

What's New in the New Europe?

Redefining Culture, Politics, Identity

edited by

Krystyna Kujawińska Courtney, Tomasz Fisiak

Agnieszka Miksza, Grzegorz Zinkiewicz



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Łódź 2019

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INTRODUCTION



he papers presented here are the result of the conference “What’s *New* in the New Europe? Redefining Culture, Politics, Identity” which took place July 11–15, 2016. The conference was organized by ISSEI (The International Society for the Study of European Ideas) and the Faculty of International and Political Studies, University of Lodz, Poland. It was an honor for the Faculty of International and Political Studies to be invited by ISSEI to host its 2016 biennial international conference. Previous hosts of the prestigious conference include Amsterdam (1988); Leuven (1990); Aalborg (1992); Graz (1994); Utrecht (1996); Haifa (1998); Bergen (2000); Aberystwyth (2002); Pamplona (2004); Malta (2006); Helsinki (2008); Ankara (2010); Cyprus (2012); Porto (2014).

As Dr. Edna Rosenthal, the conference co-chair and the editor of the ISSEI’s periodical, *The European Legacy*, explained in the conference’s call for papers, the title of the 2016 meeting in Lodz was not coincidental. “What’s *New* in the New Europe? Redefining Culture, Politics, Identity” was to become an international interdisciplinary forum to discuss the changes that had occurred in Europe in the past quarter-century. In her words, they were

dramatic, rapid and unforeseeable. These changes—from the rise of the Solidarity Movement in Poland in the early 1980s to the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the unification of Germany, the dissolution of the Soviet Bloc, through the creation of the Eurozone, to the enlargement of the Union to 28 states—seemed to reaffirm the spirit of Europa, the cradle and carrier of Western civilization. They also seemed to amply justify the ideal of the New Europe as defined by the European Union: to create a peaceful and prosperous Europe. This vision, it was hoped, would heal the continent, torn and destroyed by two world wars, and consolidate its central role in the global arena of world politics. Recent events, however, have seriously undermined this vision of peace and prosperity, including the global financial crisis, the political crisis in Ukraine, the humanitarian crisis of immigration, and the repercussions of the political upheavals across the Middle East, Europe’s geographical neighbor. It would

seem that Europe, that symbol of a united and peaceful Europe, cannot be upheld without examining what Europe is today, without, that is, attending to Europe's own self-understanding alongside how it is seen by non-Europeans, from east to west. Since ideals and realities have a history, often a very long history, and since our terms of reference are determined by particular methodologies and disciplines, the attempt to examine the ideal in light of the real, to assess what is new in the New Europe, calls for multiple perspectives on the ever-changing faces of Europe.

The conference in Lodz was attended by an impressive number of international academics, who were able to interact over several days in a variety of contexts. They presented and discussed their research in a range of topical workshops. In addition, there were plenary lectures and film shows. The organizers also invited the participants to attend entertainment activities which demonstrated some of the most interesting aspects of the town and its culture. For example, the University of Lodz Students' Folklore Ensemble presented their program in the colorful traditional clothes of the town and province, and a group of students of the Higher Musical School performed their professional musical arrangements. Other social events and coffee breaks enabled scholars to network over local foods and cakes baked by the famous local bakery and confectionery.

Conference participants were also invited to watch some movies about the City of Lodz and Polish culture. Particular interest was evoked by *The Promised Land*, directed by Andrzej Wajda, who received in 2000 the Oscar for Lifetime Achievement. The movie was based on a novel written by Wladyslaw Reymont, the 1924 Nobel Prize Laureate in Literature. It shows the history of Lodz at the end of the nineteenth century, as it was becoming a quickly developing manufacturing center for textiles in Poland. Finding itself under the Russian partition during this time, Lodz was one of the largest cities of the Russian Empire. The movie is highly critical of the blood-thirsty factory owners who took advantage of the newly born working class.

The other movie that drew the attention of the conference participants was *Karski & the Lords of Humanity*, a 2015 documentary directed by Slawomir Grundberg. The documentary shows the life of Jan Karski, who, as a member of the Polish underground, infiltrated the Warsaw Ghetto, a Nazi Transit Camp. He was next sent to Britain and the United States as an eyewitness of the atrocities. He informed the Allied powers of Nazi crimes against the Jews of Europe and warned the Western powers of the ongoing Holocaust.

Dr. Edna Rosenthal presented the journal *European Legacy: Toward New Paradigms—the Journal of the International Society for the Study of European Ideas*,

which is an international, interdisciplinary peer-review periodical in operation since 1976. It is published by Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group (UK), and included in the Thomson Reuters and Humanities Citation Index. The journal appears seven times a year online and in print. In 1996, it was listed as one of “The 10 Best Magazines of 1996.” In 2010, *The European Legacy* was rated by the Australian Government’s Australian Research Council as being among the top 15% global academic journals. It was included in a category where publishing “would enhance the author’s standing, showing they have real engagement with the global research community and that they have something to say about problems of some significance.”

Professor Krystyna Kujawska Courtney presented the *International Studies: Interdisciplinary Political and Cultural Journal*, published since 2004 by the Faculty of International and Political Studies, the University of Lodz. It is available in two formats—on the de Gruyter platform and in print by the University of Lodz Publishing House. It is one of the first journals of this kind, not only in Poland but also in Central and Eastern Europe. Its scope is not limited to the region; on the contrary, it aims at bringing to its readers the most interesting perspectives and opinions about current global issues along with the most topical and innovative research in the area of international, cultural and political studies. The *IS* publishes essays that vary in focus and methodology. In pursuit of the goal of continued excellence, it had invariably been dependent on the contributions of our colleagues working in other disciplines, such as philosophy, literature and anthropology. To date, the journal has generated a worldwide interest and has received quality submissions from all over the globe. It collects and publishes articles in special thematic issues, but also accepts proposals which are not connected with their current call for papers. The *IS* is on the Polish Ministry of Higher Education’s List of Eminent Journals.

At the heart of the ISSEI 2016 program were the 24 workshops, in which over 160 speakers participated. The wide range of subjects topics included “Evolving Identities in a Globalist Age: Constant Transition vs Stability”; “What’s Not New in the New Europe: Ancient Answers to Modern Questions”; “European Higher Education”; “Direct Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe after 1989”; “The Remains of Politics / The Politics That Remains”; “New Nationalisms in European and Postcolonial Discourses”; “Critical Reflections on the New and the Old in European Culture”; “Irony as Tool of Critique Resistance in European Literature and the Arts”; “The Linguistic and Cultural Manifestations of War and Terrorism”; “Classical Rationalism and the Politics

of Europe”; “Fading Europe? Confronting Limitations / Envisioning Alternatives”; “Shakespeare and/in Europe: Connecting Voices”; “Globalization and the New Europe: A Nietzschean Perspective”; “The Republic of Letters and Political Reality: How Intellectuals Relate to Politicians and Vice Versa”; “The Remains of Politics / The Politics That Remains”; “Critical Reflections on the New and the Old in European Culture”; “Fading Europe? Confronting Limitations / Envisioning Alternatives” among others.

The conference papers listed in this publication constitute only a selection of the discussions we had—many conference participants have already published their works in other journals or monographs. The variety of research areas they cover are not amenable to a simple classification. The three parts they are grouped into represent the dominant research themes their works describe: “European Culture and Its Multiple Voices” edited by Dr. Agnieszka Miksza; “Politics in the New Europe” edited by Dr. Tomasz Fisiak; and “A New Enquiry Concerning the Old World” edited by Dr. Grzegorz Zinkiewicz. I would like to express here my deepest gratitude to the editors of these sections for their work and involvement in the preparation of this volume.

I would like also to apologize for the delay in publishing the papers, which was beyond our control. In this context we would like to thank you, all the conference participants, hoping that the ISSEI conference in Lodz 2016 has left some indelible memories, a part of which is this publication.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Edna Rosenthal, for selecting the University of Lodz for the ISSEI 2016 conference and giving us guidance and freedom in its organization. In doing so, she has given us one of the most rewarding experiences of our professional lives.

Krystyna Kujawińska Courtney

EDNA ROSENTHAL

The European Legacy/ISSEI

OPENING SPEECH
MONDAY 11 JULY 2016
UNIVERSITY OF ŁÓDŹ, POLAND



On behalf of ISSEI's organizing team and community, and the editors of *The European Legacy*, I want to express our deep thanks to the University of Łódź for hosting our 15th conference. We want to thank Professor Antoni Różalski, Rector of the University, and Professor Tomasz Domański, Dean of the Faculty of International and Political Studies, for their support of the conference, and all who have generously given their time, hard work, and good advice in bringing this event to fruition. Our special thanks go to Mr. Tomasz Koralewski, director of VOLEO, for his invaluable help, and to Ms. Beata Gradowska and Ms. Rachel Ben-David for overseeing the administrative work. We owe our greatest debt of gratitude to Professor Krystyna Kujawińska Courtney for her faith in our joint endeavor, for her stamina and resourcefulness in bringing us here for a five-day meeting of minds. For a short time we will enjoy the beauties of this lovely city, and perhaps put aside our worries about the state of the world, of Europe, of our own country, of academia. A conference holds the promise of a wonderful adventure, as it is less an *escape from* our daily routine, as *a chance* to engage with our subjects in a new environment, with fellow academics with different histories and memories.

Before I say a few words on our theme, I have been asked by five people – whose names will be familiar to some of you, and who were unable to come to our gathering – to extend their personal greetings to you. Professor Ezra Talmor, founder of ISSEI and of our journal, *The European Legacy*; Professor David Lovell, my coeditor; Rachel Ben-David, coordinator of the academic programme; Professor Heinz Uwe-Haus, a long standing dedicated member of our Society; and Professor Yolanda Espina, our co-chair in our last conference, in Porto.

For those who wonder what ISSEI stands for, allow me to read David Lovell's succinct description: "ISSEI was always more an ideal, than an organization with newsletters, organizing committees, and annual fees. It is an ideal of cooperative inquiry into the ideas of Europe, the idea of Europe itself, and . . . the influences of Europe on the rest of the world." ISSEI, that is, is an informal, voluntary association of those who are interested in attending our conferences and contributing to our journal.

So, what's *new* in the New Europe? To me the European Union is the embodiment of the New Europe. The vision of a united Europe, committed to the peaceful coexistence of erstwhile enemies, brings with it great responsibilities and great expectations. We are daily reminded of how momentous this vision is, how high the stakes of realizing it – by the growing resistance it provokes – resurgent nationalisms, demands for border controls, the calls for drastic measures to curb the waves of desperate immigrants from Africa and the Middle East, and now the political repercussions of the UK Referendum. Euroscepticism has of course accompanied European unification from the start, and has intensified in the past decade. But this vision, I believe, will in time overcome the backlash. No significant change – even ostensibly benign reforms of social and political arrangements – has ever come about without resistance or without some unexpected negative consequences. The history of every nation, of every community, attests to this, for the labour of civilization, as distinct from technological progress, is slow and unending.

"To have a *new* vision of the future, it has always first been necessary to have a *new* vision of the past," says British historian Theodore Zeldin, in an interview following the 1994 publication of his remarkable book, *An Intimate History of Humanity*. Adapting this to my purpose, I rephrase my belief: the European Union is a new vision of the future, which calls for a new understanding of the Old Europe. But what is the "old Europe"? To me the old Europe is very old, reaching back as far as history will take us; it is the centuries upon centuries of the evolution of the Western civilization. I do not deny that there are revolutions, or what appears as catastrophic ruptures with the past, but once a radical change has taken root in the public mind, there is a tendency to dismiss the past and to obscure the myriad links of the present state of affairs with what came before.

Umberto Eco, a few years before he died last February, stated his view of the New Europe in words that echo our theme: "It's *culture*, not *war*, that cements European Identity." And then declared: "We're now *all* culturally European." For Eco this shared European identity is the culmination of

the long process of civilizing exchanges among those who were once total strangers and bitter enemies; it is something to be celebrated and defended, as the cumulative achievement of Europe's mixed origins – Greek, Roman, and Judeo-Christian.¹

Now the same outlook was fiercely defended a century earlier by the early Modernists – James, Eliot, Pound, Joyce and their continental counterparts – who saw themselves as Europeans and cosmopolitans. Like James and Pound, Eliot came to Europe in 1914, made England his home, and famously declared in 1928 that he was a “classicist in literature, royalist in politics, and anglo-catholic in religion.” While few were impressed by his political and religious allegiance, none in literary circles ignored his “classicist” stance. For the declared ambition of the literary avant-garde, as Eliot put it, was a question of “affirming forgotten standards, rather than setting up new idols.”

Today, Eliot is mostly remembered for his poetry, especially for “The Waste Land” (1922) on Europe's spiritual desolation after the First World War, and some of the most memorable images of the modern city and modern psyche. But in his essays, which are less well known today, he promoted, like Eco, the idea of Europeanness as cultural identity, using the phrase “the mind of Europe” as a synonym for Western civilization as a whole. In his most influential essay,² “Tradition and the Individual Talent” (1919), Eliot argued that the really *new* work of art was a function of its *continuity* rather than its *rupture* with the past. To him the “historical sense, which is a sense of the timeless, as well as of the temporal and of the timeless and of the temporal together, is what makes a writer traditional” (ibid). “Culture,” as he put it, “is traditional, and loves novelty.”³

Eliot, in fact, used “European” as the highest praise of writers, from the past and from the present, along with “catholic,” “Latin,” “traditional,” and “universal,” all of which terms implied a vibrant relationship with the past – with Homer, Aeschylus, Virgil, Dante, and Shakespeare.⁴ The uniqueness of a writer,

¹ G. Riotta, U. Eco, “It's culture, not war, that cements European identity,” *Guardian*, 26 January 2012.

² T. S. Eliot, “Tradition and the Individual Talent,” in: *Selected Essays* (London: Faber and Faber 1951), 13–22. Frank Kermode sees it as “arguably his [Eliot's] most influential single essay” (introduction to *Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot*, ed. Frank Kermode [London: Faber and Faber, 1975], 11). Many critics agree that the essay is central to Eliot's criticism as a whole.

³ T. S. Eliot, “London Letter,” *The Dial*, March 1921, 451.

⁴ T. S. Eliot, “What Dante Means to Me,” in: *To Criticize the Critic and Other Writings* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1965), 127. A few examples: “Marvell's best verse is the product of European, that is to say Latin, culture” (“Andrew Marvell,” in: *Selected*

of Dante, for example, he argued, was the outgrowth of his reliance on what came before him, on Aristotle and Aquinas.

As we know, Eliot's vision of cultural continuity was swept aside by the postwar rejection of the "old" order and grand Eurocentric narratives. Rupture, disruption, subversion – of the text, of the author, of the self, of the canon, of the disciplines – soon replaced the text-based New Criticism with the context-based Poststructuralist approaches. In Western universities the culture or canon wars, as they were called, led to the restructuring of curricula, with Cultural Studies gradually replacing literature departments. The boundaries of the disciplines were being redrawn, which change seemed to confirm, if not to accelerate, the decline of the humanities – the very subjects that form the bed-rock of European identity, of any cultural identity.

And outside the universities, in the world at large? Well, at least here, in Europe, the boundaries were redrawn and the walls, real and symbolic, actually tumbled down, ushering in new possibilities, new freedoms. Yet the smaller the world became by the pull of globalization, and paradoxically the smaller Europe became through its unification *and* enlargement, the stronger the opposition, the louder the demands for closing the borders, for curbing individual freedoms, for defending one's national identity.

What do these and other conceptual, cultural and political shifts teach us? At the very least, they teach us that the dialectics or antinomies of inclusiveness and exclusiveness, like the dialectics of the old and the new Europe, demand a constant re-engagement with our ideas and ideals – of freedom, identity, democracy – with their origins, their development, and changing meanings.

To conclude: despite the setbacks, the resistance to, the understandable but perhaps exaggerated fear of the new, the vision of a united Europe delivers a priceless message to non-Europeans, such as myself: it brings with it the hope that people of other nations can decide one day to live in peace and settle their differences by learning to talk to each other, by learning each other's language and history, each other's way of thinking. As Europe, with its 28-strong Union, has done, non-Europeans may realize that war is the least civilized way of resolving disagreements and conflicts. That war is brutal and wasteful, and a sad reminder of our collective failure as *Homo Sapiens*.

Essays, 293); "Dryden is one of the tests of a catholic appreciation of poetry" ("John Dryden," in *Selected Essays*, 305); Hooker and Andrewes "were fathers of a national Church and they were Europeans" ("Lancelot Andrewes," in *Selected Essays*, 343).

If *Europe* doesn't show the way, who *will*? This, then, is Europe's burden, its debt to its humanistic tradition – its Greek, Roman, Judeo-Christian tradition, and to the world beyond its shores and borders. "Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days" (Ecc. 11:1), which in the original sounds thus:

שלח לחמך על פני המים, כי ברוב הימים תמצאנו.

Thank you all for coming to our conference. Thank you, the University of Łódź! Thank you, Łódź! wish all of us a wonderful conference!

STEFAN HÖJELID

Linnaeus University

WELCOME SPEECH AT
WHAT'S NEW IN THE NEW EUROPE?
REDEFINING CULTURE, POLITICS, IDENTITY
2016 ISSEI CONFERENCE
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ŁÓDŹ, POLAND
(11 JULY 2016–15 JULY 2016)



adies and gentlemen!

It is a pleasure for me to welcome you all to Poland, to Łódź (*The Promised Land*), to Łódź University and to the 15th ISSEI Conference. My name is Stefan Höjelid and I am Swedish (and European) even though married Polish. Actually I met my wife in September 1999 in conjunction with an EU Tempus project-conference in Łódź (*Sic!*). Then I also got to know Professor Krystyna Kujawińska Courtney, one of the two co-chairs of this conference, and a lot of other Polish colleagues who have over the years become close friends to me. So this background was maybe one of the reasons why Dr. Edna Rosenthal as a co-chair asked me to introduce this conference. I will do so by saying a few words about *the theme* of this conference and about ISSEI and its journal *The European Legacy* and finally by briefly reflecting upon *Europe as a concept* and what is happening right now with our old dear Europe.

Conference theme

The changes that have occurred in Europe in the past quarter-century were dramatic, rapid and unforeseeable. These changes – from the rise of the Solidarity Movement in Poland in the early 1980s to the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the unification of Germany, the dissolution of the Soviet Bloc, thro-

ugh the creation of the Eurozone, to the enlargement of the Union to 28 states (soon 27 after the British referendum) – seemed to reaffirm the spirit of Europe, the cradle and carrier of Western civilization. They also seemed to amply justify the ideal of the New Europe as defined by the European Union: *to create a peaceful and prosperous Europe*. This vision, it was hoped, would heal the continent, torn and destroyed by two world wars, and consolidate its central role in the global arena of world politics. Recent events, however, have seriously undermined this vision of peace and prosperity, including the global financial crisis, the political crisis in Ukraine, the humanitarian crisis of immigration, and the repercussions of the political upheavals across the Middle East, Europe's geographical neighbour, as well as the outcome of the Brexit-referendum in June in Great Britain.

It would seem that Europe, that symbol of a united and peaceful Europe, cannot be upheld without examining what Europe is today, without, that is, attending to Europe's own self-understanding alongside how it is seen by non-Europeans, from east to west. Since ideals and realities have a history, often a very long history, and since our terms of reference are determined by particular methodologies and disciplines, the attempt to examine the ideal in light of the real, to assess *what is new in the New Europe*, calls for multiple perspectives on the ever changing faces of Europe.

ISSEI (The International Society for the Study of European Ideas)

In 1984, the Rockefeller Foundation invited the Editorial Board of *The European Legacy* to hold its first conference on "Europe in a Changing World," in Bellagio, Italy, and it was there that the Talmors decided to found the International Society for the Study of European Ideas. The ISSEI conferences offer a forum for academics from different countries, backgrounds, and disciplines to share the fruits of their work and to keep track of new intellectual trends and research in areas of study other than their own; they enable participants to keep abreast with new developments in current-day Europe where the forces of nationalism, unification, globalism, and the impact of a rapidly changing world shape and reshape academic practices. From 1988, ISSEI has organized biennial international conferences on a variety of themes:

1988

Turning Points in History

University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands

200 Participants

1990

European Nationalism

Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium

300 Participants

1992

European Integration and the European Mind

University of Aalborg, Denmark

400 Participants

1994

The European Legacy: Toward New Paradigms

University of Graz, Austria

900 Participants

1996

Memory, History and Critique: Identity and the Millennium

University of Humanist Studies, Utrecht, the Netherlands

1 500 Participants

1998

Twentieth Century European Narratives: Tradition and Innovation

University of Haifa, Israel

700 Participants

2000

Approaching a New Millennium: Lessons from the Past: Prospects for the Future

University of Bergen, Norway

650 Participants

2002

European Nationalism in a Changing World: Between Nationalism and Globalism

University of Aberystwyth, Wales, UK

430 Participants

2004

The Narrative of Modernity: The Co-existence of Differences

University of Navarra, Pamplona, Spain

390 Participants

2006

The European Mind: Narrative and Identity

University of Malta, Malta

380 Participants

2008

Language and the Scientific Imagination

Language Center, University of Helsinki, Finland

480 Participants

2010

Thought in Science and Fiction

University of Chankaya, Ankara, Turkey

150 Participants

2012

*The Ethical Challenge of Multidisciplinarity: Reconciling "The Three Narratives":
Art, Science, and Philosophy*

University of Cyprus, Nicosia

350 participants

2014

Images of Europe: Past, Present, Future

Catholic University of Portugal, Porto

280 Participants

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The European Legacy: Toward New Paradigms (formerly *History of European Ideas*) is an international, multidisciplinary, peer-reviewed journal devoted to the study of European ideas. Founded in 1979 by Sascha Talmor and Ezra Talmor (Israel), the journal was first published by Pergamon Press (UK). In 1995 it was transferred to MIT Press (USA) and was renamed *The European Legacy*, although the Board of Advisory Editors remained unchanged. From 2000 to the present *The European Legacy* has been published by Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group (UK).

Aims and scope

The European Legacy is devoted to the study of European intellectual and cultural history but is equally concerned with the emerging paradigms of thought in the making of the New Europe. The editors believe the journal's multidisciplinary scope and appeal is immensely important with the ever-increasing level of specialization in all spheres of knowledge. The journal publishes articles, review essays and book reviews on a broad range of disciplines – philosophy, language, art and literary studies, political science, the social and human sciences, and non-technical science, including their various sub-disciplines. Special issues devoted to particular themes are edited by expert guest editors.

What is Europe? Was ist Europa? L'Europe – c'est quoi? Czym jest Europa?

To say something well thought out about Europe may seem rather pretentious. Its essence is elusive and its charm discrete, the saying goes. Moreover, its diversity is often underlined, as well as its frequent quest for unity. Likewise, its permeable boundaries are typical. And of course each European country has its own honour: Goethe, Shakespeare, Voltaire, Cervantes, Dante, Tolstoy, Mickiewicz, Strindberg and so on.

But we can also recognize a European canon that includes philosophers, artists, and composers among others – emphasizing “the supranational” and thereby representing the common European cultural heritage. But we have to be careful. How uniform is this heritage? Which are the underlying values?

So, what do we mean when talking about Europe? Was ist Europa? Well, there is no black box, in other words no absolute answer, where to find Europe.

We should rather realize that Europe has to be discovered and rediscovered, to be discussed, to be invented and reinvented and to be negotiated and renegotiated over and over again.

Why so? Because there are so many pictures and understandings of Europe, as well as of the European Union. As a concept and as a project Europe can never be completed. It will always need to be remade and at least partly emancipated from the past.

According to Zygmunt Bauman, a famous Polish sociologist, the European culture can be measured by its ambitions and horizons, allergic to borders and to all finitude and fixity. He argues that Europe is an unfinished adventure. Stefan Zweig, Austrian (with Jewish roots) novelist, playwright, journalist and biographer who at the height of his literary career, in the 1920s and 1930s, was one of the most popular writers in the world, constituted doubt a typically European characteristic. Let us turn to the famous Polish Nobel Prize Laureate, Czesław Miłosz. In his autobiographic book “My Europe” stands his longing for a habitable living space free from nationalist hysteria and state terror. In his notes from the war period he writes: “The European inhabitant continued long to say *My Lord!* Later he gloomily noted and said *My religion!* Much later he began with excitement to roar: *My country, my nation!* And now he screams fanatically *My race!* In the same moment he ceases to be European!” (My translation).

Where on earth is Europe and the European Union heading these days? Who knows! We can however agree on the fact that Europe and the EU have some problems! Looking back it is obvious that our continent has been benign to establish the national, the religious, ethnicity... In other words, it has acted in a rather divisive way, and not always unifying and bonding.

Some people say that there are too many homes in too small an area! Is this the case? I think not, even though one of course could explain the many European wars in relation to this argument.

But those arguing this way, saying that they have a problem with too many people of different kind, too many different languages, as well as religions nearby and around – they have an obvious problem with Europe by the simple reason that multiculturalism and diversity is the fate of Europe! We must realize

that this dimension is present in the heated discussions, as well as in the more low key and quiet conversations.

Let me finish by turning to the Polish poet Adam Zagajewski and his picture of the European citizen, “migrating” between nation and integration:

He has a good memory and remembers very well the bright side, as well as the dark side of Europe. He cannot be arrogant because the amount of evil prohibits all kinds of presumption. He respects the achievements of Enlightenment but does not despise Middle Ages and its faith. He knows that Europe has place for both analytical thinking and for prayer; for physics and for music. He hopes that the taste of his favorite cheese will not be decided by the wise men and women in Brussels...

Even though he does not believe in CSFP, he believes in Europe... without forgetting though that Europe is an admirable fiction. And it helps us to live our lives. He must read poetry as the democratic system in Europe does not provide sufficient spiritual nourishment and is intellectually clear...

He must therefore also read poetry to wrap the unfinished democratic system. (My translation)

Thank you so much for listening! I wish you all, colleagues and friends, interested in the discussion of European ideas, a fruitful and enjoyable conference this week, and I do hope that you will find out “what’s new in this new Europe.”

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POLAND AND THE EUROPEAN UNION —SELECTED PROBLEMATICS



During my third year of studies, I began searching to answer some of life's major questions. One of my obsessions was understanding what happiness is and how to be happy. Initially, my reflections were infantile. However, later, I started conducting proper research, reading books and scholarly papers. The deeper I delved into the subject, the larger my questions and doubts became.

And there is nothing surprising about that because over the centuries the very word *happiness* and its nature have acquired an abundance of meanings, associations and opinions, all of which have been heartily debated. This was rightly observed by Władysław Tatarkiewicz in his monumental work on the subject, *Analysis of Happiness* (1978). According to this eminent Polish philosopher, the basic problem we face when philosophizing on human happiness is the term's ambiguity.

As a result of my research, I managed to distinguish four basic types of happiness:

1. Happiness as "highly positive developments"—that is, developments that positively influenced the life course of an individual, inducing a state of happiness. Examples of such events include being admitted to a university, getting one's dream job, publishing with a prestigious publisher, going on a wonderful holiday, the birth of a healthy child, getting married and organizing a superb wedding party.

2. Happiness as "incredibly pleasant moments"—understood as experiencing a sense of inner fulfillment: falling in love with reciprocity, appreciating the pleasure of a good meal, achieving satisfaction with the proper execution of a task, or enjoying a Saturday evening spent with family and friends.

3. Happiness as "possession of the highest human good," that is *Eudaimonia*, of which Herodotus, Aristotle and Boethius wrote. Here we can distinguish

two categories: tangible goods, which improve one's standard of life (a new car or house, a modern computer, brand-new clothes), and intangible goods such as morals or internal peace.

4. Happiness as "satisfaction with one's life"—or the overall balance of one's life. If it is positive, a person's life can be assessed as a happy one. As Władysław Tatarkiewicz put it in his study, "happiness is full and lasting satisfaction with the entirety of one's life" (1076: 74). Similarly, Johann Wolfgang Goethe observed in one of his letters, "I am happy, and I wish to live my life again" (qtd.: Kirsch 2016). We find similar thoughts in the writings of Katherine Mansfield, a New Zealand born, English novelist, who—in her *Journal*—thanked God for the very fact of her existence (1964: 49). Contrary to *Eudaimonia*, this category is subjective, because it is measured by satisfaction with life and not by the possession of goods.

All these categories have one thing in common: they describe something that is both positive and valuable. The popular understanding of happiness includes a highly favorable development we are part of. When we talk about such a series of positive events or fortunate life circumstances, we might name them success, prosperity, good fortune or a stroke of luck. Such experiences run the continuum from relief to contentment to moments of pure joy. We experience happiness of the first kind when the lock of an attacker's gun trying to kill us gets jammed or when we manage to leave a building just before the terrorists' bomb explosion. But happiness also means being born in a well-off family, being in good health, having access to tangible and intangible goods, and being loved and enjoying other people's appreciation. Moreover, it can also be felt during temporary events, such as a holiday at the beach or a New Year's Eve party.

The issue is obviously much more complicated, yet all concepts, categories, reflections and comments on happiness are linked by a certain condition. We can find this condition in the famous work of Agnolo Bronzino (1503–1572), an Italian painter, draftsman and poet from the Mannerism period. The work *Allegory of Happiness* is on display at the Uffizi Gallery in Florence. At the center of the painting, we see the Allegory of Happiness with the Horn of Plenty. She is flanked by Cupid, Justice and Prudence. Above the head of Happiness is Fame sounding a trumpet, and Glory holding a laurel garland. At her feet are Time and Fortune, the latter with the wheel of destiny and the enemies of Peace lying humiliated at her feet. In other words, through this iconographic presentation, its creator suggests that the prerequisites of happiness are Peace and Security.

Indeed, the etymology of the word Peace can be helpful. The word comes from Latin *PAX* meaning “consensus, tranquility, a moment of rest, lack of conflict or hostility, harmony.”¹ The English word *peace* was first used in the 13th century as a greeting “Peace be with you,” which was inspired by the Hebrew word *SHALOM*, meaning “being healthy, calm, in a proper shape of mind.” A close word is the Arabic *salaam*, which does not only denote peace but also equity, fairness, safety, happiness, well-being, prosperity, integrity, fortune and friendship. “Peace” can be found in nearly all dictionaries and encyclopedias of the world, and yet a clear and unambiguous definition of the word does not exist. There are even more doubts when it comes to the context of political science. According to Joachim Kondziela, “peace” is a “verbal understanding” between states, nations and politicians as to the scope of values, which—when being defined—result in a clear divergence of opinions (1975: 32). This is complicated by the fact that, in popular perceptions, peace constitutes something of unquestionable value and indisputable parameters.

The notion of peace serves as an intuitively understood code, an incontestable axiom in foreign policy, at least in its declaratory dimension. “Peace” is also an existing or desired state of affairs. It is an ideal that humankind believes in and strives for. It is the concept that expresses the most sublime ideals and humanitarian values of man. Yet—as seen by realists (today neo-realists)—it can be also a “dangerous illusion.” Although this general way of understanding peace does not usually cause controversy, difficulties immediately appear when to this general notion we attribute more substantial and clearly defined content resulting from the needs and expectation of individual states. Then, this extra-semantic level of understanding becomes more complicated.

