevich and every kind of Formalism will die’."13

The sense of threat, therefore, which the painter is now experiencing concerns, not only his intellectual entity, but his physical integrity as well. It was then that his friends and comrades burnt many of his essays and manuscripts, out of fear that they may be used against him.14 Thus, Malevich’s ‘disengagement’ from abstract art was an issue that was exigent and crucial; in reality, it was an act of vital necessity. As characteristically described by Natalia Antaskina, ‘A record of past membership in one or more of the avant-garde grouping was dangerous, so to belonging to any political party except the Bolsheviks.’15 Ever since, and from 1933 up to and including his death, Malevich paints portraits of the members of his family and friendly persons, adopting a representative style, which alludes to the art of the North-European renaissance and dates them accurately (Fig. 7-8).

This is the political framework in which the change in the artistic as well as the theoretical orientation of Malevich is included. It is perhaps time to dive deeper into some of the works of his forged rural series. And, in order to do that, it is necessary to bend over the very works themselves. In the back part of the painting Complicated Premonition (Torso in a Yellow Shirt) (1913, Fig. 5), the painter has noted the following: ‘The elements of this composition are the sensation of emptiness, solitude, and exileness.’16 As a matter of fact,

12 Golding, op. cit., p. 80.
14 Ibid., p. 24.
16 Quoted in Douglas, “Malevich and De Chirico,” p. 287.
the work was characterized as a self-portrait. Herein is included a motif that is recurring also in other paintings and drawings of the same period. The red house with a black roof, without a door and window, is correlated to the experience of his incarceration in prison and the fixation of the painter on that experience. Whereas, in one of the numerous drawings depicting the same theme, Malevich wrote: ‘Man in prison. The feeling of a man in prison.’

To the same series belongs the Peasant Woman, painted at the beginning of 1930 (Fig. 9), also dated as of 1913. The peasant stands still with the hands empty at the sides and, as she turns her head to the right, there is revealed, instead of a face, a black shape alluding to a coffin. The image has been appraised as ‘a composition of metaphysical, almost mystical significance.’ For Malevich, the renunciation of the art of abstract Suprematism was equivalent to a sacrifice of the ego. Following the revolution, however, the logic of the self-surpassing was thwarted through the repression of the very same creative individuality. For this reason, I regard that the composition is, in reality, an almost macabre painting. As a matter of fact, such works, which directly refer to the mission of the Soviet state to repress the liberating force of individualized creativity, reflect Malevich’s disillusionment due to the failure of the Revolution to implement his Suprematist dreams.

This is confirmed by the fact that, only four days after Lenin’s death, on January 21, 1924, he writes in the draft of his ‘Book on Non-Objectivity.’ These are experimental proclamations reflecting his faith that the political transformation of Russia and the Suprematist perfection of art were aspects of the same superior transformation of the human species, which, alas, was not fulfilled. On the contrary, despite the dramatically revolutionary formulations in the area of art, the latter, returning to the old representational conventions, became again an object of manipulation by the forces of power. The latter pursued the preservation of their esteem by instilling respect for themselves into the masses, in order to perpetuate the social structures which guaranteed their longevity.

In any case, the new form-types alluding to the human figure, in all their versions, whether they are the humanoids of Malevich or the Bauhaus dolls of the 1920’s, appear, after a decade of violence and atrocity, as an aftermath of the purges of the Great War. In the history of the transformation of the human form, this innovative creation, drained from psychological autonomy, was characterized as post-humanistic and was elevated to a ‘metaphor, a symbol

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18 Ibid., p. 268.
21 Ibid., pp. 164, 172.
of human form...." In fact, the model of the specific subclass of the faceless forms refers to a specific type of children’s Ukrainian doll, which did not have features and hands and which Malevich knew well. On the one hand, according to Haine Maria Rilke, the doll, with her inexpressive look, offers a comforting presence, but, at the same time, it imposes, in a cruel way, an unexpected silence. For this reason, the doll is the first figure which imposes on the human creature the experience of estrangement.

On the other hand, the creation of the human body on the model of the form of this doll, due to its childish simplicity, combined a relieving and apparently living charm with a nerveless personality, insofar as the human element was absent. By standing between naturalness and artificiality, it was converted into a vessel of simultaneously emotional identification and estrangement, a fact which finally justifies the impregnable and ambiguous character of the said form-type, which rendered their aesthetic appraisal so difficult.

The Peasant (Fig. 6), thus, as he stands without individual features, is opposed to the physical integrity of the healthy body of the national propaganda and, despite that, it attains the anonymous uniformity, so necessary for the constitution of the collective subject – the healthy hero, the farmer – is made, alas, the metaphor of the entire rural world, which, during the Soviet phase, is converted into a group of people who do not see, do not listen, do not speak.

By embedding these creations in the intellectual climate of the Stalinist period, I would claim that the forms of Malevich find themselves very close to a history of the author of the absurd and an ardent supporter of the painter Daniil Kharms, published precisely in the same period (1927). In the said short story, the literary author, speaking on censorship, the contempt and the frustration of the avant-gardes’ ideals, essentially insinuates the distortion and the disappearance of people and things and, eventually, of the avant-garde itself. More analytically, this story is divided into five chapters and has as a protagonist ‘in a manner of speaking’ a red-haired man who is characterized by this circumlocution, as he was not able to talk because he did not have a mouth, nose, arms, legs, stomach, back, or any insides. He was a figure ‘in a manner of speaking,’ as, in reality, he has nothing. For this reason, in the fifth chapter, the author concluded: ‘So we’d better not talk about him any more.’

By taking into account the increasingly intensifying censorship in the year of the publication of the story, this prompt could have been perceived as a covered instruction. Consequently, the expression could mean that it is safer that

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24 Koss, op. cit., p. 734.
25 Ibid., p. 724.
no one should talk about the very avant-garde any more. A sad corroboration of the foregoing explication constitutes the end of Kharms, who is arrested and eventually executed, a consequence of the brutality of Stalinist censorship.27

Conclusion

Taking the above into consideration, I claim that Malevich’s mutilated humanoids were in a head-on collision with the principles of Socialist Realism, not only because they insinuated the image of the vigorous young and bright hero he promoted, but also, primarily, as, due to their special qualitative properties, on the one hand they encouraged the emotional response and, simultaneously, the absence of emotion.28 By extension, the humanoids of Malevich repelled their embodied viewing and the penetration of the viewer in their internal world, leaving the art work uncompleted. On the contrary, it is ironic that the identification sought after through its heroic themes by Socialist Realism, by aiming at the emotional absorption of the public, essentially adopted a passive model of bourgeois viewing. This found itself in total opposition to the critical approach and the active intellectual investigation generated by the problematic type-form of Malevich.

Such forms that introduced the ‘abstract human,’ 29 weakened the death of naturalism and its subsequent psychological emotions. In any case, the disentanglement of the humanoid from its natural environment also constitutes a form of abstraction, which, as it continued, had to be camouflaged with false data, such as their false dating. In conclusion, this series of works, signaling the moment just prior to the turn of Malevich to the art of Renaissance and, in combination, to the effort of deceiving the hostile horizon of reception through the false dating, do not merely express the dilemma or the oscillation of Malevich between the absolutist norm and abstraction. It is essentially a symptom of the crisis under which the artist is suppressed, due to his difficulty to preserve his creative autonomy.

27 Ibid., p. 188.
28 Koss, op. cit., p. 735.
29 Ibid., p. 729.
Fig. 1: Photograph showing a section of Malevich’s display of Suprematist paintings at The Last Futurist Exhibition of Paintings, 0-10 (Zero-Ten), Petrogrand, December 1915-January 1916 [rpt. detail from J. Milner, Kazimir Malevich and the Art of Geometry (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1996, Fig. 192)].

Fig. 2: K. Malevich, White on White, 1918, oil on canvas, 80.01X80.01 cm., Museum of Modern Art, New York.
Fig. 3: K. Malevich, *Head of a Peasant*, 1928-9, oil on plywood, 69x55 cm., Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.

Fig. 4: K. Malevich, *Peasant in a Field*, 1928-29, oil on plywood, 71,3X44,2 cm., State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.
Fig. 5: K. Malevich, *Complicated Premonition (Torso in a Yellow Shirt)*, c. 1932, oil on canvas, 99X79 cm., State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.

Fig. 6: K. Malevich, *Peasant*, 1930-32, oil on canvas, 120X100 cm., State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.
Fig. 7: K. Malevich, Self-Portrait ("Artist"), 1933, oil on canvas, 73×66 cm., State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.

Fig. 8: K. Malevich, Portrait of the Artist’s Wife, 1933, oil on canvas, 66×56 cm., State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.
Fig. 9: K. Malevich, *Peasant Woman*, 1913 (1930), oil on canvas, 98.5X80cm., State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.
Responding to Post-War Crisis in Germany: Survival and Memory in Joseph Beuys’s Actions

CONSTANTINOS V. PROIMOS

The only thing that art critics seem to agree about when they consider Joseph Beuys is the most elementary biographical details around the artist, namely his date of birth in Krefeld, Germany in 1921, and his death in Düsseldorf in 1986.

(Fig. 1, you see a photographic portrait of the artist at work and fig. 2, the artist in one of his actions, Titus/Iphigenie, Festival of Theater, Experimenta 3, Theater am Turm, Frankfurt 1969)

Then, some proclaim him as the most interesting post-war artist in Germany, while others as the greatest charlatan.

In any case, Beuys remains an emblematic figure for all the dilemmas and enigmas that accompany today’s reception of contemporary art, and of the neo-avant-garde in particular. The extreme variety of responses that Beuys’s work has produced and continues to generate is a sure sign that the import of his work has not yet been adequately exploited. However, this extreme variety of responses to Beuys’s work is, in part, also a function of his artwork that has uniquely intertwined with the artist’s persona, itinerary, life experience and biography.

This fact of the artist, his work and his personality being inextricably tied together, has created numerous confusions, riddles and debates, even court trials, whenever there has been an attempt to catalogue, let alone to exhibit Beuys’s works since the artist’s death. Being difficult to assemble or to exhibit, Beuys’s work was proved to be even more difficult to account for, critically.

Jean-Philippe Antoine remarks on a difficulty that affects the most varied audiences of the latter’s work. Thus, on the one hand, the general public is most often astounded to discover, in the most respectable museums, quotidian objects and detriments of everyday life, seeming to have been assembled together, without any particular care and being displayed as art.

On the other hand, the more specialized audience of art connoisseurs, curators, critics, artists, and others often gather in three fiercely opposed camps: one blinded by uncritical adulation, another, all too eager to ostracise, dismantle and banish anything having to do with Beuys, and a third, all too ready to condescendingly and complacently tame Beuys’s work into fitting, traditional, art historical canons.

Trying to be neither in the camp of Beuys’s advocates nor in that of his critics, I shall attempt to give a close reading of a few of Beuys’s works, in an effort to propose a rather partial and open-ended interpretation of them. Beuys’s work rarely lends itself to the coherent “whole” which is customarily

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2 With regard to these problems of Beuys’ reception and the general “brouhaha about legacies,” see D. Galloway, “Beuys and Warhol: Aftershocks,” Art in America, 76 (1988), 113-122.


defined as “artistic creation,” by being radically fragmented and resistant to integration into concrete art historical contexts and discussions, such as that of “originality,” with which Benjamin Buchloh takes issue. This is certainly one of the work’s major difficulties, as well as one of its greatest merits, namely, the extent to which it requires from its viewer a suspension of many certainties about art. Likewise, the critic or art historian engaging with Beuys’s work is obliged to adopt a point of view that also puts everything at stake and questions all known art historical premises, including the notion of art itself. Without pretending to propose any classification of Beuys’s work, I shall examine his first decade as a sculptor, around the 1960’s, a time when his interests and preoccupations took a definitive form that was quite crucial for the rest of his artistic career.

Most works by Beuys have had the form of installations or of performances ultimately serving the artist’s renowned “actions,” the term he preferred to use for his site-specific, “theatrical,” event-like or performance works. Being bound to the time and place of their inception or performance, these installations and actions are difficult to experience in retrospect. One can nevertheless get a glimpse of what they were like through the existing documentation about them.

Useless Objects

Among all of Beuys’s works, the assembled objects constitute his simplest installations and, as they are also the ones that have most obviously remained in the same state as they were meant to be, they occasion our present point of departure. Beuys never excluded regarding them as autonomous objects, even if many of them were relics of his actions. However, the fact that these objects were relics of his actions and were specifically employed to serve a time and space-specific event or performance, and were not therefore primarily “aesthetic objects” meant for mere display, plays an important role.

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6 See a number of important works whose first version is located in the sixties and later versions subsequently. It seems that according to Beuys’ biography, he reached his period of creative and personal maturity in the sixties. His concept of action was invented in 1962 with the Earth Piano. Around the 1960’s, Beuys overcame a psychological crisis, decided to become a sculptor, assumed a professorship of sculpture at the Düsseldorf Academy of Art, got briefly involved with the Fluxus movement and married Ewa Wurmbach. See H. Steichelhaus, Joseph Beuys, trans. D. Britt (New York: Abbeville Press Publishers, 1991), pp. 126, 187, 188.

7 Jean-Marc Poinsot pointed out to me that “remnants” of the actions would be a better term than “relics,” for the last carries a religious significance. After careful consideration of his remark, I still think that the term “relics” corresponds better to the significance that Beuys himself attached to these remnants, the leftovers of his rituals, to the fact that not only himself but also most of his collaborators treated these remnants with religious respect as if they were artworks, in the first place.
Such an object is the famous *Stuhl mit Fett, Chair with Fat*, which remained known under this name, since the time of its original inception in 1963 (fig. 5).

![Fig. 5, fig. 6](image)

A second version of the same work appeared as untitled in 1985, and was alternatively referred to as *Fettsuhl, Fatchair* (fig. 6).\(^8\) In the original work, one can see an ordinary kitchen chair, made of wood on which a triangular volume of fat (margarine) has been placed in such a way so as to cover the entire sitting surface. The triangular volume of fat composes what seems like a three-dimensional rectangle whose hypotenuse unites the end of the seating surface and the chair’s top handle. A wire made of steel is around the top chair handle, indicating perhaps that the object was originally meant to be hanging, possibly from a ceiling. In the more recent version of the work, less fat has been placed on the chair and without any particular care, but rather amorphously. Now it looks as if someone had sat on the chair because the volume of fat is compressed and its top is flattened. The wire is missing but now a new element, a medical thermometer has been inserted into the fat.\(^9\)

The object oscillates between an assemblage,\(^10\) a Duchampian readymade and sculpture, without being able to be convincingly contained in any of these art-historical categories. On the one hand, it is neither merely an assemblage, nor a readymade, as there is an elementary attempt to sculpt or form the mass of fat appended to the chair, more conspicuously in the first version of the work, less so in the second. On the other hand, it is not merely sculpture, as the most central element constituting the piece, namely, the kitchen chair, is a

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found object, left intact and the material manipulated (margarine) is unqualified for sculptural creation, at least by the traditional theory of sculpture.\[^{11}\]

Nonetheless, the most striking thing about *Chair with Fat* is not solely its defiance of such art-historical categories. It is also the fact that this work largely depends on a quotidian object, a kitchen chair, which is rendered almost unrecognizable and unfamiliar by the volume of fat placed on it. In fact, the fat obstructs what the chair supposedly serves: it obstructs sitting and therefore renders the chair not only practically unusable but also quite mysterious, as a material entity or synthesis. Actually, a number of Beuys’s objects follow the same “compositional” logic. For example, a piece from 1966, (fig. 7) with the title *Infiltration Homogen für Konzertflügel, Homogeneous Infiltration for Grand Piano*, has a grand piano totally covered with felt, in a way that its felt cover follows the forms and corners of the piano like a skin. On one side of the covered mute piano, two pieces of red fabric have been sewn on the felt to compose the sign of a red cross. A similar piece appeared in 1967 with the title *Infiltration Homogen für Cello, Homogeneous Infiltration for Cello*, substituting the piano with a cello this time (fig. 8).

(Fig. 7, fig. 8)

Observing this range of objects, as well as many others from around the same period of Beuys’s career (see, for example, *Untitled*, 1962, a knife cov-

\[^{11}\] Despite the fact that Beuys was the first to systematically find recourse to materials such as fat, felt, wax, honey and others he was not unprecedented with regard to the use of all types of eccentric materials in sculpture. See U. Boccioni, *Technical Manifesto of Futurist Sculpture* (1912), where the first modern appeal is being made to the use of all kinds of different materials in sculpture, in order to go beyond the boundaries of the art practiced. This claim will be repeated several times before the second world war by different representatives of the avant-garde. See K. Schwitters, *Merz* (1921) and N. Gabo, “Sculpture: Carving and Construction in Space” (1937), instances when this same appeal is repeated from the point of view of dada and constructivism, respectively. All in H.B. Chipp (ed.), *Theories of Modern Art* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1968). No one else before Beuys had such an extensive and systematic use of materials such as fat, felt, wax, and the like, despite Buchloh’s contrary claims that evoke Degas and Medardo Rosso. See B.H.D. Buchloh, “The Twilight of the Idol: Preliminary notes for a Critique,” *Artaforum*, 18 (1980), 35-43, p. 41. In any case, the point is not who used a material first but what kind of use artists reserve for the materials they employ in their work. As we will see later, the use of these materials by Beuys was unique for his case.
ered with felt at its edge), reveals a paradoxical logic that they all have in common: on the one hand, they are extremely familiar and quotidian objects, tools or instruments which remain clearly recognizable as such and seem to occupy a rather important place in the work. On the other hand, these objects are also employed, slightly changed or presented, in a way that obfuscates their utilitarian purpose, and consequently makes them appear rather mysterious, estranging and disconcerting. What the viewer clearly retains in encountering these common, everyday objects is that, in fact, they are hardly common at all: one can neither sit on the chair, nor play the piano.