According to Kukułka, “peace fosters the nurturing and development of all kinds of creative international order and humanist aspects of world civilization.” It not only covers different levels of society, such as the individual, class, nation, international system or state, but also various issues of social development centered around cooperation, social order, conflict, and domination, among others (1982: 61). It is the ethical dimension of peace that promotes its understanding as a “value in social life,” as observed in the European Union context by Roman Kuźniar in his work *Prawa człowieka. Prawo, Instytucje, Stosunki międzynarodowe* [*Human Rights. Institutional Rights, International Relations*] (2000: 269).

¹ If not indicated otherwise, all translations are mine.

As early as the beginning of the 17th century, the famous English poet and preacher John Donne maintained in his *Meditations* (XVII) that:

No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friends or of thine own were: any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bells tolls; it tolls for thee.

Beyond any doubt, man is a social being; a human being never lives alone. Isolation or separation does not help when it comes to personal growth: it does not foster self-development; it does not forge an individual's identity. As observed by Professor Józef Tischner, a lonely man can only build a hiding place for himself, or herself, whereas building a home requires the presence of at least two—you and me.

Man cannot settle down in loneliness. Lone people build cells, others construct hiding places. The very essence of reciprocity consists in offering to another man of what is only possible thanks to the presence of another human being. (qtd. Bobko 2003: xviii)

Since ancient times, most human beings have wanted to live in an ideal world, a world free of conflict, happy and peaceful, in which they could fulfil their dreams and satisfy their wishes. This theme—since the dawn of our civilization—has been present in our reflections on the human condition, yet this does not mean that it has been fully exploited. On the contrary, it is still quite relevant nowadays. The overwhelming desire for peace and almost endless human imagination have pushed humans to develop new ideologies or belief systems, most often in utopian contexts.

The term “utopia” is a relatively new one—its use can be traced to the Latin title of the essay (1516) of the same name by Thomas More. The origins of *utopia* are ambiguous as it could have come from either the Greek *outopos* (Greek: ou—no, topos—place: *non-place*, *a place nonexistent*) or *eutopia* (meaning *a good place*). Quite possibly this ambiguity was deliberate: one can suspect this, judging by the history of creative and abstract human thought, preoccupied with the project of creating an ideal political system, based on solidarity, justice and equality. The term “utopia” has since been used to describe those motifs and storylines in literature and pseudoscience that express the human desire for a better world. The biblical paradise is the first example of utopia. An-

cient Greeks had their own paradise topos—namely Arcadia. Then we should mention Plato's dialogue, *The Republic*. Over time, the image of utopia has changed and evolved, sometimes taking rather surprising forms, depending on the epoch. This striving for happiness, so deeply rooted in human nature, leads people to adjust their expectations to pre-existing utopian visions or create them according to their own imagination. As a result, it is possible to imagine an unlimited number of combinations of ideal worlds created by a sublime awareness. Yet, we should remember here that each of these ideal worlds is modified according to the individual beliefs, opinions and desires of their creators.

In his book *Spotkania z Utopią* [*Meetings with Utopia*] (1980), Jerzy Szacki enumerates many of the books devoted to this subject. The majority of the works he mentions condemn the present zealously and with great pathos, yet do not provide practical solutions. Instead, they propose escaping into a dream world. We are told what good is, but not how it can be achieved. We are told what evil is, but not how to replace it with good. Such utopias are quite often created by those members of society who are well-ingrained in their social environment, ready to follow its order even, yet want to do so by embarking on voyages to happy islands where they share this comfortable lifestyle only with a small circle of good friends. *Utopian* works demonstrate how different the images of utopia may be and how they have changed over time. However, the experiences of past generations have taught us that even the most beautiful ideas, when transformed into reality, become tainted, being lost in the barrage of information, or simply become irrelevant.

Examples of utopia are also found in Polish literature, in particular during the years when Poland did not exist on the map of Europe. In the early 19th century, Wojciech Gutkowski wrote the novel *Podróż do Kalopeii* [*A Voyage to Kalopeia*] (1956). The work was a classical utopian novel of the age of enlightenment. It depicted an ideal society that rejected private ownership and adopted only the best laws. Its citizens pursued life in a state of ideal harmony, equality and prosperity deep in the interior of the Australian continent. "Kalop" is a Pole (Polish: *Polak* read backwards). The Poles fled to this distant continent to seed a new society, organized according to entirely new rules, ones having nothing in common with Australian reality. There they secured a *utopian viability*, far from Europe and its influence on the development of the Polish society, and most importantly far from Poland's political reality.

As observed by Karl Mannheim, when literary utopias are turned into reality, they become ideologies, which—with their negative undertones—are in fact

dangerous for the very existence of the society in which they were born (Shils 1974: 83–89). It is enough to mention communism or Nazism amongst those dangerous ideologies. This makes us pose the question of whether contemporary Europe, the European Union, is an answer to these concepts of utopia? For nearly 70 years we have lived in peace, even if there are some threats to our security. Do we live or—thanks to the European Union—aspire to live, under the rule of law with an improved social order, one that that has ended the wars that had plagued Europe for centuries? Have we instituted sustainable peace on the continent? The optimists claim that this is almost so—with the disappearance of basic causes of wars such as uncontrolled power, rivalry between nations and individuals, and conflicts between interest groups. The existence of universally recognized laws, to some extent, blocks violence and the violations of rights, both in individual and social relations. Moreover, some are of the opinion that the European Union is too powerful a political organism to be threatened by an external attack.

The European Union was established through and by its founding treaties. And even if one of the revised treaties, the so-called *Constitutional Treaty* adopted in 2004, was not ratified by all Member States, the treaties in force (including the currently in force Lisbon Treaty), form the constitutional foundation for the existence of the European Union as a community of law. During the Polish accession process, we witnessed a lively discussion over our Europeanness. Some may disagree with the statement that Poland has come a long and difficult way back to Europe, with one of its milestones being the accession referendum in June 2003 (with 77.45% voting for accession to the EU). Having looked back at over a thousand years of Polish history, we are aware that there were long periods of our non-presence in Europe, in geopolitical terms and—by the same token—absence from the mainstream, socio-political and civilizational development of the continent. Nevertheless, Poles were able to preserve European values: because of these very values they often died for Europe and, even more frequently, for Poland. Fortunately, we do not need to die for Europe or for Poland anymore. Thanks to the European Union, Poland has made its return to the group of seven or eight major powers in Europe, as used to be the case in the 15th and 16th centuries.

The origins of the idea of a united Europe can be found in Poland, too. After one of the bloodiest battles of the November Uprising, the Battle of Olszynka Grochowska (25 Feb. 1831), one of its veterans, Wojciech Bogumił Jastrzębowski (1799–1882), wrote a piece titled *Konstytucja dla Europy* (*Wolne*

chwile żołnierza polskiego, czyli myśli o wiecznym przymierzu między narodami ucywilizowanymi). [*A Constitution for Europe. (A Polish Soldier's Free Moments, or Thoughts on an Eternal Covenant Between Civilized Nations)*]. It was not by accident that the work was published on 3rd May 1831, that is, on the day of the anniversary of Poland's Constitution of 1791.

Even if, Jastrzębowski's ideas did not enjoy much attention as a utopian concept during his lifetime, over the years, his work has gained greater appreciation as the first outline of a constitution for a united Europe. He wrote (<http://agad.gov.pl/wp-content>):

1. There is no stranger phenomenon below the sun than the fact that people most of all desire peace and they least care to keep it.
2. European nations should renounce their independence and fall slaves under the laws accepted by all these nations. "All nations belonging to the eternal alliance in Europe should be equally subject to the European laws. Existing monarchs would become patriarchs, fathers of nations who stand guard over both local and European rights. A patriarch elected by a nation would be its guardian and the executor of national laws, whereas a Congress itself would be the guardian and executor of European laws.
3. There would be no states but only nations in Europe. "Existing hitherto geographical borders of countries (a main cause of the bloodshed in Europe) would be abolished forever."
4. The highest authority would be the Congress, composed of representatives of all the nations of Europe. [...] Each nation would delegate an equal number of plenipotentiaries, who would be elected by the national Parliament, to the European Congress. [...] The European Congress would be a permanent institution, and it would perform its activities each year in different headquarters of the European nations.
5. The first duty of the European Congress would be to enact European laws, which should begin with an article of the following meaning: Peace in Europe is stable and eternal.

His Treatise on an eternal covenant between civilized nations and the Draft Constitution for Europe cannot be classified as belonging among totalitarian utopias, universal social projects requiring a total overhaul. The author did not comment on economic and social relations, religion, morality or customs.

In principle, Jastrzębowski did not criticize the old elites. He saw the dynasties ruling at his times as remaining in power as long as their members followed the laws of nations and participated in the international cooperation system.

Those who would not would be called barbarians. In Jastrzębowski's writings, we see nothing on bloody carnage. This well-educated Warsaw University graduate wrote his treaty under the influence of his experience from the Olszynka battlefield, assuming "that the bloodshed is not in vain, that it will release sometime [...] the blissful fruits of desired by the human race, peace."

Jastrzębowski's ideas were firmly rooted in Enlightenment-era thought, with its deep faith in reason, progress and the laws of nature, which—in time—would find its expression in ideal laws governing all of mankind. The young scientist must have remained—at least partly—under the influence of romanticism, in particular, the idea of "adjusting one's strengths to the ideas put forward" (meaning pursuing ambitious goals). Jastrzębowski's ideal Europe was a federation of nations, speaking different tongues with full respects to national identities, yet subject to the rules of a common political system. Studying Jastrzębowski's "Treaty" and the "Constitution" one may obviously speculate whether they were entirely the author's new ideas or just his reception of earlier concepts, such as the "Perpetual Peace Project" by Immanuel Kant of 1795, known at Jastrzębowski's times through several translations. The great philosopher from Königsberg had also assumed the establishment of a federation of peoples, which—in time—would cover the entire world and guarantee an end to war. We can also cite other similar examples—e.g., some declarations by Prince Adam Jerzy Czartoryski (1771–1861). Yet, Jastrzębowski's writings are characterized by a number of original ideas, such as guaranteed equality for dispersed nations (such as Jews or Gypsies). Hence, Jastrzębowski's writings certainly deserve reading anew, and attempts to recognize the author as one of the patrons of our contemporary united Europe should by no means be treated as mere propaganda.

Despite various political, cultural and social problems, the Europeans who established the European Communities, resulting in the shape of the modern Union, have every reason to be proud of their work. Granted, not everything is perfect in this European project and its practical application, but the EU is not a utopia; instead, it is a reality and as such it can never be perfect. A number of fundamental issues require corrections and amendments. Nevertheless, none of these issues should overshadow or question the ideal behind the European integration project or its institutional expression and mechanisms.

Nobody can doubt the benefits—both tangible and intangible—of membership in the European Union. It is quite easy to notice the changes in our little homelands that have been possible thanks to Union membership. In this way,

the WE ARE EUROPE project has managed to mobilize local communities to realize changes in their personal lives and in the lives of their cities or neighborhoods through Union funds and initiatives.

The European Union is not a utopia and the privilege of being a European and benefiting from membership are more and more closely linked with the obligation of solidarity within Europe. This very privilege also entails responsibility for our European homeland and the condition of the European project and the enduring vitality of our civilization. No doubt, exercising this obligation makes our dreams come true, and our major dream is to BE HAPPY AND TO LIVE IN PEACE.

And this dream has nothing to do with a utopia. We do not need to travel to *Kalopeia*, because we can be happy and live a peaceful life here and now. Receiving this is of particular importance for Polish men and women, but we should also remember that building the European community and solidarity is also a particular responsibility of the Polish people. This stems from our identity, from over a thousand years of common European history, from our utopian dreams about independence, happiness and peace. Being part of Europe, we share its lot and we should not demand one-way solidarity, e.g., funds and protection without offering anything in return.

Perhaps, we should realize that we are not only children of Europe but also children of the World. And it is up to us what this world will be like.

And our ideas cannot remain dreams; they must become a reality in which we accept variety and value all people regardless of national identity, ethnicity, religion, political party, gender, age, sexual orientation, or race.

Such values as solidarity, mutual knowledge and understanding of diversities should be a prerequisite for cooperation not only in Europe but in also the world, on both macro and micro scale, also at the local level. As a result, our present and our future, based on happiness, security and peace, can become be a reality and not a utopian dream.

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EUROPEAN CULTURE
AND ITS MULTIPLE VOICES

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EUROPEAN CULTURE AND ITS MULTIPLE VOICES

*All objects, all phases of culture are alive.
They have voices. They speak of their history
and interrelatedness.
And they are all talking at once!*

Camille Paglia



he above quotation highlights multiplicity of voices and interrelations within the notion of culture. The articles presented in the part entitled „European Culture and its Multiple Voices” highlight the fact that „[a]ll objects, all phases of culture are alive”. In the scope of its three main sections this part elaborates on topics concerning various aspects of European culture such as education, history, theatre, literature and social issues including gender, ageing, democracy and European Capitals of Culture. This series of engrossing papers is full of original statements and reflections. The Authors are preoccupied with ways of perceiving contemporary culture and, in addition, ask compelling questions about the future of our civilization.

The texts in the first section examine multiplicity of voices concerning the topic of education. The authors of the articles deal with 3D technologies at the service of culture (Fernando Blaya, Silvia Nuere and Manuel Islan) and democratic education in the EU (Denise Egea).

The subsequent section refers to theatre, literature and film. The authors present contemporary interpretations of ancient drama in Romanian (Iolanda Manescu). There is also an analysis of the American play by Arthur Miller *Death of a Salesman* (Per Grande). Moreover, film and opera are included in this section: Victor Castellani demonstrates how imagination and satire can tackle with inevitable monstrosity associated with Hitler. Finally, the topic of

the ‚small’ and ‚childlike’ characters in Czech and Slovak literature is elaborated on by Verita Sriratana.

The final section is devoted to social issues and it presents articles dealing with e.g. transforming post-communist societies (Shala Barczewska) and European Capitals of Culture (Rolf Hugoson). What is more, gender and LGBTI issues are discussed by Veronika Plankova in her paper on ‘enemies’ of the Slovak society. Another social problem, ageing, is elaborated on in the article by Jenny Walden. This section also covers issues of Peloponnesian War (Anthi Dipla) and army jargon (Hans Rindisbacher).

All the sections of this part illustrate a wide range of notions and approaches which co-exist in European culture. They are simultaneous voices which „speak of their history and interrelatedness. And they are all talking at once!”

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ART AND SCIENCE: 3D TECHNOLOGIES AT THE SERVICE OF CULTURE

Tell me and I forget, teach me and I remember, involve me and I learn.

Benjamin Franklin



The European Higher Education Area (EHEA) was launched to ensure more comparable, compatible and coherent systems of higher education in Europe. This scenario has developed new methodologies based on competences and forced professors to redefine the way of teaching. One major change is related to focus on the formative processes, more specifically expressed in the results of learning in terms of competences.

The EHEA has defined common guidelines for the European universities to increase concepts related to the student learning process and with a bigger interest focus on investigation. All in all, we look for a learning-connection between the professional world and lifelong learning.

Martínez-Otero (García-Alonso 2016), in 1997, has already told us some of the problems we have in higher education and especially in engineering.

There is an excess of theoretical content of subjects and a lack of practice and experience in real contexts.

Therefore we need to find a methodology based on a teaching-learning process that could better prepare our students in competences, knowledge, general skills and attitudes.

If we take into consideration the White Paper of the European Commission “Teaching and learning. Towards the society of knowledge” (Riesco 1995) we will be interested in two headings:

- Encourage the acquisition of new knowledge (avoid obsolescence).
- Bring the university to the business world.

This brings us the possibility of working through projects and with real needs of the society.

But we are not only interested in teaching engineering, and as a group of professors, coming from different professional training, we think that combine all the knowledge coming from apparently such a different areas (art, engineering) can bring a better opportunity to learn.

Society is a mix of disciplines and an opportunity to bring new scenarios to our students. If we think in a wide range about European culture, Spain with its cultural legacy is a perfect opportunity to make a proposal of investigation and transfer it into university, so as to improve, not only the way of teaching, but also to show that a real project can be integrated into our classes without forgetting new technologies within our reach.

We then talk about teaching based on projects and here we have an example with the digitalization of the wine cellars in Aranda de Duero, Spain.

Project

A good illustration of the uses of 3D technology is the digitalisation of a set of underground cellars located in Aranda de Duero (Spain) which was declared an Asset of Cultural Interest in 2013 by the Government of Spain. Some students could work in this project and experience a real possibility to transfer the theoretical classes into a real proposal.

Aranda de Duero

First of all, we have to tell that the present group of cellars in Aranda de Duero is, from an historic and ethnographic point of view, the main cause of the

development of the city. In fact, the increase of the area of this town is closely produced in a parallel way as the construction of the wine cellars built in the underground (Anexo BOE N° 175/ jueves 23 de julio de 2015. Sec. III. p. 62237).

The underground of Aranda de Duero has around 135 cellars dating approximately before the XVI century. There has been a deep study of 60 of them, taking photos and scanning them in order to understand the space and its functionality. We also have to mention that a lot of them are more or less abandoned, others are private and just one of them is for tourist visit.

This kind of study made with the use of 3D technologies allows us to promote and take care of a wonderful heritage by creating an inventory of them. It has been created a virtual video tour to visit all of them so you can have an immersion without the necessity of being there.

Methodology

To take into consideration the wine cellars of Aranda, we started from aspects as investigation of previous information, photographs, maps and book reviews, so as to know, from a true aspect, the characteristics of the object of study.

We decided to approach it from an architectural-archaeology point of view and using reverse engineering. Such tools make necessary to work on the site, and here we can appreciate the importance of teaching through project based learning. It is obviously different to experiment it than to hear a master class about it.

Thanks to new technologies of digitalization we can create a virtual catalogue of the cultural heritage. Current software will allow us, once we take all the photos, to restructure the object in three dimensions for later use. Utilizing the scanner and photogrammetry we will obtain the three dimensions of the wine cellar spaces with an excellent definition. Once we have done all this process we can reproduce them through 3D printers, promotional or tourist videos to watch them in a digital platform.

We will explain, in a summarising way, the tools we have used to make this investigation come true.

Laser scanner

With the scanner we can take easily the form, texture and colour of different objects, buildings or landscapes due to the sum of the laser rays and the

subsequent measurement of the distance in each of the directions we point to. After all, we will be able to join all the information and transform it into 3D images with the use of specific software.



Figure 1. Preparation of the scan and reference points (white spheres)

Source: Fernando Blaya's photograph.

Panoramic photography

We will define the panoramic photography as the one that has the same aspect relation that perceives the human eye with a proportion of 2:1. We can also include the environment of the shoot of the camera, which is 360° in the horizontal axis and 180° in the vertical axis.



Figure 2. Shooting of the façade of the church of Santa Maria and vision with Oculus

Source: Fernando Blaya's photograph.

Photogrammetry

Photogrammetry is a technique that allows three-dimensional photograph restitution from geometry of the shape and dimensions and its texture or material aspect. Depending on the quality we want to have, we will need a different quantity of photographs.



Figure 3. View of the Trigo Square

Source: Fernando Blaya's photograph.

The aim is the complete restitution of the space thanks to photos.

There is different software that processes all the pictures taken and aligns them to recompose the photographed object in three dimensions. Once we have edited we can texture it and obtain ortho-photos.

Video and panoramic video

Creating a video is a key objective in the process. It will serve to allow the location of the referenced object in space and it will work, as well, as an important resource for the development and promotion of cultural heritage.

If we focus on aspects related to tourism, the video is really interesting for its ability to recreate itineraries that simulate a real journey, which would display the heritage filmed at any time and from anywhere.

The process to generate a panoramic video is similar to the one we describe in the panoramic photograph process. In this case we will use a six video cameras mounted on a stand with a cube configuration to cover the whole environment. As we need that all the cameras start at the same moment, they will be synchronized. A video will be generated as a result of the cylindrical projection of the various video sources placed in a spherical space.

Planimetry. Floor plan. 2 dimension computer graphics

In spite of the fact that the characteristics of the wine cellars are irregular, thanks to the digitalization we could obtain precise floor plan. With a specific computer tool, made for this occasion to generate digital topographic models, we create outlines that became the shapes where later on we included the photographic image related to each zone with all the texture, colour and definition.



Figure 4a, 4b & 4c. Outlines extracted from the drawing software. Superimposed image. 3D computer graphics in high quality

Source: Fernando Blaya.

On the one hand, technologies currently available are virtually essential for the study, preservation and dissemination of cultural heritage, being totally recommended its use and promotion in the practice of numerous disciplines such as archaeology, inventoried goods, or tourism promotion, among others.

The possibility of creating 3D models after scanning can be use in two ways:

- For the creation of a 3D inventory that could be use in a virtual way and as reverse engineering to recuperate damaged or disappeared goods and,
- To create models used for educational interest (blind person, in a class of Art history or Geography, Design engineering, etc).

Thanks to new digital technologies, especially the internet and 3D printing, Europe's rich cultural heritage can today reach new audiences across the world. They can be used to create virtual catalogues of the entire range of European cultural history, from buildings and urban settings to artefacts.

On the other hand, we consider that learning based on projects is an adequate proposal in this educational frame, not only because it can be well adapted into it, achieving their requirements, but also because the transversal competences, as collaborative work or interdisciplinary coordination, can be developed. Ours students of industrial engineering design may study the problems framed into a real project.

Our investigation is also based on reverse engineering and on teaching methodologies in training for innovation, making a proposal of activity related with the Spanish cultural legacy, with art and engineering. This kind of proposal should be implement in the curriculum of some engineering programs, in particular in the degree in industrial design and product development.

Reverse engineering is, in turn, an excellent tool for innovation and a teaching strategy to acquire the skills required for design and innovation in engineering education (Wanamaker 2012).

The study methodology presented here is to propose reverse engineering as a novel technique that not only discloses the historical, artistic and cultural heritage, but it also encourages the preservation of its incalculable wealth.

Finally, it could be added as additional conclusion that even though we are a group of professors from the Polytechnic University of Madrid trained in such different areas as Fine Arts and Industrial Engineering we find that work, mixing different fields, provides students a wide insight into their training. Is it necessary then to come back to a humanism training, muddling up all disciplines?

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THE CHALLENGE OF DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION¹



When East European countries joined the European Union, linguistic and cultural diversity increased, and generated new conflicts even as some attempt was made to use diversity to build a stronger democracy and develop Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC).² In recent decades, such problems have been sharply exacerbated by the largest inflow of refugees ever to sweep over Europe. Languages are being promoted³ while they pose a serious challenge when some people are denied the right to keep their na-

¹ This text is an updated version of a shorter paper published in *Critical Essays on Contemporary European Culture and Society*, ed. U. W. Beitter (New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing, 2003), 42–52.

² The Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC) project was initiated in 1997. Its aim was to identify (a) which values and skills individuals needed in order to become actively engaged citizens; (b) how they can acquire those skills; and (c) how they can learn to pass them on to others. In 2010, the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education was adopted by the Organisation's 47 member states in the framework of Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)7. On 28–29 November 2012, in Strasbourg, France, over two hundred participants from all over Europe and beyond attended the Conference on "Human Rights and Democracy in Action – Looking Ahead: The impact of the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education."

³ As the European Year of Languages 2001 began developing projects in almost all European countries and in many cities, and European educational systems were asked to integrate the "European dimension" in their syllabi, the question of languages became more than ever a serious challenge in Europe. On the eve of the closing event of the Year, the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers decided to declare a "European Day of Languages" on 26 September each year, to celebrate linguistic diversity, plurilingualism, and lifelong language learning.

tive language and culture in their own homeland,⁴ while some immigrants can see their rights to their language and culture of origin preserved. Is it possible to develop a European educational system (systems?) which could keep and in some cases revive languages and cultural diversity and at one and the same time develop European democratic citizenship consciousness? To explore this question, I shall refer to Derrida and his concepts of “an ideal of democracy” and “democracy to come”⁵ as tightly linked to language and human rights, basing my analysis on three of his major texts: *Right to Philosophy*, *The Other Heading*, *Specters of Marx*, and *Talking Liberties*.

Defining democracy

In Derrida’s “ideal of democracy,” the key word is “ideal”; for it stresses that his reference is not to democracy “as we know it today, not democracy as a reliable state of things” determined by Western societies.⁶ In *Specters of Marx* and *The Other Heading*, in “Call it a day for democracy” in particular, Derrida discusses the concept of democracy as something which “remains to be invented. *Every day*. At least.”⁷ He makes it clear that the social, political, philosophical, and economic dimensions of our world have changed, are still changing, and that intellectuals the world over have to re-think the meaning of “old” paradigms, and develop new ones. For example, what is the new model for a democratic society in the face of problems of homelessness, refugees, violence, fierce nationalisms, virulent ethnocentrism, xenophobia, “cleansing,” and exterminations? For Derrida, the future holds a promise, for “at the core of the idea of democracy there is a promise,” that of the “ideal of democracy.”⁸ It entails “some openness to the future, and this openness to the future and this

⁴ E.g., in the 2000 Eurobarometer survey, Irish was declared to be “foreign” by 38% of the Irish people.

⁵ J. Derrida, “Talking Liberties,” in: *Derrida & Education*, ed. G. J. J. Biesta and D. Egea-Kuehne, London: Routledge, 2001, 380. Interview of Jacques Derrida by Alan Montefiore in the Oxford Amnesty Series of Lectures, 13 February 1992.

⁶ J. Derrida, “Talking Liberties,” 396.

⁷ J. Derrida, *The Other Heading. Reflections on Today’s Europe*, trans. P.-A. Brault and M. B. Nass, Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 1992, 98. Original emphasis.

⁸ J. Derrida, “Talking Liberties,” 396.

openness to the other imply that we do not simply reconstruct,” as Montefiore suggested.⁹ That is why, Derrida insists, when “you refer to ... democracy, you have to speak of democracy *today* ... democracy to come,”¹⁰ and experienced as always possible. But note that it does not mean a democracy which will realize itself only in a future time, nor a “regulating idea, in the Kantian sense, or ... a utopia.”¹¹

By “democracy to come,” Derrida refers to the very concept of democracy as “the concept of a promise” which can manifest itself only where there is disruption and upheaval, when there exists a gap between the present state of democracies and the ideal of democracy. Thus the *apparent* failure of democracy is “*a priori* and by definition” characteristic of “*all* democracies, including the oldest and most stable of so-called Western democracies.”¹² In fact, it is in this very gap that democracy is being shaped, “between an infinite promise ... and the determined, necessary, but also necessarily inadequate forms of what has to be measured against this promise.”¹³ In this gap heterogeneity must be preserved, “as the only chance of an affirmed, or rather re-affirmed future.”¹⁴ Without this gap, without this disjunction, without this “*diastema*,” democracy may simply believe, *in all good conscience*, to have succeeded, to “ha[ve] done one’s duty,” and therefore may lose “the chance of the future, of the promise or the [call] ... of the desire also (that is [the chance of] its very possibility).”¹⁵

Derrida reminds us that, inherent in that notion of democracy, there is the necessity to be vigilant when discussing such idioms, and to look critically at “[t]he best intentioned of European projects, those which are quite apparently and explicitly pluralistic, democratic, and tolerant.”¹⁶ Within their supposedly clearly understood meaning, and despite the best intentions to remain true to their “spirit,” lurks the danger of wanting to “impose the homogeneity of a me-

⁹ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰ J. Derrida, “Talking Liberties,” 396. Original emphasis.

¹¹ J. Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, & the New Interntional*, trans. P. Kamuf, New York and London: Routledge, 1994, 65.

¹² J. Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 64. Original emphasis.

¹³ *Ibidem*, 65.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, 37.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, 28.

¹⁶ J. Derrida, *The Other Heading*, 54.

dium, of discursive norms and models.”¹⁷ For example, talking about Europe, Derrida wondered – and his words ring more true than ever¹⁸ – whether

the future will ... escape monstrosity... [For] in the name of identity, be it cultural or not, the worst violences, those that we recognize all too well without yet having thought them through, the crimes of xenophobia, racism, anti-Semitism, religious or nationalist fanaticism, are being unleashed, mixed up, mixed up with each other, but also, and there is nothing fortuitous in this, mixed in with the breath, with the respiration, with the very “spirit” of the promise.¹⁹

The challenge of access to rights, democracy, languages, and education

Derrida discussed at long length his concern about “the problems of the access ... of people who until now had no access to human rights – children, women, and so on and so forth.”²⁰ This is in part why Derrida’s texts are especially significant when discussing the consequences of exclusion due to the hierarchies prevailing in the so-called history of the West.²¹ He has denounced the limits of any institutional discourse on democracy. Derrida’s profound understanding, informed by experience, is at the root of some most perceptive discussions of the dynamics of exclusion, discrimination, and exile, and he calls on us to “never neglect this obvious macroscopic fact, made up of innumerable singular sites of suffering.”²² An analysis of questions of exclusion and privilege, hegemony and access to language, knowledge, educational institutions, and democracy can be traced throughout his writings, conferences,

¹⁷ *Ibidem*.

¹⁸ E.g., see the latest elections (Brexit, American presidential) and upcoming elections (France, Germany).

¹⁹ J. Derrida, *The Other Heading*, 6.

²⁰ J. Derrida, “Talking Liberties,” 398.

²¹ I have previously discussed the problems of human rights and access to education, especially in the context of Eastern Europe. See, “The Challenge of Freedom in Eastern Europe: Derrida’s Ethics of Affirmation and Educational Responsibility,” in: *The New Europe at the Crossroads*, ed. U. E. Beitter, New York: Peter Lang, 1999, 25–38; and “Paths to Integration and/or Multiculturalism: Cultural Crossroads and/of Education,” in: *The New Europe at the Crossroads II*, ed. U. E. Beitter, New York: Peter Lang, 2000, 89–109.

²² J. Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 85.

and seminars. In addition, these questions are the specific focus of the texts he gathered in *Du droit à la philosophie*.²³ In these texts, Derrida explores the conditions of access to philosophy, to the “proper” discourse, to language, to instruction, research, publication, and to the “legitimacy” of philosophy and education. He asks: Who has a right of access to philosophy, education, language? Who holds their power or privilege? Where does the responsibility lie, to whom, for whom?

When discussing “the right to a quality education”²⁴ the problem of language becomes a major issue. In cases where educational opportunities are diminished or denied through linguistic control or coercion, some children may find themselves excluded from the learning process, and later, as members of the community, they may lose all abilities to participate in the democratic process, in the governing of their region, and in the decisions which affect their lives. For, says Derrida, “[i]f there are human rights, which means universally valid human rights, they should be accessible, understandable to everyone, whatever language they understand or they speak.”²⁵ Derrida often discussed the importance of the affirmation of language and its link to responsibility as a commitment to speak to one another, to listen to the other’s language, to “hear” one another, to “get along.” In Europe, and in any country, it is necessary more than ever to consider this affirmation of language, and the problem of idioms and translation, in order to “avoid both the nationalistic tensions of linguistic difference and the violent homogenization of languages through the neutrality of a translating medium that would *claim* to be transparent, metalinguistic, and universal.”²⁶

Some measures have been proposed to minimize the damaging impact of imposing dominant norms through education. For example, the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People*²⁷ establishes some fundamental rights, some which specifically address education, like *Article 14*:

²³ J. Derrida, *Du droit à la philosophie*, Paris: Editions Galilée, 1990, trans. J. Plug and others and published in two volumes: *Who’s Afraid of Philosophy? Right to Philosophy 1* (2002), and *Eyes of the University. Right to Philosophy 2* (2004).

²⁴ UNICEF, The State of the World Children. www.unicef.org/sowc99 and www.unicef.org/sowc16. Last (accessed: 6 December 2016).

²⁵ J. Derrida, “Talking Liberties,” 391.

²⁶ J. Derrida, *The Other Heading*, 58. Added emphasis.

²⁷ http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf (accessed: 6 December 2016).

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.

2. Indigenous individuals, particularly children, have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State without discrimination.

3. States shall, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, take effective measures, in order for indigenous individuals, particularly children, including those living outside their communities, to have access, when possible, to education in their own culture and provided in their own language.

However, the dilemma, as Derrida points out, is that while it is necessary to respect minorities, differences, singularities, idioms, and languages, it is *at one and the same time* imperative to respect also “the universality of formal law, the desire for translation, agreement and univocality, the law of the majority, opposition to racism, nationalism, and xenophobia.”²⁸

Before addressing the problem of this *aporia*, it is necessary to consider two closely related issues: the paradox inherent in the concept of universal rights, and the question of language as a commitment for access to education.

The paradox of universal rights

In his long introduction to *Du droit à la philosophie*, “Privilège,” Derrida discussed what he saw as the paradox of human rights. He showed how the so-called *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, “while claiming to be grounded in the concept of natural rights,” is actually dependent upon a *topos*, and “a lexicon of justification or jurisdiction, of legitimation or foundation.”²⁹ The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* is grounded in history, and in his Oxford Amnesty lecture, Derrida reminded his audience that the human rights, “what we call the human rights is a set of concepts, laws, requirements which were not given in nature, from the beginning.”³⁰ The concept of human rights has been developed over time, through a number of declarations which have gradually determined it and given it its shape and content. However, the rights to education, to instruction, to culture, to language, are only relatively recently

²⁸ J. Derrida, *The Other Heading*, 78.

²⁹ J. Derrida, “Privilège,” in: *Du Droit à la Philosophie*, 55.

³⁰ J. Derrida, “Talking Liberties,” 392.

developed concepts, which emerged as human rights were being refined, re-defined, and more and more specifically determined. So, the words Derrida pronounced concerning the university can also apply to human rights: "Here, for example, is not an indifferent place."³¹

Derrida showed how the concept of human rights "also implies a philosophy" which, also, often claims to be universal; although, as he pointed out, it is hardly the case.³² For while one often tends to consider philosophy "a universal discourse, [which] crosses the borders of languages, nations, determined groups" and which "claims to address the universal problem,"³³ its concepts of culture, instruction, and education, actually also "have a history, a genealogy (*paideia*, *skholè*, *cultura*, *Bildung*, and so on) and a very complex structure."³⁴ From the beginning, they have been linked with specific cities and languages (Greek, Latin, French, German), and a familiar tradition outside which "the word[s] [do] not mean anything."³⁵

Furthermore, for Derrida, "the right to education [also] supposes the knowledge and the teaching of rights and the law"; and in order to gain access to rights and the law, individuals first need access to "the ability to read and interpret, in short, [it supposes access] to instruction."³⁶ Derrida saw this circular reasoning as inscribed in the concept of "power" (*pouvoir*, as a verb: to be able/to be allowed to; and as a noun: power; also akin to the term "empowerment") with a play on the concepts of authorization and of ability. Derrida wondered how to satisfy both of these exigencies of *pouvoir*: "By a being able/allowed-to-interpret, being able/allowed-to-speak, to write, to decipher?"³⁷ That power – given, as in being-allowed; or taken, as in being-able – this empowerment, have to go "through the practice of the language" and "through philosophy: through the constitution of power as linguistic and philosophical competence." Derrida saw the latter (philosophical competence) as being inscribed within the circle of access and education, but also as "the condition of the circulation of the circle."³⁸

³¹ J. Derrida, *Du Droit à la Philosophie*, 113.

³² J. Derrida, "Privilège," 58.

³³ J. Derrida, "Talking Liberties," 399.

³⁴ J. Derrida, "Privilège," 56.

³⁵ J. Derrida, "Talking Liberties," 391.

³⁶ J. Derrida, "Privilège," 63.

³⁷ *Ibidem*.

³⁸ *Ibidem*, 64.

It is necessary to do a “genealogical analysis [i.e., “deconstruction”] of the trajectory through which the concept [of human rights] has been built, used, legitimized.”³⁹ Assumptions must be uncovered and critically examined through a tracing of its history, and of its use as a philosophical, ethical, juridical, or political concept in order to take into consideration these specific determinations. For Derrida, its link to an ideal of democracy is evident on another level. Like democracy, the concept of human rights is still always in the making, always to-come, *à venir*, while the universal declaration of human rights is still being written; the latter can never be a finished process, but rather a promise as the ideal of a declaration to-come. In any case, Derrida stressed, it is of paramount importance that “[i]f there are human rights, which means universally valid human rights, they should be accessible, understandable to everyone, whatever language they understand or they speak.”⁴⁰ For Derrida, the paradox of a right to education lies in the fact that it implies an education already determined by concepts and by language.

The question of language and languages

As illustrated by Derrida’s experience and that of his schoolmates in Algiers, Algeria, described in *Monolingualism of the other*, the actual access to education through language is in fact discriminating on two counts. (1) A lack of familiarity with the “right” language, even within one’s “own” language, in effect, works out a discrimination. Those who do not, or cannot, use that particular language or their own variety of that language “*in a certain way*,”⁴¹ linked to history and genealogy, to connotations, styles, rhetoric, potential semantic, characteristic of specific groups and social classes, can find themselves, in actuality,⁴² excluded from access to education. (2) Access to human rights and their content can be assured only by instruction, education, and knowledge of the language. Even when education, and education in the language, can enable one to perceive the rights to education and their instrumentation, not everyone has access to this

³⁹ J. Derrida, “Talking Liberties,” 391.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*.

⁴¹ J. Derrida, “Privilège,” 52. Original emphasis.

⁴² Nearly 40 years ago, a major worldwide survey was conducted for the UN (Capotorti, 1979) on government released information to assess “how minorities were treated *de jure* and *de facto*” (Phillipson 1992: 94).

understanding – at least, to the understanding of the “essential” part of the language – because there is a distinction between understanding its linguistic expression, and the hermeneutics of its content. One must learn how to read. In that sense, the question of language is tightly linked to what Derrida called the “technical condition of access.”⁴³

This is why, when we talk about the right to education, this question cannot be avoided: Is education a universal – i.e., natural – right? As such, is it accessible? And as such, does it not entail an essential relation with the experience of language, school, and education, where access to education must go through a language and its sub-codes which are all, as we have seen, generally dependent on, or enforced by, the dominant language and its culture. Moreover, “even if we could do without any institutions ... schools ... disciplines” and curricula, wrote Derrida, “language would still be indispensable.”⁴⁴

Since one cannot dissociate concepts from language, from what one insists on calling natural language, and since yet, from the very beginning, both concepts and language were determined by a cultural, historical, national, and ethnical context, one must be aware of the fact that this supposedly universal translator imports or conveys with it some national hegemony. Derrida reminds us that international law and international institutions were born in, and defined by, the West. So far, they all are “Western texts, Western discourses.” Not linked to any particular nation, they are nevertheless very European, said Derrida, indicating that nowadays, “European” – i.e., Western – culture encompasses “also the United States, maybe Japan too.”⁴⁵ Although the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and its rhetoric may seem transparent enough, Derrida showed how they are nevertheless tightly linked to language, to a particular language, to its practice, its use, and its understanding. As mentioned above, the concept of human rights also implies a philosophy, a certain concept of truth and of its relation to language. Language is not neutral as Derrida pointed out: “[a]s soon as you reaffirm your own language, your own idiom ... there is the beginning of some nationalistic affirmation.”⁴⁶

Which is why we have to be careful, to be “vigilant,” a term often used by Derrida. And we need to think new kinds of teaching, and new ways of thinking. But again, while traditionally we were asked to make a choice between

⁴³ J. Derrida, “Privilège,” 60.

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, 51.

⁴⁵ J. Derrida, “Talking Liberties,” 401.

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*, 403.

singularity and plurality, Derrida called on us *not* to make a choice, but rather to face a dual responsibility: “how is it possible to reaffirm singularity, minority, specific idioms, natural languages, without giving rise to what we call nationalism in its violent and imperialistic form?”⁴⁷

The dual exigencies of education

This dilemma, this double injunction, this paradox of universality, is a challenge for all educators to develop an ability to mediate differences and boundaries, exclusions and violence, hierarchies and borders, whether they are concerned with language, rights, or democracy. How can one respond *to*, respond *for*, be responsible *to and for* two imperatives? For example, how can one respond both to the necessity of respecting the voice of the other, the idiom of the other, the heterogeneity which welcomes the other, which is the necessary condition for the very presence of the other, *and at one and the same time*, to the necessity of a universal formal law? How can one satisfy to the conflicting imperatives of “neither monopoly, nor dispersion”?⁴⁸ How can one choose between two equally imperative injunctions? And why, Derrida stressed, is it so important that we should *not* have to choose? In *The Other Heading*, Derrida described such dilemmas and paradoxes when discussing the “new” Europe, and gave examples of *aporias*, of “double duties” which can also help us reflect on education and its dual responsibilities. Specifically addressing European issues, these double duties are characteristic of the challenge educators have to face the world over, wherever diverse ethnic and racial groups have to live side by side.⁴⁹

These double injunctions, contradictions, *aporias*, are, according to Derrida, the essence of responsibility. Derrida described and discussed extensively and in most of his texts how these dilemmas are inherent in the concept of responsibility, are in fact *the very condition* of its possibility. For “at a certain point, promise and decision, which is to say responsibility, owe their possibility to the ordeal of indecisive nature of something which will always remain their condition.”⁵⁰ He repeatedly stressed that, if there is an easy decision to make,

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, 401.

⁴⁸ J. Derrida, *The Other Heading*, 41.

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, 76–78.

⁵⁰ J. Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 75.

and only a set of rules to follow, or a program to implement, there is, in fact, no decision to be made, therefore, no responsibility to be taken.

Derrida linked this concept – this condition of possibility as being dependent on the simultaneous necessity of a condition of impossibility – to a notion of “messianic” approach to the experience of the promise. It is by opening a space for the affirmation of this promise, of the “messianic and emancipatory promise as promise,”⁵¹ of the impossible event as a promise, that it will preserve its capital of possibilities, of dynamic ideal in-the-making, to-come. Derrida warned that there is danger in settling for an easy consensus, for “transparency,” since while “claiming to speak in the name of intelligibility, good sense, common sense, or [supposedly] the democratic ethic, this discourse tends, by means of these very things, and as if naturally, to discredit anything that complicates this model”⁵² As soon as we settle for a common space, we turn all possibilities into a program or into an “onto-theological or teleo-eschatological scheme.”⁵³ Derrida defined “the condition of possibility of this thing called responsibility” as “a certain *experience and experiment of the possibility of the impossible: the testing of the aporia* from which one may invent the only *possible invention, the impossible invention*.”⁵⁴ He also showed how closely related *aporia*, responsibility and ethics are declaring: “ethics, politics and responsibility, *if there are any*, will only ever have begun with the experience and the experiment of the *aporia*.”⁵⁵

The challenge of education for democratic citizenship in Europe lies in the paradoxical task educational systems are asked to accomplish, i.e., to reinforce national identity and to reduce cultural differences while at the same time developing the “European dimension” and preserving cultural diversity. Despite the rhetoric on promoting multiculturalism, some national school systems still banish “minority and regional languages.” While the member states may be willing to accept new European programs (e.g., Erasmus, Europass, Grundtvig, Leonardo da Vinci, Come-

⁵¹ *Ibidem*.

⁵² J. Derrida, *The Other Heading*, 55.

⁵³ J. Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 75.

⁵⁴ J. Derrida, *The Other Heading*, 41. Original emphasis.

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*.

nus) and develop the educational “European dimension,” it is unlikely that they would accept any loss of authority over their own educational system.

The European Year of Languages 2001 prompted the development of projects in almost all European countries and in many cities, as European educational systems were asked to integrate the “European dimension” in their syllabi. Yet the question remains of whether it is possible to develop a European educational system which could preserve, and in some cases revive, languages and cultural diversity, *and at one and the same time*, develop a European citizenship consciousness. We saw that there is a tight link among languages, human rights, and democracy. The role language plays in gaining access to human rights and freedom, and the responsibility facing education in re-evaluating, re-considering, and re-interpreting its position along a continuum of double-imperative are paramount. Considering the *aporetic* nature of education and its issues of rights and languages, overlooked in all proposed models of education and curriculum, is not the necessary step to recognize that our true dilemma is not a choice? Rather, should we not refuse to settle for easy consensus, simplify, neutralize, or translate, and accept and assume the responsibility to think, speak, and act within *aporetic* situations, under the double contradictory imperatives of a continuum of what Derrida calls “double duty”?

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CONTEMPORARY INTERPRETATIONS OF ANCIENT DRAMA AT THE NATIONAL THEATRE OF CRAIOVA, ROMANIA



he National Theatre of Craiova is one of the oldest theatres in Romania. It was founded in 1850 but, before that date, some Western companies from France and Germany had visited the town and presented their productions in Craiova, while the local intellectuals would prepare and play short dramas when they organized their meetings, for instance "in winter, especially during the carnival."¹

We could say that the interest in staging ancient dramas is somehow linked to the moments in history when people, confused by some disturbing events, such as wars or change of political regimes, or even at the turn of centuries or millennia, feel that they should go back to the origins and find there the power to go on. The first ancient tragedy staged in Romania was "Hecuba" by Euripides – it was presented by the students of a famous high school in Bucharest, in 1819. The sociopolitical conditions did not allow a new staging soon after that, and, thus, only at the end of the 19th century the ancient theatre is taken into consideration again. Meanwhile, more translations of the ancient Greek plays had been made. The playwright who was preferred during that time was Sophocles: for instance, "Oedipus the King" was kept in the repertory of the National Theatre of Bucharest from 1890 to 1924. A new significance, with profound contemporary references, was found in the text – the underlining of the human dignity and the passion for knowing the truth.

During the first half of the 20th century, more and more ancient plays were staged in the Romanian theatre. In 1911, and 1912, "Iphigenia in Aulis" was

¹ A. Fireescu and C. Gheorghiu, *History of the National Theatre in Craiova 1850–2000*, Craiova, Romania: Aius, 2000, 18.

presented in the open air, in different cities in Romania. At that time, some Romanian actors began to gain international recognition: Agatha Barsescu for example played in ancient tragedies in Austrian, German and American theatres.

After the Second World War new modalities of staging the ancient plays were found, in order to express the new experience of the war. The profound changes of the society led to finding new texts to be performed: Sophocles's "Antigone" was staged for several years, and Euripides's "Hecuba" was of interest again.

The National Theatre of Craiova staged an ancient play, for the first time, in the season 1943–1944: it was Sophocles's "Oedipus the King". Nevertheless, an ancient drama was staged again only in the 1963–1964 season. Euripides's "The Trojan Women" was meant to remind people that war generates suffering, ruins, destruction, desolation and humiliation, and to warn about the dark perspectives and consequences of the future after the war.

The interest for the ancient drama continued in new ways in the Romanian theatre: the TV shows began to be of great interest for the audiences during the 60s. New performances were either created or adapted for the television. Among the first plays presented on television, we can mention "Medea", "The Trojan Women" or "Alcestis". Also, different theatre festivals began to be organized in the 70s. The first festival of ancient theatre in Romania was organized by the Dramatic Theatre in Constanta, at the Black Sea, in 1978, and the performances took place in different historic places, even around some ancient ruins such as at Histria or Callatis, on the shores of the Pontus Euxinus – the ancient name of the Black Sea. The internationally renowned director Silviu Purcarete started to stage his performances of ancient plays on the occasion of this festival. In 1978 he presented his performance of "The Atreides' Legends" at Histria having in mind the link between cultures, between the Golden Age of the ancient Greece, the Byzantine world, and some ancient Romanian folkloric concepts expressed in poems, dances, and songs such as: "Caloian" (a rain ritual), "Ciuleandra" (a circle dance), and "Miorita" (a ballad). He meant to bring to life the image of a world of myths and dramatic poetry, a world that was "more than old, and more than archaic – a primordial world".² Silviu Purcarete continued to participate in the Festival of Ancient Drama, at the second edition, in 1981, with his performance of "Hecuba", a play that had marked the beginning of presenting performances in the Romanian language, in the early 19th century.

² S. Purcarete, *The Atreides' Legends Playbill*, Dramatic Theatre, Constanta, Romania, 1978, 2.

After December 1989, the Romanian theatre life changed dramatically, the same as the whole Romanian society, and the same as the whole European society. A decisive moment in the history of the National Theatre of Craiova was that when the director Silviu Purcarete started his collaboration with the Craiovan theatre. He staged there several performances and – after he had become famous worldwide with his performances of “Ubu Rex with Scenes from Macbeth” after Alfred Jarry and William Shakespeare, and “Titus Andronicus” by William Shakespeare, which were presented at the best-known theatre festivals such as the festivals in Edinburgh and in Avignon – he started his series of performances of ancient drama staging his performance of “Phaedra” in 1994.

In creating a new performance, Silviu Purcarete has always started his work from an exhaustive informational material, from a detailed research of all sources, and from the study of different translations (not only into Romanian). His theatrical language includes text, image, light and sound in a perfect balance. His performance of “Phaedra” combined Euripides’s Hippolytus and Seneca’s Phaedra in his attempt to find the most appealing words to the contemporary society. The set was minimal, only formed of a moving platform that symbolized a bed, and the stools that were permanently carried by the members of the Chorus – the most important character that included a number of eighteen female performers. They represented the well-known Chorus in the ancient drama, and, at times, the character of the Nurse that was mainly played by four actresses. The multiplication of a character is one of the motifs in Silviu Purcarete’s works. The huge dark empty stage, dominated by the light of the Moon suggesting the merciless goddess Artemis, the use of only black and white colours, the strange sounds as generated from another world, all these created a mesmerizing atmosphere that the audiences could hardly forget. The next production of an ancient play that he staged at the Craiova National Theatre was *The Danaides*, a huge production, with more than one hundred performers – it was the collaboration between the National Theatre and some very important international theatre festivals in Avignon, Vienna and Amsterdam. As long as much of the text of this play was lost, Silviu Purcarete not only used the surviving fragments of the tetralogy that included *The Suppliants*, *The Egyptians* and *The Danaids*, but he also introduced commentaries on tragedy by some of the most famous philosophers, critics and playwrights: Aristotle, Corneille, Stendhal, Scaliger, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche.

Silviu Purcarete created several performances at the Craiova National Theatre (mainly ancient drama and Shakespeare) and his latest production of an

ancient play staged there was “Oresteia”, Aeschylus’s only completely extant trilogy. It is a play that the director had staged in France, before staging it in Romania. Therefore, the work on the text was all the more complex, as the director had studied several French and Romanian translations, in order to refine the language of the performance, for it to become as coherent to the contemporary audiences as possible.

The interest of the National Theatre for the ancient drama has continued, and another director who staged ancient Greek plays in Craiova was Yiannis Paraskevopoulos who started his Craiovan career with a wonderfully fresh view on a masterpiece of the world playwriting: “Romeo and Juliet” by William Shakespeare. The success of this performance led to a new presence in Craiova of the Greek director whose second performance staged there was “Medea” – a mixture of modern means and traditional Greek aspects that deeply impressed the audiences. The actors were dressed in contemporary costumes but they used traditional Greek gestures and behaviors. Besides the torments of a deceived woman, Medea also suffers the humiliation of the migrants. Therefore, the performance presents one of the most imperative contemporary problems, which was as actual in the ancient times, as it is nowadays. The performance was very successful both in Romania and in Greece where it was acclaimed by the audiences who saw it at the Festival of South-Eastern Europe – Aspects of the Ancient Drama in Thessaloniki and at the International Festival of Ancient Greek Drama in Cyprus. The next performance that Yiannis Paraskevopoulos staged at the National Theatre of Craiova was an ancient Greek comedy: “Lysistrata” by Aristophanes. The theme is again extremely actual, as the play is an anti-war comedy and it approaches the sexual relations in a male-dominant society.

The ancient Greek literature was also present in the repertory of the National Theatre through the production of “The Odyssey”, staged by the British director Tim Carroll who proposed a very innovative approach of Homer’s epic poem – each performance was a new retelling of the stories included in the books of “The Odyssey”. The actors used improvisation, songs, pantomime, as well as the audiences’ stories, while the props were hoops and sticks. All the actors knew all the roles, and they would change the character they performed, randomly, representation to representation. In an epoch of globalization, the attempts of finding a complex language, as accessible as possible to a diversity of peoples and cultures, represents one of the main roles of theatre today.

We will conclude with one of the director Silviu Purcarete's opinions about the ancient drama that can be a permanent source of inspiration: "It is fascinating. I never feel I am bringing back to life something old; I do not have the feeling that I am dusting something in order to reveal its brightness. On the contrary, this brightness is blinding me. The force of these texts does not need to be discovered because their modernity is aggressive. Whenever I read them, I am very touched, very moved."³

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THE LOMANS' PRIVATE APOCALYPSE IN *DEATH OF A SALESMAN*

*Therefore,
Their sons grow suicidally beautiful
At the beginning of October
And gallop terribly against each other's bodies*

James Wright (1927–1980)

Being well liked



n the book entitled *The American Dream. A Short History of an Idea That Shaped a Nation*, Jim Cullen focuses on what he considers the six main themes according to which the American Dream is characterized: religious freedom, the quest for equality, the Declaration of Independence, upward mobility, home ownership, and fame and fortune.¹ Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* depicts a distorted version of this Dream. The first three of Cullen's themes do not play a central role in *Death of a Salesman*. However, the last three, upward mobility, home ownership, and especially fame and fortune, are core "values" for the Lomans, the family at the center of Miller's drama. In the light of the dream, we understand why the house and car are so important in the play. Even more significant, though, the central character Willy Loman's approach to life verges on a decayed version of the American Dream, in which talent and hard work are subordinated to fame. This modern delusion, in which a charismatic personality is a necessity, in which physical beauty is

¹ J. Cullen, *The American Dream. A Short History of an Idea That Shaped a Nation*, New York: Oxford UP., 2003, 8.

almost valued more highly than wealth, and in which the elected are those who do not have to try too hard,² contains the elements of Willy's American Dream.

Willy Loman has no past, no tradition to cling to. He is a prisoner of the here and now. The cheapness of his existence is highlighted by the lack of tradition and history. To cope with this void, he only allows himself to see the world through the rose-tinted ideals and slightly brutal work ethics of a salesman. In the course of the play, the meaninglessness of the life of a salesman, once something outwardly able to fill his life with meaning, is gradually revealed.

In the play, Willy confesses to an imaginary Ben that he feels – kind of contemporary about himself.³ As a child, he was abandoned by his father. Lacking a father figure, he turned to his older brother, Ben, who did not really care about his younger brother, only his own career and success, a success partly based on cheating others. Like Jay Gatsby, Ben has taken short cuts on the road to success and wealth. Thus, Willy's basic male models from early childhood were people like his father, who abandoned him, and Ben, who was driven by a brutal desire for success. Willy is totally spellbound by Ben and his success, and, therefore, totally spellbound by the American Dream – without ever considering the premises or the futility of the dream.

Willy's background hints not so much at why he does not succeed in business, as at why he deceives himself and his family. His past has made him vulnerable to the outward trappings of the American Dream. Not once do we hear Willy Loman reflect on the reality of the dream, on the fact that there will be very few winners and very many losers. According to Brian Parker, Willy and his family are victims of the deterioration of this dream. Parker sees Willy's philosophy as a reflection of the personality cult of Dale Carnegie in which one wins friends and influences others for the purpose of gain.⁴

Willy thinks of himself in terms of what he does; his identity lies in his work title. He is not interested in who he really is or his inner value. His life philosophy focuses on success, primarily in sports and business. He has no other ideals, no religion or philosophy, to balance such an ideal. Willy thinks that, if he is not successful, he cannot deserve to be loved by his family.⁵ All

² *Ibidem*, 177–178.

³ A. Miller, *Death of a Salesman*, London: Penguin Classics, 2000, 40.

⁴ B. Parker, "Point of View in Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*," in: R. W. Corrigan (ed.), *Arthur Miller: A Collection of Critical Essays* (Twentieth Century Views), Englewood Cliffs, NJ.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1969, 102.

⁵ *Bloom's Guides. Arthur Miller's Death of a Salesman*, Chelsea House Publishers, 2004, 8.

his life, he has compensated for his unhappy childhood by clinging to the belief that being popular is everything that is necessary. Willy believes in the cult of personality, and in the importance of charm. His dream of being successful in business and sport, as in other areas of life, is clearly based on the romantic and virility-based notion that one can make one's mark by outdoing others. Willy believes in the romantic personality, the person who is gifted by nature, who is looked up to and admired by others, and who does not have to work hard to attain success.

In Willy's view, natural strength and natural charm are enough, and he believes that these qualities are exactly what Biff has. Willy sees in Biff a kind of internalized superiority, evident in such statements as: "You got greatness in you." (*Death of a Salesman*, 53.) He just cannot understand that his son is lost "in the greatest country in the world" since he is a young man with such – "personal attractiveness."⁶

Looks are clearly important. Biff is described as a young Hercules,⁷ while both boys are called Adonises. In his father's eyes, Biff stands above the normal moral limitations because of his looks and talent in sports; the fact that he breaks the rules simply highlights his superiority. Thus, Willy laughs proudly when Biff is accused of theft, and claims that if anyone else had stolen something, there would have been an uproar.⁸ While the young Biff, like Hercules with a golden helmet, is glorified by his father as a young god: "*And the sun, the sun all around him*" (*Death of a Salesman*, 54), he returns to his parent's home as a 34-year-old misfit. The strong, ruthless high-school graduate, with the looks of Adonis, has striven in accordance with his father and uncle Ben's law of the jungle, but has not been able to hold down a job.

Willy has taught his sons the shortcut to success: success begins by being popular. If you are liked, you are not even obliged to abide by the law. Therefore Willy accepts that the young Biff steals timber and basketballs, not understanding that this ethical *laissez faire* attitude could later cultivate arrogance, laziness and ruthlessness. Justified by his brother Ben's law of the jungle, Willy accepts that there will be a certain dishonesty among the elect, the likeable, as an indication of superiority.

Willy, although hard working himself, does not convey to his sons that hard work is the real way to success. Blinded by his narcissism, he cannot see

⁶ A. Miller, *Death of a Salesman*, London: Penguin Classics, 2000, 11.

⁷ *Ibidem*, 54.

⁸ *Ibidem*, 23.

that education, which he lacks, could contribute to his sons' success. Moreover, by emphasizing personality and sport to such a degree, Willy actually limits his sons' chances for success.

The American dream

The more Willy tries to enhance his sons' success, the more they are channeled into failure. Willy's American Dream consists only of success, not of the hard work which is a prerequisite for success. Willy has become like Ben, inclined to take short cuts in order to attain his goal; but, unlike his brother, his desire for success ends in failure.

This causes readers to question the dream itself. According to Cullen, the real problem with the American Dream is that it is too incomplete a vessel to contain the longings that elude human expression or comprehension: "We never reach the Coast we think we see." (*The American Dream*, 182.) Thus, it is something related to the desires behind the dream which causes the dream to turn sour.

If we examine the models who have represented this mighty dream, Willy seems to have been influenced by the ideals of such men as Andrew Jackson, America's president from 1829 to 1837, who was born poor, lived in near wilderness, and became successful due to his own strength and iron will. From this perspective, Ben becomes, in Willy's eyes, the ultimate living model for his sons to imitate.

However, there is one essential ingredient lacking in Willy's American Dream: He does not really believe in self-improvement, but rather in natural charisma. In this respect Willy, like Jefferson for example, thinks that there is a natural aristocracy among men based on talent. While this is part of the American Dream, it is clearly a distorted version, which, when combined with rivalry and ethical *laissez faire*, will pave the way for tragedy.

Rivalry between father and son

Willy's relationship with his son Biff turns from mutual admiration to mutual spite. Already before Willy and Biff begin to talk to each other on Biff's return, Willy is so obsessed with Biff that he is in a constant conversation with

him, even though he is not there. The “dialogue” constantly switches between the here and now, and the past. It is both somber and idealistic, and Willy is constantly contradicting himself. In the same sentence, he refers to Biff as lazy and not lazy,⁹ revealing Willy’s mental decline. Their unfulfilled relationship has, in Willy’s case, developed into a loss of reality. When Biff finally enters the stage, Willy’s wife Linda tells him that when Biff is at home, Willy is always at his worst. The closer Biff comes, the shakier his father becomes.

The conflict between Willy and Biff is clearly destined to end in tragedy. “Double mediation,” René Girard’s term for reciprocal imitation, between father and son arises because each of them desires success through the other. But in both cases, the desire for success turns into degrading failure and they begin to blame each other. Willy shifts continuously between praising and despising Biff. He can only accept the successful side of his son, a side which is constantly waning. Because Biff is a part of himself, he cannot accept anything but success. However, the pressure being put on Biff causes him to fail repeatedly. In one sense, his failure, like his father’s, comes down to a deep desire to subvert the other’s desire. Biff cannot succeed since that would mean that he has, existentially, become a fake like his father. Willy and Biff have become each other’s stumbling blocks. Biff, however, has partially perceived this illusion, but instead of feeling sorry for his father, he considers him pathetic.

The previous time Biff had come home, Willy had thrown him out because Biff called him a fake.¹⁰ Biff swears to his mother that this time he will behave,¹¹ but when Willy enters the room, they immediately begin blaming each other. The presence of Biff brings forth the demons in Willy – and likewise in Biff. The father and son have become obsessed with each other. The intensity of Willy’s desire for success is so powerful that, when Biff returns home, he gradually begins to long for the same success. After only a day, despite the conflict and spite, Biff’s belief in his father’s unending ideal of success in business is renewed, and he forgets his hard earned insight into the illusion of his father’s salesman-ideology. The fixation is so strong and demonic that Willy hardly notices that Happy is present. Even Linda, their mother, is caught up in the conflict between her husband and eldest son to such an extent that she does not react when Happy proclaims the good news that he is getting married.¹²

⁹ *Ibidem*, 11.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, 43.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, 47.

¹² *Ibidem*, 53.

A distorted Oedipus complex

It would not be unreasonable to call the relationship between Biff, Linda and Willy a distorted Oedipus complex. It has developed into a triangular pattern of desire in which father and son seemingly do not desire the mother but worldly success. This created a configuration in which the mother, Linda, always takes the side of the father. She does not know about her husband's infidelity, so she does not know that Biff is unconsciously defending her and punishing Willy for having betrayed her.

Biff does not only witness Willy in bed with a young lady, but he also discovers that Willy has given his lover stockings belonging to Biff's own mother¹³ – a very prestigious item after WW2. Thus, stockings become a symbol of Willy's betrayal, and in the play Willy cannot stand the sight of his wife mending her stockings.

The rivalry is enhanced by Willy's sense of guilt towards Biff. Every time Willy looks at Biff, he is reminded of his infidelity and he immediately feels exposed. After Biff witnesses Willy's affair in a hotel room in Baltimore, their relationship is irretrievably ruined. Both men live with this secret. Willy is terrified that Biff will expose him, and, at the same time, is guilt ridden. Every time Willy encounters Biff, he feels guilty and this makes him behave irrationally.