Indeed, in all visual arts, what is displayed is not meant to serve the beholders’ use, but only to satisfy their sight. Even the most recent aesthetic theories claim that all artworks primarily cater to aesthetic pleasure and only incidentally serve any utilitarian value. But, according to the same aesthetics, pleasure of the sight is the result of the artist’s work, the transformation of raw material into a self-subsistent entity, which pleases in this self-subsistence and difference from all other things. Except for the fat appended on the kitchen chair and the felt attached to the grand piano, no other material transformation takes place which regards these objects. Even this transformation regards solely the presentation of these objects and not at all their material construction. It is more than anything else a transfiguration rather than a transformation. Furthermore and as mentioned previously, the chair and the piano are part of the artist’s actions and were not simply meant to be autonomous artworks offering to the beholder a spectacle for aesthetic contemplation. This is clearly observed in the way they are presented. For, were someone to attempt to just look at them and describe them in the most formalist of ways, as a conglomeration of lines and shapes, this attempt would be in vain, as their shapes are being distorted by the addition of formless elements, like the fat and the

12 See also Feldbett, Felt bed (1963-1964); Jason (1961); Erdtelephon, Earth Telephone (1968), and several others in F. Herrgott (ed.), Joseph Beuys, exhibition catalogue, pp. 66, 209, 142 and 169, respectively.
felt, which, by definition, cannot be susceptible to formalist description. \(^{14}\) Therefore, the quotidian objects that Beuys employs in his actions do not have a definite and assured status as artworks, but, rather, oscillate between art and utilitarian objecthood, having an intermediary status between the two. \(^{15}\)

By blocking the way these quotidian objects, as the chair and the piano, are presented, Beuys chooses to block their utilitarian function as objects and, thus, inevitably draws attention to these blocked functions. \(^{16}\) As the objects he employs lay bare, stripped of their purpose and as the viewer stands helplessly in front of them, wondering what to make out of them, the most essential and most elementary fact about these objects becomes explicit to the viewer: their suspended usefulness.

**Deficient Modes of Concern**

The helplessness with which humans stand before things which are unusable, either because they are broken, missing or standing in the way and obstructing a concern, was called a “deficient mode of concern” by Martin Heidegger in *Being and Time*. \(^{17}\) Heidegger introduced the phenomenon exemplified by the deficient modes of concern in a crucial part of his seminal book, in order to explain what he called “the worldhood of the world.” The thesis associated with the worldhood of the world, is the fact that we all get “a glimpse of the world” in everyday life, without necessarily having, first, to interpret or thematize this world by employing ontology or phenomenology. \(^{18}\)

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\(^{15}\) With regard to this issue, see Beuys’ response in an interview with Volker Harlan, to the question that the latter posed in reference to the usefulness of the objects employed by the artist and how this usefulness affects their status as objects as well as their reception by the viewer. Beuys’ response was that he did not wish to block any kind of reception from the part of the viewer and that all receptions would be valid, as far as he was concerned. See Harlan, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

\(^{16}\) I am grateful for this insight to David Raskin’s remarks about the *Fat Chair* in his unpublished paper, for Prof. Donald Kuspit’s seminar, under the title “Hunting for Coyote: The Art of Joseph Beuys,” May 18, 1993, p. 18.


modes of concern give us this glimpse, make us “ontically” discover things around us, before all theory and ontology. Heidegger seems to indicate that the only access we have to the presence of all things is through their absence, obrusiveness to a purpose or un-usability. Only in this kind of “negative” or “privative” way do the entities of this world and this world itself, become explicit to our view and consideration. When all the world’s things are “ready-to-hand,” readily available to our needs, Heidegger claims, their mere presence escapes our attention. We tend to take both their presence and use for granted, and do not notice things except as mere means to achieve our everyday assignments. From the moment they stop being ready-to-hand, they become “present-at-hand,” explicit in themselves and in their environment, precisely because our assignment with them has been disturbed.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 103-105.}

The logic of construction of Beuys’s objects under consideration can be best described in the above Heideggerian terms. The things, and the world of which they are part, first become revealed in the “negative” and “privative” experiences, stemming from their non-availability, from the fact that they cannot serve, in Beuys’s actions, what they were purportedly made for. Therefore, it is as if Beuys, along with Heidegger, claims that it is not by looking at things that we experience them. It is rather the opposite: we can get a first glimpse of all things after we have experienced their suspended usefulness. It is the experience of privation with the things and their world, that precedes the aesthetic experience, traditionally conceived of as an experience of fulfillment and plentitude.\footnote{It would be possible to interpret, towards this direction of plenitude and emotional fulfillment, several passages from traditional texts on the philosophy of art. See for example I. Kant, \textit{Critique of Judgment}, trans. J.H. Bernard (New York: Hafner Press, 1951) p. 77, about the necessary satisfaction accompanying the feeling of beauty, or Hegel’s aesthetics, in which he writes about art’s satisfaction of “spiritual wants,” in G.W.F. Hegel, \textit{Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics}, ed. M. Inwood, trans. B. Bonasquet (London: Penguin Books, 1993), p. 12. Dufrenne writes about “the depth of aesthetic feeling,” which may also be interpreted in this direction (Dufrenne, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 405-407).}

Or, in other words, the aesthetic interest we demonstrate in certain objects and things is subsequent to our commerce with them in everyday life and especially to the cases when we fail to have any commerce with them at all. Then and only then, are we really able to see things for the first time.

This is why the aesthetic, traditionally speaking, has, in Beuys, a derivative and secondary status. Hence, also, Beuys’s notorious, iconoclastic remark that “our most urgent need is not to create pictures or sculptures but to shape the economy,” a task that he, nevertheless, considered to be the ultimate task of his expanded theory of art and sculpture.\footnote{See Frans Haks’ interview with Beuys in 1976, in Thistlewood (ed.), \textit{Joseph Beuys: Diverging Critiques}, p. 54, for his expanded theory of art and creativity see also pp. 56, 57.} Likewise, the concomitant order
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that traditionally accompanies the aesthetic, namely, that order which dictates that sight precedes and conditions experience, gets reversed: it is, rather, experience which precedes and conditions all sight.22 Beuys is among the twentieth century artists that became famous, along with Marcel Duchamp, for advocating a non-retinal art.23

The experience that the artist cherishes as fundamental for all art is, rather, that of warmth, an experience that has never before been valued in aesthetics.24 Humans seem to be the most fragile organisms with regard to warmth; they can hardly maintain the certain body temperature essential to their survival by themselves, unlike most animals. Thus, since their first apparition on earth, they have been using felt to cover themselves and have been consuming fat to be able to bear their energy losses. The invention of fire and, in short, a complex array of issues that have marked all civilizations, relate to warmth, and essentially had to do with maintaining body temperature and recuperating daily energy losses.

Fat and felt, for the use of which Beuys has become famous, are well known as insulators, i.e. for their ability to help the human organism replenish quickly large amounts of lost energy. Thus, fat and felt have been and continue to be essential for keeping warm or, in other words, for human survival. Furthermore, the smaller elements in the objects under consideration reinforce the reference to warmth and human survival. The thermometer in the recent version of Fettsuhl (fig. 5) is an object indicating a concern with the body temperature, which rises only when the organism is in some form of danger or defense and cannot, therefore, maintain the regular body temperature.

The Indexical Relation of Beuys’s Objects to War and Survival

The red cross sewn on the felted piano has the exact same shape, appearance, dimensions and color of the Red Cross Foundation sign, a neutral foundation was especially preoccupied with the work of Duchamp, to whom he dedicated one of his most well known actions with the title Das Schweigen von Marcel Duchamp wird überbewertet, Marcel Duchamp’s silence is overestimated, in Düsseldorf, 11 of December 1964. To Duchamp’s art which the artist thought, already since its very inception, that it anticipated or even preceded all subsequent forms of contemporary art and which oscillates between art and non art, Beuys counteracted his expanded model of art. According to Beuys’ model, art needed to overcome the traditional conventions only in order to be able to aim at social action and reform. See Herrgott (ed.), Joseph Beuys, exhibition catalogue, pp. 275, 276.

22 Beuys was very adamant on this point that we must experience his objects first before resorting to judgment and interpretation. For him, it did not simply suffice to see them. See Antoine, op. cit., p. 51.


24 For warmth and its importance for Beuys, see Harlan, op. cit., p. 119.
providing medical first-aid to victims of war-stricken countries and places worldwide. Beuys knew, admired and was reportedly inspired by the work of Henry Dunant, the founder of Red Cross and the visionary artist.25 Even separated from its context, the red cross sign indexically points to the Red Cross Foundation and thus to war and survival. Thus, these appended elements on Beuys’s quotidian objects, whether they occupy an important and conspicuous role or not, establish an indexical relation to the event of warmth and human survival. As Jean-Philippe Antoine remarks: “An indexical logic put at work... lies undoubtedly at the center of Beuys’s work.”26 Antoine relies on Charles Peirce’s notion of the index, defined as:

“... a sign, or representation which refers to its object not so much because of any similarity or analogy with it, nor because it is associated with general characters which that object happens to possess, as because it is in dynamical (including spatial) connection both with the individual object, on the one hand, and with the senses or memory of the person for whom it serves as a sign, on the other hand. [...] Indices may be distinguished from other signs, or representations, by three characteristic marks: first, that they have no significant resemblance to their objects; second, that they refer to individuals, single units, single collections of units, or single continua; third, that they direct the attention to their objects by blind compulsion.”27

If, indeed, all materials like the fat, the felt, the thermometer and the cross are indexically related to warmth and survival, the red cross gives us an additional clue that the survival to which we specifically refer, is survival from war. Thus Beuys’s appended materials on his quotidian objects are indexically related to the event of survival from the closest war in memory for Beuys and his audiences, namely the Second World War, the memories of which they propel onto them. It was certainly of primary importance to Beuys and to some of his generation, not to forget, but to actively remember the vicissitudes of their survival through the Second World War and Nazism. Having been drafted to serve the German Nazi forces at the age of twenty, almost right when the war broke out, and having been wounded and risked his life five times, leading up to 1945, when he was released from a British camp of German prisoners, Beuys surely had reasons to try to find a meaningful way to cope with his traumatic experiences.28

This is also the reason why Beuys himself often talked about the role of his Erinnerungsstütze, his “memory accessories,” among the materials he employed in his works.29 As Jean-Pierre Antoine remarked, through his “memo-

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26 See Antoine, op. cit., p. 55.
29 See Antoine, op. cit., p. 52.
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... the role of crutch or of the “memory accessory” [Erinnerungsstütze] [has] developed in Beuys’ production in the context of a greater social and political project: to overcome the trauma caused by the Second World War and Nazism, in Germany but also more broadly in Europe, and through the ‘hard labor of remembrance,’ to retrieve the symptoms of illness of the culture that made this catastrophe possible, so that once these symptoms are identified, to heal the social corpus.”

It is precisely by blocking, through fat and felt, the access to the quotidian objects and the world that these evoke, that Beuys attempts to commemorate these objects and their world, as lost unable to correspond to their function. Indeed, the world must have felt this way for a German after the Second World War, even if it is rare and understandably difficult for some to also think of Germans as war victims. But, according to Heidegger, Beuys’s strategy of commemorating the quotidian objects and their world as lost would also mean rendering them explicit, retrieving them for memory and conscience, and valuing them, all perhaps for the first time. Furthermore, the fat, the felt, the thermometer and the cross with which these objects are mainly appended, indexically relate to the event of survival from their single, unique and monstrous referent, the Second World War, and, thus, historically situate Beuys’s work in a firm and pertinent manner. Both effects of his work certainly qualify Beuys’s artistic attempts for a new and meaningful beginning, after the sharp end to everything that the war imposed.

Of course Beuys’s work does not exactly involve a direct tribute to the war and its many monstrosities, in the sense that its does not address directly the atrocities committed. However, it was a common conscience after the Second World War that a direct artistic representation of the atrocities committed was not only inefficient, but also totally out of the question. Representation, having been the crux of modern European culture for the recent past centuries, could not simply be employed again to account for this enormous, modern European cultural fallacy and perversion of the war.

The role of the term counter-image, Gegenbild, which Beuys often employed in his interviews and statements, demonstrates his conscious rejection of image as mere representation and describes the indirect and positive way that his works commemorate the events of the Second World War. In his own words: “These events [of the war and the Holocaust] can only be commemorated through a positive counter-image, to the extent that all this is really eliminated from the world and from man so that the rest of inhumanity may be surmounted.” Thus, the blocked chair with fat and the felt-covered piano are counter-images, rendering explicit these quotidian objects and their world

30 Ibid., p. 52.
31 Heidegger, op. cit., p. 105.
32 Cited in Antoine, op. cit., p. 52.
and thus indicating a new point of departure. At the same time, they indexically commemorate the event of survival, so that “the rest of inhumanity” may be surmounted and not repressed, in the act and fury of the new beginning.

However, as Peirce warned his reader “... it would be difficult, if not impossible, to instance an absolutely pure index, or to find any sign absolutely devoid of the indexical quality.” Furthermore, both icons and symbols permeate all things to a certain extent, and it can therefore be inferred that Peirce’s threefold distinction of signs in icons, indices and symbols is also valid in the interior of each sign. Beuys also worked with symbols and assumed the expressionist stance with which they are usually accompanied, in continuation of the prewar avant-garde tradition of expressionism in Germany. Thus, he consciously employed in his art fat and felt, and other degenerate, formless and quotidian materials that would have had his work surely banned during the Nazi era. Moreover, he created a personal and collective mythology of remedy and healing through his art and life, in order to cope with the legacies that he, his country and Europe in general, were left with, after the end of the Second World War.

Nevertheless, as much as Beuys’s expressionist stance is true, and as much as the symbolic content of his works should not be excluded, this symbolic content is too often overemphasized in his critical reception. For simply noting the symbolic references of his materials does not suffice to illuminate the logic with which these materials are assembled or presented, and have, thus, so far, mostly closed rather than opened venues for the analysis of Beuys’s œuvre. It is certainly true that Beuys himself, with his incessant, and, at times, contradictory and obscure statements and interviews, has also been responsible for his symbolically over-interpreted and yet hardly understood work. However, despite his faults in this regard, it is Beuys himself, again, who also emphatically stated, several times and on different occasions, that he does not work with symbols but only with materials.

33 Peirce, op. cit., p. 108.
36 See, for example, Beuys’ account of his experience with the Tartars who saved his life by wrapping his wounded and burned body in fat and felt after his plane crashed in their area. The facts that account of this experience have been contested by several critics but this contestation by itself, does not suffice, of course, to disqualify Beuys’ art. Kuspit provides an answer for the artist in his remarks about the mythological impact of these events, without regard to their factual or fictional status. See “Joseph Beuys: Between Showman and Shaman,” pp. 29, 30, 31, 34, 35, 36. Also his “The Body of the Artist,” pp. 96, 97, 98, 100. For the account of the experience with the Tartars, see also Stachelhaus, op. cit., pp. 18-25. For the contestation of this experience, see Buchloh, op. cit., p. 38, and B. Buchloh, R. Krauss, A. Michelson, “Joseph Beuys at the Guggenheim” October, 12 (1980), 3-21, p. 8.
37 It is almost the entirety of Beuys’ critics, particularly those who are favorably disposed towards him that emphasize the symbolic and mythological associations in his work as for example Kuspit, Stachelhaus, Adriani, Tisdall and others.
38 See his interview with Louwrien Wijers in Kuoni (ed.), Joseph Beuys in America: Energy Plan for the Western Man, p. 252. See also M. Rosenthal, Joseph Beuys, Blitzschlag
While, with his quotidian objects, Beuys tried to launch a new beginning in art, thought and action, with his appended materials, he attempted to safeguard the memory of the past, so that this new beginning, after the war, that he strived to herald, avoids past grave mistakes.

PART VIII

Religion and Crisis,
Religion as a Remedy to the Crisis
The cultural description of heaven and hell, as referenced in the narrative of St. Andrew the Fool, likely dating back to the tenth century A.D., or that in Byzantine/post-Byzantine mural paintings explains the creation of a mutually opposing, yet multidimensional, anthropological system, where archaic classification styles are embedded. In our paper, we will argue that the binary oppositions, known largely by the anthropological analyses of Claude Lévi-Strauss (i.e. heaven-hell, male-female, healthy-contaminated), that make up Christian spirituality have built the fundamental structure of a system compatible with Christian salvation. More specifically, the binary opposition of heaven and hell is a necessary requirement for the Last Judgment. The anthropomorphism of heaven excludes from the Last Judgment and salvation all that is animalistic and subject to racial or sexual ambiguity. Indeed, heaven’s anthropomorphism is defined by the figures of the demonic and the contaminated as forms of alterity.

Hell hosts the animal species and its emotional anomaly and ascribes it as the figures of alterity, placing it on the opposite direction away from humanity. So the ancestral animal origins confront the principles of human reason, civility and socio-cultural order. Within hell, the “bestial other” is either a demon or an anthropomorphic entity, which is defeated because of torture and the loss of its physical integrity and able-bodiedness. Essentially, only the humanness of heaven recognizes the supremacy of reason and only this element ensures Christian salvation. Just like the dream of St. Andrew the Fool’s imaginary transition to heaven depicts life’s cultural differentiation, so do the artistic realities of the Byzantine and the post-Byzantine Last Judgment. They expose a fundamental cultural division within the Byzantine world. On the one hand, there is the purity of heaven (male) and, on the other hand, the contamination of hell (female). This division ultimately identifies the subjects that are esteemed in the Christian world’s hierarchical demarcation. As Judith Butler emphatically states, gender is produced under the authority of the heterosexual womb (matrix) and all that the dipole excludes (e.g. sexual ambiguity or erratic identities) belongs to the world of otherness.2

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From a “Raw” Heaven to a “Cooked” Hell

In the narrative of St. Andrew the Fool, a document likely to date back to the tenth century A.D.,
insanity as a way of life offends civil reason. In the Foolish Saint’s case, natural instincts are entangled with one’s soul, thus giving a new meaning to the physical and spiritual forces that once shaped the cultural context of the urban setting. The Fool deviates from rationality
to the point that he gives up on self-control as a defining measure for civilized behavior and, therefore, threatens social cohesion and security. The Fool personifies
nature’s primary instincts and permanently ends up in an exceptional state, living at the city’s fringes. For a period of time, he is restrained so that he comes to his senses.
The Foolish Saint cannot take part in material indulgences, so he symbolizes all of the primary desires and repressed thoughts of the unconscious. He reveals the world’s natural function, one that lays the foundations for an alternative cultural pattern of civilization. The Fool puts forth an inverted definition of disgust, which, if recognized as a social way of functioning, could lead to the breakdown of social cohesion. But the Fool’s primary need for survival is completely irrelevant to the daily concern of ensuring his nutritional intake. His own self deprives him from cultivating land which would otherwise ensure safety and sustainability. The Foolish Saint therefore adapts to a qualitative assessment of his life. He lives in the greatest uncertainty and his life expectancy can only correspond to a minimum time span due to poor food intake.

In light of the untouchable, St. Andrew’s imaginary stroll must be observed in heaven. The Foolish Saint senses in full action, through smell, sight and audition, the magic of indulgence. All the while, he is completely free of physical coercion. Heaven promises to fulfill him with an evergreen euphoria. That being said, the Saint does not taste or touch, at least as evidenced by his narrative from which the following is extracted in this context: “I found myself in a lovely and most wonderful garden”; “a wreath plaited with all sorts of flowers”; “shimmering with the color of roses”; “a fire of pleasure, full of.

4 «φύσει παρατραπεζ» (Andrew has gone stark mad), L. Rydén (ed.), The Life of St. Andrew the Fool. II. Text, Translation and Notes. Appendices (Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 1995), 103, pp. 18-19.
5 «δεσμοῖς δεθῆναι αὐτόν» (he should be chained), Ibid., 111, pp. 18-19.
6 For the Byzantine apocalyptic visions of the Other World and their relationship with economic and social realities of their time, see J. Ralls Baun, Tales from Another Byzantium: Celestial Journey and Local Community in the Medieval Greek Apocrypha (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
7 «σκοτώσον τηρην καὶ θηματών λίων» Rydén, The Life of St. Andrew the Fool. II., 505-506, pp. 46-47.
8 «σπαντοίον ἁθέθον» Ibid., 515, pp. 46-47.
rejoice and delight;10 “some flowers were everlasting and never-faded”11 “others were ordained by God to be adored with fruit”;12 “wings made of gold or snow”;13 “the song of their beautiful and delightful voices”;14 “a vine with golden leaves spreads its crown over the river on both sides”;15 “this sight made my heart rejoice”;16 “the beautiful trees there were filled with a wonderful fragrance that surpassed all the aromas of things terrestrial”;17 “the breeze stirred the trees’ fragrance so that for a long while I became speechless, enjoying the sweetness and grace of the wind’s most pleasant perfume”,18 “possessing a sweetness like roses and lilies and a purple color like a violet”;19 “sending out a perfume more pleasant than myrrh and musk which pierced my heart”;20 “singers of hymns, beautiful, tall, and white like light, sending forth flashes of fiery bright rays from their eyes”21 “I was filled with spiritual honey and fragrance”,22 “very pure amber”,23 “cladded in dazzling purple and linen but reducing his splendor”;24 “I gazed at the magnificence and beauty of the God-Man the way one looks at the sun as it rises”;25 “the voice dripped honey, it was mild and sweet”;26 “the plain was very beautiful with green grass, lily flowers and roses in boundless quantity. It had wells gushing with milk and honey, emitting a wonderful fragrance and sweetness.”27

At the end of this thorough, literal description of heaven, the senses of touch and taste remain unexploited, the sole exception being the kissing of the crosses when one ascends to higher stages, as does the Fool when wandering
disembodied in heaven. Here there is no physical pleasure through touch or taste, because the vision revolves around the imaginary experience of indulgence in a setting where everything seems to be offered in abundance. Consequently, all the above conditions, while rendering a state of bliss, operate in the absence of the two main bodily senses.

The Fool experiences the break up between secular and heavenly life and gives into heaven’s nature where indulgence is different to what is considered on earth as devouring behavior, and seen as a fundamental requirement imposed by life’s basic needs. Moreover, the passage to heaven is accompanied by a symbolic castration, to the extent that the imaginary pleasure he takes part in eventually amounts to an eliminated phallus. The Fool enters the heavenly state by means of complete paralysis of the phallus. The latter is functionally inactive: “I noticed that I was disembodied, as it were, for it did not seem to me that I was wearing flesh.” Nonetheless, the detailed presentation of heaven’s imaginary diversity is motivated by the need to be feed from the earthly order of things. Eventually, the Fool returns to earth’s reality as a sort of unaccounted entity which opposes heaven’s imaginary rule and therefore finds himself in the primordial state of nature: “naked, young, foolish.” At this point, Saint Andrew’s life is especially striking because the narrative unites the horror and brutality of daily life with the magnificent, though imaginary, splendor of heaven.

Terms that refer to the animal substrate are missing from the above detailed description of heaven’s landscape. There is no mention of a human being’s basic needs as a creature of nature. Instead, the stages in heaven consist of a coherently arranged visible space where physical change is missing. Firstly, the term «εὐπρέπεια» (magnificence) is the fundamental element of heaven’s status quo, which describes a tenaciously consistent safety net. However, order and modesty are the most valuable practices for a tenacious cultural firmament. Another essential difference between heaven and earth’s status, in line with what has already been mentioned, is the absence of darkness. So, in the imaginary, the white light’s simulation is referred to as snow (“looked like snow”, “white as snow”) and complies entirely with the description of heaven. In reference to the latter, full visibility plays the main role. Consequently, the earthly sphere is the birth place of darkness: “to what I saw there, what is here is darkness.”

28 «Κατενόουν δὲ ἐμαυτὸν ὀσπὶρ ἀσαρχικὸν ὅπως γὰρ ἐνόμιζον σάρκα φορεῖν.» Ibid., 512-513, pp. 46-47.
29 «γυμνός, νέος, σαλός,» Ibid., 712, pp. 60-61.
30 Ibid., 529, pp. 48-49; 557, pp. 50-51; 660, 665, and 675, pp. 56-57.
31 «παράταξις πρὸς παράταξιν» (They stood in rows, one line of battle behind the other), Ibid., 545-546, pp. 48-49.
32 «ἐπέθεκασαν οὖν τάξις τινα καὶ κοσμότητα» (They stood on this awesome height in a proper order), Ibid., 653, pp. 56-57.
33 « createState text here » Ibid., 566, pp. 50-51.
34 «ἐκείνοις ἅπασι τοις ἁπάσιν,» Ibid., 626, pp. 54-55.
35 «πρὸς γὰρ τὰ ἐκεῖ σκότος τὰ ἐνταῦθα,» Ibid., 548-549, pp. 50-51.
power, hence consumption. While the Fool lives in such a place, he is asked to accept the defining features of poverty and humility if he wants to avoid consumption. This reference to reality is essential because, without it, the heavenly order collapses. As a result of this, the Fool liberates his anger, freely consumes any kind of food and, thus, serves as a countereexample that can destroy the earth’s status quo. So the Fool takes on the heavy burden of deconstructing the earthly order and is, therefore, exposed to all kinds of misunderstandings from the urbanite.

In the narrative of St. Andrew the Fool, a natural product known largely from the anthropological analyses of Claude Lévi-Strauss of what is pure makes its appearance. The function of pure opposes the function of fire. Here, reference is made specifically to honey under the form of a plant. In this evergreen and ever-sweet plant, an entity is formed that opposes darkness and fire in every sense. Each of the latter two terms (honey vs fire) defines the dominant properties of two opposing worlds. They each invoke, respectively, two fundamental categories, where abundance and sex battle the sun to claim the source of eternity. There are cooking guidelines. Both worlds possess complementary features, which Claude Lévi-Strauss could designate as “pre-cooked” and “post-cooked,” respectively. Moreover, in the narrative of St. Andrew the Fool, there is a description of heaven and hell that defines two symmetrical worlds. On the one hand exists a world of abstinence from sexual activity, and on the other hand a world of abundance. However, the body does not exist in heaven’s landscape: “I was overwhelmed by a feeling that I had been transplanted there without my body.” Instead, it leaves behind an imaginary and decomposed being: “for it did not seem to me that I was wearing flesh.”

For this reason, honey is equivalent, not only to heaven, but to the very existence of God. It opposes earthly abundance and makes reference to the fall of the soul into Hades. A product which cannot be consumed but can be

36 «ὦν ἐπεραυς πνευμάτων; ὦν τὴν τοπίναν» (because of your boundless poverty; because of your humility), Ibid., 711-712, pp. 60-61.
38 «ἄλλῃ ἀνθισθλῃ καὶ ἐπερορήθῃ, μελισταγῆ καὶ ψικορμοῖς» (trees of a different nature, dripping with honey, with lofty and pleasant foliage), Rydén, The Life of St. Andrew the Fool. II., 524, pp. 48-49.
40 «ἀνεκτέρεα με λογισμὸς ὡς ἐκτός τοῦ σώματος τοῖς ἐκέετος προσπεφυκέναι με,» Rydén, The Life of St. Andrew the Fool. II., 593-594, pp. 52-53.
41 «ὦ γὰρ ἐνόμιζον σάρκα φορεῖν;» Ibid., 513, pp. 46-47.
42 «κατευθυνοτικὸν μέλατος καὶ εὐωδίας ἀνάπλωσας γέγονα» (I was filled with spiritual honey and a fragrance), Ibid., 617, pp. 54-55.
satisfied by one’s eyes is now available to an entire religion. The heavenly state of the soul’s salvation mobilizes the senses of sight,53 smell54 and audition.55 All of the above coincide with the Fool’s imaginary trip, where he falls into a kind of hibernation due to the cold. Sight, smell and audition function when human existence is at its highest peak: “my mind was carried away into ecstasy”,46 “still amazed were my thoughts and my mind.”47 This peak is far from the reproductive area, known as the lowest point of the body, which is associated with a divergence toward rage and the demonic. The highest peak complements the aforementioned honey. At this point appears the whiteness of light and snow,48 as does the whiteness emitted from the rays of light, which must not be confused with the rays of fire: “A flame of fire came forth but not like the fire of this world but one that is whiter to look at than snow.”49 The volume of honey is then duplicated through the sound of light, which then also drips with honey: “A voice was heard from this light, tearing the wonderful air with its mighty sound. The voice dripped honey.”50 Here, the honey represents the divine voice which, in any case, does not participate in the cooking process.

Let us now focus our attention upon the cooking process and its ingredients. Fire is the unprocessed ingredient used in hell: “they will be wholly surrendered to the fire.”51 The lowest body parts, such as the reproductive and anal areas, hold a central place and generate disgust. The cooking ingredient is associated with stench and dung: “at last there was a small stinking room in which there was nothing but ordure of men and dogs.”52 These are inextricably linked with self-contamination and death. Acceptance of cooking the primitive animal leads to a transition toward abundance, which is associated with impurity,53 as observed under the light of a stillbirth body and soul: “These are the souls which have been compared to foolish beasts and likened to them.”54 In this case, the physical function of digestion is interwoven with

43 «Γάντια τούς ὄρην νηφρανόμενη μεγάλοις καὶ ἠλάλαξεν ἡ καρδία μου καὶ ἠγάλλαξε τὸ πνεύμα μου» (At this sight I felt great joy, my heart shouted with delight, and my spirit rejoiced), Ibid., 599-600, pp. 52-53.
44 ἅρματος τοὺς αἰσθητήρια τοῖς αἰσθητηρίοις υἱοῦ τῆς ὀσφρήσεως μου διήρχετο» (fragrance and sweetness again reached my senses through my nostrils), Ibid., 597, pp. 52-53.
45 «τὸν κελαδισμὸν τῆς φωνῆς αὐτῶν τῆς ὡραίας καὶ ἠθέτης τοῖς αἰσθητηρίοις» (the other two white as snow) (so that the song of their beautiful and delightful voices was heard), Ibid., 535-536, pp. 48-49.
46 ὁκαὶ ἤρπαζότο ὁ νοῦς μου ὡς εἰς ἔκστασιν,» Ibid., 537-538, pp. 48-49.
47 «τὴν ὀσφήσει ἐκθετομοῦνας τὸ λόγισμα καὶ τὴ διάνοια,» Ibid., 540-541, pp. 48-49.
48 «πᾶς ἄλλα λευκά ὡσεὶ χιών» (the other two white as snow), Ibid., 610, pp. 54-55.
50 «Ἐξῆλθεν δὲ φωνή ἐκ τοῦ φωτὸς ἐκείνου κατημένη μέγας τὸ ἔρως, ὡσεὶ συντρίβεται τὸν θαυμαστὸν ἄτατον ἅπαν ἀυτῆς. Ἡ δὲ φωνὴ ἦν μελητατήτις,» Ibid., 680-682, pp. 58-59.
51 «... τὸ πῦρ ὄλακληρος παραδόθησαν,» Ibid., 2347-2348, pp. 166-167.
52 «ἀχροτομοῦν ἄλλον ἐν τῳ οἰκίσκῳ δυσάδει, ἐν ὥσίδεν ἦν ἡ μη κατείρη ἀνθρώπου ἀνδρόπου καὶ κυνόν,» Ibid., 2333-2334, pp. 164-165.
53 «αἰ δὲ μοχρον, αἱ δὲ πόρροι, αἱ δὲ Σοδομίτων» (others to adulterers, some to fornicators, others to sodomites), Ibid., 2356, pp. 166-167.
54 «Αὐτοὶ εἰσὶν αἱ ψυχαὶ αἱ παρεσυνελήφθησαν τοῖς κτίσεις τοῖς ἁνοίγοις καὶ ὁμοιῶθη-
disgust, because consumption has occurred: “the glutinous as horses, the drunkards as demoniacs, the heretics as dung, the whoremongers as asses; the procurers who with oaths and lies bring men to women, submerging them in fornication.”

It also includes sexual freedom, which is tightly linked to animal behavior. The latter is the inverse state that replaces heaven’s honey. Therefore, the absenteeism of honey plays a key role to man’s return to his animal origin. He becomes equivalent to an image that completely lacks sexual control.

Honey is presented as an abundant liquid, equivalent to that of water, or as a liquid that fertilizes nature and does not pollute the very sources that allow milk and honey to flow. Of relevance are a number of similar properties:

1. The ineffable light,
2. The evergreen and ever so tall tree trunks,
3. The everlastings flowers,
4. The chirping of birds with golden and snowy white wings,
5. Heaven’s sequential rows of flora,
6. The greenery of heaven’s cultivations,
7. The cultivation of vines,
8. The scent of trees,
9. The sweetness emitted from roses and lilies,
10. The fragrance of myrrh and musk.

It also includes equivalents to an image that becomes a mighty river flowed straight through the garden, watering all the trees. 

Claude Lévi-Strauss, Going on a Journey to Byzantium, pp. 166-167.


56 “τοις κτηνοβάτας και άρανοκοιτας ως την μον και ως σκοληβισθητον κόνις την εα της κοπρος ρριμμένον, τοις πάνοις ως τοις χοιρος” (those who have intercourse with animals and the sodomites as rats and as dogs thrown on the dunghill and eaten by worms, the fornicators as swine), ibid., 2363-2365, pp. 166-167.

57 “σπήτως μέγας μέσον τον παραδείσου οὖσας και ἐποίησε πάντα τα φυτες” (a mighty river flowed straight through the garden, watering all the trees), ibid., 550, pp. 50-51.

58 “Πηγαί δε ήταν αυτη και αυτα βρουσαν γάλα και μέλι” (It had wells gushing with milk and honey), ibid., 698-699, pp. 58-59.

59 «αρρήτου φωτος τη ιδέα» (with an indescribable light), ibid., 518, pp. 48-49.

60 «ανιθαλη και έπεροψη, μελιστης και ινηκορμι και τερπη» (evergreen trees of a different nature that drip with honey and with lofty and pleasant foliage), ibid., 524, pp. 48-49.

61 «δικη διδασκαλη ισοταταινται και άμαρανταν (to some had been given everlasting and never-fading flowers), ibid., 529, pp. 48-49.

62 «σπάσαντα και χοντράντα, [...] τον λειασμον της φοινης αρτιων της ραπατς και εν διπλον ισοπεδωθαν» (with wings like gold or snow; [...] so that the song of their beautiful and delightful voices was heard), ibid., 534-536, pp. 48-49.

63 «Πάντα δε τα οραμα υφα έκδαν ενωρίδιως έστηντο ως παράταξις προς παράταξιν» (all these beautiful trees stood in rows like one line of battle behind the other), ibid., 545-546, pp. 48-49.

64 «μεταρα ή χειρ ή τατο φυτεύσασα» (blessed be the hand that planted them), ibid., 546, pp. 48-49.

65 «φρασθεναι μεγαροσ βοτρυσ ενορπεστατοι» (heavy with big, splendid grapes), ibid., 557, pp. 50-51.

66 «δενδραν εν ευφρεπεσα ἐμπεπλησμενη ευοδιας» (The beautiful trees there were filled with a wonderful fragrance), ibid., 567, pp. 50-51.

67 «τη ηδονης ως τα ροδα και τα κρινα» (having a sweetness like roses and lilies), ibid., 586-587, pp. 52-53.

68 «παρ μωρον και μοισιον την ευοδιαν εκπεμποντα» (sending out a perfume more pleasant than myrrh and musk), ibid., 588, pp. 52-53.
ously sized and fair singers of hymns;\(^69\) xiii. The brightness of angels whose intensity exceeds that of the sun;\(^71\) xiv. The order and civility shining from the angels;\(^72\) xv. The flame that emanates from God is equivalent to the whiteness of snow and contradicts the earth’s fire.\(^73\) xvi. Finally, the sun is identified to the Godly man’s splendor.\(^74\) All of these elements demonstrate the malfunction of sexual penetration. In other words, they represent the limitless boundaries that oppose the darkness of the Hades.

Hell possesses its own dietary regime where bodily feces are intertwined with sexual practices all within a dark environment.\(^75\) Equivalent to hell is abstinence from eating honey and the consumption of sexual intercourse. Here, what we realize in essence is that this partnering of consumption and defecation exists in hell. Areas that define disgust are revealed,\(^76\) where fluids are considered pollutants and do not bear fruit. This includes animalistic fecundity, from which a Christian should abstain for the sake of salvation of his soul. The animal’s original shape is an obvious implication of the body’s vulnerability to disease and death. Aside from bodily fluids, noticeable practices include adultery, prostitution, sodomy,\(^77\) bestiality, homosexuality,\(^78\) gluttony and drunkenness.\(^79\) In addition to that, a number of animals act as symbols. In the culture of consumption animals, such as mice, dogs, donkeys, scorpions, snakes, pigs, wolves, foxes, cat like species and crows, are associated with stench and disgust.\(^80\) In this climax of disgust, the feces possess a dominant

\(^69\) “λευκὰ ὡς χιόν” (white as snow), \textit{Ibid.}, 610, pp. 54-55.
\(^70\) “ἀσωματίζουσιν ὁράσιον, εὐμαγνήθεις καὶ λευκοὶ ὅπως φάσο” (singers of hymns, beautiful, tall, and white like light), \textit{Ibid.}, 611-612, pp. 54-55.
\(^71\) “σαλίθρινον ἀναρίθησαν νυκτὸν ἐγέλουν περίνουν, τὰς ὅψις τρισχείτες ὑπὲρ τῶν ἡλίων” (an innumerable multitude of spiritual holy angels of fire with faces more far-shining than the sun), \textit{Ibid.}, 652, pp. 56-57.
\(^72\) “ἐστηκέσαν οὖν τάξιν καὶ κοσμίατος” (they stood on this awesome height in proper order), \textit{Ibid.}, 653, pp. 56-57.
\(^73\) “φλάς δὲ ἐπαράζετο εἰς πάντα, οὕτως ὡς τὸ πῦρ τοῦτο ἄλλῳ ὑπὲρ τῆς χιόνος ὁρώμενον τὴν λεικότητα” (A flame of fire came forth from it, not like the fire of this world but white to look at than snow), \textit{Ibid.}, 669-670, pp. 56-57.
\(^74\) “ἐπὶ τὴν θεοθέωσαν ἐπαράζεσαν τε καὶ ὑφαίστε, ὡς τὸ τῆς ἡλίου βλέπα” (I gazed at the magnificence and beauty of the God-Man the way one looks at the sun), \textit{Ibid.}, 673-674, pp. 56-57.
\(^75\) “σκότος εὐκάτω τὸ ἀλάμπαξ” (the impenetrable darkness prevailing there), \textit{Ibid.}, 2327, pp. 164-165.
\(^76\) “ὁσφάδας τῶν τῶν καὶ λιῶν δυσαίες καὶ ὅωςίδες” (places that were difficult to access and very ugly and noisome), \textit{Ibid.}, 2326, pp. 164-165.
\(^77\) “αἱ δὲ μοιχαὶ, αἱ δὲ πόρναι, αἱ δὲ Θράσοις” (others to adulterers, some to fornicators, others to sodomites), \textit{Ibid.}, 2356, pp. 166-167.
\(^78\) “τοῖς κτηνοβάταις καὶ ἄρσονοκόκταις” (those who have intercourse with animals and the sodomites), \textit{Ibid.}, 2363, pp. 166-167.
\(^79\) “τοῖς λαμάργοις ὡς τὰ ἄλογα, τοῖς μαθηταῖς ὡς τοῖς δακτυλόντας” (the gluttonous as horses, the drunkards as demons), \textit{Ibid.}, 2367-2368, pp. 166-167.
\(^80\) “μῶν καὶ κυνῶν καὶ κνησάλων καὶ ἄνων καὶ ἀναμνήσεων ὡς τοῖς ἀρσενικοῖς ὡς τοῖς φαρμακοὶ ὡς τοῖς δρακοῖς, τοῖς κτηνοβάταις καὶ
title that is directly linked to an infectious impurity. The latter corresponds to the destructive power of an incinerating fire. Therefore, the binary opposition of inside water/ outside fire with regards to heaven and outside water/ inside fire with regard to hell are analogous to a man’s abstinence, or sterility, found in heaven and a woman’s fertility that resides in hell.