The hotel incident is often considered to be the key to Loman family's dysfunctional behavior. The scenes before the hotel-room scene build up neatly towards an unavoidable rivalry between father and son. Willy has, up to this incident, been the young Biff's main role model, and the boy believes blindly in his father's ideals, ideals which in substance may – if there is no outer goal, no enemy to conquer, and no jungle to escape to – create extreme rivalry. Rivalry between the father and son, however, is usually more complex than, for example, rivalry between friends and colleagues because it usually supplants by metamorphosis of a deep love; thus, love and loyalty are transformed into spite due to an identification crisis, and friendship is transformed into enemy twins.

This distortion of the truth results in Linda blaming Biff for Willy's attempted suicide. At this point, the play develops from a tale of domestic conflicts to a tragedy. As in the case of Oedipus Rex, this happens because vital information is withheld. Oedipus has no knowledge of who his real parents are, while Linda has no knowledge of having been deceived.

¹³ *Ibidem*, 95.

Although the father-son relationship is complex, the system of desire is basically the same as in other relations. From such a perspective, the Oedipus complex is not an adequate model because it is a pre-constructed model, while desire is governed by no other model than the other's desire. According to René Girard, all desires are mimetic and based on the other's desire. It is therefore essential that the father is capable of eliminating potential rivalry before it becomes real and endangers family relations. Biff has lost faith in his prime imitative model and does not seem able to find an alternative. On the one hand, he hates his father and, on the other hand, he embraces his father's ideals of success, and this creates a double bind that leads to failure. Every time Biff attempts to succeed in business, he is reminded of his father's betrayal, and he subconsciously sets himself up to fail.

Seen through the lens of imitative desire, the play becomes a drama about liberation from the other. However, the play's fundamental insight, its genius, is its description of how desire works. Miller describes desire in such a way that it is only concerned with the unfulfilled. Desire has turned Willy and Biff into a state where everyday reality means less and less. They are possessed by each other. Even when Biff is not at home, Willy is still preoccupied with the conflict with his son, and the tragedy lies in the fact that Willy will not alter his belief in personality and success. As spectators, the audience follows Willy through the last 24 hours of his life in which the world is gradually closing in on him.

Salvation in nature

Death of a Salesman is based on a dark world-view. There seems to be no escape and no reconciliation possible within the frame of the characters' lives. Rivalry and conflict color the characters' outlook on life. While there is always a glimpse of freedom lurking around the corner, this is always destroyed by desire. The vitality of outdoor life is clearly an ideal for the characters. This is evident in Biff's claim that his family should be working on the land, out in the open air. Similarly, Willy admires the countryside from the road and feels claustrophobic in the mechanized urban environment.¹⁴ He talks longingly of nature, the country and the open-air. Biff is even more frank about his yearning for a healthy life in the country: "*We should be mixing cement on open plain – or carpenters. A carpenter is allowed to whistle*" (*Death of a Salesman*, 48). Willy has, in Biff especially,

¹⁴ R. Hayman, *Arthur Miller*, Contemporary Playwrights, London: Heineman, 1977, 30.

nurtured an intense desire for freedom, which cannot be combined with life as a businessman. However, the possibility of living a simple, healthy and fulfilling life is destroyed by Willy's idea of success. The very idea of working with one's hands, which is clearly Willy's strength, is dismissed as being beneath the Lomans. Willy's snobbery is revealed when he categorically states that it is not good enough to work as a carpenter.¹⁵ This snobbery seems to be the result of rivalry.

Members of the Loman family are strong and healthy, and yearn for the outdoor life. Both Willy and Biff's real talents lie in outdoor work, using their hands, and their lives would probably not have been tragic if they had become carpenters and farmers. However, because of his ongoing rivalry with Biff, Willy is blinded and can't accept success in any field other than his own – as a salesman. Rivalry with his eldest son causes him to ignore his real desires, and he can't accept anyone else striving for these. Instead, he claims that success in business and sport are what really counts. Only when he is alone with Linda does he admit to yearning for the country and life as a farmer.

The waste land of contemporary culture

In his description of the drabness of life in the Loman family, Miller is touching upon the barrenness of modern life. Like T.S. Eliot's poem, *The Waste Land*,¹⁶ *Death of a Salesman* depicts contemporary Western urban culture as sterile and lifeless, a place where people are obsessed with novelty. However, in Eliot's poem, contemporary trends and materialism are echoed by a richer and more fertile past; beneath the cultural barrenness there lie seeds of moral regeneration. This indicated regeneration is also evident in *Death of a Salesman*, in Act Two, when Willy wants to go out and buy some seeds, and see things growing again. But according to Linda "nothing'll grow any more". (*Death of a Salesman*, 40) As in *The Waste Land*, growth is associated with cruelty. For example, April, the month of fertility, is the cruelest of all months, "breeding Lilacs out of dead land". (*The Waste Land*, lines 1–2) In *Death of a Salesman*, Willy experiences a similar barrenness, the same cruelty, claiming that "there is not a breath of fresh air in the neighborhood. The grass don't grow any more, you can't raise a carrot in the backyard". (*Death of a Salesman*, 12) The earth, in *Death*

¹⁵ A. Miller, *Death of a Salesman*, London: Penguin Classics, 2000, 48.

¹⁶ T. S. Eliot, "The Waste Land," in: *T.S. Eliot. Collected Poems 1909–1962*, London: Faber & Faber, 1983, 61–86.

of a Salesman, refers more concretely to the earth as such, but in both the poem and the play, barrenness seems to be the result of desire. According to Eliot, one finds, under the dry earth, traits of violence, hidden by hysterical and empty expressions of contemporary culture. Beneath the contemporary shallowness, the poem alludes to sacrifice; dead corpses and dry bones which dogs threaten to dig up again (*The Waste Land*, lines 69–76). In both the play and the poem, the decline of earth and culture are viewed as a unit, mixed up with death.

Infidelity and barrenness

The barrenness of existence gradually reveals itself, not as a lack of contact with nature, but as cruelty in human relations. In both *The Waste Land* and in *Death of a Salesman* infidelity seems to be a source of cultural emptiness. The low life of a salesman, which is the basic setting in Miller's play, is also evident in Eliot's poem. Mr. Eugenidies, the Smyrna merchant, becomes a symbol of the cultural decay (*The Waste land*, lines 208–214). Like Willy Loman, Mr. Eugenidies is loud, vulgar and contemporary. The currants in his pocket are a symbol of his utilitarian world-view based on physical nutrition. The decay of manners and morals are further emphasized by the small house agent clerk with staring eyes: "One of the low on whom assurance sits/ As a silk hat on a Bradford millionaire" (*The Waste Land*, lines 233–234). The house agent, a salesman like Willy, is vulgar, and his attempt to seduce is devoid of tenderness. His only purpose is physical self-satisfaction. The somber modernism as shown in these works, reveals, at its heart, a broken trust between man and woman.

While Willy clings to his shallow ideals of being liked and successful, and teaches his son to cash in on his personal attractiveness, the characters in *The Waste Land*, delve into vulgarity, the 'Jug Jug to dirty ears' (*The Waste Land*, line 103) where tradition is lost and replaced by horoscopes and loveless sexuality, causing indifference and the lack of communication.

Sources to regeneration

In Eliot's *Waste Land* experience is reconciliation, some sort of hope of continuation through the renewal of genuine European cultural values. Intertextuality of the poem creates a dialectic between a rich past and a barren

contemporary world. The hopelessness of the here and now, however, is not absolute. It is debased but has, nevertheless, evolved from a rich and fertile past. *The Waste Land* ends with images from an ancient religious and literary tradition which promotes fertility and peace, indicating a future of regeneration and reconciliation.

In contrast, the characters in *Death of a Salesman* lack a cultural heritage, myths or religion. The Loman family is lost in their distorted American dream, with no reinvigorating ideas or ideals to help them find a better existence. The desire to move out into the countryside is clearly an ideal, but can never be materialized because of the rivalry between father and son. The freedom to break out, start anew, and do something they really enjoy, can only be realized if the characters give up their current existence in which the real objects of desire constantly vanish due to the fierce father-son rivalry. This rivalry has become so complex that Willy would actually never be able to be reconciled with it. In their enclosed suburban Brooklyn environment, there is no reinvigorating past and no invigorating future. Their world is a closed world because they have, in their own eyes and those of others, become losers in their competition to succeed.

After the disastrous dinner at the restaurant, Willy tries one last time to get hold of some seeds to plant.¹⁷ The desire to see something to grow comes after the father and son have revealed their personal drought; Willy has been fired and Biff has run out of a job-interview after stealing a fountain pen. The seeds represent Willy's last hope. They seem to be the nearest the play gets to any symbol of renewal. Thus, the seeds represent hope for growth and renewal after every other hope is gone. Nature represents a stubborn drive for renewal, but is nevertheless unable to save the characters from their hellish existence. The seeds could, in a different context, be seen to represent real renewal, like the regenerating water-symbols at the end of *The Waste Land*. However, it would be misleading to see any real reconciliation in *Death of a Salesman*, either between Biff and Willy, or in nature. The only catharsis is when Biff begins to cry and Willy, for a brief moment, understands that his son actually loves him.

¹⁷ A. Miller, *Death of a Salesman*, London: Penguin Classics, 2000, 96.

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MAKING FUN [SIC] OF HITLER



Adenoid Hynkel, Kaiser Overall, and Adolf Elizabeth Hitler have two things in common. First, all three names humorously identify one of the most evil people in recent or any history—no laughing matter, a moral monster responsible, directly or indirectly, for deaths of tens of millions and for misery of countless people that lasts till this today. Secondly, they also show how an artistic and, more narrowly, a satiric imagination can deal with such monstrosity.

Example 1: *The Great Dictator* (1940)

Even before World War 2 broke out in Europe Charlie Chaplin's film project commenced (September 1938).¹ Since American producers hesitated to ridicule leadership of a country at which they were at peace, Chaplin largely self-funded the production, which was completed March 1940. *Dictator* was popular in the United Kingdom, inevitably, and before that across the Atlantic. It premiered in the United States October 1940, when the aerial Battle of Britain was well under way. However, despite invasions of France and the Low Countries, Denmark and Norway in spring of that year, America remained neutral politically, if not emotionally. The film reached British theaters two months later during some of the heaviest bombing of the "Blitz."

"Adenoid Hynkel" is the name under which Englishman Charlie Chaplin caustically mocked the German *Führer* Adolf Hitler. This evil and yet ludicrous figure is called here "The Phooey," after recently coined bit of American slang that means something like "bad luck!" "rubbish!" or the like. With "the Phooey of Tomainia" other German Nazi bigshots are associated, likewise mocked—in

¹ Youtube gives online access to excerpts/highlights of all three creations discussed here. For example, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YqyQfjDScjU> (globe scene).

one case visually by obesity and ineptitude. Their names are similarly easy to decode. Even today, in the 2010s, we know all too well those malign people whom they identify, what they stood for, and what they perpetrated in thought, word and horrendous deed: “Garbitch” equals Joseph Goebbels, an eerily sinister man, while Chaplin’s fat bumbler “Herring” deflates Herman Göring. Chaplin prudently took only *these* names from Riefenstahl’s diabolical classic glorifying record the 1934 Nazi Party rally at Nuremberg *Triumph des Willens* (to which Chaplin alludes visually at several places). He wisely omits others shown there, for example, grotesque *Judenhetzer Nummer Eins* Julius Streicher or not yet prominent wimpy-looking Heinrich Himmler. We do meet the Great Dictator’s clownish colleague in tyranny “Bacterian” Duce “Benzino Napaloni,” played brilliantly by American actor Jack Oakie with nice-a EEtahlian accent. These names deploy: [1] comical *sounds*, such as Anglophone comedians know to be intrinsically funny (“Hynckel”: think of “Twinkle” and “tickle”); [2] amusing and belittling word-plays: “Adenoid,” a throat tissue, apt for a screaming rabble-rouser; “Garbitsch,” for trash as well as bitch; “Herring,” for *small* fish. Duce “Benzino,” motor fuel, from a land already famous for sports cars. “Napaloni” suggests at once a would-be Napoleon and the pastry named “napoleon” *and* either pasta or Italian dessert: *maccaroni* and types *rigatoni* and *cannelloni* or else *spumone/spumoni*. “Tomainia” and “Bacteria,” naming the two Axis nations, indicate poison and disease.

Repeated quotation of the lovely Prelude to *Lohengrin* intrigues us, first during a famous delicately grotesque sequence when Hynckel cavorts with a big globe-balloon, tossing and kicking it up, then when it returns during the dreamy moment of hope at the very end.² For Chaplin, Richard Wagner seems both Mr. Hyde and Dr. Jeckel. Germany’s cultural achievements can hardly be denied, sour though Hitler renders her music by appropriating Bayreuth and the composer’s grandsons.

Chaplin and his audiences knew about random “wildcat” killings of Jews and institutional humiliations, about “concentrations” of them as also of dissidents and other categories of un-person. However, when “Herring” gleefully announces invention of a new poison gas, audiences in 1940–41 suspected that, like other inventions that fatso celebrates, this is another fiasco, whereas we, shuddering at mention of “gas,” must remind ourselves that horrors of *Vernichtungslager* were in 1940 inconceivable (unless to the likes of Himmler), that the Wannseekonferenz was two years in the future.

² To be reminded of this, visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Jggig2uXu0>

Dictator includes much sheer clowning. Hynkel at times switches from dialogue in unmarked English to ludicrous “Tomainian” accent. Chaplin plays Hynkel both ways, mixing the ludicrous with the ominously serious. The preposterous plot contrives the undetected substitution for Hynkel of a look-alike WW1 veteran Jewish barber, whom of course Chaplin also impersonates. Along our way to this improbability several hilarious scenes with Hynkel, some in slap-stick vein, have amused us. One memorable sequence confronts Hynkel and Napaloni, childish, farcical rivals for superior dignity that neither can rightly claim.

The deliberately nameless barber, an Everyman or at least an everyday decent person, hesitantly ascends to the microphone on the Phooey’s exalted podium and delivers a famous, widely excerpted and transcribed speech in Chaplin’s own normal voice. This follows and gainsays a harsh harangue by Garbitsch before citizens of newly annexed “Osterlich.” At first calm, then agitated and passionate the barber urges peace and human solidarity on an astonished audience, thousands in person, millions in the radio. Until *this* point shrewd interplay of harsh realism with comedy works. The end of the movie, however, is more preachy than effective, noble in sentiment yet incongruous after all that came before. “The movie plays like a comedy followed by an editorial,” American film critic Roger Ebert wrote in 2007.³ Satire here has turned dark in Garbitsch’s speech, where grimacing parody needs only slightest exaggeration. Then, in the barber’s speech, humor is shelved. The broader travesties have more impact today than the movie’s concluding wishful, wistful thought that Hitler might somehow be neutralized, that compatriots who would conspire against him and persuade the German people to change their course—so that Wagner no longer hurt the mind.

Example 2: *Der Kaiser von Atlantis* (1943–44)

The author of the libretto for one-act opera *Der Kaiser von Atlantis*, oder *Die Tod-Verweigerung* (i.e., “Death’s Boycott”) was the poet Peter Kien, while Victor Ullmann composed its musical score.⁴ Both were “racial” Jewish inmates at a showcase *Konzentrationslager* in occupied Czechoslovakia. Theresienstadt (Terezín) was designed to demonstrate to International Red

³ Ebert’s entire essay: <http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/great-movie-the-great-dictator-1940>

⁴ The complete opera: <https://vimeo.com/45899028>

Cross inspectors how conditions in such places were not unpleasant, in particular how culture flourished there. The Ullmann-Kien piece was created there beginning in 1943 and nearly produced the following year—when censors suddenly realized how ambiguously it referred to Hitler, to Wehrmacht and SS, and to the “total war” that Joseph Goebbels had announced in February 1943. The poetic concept of this work is complex and elusive. A musician-censor may have taken offense when Overall is introduced to a sour, distorted variation of the *Deutschlandlied*, then winced at a sweetly lugubrious parody of Luther’s chorale *Ein’ feste Burg*, here hymning not *unser Gott* but Death, “Komm’ Tod, du unser werter Gast” ending the opera. This reminds one of the Weill-Brecht *Dreigroschenoper*’s caustic mockery of “pious” hymns.

The second half of 1943 and early ’44 brought about Germany’s retreat on southern and eastern fronts, bombing day and night of its big and medium-sized cities, and much more bad news. No 1944er “springtime for Hitler” came after; instead a July Plot threatened his sad life. Shortages of everything that Chaplin hopefully imagined four years earlier Germans now experienced for real. Despite the increasingly desperate military situation, extermination camps were in full swing. Librettist and composer were soon transported, with tens of thousands besides, to Auschwitz and died there by the end of 1944, Kien of disease, Ullmann, more likely, gassed.

The plot of their opera improbably postulates a complete *suspension* of death because Death Himself cannot keep up with the mechanized slaughter of the 20th century. *Tod* (a role scored for bass-baritone) sings that he was content with old-fashioned warfare, but not with the massive industrial carnage of its 20th-century version. He needs a respite! What further concerns us here is the extraordinary dark optimism of the work that emerges incongruously after the first two of its four *Bilder*, “scenes.” For this short opera shares a wishful conclusion with Chaplin’s long movie (which two prisoners in Poland can hardly have seen, though perhaps they knew *about* it).

Unlike historical Hitler, absolute ruler of an imperialist *Reich*, their title character does not disdain the title “*Kaiser*.” Indeed the Emperor’s (English) name “Overall” transparently translates “über alles” as in the German national anthem. Could the creators of the work know either the workman’s or farmer’s attire called “overalls” in American English or the British laborer’s smock of that name? If so, it refers sardonically to the “*Arbeiter*” element in the name of the National Socialist German *Workers’* Party.

With manifest global ambitions like Garbitsch's and Hynkel's, Kaiser Overall sends troops tanks and aircraft to conquer the world. Abruptly in *Bild 4*, however, he has a change of heart. Its motivation is problematic, for its occasion is that astonishing, frustrating cessation of *Tod*. Human deaths come to a complete halt, since Death will not allow any of the empire's enemies, nor any of its own fighters, to *die*—none. Increasingly frantic attempts to hang, shoot, or otherwise dispatch an attempted assassin of the Emperor get nowhere. Comic frustration ensues. Overall's first response exaggerates only a little what followed assorted *Attentaten* against the German Führer. He triples his personal fortified security and energetically prosecutes the “war of all against all” that *Der Trommler* announced in *Bild 1*.⁵ Cynically he declares that he is imparting the secret of immortality to his troops. The enemy, however, are likewise un-killable. The Drummer tries to incite two soldiers, on opposite sides, to fight; however, one of them turns out to be female. They would rather make love than war. Furthermore, wistfully recalling peacetime, they ignore the Drummer's most violent drumming. Parody, even mockery is involved here as in Chaplin's film, and ludicrous frustration, though it is less clownish here than in *Dictator*. Perhaps that is why it took censors so long to arrest it. Its ending, in two variants, amounts to this: instead of offering the German people as a sacrifice to himself and his catastrophic megalomania, as Hitler was doing during the last months of his life—pretty obviously the case by mid-1944, Overall offers himself as appeasement to Death, who readily accepts him. This makes amends for the ugly slaughter that led Death to boycott armed conflict. Overall's death may even, we sense, permit that post-WWI peace to be restored which he had scorned and violated.

Death will still need to hold off awhile. People need to be reacquainted with *life*—love and wine, beautiful landscape without bomb craters. Only when they have such life does death recover its proper meaning. By the bold premise of the opera their living lately has been worse than death, a metaphorical lifeless state without death's closure, for example, in the peculiar plight of trained warriors who can neither kill nor die. Overall's solitary death will restore proper death and life. Alas, “Atlantis,” the name of the realm that the Kaiser will leave behind, may indicate despair over whether the Nazi *Reich* can avoid the fate of Plato's *doomed* mythic island.

⁵ Because “Der Trommler” is scored for a female voice, discussions in English mention a “Drummer *Girl*.” It seems to me that a *Hitlerjugend*-type adolescent *boy* is intended.

Example 3: *The Producers* (initially 1968)

Mel Brooks was born in Brooklyn New York of German-Jewish and Russian-Jewish parents. Perhaps his most controversial creation, *The Producers* has had three incarnations. First it was a movie starring Zero Mostel. Years later it was made into a highly awarded live musical (2001), which was made into a movie (2004). Nathan Lane starred in both of these. Both Mostel and Lane played Broadway producer Max Bialystock, the has-been “King of Broadway” whose recent musicals have failed. He and his accountant Leo Bloom accidentally realize that a *spectacular* failure could be lucrative. Backers underwriting it could safely be promised—dishonestly, yet safely—many times a total hundred percent of shares, *if* it was *guaranteed* to fail, because shares would have value only if it was a profitable hit. Max and Leo find a perfectly *awful* musical titled *Springtime for Hitler*.⁶ A Nazi—not *Neo*-Nazi, but an undetected, unrepentant Nazi named Franz Liebkind—created the most abominable possible book and music. Celebrating the glories of the Third Reich and idolizing “Adolf Elizabeth Hitler,”⁷ it choreographs storm-troopers dancing in swastika formation to the tritest imaginable music. Max and Leo learn, appalled, that Liebkind takes his wretched creation seriously; *they* see only sure-fire F-L-O-P. No way could it succeed! “We knew we couldn’t lose,” Max laments later, “half the audience were Jews!” Lose they nevertheless do—by succeeding. Some of the audience walk out indignantly at intermission, other after. Those who stay, however, if only to get their expensive tickets’ worth, come to understand it—*misunderstand* it according to its author’s *and* producers’ intentions—as brilliant uproarious *satire*.⁸

Brooks was a young adult when the full extent of Nazi atrocities became widely known. *He* suffered no dread of possible German victory as Chaplin certainly did, nor personal danger of genocidal murder like Kien and Ullmann. Unsurprisingly, therefore, Brooks endured grim rebuke over making fun of *Blitzkrieg* (“Springtime for Hitler and Germany [dah-da-DAH-da], winter for Poland and France”) *and for his movies’ and musical play’s silence about the Holocaust*.

⁶ Visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kHmYIo7bcUw> (1968 movie’s chorus) and <http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x2lu0ef> (Broadway show’s chorus + Hitler).

⁷ “Descended from a long line of English kveens,” Franz explains when administering the “Sacred Siegfried Ohss” to the producers.

⁸ Broadway economics and theater culture are also satirized, since “Springtime” is *satire-within-satire*. The brazen crookedness of overselling shares subjects Max to criminal prosecution and conviction in Act Two!

A passionate minority of persons, not only but chiefly Jewish Americans—some who barely escaped the Holocaust but lost family and friends, were and many remain horrified that a Jew like Brooks, *or anyone at all*, could make fun (and money) out of Hitler. They agree with those inside the play's/film's action who leave angrily after Act One. These critics, like Chaplin's in the early 1940s, missed the point of satire. Like Chaplin, to whom he acknowledges indebtedness, Brooks is not a historian, but a comic parodist-satirist.

A majority, on the other hand, agree with opening night playgoers who stayed in the theater opening night, determining that "Springtime" is an response to the indelible memory of Hitler in a world that still contains neo-Franz Lieb-kinds. Interviewed by *Der Spiegel* in 2006, when the DVD of the musical entered worldwide distribution, Brooks said, "Of course it is impossible to take revenge for 6 million murdered Jews. But by using the medium of comedy, we can try to rob Hitler of his posthumous power and myths. In doing so, we should remember that Hitler did have some talents. He was able to fool an entire population into letting him be their leader."⁹ In 2015 the online Jewish magazine *Tablet* reported on *Producers*: "As Brooks has often explained, he saw it as his goal to mock Hitler. 'You can't get on a soapbox with these orators, because they're very good at convincing the masses they're right,' he said in an interview. 'But if you can make them look ridiculous, then you can win over the people.' If he was going to go toe to toe with Hitler, he had to rely on the only weapon he had to annihilate his opponent: comedy."¹⁰ Hitler's lyric "Heil myself, heil to me, I'm the kraut Who's out to change our history. Raise your hand, There's no greater Dictator in the land!" does this. Some things are indeed too grim to make fun of. Nevertheless villains responsible for horrors can be attacked not only by dour *damnatio memoriae* but by posthumous *ludibrium*, by scornful reduction to farce.

Wit and humor lose penetrating impact if their thrust is either too needle-like or too blunt. Despite its multiple targets Brooks' satire packs more punch than both the older movie, which is too obviously tendentious (most

⁹ See: <http://www.spiegel.de/international/spiegel/spiegel-interview-with-mel-brooks-with-comedy-we-can-rob-hitler-of-his-posthumous-power-a-406268.html>

¹⁰ Visit: <http://www.tabletmag.com/scroll/192439/dont-forget-to-laugh>; see now also <http://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-arts-and-culture/206140/a-conversation-with-mel-brooks>

people see it—once!), and the opera which, more poignant than pointed, weakens its comic vigor by embitterment or at least pensiveness, and whose exact message is somewhat obscure. Neither of its alternative endings is quite satisfying. All three works use distorted imitation—that is, parody. Chaplin parodies *Triumph of the Will* and newsreels, Kien and Ullman German music and Nazi brow-beating. Brooks takes on entertainment genres and a broader culture of propaganda because “All you need to know is, Everything is showbiz.” All three works use absurd exaggeration, which in satire should be not complete *fabrication* but ridicules by *distortion*. All present and develop diverse incongruities, as comedy must. Anglophones Chaplin and Brooks use accents and verbal humor. Brooks and Ullmann deploy musical take-offs. The almost-pretty chorale concluding *Kaiser* recalls, as already noted, pseudo-religious hypocrisies in *Dreigroschenoper*, whereas “Springtime” spoofs frivolous, upbeat American patriotic musicals almost as jingoistic and quite as cheerfully oblivious of real life in stressful times. Chaplin engages Wagner in a very different mode.

Admirers of humorists who pillory outrageous public figures, demagoguery, and cultural shibboleths may question the *un*-comical wishful, hopeful endings of *Dictator* and of *Kaiser*, respectively, when the Jewish barber, posing as Hynkel, unspeaks Hitler’s appalling ideology in a painfully earnest speech, when Emperor Overall appeases Death so death *and life* may resume their proper alternation for humankind. Those are *frowning* incongruities. From Brooks’ distant post-V Day perspective he knows better than to suggest a peaceful end to the Third Reich. On the other hand, toward the end of his masterpiece *Blazing Saddles* (1974) he makes fun of Hitler’s *suicide*. During a movie studio’s cafeteria lunch an actor costumed and made up as Hitler say matter-of-factly, in a big-city American accent, “They lose me right after the bunker scene” for the end of his current employment. This is both funnier and more telling than Hynkel’s implausible mistaken arrest in the Chaplin film that permits a Jew to impersonate him or Overall’s startling self-sacrifice.

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ŠVEJK, JAN DÍTĚ, SAMKO TÁLE
AND THE FIRST THAI ADAPTATION OF
THE (NOT SO) GOOD SOLDIER *SHA-WAKE*:
TRANSNATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE OF
THE “SMALL” AND “CHILDLIKE”
CHARACTERS IN CZECH AND SLOVAK
LITERATURE



n Europe there are the large countries on one side and the small on the other; there are the nations seated in the negotiating chambers and those who wait all night in the antechambers,”¹ wrote Milan Kundera (1929–). In his discussion of Neville Chamberlain’s description of Czechoslovakia as “[a] faraway country of which we know little,”² Kundera criticises the British Prime Minister’s justification of the Munich Pact and describes the signing away of Czechoslovakia as a shameless sacrifice of the small and insignificant [Czechoslovakia] for the greater [British] good. It can be said that Kundera’s *negotiating chambers versus* antechambers categorisation of world power complements his controversial notion of a particular “Czech destiny” [“Český úděl”]³, which led to his public row with Václav Havel (1936–2011), who believed one must be the master of one’s own political destiny. Kundera’s idea of how a small country can never escape its resigned and predestined fate of forever being small and powerless, has often been un-

¹ M. Kundera, “Part Two: Die Weltliteratur,” in: *The Curtain: An Essay in Seven Parts*, trans. L. Asher, New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2006, 33.

² *Ibidem*.

³ B. Herman, “The Debate that Won’t Die: Havel and Kundera on Whether Protest is Worthwhile,” in: *Radio Free Europe*. http://www.rferl.org/content/debate_that_wont_die_havel_and_kundera_on_whether_protest_is_worthwhile/24448679.html

dermined and underrated by critics and scholars who, like Havel, view post-1989 future in Central Europe with utmost hope. I argue in this paper that Kundera's "negotiating chambers versus antechambers" metaphor can be seen as the metaphor which defines modernity and modernisation, as well as one of the ways in which writers and artists view and come to terms with the ongoing political crises in Central Europe and beyond. Twentieth-century Czech writers Jaroslav Hašek (1883–1923) and Bohumil Hrabal (1914–1997), as well as contemporary Slovak writer Daniela Kapitáňová (1956–) translated Kundera's metaphor into their creation of the memorable "small" and "child-like" characters who, to appropriate Kundera's words, "are on the defensive against History, that force that is bigger than they, that does not take them into consideration, that does not even notice them."⁴

As a scholar from Thailand, I shall also provide in this research paper an example of the transnational significance and subversiveness of the politics of small and child-like characters which Czech and Slovak literatures have contributed to the literary as well as political world. Through English translation, the significantly insignificant/insignificantly significant characters, such as Švejk from Hašek's *The Good Soldier Švejk*, Jan Dítě from Bohumil Hrabal's *I Served the King of England*, and Samko Tále in Kapitáňová's novel entitled *Samko Tále's Cemetery Book*, pose pressing questions not only towards the nations, peoples and ideology of, in Kundera's sense, "the negotiating chambers" of uncaring political regimes, but also towards the nations, peoples and ideology of "the antechambers" who must await and comply to the commands, decrees and values imposed upon them.

Jan Dítě: Mismatched desires and retarded modernisation

I shall begin my analysis with Hrabal's bitterly humorous/humorously bitter story of the lives of little people who constitute the "Grand Bohemian Hotel", to appropriate the title of the famous film *Grand Budapest Hotel* (2014), which needs to open its doors, offers its best services and pledges its allegiance to the many changing regimes, from absolute monarchy to the Nazi regime and Soviet totalitarianism.

⁴ M. Kundera, "Part Two: Die Weltliteratur," in: *The Curtain: An Essay in Seven Parts*, trans. L. Asher, New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2006, 33.

Bohumil Hrabal, writer and survivor of the Nazi and Soviet occupations in Czechoslovakia, was born in 1914 in Brno, Moravia, then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. He spent one year of his youth at a grammar school in Brno—the same school which one of his many admirers, Milan Kundera, would later attend as a boy. Having worked as a railway dispatcher during the Nazi occupation, a travelling salesman, a steelworker, a recycling mill worker and a stagehand, the author of the famous novel *Closely Watched Trains* (1965) paradoxically began his literary career as a poet writing “surrealist” lyrical poetry, which was immediately withdrawn from circulation when the communist regime came to full power in 1948. His other works have also been banned since then. *I Served the King of England* was written in one long draft and circulated as a rare samizdat in the 1970s. The novel was officially published in 1983 by the Jazz Section of the Czech Musicians’ Union.⁵ Hrabal died in 1997 after having fallen from a fifth-floor window in a Prague hospital, apparently trying to feed the pigeons.

I Served the King of England is set in Prague in the 1940s, during the Nazi occupation and early communism. The main character’s name is Jan Ditě. True to the fact that *ditě* in Czech means “child”, this character is a minuscule waiter with not only remarkable inferiority complex, but also an obsessive appetite for women and money. Ditě works in various hotel restaurants. Then, after marrying a Czech-German woman, he serves the Nazis in various country hotels. After the war, having made his fortune because his wife stole from the dispossessed and persecuted Jews during the Second World War, he finally opens his own hotel. In 1948, however, when the communists take over, he is arrested as a millionaire. He loses everything. The novel ends with Ditě working as a road mender in a forest in the middle of nowhere. The message which can be derived from the novel is this: Everyone living in the Grand Bohemian Hotel of changing regimes can only be a lowly and subservient waiter. Vis-à-vis history and changing totalitarian regimes, one can only live and dream as a minor character. Though this message seems bleak, hopeless and nihilistic, what readers can celebrate is the clever ways in which Hrabal creates and utilises Jan Ditě, his main character, to question and challenge the discourses of totalitarianism. The novel begins with a paradox. Hrabal describes with humour and irony the role of a waiter expected of Ditě as someone who should NOT see anything and hear anything – and at the same

⁵ D. Jones, Ed., “Bohumil Hrabal: Czech Writer (1914-1997),” in: *Censorship: A World Encyclopedia*, Volume 1–4, New York: Routledge, 2015, 1109.

time – should INDEED see everything and hear everything.⁶ Such contradictory instruction goes in line with Ditě's contradictory life and dreams. His “retarded” [a word which might also remind readers of the French *en retard* which means “belated”], mismatched desires and naïve aspirations outrageously go against the changing regime of his time. For example, Ditě only realises his capitalistic dream and desire to become a millionaire only in the time when the communist regime has taken control of his country and begins to “nationalise” all businesses, confiscating bourgeois properties and sending their rightful owners to prison.

What is the transnational significance of this “childlike” character created by Hrabal in his novel? In July 2015, the Central and Eastern European Studies Section of the Centre for European studies at Chulalongkorn University, of which I currently serve as Head, collaborated with the Czech Embassy in Bangkok in holding a screening of and seminar on the novel and film adaptation of *I Served the King of England* at Thai Knowledge Park (TK Park), which is a modern library in one of Bangkok's most popular shopping centres. The number of participants was overwhelming. What Thai audience seem to find in common with Hrabal's unforgettable character is the hopelessness and futility felt by the voiceless and powerless people towards a cold and indifferent totalitarian regime. Between 1930 and 2014, Thailand had had 13 successful coup d'états and currently ranks the 4th country with the most coup d'états in the world after Sudan, Iraq and Bolivia. Thai People, like Ditě, need to wait on the high table of a country where the military devours and hijacks the *lèse majesté* law, a law against an offence made against the dignity of a reigning sovereign. This law, endorsed since the year 1908, is reflected in all versions of the Thai Constitution since the 1932, which contain the following clauses: “The king shall be enthroned in a position of revered worship and shall not be violated. No person shall expose the king to any sort of accusation or action”⁷. This particular law is thus elaborated in section 112 of the Thai Criminal Code: “Whoever defames, insults or threatens the king, queen, heir-apparent, or regent shall be punished with imprisonment of three to fifteen years.” Missing from the code, however, is the exact definition of the particular words or actions which constitute such “threat”, “insult”, or “defamation”. Offenders are investigated and put on trial behind closed doors. Moreover, it is illegal for the media to repeat or report on what has been said or done by the accused as doing so is

⁶ B. Hrabal, *I Served the King of England*, trans. P. Wilson, New York: New Directions, 2007, 1.

⁷ D. Streckfuss, *Truth on Trial in Thailand: Defamation, Treason, and Lèse Majesté*, ed. D. McCargo, Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2011, 190.

considered a criminal offence. The obsolete law, particularly the abuse of such law, and Thailand's aspiration of becoming a modernised democratic country indeed form an absurd mismatched pair.

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Czech film shows parallels of constantly-changing autocratic regimes: critics

Submitted by editor1 on Tue, 07/07/2015 - 15:08

Asaree Thairakulpanich

Film critics say a Czech film, set in 20th century Czechoslovakia, recently screened in a central Bangkok mall, reflects the role of autocratic regimes in everyday life and education and also sheds light on how constantly-changing autocratic regimes bear down upon normal people in their everyday lives, even on "non political" people.

The discussion after the special screening of *I Served the King of England* (2008) at the Central World on Saturday drew parallels between the film's 20th century Czechoslovakia setting and present-day Thailand while raising questions about the prevalence of mainstream historical narratives, especially in education.



Source: <http://prachatai.org/english/node/5274>

Samko Tále: (Trans)national xenophobia

The Slovak writer Daniela Kapitáňová was born in 1956 in Komárno, a town on the Danube near the Hungarian border. Trained as a theatre director in Prague and having worked as a director in both Slovak and Czech theatres, she came to fiction fairly late in life. A crime fiction aficionada, Kapitáňová produces programmes on literature for the Slovak Radio, writes for the daily *Pravda*

and teaches creative writing at the University of Constantine the Philosopher in Nitra. In the similar manner as Hrabal's use of a childlike character exposes the absurdity of arbitrary laws and norms dictated by totalitarian regimes which are indifferent to the little and insignificant people, the Slovak writer Daniela Kapitáňová's painfully brilliant/brilliantly painful use of irony exposes xenophobia as the underlying force behind biases and discrimination against the non-Slovak as well as the "not-patriotic-enough" Slovak population in Slovakia and beyond. *Samko Tále's Cemetery Book* (2005) is set in the immediate years after the "Velvet Divorce" between Slovakia and the Czech Republic in 1993, when life was still under the shadow of the Communist Era and its legacy. The novel is a story about a 43-year-old boyish man/mannish boy named Samko Tále. It is worth to note the condescending diminutive in his name, which features and highlights his "childlike" quality. Samko is physically and mentally disabled. He spends his days collecting cardboards and wheeling them to the local Recycling Centre on his handcart. This novel reads like his memoir or journal.

The territory of Komárno, Samko's hometown, was drawn and defined in the Treaty of Trianon—a treat signed at the end of the First World War in 1920 as part of a peace agreement between the Allies and the Kingdom of Hungary. The newly created border cut the original territory of the Hungarian town in half. The smaller section is known in the present day as the Hungarian town of Komárom, where the Slovak-Hungarian community is strong. Samko is part of that community but ironically his views reflect a hand-me-down ultra-nationalist attitude towards the Hungarians:

But Grandmummy and Granddaddy were not German because they were in Slovakia, except that Grandmummy's grandmother was Hungarian and her name was Eszter Csonka, meaning that she had a Hungarian name too. And nobody liked that. I didn't like it, either.⁸

Samko's comments expose how illogical ultra-nationalism and racial prejudice sound in extreme. Samko can only justify his views by stating that he adopts, reiterates and repeats—like a parrot—the anti-Hungarian sentiment and glorification of so-called "Slovak-ness" from school and TV, mass media.

The transnational significance of characters such as Samko lies in how, when read in the Thai context, the character's tautologically ridiculous views can lead

⁸ D. Kapitáňová, *Samko Tále's Cemetery Book*, trans. J. Sherwood, London: Garnett Press, 2011, 14.

readers to question and challenge the hand-me-down right-wing discourses of xenophobia and the discrimination which ensues as a result. Samko's irrational hatred for his grandmother's Hungarian name and identity originated from and is sustained by the inexplicable sentiments of the people around him, the mass. By disliking and finding inexplicable fault with his own grandmother, he unwittingly dislikes and finds inexplicable fault with himself as well as his ethnic and cultural heritage. Such lack of logic can be seen reflected in Thailand's ultra-nationalist discourse which often equates Thainess to Royalism in the sense that to be a "good" Thai, a "patriotic-enough" Thai, means to uphold the *lèse majesté* law: "Just as under absolutism, neo-absolutism in Thailand has seen the emergence of its apologists who justify not just Thai-style monarchy, but the *lèse majesté* law itself as a unique cultural expression of Thainess."⁹ The witch hunt for Thais who do not adequately demonstrate their love and affection for the monarchy and the purge of Thais who dare to criticise the *lèse majesté* law reflective of national(ist) xenophobia persist and reach its peak at the time when this article is being written (29 October 2016) shortly after the King's death.

The good soldier Švejk begs to report in Thailand as the (not so) Good Soldier *sha-wake*

The Good Soldier Švejk, Jaroslav Hašek's satire of the senseless thirst for war and violence, is one of the first anti-war novels. The ambiguity which is Josef Švejk, at first glance a combination of the childlike Jan Dítě and the retarded Samko Tále, offers more space for interpretation. Is he a complete idiot, or a playful and highly intelligent dissident? In any case, Hašek shows us that the power of the shared condition of powerlessness lies in one's ability to laugh at and laugh with Švejk. The Czech verb *Švejkovat* "to Švejk", or "to act like Švejk,"¹⁰ is a verb which means to rise triumphantly over tyranny using one's ambivalence to surprise and intimidate the authority which, lacking any sense of humour, wishes to put everyone

⁹ D. Streckfuss, "Freedom and Silencing under the Neo-Absolutist Monarchy Regime in Thailand, 2006–2011," in: "*Good Coup*" *Gone Bad: Thailand's Political Development since Thaksin's Downfall*, ed. P. Chachavalpongpun, Singapore: Institute of Asian Studies, 2014, 129.

¹⁰ *Discourses of Collective Identity in Central and Southeast Europe (1770–1945): Texts and Commentaries*. Modernism—Representations of National Culture. Volume Three/2. Eds. A. Ersoy, M. Górný and V. Kechriotis, New York: Central European University Press, 2010, 208.

in fixed pigeonhole.

The Good Soldier Švejk saw its first Thai stage adaptation on 18 February 2016. The adaptation is entitled “A (not so) Good Evening with the (not so) Good Soldier Švejk [Thai pronunciation would be the two-syllable “Sha-Wake”]”. The performance was part of Thailand’s first ever Czech Arts & Culture Week organised by the Central and Eastern European Studies Section of the Centre for European Studies, in collaboration with the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Bangkok and the Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University. It was a highly successful event, which enjoyed media attention.

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First-ever Thai adaptation of Czech anti-war novel to be staged

Submitted by editor3 on Sun, 14/02/2016 - 18:54

Asaree Thairakulpanich

The first-ever Thai adaptation of a 1923 Czech anti-war novel will be coming to a stage near you at Chulalongkorn University this coming week, as part of the Czech Arts and Culture Week.

Thursday 18 February 2016: A (not so) Good Evening with the (not so) Good Soldier Švejk
(The First Thai Adaptation of Jaroslav Hasek's Novel)
18.30-21.00

"Sometimes I notice I'm demented, especially at sunset."
Character: Michael Čep

"Great times call for great men." (?!)
Character: Jaroslav Švejk

"War demanded valour even in offering."
Character: Jaroslav Švejk

A (not so) Good Evening with the (not so) Good Soldier Švejk

Date: Thursday 18 February 2016 (18.30-21.00)
Venue: 9th Floor, Mahasarakham Building, Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University

Registration and Refreshments
18.30-19.00
Hasek and Švejk: An Overview
His Excellency Dr. Vítěslav Giepl,
Ambassador of the Czech Republic in Thailand
19.00-20.30
"A (not so) Good Evening with the (not so) Good Soldier Švejk"
Screenings and Comedy Sketches – The First Thai Adaptation of Jaroslav Hasek's 'The Good Soldier Švejk' (1923), directed by Sasapin Siriwanyai of 8-Floor Group (English translation will be provided)
20.30-21.00
Q&A and Post-Performance Discussion

Itinerary for "A (not so) Good Evening with the (not so) Good Soldier Švejk" (See larger image)

Source: <https://www.prachatai.com/english/node/5857>

The following is an extract of the English translation of the play's opening

scene:¹¹

Part I

The Good Soldier Švejk Intervenes in the Great War

Scene I

Setting: Švejk's home

Stage Direction: Švejk sits on a chair located in the middle of the stage. He is cutting his toe nails.

On the projector – These descriptions:

1. “Prague, Austro-Hungarian Empire, around 1914 (maybe) – Švejk has been released (or, perhaps, released himself) from military service many years ago, after the military doctors classified him as mentally “short of 1 baht” [note: Thai idiom – an imbecile is regarded as having a mind not fully reaching the amount of 1 baht]... oops... “short of one Koruna” (which is now, by the way, what we call the Czech currency – and not the famous brand of Mexican beer we all know) Profession: dyeing dogs and selling them (well, our Thai idiom is supposed to be “dyeing cats and selling them” [note: this idiom means, to decorate or gloss over a bad item/person in order to make it more presentable and fool others to buy/accept them]... erhm okay, this part is really from the book – we didn't make this up to fool you!)

2. Framed portrait of Emperor Franz Josef in the background

Charwoman: (holding a copy of the newspaper and a broom) “Dead, dead, dead, dead [in Thai, the word for the interjection “God!” or “Gosh!” is “Dead!”] – DEAD. Our dear Sir Fer [the word “tun” in Thai, an equivalent of “Sir” in English, can be used to refer to monarchs, monks, respected people] was shot to death!”

Švejk: (Aside) He must be totally absolutely dead. You said far too many “deads”. (Turns to Charwoman) “Which dear Sir Fer? In this short life I know only three Fers – 1. Ferrari – too fast and

¹¹ V. Sriratana, “English Translation: A (not so) Good Evening with the (not so) Good Soldier Švejk”. Printed as Loose-Leaf Handouts distributed on 18 February 2016, Bangkok: Centre for European Studies at Chulalongkorn University, 2016.

furious to be shot down 2. Ferragamo – 100% leather, a gunshot won't penetrate it [note: referring to Thai's superstitious belief that once one's got a tattoo or amulet from famous monks, one's 100% leather = one's body is invincible. No knives and not even gunshots can leave a mark] 3. "Ferbie" – the world doesn't break if this thing's shot to death *impersonates furbie [note: referring to Thai's obsession with collectibles like Furbies and now the angle dolls] –

- Charwoman: "Don't joke like this. It's not funny. I meant that dear Sir Fer!"
- Švejk: (is brought to a standstill – thinks deep and hard – until he finally gets it) "That Sir Fer!"
- Charwoman: "That Sir Fer!"
- Švejk: "That Sir Fer!"
- Charwoman: "That Sir Fer!"
- Švejk: "That Sir Fer!"
- Charwoman: "That Sir..." Whoa, stop it! An old lady's short of breath...
- Now, you know what this means, right?"
- Švejk: "Of course I know what this means."
- Charwoman: (whispering) WWWWWWWWWWWWWWWar! So this means you will have to go back to the army and serve our Emperor and our Empire, then.
- Švejk: "Of course, I'm up and ready to go. I had previously offered my service to the Emperor for years... Never thought the day would come... again"
- Charwoman: (Sadly – looking at the portrait) "Never thought it would."
- Švejk: "The Emperor must be feeling so depressed."
- Charwoman: (Sadly – still looking at the portrait) "The Emperor must be."
- Švejk: "Because the Emperor has always been supportive to Sir Fer."
- Charwoman: (Sadly – still looking at the portrait) "They love each other very much."
- Švejk: "Of course, they do. The Emperor is one of the disciples of the RED DEVIL [note: nickname of Manchester United FC]



Caption: “WWWWWWWWWWWWWWar!”

A still image from Scene I of “A (not so) Good Evening with the (not so) Good Soldier Švejk”, adapted from Jaroslav Hašek’s *Osudy dobrého vojáka Švejka za světové války*, translated into Thai by Verita Sriratana, and staged at the Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand, on 18 February 2016.

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From the extract, the Charwoman refers to Franz Ferdinand, while Sha-Wake—intentionally or/unintentionally—refers to Thai football fans’ favourite Manchester United FC coach, Sir Alex Ferguson. As seen in the selected passage, the Thai stage adaptation of *The Good Soldier Švejk* invites the audience to laugh at matters which are not laughable in the context of Thailand under Junta which, to name but a few, are the following: the death of a monarch, the absurdity of *lèse majesté*, Thai politicians’ use football to distract the mass, Thai people’s obsession with material things and their senseless superstition (placing faith in plastic dolls), the on-going war between the yellow shirts (ultra-royalists) and the red shirts (those who wish to see *lèse majesté* abolished).

In conclusion, through multiple readings and interpretations, as well as through translation and adaptation of literary texts, one can see how small, childlike and powerless characters bear tremendous transnational significance, inspiring and empowering the readers/audience to dare to imagine issues which have been censored and rendered “unimaginable”. With humour and

irony, these characters from Czech and Slovak literature not only transcend but also defamiliarise the discursive borders of nationalism and socio-political norms which have often been accepted without critical thinking. Through Arts & Humanities, particularly through the teaching and learning of culture and literature, the small and childlike characters, who have been deprived of the rights to enter the negotiation chamber and have been consigned to the dark antechamber, emerge victoriously in broad daylight and come together to form a transnational community of laughter. They constitute a community of laughter, however bitter-sweet, and an orchestra of critical and analytical voices which resound in our current of national and international political arena, thus propelling readers and viewers across the globe to reflect more on the absurdity of totalitarianism and politics of hate witnessed every single day.

This should be the legacy of Europe—the kind of legacy which fosters our critical thinking and which fuels our international joint venture towards peace and freedom from all forms of injustice and oppression.

SHALA BARCZEWSKA

Jan Kochanowski University, Kielce

TRANSFORMING POST-COMMUNIST SOCIETIES: THE THIN LINE BETWEEN CULTURAL COMPETENCIES AND CULTURAL VALUES



he collapse of communism in Central and Eastern Europe dropped employees who had been raised under one set of cultural norms and values into a new system with an unfamiliar set of norms and values and expected to assimilate. When Solidarity leader Lech Wałęsa stated that his plan for post-communist Poland was to look to “the normal, well-tested solutions” of private entrepreneurship, the market, pluralism, and parliamentary democracy,¹ he was describing a goal, but not the path leading to its fulfilment. Wałęsa was looking at Western institutions, but those forms did not match social and political realities.²

Sociologist Piotr Sztompka refers to this disparity between cultural values developed under real socialism and the new norms and values required under capitalism as a gap in *cultural competence*.³ Although, it is agreed that the work ethic and employment strategy developed under communism is incompatible with free-market capitalism, there are two problems with a dismissive “just follow the West” solution. Firstly, cultural values run deep, making “eradication”

¹ Quoted in P. Sztompka, “The intangibles and imponderables of the transition to democracy,” *Studies in Comparative Communism*, 24:3, 1991.

² G. Schöpflin, “Post-communism: construction new democracies in Central Europe,” *International Affairs*, 67:2, 1991.

³ P. Sztompka, “Civilizational Competence: A Prerequisite of Post-Communist Transition,” in: *Papers from participating universities in Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and the United States of America*. Cracow, 8–12 November 1992, Knoxville, Tennessee: The University of Tennessee, 1993. <http://www.friends-partners.org/newfriends/audem/audem92/Sztompka.html>. See also: G. Hofstede, *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*, Maidenhead, UK: McGraw-Hill, 1991.

of “communist residue” from “human personalities and [...] most importantly, from the underlying cultural structures”, a difficult task.⁴

Secondly, “follow the West” is not a clear model. A cursory glance at literature on international business cultures shows that management styles and employee behaviour differ between capitalist countries.⁵ Thus, the simple adoption of Walesa’s “well tested solutions” does little to designate the cultural values that would have to change for Poland, or other post-communist societies, to become successful market competitors. In order to understand the difference between unhealthy residues of communism and the “normal” cultural values of Central and Eastern European societies, research into cultural values systems is necessary. Unfortunately, studies to date on cultural values in these countries is lacking, especially in comparison to those conducted in Europe and East Asia.

This paper juxtaposes the cultural value dimensions suggested by Frons Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner with Sztompka’s prerequisites for civilizational competences.⁶ The results and their implications are discussed at the end of this paper.

Defining culture and cultural values

A distinction can be made between two different concepts of culture: *culture one* and *culture two*. Hofstede describes *culture one* as what is usually understood by *culture* in Western language: “civilization” or “refinement of the mind.” It also includes the “results of such refinement, like education, art, and literature.” *Culture two* refers to a wider concept common among social scientists; it includes both aspects of *culture one* and aspects of daily life such as “greeting, eating, showing or not showing feelings, keeping a certain physical distance from others, making love, or maintaining body hygiene.”⁷

⁴ P. Sztompka, “The intangibles and imponderables of the transition to democracy,” 297.

⁵ E.g., E. T. Hall and M. Hall, *Understanding cultural differences*, Yarmouth: Intercultural, 1990; F. Trompenaars, *Riding the waves of culture. Understanding cultural diversity in business*, 2 ed., London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 2002.

⁶ Ch. Hampden-Turner and F. Trompenaars, *Building cross-cultural competence. How to create wealth from conflicting values*, New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2002; F. Trompenaars, *Riding the waves of culture*; Sztompka, “Civilizational Competence: A Prerequisite of Post-Communist Transition.”

⁷ G. H. Hofstede, *Cultures and organizations. Software of the mind*, New York, London: McGraw-Hill, [1991] 1997, 6–7.

Hofstede illustrates his concept of culture with a set of concentric rings. Items that are external or explicit are in the outer rings with deeper or implicit values at the core. Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner, who see themselves as extending and developing Hofstede's research, begin with the same distinction between *culture one* and *culture two*, but make some important adjustments. Firstly, they title the core of their diagram *assumptions about existence*. Secondly, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner begin with three types of dilemmas or relationships around which each culture is organized: relationships with people, with time, and with nature. From these, they identify seven categories by which cultural differences are defined and organized.⁸ Because of its dynamic nature, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's cultural dimensions were chosen for comparison with Sztompka's competencies.

Relationships with people:

(1) Universalism / Particularism

Is integrity expressed through loyalty to universal laws, even when it costs friendship, or particular relationships, even if that means bending the rules?⁹

(2) Communitarianism / Individualism

Is the greater good reached through sacrificing for the community or by promoting individual advancement?¹⁰

(3) Neutral / Affective (Emotional)

Should a person express emotions in the business setting or is more success achieved by maintaining a neutral posture?¹¹

(4) Diffuse / Specific

Are different aspects of life viewed as part of one diffuse whole or is it compartmentalized into specific segments?¹²

⁸ For a summary of different cultural value orientations see F. Trompenaars, *Riding the waves of culture*, 8–10. Summaries of all culture values can also be found in other works by the authors, such as Ch. Hampden-Turner and F. Trompenaars, *Building cross-cultural competence*. For simplicity page numbers are provided from *Riding the waves of culture*.

⁹ F. Trompenaars, *Riding the waves of culture*, 29–49.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, 50–68.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, 69–80.

¹² *Ibidem*, 81–101.

(5) Achievement / Ascriptive

Is status achieved through demonstrating one's abilities or is it ascribed by the society depending on inherent characteristics such as family and age?¹³

Relationship with the environment:

(6) Inward / Outward

Does a person create his own destiny by utilizing what he finds inside himself or does he try to go along with the flow of life directed by outside forces?¹⁴

*Relationship with time:*¹⁵

(7) Sequential / Synchronic¹⁶

Is life viewed as a series of sequential events along a line or do events happen synchronically, overlapping and repeating themselves in a circular fashion?

(8) Past-, Present-, or Future- Orientation¹⁷

When making decisions, is the focus on the past and tradition, present 'impact and style' or potential future opportunities and benefit? Who in society is most valued: previous generations, one's own generation, or the next generation?

The authors advise that it is better to look at these apparently opposite values as mirror reflections of one another; they both can add value to a society, but they can each also be taken to a dangerous extreme. Racism, fascism, materialism, communism, and many other '-isms' that have precipitated suffering, injustice, and warfare are the result of taking one or More Of These Values To The Extreme.

Legacies of communism and civilizational competence

Citizens of post-communist Poland were left to adapt to this new reality by picking and choosing what they saw to be the best "well tested solutions" of democratic, capitalist countries and imitating them. However, imitation rarely

¹³ *Ibidem*, 102–119.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, 141–156.

¹⁵ For the purposes of this research project, relationship to time was subdivided into these two aspects.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, 120–140.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, 138–139.

brings about real societal change. Real, enduring change can only take place when the cultural values of a society change along with its practices, and values are much deeper, and thus slower to change, than external activities.¹⁸

The values encouraged and supported under the communist regime in Poland politicised the work environment and discouraged Western entrepreneurial skills. Subsequently, people lost the sense of individual responsibility normally present with industrialization. When the system finally did collapse, it was difficult for individuals to learn to take responsibility for their actions leading to a symptom referred to as “learned helplessness.”¹⁹

However, not all Polish cultural attitudes can be attributed to communism. Ivan Volgyes aptly asks if it is possible to “discern whether it is the communist value structure or the previously existing one that can be regarded as the independent variable determining current behaviour.”²⁰ Schwartz and Bardi identify religion and the state of the country before World War II as possible influences.²¹ In Poland, this would translate to mean the role of the Roman Catholic Church, an authoritarian and often foreign ruler, and an agrarian economy. Another aspect of Polish history worth considering is Poland’s relatively late (post-WWI) attempts at modernization. George Schöpflin claims that elites tried to create a modern European nation after WWI by importing Western institutions; however, the attempt largely failed due to a lack of mutual trust between the elite rulers and those they ruled.²²

¹⁸ G. Schöpflin, “Post-communism: construction new democracies in Central Europe.”

¹⁹ J. L. Curry, “The Sociological Legacies of Communism,” in: *The Legacies of Communism in Eastern Europe*, ed. Z. Barany and I. Volgyes, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995, 55–83; J. Kochanowicz, “Incomplete Demise. Reflections on the Welfare State in Poland after Communism,” *Social Research*, 64:4, 1997. For further information on ‘learned helplessness’ see H. Grzymała-Moszczyńska, “Unlearning Learned Helplessness: The view from Poland,” *Christian Century* 111, 1994.

²⁰ I. Volgyes, “Legacies of Communism. An Introductory Essay,” in: *The Legacies of Communism in Eastern Europe*, ed. Z. Barany and I. Volgyes, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995, 1–22. See also: M. Marody, “Homo Sovieticus and the Change of Values. The Case of Poland,” in: *Landmark 1989: Central and Eastern European societies twenty years after the system change*, ed. H. Best and A. Wenninger, [Soziologie Forschung und Wissenschaft], Berlin: Lit, 2010, 80–89.

²¹ S. H. Schwartz and A. Bardi, “Influences of Adaptation to Communist Rule on Value Priorities in Eastern Europe,” 18:2, 1997, doi:10.1111/0162-895X.00062.

²² G. Schöpflin, “Identities, politics and post-Communism in Central Europe,” *Nations & Nationalism* 9:4, 2003.

Thus, it should come as little surprise that trust between different levels of society continues to be an issue in post-communist Poland. Sztompka identifies resolving the conflict between private (personal) and public (official) spheres of life as the foundational problem facing countries readjusting to life after communism. This division is seen in several sets of opposites that follow an “us” versus “them” format: society versus authorities, nation versus the state, and the people versus rulers.

To illustrate the dichotomy of the post-communist value system, Sztompka borrows from Jeffery Alexander’s binary discourses: the “discourse of real socialism” and the “discourse of emerging capitalism.”²³ From these binary discourses, several dimensions emerge. These dimensions, (a-g, explained below), show the tension between the cultural values people developed adapting to real socialism and the cultural values they will need to develop in order to adapt to democratic capitalism.

(a) Collectivism versus Individualism

Emerging capitalism requires taking risks and achieving personal success. Being recognized as an individual, one has more rights, but also more responsibilities.

(b) Private versus Public domain

Emerging democracy requires a commitment to the public domain and a willingness to participate in local and national discussions.

(c) Past versus Future

People tend to glorify the past and look to examples from “before the war”. However, emerging capitalism requires innovation and planning for the future.

(d) Fate versus Human agency

Under real socialism, one was at the mercy of the state or other inaccessible, impersonal forces. On the other hand, democracy requires belief in the ability of the individual to effect change, both in his personal life and in the community.

(e) Liberty versus Consequentialism

Society rejected communism in terms of “freedom from” economic controls and Soviet influence (consequentialism). Emerging capitalism requires “freedom to” control and direct one’s own life and governing institutions (liberty).

(f) Mythology versus Realism

Sztompka cites a “tendency to elevate mythical, religious, ideological thinking over mundane, realistic and rational arguments” to escape reality. Yet,

²³ J. C. Alexander, *The Discourse of American Civil Society: A New Proposal for Cultural Studies*, Los Angeles: UCLA (mimeo), 1989.

a capitalist society requires “rationality” and a “cold calculation of profits and costs.”²⁴

(g) Effectiveness versus Fairness:

The new society builds trust by universal adherence to law and contracts, irrespective of how instrumental it may seem at the time.

Sztompka comments that these biases, developed under the conditions of real socialism, still play an active role in society. Conversely, *Civilizational competence*, is achieved when a culture adopts the correct values above and represent the “historical achievement of modernity.”²⁵

At the same time, it should be recognized that these dichotomies parallel the value dimensions presented by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner. The culture rewarded in communist societies often, but not always, corresponds to one of the culture value orientations taken to the extreme. Table 1 juxtaposes Trompenaars and Hampden Turner’s cultural value dimensions with Sztompka’s observations regarding the post-communist society in Poland.

Table 1. Cultural Value Dimensions and Civilizational (In)Competencies

Cultural value Dimension	Negative aspects present in Polish society	Pre-requisites for success in a capitalistic society
Universalism / Particularism	<u>Particularism</u> : Personal connections are idealized; loyalty to friends; authorities seen as ‘them’; solutions viewed in terms of usefulness	<u>Universalism</u> : political activism; human rights for all citizens; solutions measured by a standard of right and wrong
Individualism / Communitarianism	<u>Communitarianism</u> : “learned helplessness”; reluctance to make decisions or act outside the group; pursuit of mediocrity <u>Individualism</u> : Private life demands a higher level of integrity than public life	<u>Individualism</u> : Taking risks; achieving personal success; individual competitiveness; majority vote <u>Communitarian</u> : healthcare

²⁴ P. Sztompka, “The intangibles and imponderables of the transition to democracy.”

²⁵ P. Sztompka, “Civilizational Competence: A Prerequisite Of Post-communist Transition.”

Cultural value Dimension	Negative aspects present in Polish society	Pre-requisites for success in a capitalistic society
Neutral / Emotional	<u>Emotional</u> : Myths received as truth; elevation of ideological thinking	<u>Neutral</u> : Ideas accepted or rejected on the basis of facts alone; rational calculation
Specific / Diffuse	<u>Diffuse</u> : Expectation that government/employer will provide social benefits <u>Specific</u> : Extreme compartmentalization of public and private life.	<u>Specific</u> : scepticism and criticism allowed and encouraged
Achievement / Ascribed Status	<u>Ascribed Status</u> : Privileges based on who one is and who one knows; “disinterested envy”	<u>Achieved Status</u> : ability of a person to change status, employment or salary through hard work
Inward- / Outward-Directed	<u>Outward-Directed</u> : fatalism, a feeling that one is unable to change or control the future	<u>Inward-Directed</u> : Perseverance and personal goals; belief in personal ability to cause change
Sequential / Synchronic Time	<u>Synchronic</u> : inefficiency and absenteeism in state jobs	<u>Sequential</u> : orderliness, punctuality
Past-, Present-, or Future- Orientation	Past-oriented: “before the war” glorified	Future-oriented: planning for the future

Source: own study based on Trompenaars-Hampden-Turner and Sztompka.