The presence of honey on the one hand, and fire that incinerates all physical matter on the other, demonstrate the asymmetry between the two worlds. In the former exists the spiritual substance of honey and that of heavenly water, whereas, in the latter, fire represents bodily functions. The source of the latter must be extinguished with heavenly water in order to deter obscene acts and passions from entering the human body. Indeed, the two worlds follow opposite paths. The first is defined by hyper-cooking and uses a fire which burns in heaven but does not deteriorate any materials, while the second is defined by meta-cooking and uses a fire from hell that burns all materials and converts them to damaged goods. This contrast between the beneficial usage of heaven’s elements [water (+) − fire (+)] = «σοῦ ής το πῦρ ἄλλ᾽ ύπέρ της χύνος όρόμευον τη λευκότητα» (not like the fire of this world but whiter to look at than snow) and the destructive function of hell’s elements [fire (-) − water (-) − όλοκλήρος παραδόθησαν] (they will be wholly surrendered to the fire) + «οἱ ἀνθρώποι καὶ ἐρρύσαν αἱ σάρκες οὐκοῦ ἐπὶ τη γῆν ὧσι ὦδορ» (the miserable man’s body dissolved, his flesh flow-

ἀρσενοκοῖτας ὡς τον μῖν καὶ ὡς σκολικοῦρπον κόινα τον ἐπὶ κοπρίας ἐρρύσαν, τοις πόρνους ὡς τοῖς χώρους, τοῖς κλέπταις ὡς τοῖς λύκους, τοῖς δολεροῖς ὡς τῆς ἀλάσπειας, τοῖς φιλαργύρους ὡς τοῖς αἰλουροῖς, τοῖς ἀγγάλοις ὡς τη θηρία, τοῖς γειτόναις ὡς τον ώριν, τοῖς λοιμάργους ὡς τα ἄλογα, [...] τοῖς καταλάλους ὡς κόρακας...» (for the murderers he regards as scorpions, the idolaters as beasts, the adulterers as those who have lost their mind, the magicians and sorcerers as snakes, those who have intercourse with animals and the sodomites as rats and as dogs thrown on the dunghill and eaten by worms, the fornicators as swine, the thieves as wolves, the deceitful as foxes, the avaricious as cats, the quick-tempered as wild beasts, the liars as snakes, the gluttonous as horses, [...] those who speak evil of others as ravens), Ibid., 2361-2368; 2373, pp. 166-167.

81 «ὁδεῖν δι ή μη κοπρία ἀνθρώπου καὶ κονίαν» (there was nothing but ordure of men and dogs), Ibid., 2334, pp. 164-165.

82 «Μετὰ δὲ την ἐξαναστάσεσ των σομάτων, τότε το πῦρ ὀλοκλήρος παραδόθησαν» (After the resurrection of the body they will be wholly surrendered to the fire), Ibid., 2346-2348, pp. 166-167.


84 «οίτι το προσέπελον ἀφομοιούμενον εν τόδε το κόσμῳ τη πολιτεία καὶ ταῖς αἰσχριστοῖς πράξισι καὶ τοῖς πάθεσι» (showing to what each one of them has become similar in this world because of their way of life and its shameful acts and passions), Rydén, The Life of St. Andrew the Fool. II, 2354-2355, pp. 166-167.

85 «Ἀκμάθηρα δὲ καὶ διαλόθη τὰς ἄρρυμας» (Its frame became so ruined and dissolved), Ibid., 2398, pp. 168-169.

86 «οἱ καὶ ἰδού πῦρ φλέγον τὰ ἐκέλευ ἀπανθα» (there was a fire burning everything there), Ibid., 632-633, pp. 54-55.

87 Ibid., 669-670, pp. 56-57.

88 Ibid., 2347-2348, pp. 166-167.
ing on the ground like water)\textsuperscript{89} is confirmed by verbal recordings that render both contexts respectively. Heaven’s environment declares a pleasant outflow, openness, magnitude, ecstasy, ascension and spiritual consumption: “my heart was filled with divine joy”;\textsuperscript{90} whiteness and brightness (“glowed”\textsuperscript{91} “grow”;\textsuperscript{92} “ecstasy”;\textsuperscript{93} “amazed”;\textsuperscript{94} “emitted a vapour”;\textsuperscript{95} “sending out”;\textsuperscript{96} “shining like the sun”;\textsuperscript{97} “flashing”;\textsuperscript{98} “sending forth flashes of fiery bright rays from their eyes”;\textsuperscript{99} “spread out”;\textsuperscript{100} “rays of light”;\textsuperscript{101} “with faces more far-shining”;\textsuperscript{102} “rises”\textsuperscript{103}]. However, hell’s environment declares introversion, confinement, descent, animal-like consumption and darkness [“prisons and bars and jails”;\textsuperscript{104} “enclosed”;\textsuperscript{105} “submerging them in fornication”\textsuperscript{106}] equivalent to an unpleasant and destructive assimilation.\textsuperscript{107}

Meanwhile, heaven praises an economy based exclusively on sight, smell and audition, but under no circumstances the intention to consume. The gluttony of hell, however, as defined by food or sex, comes into force through touch and consumption and is linked to an economy of abundance and greediness, the consequences of which are unfortunate. Nevertheless, these two opposite settings have a distinguishable feature in common. They present, each in its own unique way, a kind of slurry – an abundance of honey on the one hand, and a dry/burnt substance on the other. A similar contrast is demonstrated between heaven and hell’s olfactory codes. Heaven’s olfactory properties are opposite to those of hell, where the latter’s olfactory code is one of foul defecating odors: “noisome”\textsuperscript{108} = “unpleasant”\textsuperscript{109} = “ordure”\textsuperscript{110} = “sub-merging.”\textsuperscript{111}

\textsuperscript{89} Ibid., 2396-2397, pp. 168-169.
\textsuperscript{90} «ἐλήλυσεν γεράς θεϊκάς ἢ καρδία μου,» Ibid., 685-686, pp. 58-59.
\textsuperscript{91} «Ἐστιν κάτω,» Ibid., 518, pp. 48-49.
\textsuperscript{92} «Χαλάστρακα,» Ibid., 52, pp. 48-49.
\textsuperscript{93} «Χαλάστρακα,» Ibid., 538, pp. 48-49.
\textsuperscript{94} «Χαλάστρακα,» Ibid., 540, pp. 48-49.
\textsuperscript{95} ἀκτινίζω,» Ibid., 566, pp. 50-51.
\textsuperscript{96} «Χαλάστρακα,» Ibid., 588, pp. 52-53.
\textsuperscript{97} «Χαλάστρακα,» Ibid., 605, pp. 52-53.
\textsuperscript{98} «Χαλάστρακα,» Ibid., 610, pp. 54-55.
\textsuperscript{99} «Χαλάστρακα,» Ibid., 612-613, pp. 54-55.
\textsuperscript{100} αὐτοίς φόρος,» Ibid., 638, pp. 54-55.
\textsuperscript{101} αὔγους πτυλαρίζω,» Ibid., 664, pp. 56-57.
\textsuperscript{102} «Χαλάστρακα,» Ibid., 652, pp. 56-57.
\textsuperscript{103} «Χαλάστρακα,» Ibid., 675, pp. 58-59.
\textsuperscript{104} «Χαλάστρακα,» Ibid., 2328-2329, pp. 164-165.
\textsuperscript{105} «Χαλάστρακα,» Ibid., 2330, pp. 164-165.
\textsuperscript{106} «Χαλάστρακα,» Ibid., 2370, pp. 166-167.
\textsuperscript{107} «Χαλάστρακα,» Ibid., 2370, pp. 166-167.
\textsuperscript{108} «Χαλάστρακα,» Ibid., 2326, pp. 164-165.
\textsuperscript{109} «Χαλάστρακα,» Ibid., 2329, pp. 164-165.
\textsuperscript{110} «Χαλάστρακα,» Ibid., 2334, pp. 164-165.
This fundamental opposition equally exists also in both the senses of audition and sight. The chirping of heaven’s birds, as well as its blinding white light, diametrically oppose the dark, rough and foul stench of hell. Claude Lévi-Strauss also confirms this in his work The Raw and The Cooked, while explaining how noise and odor are replaced by pleasant sounds and fragrance. Of great interest is also the fact that the sexual code is openly showcased in the context of hell, although inferred through a food code in the context of heaven. This is demonstrated in Epiphanius’ vision for St. Andrew the Fool, where the consumption of heavenly fruit is nonexistent: [“Did I not see you, not only that you took of its fruit and ate but also that you enjoyed it to repletion?”; “he swore and insisted that he had not even touched as much as a mouthful of it”]. The former statement implies the female’s sexual code, which is one of exuberant consumption, while the latter refers to the male food code, one of abstinence and sperm retention. This controversial relation of opposites confirms, nonetheless, a deeper implication. It assumes that stench and decay are natural in hell, while fragrance, restoration and order [«εὐαίσθησις» (beauty) +«ἀμάραντα» (never-fading) +«παράτατες» (stood in rows like one line of battle behind the other) + «εὐπρεπεστάτοις» (splendid)] are features that define a heavenly culture.

Consequently, the stench is the non-edible and natural display of femininity. Milk is a product that is offered, but is non-edible in heaven. Thereafter emerges the cultural component of stench, but only when associated with sexual activity. On the contrary, heaven’s pleasant odors are associated with abstinence from sexual practices. From a cultural perspective, the non-edible is the vegetative that possesses positive cultural implications, while the edible is the animal, bound up with sepsis, and consequently assessed in a negative way. As it turns out, the life of St. Andrew is depicted by both images of heaven and hell. Each gender’s resolution toward the edible or non-edible elements is obvious. Animal hierarchy is edible. It integrates the female and is a consequence

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113 ὡς εἰς τὸν ᾅδην ἔφυγε, ἀλλὰ καὶ εἰς κήπους τούτου ἰππέλαυσα; Rydén, The Life of St. Andrew the Fool. II, 1721-1723, pp. 126-127.
114 ἀλλὰ ἰππέλαυσα πρὸς παράτατον (stood in rows like one line of battle behind the other) + «εὐπρεπεστάτοις» (splendid) + «τὰξι τινὶ καὶ κοσμιώτητι» (in proper order) are features that define a heavenly culture.
115 Consequently, the stench is the non-edible and natural display of femininity. Milk is a product that is offered, but is non-edible in heaven. Thereafter emerges the cultural component of stench, but only when associated with sexual activity. On the contrary, heaven’s pleasant odors are associated with abstinence from sexual practices. From a cultural perspective, the non-edible is the vegetative that possesses positive cultural implications, while the edible is the animal, bound up with sepsis, and consequently assessed in a negative way. As it turns out, the life of St. Andrew is depicted by both images of heaven and hell. Each gender’s resolution toward the edible or non-edible elements is obvious. Animal hierarchy is edible. It integrates the female and is a consequence

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116 Ibid., 529, pp. 48-49.
117 Ibid., 529, pp. 48-49.
118 Ibid., 545-546, pp. 48-49.
119 Ibid., 557, pp. 50-51.
120 Ibid., 653, pp. 56-57.
121 «Πήγα δὲ ἦν τὸν ἄνοικὸν καὶ ἄνοικον βρύσοιται γάλα καὶ μέλι» (It had wells gushing with milk and honey), Ibid., 698-699, pp. 58-59.
122 This fundamental opposition equally exists also in both the senses of audition and sight. The chirping of heaven’s birds, as well as its blinding white light, diametrically oppose the dark, rough and foul stench of hell. Claude Lévi-Strauss also confirms this in his work The Raw and The Cooked, while explaining how noise and odor are replaced by pleasant sounds and fragrance. Of great interest is also the fact that the sexual code is openly showcased in the context of hell, although inferred through a food code in the context of heaven. This is demonstrated in Epiphanius’ vision for St. Andrew the Fool, where the consumption of heavenly fruit is nonexistent: [“Did I not see you, not only that you took of its fruit and ate but also that you enjoyed it to repletion?”; “he swore and insisted that he had not even touched as much as a mouthful of it”]. The former statement implies the female’s sexual code, which is one of exuberant consumption, while the latter refers to the male food code, one of abstinence and sperm retention. This controversial relation of opposites confirms, nonetheless, a deeper implication. It assumes that stench and decay are natural in hell, while fragrance, restoration and order [«εὐαίσθησις» (beauty) + «ἀμάραντα» (never-fading) + «παράτατες» (stood in rows like one line of battle behind the other) + «εὐπρεπεστάτοις» (splendid)] are features that define a heavenly culture. Consequently, the stench is the non-edible and natural display of femininity. Milk is a product that is offered, but is non-edible in heaven. Thereafter emerges the cultural component of stench, but only when associated with sexual activity. On the contrary, heaven’s pleasant odors are associated with abstinence from sexual practices. From a cultural perspective, the non-edible is the vegetative that possesses positive cultural implications, while the edible is the animal, bound up with sepsis, and consequently assessed in a negative way. As it turns out, the life of St. Andrew is depicted by both images of heaven and hell. Each gender’s resolution toward the edible or non-edible elements is obvious. Animal hierarchy is edible. It integrates the female and is a consequence
of a natural event in hell. It opposes the context of heaven, which is non-edible, and highlights the exclusive partnering between the male and culture.

*The Human Being’s “Devouring” Practices and Its Regurgitation*

In this context, we are able to understand the Fool’s reaction as outlined in the narrative of Saint Andrew. His life is a battle field where two opposing but complementary worlds meet. It is the place where the reversal of life becomes real. The life of the Fool presents a condition that complements the terrestrial senses of touch and taste in order to sustain violence without compensation. The most crucial element, however, is that the Fool represents an unconditional uniqueness in an urban setting. Therefore, the presence of the Fool is exemplary, because it expresses either an obvious disparity or the paradox of an encrypted truth. The Fool achieves to rid the city of its vulnerability and places it on the path to salvation. But, within the city, he represents the absolute otherness and, thus, gives the impression of being a cause for concern. He is the “anti-noise” in heaven’s silence\(^{122}\) and, therefore, this “otherness” is where the earthly meets the transcendent world.

In yet another example outlined in the narrative of Life of Saint Andrew, a disappointed wife attempts to deter her husband with magical tricks from his tendencies toward prostitutes. The refusal to ingest, in this case to fast, indicates the woman’s repressed sexual desire, which is gradually manifested in her sleep. She dreams of an old Ethiopian man, a dark-skinned and husky dog and Constantinople’s hippodrome statues. She dreams of these in succession, wishing that they would have sex with her. Even in her sleep, she ingests a frog, snakes and reptiles, which express the paradox of her dreamy state. However, this kind of consumption could also be perceived either as an excessive yet basic need to consume or as a need to give into animalistic sexual temptations. These needs appear because of cessation or food restriction. But, even after fasting, which is essentially therapeutic, the cause of unpleasant dreams is once again disclosed to the betrayed spouse in her sleep. The magician overs her sacred icons with foul-smelling stools from top to bottom, which “were smeared with human excrement from top to bottom and emitting an unmatchable stench.”\(^{123}\) These elements of bodily secretions indicate an “endearing reversal,” which confirms the elimination of sexual desire as opposed to its need.

At the same time, the dream may reveal the denaturing activity of being overly-sexualized in a non-verbal reality,\(^{124}\) as in the case of the woman’s sleep. So the wife witnesses a second “endearing” reverse event. Her oil candle fills up. But, instead of oil, there is dog urine: “the lamp was filled with

\(^{122}\) ἀκούσι- μεγάλης παρουσίας γεγονόσης (suddenly there was a deep silence), *Ibid.*, 579-580, pp. 52-53.


When she wakes up, she comes to realize the magical act that took place in order to keep her husband close to her. Consequently, she then feels as if she has fallen into a sewer. This event brings forth a third assumption, one of “reverse ingestion.” All of these reversals are an imaginary verbalization of deprivation. They function in order to deconstruct the “devouring” nature of the self, which reveals the inevitability of death. Moreover, the narrative of St. Andrew’s Life is especially obvious at this point. The “reverse ingestion” corresponds to the inhibition of physical needs, but in a nonverbal world: “they sleep and drink gladly, pursue relaxation, fornicate, devote themselves to gluttony, laugh, sing, play the guitar and satisfy the desires of the flesh carelessly.”126 This kind of regurgitation (i.e. the reverse of ingestion) is the only stool that has the unique advantage of providing access to God’s hungry mouth: “unless we are baked through the temptations we cannot come unto God a most pleasant piece of bread.”127 We deduce that the dietary needs of the divine are very modest. Indeed, they lean toward the nullification of caloric requirements, which makes evident the fundamental destitution of God, which is contrary to the insatiable Hades.