The correlation between many of Sztompka’s cultural (in)competencies and cultural value dimensions, could be cause for concern and imply that rushing to assimilate “capitalist” values may result in further disorientation. Even though Sztompka and others are acute in identifying the sociological dilemmas faced by post-communist societies, the solution they pose seems to reflect an American cultural value system without considering the uniqueness of other successful (European) cultural value orientations.²⁶

²⁶ See M. J. King and J. O’Boyle, “Idea and Value Exchange Worldwide. American Culture in the World,” *Journal of American & Comparative Cultures* 25, 1–2, 2002, doi:10.1111/1542-734X.00001 for a list of American values that closely resembles Sztompka’s pre-requisites for *civilizational competence*.

Suggestions for future research

When originally compiling materials for this project, I was surprised by the limited amount of research that had been done into descriptive rather than evaluative culture studies in Central and Eastern Europe. While this is still unfortunately true, many surveys into societal trends and preferences are being conducted such as the European Values Survey and those organized by the Polish Public Opinion Research Center CBOS (Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej). Sociologists have only begun to evaluate these results in light of cultural values.²⁷ Much more could and should be done, both in descriptive and comparative analysis.

At the same time, comparative analysis must be done with caution. As seen by juxtaposing Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's value dimensions with Sztompka's requirements for *civilizational competency*, many Western neighbours would not make the cut as a "competent" capitalist country. Just as there is no single "right" culture, there is no single path to becoming a fully-functioning democracy. Just as each Western European culture developed independently and uniquely, so must each post-communist country be free to find itself under the layers of debris left by communism and previous occupations.²⁸

Taking all of this into consideration, it becomes necessary to determine whether the dimensions identified by culture analysts to date are sufficient to describe the societies of Central and Eastern Europe. For this reason, further study into cultural values in Poland and other post-communist countries should be taken on by a team of scientists from mixed backgrounds, both inside and outside the countries where the research is being done. Because part of the solution lies in identifying cultural values present in Polish society before WWII, there is a need for sociologists to cooperate with scholars of Polish history and literature.

²⁷ K. Baytchinska, "Values of Contemporary East European Culture. A Cross-Cultural and Developmental Approach," in: *Political transformation and changing identities in central and eastern Europe*, ed. A. M. Blasko and D. Januaskiene, Washington D.C.: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2008, 299–322; M. Novojczyk, "Universalism versus Particularism through the European Social Survey Lenses," *Acta Physica Polonica B* 37:11, 2006.

²⁸ E.g., T. Borén and M. Gentile, "Metropolitan Processes in Post-Communist States: an Introduction.," *Swedish Society for Anthropology and Geography* 89B:2, 2007; A. Matveeva, "Exporting Civil Society. *The Post-Communist Experience*," *Problems of Post-Communism* 55:2, 2008, doi:10.2753/PPC1075-8216550201.

Identifying cultural patterns and tendencies in each country is a crucial step not only in rebuilding post-communist Europe, but also in dispelling the sense of inadequacy that seems to haunt contemporary society due to constant comparison with Western neighbours. Only by understanding the cultural values orientations and the reasoning behind them can effective steps be taken to improve cultural competence and to improve it in such a way that is not “Western” or foreign, but uniquely Polish.

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CULTURAL LEGACY OR CAPITAL?: TOWARDS A THEORY OF WHAT EUROPEAN CAPITALS OF CULTURE LEAVE BEHIND



European Capitals of Culture (ECoC) is a recent invention, dating back to the middle of the 1980s, when the official title was “European City of Culture”. ECoC-events change cities – possibly with the exception of Paris 1989, an event overwhelmingly overshadowed by the revolutionary bicentennial.

In the debate about changes and effects among ECoC:s, the concept of legacy has been introduced. The concept is apparently useful but also problematic and thus interesting to explore, as I demonstrate in the following.

It took a hundred years for the modern Olympians to discover the usefulness of the legacy concept. According to the French historian Chappelet, active in Lausanne: “The concept of legacy is relatively new within Olympic circles: it appeared in the 1990s, during the organizational phase of the 1996 Atlanta games. The private organizers of these centennial games felt compelled to highlight what they would leave behind for the host city.” (Chappelet 2008, 1885).

During a formative symposium on Olympic Legacies held in Lausanne in 2002, Australian historian Richard Cashman identified six very broad legacy categories (Cashman 2003: 35ff):

- a) economic;
- b) built and physical environment;
- c) information and education;
- d) public life, politics and culture;
- e) sport;
- f) symbols, memory and history.

A more simple distinction soon ensued between “hard and soft legacies”, as Chappelet says: “material legacies such as sports facilities – relatively simple to

identify – and non-material ones, such as socio-cultural development, which are harder to distinguish” (Chappelet 2008, 1886).

Only when these fin-de-siècle inventions of Olympic legacies appeared well established – through the Sydney Olympics – the concept was imported to the field of European Capitals of Culture. For example, Mary McCarthy, the programme director of Cork 2005, emphasized the value of legacy in 2004, e.g.: “Really, we’re in partnership [with the Irish Arts Council] in terms of the legacy onwards.” (quoted in Belinda MecKeon, “Cork’s year in the limelight”, Irish Times Fri, Oct 8 2004 <http://www.irishtimes.com/culture/cork-s-year-in-the-cultural-limelight-1.1160996>).

More importantly, in the widely read 2004 Palmer report on ECoC:s, a section was entitled: “Legacy and long-term effects” (Palmer 2004: 146). Palmer mentions as relevant legacies buildings, projects and organisations. Apparently following the Olympic example, built infrastructure is priority legacy. The term “softer legacies” is used for other legacy forms: “cultural programmes”, “the enhancement of experience, skills and confidence” in management and “helping to enhance a city’s international image”.

A Greek infrastructure project left unfinished during the Thessaloniki ECoC year – thus hardly relevant to the actual event – is somewhat surprisingly identified as good example of legacy by Palmer: “the infrastructure projects were not completed in the cultural year, causing substantial problems and hostile media reaction. But six years later they were complete, offering new facilities for the public and renewed atmosphere to certain parts of the city such as the port. Respondents in most cities were able to point to impressive cultural projects, buildings or organisations that either continued to exist beyond the cultural year or had a long-term impact.”

In a 2011 report to European Parliament’s Committee on Culture and Education, Beatriz Garcia points at the European Union decision 1622/2006 as the official beginning of ECoC legacy planning. To be precise, she says that capitals were “planning for the future” already in the 1990s. But only since 2006: “the explicit requirement for the Programme to be sustainable and have a long-term effect has led to more frequent discussion of the need for legacy and some examples of strategic legacy planning.” (European Capitals of Culture: Success strategies and long-term effects, EU-Parl 2011: 111 ([http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2013/513985/IPOL-CULT_ET\(2013\)513985_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2013/513985/IPOL-CULT_ET(2013)513985_EN.pdf)))

Actually, the legacy concept is not mentioned in the October 2006 decision of the EU council and parliament. But article 4 establishes new criteria for

the cultural programme. This should: “*be sustainable and be an integral part of the long-term cultural and social development of the city.* [my emphasis]”. A programme should also encourage participation and raise the “interest” of citizens and visitors (1622/2006: “Establishing a Community action for the European Capital of Culture event for the years 2007 to 2019”).

Garcia herself was highly influential in establishing a link between Olympic Games and cultural events. I have identified three Garcia moments: *Firstly*, Garcia’s 2002 PhD dissertation focused on the Arts Festivals that preceded the Sydney Olympic Games. Whereas the word just had been briefly mentioned by being quoted in her two earlier English language publications, she now used “legacy” no less than nine times (Garcia 2000, 2001, 2002).

Secondly, Garcia in a later article establishes a specific perspective on Olympic *cultural* legacy: “arts programming has yet to achieve a position that allows it to be perceived as a relevant contributor to the success of major events and their potential regeneration legacy” (Garcia 2004: 104).

Thirdly, in 2006, Garcia became director of the small research team that aimed at following Liverpool’s ECoC experience under the name “Impacts 08”. Legacy aspects were thoroughly emphasized and publicized, adding to the interest created by the recent Palmer report.

Within a few years, the legacy concept was used in other countries, e.g. in Sweden, where Umeå’s 2008 application for the year 2014 introduces “the legacy” as a headline. But it is worth mentioning that in the Swedish programme version, this headline is simply translated into “After 2014...” (http://umea2014.se/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/ansokan_1_eng.pdf; http://umea2014.se/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/ansokan_1_sve.pdf).

Indeed, the English word legacy is not easily translated, as already Cashman (2003: 33) noticed at the Lausanne Symposium on Olympic legacies: “there is no precise equivalent to this word in other languages such as French: the word “legs” has a narrow and specific meaning relating to an individual legacy. Hence there was the odd phenomenon that the symposium was advertised as a symposium on legacy (in English) and heritage (in French). If there is such a difference in the meaning of legacy from one European language to another there may be even greater ambiguity when the word is translated into non-European languages.”

This translation problem has rarely been identified as a decisive obstacle by the English. In the UK consultancy Ecotec’s evaluation of the 2007 and 2008 ECoC:s (Luxemburg GR, Sibiu, Liverpool and Stavanger), several legacy effects

were identified. Conscious efforts to plan for a legacy was appreciated. For example, Luxemburg's organization: "Ensuring that the positive impacts of an ECOC are sustained may best be achieved through the creation of one or more dedicated legacy bodies; these should be planned from an early stage and, as far as possible, retain key members of staff involved in delivering the ECOC programme" (Ecotec 2009: Ex-post Evaluation of 2007 & 2008 European Capitals of Culture Final Report, 37). In 2010, Ecotec merged with a Dutch company and was renamed Ecory. But their attention to legacies remained crucial in Ecory's evaluation of the 2010 ECoC:s (Essen/Ruhr, Pecs and Istanbul).

In 2010, the legacy concept was established to a multinational audience at the Brussels conference 'Celebrating 25 years of European Capitals of Culture'. Among the speakers were both Mary McCarthy and Beatriz Garcia. At the conference, the concept was appreciated, perhaps because it captured a vaguely positive impact of ECoC:s (2010: 5): "There is not one unique legacy, nor one single way to be successful; each city must decide on what constitutes success for them and for whom." The short conference summary also included no less than three pages "about legacy" and two pages under the title "How to evaluate legacy?" ("Summary of the European Commission conference 'Celebrating 25 years of European Capitals of Culture'" 2010).

Finally, in 2014, the EU parliament and council decided to establish new rules for the ECoC project (EU 445/2014). "Legacy" is now spelled out, in contrast to the 2006 decision. Or rather, this is what occurs in the English text, whereas in other languages we encounter great variety. In English, number 16 of the decision preamble states (emphases mine in the following quotations): "there should be a particular focus on candidate cities' plans for legacy activities embedded in a long-term cultural policy strategy capable of generating a sustainable cultural, economic and social impact."

This is followed up in Article 5.6: "as regards the 'management' category, the following factors shall be assessed: a) the feasibility of the fund-raising strategy and proposed budget, which includes, where appropriate, plans to seek financial support from Union programmes and funds, and covers the preparation phase, the year of the title, the evaluation and provisions for the legacy activities, and contingency planning".

Also in the following quotations, I have emphasized the "translations" or relevant terms in seven languages I can read, as well as one quotation in Polish a colleague helped me translate. The general tendency is clear: legacy is most often translated as "posterior activities" connected to the ECoC

event. Only two exceptions occur in my selection. Firstly, there is the Spanish choice of “patrimonio”, a word closer to heritage, to be found notably in the Spanish for UNESCO world heritage: “UNESCO patrimonio mundial”. Secondly, there is the Polish word “spuścizna”, which appears to be quite close to the English “legacy”. Because, in Polish, UNESCO world heritage is “UNESCO Światowego Dziedzictwa”, thus “Dziedzictwa” corresponds to “heritage”.

But, again, the general tendency is translations to “posterior activities”:

a) The French text (16): “une attention particulière devrait être portée à la présence, dans les projets présentés par les villes candidates, d’activités ayant des retombées durables” [...5.6] “activités ultérieures”.

b) The Italian text (16): “un’attenzione particolare ai piani per le attività legate al titolo”; [...5.6]: “la fase preparatoria, l’anno del titolo, la valutazione e la continuazione delle attività legate al titolo, e il piano di emergenza”.

c) The Spanish text (16): “especial hincapié en los planes de las ciudades candidatas relativos al patrimonio integrados en una estrategia de política cultural a largo plazo” [...5.6]: “fase de preparación, el año del título en sí, la evaluación y las provisiones para las actividades relativas al patrimonio, así como los planes de contingencia”.

d) The Dutch text (16): “bijzondere aandacht worden besteed aan de plannen van kandidaat-steden voor activiteiten met langetermijneffecten,” [...5.6]: “voorbereidingsfase, het jaar van de titel zelf en de evaluatie, en omvat reserves voor activiteiten met langetermijneffecten, alsmede plannen voor noodsituaties”.

e) The German text: (16): “ein besonderer Schwerpunkt auf Maßnahmen mit nachhaltiger Wirkung gelegt werden, die die Bewerberstädte im Rahmen einer kulturpolitischen Langzeitstrategie ” [...5.6]: “Vorbereitungsphase, Jahr der Veranstaltung, Bewertung und Reserven für Maßnahmen mit nachhaltiger Wirkung und Notfallpläne”.

f) The Swedish text (16): ”bör särskild tonvikt läggas vid kandidatstädernas planer för uppföljningsverksamhet” [...5.6]: ”förberedelsefasen, kulturhuvudstadsåret, utvärderingen och bestämmelser om uppföljningsverksamhet samt beredskapsplaner”.

g) The Polish text (16): ”należy zwrócić na planowane przez miasta kandydujące działania, które staną się spuścizną obchodów, ” [...5.6]: ”etap przygotowawczy, rok obchodów, ocenę oraz zapewnienie działań będących spuścizną obchodów, a także plan postępowania awaryjnego”.

However, on the field of European Capitals of Culture, it need not always be the case that official documents in domestic languages have privilege. Except in the French context, English is widely established also as an official language. Much international work is pursued in English, in connection to the cultural capital candidatures as well as in the processes of selection, implementation and evaluation.

Indeed, even in French we encounter efforts to find a reasonable equivalent to “legacy”. This happens in documents where past capitals are evaluated. For example, in the evaluation of Košice and Marseille-Provence it is argued that (2013, section 4:8 “Sustainability/ Durabilité / Nachhaltigkeit”): “legacy planning in Košice was well-developed”. Whereas the German text here sticks to the vague long-term planning or “Langfristigungsplanung”, the French on this occasion wrote: “la planification de l’héritage”.

Also in Swedish an effort is encountered which appears new when compared to the older documents: “planeringen av arvet” (EU 445/2014). The Swedish word “arv” is close to the German “Erbe” and both belong to the UNESCO world heritage context, German “UNESCO Weltkulturerbe” and in Swedish “UNESCO världskulturarv”. But to simply translate legacy with “arv” is not an idiomatic translation.

Although “kulturarv” and “Kulturerbe” means cultural heritage, “arv” and “Erbe” on their own appear as more fundamental notions. When the term “arv” is used in the strict legal sense it presupposes the death of persons: an “arv” is a donation which comes into effect only when the proprietor dies. Although the concept can be used metaphorically in the wider sense, it then usually denotes the passing away of epochs. Therefore, “arv” mix badly with planning for longevity and it is easy to understand why German as well as Danish avoids versions of the Swedish “planeringen av arvet”, a clumsy wording which fortunately has remained rare.

However, this odd Swedish translation has been used again in the 2015 evaluation of Riga in Latvia and Umeå in Sweden. Here, the French have “héritage”, whereas the Germans again hesitates between “Langzeitwirkungen” and “langfristiger Wirkungen” (EU 2015, 4.7: Sustainability/ Durabilité / Nachhaltigkeit/ Hållbarhetsperspektiv):

i. “The evaluation notes that there were aspects of both cities’ approach that showed they had considered sustainability. Although thinking around legacy was established early on in the ECOC lifecycle of each city, this did not however manifest in a strong longer term legacy or sustainability plan to sustain the cultural offer beyond the title year itself.”

ii. ”Enligt utvärderingen visar vissa aspekter i de båda städernas program att de arbetade ur ett hållbarhetsperspektiv under planeringen. Trots att frågan om arvet från kulturhuvudstadsåret togs upp tidigt i planeringsarbetet i de båda städerna, gjordes ingen plan för att fortsätta arvet och utvecklingen i syfte att upprätthålla det kulturella utbudet även efter själva året.”

iii. “L'évaluation note que certains aspects des approches des deux villes montrent qu'elles ont tenu compte du critère de durabilité. Bien que la réflexion sur l'héritage ait été établie à un stade précoce du cycle de vie de chacune des CEC, cela ne s'est toutefois pas traduit par un plan solide en ce qui concerne l'héritage ou la durabilité à long terme, qui permettrait de maintenir l'offre culturelle au-delà de l'année de la manifestation elle-même.”

iv. “Im Evaluierungsbericht wird angeführt, dass es in der Vorgehensweise beider Städte Aspekte gab, die zeigten, dass Nachhaltigkeit ein Thema war. Zwar wurde schon früh im Kulturhauptstadtzyklus beider Städte über Langzeitwirkungen nachgedacht, dennoch wurde kein besonderer Plan zur Sicherung langfristiger oder nachhaltiger Wirkungen erarbeitet, um das Kulturangebot über das Kulturhauptstadtjahr hinaus aufrechtzuerhalten.”

Interpreting this field of linguistic differences, it seems that the English original “legacy” occupies a terminological space between “heritage” and “bequest”, without cutting of the relations with these alternative words, yet conveying a rather vague image of something being benevolently passed on in time.

A legacy can also be a gift; indeed, according to the English dictionary definition this is something given away in a will or handed down by a predecessor and the origin is the Latin “legatus”: “Late Middle English (also denoting the function or office of a deputy, especially a papal legate): from Old French *legacie*, from medieval Latin *legatia* ‘legateship’, from *legatus* ‘person delegated’ (see *legate*).” (<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/legacy>).

Tentatively, we might say that English historical usage has taken the opportunity to mix up of the two Latin words “legatus” (a legate or envoyé) and “legatum” (a testamentary bequest). When this Latin couple *legatus* and *legatum* has been imported to other languages, the meanings have usually been kept separate. This might explain why many Western European languages lack an obvious translation of the very English “legacy”. As noted, the polish “spuścizną” might tempt us into assuming that Slavonic languages have less difficulties in finding a good translation.

But in many languages, there are only three rather awkward alternatives:

a) either a choice of a vague term, such as in EU 445/2014 varieties of “long-term planning” in Dutch, French, German, Italian and Swedish;

b) or the “heritage” option, such as the Spanish “patrimonio” and sometimes (e.g. in the evaluation reports quoted above) the French “héritage”;

c) or, finally, the choice of a legal term closer to the English “bequest”, Latin “legatum” or the French “legs”; this last solution can be found in some Italian translations, where we encounter “lascito” (EU 2015): “Sebbene la riflessione sul lascito dell’azione sia stata prevista in uno stadio precoce del ciclo di vita di ciascuna delle capitali europee della cultura, questo non si è tuttavia tradotto in un solido piano sul lascito o sulla sostenibilità a lungo termine per mantenere l’offerta culturale oltre l’anno in questione”.

Now, we could of course rejoice and say that this is excellent news. Europe is a plurality in cultural terms, why we should avoid placing words in straight-jackets, defining them with too much rigor.

Let the Germans say langfristiger, the French heritage, the Spanish patrimonio and the Italians lascito. Yet, we must note that this is not the official strategy. The diversity of translations are not emphasized in any official document I have encountered. Translations are without exception presented as faithful copies.

Perhaps scholars can contribute here, by distinguishing differences as well as similarities and making comparisons relevant also to practitioners. In other words, let’s not stick to the legacy wording but look and see if other words better would help us exploring the topic, what European Capitals of Culture leave behind.

Precisely when we discuss what to do with what is left over, we might need to begin by talking also about the concrete aspects of the particular mixtures of capacities, resources, capital, stock, leftovers and spoils to be found in cities, whether they made it to the European Capitals of Culture or not. Perhaps we ought to talk about more about Urban Capital than about Urban Legacies?

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- [http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2014/445\(1\)/oj](http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2014/445(1)/oj) DECISION No 445/2014/EU OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 16 April 2014 establishing a Union action for the European Capitals of Culture for the years 2020 to 2033 and repealing Decision No 1622/2006/EC

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FIGHTING THE (UN)HIDDEN “ENEMIES” OF THE SLOVAK SOCIETY



he development of the Slovak LGBTI community's rights has faced a backlash in the recent years. According to the “Rainbow Europe 2016” (ILGA-Europe 2016) report, Slovakia has achieved only 29% of the overall score. Romana Schlesinger, a Slovak LGBTI activist and the executive director of the Queer Leaders Forum, characterised the situation as “the biggest backlash since the history of the Slovak Republic and the Velvet revolution” (personal communication, September 4, 2016). The backlash peaked in two key events – a change of the Slovak constitution & the Referendum for the Slovak family.

In the 2014, two political parties united and agreed on an issue of strengthening the position of a marriage on the constitutional level. The change affected the Article 41 in which two sentences – “A marriage is a unique bond between a man and a woman. Slovak Republic protects marriage on all levels and help its goodness.” (Ústava Slovenskej republiky 2015: 14, own translation) – were added. The proposal was drafted by the Christian-Democratic Movement (KDH), specifically driven forward by the party leader Ján Figel' who believed that the implementation of this clause into the Slovak Constitution would protect family against external forces. KDH found an ally in the most represented party in the parliament, SMER- Social Democracy (SMER-SD). The proposed draft with the both its explanatory clauses and redefinition of the Article 41, was supported by 102 votes from 128 MP present that day in the parliament.

The opposition criticised collaboration of these two parties. The Freedom & Solidarity party (SaS) described the move as selfish and populist: the “real meaning and motive is not a protection of a traditional family, but a culture of hate spread by the SMER-SD and KDH driven by pure self-interest.” (TASR, 2014, para. 21, own translation) The reason for this might be the fact that Róbert Fico, the leader of the SMER-SD and the current Prime Minister, was

running for the position of the Slovak president in the upcoming presidential elections of 2014. Nevertheless, Fico claimed that it would not “disturb”, in his words: “the other people who have a different view on the issue, or who live differently.” (TASR 2014, para. 12, own translation) As the law already defines the marriage as a bond between a man and a woman he perceived the constitutional upgrade of the law as harmless to those who he defined that time as “the other people”.

However, there is an issue with the change which was meant to complicate the future for the same-sex couples in judiciary situations. It is at least what Ján Figel', the main person behind the change, have said in 2014. The purpose of the structure of the language and the draft is to limit the future possibilities of the same-sex couples to be recognised before the law. In his words:

...the proposition has its base, i.e. concrete proposition for the constitution's text; and explanation clause. In whatever situation, the explanation clause is always considered when it comes to the interpretation of this new change. [...] The constitutional definition will prevent any other partnerships to obtain the same credibility as marriage. That means, that the rights and duties of marriage won't be able to incur in other way than in legally binding connection between a man and a woman. Based on the changes in the constitution, marriage cannot and won't be able to incur between the same-sex individuals in Slovakia. (Obšitník 2014, para. 20, own translation)

Following the Figel's line of thought, there is a difference between the Article 41 of the Constitution and the Slovak *Family Law Act of 2005* (2016) which defines marriage “as a bond between a man and a woman”. (Art. 1, own translation) It is the word “unique” which occurs in the sentence added to the Constitution. The word “unique” has its special importance in the logic behind the formulation of the draft. Figel' explains it as follows:

The word ‘unique’ is that message for me, which means ‘nothing else’. The word “unique” is clear in its definition [...] I would not sign a proposition without the words ‘unique partnership.’ The word ‘unique’ is so important for me that nothing else can describe this definition... (Obšitník 2014, para. 22, own translation)

The Explanation Clause is further trying to justify the above formulation of a marriage by what is defined here as a “natural family.”

First of all, it refers to the family as the basic cell of the society. The clause understands the term “family” as a historical institution which precedes the

state and guarantees its future existence. For this reason, many civilisations were condemned to self-destruction as they had not protected the status of family. (NRSR 2014) However, it is only the “natural” family formed by a marriage between a one man and one woman which can guarantee the survival of a nation. This formulation excludes not only the LGBTI families, but also one-parent or guardian type of families as being equally and fully recognised under the national law. When Figel’ (2014) stated that “what is good for a family, is also good for the state,” (TASR 2014, para. 17, own translation) he has limited the discourse about family only to the level of marriage as it is now defined by both the family law and the Constitution. The language of “naturalness” used in this type of discourse creates a notion of some kind of eternal status-quo which needs to stay untouchable as a symbol of stability. The external forces challenging it than are portrayed as revolutionary but in the negative meaning of destruction and chaos. As Benedict Anderson formulated in his book *Imagined Communities* (1983/2006): “... in everything ‘natural’ there is always something unchosen. In this way, nation-ness is assimilated to skin-colour, gender, parentage and birth-era – all those things one cannot help.” (143) Following Anderson, the LGBTI community is, therefore, excluded from natural-ness if the “true and healthy” nation(-ness) can only be represented and continued by a family scheme which is drafted in the above-mentioned way. Moreover, the draft highlights the negative influence of the external forces in the third paragraph of the explanation clause:

The development in the contemporary world and specifically in Europe shows the instability of a law when it comes to the definition and interpretation of these terms. This instability does not contribute in adequate protection of the family in the society. (NRSR 2014: 6, own translation)

The following paragraph mentions also other countries (Poland, Latvia, Hungary and Croatia) as good examples in the fight for the “natural character of the marriage and the family” (NRSR 2014: 6, own translation) which moved the definition of marriage as a bond between a man and a woman on the constitutional level.

Another important factor structuring the draft is its use of the international declarations. First of all, the second paragraph justifies the “natural family” as the best environment for a child. (NRSR 2014) It refers to the Article 3 of the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989) which states in the part 1:

In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration. (p. 2)

The “best interest of a child” is the quoted part used in the explanation clause. As the natural family is the most adequate environment for both having and adopting children it supplements the restrictions for adoption by other forms of partnership or parenthood. Moreover, the discourse referring to the “best interest of a child” is a common part of other conservative campaigns as I will demonstrate in the later part of the paper.

Secondly, it is claimed in the Explanation Clause, that the definition of marriage stated by the clause is in accordance with other international human rights declarations. It specifically refers to the Article 16 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights [UDHR] (The United Nations 1948); the Article 23 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights [ICCPR] (The UN General Assembly 1966); and to the Article 12 of the European Convention of Human Rights [ECHR] (Council of Europe 1988) as examples of documents signed and respected by the Slovak Republic. In the Explanation Clause (NRSR 2014), the ninth paragraph is written as follows:

The International Declaration of Human Rights defines marriage as a legal bound between a man and a woman in the article 16. The equal characterisation of the institute of marriage as a bound between a man and a woman is shared also within other international declarations for human rights protection, by which the Slovak Republic is bind. (p. 7, own translation)

However, the statement is misleading. All the three declarations define marriage as an equal right for both men and women. They do not restrict the institution for heterosexual marriage right only, but protects it for every human being. For example, in the UDHR (UN 1948) it is written:

Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution. (Art. 16)

There are only two basic restrictions needed to be respected regarding legality of marriage – full consent and age. The ECHR is the only one which recognises the particularity of the “national laws governing the exercise of this right.” (Council of Europe 1988, Art. 12) On the other hand, the ECHR omits

a discourse about naturalness of family which is defined by the other two declarations as follows:

The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State. (UN 1948, part 3 of the Art. 16 & UN General Assembly 1966, part 1 of Art. 23)

This statement both supports and contradicts the argument promoted in the Explanation Clause. While it follows the discourse about protecting family as the root of a society, the word “natural” is used differently in different meanings. As I already mentioned, the Explanation Clause is setting only one standard which it phrases as a “natural family” or a “natural bond” and protects it with defined “uniqueness of marriage”. (NRSR 2014, own translation) All the other declarations are protecting the equality of rights of individuals in their claim for family and marriage. The only purpose of the “natural” and “fundamental” in the phrasing of the UDHR & ICCPR is to state their inalienable right for full protection and support by the law, society and State. Later in 2013, the European Union even specified that the LGBTI persons are part of the category of mentioned protected individuals, and, although the ECHR does respect the national laws in the terms of marriage, the states should recognise that:

LGBTI persons have the same rights as all other individuals – no new human rights are created for them and none should be denied to them. The EU is committed to the principle of the universality of human rights and reaffirms that cultural, traditional or religious values cannot be invoked to justify any form of discrimination, including discrimination against LGBTI persons. (Council of the European Union 2013: 1)

Moreover, the Article 30 of the UDHR clearly prohibits any actors to strip other individuals of their basic human rights:

Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein. (UN 1948, Art. 30)

Therefore, while looking at Ján Figel’s arguments we can observe that the logic of the proposed and accepted change follows a popular type of nationalist discourse in which he tries to stabilise the position of his party by forming an image of an enemy in a form of external force coming from the EU as mentioned in the third paragraph of the Explanation Clause (NRSR 2014).

Figel's argument lays in externalisation. While he sees marriage and family as discredited around Europe, he explains that a new dangerous "Gender Ideology" which has its origin in "the West" is trying to impose new moral values on other countries:

I see it as a growing influence of the "ethical relativism" which had many forms and outcomes in history. This time it is so-called "gender ideology" which – unlike the other ones - comes from unnatural understanding of human identity. [...] This is the beginning of chaos or beginning of new rights subverted from these outcomes. We don't accept them exactly because they mingle with every sphere and endangers the natural, universal and basic human rights. (Obšitník 2014, para. 7, own translation)

He understands the present situation as an attempt to violate basic human rights driven by lobbying forces. In that formulation, he appears as a protector of what he specified as "natural" human rights. (Obšitník 2014) What it is meant by "natural" was already explained in the above paragraphs. As he does not recognise the LGBTI persons (in this case homosexuals) being included in his pattern, they must, in his perception, create new rights for themselves. Although he said in the 2015 interview that he does see homosexuals as equal to him, he does not distinguish between their Human Rights and what he claims they are asking for, between the "special rights" (i.e. right to marry and to adopt children). This is a continuous and a common debate in the discourse concerning the LGBTI personages. Mostly the fundamental or conservative religious groups perceive the homosexual life as a sinful life-style and their bond, therefore, unnatural. For this reason, it is understandable that a party leader of a Slovak conservative Christian party might follow this line of thought. As the moral life of the gay and lesbian couples is, in his understanding, already corrupted it would be endangering to let them even adopt abandoned children. Moreover, allowing them to marry, or to let them equalise their partnerships on the level of marriage is a part of, what he described as, "salami tactics":

Firstly, there is a discussion about the change of perceiving relationships, then about partnership which wants the same rights as marriage and finally it influences the whole social sphere in a way that it is attacked by relativism and even ideology. (Kern 2015, para. 46, own translation)

Jana Dubovcová, the Slovak Public Defender of Rights, on the other hand, believes that a compromise should be made in this regard. She does not view the possibility of adoption for homosexual couples as an attack on the traditional

family and affecting healthy upbringing of children. She sees it as a step which could be beneficial for the Slovak society in general as the rumours of the dangerous influence of homosexuals on children would be discredited:

Allowing this would only benefit our society. We would allow people to live following their own consciousness. Maybe, also the rumours about what an immoral life this part of society has would be confronted with the morals of those whose life is ordinary. This is, I believe, the way of the other European states which allowed this and that we certainly cannot portray them as morally corrupted or disrespectful towards the traditional values. (Jancová 2015, para. 7, own translation)

According to the law, “the adoption is considered only when the traditional family does not exist – either it failed, or the parents died and a child does not have anyone.” (Jancová 2015, para. 9, own translation) When this kind of situation comes into being, the law should consider the best environment for a child, but “the Sexual orientation should not be the criteria for an applicant, but his/her capability to create a loving environment for a child.” (Jancová 2015, para. 10, own translation) Her comments refers directly to the Referendum for a Family which succeeded the above-discussed change of the Slovak Constitution, and which campaign was an open attempt against the LGBTI minority using, again, the children as the main subject of their claimed protection.

The Referendum About the Protection of Family was a massive call by the *Alliance for Family*, a civil movement which was established in the 2013. It was held on the 7th of February 2015 which was preceded by a petition. The Alliance managed to collect more than 350 thousand signatures which is the minimum requirement for the validation of the petition by the President. The focus on children was the main driving force behind the campaign, which I believe as part of the started Constitutional change in 2014, was an attack on the LGBTI community presenting it as an external force destabilising the moral order of the country.

The external force is in this case the European Union. However, it is clearly portrayed more negatively than in the Explanatory Clause of the discussed draft. The content of the petition collects all the aspects of this message and shows the fear of the “Salami tactics” mentioned by Jan Figel’ before:

Abandon children also deserve to have mom and dad, and, because of that, we need to insist on that the best interest of children must be a priority during adoption, not the interest of adults. [...] Children are naturally born and raised only in a relationship consisting of a man and a woman. For this reason, the same-sex couples or groups

cannot make a claim for the same rights as marriage has. We vote for keeping the present order. Approving the registered partnerships would lead to a situation when the European courts would grant them, even without our permission, all the rights which only marriage has in our country. (Alliance for Family 2014, March 1, own translation, original highlights)

According to the Slovak *Law Act about the organisational manner of conducting a referendum* (2015, own translation), it is the President's duty to control whether the petition is in accordance with the constitution. The current Slovak president Andrej Kiska followed this duty and before announcing the referendum, he sent it to the Constitutional Court to analyse the content of the questions. There were originally four referendum questions:

1. Do you agree that no other cohabitation but the union between one man and one woman should be called marriage?
2. Do you agree that neither same sex couples nor groups shall be allowed to adopt children and subsequently raise them?
3. Do you agree that to no cohabitation of persons, except marriage, should be granted special protection, rights and obligations, which have been granted by legislative acts up to 1.3.2014 only to marriage and spouses (in particular the recognition, registration as a lifelong union before the public authority, the possibility of adopting a child by the parent's other spouse).
4. Do you agree that schools cannot require the participation of children in classes dedicated to sexual behaviour or euthanasia if their parents or the children themselves do not agree with the content of the lessons? (Alliance for Family n. d.)

The third question was considered as unconstitutional and excluded from the referendum sheet by The Slovak Constitutional Court. The other three questions were approved and referendum was announced to take place in February 7, 2015.

The decision of the court was viewed as a failure by many critics. The Slovak Constitution (2014) states clearly in the Article 93 section 3, that "No issues of fundamental rights, freedoms, taxes, duties or state budget may be decided by a referendum." As the Constitutional Court had not recognised the first and the second questions as interconnected and aimed against the rights of the LGBTI minority, and, therefore, unconstitutional, it supported the future discrimination of this group. The Amnesty International made a similar

statement. It had seen the referendum as a backward step for Slovakia which would show how Slovakia really perceive what the Human Rights are and who has the right for them. In the words of Jana Malovičová, the director of the Slovak branch of the Amnesty International (2015a): “It is a decision about whether we believe that everyone has the same rights for a family and for the protection of the Human Rights.” (para. 3, own translation) Although AZR officially stated that their campaign was not meant as an attack against “ordinary homosexual couples” (STV 2015), or, that they are “not bound to any ideology, religion or political party”, (AZR n. d.) the content of their official page (besides the referendum questions) gives a different impression. For instance, an article presented as *Endangerment of Family in the World and in Slovakia*, (AZR 2014, April 5) mentions 32 examples of situations which are supposed to threaten the status and the healthy well-being of a family in the world and in Slovakia. From this number, the content of 18 out of 22 in the world and 5 out of 10 in Slovakia are aimed against the same-sex marriages, registered partnerships and adoptions. Moreover, in the part called “Why is the referendum important?” (AZR n. d.) the following was written:

There are big pressures from western countries and the European Union bodies to redefine marriage and family, also in Slovakia. These countries and bodies already accepted the ideology of ‘marriage for all’, in many cases denying freedom of speech and conscientious objection. Also, our state institutions are already filled with pro-gay activists and thus it is hard to resist the pressure. Most politicians are scared of resisting the pressure from EU, too.

In the other sections of their page, the AZR explains the purpose of every referendum question.

Beginning with the first question, a marriage is perceived similarly as in the Explanatory Clause discussed earlier in the paper. Marriage is connected to the core of the state as it ensures the continuity of the nation. It mentions that if homosexuals’ partnerships were equalised with marriage (by the EU courts for example), nothing would ban them to have the “same rights or services” (AZR 2016b, April 21, own translation) as marriage is legally allowed to have.

The second question deals more or less with who has a right for children. It refers to children as to have mother and father is their basic rights to have and the state needs to consider this option before any other. This is already the main concern of adoption policies as Jana Dubovcová already pointed out. Furthermore, it implies that for the reasons of healthy upbringing, a child needs to

experience “examples both a man and a woman, their mutual love, respect and coexistence.” (AZR 2016a, April 21, para. 2, own translation) Mentioning example of Austria, it warns against “activist interventions of the European Court for Human Rights” which prioritise the “so-called principle of ‘non-discrimination’ instead of the principle that a child needs a father and a mother.” (AZR 2016a, April 21, para. 3, own translation) This is again the case of hijacking the topic of human rights for an own cause.

The longest explanation was added to the third question originally banned by the Slovak Constitutional Court. The reference to the Explanation Clause of the 2014 is clear. The explanation offered here backs marriage’s claimed uniqueness and the importance of protecting this uniqueness for the future generations. The “salami tactics” of adoption rights is an unavoidable danger if the registered partnerships would be allowed. The Alliance highlights that this might be the last opportunity to “ban ‘values’ forced from outside”, (AZR 2016c, para. 5, own translation) because if the registered partnerships were allowed, the European Union would be unstoppable in imposing these values on the Slovak society while banning the right to object. This sort of discourse fortifies the illusion that the European Union is a type of dictatorship which would consume the identity of the separate nations if they let it infiltrate their structure.

The battlefield here is on the ground of Human Rights which are designed to guarantee rights of every individual. The organisations or activists representing the LGBTI group are described here as “lobbyists” who “are going far behind the border of non-discrimination; and actually, discriminate and have potential to corrupt the correct understanding of the root and purpose of marriage and family.” (AZR 2016c, para. 4, own translation) In this formulation, the Alliance is trying to portray itself as not truly rallying against homosexuals, but only against those lobbyists who are trying to legalise what Alliance believes are the special rights. In an interview with a homosexual couple conducted by the *Denník N*, Roman, one of the partners, described the following double-standard towards discrimination with words: “It is different to be truly discriminated and feel discriminated for to not be allowed to discriminate others.” (Mikušovič 2015, para. 57, own translation) Alliance also claims that rights for inheritance and health state of a partner could be easily achieved through other legal institutions and so they do not need to be legally recognised as partnership union.

The last question also demonised the foreign influence. While calling it “ideological exercises” (AZR 2016d, para. 6, own translation) on children

which parents should have a right to refuse, it defined two basic types of sexual education – “An Education towards responsible sexual behaviour and parenthood” (AZR 2016d, para. 3, own translation) and “permissive sexual education.” (AZR 2016d, para. 4, own translation) The former is described as the correct one which mainly encourages young adults into responsibility and sexual abstention before marriage. The latter is described as opposite, and dangerous (according to the Alliance believes) following the concept of “safe sex – the usage of condoms and hormonal anticonception for averting pregnancy while accepting artificial abortion as a solution for unplanned pregnancy.” (AZR 2016d, para. 3, own translation) The Alliance claims that this latter type of sexual education which is adored in the western countries lead to grow in number of abortions, early pregnancies and sexual diseases. They do not support their claim with any statistical evidence. What they mention as a proof for their concerns is an example coming from Germany where children cannot skip any subject nor sexual education class if the objection is based on their religion. The reason for this is to offer children a neutral ground apart from the parents’ values to offer them an opportunity to choose by themselves (Houlton 2009). Nevertheless, the other sources of influence on the existence of the forth question are, I believe, the two broadly discussed EU reports drafted in 2013 and 2014 – Estrela & Lunacek Reports.

Both reports, despite being non-binding to the states, were criticised and attacked by conservative (and) religious groups. The former called *The Report on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights* (Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality 2013) authored by Edite Estrela, a Portuguese MEP, was a reaction to results of *The Gender Inequality Index* (The United Nations 2015) which is monitoring dimensions of health, empowerment and labour market. The suggestions provided in the report were supposed to enhance the quality and equality in terms of health care services; or to help to reform or establish a quality sexual education at schools which would lower the rate of unwanted pregnancies and provide information for youth to lead safe and responsible sex life. The data collected focused on, for example, “forced or coerced sterilisation”, “Maternal Mortality”, “Abortions”, “Adolescent Birth Rates and Unwanted Pregnancy”, “Sexually Transmitted Infections”, economic difficulties for fresh parents, Gender-based violence or the continuous discrimination of LGBTI and their sexual and reproductive rights. (CWRGE 2013) The criticism of the report’s data was mainly concerned about abortions together with the conscientious objection of doctors, contraceptions, sexual education and LGBTI parenthood. For instance,

the Article 43 (CWRGE 2013) of the report highlights the importance of distinguishing the difference between the sexual and reproductive health needs of adults and adolescents. It “calls on the Member States to ensure that adolescents have access to user-friendly services where their concerns and rights to confidentiality and privacy are duly taken into account.” (p. 13) This point is incorrectly presented, for example, by the Federation of Catholic Family Associations in Europe (FAFCE) as forcing the states to make “sex education classes compulsory for all primary and secondary school children” (FAFCE 2013, para. 21) in which the education for children aged 0-4 would “give information about enjoyment and pleasure when touching one’s body, early childhood masturbation”; ‘Enable children to gain an awareness of gender identity and give the right to explore gender identities’. (FAFCE 2013, para. 23) It is important to mention this as the anti-report campaign significantly influenced the rejection by the European Parliament (334 to 327) (Honor 2013).

The latter Lunacek report, on the other hand, passed. *The Report on the EU Roadmap Against Homophobia and Discrimination on Grounds of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity* (CCLJHA 2014) authored by Ulrike Lunacek, an Austrian MEP, was backed by the EU Parliament with 394 members in favour. Lunacek’s mail service was later spammed by negative anti-report emails as before happened to Estrela as well. Moreover, her personal website was hacked with a banner warning against a harming content to the reader’s computer (Nielsen 2014). Conservative campaigns against the report were also mobilised, as for example, on the *Citizen Go* page which is a well-known representative of conservative religious and anti-LGBTI groups or pro-life supporters. It firstly, highlights the victory over the Estrela report and the need to mobilise, again, against the new danger which comes now from the “LGBT activists to twist what is meant by fundamental human rights.” (Citizen Go Europe 2014, para. 3) Lunacek herself is described as a “left-wing feminist” who by her showed support towards the Estrela report before advocated “taboo-free and interactive sex education for toddlers.” (Citizen Go Europe 2014, para. 5) The LGBTI group is again portrayed as advocating for special treatment or the so-called “special rights” turning their campaigns for recognising their right for human rights as lobbying attempt to be awarded “special privileges.” (Citizen Go Europe 2014, para. 6) Their campaigns are described as “institutional queering of human rights” which would force Member States to “engage in a holistic homosexual mainstreaming of all public policy domains” (Citizen Go Europe, 2014, para. 7) which would, for example, pressure “Member States to provide legal recogni-

tion of same-sex ‘marriages.’” (Citizen Go Europe 2014 para. 8) Although the language, misinterpretation, and hysteria on the *Citizen Go* page (or by other groups) is more rigid in formulation than the information on the *Alliance for the Family* page, the similarity of the arguments and the fears following both reports are obvious.

The Catholic Church had its own specific involvement in the campaign. The most influential and also shocking was *The Pastoral Letter of Slovak Bishops Regarding the National Referendum About the Protection of Family* (Katolícka Cirkev na Slovensku 2015, own translation) which was transferred from the Synod of Bishops in Slovakia and presented in all churches, only 5 days before the Referendum. Martin Macko described it as “the first time the Church has been involved in a political issue in such an extent.” (Minarechová 2015, para. 5) In the letter, they referred to the speech of the Pope John Paul II. (1996), dedicated to the Slovak pilgrims on the 9th November 1996 where he addressed Slovakia’s specific role in defining the new trend of the Third Millennium. The devotion to the Holy Virgin, the traditions, culture, martyrs and freshly raised generations, is the gift which the Slovak Catholics can offer to Europe and help it in its delicate moment.

The letter was highly criticised for its content. Homosexuality was portrayed as a behaviour which children would be pushed into by some dangerous ideologies from outside. As children are the future for everyone in the society, the letter highlights the importance of the type of family they should grow up in. Therefore, children must not be, as the letter describes, “demoralised since childhood.” (KCS 2015, para. 1, own translation) The demoralisation is hidden in the questions about the life, family and sexuality, which took nearly a “sinister” form in many European countries. The examples enclosed in the letter, are euthanasia, sexual education, homosexuality and conscientious objection of doctors. All these are claimed to be parts of the “Gender Ideology” which the letter defines as “non-scientific ideological argument that two-typed gender – masculine and feminine – does not actually exists.” (KCS 2015, para. 2, own translation) The parents and grandparents should not be passive and careless and not let the other forces to deform the “identity and sexuality” of their children and grandchildren. The letter says that the *Alliance for Family* offered a way to fight the danger with the referendum describes as peoples’ “basic human right for opinion.” (KCS 2015, para. 6, own translation) Similar to Figel’s logic, it does not see the referendum as violating the Human Rights of others. Although it mentions that this and other criticism was raised regarding the referendum, it views it only as an effort to demotivate people to vote.

The “people”, however, is a category which does not include everyone holding the Slovak citizenship. The discourse of endangered “us” creates a notion of imagined coherent community (Anderson 1983/2006) which represents the “true” Slovak identity threatened now by a foreign ideology. As the urgent tone of the letter suggests, the “we” or “us” are the chosen one who must take an action, gather as many people who share the same values and vote to save the “young lives and families. [...] Not every generation gets a chance to decide about the future of its homeland; we are facing a challenge to express our opinion about the fundamental life values. [...] Our whole society is built on them, but falls apart without them.” (KCS 2015, para. 10, own translation)

The last part of the letter focuses on the Pope Francis. The campaign of the referendum was criticised for hijacking the current Pope words for their campaign. Although Pope Francis (2015) showed support for the “courageous Slovak Church, which at this moment, at this time, is fighting to defend the family. Continue with courage!”; but he never commented only on the referendum directly and never expressed support for its questions. Pope’s words are extracted from different homilies and speeches and organised in the letter to support every of the questions. Some parts are extracted from the time before he was being elected for the Pope in 2013. The eight paragraph refers to his time as Cardinal Bergoglio and to his letter protesting against the same-sex marriage from the June 2010:

The life of so many children who will be discriminated beforehand due to the lack of human maturity that God willed them to have with a father and a mother is in jeopardy. A clear rejection of the law of God, engraved in our hearts, is in jeopardy. [...] Let us not be naive: it is not a simple political struggle; it is an intention [which is] destructive of the plan of God. [...] a “move” of the father of lies who wishes to confuse and deceive the children of God. (para. 2–3)

The Pope has certainly been critical to the above-mentioned understanding of the so-called “Gender Theory” and he has showed support in the fight against it. In an interview in 2015 he defined it as an “Ideological Colonization” in which an idea is introduced “to the people that has nothing to do with the people. With groups of people yes, but not with the people. And they colonize the people with an idea which changes, or means to change, a mentality or a structure. [...] through the children.” (Kara 2015, para. 9)

This statement partly explains the origin of the fourth question of the referendum and the fear about the sexual education reforms in schools. Moreover,

it also supports the creation of the discourse about “us” and “them”, about the values of claimed majority threatened by minority which values put it on the border of being recognised as an equal part of the society.

The Catholic Church has not been perceived by the general population as inclining to extremism. It is at least what the Slovak police report on extremism (MVSR 2012) showed in the 2012. The questioned participants did not see the Church as contributing to the recognised problem of growing popularity of the extremist groups. Although the low turnout on the referendum (21.4%) and so its rejection was perceived as a positive step towards LGBTI rights, by NGOs such as Amnesty International (2015b) some argue that the turnout was low simply because it was perceived as unimportant and as a waste of money. On the other hand, I believe that it had influenced the election turnout for the *KDH* party which lost its position in the parliamentary elections (from 8.82% in 2012 to 4.94%) in 2016. However, it opened a door for other conservative parties, such as the *Slovak National Party* (8.69%) and the controversial *We are Family Party* (6.62%) (ŠÚSR 2016). The representative of the Slovak National Party, Andrej Danko, now a chairman of the National Council, recently assured the religious representatives that he would always support the Christian values and reject any attempts of LGBTI group to establish their rights (SITA 2016).

The most disturbing outcome of the elections is the victory of the neo-fascist *Kotleba Peoples Party – Our Slovakia* (8.04%) (ŠÚSR 2016). Its leader, Marián Kotleba, who has a long history of extremism, was also elected as a governor of Banská Bystrica region in the 2013. On the one hand, he does not differ from many other right-wing conservative parties in the EU now. His campaigns are strongly nationalistic, euro-sceptic, Islamophobic, anti-refugees and anti-LGBTI. On the other hand, the devotion to the WWII Slovak State connects him specifically to the history of the fascist Catholic Slovak Church of that time. His party openly admires the president of the WWII Slovak State, Jozef Tiso, who as a catholic priest collaborated with Hitler. Moreover, the national literature in time of defining both the language and the sense of being a Slovak was mainly formed by the catholic or protestant priests in the 18th and 19th century. There is, therefore, a direct connection between the nationalist discourses and religion in Slovakia. The values supported and spread in (or pretending to be with) accordance with Christianity are presented by nationalists as the core values of the Slovak society.

Unfortunately, this logic naturally transfers the situation of the LGBTI group from into exclusion by the national community. The identity of any person is influenced by the society he/she lives in. If the LGBTI group continues

to be excluded, their self-identification could be reshaped into seeking refuge in some closed and secure groups which would mean stronger feelings of exclusion. This relates to the Charles Taylor's (1994) discussion about recognition and Anthony Appiah's concept about the positive and negative life-scripts which are relevant in this time as the LGBTI community is asking for its voice and recognition. Kwame Anthony Appiah (1994) states that in a society where the negative scripts are influencing and shaping the identity of a certain minority groups, some "rights" equalising their position are not enough to preserve and restore their dignity. Focusing on homosexuals, even a life "as an 'open homosexual' cannot be enough. It will not even be satisfactory to be treated with equal dignity despite being homosexual, for that will require a concession that being a homosexual count naturally or to some degree against one's dignity. And so, one will end up asking to be respected as a homosexual." (Appiah 1994: 149).

The collective identity is than strengthened and reshaped. This might be perceived as an oppressive action towards the rights of the majority. However, as these two groups are strictly interconnected, nationalism can hijack a sensitive issue of this measure and turn the majority away from the mutual discussion with the minority. It can than misuse the LGBTI need for recognition for a purpose to strengthen collective identity of the majority group in a form of emotional blackmailing. As it was discussed in this paper, it can emphasise the difference in the basic structure of the family on its moral and legal level. On the one hand, the impossibility of a "natural" reproduction for homosexual couples and the "traditionalism" behind marriage turns to be an argument against gay marriage on the level of law, because cohabitation of the same-sex couples cannot fulfil the need for survival of a nation. On the other hand, the problem with recognising LGBTI persons as normal and their sexuality as natural (as many studies concluded) turns the conflict into a fight for a moral purification of the society and into the discourse relating to the protection of children. In this sense, nationalism hijacks the children as they are the future for the new generations and the means of how the nation would identify itself in the future. In this understanding, their "healthy" upbringing, therefore needs protection. Of course, the healthy upbringing is only possible in the traditional family with possibility to control the sexual education in order to prevent them to have any homosexual "tendencies" as these conservative groups tends to say.

This "struggle" is shifted to the European Union's ground. As discussed in the paper, the "western countries" already implemented or are trying to implement measurements to recognise LGBTI people within its borders. This equal-

isation of the LGBTI rights seems to add, as I tried to demonstrate, a new vocabulary for the mentioned homophobic groups on the level of language of Fundamental Human Rights. These groups do not recognise this act as a process of equalisation but as a process of making important exceptions to the rule where the LGBTI group claims to have “special rights.”

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“MOMENTS OF GRACE?” THE “DRAMATIC” REPRESENTATION AND THE AESTHETIC OF AGEING



his paper will limit its focus to consideration of two ‘dramatic’ treatments of ageing, both of which involve an aged woman and both of which touch upon ageing and *dementia*. My focus is here as part of my proposition is that ‘dementia’ is on a spectrum of ‘cultural’ apperceptions of the ageing process associated as that process is with weakening and failing ‘powers’ both physical and mental.

Dementia is also that which conjures up strong and complex emotions with apprehension and fear which I suggest additionally serves the ‘dramatic’ effects of representations of ageing.

I want for the sake of economy to present some alternative commentaries upon the aged woman and dementia which refer to perhaps two ends of the spectrum for dramatization; the highly orchestrated ‘mainstream’ narrative film and the ‘close to home’ documentary, in this case made by the daughter of the aged person with diagnosed Alzheimer’s. I rely upon two papers which whilst referring to cultural productions were each placed in scientific journals. One is a paper by Megan. E. Graham presented in a journal *Dementia* in 2014 entitled “The voices of Iris: Cinematic representations of the aged woman and Alzheimer’s disease in *Iris* (2001)”¹ The other is a paper by Aagje Swinnen in ‘*The Gerontologist*’ journal in 2012, entitled Dementia in Documentary Film: *Mum* by Adelheid Roosen (2009).²

¹ M. E. Graham, “The voices of Iris: Cinematic representations of the aged woman and Alzheimer’s disease in *Iris* (2001),” *Dementia* Vol. 15, 2014, 05 2016, 1171–1183. Sage Publications originally published online November 2014.

² A. Swinnen, “Dementia in Documentary Film: *Mum* by Adelheid Roosen (2009),” *The Gerontologist* Vol. 53, Issue 1, 1–10.

I am interested in not only the identifiable difference and similarities along this spectrum but also in what the commentators take from the effects of these dramas in terms of an “aesthetics of ageing”.

One’s overriding response to even the word dementia, even before any representation, is that of a concern for ‘loss’ and something of a “living death” whereby the body is still in operation to some extent, whilst the mental faculties are highly disordered and on route to an irreversible ‘complete’ malfunction.

The narrative film genre arguably ‘orchestrates’ such loss with a typical rendering of the story whereby “the disease in progress reaches its nadir in the time span of the narrative and use(s) metaphors such as darkness to add to the story of decline” (Graham 2014).

The overall ‘feel’ will be elegiac evoking previous and now lost ‘powers’ and holding on to ever diminishing “moments of grace” as the disease ‘takes hold’.

As has also been pointed out the ‘caretaker’s perspective’, if not dominant in terms of ‘speaking for’ the ‘afflicted’ person, takes on a poignancy as that person’s or persons’ stress, bemusement and frustration is stitched into the drama (see Swinnen 2012).

The orchestration of the drama is designed to elicit compassion in the viewer, but is it always clear as to the direction of this compassion; compassion for whom?

My proposition also here is that responses and the ‘*premise*’ of dramatic effect depend upon a privileging of a certain view or presentation of cognitive and intellectual ‘powers’ tied exclusively to a notion of ‘mind’ as substitutable for *being* as such, so that ‘loss’ of such powers presents a *disappearance* of the person.

There is also a dependence upon a certain ‘aesthetics’ of *being* and physical presence so that aspects of ‘perceived’ physical disarray or physical ‘incoherence’ or non-normative physical expression are deemed solicitous of our compassion and regret (see Swinnen 2012).

The feature film *Iris* (2001) is a case in point. Hailed as a film that “...helps people understand what it [Alzheimer’s] means for family and friends as well as for the person with the condition...” (Quoted in Graham 2014) arguably reinforces stereotypes and culturally negative presentations of women and ageing with Alzheimer’s being at the extreme end of a spectrum of diminishing quality of life and sickness as that which befalls womanhood (see Graham 2014).

Iris is about the British philosopher and author Iris Murdoch who had a flourishing career as a writer and social commentator who crossed the ac-

ademic/ popular divide. The film is not about this career however, but seen through the ‘memoirs’ of her husband John Bayley, is a narrative of her decline in her ‘older age’. Her younger self and her prowess are seen through the lens of emotional frailty and instability accompanying ageing and her ‘disease’, here strongly orchestrated as a ‘harrowing’ loss of identity.

Richard Eyre who directed the film presents a clear view of the need for and effect of the dramatization. “One of the things I’ve tried to show in the film is that even though the person is disappearing in front of you, in some way there is a sense in which they remain. You can still love the person because their soul is still there until the end.” (Eyre, R (2001) Miramax Films, Quoted in Graham 2014)

We thus encounter the ‘classic’ themes of loss and disappearance of self, dramatized through broadly familiar devices such comparison between younger Iris (self) and aged Iris (self). Here played by two different actors with younger self ‘augmented’ via timbre of voice, energised delivery and charismatic presence compared to a flat-toned, confused and distressed aged present day Iris, where any highly expressive pitch is couched as that of terror and torment rather than ‘joy of life’.

This is particularly dramatized in two scenes where the aged Iris actual confronts her younger self, one by way of earlier film footage in a television studio and once as a ‘quasi-mirage’ whilst swimming in the sea. In both instances the aged self is left ‘speechless’ or ‘nonplussed’ (see Graham 2014).

Speechless is one thing. Silence is another. Megan Graham is interested in the particular aesthetic of ageing that marks this film, which is that of the *sound of woman’s voice*. It is physically the case that the female voice will usually change timbre with age but what does, should or could that mean culturally?

The association of the young higher pitched female (soprano voice) with the ‘angel’s cry’³ even as that becomes secularized and dramatized as ‘tragic’ in the move from religious song to opera, still retains a sense of ‘evocation’, quasi-spirituality and ‘siren-like’ affect in the western canon.

This is emphasised in *Iris* by the ongoing theme of her unaccompanied singing of an Irish folk song, “The Lark in the Clear Air” (the thematic of the singing voice of Iris is explored by Graham 2014).

As Graham points out, what the ‘aesthetics’ of sound emphasises is the strength and sonority of the younger voice compared to the thin ‘wilting’ sound of the aged voice as if ‘*married to her failing body*’ (Graham 2014).

³ See M. Poizat, *The Angel’s Cry*, trans. A. Denner, Ithaca: USA Cornell University Press, 1992.

To take the voice and its sound as an aesthetic vehicle for signifying the aged woman is a powerful and potentially empowering move for criticism.

The voice and sound are in many of their respects 'extra' linguistic or in excess of semantic meaning of any utterance or 'expression'. Additionally even as the gendered voice in 'conventional' narrative film anticipates a commanding authority and exteriority for the male voice and a disempowering 'subordinated' interiority to the female voice, that very opposition, precisely because it cannot be an 'exact' science and bears even the tiniest element that escapes characterisation, *can* set up a destabilising effect which disturbs the conventional attribution of meaning.

A critical attuning to the aesthetics of voice and *sound* as opposed to the always seeking after *meaning* supports a 'listening against the grain of the voice'. Such listening against the grain may enable those moments of grace in the elegiac 'air' of the folk tune (for example here) to be released from *poignancy* and take on a *potency for the* identity of the bearer of the voice.

Working against the grain of expectation is much more powerfully evoked in the other dramatic representation considered here, the documentary film *Mum*. This is a film made by the artist Adelheid Roosen in 2009 about her own mother and includes Roosen herself in one of the 'staged' scenarios and another family member with her mother in each of the other 'scenes'.

As Swinnen (2012) let us know in her paper the thematic and style of this documentary is strongly counter to 'conventional' documentations of the aged and /or Alzheimer's subject.

For a start it does not so much present a story with a narrative arch, as a series or set of episodes with the effect of 'performed' interactions between Mum and one of her family members. Whilst there is 'framing' there is no *narrative* framing of a 'before' and now 'after' dementia or surrounding frames of 'familiarizing' objects or accoutrements.

Here instead, the 'frames' are deliberately 'theatrical' framings including one where Roosen's own body clearly and deliberately 'mirrors' that of her mother and wears similar minimal clothing and one where the mother's son-in-law 'cradles' the mother in a quasi- reversal of a *Pieta* image.

The 'stark' physicality of the framed encounters confronts the viewer in the way that the narratively positioned images of withering and increasing frailty in a film such as *Iris* do not.

Arguably it is not 'compassion' that is elicited of the audience/viewer here but a provocation to respect and understand the presence and personhood of *Mum*.

That this may be discomfiting and disturbing for the viewer and not ‘sad’, speaks to this entire problem of aesthetic representation of ageing. Roosen deliberately eschews a conventional portrayal of the aged person with Alzheimer’s as “confused and helpless but not visually threatening” (Swinnen 2012).

Instead the viewer experiences highly stylised and aestheticized presentations of *Mum* in minimal whilst *potentially* ‘pathos inducing’ garments in deliberately dramatic contexts. These contexts are both slightly ‘surreal’ whilst displacing an ‘easy’ differentiation between the aged ill person and the person who is not and eschewing any familiar ‘spectacle’.

The film did provoke controversy with some commentators suggesting ‘exploitation’ of the subject and questioning the fact that the subject (Mum) was not in a position to consent to these portrayals. As Swinnen suggest however “because [they] believe the mother has *disappeared*, some viewers feel compelled to speak for her...they want to safeguard an aesthetics of personhood which assumes dignity to be linked with a subject that can sit straight does not [need protection for incontinence] and can speak [what is conventionally considered to be] coherently” (Swinnen 2012). Swinnen asks “Would it have made a difference if the mother...had been well enough to give informed consent?” (Swinnen 2012).

I would add that these objections are less about the personhood of the mother, which is actually stronger in its presentation here than in most other documentaries about aged persons or feature films but are more to do with the spectators’ discomfort.

This discomfort is because the spectator is *denied* the more easy ‘moment of grace’ that can solicit ‘compassion’ rather than some other less defined emotional response to these images.