When the human being’s physical needs are limitless, the inner self is defeated. The human being remains fundamentally an outsider in terms of assimilating with God. This assimilation takes place only when agreement with God occurs, which, of course, means the impossible return to nature’s needs and material things. Consequently, according to the narrative of the Life of St. Andrew, a human being’s need for excessive consumption — “bleat like a goat /barked violently like a shepherd’s dog” — is identical to the sensuous pleasures and impurities of the animalistic state: “Besetting him with bad thoughts through the burning desire of the flesh he tried to draw his soul’s beauty down pitifully into the mire of lechery,” in other words, a totalitarian state: “that God does not need filthy servants.”130 The narrative, then, attempts to reconstruct a reality that lacks all traces of an animal state: “defiled and rotten and stinking and smeared with dung and brimstone.”131

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125 οὐκινδηλίζαν γέμισον οὖρον κοινάς,» Rydén, The Life of St. Andrew the Fool. II., 2515-2516, pp. 176-177.
127 «αὖτι μὴ ἐμφαινομένοι διὰ τῶν πειρασμῶν, θεῷ ἢδοτατος ἄρτος γενέσθαι οὐ δύναμεθα,» Ibid., 2778-2779, p. 192.
129 «Τοῖς πυρηναῖς δὲ λογισμοῖς διὰ τῆς πυρὸς τῆς σαρκὸς ὑπαινορκάζων ἔλκειν ὑστερὸς ἐνεπλακά τὸ λογισμὸν βορβόρω τὸ τοῦτον πυρρόν κάλλος,» Ibid., 2720-2722, pp. 188-189.
130 «ὦ θεός ἰδουαρχός ὑπάρχεις οὐ χρήζα,» Ibid., 2839, pp. 196-197.
131 «μεμιασμένην καὶ στεσπάσθαι καὶ ἀπόντιον καὶ ἀλεμμένην κόπον καὶ τέας,» Ibid., 2860-2861, pp. 198-199.
This self-restraint style of resisting nature’s imperatives \(^{132}\) includes all days of the week, even Sunday. Nevertheless, this resistance soon becomes abolished, along with the reality of space and time. As a result of this, the natural passing of time degrades. In this case, diverging from one’s feelings, instincts and appetites becomes a risk to the “progression” of time, because it implies a new order of time, one that “contracts.” The latter is interpreted as the need for total minimalism that equates to the weight and the size of one and only substance, that of the human soul: “light [...], very fine [...], into a kind of invisible limb.” \(^{133}\)

From all the above-mentioned, it becomes clear that the acceptance of a self-restraint system is carried over to all natural and societal environments. Uniqueness exists when one is in a state of deprivation, granted that fasting and abstinence seem to decisively determine, in a way, the natural history of a human being. In the emaciated space and time established by Christian anchorites, where needs are restricted voluntarily, a new field of complete brightness emerges. The body’s emaciating state allows the dominant sense of vision to strengthen. A noticeable change in the range of light gives meaning to the transition from total darkness to a blinding brightness. \(^{134}\) Restricted senses have a unique privilege. A look alone offers access to light. At the same time, however, the intake of light is what remains when all, but one, of the bodily senses are removed. The sensed experience is reduced to the field of vision alone. This restriction is intertwined with another function, one that restores all bodily senses when time comes to an end. \(^{135}\) But these are not the sinner’s littering senses of touch and taste, which the evil bites into, previously having grabbed them by the hand. Furthermore, the mouth (i.e. food) and the rectum (i.e. bowel movements) are complementary functions that represent the entry and exit of food from the body. The demonic is identified as the body’s “devouring” function and possesses all of the determinant features of touch and darkness. Its reversal, however, restores brightness. Viewed in this light, the field of darkness is identical to touch, taste, smell, “devouring” and is detached from the field of brightness. Hence, identity and otherness are two functions that establish a system in two opposing worlds. As a result, what is

\(^{132}\) “τήν τῆς σαρκὸς πύρον εἰς ἐπιθυμίαν τῆς γυναικὸς αὐτοῦ” (by the fire of his flesh he had desired his wife), \textit{Ibid.}, 2870-2871, pp. 198-199.


\(^{134}\) “(...) ὅσον δὲ ἐπιμένομεν τῇ ναρτείᾳ, τῇ παννύχῳ στάσει, τῇ προσευχῇ, τῇ δαίμονα, τῇ ἐγκρατείᾳ, τοῦ θανομοθετημένου ῆμιν ὑπὸ τοῦ αἰτίου πνεύματος, τοσοῦτον φαινομένον, ροτετόμεθα, λαμπρόνωμέθα” (as much as we persist in our fasting, our standing in all-night prayer, our supplication and abstinence, which have been imposed upon us by the Holy Spirit, so much we become illumined, beaming, radiant), \textit{Ibid.}, 2922-2924, pp. 202-203.

\(^{135}\) “(...) καὶ συναδρήσουσι τὰ ὀστά τῶν ἄνθρωπων, ἐκατέρτων πρὸς τὴν ἀρμονίαν αὐτῶν, καὶ ἐφιμέρσουσι καὶ κολληθήσονται, καὶ ἀναζήσεται ἐπ᾿ αὐτὰ νέον καὶ σέρις, καὶ ὀστά ἐκάστω σώματι ἢ ψυχῇ αὐτοῦ ἀνθρώπου (...) καὶ ἀναζήσεται ἐπ᾿ αὐτὰ νέον καὶ σέρις, καὶ ὀστά ἐκάστω σώματι ἢ ψυχῇ αὐτοῦ ἀνθρώπου (...) (and the bones of men will come together, each to its own joint, and they will unite and be fastened together, and sinews and flesh will spring up on them, and to each body will be given its soul, imperishable...), \textit{Ibid.}, 2964-2967, pp. 204-205.
declared in the Life of St. Andrew is death’s reversal. But this affirmation is related nonetheless to the human being’s “devouring” behavior.

Meanwhile the distinction between a devouring behavior and the behavior of regurgitation, or reverse ingestion, must be determined and the allocation of human beings into two classes should be statistically recorded with evidence. St. Andrew the Fool established this taxonomic distribution with a statistical sample derived from those leaving a Sunday Service (i.e. the exit poll). The narrative provides the opportunity to reconstruct the verbal experience of two opposing worlds. The positive behavior of “reverse ingestion” equates to brightness and abstinence as the following terms show: [οὐκετάνοι (white); γρίφων (snow); ἀλεοί (sun); χρυσοί κατακεκουμημένοι (wreaths of gold); εὐώδεια (fragrance); ἄνθις (violets); ρόδα (roses); ἅγιοστόντο (decked out); παρθένια (purple); νεανίσκοι δὲ περικαλλόστατοι (very beautiful young men); άγια ἐκσωρακοσσείς (Holy Lent); νηστείας (fasting); ἄρωτα (invisibly); σωματικοί ὄφθαλμοι (bodily eyes); χάλκινος ἕλιος (sunbeam); ἀλάμπουν (shining); ἁπαχόμενοι ποντικίας, μονίμες, μητρικός καὶ πάσης φλυαρίας (keeping away from fornication, adultery, remembrance of wrongs and all kinds of foolish talk); γλαύνας χρυσάς (golden cloaks); ἀγὴλην (beaming); περιστέραι λευκά (white doves); μύροι (perfume); θυμιάματος εἴσοδια (smell of incense); ὀστεροφεύγων (deny)]. 136 On the contrary, the negative behavior of devouring equates to darkness and excessive loathing: [ὑπεβολομένον (black as soot); κοπρώδης (dirty); βεβορβορομένη (filthy); αὐλουροὶ (cats); κυνάρια (dogs); ὀρειχαλκός (snakes); ἀπορρέοντα βόρβορον (the filth that flowed); βατράχοι (frogs); θηρίοι (animals); ἁπαχωμενοὶ (profligate men); ἀρσενοκοιταί (sodomites); μοιχαὶ (adulterers); μαλακοί (catamites); ἀλασχόρφου (lovers of money); πρόπου (swine); ἄρηβορον τῆς ἀμαρτίας (the filth of their sin)]; 137 [ὁι μηδὲ αὐτὰς τὰς γενομεμενέσσας ἡμέρας τῶν ἁγίων νυκτερινῶν φυλάττοντες, άλλα μᾶλλον ἀποστρεφόμενοι καὶ μησοίντες αὐτὰς καὶ βαρετὰς ἠγούμενοι] (they don’t even observe the customary days of Holy Lent but rather turn away and hate them even considering them a nuisance)]; 138 [οἱ μηδὲ αὐτὰς τὰς γενομεμενέσσας ἡμέρας τῶν ἁγίων νυκτερινῶν φυλάττοντες, άλλα μᾶλλον ἀποστρεφόμενοι καὶ μησοίντες αὐτὰς καὶ βαρετὰς ἠγούμενοι] (they don’t even observe the customary days of Holy Lent but rather turn away and hate them even considering them a nuisance)]; 139 [οἱ μηδὲ αὐτὰς τὰς γενομεμενέσσας ἡμέρας τῶν ἁγίων νυκτερινῶν φυλάττοντες, άλλα μᾶλλον ἀποστρεφόμενοι καὶ μησοίντες αὐτὰς καὶ βαρετὰς ἠγούμενοι] (they don’t even observe the customary days of Holy Lent but rather turn away and hate them even considering them a nuisance)]; 140 At the same time, the distinctness of disgust is reflected upon the terminology of olfactory discomfort.

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136 For the terms, see Rydén, The Life of St. Andrew the Fool. II., Appendix a, 17-45, pp. 362-363; 364-365.
137 Ibid., Appendix a, 68-104, pp. 366-367; 368-369.
138 Ibid., Appendix a, 82-84, pp. 368-369.
139 Ibid., Appendix a, 99-100, pp. 368-369.
140 Ibid., Appendix a, 101, pp. 368-369.
and darkness: «μέλανες τε καὶ ζωφόδες» (black and dark). These impressions of evil are the predominant otherness that halt the continuity of the Christian culture and are enhanced when furious souls completely lose control: “Ethiopians armed with fiery sticks.”

All of these terms render the very essence of a “devouring” behavior, whereas energy gained from psychic turmoil and pure hostility reinforces them. At times, there are terms mentioned in the narrative that describe a discrepant state. They also express the origin of anger’s presence: “these are the irascible and hot-tempered.” In other instances, there are terms that convey the intense desire for destruction that resorts to armed violence: “that is the image of wrath, anger and fury.” The negative function of defecation is inconformity with the latter: “all but squander their whole life on these passions, although they know that they will reap no other fruit than filth and unbearable foul smell”; [holding two-edged swords]/«covered with blood/«a viper full of wrath and fury»/«senseless, as it were, and bereft of reason/«undisturbed anxiety»/«thieves and those who have acquired the disgusting passion of profilagry»/«because they are set on fire by the spiritual beast, the vipers»/«to murder»]. To an extent, these verbal recordings recognize the value of reversal and represent a reality in nature that desires to see this reversal as the backbone to a religious experience (i.e. either by reverse defecation or regurgitation or fasting). Christianity has to compete with the highest form of otherness, which is none other than the negative value assigned to animal behavior and the animal species. Here are some terms that define animal behavior: “and the most despised among beasts, I mean frogs and rats and tortoises and others still more abominable.” Similarly, a human body’s features are described as being splashed with soot: “and they had their bodies covered all around from head to foot with soot.” The animal species thus forbid access to the sun’s brightness —“and their eyes blinded so that they could not see the sun” — and to the transcendental reduction that light possesses.

141 Ibid., Appendix a, 105-106, pp. 368-369.
142 «Αἵθιοπες ἀπηγμομένοι, μάχαιρας ὀξείας ἐν ταῖς χερεῖς αὐτῶν κατέχοντες,» Ibid., Appendix a, 108-109, pp. 368-369.
143 ἀνθίζουσι δὲ εἶσιν οἰχύλοι καὶ θημόδες,» Ibid., Appendix a, 131, pp. 370-371.
145 ἀλλὰ δὲ ἄλοι τῆς ζωῆς αὐτῶν χρόνου εἰς ταῦτα τὰ πάθη πάθη καταδαπανώντας ἐμαυτοῖς, μηδὲν ἄλλο καρπαπέσον εἰδότες ἢ κόψουν καὶ διωκοῦσιν ἀφόρητον,» Ibid., Appendix a, 96-98, pp. 368-396.
146 «μαυραίας διοίκουμες κατέχοντες/»«αἵματος πλήρες/»«ἐχθρία πλήρης ὀργῆς καὶ θυμοῦ/»«ἀνάμισθηκεν καὶ φρενάν ἀμορφοῦ/»«τάραχός ἀστασιαστος/»«ἀρπάγης καὶ οἱ τὰ πάθη τῆς βασιλικῆς ἀσωματίας ἔχοντες»«οὐδὲ τὸ νοητὸ τῆριον τῆς ἐργίνης ἐμπιρικομένονον/»«φρέαρ τοῦ φόνου.» For the terms, see Ibid., Appendix a, 116-126, pp. 370-371.
149 «κατεπτόθησαν τὰ ὄμματα αὐτῶν τοῦ μὴ βλέπειν τὸν ἥλιον,» Ibid., Appendix a, 141, pp. 372-373.
Saint Andrew the Fool’s insanity is demonstrated by the human being’s life experiences when living in the Byzantine urban setting. At a first glance, his life upsets the cultural norm. The life of the holy fools attempt to redefine what a mental disorder looks like in an urban setting. The Fool’s insanity is the medium that, from the outset, describes the actions of an uncontrolled natural world. He refuses to comply with customs and so threatens to undermine the urban cultural ideal. The Fool serves as the epitome of animalistic behavior. A reversed, yet disguised, mediocrity embodies the Fool’s insanity and presents itself in the ruptures of an urban setting. Consequently, the reader soon faces a dilemma that challenges and internally overthrows the normalcy of conventional culture. The Fool’s actions become an opportunity to reexamine the animal’s essence, the human being’s outward behaviors and self-awareness. Seen under the light of a reversal, St. Andrew’s narrative captures a meaning. In the narrative’s author, the Fool’s insanity, seen through the eyes of urban residents, is synonymous with irrationality. The Fool finds himself there because he truly represents the function of reversal. For the author of the narrative, this animalistic insanity introduces a world of transcendent possibility. It is as if his foolishness is a tool with a reverse function from nature’s devouring mechanism.

Saint Andrew the Fool personifies the kind of animalistic behavior that ultimately ends up with the elimination of the self. In this context, the Fool bears the weight of something ambiguous that reintroduces animal behavior as a mechanism for self-awareness in the cultural order. Without this awareness, it is impossible to understand the difference between the order of nature and that of culture. In this sense, the Fool expresses the interweaving of two complementary life conditions. These are the need to self-confess to others, and also to acknowledge individual differences as a necessary prerequisite in order to appreciate others. Thus, the Fool’s illegal actions remove every possible safety measure from a Byzantine city. But these actions are considered imperative because they allow the Byzantine citizen to understand nature’s double function. Consequently, the Fool’s actions introduce an essential distinction between the sensible and the intelligible. His actions agree with fulfilling one’s physical needs, but nevertheless show the significance of self-restraint practices. By not ingesting, the Fool’s presence breaks nature’s chain and introduces new elements into the conventional cultural order. Rejecting man’s enslavement to the order of nature allows for the denaturalization of the human being. Only within this framework does it become possible to shift human actions towards the transcending finitude and fixed limits, instead of toward the extravagance seen in nature’s reproductive function. The path of “anti-nature” leads to the being’s emaciation. This potential to spread the animal’s “devouring” behaviors presents a negative backwardness, and hence is fixed far opposite from Christian salvation. In conclusion, the non-consumption of “raw food” results from abstinence and rawness. Let us recall here the statistical sample generated from the “exit poll”: “naked, darkened like Ethio-
pian{s, holding two-edged swords covered with blood.} The narrative of St. Andrew’s Life insists on the nudity and bloodiness that describe cruelty. However, this experience of cruelty is what essentially differentiates the earthly from the heavenly.

Conclusion

Once conceptualized, these binary oppositions structure the world on two foundations of two extremes. Each of these extremes gathers the “qualitative features” of a kind of exclusivity. From this point of view, the aforementioned binary oppositions describe two scenarios. On one hand, there is a utopian scenario of a disembodied and divine ascension and, on the other hand, there is the “dystopia” of the human being experiencing the body’s constraints through the torturous descent into the Hades. In fact, these extreme opposites define the constraints of any discrepancy in a society. Instead of seeking a third path, society’s “standardization” depends on intensifying the different, which is favorable to heaven’s exclusivity. In the worthy yet burdened pre-modern setting of Byzantine and post-Byzantine civilization, the dualism of opposite structures (i.e. culture-nature, male-female, divine-demonic) dominates; terms to which possessive evaluative nuances refer for supremacy, legitimacy and male identity. Negative evaluations imply impurity and female identity. In this asymmetric relationship, male represents the principle of identity while female represents the otherness. Consequently, female identity becomes an adverse counterweight to the male’s sound realizations. Hence, Saint Andrew the Fool’s vision for Byzantine idealizes male sexual abstinence. But projected therein are female impurity and woman’s various sexual practices, which lead to excessive use and abuse of the body. Nevertheless, the female confirms the durability of the ancestral duality of male and female. This duality extends toward many more dualities, such as culture-nature (i.e. nature being equal to primitivism), active-passive, healthy-infected, clean-unclean and right-wrong. First of all, what is worth mentioning is a negative evaluation triggered by this distinction in the male-female dualism. Secondly, the dualistic make-up of human life itself devalues female fertility in the male’s institutional standard. Thirdly, the aforementioned dualistic conceptions are culturally defined. In fact, all these dualisms shape a world of hierarchical constitution that exacerbates inequality and hierarchy, and reproduces the taxonomic categorization of the identity and the other.

In reference to the events of the Last Judgment, the Byzantine and mainly post-Byzantine representations of bodily torture reveal that man is captive

150 οὐς εὐθύς, ζεζοφωμένους ὡς Αἴθιοπας, μαχαίρας δίστομους κατέχοντας, καὶ ἀταίρα ἀμιτος πλήρεις. Ibid., Appendix a, 115-117, pp. 370-371.
152 D. Mouriki, “An Unusual Representation of the Last Judgment in a Thirteenth Century Fresco at St. George Near Kouvaras in Attica,” Δελτίων της Χριστιανικής Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας, 8 (1975-1976), 145-171; M. Garidis, Études sur le Jugement Dernier Post-Byz-
to his own mortality. For the Christian faithful, this communicates the cruelty of hell’s torturous weapons that serve as a punishment for the terrestrial sins committed. However, there are many ways to establish the permeability of death. Other ways include man’s cultural temporality after death and a survival mode while the body is under constant torture. This sort of temporality is dominated by the fundamental asymmetry between pain and pleasure, torture and eroticism. Sharp torturous weapons are used while acting as reversed phalluses, thus causing pain instead of pleasure. They are nailed on the genitals of the tortured bodies. This indicates the painful penetration of these weapons into the human body in the most marginal and sadistic way. In hell, the use of sharp weapons in order to nail with intensity the genitals of the tortured not only implies the annihilation of the human body, but also creates a ban upon this sexual activity under the reign of religion. For this reason, in the Last Judgment’s artistic scene, the sexualized body becomes condemned. Everything within a sexualized body corresponds to the underworld’s identities where the gender’s personality lies on a phallic structure. So, in this place of punishment and torture, the phallus functions as an anti-pleasure inducing organ.

Hell is qualified as a constrained environment to the extent that it hosts a multitude of abominations and perversions that intend to normalize the bodies of the faithful through negative connotations. Accepting painful trauma that results from rape, a kind described with knifelike and phallic connotations, is a fact that provokes the fear of death, and thus renders the representation of trauma much more robust. But, in the context of hell, the provocation to fear death has already occurred. It is in this sense that the image of hell constructs a kind of bio-authority,153 where the disgrace of heaven is clearly declared. It is no coincidence that, in the torture scenes, sanctioned bodies are sometimes represented with their secretions and eventually become contaminated. Here, hell is a place of reference for the others and defines an environment of otherness characterized by insecurity and the risk of perforation. It is the place of demonic power that represents the release of emotions, animalistic reproduction, a disturbed sexuality and a monstrous, inhuman nature, as evidenced by the imaginary representation of a black figured and winged monster with hybrid features. The latter reflects the interweaving of sexuality with birth defects which could not be further from the origins of animal. Contrary to the annihilation by hell, the salvation of paradise indicates the creation of a familiar body and an alien one, an able body and a body that has lost its integrity.

and boasts contamination, a term that deliberately records the connotations of rape and its practices (i.e. loss of purity). Therefore, hell, as opposed to heaven clearly distinguishes between an embodied and a disembodied state. It identifies the otherness of a spoiled ideal with inferences to homosexuality. However, heaven, thanks to celibacy, is foreign to the narrow confines of demographic (i.e. reproductive) distress. Therefore, in terms of the bio-politics of the Christian salvation, the image of the tortured in hell introduces a kind of place that allows one to worship the pure, asexual self, and reject the evil and gendered monstrous otherness.

Between *Paideía* and *Mystagōgia*:
Formative Ideal and the Crisis of Today

**Dan Chiţoiu**

*Introduction*

It is not easy to obtain an accurate understanding of what is particular to the formative ideals that various European cultural traditions have. A syncretism of values and traditions, an overlap of spiritual values and interpreting perspectives is an improper, but yet the most handy, solution for an interpreter, if being still under the influence (either conscious or not) of the Enlightenment and Rationalism (still having a significant influence nowadays). When searching for an adequate interpretation, we are found in a strange cultural situation nowadays, as the paideutic paradigm that crosses both the education system and the present cultural values still owes much to the ideals of Enlightenment. If proposing to follow the meaning of edification for present day women and men, we must establish the original frameworks that allow us this research and guide us towards it. Our tough conscience to have an individuality that may not be altered or diminished originates in the intuitions and formulations of Late Antiquity.

The 4th century AD was the time when a new mentality and new interpretation manner, unknown by Late Antiquity (at least at the cultural level), began to make an impact, i.e. Christianity. At first, the refined Neo-Platonic thinking that dominated philosophy did not view the Christian message as a challenge, yet, with the emergence of writings by the Cappadocian Fathers and other early Patristic authors, it became obvious that the new spirituality brought along a kind of asceticism and mysticism that could definitely not be ignored. Conversely, the Christian Fathers in the decisive 4th century AD had to express a practical and practicing understanding of the evangelic message, and they achieved this using Neo-Platonic language.

*Paideia, Neo-Platonic and Christian*

The tension between the Christian and the Neo-Platonic understandings of the ultimate meaning of human experience lay, not so much in the texts and discourses, but in the significance of concrete experience and in the inner experience of the self. The antagonism was not between two manners of *explaining* the world, but between two ways of *living* the world. The philosophy in late Antiquity involved a practical path of inner experience through the statements of a system of thought, which involved asceticism and also what may be described as mysticism. Asceticism had become a necessity of the practice of philosophy, for concentration, focus and the strengthening of capacities that jointly assured the achievement of the philosophical undertaking, which was
not limited to theory. The term “mysticism” covers the content of this type of philosophical practice—although it is commonly associated with religious acts—as the goal was ek-stasis, the coming out of one’s self. If, over time, the influence of the Neo-Platonic spiritual and formative path declined, it was because, both in practical terms and in its promise, Christian mysticism proved its superiority.¹ The Athens Academy had simply lost its following among the Greek aristocracy. The well-off citizens of Athens, and of the Empire in general, would send their offspring to attend the courses of the famous school, since it guaranteed the consummate instruction, not only of the students’ minds, but also of their personality.²

By its very design, the Academy aimed at something different than the acquisition of solid knowledge of philosophy. The Greek-Hellenistic cultural tradition had long been skeptical of knowledge accumulation in itself and for itself. The initiation required, at first, the mastery of the rules of formal logic. Thus, after the cycle of a paideía common to any town school had been passed, the Late Academy proposed a level called preparation mysteries, which focused mostly on the systematic study of Aristotle. The other level consisted of two stages, the first cycle being marked by the ideal of forming what the Greeks would call the political man, the individual who understood and practiced civic virtues. The objective was achieved by studying some of the more accessible dialogues of Plato. Yet the goal of this education system was achieved only in the last stage, which involved the study of the most difficult of Plato’s dialogues, such as Timaios or Parmenides, and, subsequently, the initiation to rigorous ascetic practices and also to Orphic mysticism and Chaldean oracles. This orientation in the training of the individual was sought by Christian paideía as well, yet the differences appeared in the description and the understanding of the last stage of initiation. The path of the union with the One, the Neo-Platonist theme, presupposed the doctrine of emanation. Yet the Christian doctrine vigorously emphasized the difference in nature between the created and the uncreated, asserting that there was an absolute difference between the two, whereas the theory of emanation considered that the mystical act of contemplation (ek-stasis) was possible due to the shared nature of the human mind and the Ultimate Reality, the One.

The Byzantines, as promoters of new the Christian formative paradigm, never abandoned principles of the Greek and Hellenistic-inspired paideía, and even largely maintained the contents of this model of forming the individual. Yet the difference with this heritage occurred when the ultimate claims of the

¹ I would like to repeat that the argument is not over the theoretical and discursive superiority (although in this area too Christianity brought exceptional change), but the motivation offered by the contents of an inner experience. In this manner one can explain the closing down of the Athens Academy by emperor Justinian in the year 529 AD. Although certain modern historians have considered it a brutal act of censorship of anything that did not reflect Christian thought, a more thorough evaluation of the context of the decision has proven that the reality was different.

old paideía were considered: to make one capable of attaining union with the One by himself, by his own power, the highest goal of Neo-Platonism.

**New Description of Human’s Open Existence and Need of Initiation**

This was viewed as impossible from the Christian perspective, so that it was thought that the ultimate experience could not be result of any type of formal instruction, but of a different guidance, which could be called practical spiritual guidance. The latter can only be achieved through spiritual guidance, an exclusively face to face relationship, yet one which did not equate to the passing on of information or techniques, because, for the first time, the absolute and radical uniqueness of personal experience was acknowledged. Of particular significance was the understanding of the human from this novel perspective. Gregory of Nyssa and Basil the Great faced the task of describing an existential situation which could not be confined to the classical Greek philosophy understanding of nature (ousía). In light of the explicit or implicit presentation of the Holy Trinity in the Gospels, its essential characteristic is the Personal dimension, one not being conditioned by the Divine Nature. Christian doctrine was the first one to establish the boundaries that enable the recognition of man’s free existence. Freedom, in the proper sense, involves the possibility to overcome conditioning and predetermined frameworks. The postulation of man’s personal dimension (hypóstasis) marked an essential leap, compared with the philosophical understanding of man up to that point.

The pinnacle of the Greek meditation on man’s existential situation was Tragedy, which described the individual’s forever unsuccessful attempt to evade the fate that ruled his life. Tragedy was the limit that Greek meditation could attain in reflecting on man’s effort to suspend his conditionings, because there were no arguments in favor of man’s capacity to genuinely alter the course of his existence. Christian doctrine did not merely accredit the fact that man is able to make decisions freely and to realize his decisions, it also emphasized the possibility that man can radically change his way of living, his own existential condition, to be in other words an open existence. Of course, such a statement involves paradox, being very difficult to make reliable statements about human. The paradox required the use of a different type of language, called “apophatic,” which is based mainly on negation and suspension in order to escape the trap of describing what cannot be positively stated in any way. Consequently, the only way to express the personal mode of existence is to exceed conceptual language (which frames the object of its description in definitions and details), and to adopt a new acceptation of the terms’ use, which alludes to an apophatic reality, rather than categorizing it in some way. The word is given the role of indicator, signaling a reality that eludes conceptual frameworks and even simple description.

The understanding of a fundamental difference between God and World was full of consequences for the way in which the possibility of knowledge

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was conceived. In the Greek horizon before Christianity, it was stated that the possibility of knowing the truth was offered by the co-naturalness of the human mind with God, because the world is not ontically different from God, but it is an emanation of Him. But the Christian doctrine brings the conscience of an unsurpassed abyss between the created mind and uncreated God, and therefore it is impossible for the mind to find out about God on its own. For this reason, it was necessary to reconsider the acceptance of philosophy as a truth-searching exercise. To philosophize could not any longer mean a rational effort to grasp the mysteries of reality. Yet this did not mean a rejection of the value of classic philosophic exercise, as made by Plato or Aristotle. But a preparatory role was granted to this way of searching, a very important one, in the economy of searching, the ultimate purpose of the philosophical exercise. It was called “exōterikós”; however, this did not describe an inferior level, but it pointed out that this is the maximum possibility that the human effort could reach in knowledge; it is what we call the knowledge from the outside. This “outside” means the lack of something which can offer true and complete knowledge, “being outside” the relation what could deliver the truth. For the entire cultural history of the Christian East, practicing this outside philosophy was considered to be forming the mind’s possibilities to discern, because any higher spiritual experience has many dangers, such as the risk of falling into an imaginary frame of mind, as long as the rational capacities are not completely formed. It has been considered that instruction in the classic Greek philosophical texts could accomplish this formative task. For this spiritual horizon, the Truth is not something any longer but Someone. Reaching the truth takes the form of a personal relation with the Truth as Someone, as a Person. In this understanding, we can no longer talk about an objective knowledge of the truth, so the much used later difference of modality between the objective and the subjective becomes useless.

Outer and Inner Philosophy: Paideía and Mystagōgia

More importantly, there is also an inner philosophy, from the inside, which received the name “esōterikós.” This philosophy does not follow the rigor of the Greek classic rationality: its specific form is given by that which is characteristic of each person in his/her opening to communion with Logos, with God. This is the reason why, in its intimacy, this part of philosophy is situated higher than the speech, it names the depth of the personal relation between the

5 Which today we call mystical, but it did not have this name because it did not have the exceptional character we associate today to mystical experience, but it had a signification of an experience through which anyone could search the true path to Christ.
7 C. Cavarnos, Byzantine Thought and Art (Massachusetts: Institute for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, 1968), p. 15.
Creator and the creature, a relation always unique and non-repeatable. Nevertheless, reason is not absent from this experience, but takes superior forms which cannot be simply placed in a discursive expression. This is also the place where the paradox of this expression lays, in an experience which does not go around reason, but it cannot be put into words either. This is the most practical dimension of philosophy, one that involves the entire being, all of the human capacities and has, as its consequence, a change of man in his depth, which received the name metánoia in the Patristic texts. It means a change of mind, not as in a modification of its function, a decrease or alteration of its rational capacities, but as in opening of it to the understanding of what is above the creation; it is a participation with the uncreated. The consequences of this experience are much more ample; they imply the whole human being, even the body. There are changes also in the references to the world, in the way we interact with it, so that we could talk about a real influence of man upon the world through his inner changes and not through external direct actions or things. From this point of view, we can even say that a subtle influence, but one which implies precisely the profound way of existence of the world, is the consequence of the achievement of this metánoia, rather than the outer interaction with the objectivity of this world.

The recuperation of this understanding is very productive nowadays, not just for philosophical discourse, but also for the orientation of educational models. In fact, the broader issue that needs clarification is how a certain doctrine on the person can be relevant for contemporary education. When man is understood as a modality of personal existence, he is not just a simple piece in a universal aggregate that is guided by immutable laws. The positivism that dominated the practice of science over the last three centuries (whose influence is strong to this day) could not lend man anything more than the role of a ring in a chain of determination that is under the strict command of the causal laws of nature. This vision could hardly find a meaning for the notion of human freedom. The notion of person could not be understood under scientific research. As far as classical science is concerned, guided as it is by the rules of positive experiment and of its verifiability, personal reality as a mode of interaction with the world cannot even be considered. Yet, contemporary border science is in the situation to resort to what lies beyond the visible, especially when it must offer the description of a certain reality that eludes conventional scientific explanation. It increasingly takes into account the elements pertaining to the “data” of the personal mode of existence and influence. To a certain extent, advanced research in neurosciences could describe the influence that man can have on the world, or on himself, by spiritual practices. So, the contemporary recuperation of the Eastern Christian perspective on the person can have significant consequences.

Conclusion

This understanding can offer a different answer to the question about human freedom, to the question of how this freedom can be described and under-
stood. If the signification of freedom were to go beyond the borders of moral and moralizing discourse, then a consistent description of the effectiveness of the person’s influence must be offered, from the perspective of the relationship between freedom and determinism. The person is not a static reality; it is something that can be, rather, intuited. However, what we might call dynamism, in this case, is not exactly used simply to describe or to frame. The person is a reality that “does not stand,” in its very fundamental grounds. It “moves,” i.e. “it is in the making,” it becomes that which it was not. Wo/man is not; he/she becomes, for he is called to go beyond himself, to be united with a nature beyond himself and all creation. The apophatism of the person is a phrase that must be interpreted in the light of this latter statement. The language of negation is more appropriate when one aims to talk about something that ceaselessly makes oneself and is, beyond oneself, in union with something above the self. Yet one must add that this calling and this proper feature of the person does not point to a single path, because everything is discussed within the limits of identity, of the unrepeatability, of unity. Nothing else exists but concrete persons, and the concrete, unique and unrepeatable experience of each of them. Although wo/man, as personal reality, has freedom by his very constitution, the manifestation of this freedom supposes something more or something less; it supposes a certain way of becoming actual that cannot be presupposed beforehand. Typical for the Eastern Christian spirituality is the notion of betterment, understood as a process of enhancing human’s humanity. This progress, or betterment, as it is termed, can be described as the attaining of somebody’s “measure.” So, somebody’s identity is not a fixed configuration of psychological characteristics, but a kind of virtual tendency that can be, more or less, actualized.

Yet this road to somebody’s betterment requires guidance, and this guidance is an act that cannot be done by following a manual, or a book, because of the concreteness and non-repeatability of the personal mode of existence. The Byzantines used the ancient Greek word “mystagōgia” for this guidance, intending, by this naming, to indicate that there is rather an initiation than a teaching, than something related to the classical paideía. I consider this formative dimension as the missing aspect of today’s education. We need, today, a formative strategy that should compensate just the building of practical or theoretical abilities, this compensation being the initiation process, as a personal guidance dedicated to concrete and unique persons. This mystagogical approach can be described as the discovery of what is non-repeatable, of what is not to be found in any categorical description. In that way, the human potential can be unleashed, otherwise never to be activated or to be insufficiently activated by the current educational strategy. Such a formative ideal stands under what is called spiritual humanism, a form of humanism that must compensate and correct the problematic features of Early Modernity’s secular humanism, that one which hypostasized mathematical reason as privileged.

8 As it is described, for example, by T. Weiming in Humanity and Self-Cultivation: Essays in Confucian Thought (Boston: Cheng & Tsui, 1998).
human capacity. It becomes obvious that, besides the economic crisis today, we face other types of crises, the educational one being more critical in the longer term.
Faith as the Form of Reintegration

SERGEY NIZHNIKOV

When analyzing the history of culture one can come to the conclusion, that a person, at all times, experienced spiritual crisis of a certain depth, the contradictions of which forced him to develop spiritually; however, the situation in the contemporary world is especially frightful, for, as a result of every possible kind of global accident, not only can certain tribes or states be destroyed, but all of mankind can be eliminated. Spiritual crisis has taken on a menacing scale and depth. First of all, there are problems of war, ecology and morals, which are closely integrated with each other. As humankind loses the characters of its spiritual archetype, a person loses its humaneness. Therefore, it is so necessary to reveal immemorial values with new force.

The loss of faith, Dostoevsky considered, leads to individual (Kirillov in Devil) or collective (global contemporary problems) suicide. Contemporary people meditate “to find a fairy life, but after rejecting Christ, they terminate their life by saturating the world with blood, for blood calls for blood, and the one who raises a sword dies by a sword.”1 The absence of faith, according to the thought of the writer, results in violence and crimes, but also, and this is the worst, in the irresponsibility of man, “since if you have no God, then what is then a crime?”2 Sometimes, there are such examples of human being’s desperate situations that only faith can help. The idea of faith is the absolute spiritual protection from all the misfortunes of a man’s life. It is clear that the idea on its own is not enough. In order to become a spiritual one, it has to materialize in a person, not only in his mind, but in his heart and feeling. The inner “sensors” of a man should be transformed in accordance with the idea. To make such a transformation possible, there should be a heroic act that is all spiritual and living experience. The spiritual existence of Christianity is the manifestation of such a kind of faith idea. The realization of this display is metaphysics and ontology of faith. In compliance with it, “faith is not momentum, a situation of human soul that constantly changes, but its permanent specific tonus – integrity, or virtue of spirit.”3 In the process of faith comprehension as a spiritual phenomenon, we should not perform its psychological analyses. Faith, in this aspect, is not just psychological confidence, but a fundamental existential and metaphysical orientation. Dostoevsky describes it in the following way: “Do believe till the last possible moment, let it be that all people in the world lost their faith and you are the only one who keeps it...”4

2 Ibid., p. 286.
4 Dostoevsky, The Karamazov Brothers, p. 291.
A lot of authors and thinkers of our day write on the actuality of faith. Richard Niebuhr, meditating over the present position and state of mankind, comes to conclusion that “faith is the problem that has the utmost importance.” From Russian metaphysical philosophy, the loss of faith gives birth to social disease, leads to crises of culture and personality, and in the end, to a tragedy, since, if there is no absolute value that is the goal of faith, then there is nothing to create, and, hence “the culture as concept is impossible.” Faith sets the horizon of experience and cognition “…discloses the essence of things and gives birth to gnosis.”

Faith practically determines the general world outlook of a person and its own central line. In this sense, the elimination of faith threatens to eliminate the creative ability of a person to fulfill his directive aims and to achieve his goals in general, because of the destruction of the spiritual structure of his personality. The necessity of faith follows from the position of a person in the world and from the existence of consciousness as an integral phenomenon. Only the divine consciousness can be totally filled up with knowledge, a human one, when being steadily deployed, can also increase the horizon and level of that which is unidentified. For the activity of man in the world, and for the substantiation of morality, he needs an absolute position that comes from the supposition that he is cognizant of everything, that he needs the concept of the initial reason of every being, of absolute virtue. Faith meets these requirements.

The religious spiritual symbols represent such human ideals, like metaphysical categories do. An ideal, as it is the ideal by its nature, is supposed to be treated on the basis of faith that, by the way, does not exclude knowledge. Faith in general demonstrates the relation of the self-consciousness of a person towards spiritual items inside his or her own consciousness. In this aspect, faith does not contradict the reason, but, in the same way, it finds its roots within a person’s ability for speculative activity that serves as a basis for the development of philosophy and religion.

The concept of faith is extremely complicated and may be interpreted from different sides. In the spiritual sphere, faith can be characterized as pure spiritual guidance. God, as an object of faith, is the pure fundamental spiritual concept. Faith is a process of transcending to Him. The absolute faith, to its fullest meaning, confirms that a person has obtained his essence, has disclosed it and has understood its reality, in spiritual meditation of the object of faith. Being represented, himself, before God in his prayer, a man, through transcending, obtains his immanent being, his essence. The level of faith shows the ratio of deployment of the essence of a man. The Bhagavad-Gita says, in connection to this: “In conformity with the essence of a man is his faith Bharat. A man is created by faith; he is the same as his faith.”

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Here is disclosed one more gnoseological aspect of faith that is specified by a number of philosophers. This is being confident of the outer world’s existence. Like D. Hume, a German thinker contemporary of I. Kant, i.e. J.G. Hamann (1730-1788), considered faith to be the basic argument for confidence of real existence of outer things. Faith, in his opinion, can provide things that all the abstract philosophy cannot do, with all of the apparatus of its volumes of proofs. In accordance to Hume, belief exists as a gnoseological phenomenon and faith as a spiritual concept, both of which are mixed, as per Hamann. He says: “Things that are believed at do not need confirmation and vice versa it is possible to prove irrefutably some concept and to have no faith in it.” Then, he continues: “Faith is not a product of reason so it cannot be attacked by it, since faith appears as a result of deduction same often as a result of eyesight.” It turns out; faith is based and rooted on the fundamental stone of sensation, for experience is defined as “the only initial source of any possible knowledge.” As per Hamann, thus, the sensualization of faith concept took place, which is not acceptable for the metaphysics of faith.

In German philosophy, meditation concerning faith was continued by F.H. Jacobi (1743-1819). He was the nearest predecessor of the later “positive philosophy” of F. Schelling. His former enemy, Schelling, is valued for his criticism of philosophical rationality, though even the latest Shelling could not absolutely agree with Jacobi, for his treatment of nature and knowledge relied exclusively on faith. The purpose of Positive philosophy, according to Schelling, consists in the cognition of the Absolute. At the same time, knowledge should have no points of contact with mythical revelation or theosophy. For the “expression ‘faith’ that has the utmost value in religion,” Hegel remarks, “is used by Jacobi for definition of all other kinds of content.”

Many works by Russian philosopher S.N. Bulgakov (1871-1944) are devoted to analyses of the concept of faith as an ideal. “Faith is a function of a freedom,” he declares. Russian religious philosophy in general, within the frames of Christianity –Orthodox Christology– accumulated a lot of fundamental concepts of faith. To begin with, Bulgakov speaks against the extended comprehension of faith as a relation to all trans-subjective being (S.L. Frank), against the “secularization of faith concept” per Jacobi, who related it to empirical things as well. The philosopher notes that such an understanding of faith comes from Kant’s statement of subjectivity of any perception, which results in the idea that, to make the things an objective perception, you should have faith in its being, as the empirical sense of reality is based on some specific intuition. According to this “mythical empirics,” faith is present in every act of cognition. In the beginning of the 20th century such faith understandings will be seconded by E. Husserl. But Bulgakov speaks against such a “terminology mixture” as the intuition of empirical reality and metaphysical faith. If, in the first case, faith has practical roots and stays within the limits of the partite sphere, then, in the second case, it is gnoseological. In first sense, the

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reality of faith is verified in an experimental empirical way, here, to have faith is to “feel.” The metaphysic of faith, to the contrary, “certifies the existence of other, transcendent reality and our connection with it.” Its objective has a qualitative difference. This kind of faith is characterized by personal, free and creative seeking, and not by the statistical existence of a sensual object. Such faith cannot last, if the spiritual momentum of its progress weakens, it is an act that should be repeated, again and again, to “keep” it.

Bulgakov opposes faith in the form of “secrecy knowledge,” as some mystery for which superstitious people eagerly look. Faith is not anything like a secret that is guarded from those who are not adept. At the same time, it is a mystery, unconditionally beyond man’s abilities, since its object is a transcendent one. Only transcendence can be considered as the true mystery: “Transcendental can be defined as such only by faith,” for it is beyond cognition, higher than it. From here comes the necessity of revelation. Revelation is understood by Bulgakov as “a necessary gnoseological element of faith”: faith does not deny gnosis, “it gives birth and impregnates it: ‘Love the Lord by all your heart and by all your soul (i.e. by will), and by all your understanding (i.e. by gnosis).’”

Materialism and atheism often define faith as a superstition. However, superstitions are based on the naturalistic determination of reality; although it is influenced by spiritual forces, faith represents, by itself, a speculative construction that is a spiritual, theoretical perception of the world and of a human life. There is no doubt that superstitions can mix in both faith and science, but it is necessary to distinguish the principal difference between them. In the hierarchy of the cognitive abilities of a man, faith, from metaphysical point of view, occupies one of the highest positions. The superstitions form a negative side of cognition, then proceeding to objectivity, followed by feelings and senses, then comes reason (science), intellect (philosophy) and, at last, faith (metaphysical, philosophical and religious). The last helps to disclose things that are beyond sensual experience and positive cognition. Faith is gnostic knowledge. Here, thus, appears the hierarchy, the situation wherein faith is to be considered as primary in relation to such kinds of knowledge. Keeping priority in the sphere of theognosis, faith does not deny necessity and the importance of positive cognition and knowledge. But its role becomes a secondary one, auxiliary, and does not comprise a spiritual character. The purpose of this knowledge is to confirm, to work out the concept, to form judgments and conclusions, to supply reasons and find the basis, to arrange and systemize. This is how G. Leibniz (1646-1716) calls the reason “natural revelation”; faith, he calls, “a supernatural reason,” that, in any case, should not deny natural revelation, otherwise it risks becoming a superstition. When faith starts to deny the significance of the positive method of cognition or to oppose it to

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10 Bulgakov, *Light Unfading*, p. 34.
11 Ibid., p. 32.
Faith as the Form of Reintegration

itself, then it is transforming into something absolutely irrational and useless for man, and into a superstition in the long run. We can see such distortions of faith in concepts of Tertullian and Lev Shestov (1866-1938).

From the other side, faith that tries to gain a foothold on the conclusions of reason transfers into something formal, entirely dependent on the logical and cognizing abilities of a man. In the long run, such a ratio results in the total absorption of faith by reason, or in its denial, both of which are unacceptable for the metaphysic of faith. In Russian philosophy, brothers E.N. and S.N. Trubetskoii have chosen a methodology that leads to the described results and, thus, in contradiction of L. Shestov, came from one extreme to another. In the middle ages, West European scholasticism is displayed in the same way by St. Thomas Aquinas, who said “it is impossible that revealed truth of faith has opposite principles which are cognized by reason in a natural way (quae ratio naturaliter cognoscit).” However, when the reason is allowed to enjoy intellectual and material satisfaction, then faith is pure spiritual plenity. Knowledge is compulsory, faith is free (Shestov). A man believes in the Absolute, not because its being can be proved. Knowledge is the truth that exists as a reality and it does not need personal participation, for its affirmation or grounding. Faith—subjective, even if it is not of common significance—is a certainty as a personal one. Faith is a product of the fusion of the Abrahamic revelation and ancient metaphysics. It is gnosis of a specific form, a knowledge that cannot be proved, but which invests reason into everything that can be proved.

Along with it, faith, if we look at it in the fundamental metaphysical sense, is not something that absolutely contradicts knowledge. Indeed, faith and knowledge are two different methods of cognition, but they coincide in essence, especially in the case when we consider knowledge, not as empirical, but as the mind-view philosophical concept. Then, faith is a special type of knowledge, characterized by its super-mind depth. According to Russian philosopher V.I. Nesmelov (1863-1937), faith is the “direct intuitive cognition of transcendent reality.” Faith is a special type of cognition of speculative reality. Very similar to this is saying of Maximus the Confessor: “Faith is knowledge that cannot be proved.”

We can clear up the comprehension of the concept of theological questioning and faith through analyses in the works of M. Heidegger, where he states a difference between faith and philosophical questioning, both of which are united by essence, from the point of view of the spiritual phenomenon reflected in them.

In Heidegger’s concept of the attitude toward theology, all is clear; his several replicas are very eloquent at all times, even when they are, likewise, negative. At one of his seminars, he said “We express our respect to theology by saying nothing about it.” Nevertheless, he notes that the “... strained rela-

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14 Maximus the Confessor, Creations, Book 1 and 2 (Moscow: “Martis,” 1993).
tionship between ontology and speculative theology—this structural specific of metaphysic—was included into closest sphere of my research,”¹⁶ that without “… initial theological education I would never started on my way of thinking.”¹⁷ Along with it, Heidegger admitted that “The true aim of theology, to which theology should return again, is concluded in looking for a word that can summon to faith and keep within faith.”¹⁸

Theologizers of 20th century were aware of this task and tried to solve it using, though it may seem strange, the works of M. Heidegger. As per P. Tillich, “Historical role of Heidegger is that he fulfilled existential analyses of courage to be oneself more profoundly than anyone else.”¹⁹ Tillich, same as Heidegger, considered that the being of a man is the only key to the Being as it is: “…A man has discovered that the key to cognition of fundamental levels of reality is within himself and that exclusively his own existence gives him possibility to cognize the Being in general.”²⁰ A man has an inner connection with Being, but at the same time is separated from it in his life. Heidegger aims to eliminate this separation, as does European theology of 20th century, both Protestant and Catholic. So K. Rahner—an outstanding German Catholic theologian—did not reject Thomism, but, at the same time, created within it a fundamental anthropological overturn, when he realized that it is impossible to speak about the God and not to speak about a man at the same time. The basis of his concept was both the transcendence of Kant and the analyses Da-sein of Heidegger; that is why he got the reputation as “true successor of German philosophical thought from Kant till Heidegger.”²¹ Both Tillich and Rahner successfully interpreted Heidegger’s concept of Being in a theological manner, making use of any possible experience of new ontology, transcendence and existentialism, to meet the requirements of contemporary man for faith.

Heidegger wrote: “Theology by the sense of the word means the science about the God though the God is not in the least the object of its research.”²² He also showed the way out: “While anthropology-sociological and existential conceptualizing is not overcome and put aside the theology will not be able to speak freely about things she is supposed to speak about.”²³ James M. Robinson notes, in his work Discussions of Late Heidegger, “for non-meta-

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 191.
²³ Robinson, Discussions of Late Heidegger, p. 36.
Physic God the door remains open.”

“In case there should exist some theology,” he continues, seconding Heidegger, “then it should become non-speculative clarification of faith content from its inside.”

In this connection, it is necessary to note that, up to the present time, neither in philosophy, nor in theology is the ontology of faith itself considered in details, but this problem needs fundamental attention.

Though, by the usage of the achievements of Heidegger’s philosophical method (existential analytics Da-sein), faith can be considered as central metaphysic problem, the most important metaphysic-existential one, a specific attribute of Da-sein, even more important, to our opinion, than horror and concern, which are indicated in Heidegger’s analytic. It turns out that ontology-existential philosophy is more capable of comprehension of this phenomenon, for it possesses the appropriate method. Faith, here, is the “hope of being,” in which a man is supposed to exist, i.e. as if trying to associate the real meaningful spiritual life. Transcending, for being a man is deploying the immanent within him. Some kinds of contemporary theology aspire to use the ontology of faith as a foothold by using the method of Heidegger and discarding the previously mentioned objectification, and number one among them is Karl Rahner.

P. Tillich longed to make peace between faith and culture, R. Bultmann and D. Bonhoeffer tried to de-mythologize it, and Karl Rahner aims at discovering an ontological foundation that is closer to a philosophical analysis of faith. He moves in a backward way from Heidegger: fundamental-existential ontology leads him, not from, but right toward faith.

At the basis of a man’s being, as K. Rahner found it out, lies transcendental experience, which comprises the experience of transcendence. He believes that this experience, this “lighted-darkness of theology,” “absolute sacred mystery,” provides “some certain anonymous and non-thematic knowledge of the God.”

For Rahner, He is original transcendental experience that is beyond adequate cognition and in conceptional reflection. He is mystery. Along with it, “the talk of God is reflection indicating original, non-thematic and non-reflection knowledge of the God”; “in metaphysical reflection we just express things that prior to words we have known about ourselves long before within the depth of our personal self-actualization.”

In transcendence, Rainer supposes, the God is represented as non-thematic and non-conceptual. All our cognition is just-indication to him. This is something Absolute and Gigantic, sacred mystery, transcendence of love, this “Where to” transcendence, direction to absolute mystery, is some constant task posed before a man by nature itself.

24 Ibid., p. 37.
25 Ibid.
27 Ibid., p. 29.
28 Ibid., p. 60.
29 Ibid., p. 72.
30 Ibid., p. 73.
31 Ibid.
Consciousness, by the use of faith, is able to be concentrated in a spot within a central symbol or an idea that may result in a splash of self-consciousness, the realization of transcendence as a spiritual process. Faith turns out to be “an implicit metaphysic,” “a mute knowledge” of the original source of existing.\(^\text{32}\) It is the spiritual art of creating a human being and creating humanity in a human being. Faith is not an object, but a process, an intrinsic spiritual mood, “motiveless joy of one’s own being,”\(^\text{33}\) of its openness to Being. Faith is not a property, so it is impossible to “have” it, as any other spiritual intention. But it is possible to be grasped by faith in a process of transcendence. It appears as a result of questioning: “Do not ask where the God is but seek for him” (Serafim Sarovski). According to Heidegger, faith is concluded in the “specific existential possibility” that is prior to theology and philosophy.\(^\text{34}\)

Morality stands the closest to faith. This was distinctly and profoundly understood by Kant, when he developed the foundation of ethic-theology. But he deprived faith, not only of metaphysic, but also of ontology, because, within frame of new European categorical and naturalistic thinking, it was impossible to speak about it. The only possible thing was to postulate the categorical imperative. But, by doing that, Kant gave way to the possibility of other faith analytics appearing, which can be put into practice coming from Heidegger’s \textit{Da-sein}, where existence is combined with ontology. However, Heidegger was rather more engaged in being itself than in faith, which was its attribute, though the most important one. The most important existence, as per Heidegger, a specific “pre-ontological mood” (Stimmung) is concern.\(^\text{35}\) But it may be that the being itself as basic mood is displayed through faith \textit{Da-sein}, constituent in the sense of presence? Gadamer writes that, in criticizing the reference of theology by Heidegger (impossible without faith in its essence) to ontic sciences,

“It is obvious that this theoretical scientific thesis –is a deliberate provocation. In faith you meet what you believe at, and in the same time it is possible only in case if faith in general falls under conceptional interpretation. Is it not that ‘anything one believes at’ should be either object or objective sphere, similar to objective sphere of chemical substances or live substances? May it be that faith –same as philosophy– comprise all human dasein and the mankind world as the universe?”\(^\text{36}\)

\(^{32}\) A.V. Semushkin, “Metaphysic of Faith as a Problem of Cognition,” Foreword to S.A. Nizhnikov, \textit{Metaphysic of Faith in Russian Philosophy} (Moscow: Peoples’ Friendship University of Russia, 2001), 3-5, p. 4.


The concept of philosophical faith was developed by a friend of Heidegger, who later became his opponent, Karl Jaspers; in this concept, he tried “to negotiate the breadth of philosophical knowledge unity, to bring together heterogeneous and multi directional trends of philosophical cultures to unite it in new spirituality that supposed to satisfy both rational-cognition and mood-valued requirements of the time.”\(^{37}\)

A.V. Semushkin considers this concept of Jaspers as a “result and perspective of west European philosophical process”, as the “real and hopeless embarrassment of western philosophical thought,” as “a traditional disease of European philosophy”\(^{38}\) (including the Russian one, – S.N.), that is reflected in the constant argument of faith and knowledge, of philosophy and theology. That is exactly in that existentialism coincides the “critical reflectiveness of philosophy and groundless inclination of faith,” as far as “it expects to break open the boundaries of faith and reason for their mutual approach to each and under this process they inevitably clear of their limits and develop in its essence and significance. Therefore, faith and reason are supposed not to affirm themselves in their egoistic isolation but compliantly and good naturally justify each other in experience of mutual enrichment on the way to the truth.”\(^{39}\)

The task of philosophical comprehension of the ontology of universal faith is not only theoretically exciting, but also extremely fascinating, when, in the globalizing world, a conflict of certain interpretations of faith occurs. And contradictions in the spiritual sphere produce all other kinds of conflicts within inter-civilization, inter-cultural and inter-religious levels. The deployment of the ontological, i.e. universal faith level will create a basis for the spiritual unity of mankind, upon which basis can be solved the global problems of contemporaneity, “to unite spiritually disintegrated mankind.”\(^{40}\)


\(^{38}\) Ibid.

\(^{39}\) Ibid., p. 234.

\(^{40}\) Semushkin, “Philosophical Faith,” p. 242.
It is a fact that, nowadays, we are experiencing an acute environmental crisis. The climate change, the natural catastrophes, the acid rains, the irremediable disappearance of many species, the playing out of the resources, etc., are the effects of about two hundred years of industrialization. In fact, all of these, and many others, are the payback for our own comfort as species. Of course, for any responsible human being, it is a “must” to stop the ecological degradation, as it is for any decision factor in this world, no matter if it is public or private, political or economic. Many short, medium and long term plans were elaborated especially by different countries or international organizations of the world. But it seems that it is not enough. It needs more than a political decision to stop the irremediable destruction of the environment, more than few thousand environmental associations and foundations to repair what was undone and more than an ecological education to work for a better environment. It seems that the changes have to be, first of all, at the level of the individual consciousness, deeper than the “wormy” ecological attitude acquired in an afternoon eco-workshop. This profound change at the level of consciousness implies a consistent changing of the worldview, a re-examination of the fundamental beliefs, the assuming or rediscovering of a specific ontology and cosmology, and, in fact, a revaluation of the world in relation with its Creator. For acquiring such profound changes, it seems that there is only a solution: the revaluation of the world from a more spiritual and religious view, and a shift in ways of seeing and valuing nature.

Of course, major religions could not stay aside and tried to bring to the forefront their own arguments for a more responsible attitude toward the material world. We can say that this environmental crisis demanded coherent ethical answers from all traditional religions. All, or at least the majority of them, started to sanction—with relative success—any abuse over nature, but their voice is still quite irrelevant for the contemporary man.¹

If we restrict our evaluation to the West, it seems that there is, indeed, a crisis of identity. The Christian message no longer convinces the secularized man, who, among others, sees Christianity as partially responsible for this juncture. It seems that Christian arguments do not work anymore. The theistic perspective is no longer viable, a personal God is also obsolete, and the mediation of the church is futile. Nevertheless, the Westerner still needs a symbolic

system by which to validate, among other things, his ecological stance. In this case, he is looking for his own prophets and alternatives, embracing extraneous worldviews. Secularism closed the gate towards the God of the Bible, but opened a door to many, many alternatives, the most popular one being the Eastern worldview.  

1. From [A]theism to Monism: The Easternisation of the West

In his study published in 1999, called “The Easternization of the West,” Professor Colin Campbell, observing the changes which came into view in Western culture in the last century, suggests that the West is in a full process of Easternization. The language changes, the decline of the belief in a personal God in favour of one in “some sort of spirit of life force,” and the decline of the belief in the standard Christian doctrine of heaven and hell in favour of one of reincarnation, all of these suggest a paradigm shift. Referring to Weber’s scheme for the classification and analysis of world religions, the author points out the essential differences between the Eastern and Western religions. The East emphasized the immanent principle of divinity, who is part of the world from eternity and to whom man can adapt himself, an outlook specific to the Brahman-Atman principle in Indian religious philosophy. The West emphasizes the transcendental character of divinity, fundamentally separated from the world, creating it ex nihilo and controlling it from above. From these two perspectives derive all of the differences between East and West. Of relevance for environmentalism, we can say that the main features of the Eastern paradigm are:

“man and nature are one spiritual and physical are one; mind and body are one; man should recognize his basic oneness with nature, the spiritual, and the mental, rather than attempt to analyze, label, categorize, manipulate, control or consume the things of the world; because of his oneness with all existence, man should feel ‘at home’ in any place and with any person; science and technology, at best, create an illusion of progress; enlightenment involves achieving a sense of oneness with the universal; it is a state where all dichotomies vanish; meditation, a special state of quiet contemplation, is essential for achieving enlightenment.”

The Western paradigm is the opposite:

“man has characteristics which set him apart from nature and the spiritual; man is divided into a body, a spirit and a mind; there is a personal God who is over man; man must control and manipulate nature to ensure his survival; rational thought and an analytical approach to problem solving should be emphasized; science and tech-

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3 Campbell, “The Easternization of the West,” pp. 35-36.
4 Ibid., p. 42.
nology have given us a good life and provide our main hope for an even better future; action and the competitive spirit should be rewarded.”³

It is not hard to notice that the Western Semitic paradigm is unacceptable for a man who, on the one hand, as we mentioned earlier, condemns Christianity for the ecological crisis, and, on the other hand, rejects the scientific positivistic perspective about the infinite evolution through science and technique. But, rejecting these paradigms, he also rejects the theistic conception of divinity, without knowing which one to favor.

2. The Eastern Monism: The Paradigm of Non-Dualism in Vedantic Philosophy

The Vedantic metaphysics, which finds its ultimate meaning in the Advaita philosophy, is part of the oriental philosophical landscape by means of certain particularities, as it seeks to give an answer to the debate regarding the relationship between one (ultimate reality) and multiplicity (the universe). At a first sight, Sankara (788-820), the one who systematized the pattern of the metaphysical principles in the Upanishads, a system which in Western philosophy, was perceived as “non-duality” (advaita - “no” + “two”), proposes a ontological devaluation of the universe by denying its reality. The formulation Ekam-eva-advitiyam (“One-without-the-second,” Chandogya-Upanisad VI, 2, 1-2), which is at the core of the whole Vedantic metaphysic, proposes a philosophical interpretation which in Western philosophy is called monism. Although it may seem closely related to the monistic philosophical system, the Vedantic philosophy does not entirely correspond to this paradigm.⁶ Basically, Vedantic metaphysics specifies a different report which ranks the Absolute and the universe, and another ontological status of the universe.

Therefore, the Sankarian metaphysical non-dualism proposes a repositioning, a rethinking of the ontological values of the universe, a different perspective to the Oriental paradigm. Understanding the universe through a gnoseological perspective ultimately leads man to a proper conduct regarding the universe. The main focus is for the man not to transform the universe into an object that may be abused according to the social and industrial needs, but into an object of philosophical reflection, which ultimately leads the man into discovering the Ultimate Reality.

The problem with which the Advaita Vedanta dealt was demanding: it had to reconcile the cosmological statements about Brahma as the cause of the Sruti world, with the metaphysical notion of immutability, of the unchanging character of Brahma Nirguna. On the one hand, Sankara argues, in Brahma-Sutra-Sankara-Bhasya II, 3, 17: “Only a divided entity could have an effect⁵

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³ Ibid., pp. 42-43.
and origin because there are no effects.”\(^7\) On the other hand, *Brahman*, as the immutable and identical entity itself, is not covered by fortuitous phenomena. According to the Indian philosophical tradition, every division is a step towards disintegration, towards the destructive chaos,\(^8\) yet *Brahman* is viewed as the efficient (*nimitta-karana*) and material cause (*upadana-karana*) of the endlessly heterogeneous, moving and changing world.

If the Advaitin metaphysics pivots on the thesis that *Brahman* is *Nirguna*, undifferentiated and non-relational, the legitimate question that arises is connected to the legitimacy of a relationship between the universe, accepted as real only in the *vyavaharika* sense, and the *Ultimate Reality*. If the answer is a positive one, then what is the relationship between the “unity of existence and the multiplicity of its apparent developments?”\(^9\) In order to solve this philosophical dilemma, different terms are proposed: *unity, non-separability, non-identity and non-difference*. Each of these terms gives us an indication regarding the degree of reality of the universe. A. Rambachan\(^10\) brings into question the analogies which suggest the relationship between *Brahman* and the universe—the clay and clay-pots, gold and ornaments—stating that the universe does not emerge from *Brahman* in the same manner in which jewels are crafted from gold. The concept behind this analogy is that the fundamental nature of gold remains the same, despite the fact that it produces a multiplicity of jewels which are non-distinct from gold. Given the fact that gold is always gold, even when embellished with various ornaments, it is necessary to propose a distinction in the nature of the gold in order to preserve its unique nature. In a similar manner, taking into consideration that the emergence of the world from *Brahman* neither exhausts, nor transforms the nature, an explanation involving a twofold suggestion is useless. Since *Brahman* is the cause of the universe, this does not diminish the fullness of its being.

D. Prithipal\(^11\) states that *Brahman* is continuous with the universe and that this feature represents its reality. There are two distinct entities: the universe and *Brahman*. If we take into consideration a certain way of seeing things from an empirical perspective, in *Advaita-Vedanta*, the universe is nothing but *Brahman*. *Brahman* and the universe are not “different” and this is the reason why the issue of the ‘between the two’ does not, in fact, exist. However, *Brahman* is not dependent on the universe, and this justifies the argument that *Brahman* and the universe are not identical. But when it is understood that the


reality of the universe is Brahman, the claim regarding their identity is legitimate. Such an identity should be understood only in a transcendent sense, since Brahman is known, all questions regarding the finite lose their justification. In practical terms, the key for the advaitin interpretation lies under the realm of the acceptance of the twofold truths: paramarthika (absolute) and vyavaharika (relative).

The relationship between the universe and Brahman is defined by the assertion that the universe is “an indicative of Brahman but without incorporating it,” as T.R.V. Murti explains. This does not concern the relationship between the part and the whole, because this would assign the change within Brahman. Brahman becomes a phenomenon himself like (iva) in a free act. The relationship between Brahman and the universe is like the relationship between two terms, out of which one is the base of the other. Brahman, as the basis of this relationship, may have an unlimited, free, unconditioned and inexhaustible existence in the relationship. The other term is fully exhausted in the relationship and has a relative existence. It is important to note exactly where the universe is on the non-being – Being (Brahman) scale, in order to emphasize the relevance of the non-dualist Vedantic thesis: Brahman is ekamevadvitiyam.

The Sanskrit term corresponding to the Western term “world” is jagat. According to J.G. Arapura, from an etymological perspective, jagat denotes what the nature of the movement is. From a metaphysical perspective, the world is a constant and unstable movement between the two poles of is and is not. In Vivekacudamani, we find the statement that brahma satyam jagam-nithyety (“Brahman is real, the universe is unreal”). A first reading might lead us to the conclusion that the universe is completely unreal. But obviously, the world cannot be entirely unreal, in the sense that it may be fictitious or non-existent, because we perceive it through the senses. Although the ontological status of the universe excludes reality (sat), this does not imply unreal-
ity (asat). This would mean that the world is an appearance. Although an appearance has an ontologically special status, it cannot be called a non-being or a non-existence. It appears that the word mithyā, applied to the world, is providential in this case, in order to solve the problem solicited by the context of the current text. These aspects of the Vedantic metaphysics open the main ideational routes of our investigation, in order to offer some probative answers regarding the universe’s ontology: in which eloquent coordinates do the real and surreal appear in the universe? What does Brahman is real and the world is apparent mean? The appearance exists in a certain way, but it is not real; however, it cannot either be surreal, because, in Advaita, surreal refers to all logical impossibilities, such as a quadrature circle, the rabbit’s horns, or the son of an infertile woman. Thus, the surreal is null, everything that is contradiction per se, and cannot possibly exist. Surreal does not complement reality, but it opposes reality. Reality alone is exhaustive.\footnote{R. Puligandla and D. Matesz, “Appearance and the Laws of Logic in Advaita Vedanta,” \textit{International Philosophical Quarterly}, 26 (1986), 75-86, p. 80.}

In conclusion, we can decide ourselves upon the universal ontology through three different angles: from an empiric perspective, the universe is real;\footnote{L. Saxena, \textit{Neo-Hegelian and Neo-Advaitic Monism: A Study in Converging Perspectives} (Delhi: Bharat Bharti Bhandar, 1980), p. 102.} from the transcendental perspective the universe is surreal; and, from a philosophical and logical point of view, the universe is undeterminable.\footnote{S. Lokeswarananda, \textit{Aspects of Vedanta} (Calcutta: Ramakrishna Mission, Institute of Culture, 1995), p. 75.} Alternatively, without mistake, one can tell that the universe, as perceived by the senses, is undeterminable:

“The apparent world is not absolutely surreal (atyantam asat), because it is known, sensitively perceived, and has a certain existence. However, it is neither real (sat), because it is not incontestably in its three temporal dimensions – past, present, and future. It is neither a combination of real and surreal, because such a description would violate the contradiction law. It is neither the negation’s continuity of real and surreal.”\footnote{Karunakaran, \textit{The Concept of Sat in Advaita}, p. 191.}

The Vedantic metaphysics does not quite affirm the identity between Brahman and the world, but denies the independent reality of the world. Vacaspati Misra treats the matter accordingly: “When we say the universe is not different to Brahman, we do not confirm the identity of the Brahman and the world, but we merely deny their real existence (na khalu ananyatvam iti abhedam brumah kim tu bhedam vyaśedhamah).”\footnote{Quotation by Karunakaran, \textit{The Concept of Sat in Advaita Vedanta}, p. 191.} This means that, in the absence of Brahman, there will be no world of appearance.

We thereby end this section with a Sankarian bhasya from \textit{Mundaka-Upanisad} II, 2, 11: “All these that stand in front are nothing but Brahman, the immortal. Brahman sits at the right, as well as at the left; up and down, also, Brahman expands alone. This world is nothing else but Brahman, the al-
mighty.” The statement *sarvam idam brahma eva* (“Indeed, everything is Brahman”), which appears in *Chandogya-Upanisad* III, 14, 1, *Maitri-Upanisad* IV, 6, *Brhadaranyaka-Upanisad* II, 5, 6 does not intend to establish an ontological identity between the phenomenal universe of appearance (*vyavaharika*) and the ultimate reality of Brahman (*paramarthika*). More accurately, it shows that the universe, which seems to be real on an ordinary experience, is, indeed, completely dependent upon Brahman in its entire existence. But this dependency only swings in one direction—Brahman does not depend upon any type of universe in its existence. Moreover, this total dependence expands upon all of the universe’s things, which, in the end, derive from Brahman, not necessarily ontologically, but phenomenally.

Given the statements mentioned above, a certain attention is given to different aspects of the reception of the metaphysics of Vedantic thought in the Western pattern of study. If, under the current ecological crisis, the New Age, or any other socially-religious paradigm, wishes to offer a reinterpretation of the universe to the occidental Man, it would be better to do it under the oriental teaching’s criteria of legitimacy and authenticity.

3. From Old Age to New Age

We now have to answer an important question: in which way had this Indian metaphysics outlook achieved such popularity in the West, especially in the field of environmentalism? The answer which we propose here is via New Age. Neither common cultural transfers, nor Hindu missionaries brought and popularized it in the West, but it was brought about by means of this new Western religion, seen as a reaction to the present ecological crisis. It is not our objective to describe and analyze here the New Age philosophical and religious doctrine. We are only trying to identify the reasons which justify the New Age’s lop-sidedness to the Eastern monism as a response to the ecological crisis. In our opinion, these are: the New Age leaning towards environmentalism, the rejection of the Christian values and of their science and technology—at least in their positivistic dimension—and the appetite for syncretism, all of them interlacing into a coherent religious system.

Gordon Melton identifies four essential ideas which distinguish New Age in the contemporary landscape. These are: 1) The possibility of personal transformation in the immediate future by the medium of New Age techniques, transformation which is seen as a healing of the individual. 2) A millennial expectation which consists in a cultural transformation, which means the hope that the actual world, with all of its problems, will be swept aside and replaced with a new, golden age. 3) The emphasizing of the occult arts

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and processes. Astrology, tarot, mediums, psychic healing, channelling, meditation, etc., have become tools of self-transformation. 4) The identification of the individual as a singular essence with the divine, an impersonal God, seen as mind or energy, being the only reality.

It is obvious that none of these traits are new, but we can still speak of newness: the way these are combined in a single, unitary ideological system is all new. New Age, by its nature being a “unique synthesis of many pre-existing movements and religious traditions,” has the capacity to inspire and harmonize any other religious symbol or element from a foreign culture and fill it up with all new meanings. As an example, Rachel Fell McDermott refers to the goddess Kali and her signification in Hinduism and in New Age. Another similar example is the belief in reincarnation: from a Hindu-specific concept, it reached, in the West, a slightly but significantly different interpretation via New Age. Within Vedantic monism, things are somehow the same: the ontology, cosmology and “theology” of Brahman are taken as arguments for the deep ecological consciousness, although they are neither completely understood, nor correctly explained. As long as we could see, the Hindu monism is far from being as simple as New Age tries to present it to the Westerners. Understanding it requires, not only a strong philosophical and conceptual basis, but also the exercise of meditation and inner development. The New Age monism is somehow a lighter version of Eastern monism encased in the New Age holistic world view, where God and man are both parts and parcels of the cosmos. The immediate conclusion is that the world is divine and sacred. What stronger argument do we need for a deep ecological consciousness as a reaction to the contemporary ecological crisis? As Steve Bruce points out, “New Age Green [protects the environment] out of respect for a superior being.”

New Age is maybe the most militant eco-religious contemporary religious movement. In her Introduction to the New Age Encyclopedia, Belinda Witworth’s description of New Age’s objectives sounds like this: “The New Age movement is concerned with just about every area of existence, but I came to it first through love for Nature and concern about the environment, then complementary health and counselling, and, more recently, meditation and tarot reading.” All New Agers are green! is more than a saying and the deep ecological consciousness is more than a virtue for a New Ager. But, for this, the

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27 For the influence of Hinduism over New Age, see Diem and Lewis, “Imagining India,” pp. 48-58.
New Ager needs a strong system of reference. It seems that the theistic one is unacceptable for him. New Age means an objection to dualism, in all its forms: religious, philosophical, ecological, etc. This dualistic thinking is ascribed to the influence of institutionalized Christianity and of the over-rationalist science. Maybe this stance is the reason why New Age was and is considered the religion of the postmodern [secularized] man. Moreover, the New Age era began in the times of cultural relativism, more specifically in the '60s, when the absence of a standard of truth created a vacuum which required to be filled. All of these brought New Age closer to the Eastern paradigm. Against dualisms, New Age opposes a holistic alternative: therapies must consider man as a whole person, God and man are one in their inner essence, and humanity must rediscover its lost unity with nature. Another subject of discontent for New Age thinkers is the reductionism. The universe is not a dead mechanism, but a living organism permeated by a spiritual force.

It is obvious that there would be a reaction against Christian theism and positivism by embracing exactly its opposite: Eastern monism, pantheism or panentheism and a spiritual view over the quantum physics.

4. New Age – The Vehicle of “Re-enchanting” the World

The New Age reaction to the ecological crisis is a radical one: nothing can be saved from the old paradigm. It is so “disenchanted,” obsolete and futile that what is required is a brand new solution. And the solution at hand for New Age is to “re-enchant” the world, either through occult-esoteric significances applied to nature, or through a deification of it. And it seems that these solutions are somehow complementary. You have a cosmos. First of all, you have to give it the most profound signification that you can, so the best thing you can do is to deify it. On this basis, you need means to interact with this new deity, to communicate your needs to it and to take what you receive from it. And there are no better means to interact with this re-enchanted world than the old, ancestral magical rituals, which also correspond to the esoteric aspect of New Age.

Of course, this is exploratory research, and there are still many questions which are waiting for answers. Beyond bewildering the West with an alien worldview, has New Age found the real solution to the ecological crisis? Will it be really functional, in the sense that its impact will be strong enough over individuals in order to really change consciences in the direction of achieving a greater responsibility towards nature? Does its increasing popularity affect the general attitude towards the individual and the cosmos? Maybe time will reveal the answers to all of these questions and future research will find out if the Eastern monism/pantheism/panentheism, brought to the West via New Age, was indeed efficacious in making us more ecologically responsible.

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