Arguably the documentary offers, because it is so formally ‘staged’ in theatrical scenes, an example of a cinematic experience both visually sensory and auditory that “demands active involvement of the spectator in understanding the ‘character’”. This latter is a proposition explored by Lucy Bolton in her analysis of cinematic experience articulated through the ideas of Luce Irigaray.⁴

Following the lines of Irigaray’s thought, via Bolton, the images from *Mum* have their effect precisely because ... ‘*what it [means] to see is not already defined...*’⁵

⁴ L. Bolton, *Film and Female Consciousness: Irigaray, Cinema and thinking women*, UK Palgrave: Macmillan, 2015.

⁵ L. Irigaray (2002) quoted in Bolton (2015), *op. cit.*, 36.

They evoke something akin to (and this is why the film disturbs) a relation of the spectator's *body* to *filmed body* which is much more *reciprocal* and much less a relation of a pre-given 'mastery' (sic) by the spectator.

In sum the film embodies much of those principles of the female character 'becoming' on screen and revealing an embodied 'interiority'.

I acknowledge that the word 'interiority' does not do justice to a complex of forces and spatial relations that subtly displace cinematic 'norms', as articulated through the use of the thought of Luce Irigaray, in Lucy Bolton's critique of cinematic representation.⁶

Here, disturbing as this unconventional lived body may be, nevertheless *Mum* is a live presence, not disappearing or disappeared.

I propose such living presence rendered even more powerful by this artifice of staging compels an 'awkward empathy' rather than sympathy, far closer to an embodied experience rather than an abstracted visual one for the spectator.

The focus upon the here and now of lived moments 'framed' in scenarios also enables a closer concentration upon and 'abiding with' the spoken words of *Mum*. Close attention and patience reveals certain patterns, repetitions and rhythms and searching for associative words or sounds to bring about 'communication of meaning' which start to show their own unfamiliar but detectable 'sense'.

As Swinnen points out we know 'precious little of the life of this particular woman' (Swinnen 2012). But we know her presence far more than that of the 'narrated' subject of the story of loss and 'fading' powers that is 'Iris'.

I would argue that this is not solely due to different 'time' contexts and genres, (*Iris* is a retrospective narrated reflection upon a life and *Mum* is a direct 'in the present of her life' documentary), but is due to certain aesthetic choices and decisions about the determinants of representational affect.

As Swinnen concludes concerning *Mum* "by means of the performative mode, *Mum* invites viewers to look beyond the cultural stereotype that no personhood is to be found in people with dementia. As such the documentary is a quintessential act of recognition of an aged mother with Alzheimer's by an artist's daughter" (Swinnen 2012).

"Does she recognise you?"

To whom is this question to be addressed? (See Swinnen 2012 conclusion)

⁶ See L. Bolton, *op. cit.*, 41–42.

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Filmography

- Mum* by Adelheid Roosen (2009) Netherlands documentary short; running time 20 minutes.
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AN “IDYLLIC” WORLD AGAINST WAR ATROCITIES; IMAGES OF ELEGANCE, ESCAPISM AND LIBERATION IN THE MIDST OF THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR



his presentation proposes to explore the impact of the Peloponnesian War -a bloody and disastrous civil war between Athenians and the Delian League and Spartans and the Peloponnesian League, 431-404 BC¹- on the society of Late Classical Athens, as reflected on the images of women in the popular art medium of vase-painting. These years saw the dramatic decline of citizen population in both Athens and Sparta. Losses due to war and plague in Athens have been estimated, according to Thucydides, to the range of about one third of the original male, citizen population.²

The last part of the 5th c. BC was the age of some of the greatest achievements of Classical poetry, philosophy and science. The great Aristophanes, Sophocles and Euripides were active, whereas the less known -but equally popular at the time- tragedian Agathon was proclaimed a “master of the flowery phrase”, while he apparently led a life of vanity and grace.³ Meanwhile Socrates was conversing with the youth of Athens, in the Agora and at

¹ C. Rolley, *La sculpture grecque* Vol. 2. *La période classique*, Paris, 1999, 23–24.

² J. H. Oakley, “Children in Athenian Funerary Art During the Peloponnesian War,” in: O. Palagia (ed.), *Art in Athens During the Peloponnesian War*, Cambridge 2009, 207–208, 229–230. G. L. Ham, “The Choes and Anthesteria Reconsidered: Male Maturation Rites and the Peloponnesian Wars,” in: M. W. Padilla (ed.), *Rites of Passage in Ancient Greece: Literature, Religion, Society*, London/Toronto 1999, 209–210.

³ P. Lévêque, *Agathon*, Paris, 1955, chapters 2 and 3.

various private banquets, and the scientific study of medicine by the authors of the Hippocratic treatises coexisted with prevalent popular superstitions, the practice of magic and an interest in exotic cults.⁴

Trends in subject matter and iconography of contemporary Athenian vase-painting

During the war greater emphasis was placed on women themes. Moreover, a trend may be traced in the last part of the fifth century to mix the iconographies of the respectable (brides) with the disreputable (*hetaerae*). Throughout the Classical times, and especially in this period, *hetaerae* may appear in activities of the industrious housewife, such as spinning (Figure 1). Conversely, in certain cases solemn wives (?) are depicted being accosted and courted like *hetaerae* (high-class prostitutes). For example, brides appear in scenes of gift exchange, normally reserved for accosted *hetaerae*, or in sensual bathing, such as in “voyeuristic” views of brothels.⁵



Figure 1. Red-figure Hydria, Copenhagen, National Museum of Denmark, inv. no. CHR.VIII.520, Washing Painter, 440-430 BC.
Naked hetaera spinning in front of the brothel madam

Source: Photo reprinted from E.D. Reeder (ed.), *Pandora: Women in Classical Greece*. (Baltimore 1995), Cat. no. 50.

⁴ L. Burn, *The Meidias Painter*, Oxford, 1987, 13–14.

⁵ G. Ferrari, *Figures of Speech; Men and maidens in Ancient Greece*, Chicago/London, 2002, 12–17. See also: V. Räuchle, *Die Mütter Athens und ihre Kinder; Verhaltens-und Gefühlsideale in klassischer Zeit*, Berlin/London 2017, 142–147.

Around 440 Eros and from about 430 Aphrodite and her retinue are meaningfully shown often participating in the bridal preparation, suggesting the strong appeal of bridal adornment. By the so-called Rich Style (420–400 BC) Aphrodite and Eros have assumed a prevalent role in the bridal adornment (Figure 2). The *gynaikeion*, where the festive adornment of the bride (as well as the daily female toilette) takes place, turns into a new, idyllic world. By the Late Classical period the public aspect of the Athenian wedding ritual is downplayed on vases and the private aspect is emphasized, especially the bridal adornment. Wedding gradually becomes a female theme, associated with vase shapes of the female toilette, such as cosmetic boxes or perfume bottles, while earlier they decorated mostly ritual vases or tableware.⁶



Figure 2. Red-figure pyxis, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1972.118.148, ca. 420.

Eros pours water for a naked bride to wash her hair.
The first in a series of vignettes from the bridal preparation

Source: Photo reprinted from the Met Homepage.

⁶ A. Dipla, "Eros the Mediator; Persuasion and Seduction in Pursuit and Courting Scenes," *Mediterranean Archaeology and Archaeometry* 6.2, December, 2006, 28–30.

In scenes of heterosexual courting women are frequently shown being lured by either material gifts or a mediating Eros, as if being persuaded. What could their identity be? Are they meant to be *hetaerae* (foreigners, *metics*) or respectable Athenian wives and daughters of Athenian citizens (*astai*)? Classically all these scenes are identified as visits to a brothel, based on internal evidence (offer of money) as well as external evidence (the supposed seclusion of Athenian *astai*). This view, however, has recently been disputed. Regardless of the exact (or intended ambivalent) identity of these women, the essential message remains that women may be seductive, as well as susceptible to seduction themselves.⁷

“Androgynous” women in Aristophanes and the possibility of female emancipation

The trend of blurred identities of wives and prostitutes and acknowledgement of female seductive power, or even desire, has been explained from the depopulation of men, owing to war losses and the consequent possible emancipation of women who took charge of the *oikos* and broke free from the constrictions of the social seclusion prevalent in the High Classical period. “Androgynous” women in the Aristophanic comedy could be pointing in the same direction. It has been proposed that the masculinity of actors playing women intruded both text and performance of the Aristophanic comedies. This has been explained as revealing the illusion of gender disguise, or stressing the metatheatricality of Attic comedy, appealing to an essentially male audience. Or even as offering a distorted view of gender roles (namely, reversal), winking a reassuring eye at the male audience and aiming to reinforce cultural images and assumptions. However, it cannot be excluded that this androgynous identity of Aristophanic female characters manifests rather a newly acquired emancipation of women who enjoy a public presence and voice, as well as the manipulation of their power of seduction (as illustrated, for example, in *Thesmophoriazusae*, *Ecclesiazusae*, *Lysistrata*, or *Peace*).⁸

⁷ A. Dipla, D. Paleothodoros, “Selected for the Dead; Erotic Themes on Vases from Attic Cemeteries,” in: I-M. Back-Danielsson, F. Fahlander and Y. Sjöstrand (eds), *Encountering Imagery; Materialities, Perceptions, Relations*, Stockholm, 2012, 221–222.

⁸ L. K. Taaffe, *Aristophanes and Women*, London/New York, 1993, chapters 3 and 4. K. Διαμαντάκου-Αγάθου, «Η γυναικεία κωμωδία στον μικρόκοσμο της αρχαίας

However, the evidence from the sources is admittedly contradicting and should be handled with caution. We can trace a profound ambivalence about women and their sexuality; meanwhile we cannot be sure either how closely social reality followed the social ideal.⁹

Case study: The Meidias Painter and his associates

In the work of the Meidias Painter and his group (artists painting in the style or manner of the Meidias Painter), active roughly in the years of the Peloponnesian war,¹⁰ divine, heroic or mortal women with voluptuous bodies, in elegant clothing, and assuming graceful poses and gestures,¹¹ are depicted seduced by Erotes (ephebe love gods), or even abducted by their suitors, adorned to be wedded, cuddling with lovers, or just idling on their own, in an idyllic natural setting (a garden?) (Figures 3,4).¹² The same ambience is portrayed by Agathon in a panegyric speech, cited in Plato's *Symposium*: the most blissful of all gods, Eros is young, delicate, graceful and shapely. He dwells in soft souls, where "he fathers delicacy, voluptuousness, all the graces, longing and desire".¹³

Mythological and generic scenes on Meidian vases are dominated by women, often in a nuptial context, characterized by great ambiguity. Several questions arise: to begin with, are these women mortal or divine? What are their gardens? Xenophon stresses that a woman's nature is made for indoor works and matters. Is this merely a fantasy of entering Aphrodite's meadows of love? Or an expression of nostalgia for the Attic countryside from which the Athenians were cut off during the war?¹⁴ Or also partly a reality of breaking free to some extent from their presumed seclusion?

κωμωδίας» in: Θ. Παππας και Α. Μαρκαντωνάτος (eds), *Αττική κωμωδία. Πρόσωπα και προσεγγίσεις*, Athens, 2011, 665–669. D. Cohen, *Law, Sexuality and Society: the Enforcement of Morals in Classical Athens*, Cambridge/New York 1991, 164–166.

⁹ Ferrari, *Figures of Speech*, chapter 3.

¹⁰ Burn, *Meidias P.*, 1–8.

¹¹ G. Nicole, *Meidias et le style fleuri dans la céramique attique*, Geneva, 1907, 105–112.

¹² Burn, *Meidias P.*, *passim*, esp., chapters 3 and 7. M. Robertson, *The Art of Vase-painting in Classical Athens*, Cambridge, 1996, 237–242.

¹³ Plato, *Symposium*, 194e–198a. Burn, *Meidias P.*, 14.

¹⁴ Burn, *Meidias P.*, 84–85.



Figure 3a–b. Red-figure, hydria, Florence Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 81948, Meidias Painter, ca. 415.

Adonis rests leaning against Aphrodite's knees in a garden, surrounded by the goddess' retinue, among whom four Erotes

Source: Photos reprinted from N. Stambolidis (ed.), *Eros; from Hesiod's Theogony to Late Antiquity* (Athens 2009), Cat. no. 133. and L. Burn, *The Meidias Painter* (Oxford 1987), pl. 23b.



Figure 4a–b. Red-figure pyxis, Oxford G.302 (V. 551), Meidias Painter, late 5th c. BC. Graceful women in elegant, transparent clothes adorn themselves in a garden (?), suggested by the rocks and shrubs with berries. Erotes attend or seduce them

Source: Photos reprinted from L. Burn, *The Meidias Painter* (Oxford 1987), pl. 49a–b.

Women's presumed separation and the segregation of house spaces

In recent studies of the spatial and socio-cultural organization of Classical and Hellenistic houses, the evaluation of architectural layout and find assemblages, along with cross-cultural, ethnographic comparisons, seem to suggest

that there was no strict spatial separation of household members, by gender, age or status. Most rooms were probably multifunctional and maybe only the *andron* can be proven to be a gendered space, restricted to male use, but again possibly not at all times. The participants, rather than the activities themselves, could therefore have determined where the activities were located, so as to serve, for example, the necessity to control undesired contact of women with the outer world.¹⁵ The usual type of houses with one or two courtyards may have been designed not to provide separate male and female quarters within the house, but to create a specific male area, the *andron*, in which to receive male visitors from outside the family without risking casual contact with the women of the house. Consequently the term *gynaïkeion* may have denoted the house as a whole, apart from the *andron*.¹⁶ Spaces with such distinctive features can only be detected, however, in excavated houses from the later fifth century.¹⁷

Moreover, seclusion does not always involve separation, and separation does not necessarily imply seclusion, as anthropological studies have shown.¹⁸ Apart from the archaeological record not supporting the assumption of confinement and separation within the Greek household, the idea of overall seclusion of women from public life in Classical times has also been questioned. Though numerous literary sources attest to it, there are several limitations and biases built into them, obscuring the great underlying variability of the social role of women in different social strata or city-states across Greece. Hence they should be regarded as representing a male idealized viewpoint about what upper-class Athenian women should aspire to, rather than they necessarily practiced.¹⁹ Other than that, women participated in a complex network of activities with an autonomy of its own. This network, functioning within the private sphere of the *oikoi*, the extended family, the neighbourhood, and on occasions such

¹⁵ M. Trümper, "Space and Social Relationships in the Greek *Oikos* of the Classical and Hellenistic Periods," in: B. Rawson (ed.), *A Companion to Families in the Greek and Roman Worlds*, Malden, MA 2011, 32–52.

¹⁶ L. Nevett, "Separation or Seclusion? Towards an Archaeological Approach to Investigating Women in the Greek Household in the Fifth to Third Centuries BC.," in: M. P. Pearson and C. Richards (eds), *Architecture and Order; Approaches to Social Space*, London/New York, 1994, 98–112.

¹⁷ L. C. Nevett, *Domestic Space in Classical Antiquity*, Cambridge, 2010, 43–50.

¹⁸ D. J. Cohen, *Law, Sexuality and Society*, chapter 6.

¹⁹ L. C. Nevett, "Separation or Seclusion? Towards an Archaeological Approach to Investigating Women in the Greek Household in the Fifth to Third Centuries BC." ..., 98–100. S. Lewis, *The Athenian Woman: An Iconographic Handbook*, London, 2002, 138.

as birth, marriage, funeral and exclusive religious festivals, ran parallel to the male-dominated, public one of state politics and economy. Within their own sphere women may have enjoyed independence, freedom and self-assertion.²⁰

The Meidian style against the background of similar trends in sculpture and major painting

The idyllic ambience in the aforementioned vase scenes is complimented by the “Meidian” luxurious drawing, the elaborate, even gilded details. Dress either clings to the body, barely concealing it, or swirls away, creating calligraphic folds. This *florid* style displays a sensuous, flirtatious, rather than a menacing mood.²¹ A comparable trend may be detected in contemporary sculpture and, in a sense, in major painting, even a little before the outbreak of the war.

Similar graceful poses of especially female figures, as well as the elaborate dress, either clinging to the body stressing sensuousness, or creating swirling flourishes and a dramatic , can be traced in the so-called Rich Style, as illustrated for example in the Parthenon pedimental sculptures, in an early version, or later on in the sculptures of the parapet surrounding the temple of Athena Nike on the Acropolis (Figure 5).²²

In contemporary major painting, which exactly in this period began to influence less and less vase-painting, artists experiment with creating the illusion of volume either through the skillful drawing of outline, a trend associated with Parrhasi's, or through the manipulation of light and shadow, linked with Apollodoros, known as *skiagraphos*, the shadow-maker, who introduced an innovative mixture of light and dark tones and color gradations to produce some sort of perspective. Zeuxis was Apollodoros' pupil, who may furthermore have introduced genre subjects into painting. Both Parrhasios and Zeuxis led a life of sybaritic luxury and amassed great wealth out of their art, creating masterpieces of outstanding illusionism.²³ or those able to afford them and willing to indulge in a world of fantasy and deceptive visual surroundings. Pliny the Elder

²⁰ D. J. Cohen, *Law, Sexuality and Society*, 146–166.

²¹ J. Boardman, *Athenian Red Figure Vases; The Classical Period, a Handbook*, London, 1995, 144–147. J. G. Pedley, *Greek Art and Archaeology*, London, 2002, 283.

²² See for example: C. Rolley, *Sculpture classique*, 112–115, 123–125.

²³ Pliny, *Natural History*, 35. 36. 65-



Figure 5. Parapet of the Temple of Athena Nike, Athens Acropolis, ca. 410 BC.
Nike untying her sandal

Source: Photo reprinted from the Acropolis Museum Homepage.

recounts an anecdote about the contest of the two masters in creating perfect imitations of reality. A lingering naturalistic idealism, nevertheless, called for an eclectic depiction of the most beautiful forms, so as to create a perfection that may not exist in nature.²⁴

²⁴ S. Lydakis, *Ancient Greek Painting and its Echoes in Later Art*, Los Angeles, 2002, 120–125, 128–136. M. Robertson, *The Art of Vase-painting in Classical Athens*, Cambridge, 1996, 237, 253–254.

Extravaganza vs wretchedness in contemporary Europe: the example of Greece

An escapist tendency may be attested in European countries undergoing political and/or financial crisis, or even war, such as Greece. In the wake of a civil war, a military junta, political corruption and eventually heavy financial crisis, since Greece is currently under the vigilance of the International Monetary Fund, the European Commission EC and the European Central Bank ECB, while the sustainability of Greek debt still remains in question, Greek popular media, such as TV and magazines, the equivalent of ancient vases in some sense, have witnessed a boom in fashion and lifestyle reports and shows, around the glamorous lives of celebrities, as well as series depicting romantic stories set in luxurious or idyllic settings. On the other hand, recent war conflicts in Europe, such as in former Yugoslavia, or even in the Near East causing an influx of immigrants to Europe, especially Greece, have deprived many traditional families from their male head, so that previously secluded women may appear more emancipated and liberated within less than a generation.

The Meidias Painter, his associates and his contemporaries presumably catered for the Athenians' need to seek relief from the somber realities of their time, inscribed within a general shift in the Athenian society towards individualism, as the continuing war and the plague –of which Pericles himself perished- aggravated individual and family distress.²⁵ Consequently artists engaged in a fantasy world of love adventures in a paradisiac environment, where the representation of the female body was characterized by an observable femininity, even voluptuousness, and sensuousness. A similar late-5th century ideal of male beauty called for a degree or effeminacy, youthfulness and extreme heterosexuality.²⁶ Meanwhile, we can trace a sudden, distinctive interest in children in vase-painting and funerary sculpture of the time, as well as in

²⁵ L. Kallet, "War, Plague, and Politics in Athens in the 420s," in: O. Palagia, *Art During the War*, 111–112.

²⁶ H. A. Shapiro, "Alcibiades. The Politics of Personal Style," in: O. Palagia, *Art During the War*, 236–263.

literature.²⁷ In particular, a short-lived, two-generation long fashion for small *choes*, miniature jugs presented to children aged three to four on the second day of a spring festival of Dionysus (also called *Choes*), with a conventionalized iconography of small children, mostly boys (Figure 6), has been linked to the ritual passage of children from infancy to early childhood, less vulnerable to death, celebrating the survival of sufficient (male, citizen) population, of crucial importance to the future of the city. Such images provided a “cultic response to a social crisis...”, even if they did not act in the spirit of confrontation with these harsh realities, but of escapism, manifesting nostalgia for the carefreeness and joyfulness of early youth, as has also been suggested.²⁸ Likewise, the marked acknowledgement of female sexuality, already traceable earlier in the 5th c. BC and within the context of marriage, may merely have served the social demand for population renewal, glorifying motherhood and projecting a pronatalistic message. Conversely, it cannot be excluded that this sensual and romantic context resonates, at least to a certain extent, the sexual emancipation of women in the years of the Peloponnesian war, as a result of their greater social freedom that transcended the private sphere.



Figure 6. Red-figure chous, Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, acc. no. 01.8086, ca. 425-420.
Naked boy playing with his pet bird

Source: Photo reprinted from J. Neils and J.H. Oakley (eds), *Coming of Age in Ancient Greece; Images of Childhood from the Classical Past* (New Haven/London 2003), Cat. no. 91.

²⁷ J. H. Oakley, “Children in Funerary Art During the Peloponnesian War”..., especially, 226–231.

²⁸ G. L. Ham, “The Choes Reconsidered: Male Maturation Rites and the Peloponnesian Wars”..., 201–218.

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THE LINGUSTIC AND CULTURAL MANIFESTATIONS OF WAR AND TERRORISM

What the soldiers say: Swiss Army jargon and its links to civilian life



witzerland in the past, before the end of the Cold War at least, liked to think of itself as a nation in terms of a *Sonderfall*, an exceptional case. This *Sonderfall* thinking applies to their role in the middle of Europe but outside the EU, to their federal political system of radical bottom-up democracy and far-reaching decentralization of power, their multilingualism, perhaps multiculturalism, and their increasingly rare militia army system – beside many other things such as the peaceful coexistence of Catholicism and Protestantism, the widespread use of dialect in oral and standard language in official media communication, etc., etc. Despite this self-ascribed status, they also liked to think of themselves as a potential model for a diverse Europe of many distinct but peacefully coexisting smaller political units.

Given our workshop title, the Swiss case is a kind of counterpoint: It is about an army that has *not* fought a war in a long time in a country that has *not* (yet?) been affected by global terrorism. Language in the military, the sociolinguistics of the army and its peculiarities thus offer just such an example of the many areas of cultural and political life, where the Swiss like to think of themselves as different.

However, before turning to the socio-*linguistic* dimension proper of my project and presenting a few concrete examples of Swiss soldiers' language, I need to turn to some *socio*-linguistic aspects first and provide bit of context that is historical, sociological, political, and broadly cultural.

Bear in mind the following:¹

- Switzerland is a neutral country. (Neutrality and its various interpretations over time is a fascinating topic in its own right but cannot be addressed here).
- Swiss army has never fought a war in the modern age. It was mobilized during the Franco-Prussian war 1870-71 (where, in the country's north-western border parts of the French forces under General Bourbaki, pushed by the Germans, were taken in and disarmed, according to the neutrality principles);² it was mobilized again during WW1 and WW2, but did not fight.
- Swiss army is a strictly defensive military instrument; it cannot be deployed abroad. However, since the early fifties, Swiss army personnel do participate in international peace keeping and observer missions.³
- Swiss army is a militia army with general male draft. In the age when most European countries have moved to a volunteer professional military, this has become an exception. But the Swiss are clear about it: they reconfirmed this model in a vote in 2013, that was triggered by an initiative.⁴
- Switzerland breaks up its total service time (which amounts to a life-time service of ca. 260 days for regular soldiers) into smaller blocks, beginning with a ca. 4-month-long boot camp/basic training and shorter (3 weeks) “refresher courses.”
- The army is deeply historically rooted in the population due to centuries-old mercenary service, its militia character, its cantonal organization, its

¹ Several Wikipedia and other Websites provide a good general overview and basic information on the Swiss military system: on military history and general issues, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military_of_Switzerland; on conscription: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conscription_in_Switzerland; on military service in general: <http://www.vtg.admin.ch/internet/vtg/de/home/militaerdienst/rekrut/wehrpflicht.html>.

² Wikipedia provides a, for the purpose of this paper sufficiently detailed, account of this incident: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles-Denis_Bourbaki. As a first example of the linguistic creativity and metaphorical transfer of meanings and allusions, to this day, Swiss soldiers well call each other, tired after a long march or exhausted by field exercises and looking the part, “a Bourbaki,” in analogy of the desperate conditions the French army unit found itself in in 1871.

³ SWISSINT is the coordination center of all international peace promoting deployments in peace promoting missions, civilian, military and otherwise. For a brief history of international deployments of Swiss army units since 1953, see <http://www.vtg.admin.ch/internet/vtg/en/home/themen/einsaetze/peace.html>

⁴ Austria held a similar, though non-binding, referendum in January 2013 and the population also rejected the move from conscription to a professional army.

distribution into the home of each serviceman of key personal equipment, and the organization of service-readiness via extra-service shooting practice.

– In late-medieval and early modern times Swiss mercenary troops served all over Europe, and foreign military service was an important factor of the economy of the cantons that only later (1848) fully organized themselves into the confederation that is modern Switzerland.

– The Swiss military's roots also extend to folklore, notably through the common practice of target shooting and shooting festivals. Even today, soldiers are required, as part of their service obligation, to target shoot annually and achieve a minimum number of points.

– Switzerland is a multilingual country, with the German-speakers (the majority, ca. 2/3 of the population) speaking various, although mutually largely comprehensible dialects. However, these dialects deviate significantly from standard high German – which dominates the *written* form of communication, including significant sectors of the electronic media. The country's unique multilingualism and dialect/standard diglossia is reflected in the language usages of the army.

– The other national languages beside German are French (ca. 1/4 of the population), Italian (ca. 8%) and a few Romansh speakers (ca. 0.5%); the population segment that lists “other languages” as their mother tongue has been growing steadily and stands now at ca. 20% of the population. Those who serve in the army generally speak one of the national languages. However, many among this group are non-citizens and, hence, do not serve.

More peculiarities could be added – governmental, historical, cultural, and educational – and all have some consequences for our topic at hand, Swiss military jargon.

The first such consequence is, and this may come as a disappointment for my listeners, *there is not much* of a distinct Swiss military language! I'll point out the reasons in detail shortly. Nevertheless, there are interesting sociolinguistic facts and details to be explained. In doing so, I will largely concentrate on and present examples from German. Having to point out this limitation only highlights the obvious that the Swiss army includes troops from various language regions. Indeed, the question of linguistic integration and the army's role in Switzerland's multilingualism have recently gained in importance. More on this below.

But even for German alone, the situation is not straightforward, because the reality of daily life – and, hence also life in the armed forces – is one of di-

glossia: The (German-speaking) Swiss read, write, and consume media largely in standard high German, but in their daily lives speak almost exclusively their significantly diverging regional dialects.⁵

How then does the army deal with the country's official quadrilingualism? – Historically, army units have been recruited regionally in order to keep them largely monolingual and hence easier to manage. This has always been an approximation rather than full reality (for sheer numerical and structural reasons). Units from one language area might serve their refresher courses in a different language region (my own example is of a Bernese artillery battery serving in French-speaking canton Vaud, where there is a base for artillery training). But more recently, in the post Cold-War present of the past 25 years, the size of the army has been cut and simultaneously the need for all sorts of special-skills units has grown, notably in dealing with electronic equipment for communication, fire control, etc. The Swiss, always aiming to make the best use of their militia system, heavily rely on knowledge transfer from civilian to military life and recruit and place men accordingly. The smaller numbers and increased need for specific skills, broadly speaking, is leading to more linguistically mixed groups (see the work of Georges Lüdi, below).

Interestingly, this increased need for collaboration among soldiers of different mother tongues is not resulting, as one might surmise, in everybody switching to English; this is only *one* of the translanguing practices the men draw on in real-life interaction.

I need to step back for some context: that English might become the default national *lingua franca* has become a significant cultural concern far beyond the army as immigration in recent years has broadened the spectrum and increased the number of speakers of languages beyond the official four. Moreover, language teaching in the Swiss school system, for better or for worse highly federalistically structured, with significant differences in approach in the cantons, has been under review and criticism for years – notably on the question of when (in what grade) to begin which foreign language in which language

⁵ The use of dialect has its historical ups and downs. Currently, dialect usage is on the rise, infiltrating above all private correspondence and spoken media (regional radio stations) but even certain television programming. This issue cannot be pursued here, but there is the obvious risk of a growing disconnect of German-speaking Switzerland from the larger German-language cultural area. The mores so as the ever wider-spread use of dialect also reflects a national unease in using High-German. Speakers of Swiss German dialects feel, as a rule, a bit of an inferiority complex when interacting with “real Germans,” i.e., speakers of standard German in oral communication.

region of the country! The Swiss national science foundation (*Nationalfond*) sponsored a long-term research project (“Sprachvielfalt und Sprachkompetenz in der Schweiz” (NFP 56⁶), which also includes research on language usage in the army.⁷ While in civilian life, the use of English in translingual Swiss communication has in fact increased, in the army, this has been less the case, as a forthcoming study by Georges Lüdi reveals.⁸ Some of his key findings are:

First and surprisingly, there is no language policy in the Swiss army.

Second, given this absence, translingual interaction occurs ad hoc and reflects the linguistic competencies of those involved. Under the circumstances,

German is clearly favoured by the implicit language regime. The proportion of German-, French- and Italian-speaking members of the Armed Forces corresponds roughly to that in the general population (with a slight dominance of German among the officers), however, in relation to total investments of several billion francs as reported in the media, there is very little investment in language education for members of the army, except for English for professional officers. The system relies in general on skills acquired in civilian life. As we have seen, these are good or even excellent among staff members, but very divergent and sometimes quite poor in the case of recruits and instructors in basic training camps. Despite running central translation services for some official documents and technical regulations, the army does not provide for professional translation and interpretation in the daily military routine, but relies on plurilingual peers. German dominates as exemplified by the monolingual documentation for the staff exercise. The actors make use of an impressive number of communicative strategies, including *lingua receptiva*, plurilinguaging, English as *lingua franca* and interpretation by peers (in the

⁶ A list of scholarly publications on the sub-project investigating plurilingualism in the army, titled “Wissenschaftliche Publikationen im Rahmen des Projekts ‘Wie funktioniert Mehrsprachigkeit beim Militär?’” is attached to this paper.

⁷ The Schweizerischer Nationalfonds quarterly publication, *Horizonte* summarizes briefly the critical results of multilingualism in the army. *Horizonte* 81, June 2009, 22. The project was directed by Bernhard Altermatt, Monika Heiniger, Georges Lüdi, and Georg Kreis.

⁸ As one of the SNF researchers, Georges Lüdi, Prof. emeritus in linguistics and French at the University of Basel, has been working on a study on the sociolinguistic dimension of language use in mixed-language contexts in the army (forthcoming). One of the chapters is focused on “Language regime in the Swiss Armed Forces between institutional multilingualism, the dominance of German, English and situated plurilinguaging.” Lüdi was generous enough to send me a draft version of the chapter (e-mail to the author). Lüdi, in turn, references extensively the study by Raphael Berthele and Gabriele Wittlin, “Receptive Multilingualism in the Swiss Army,” *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 10 2 (2013): 181–95. <https://doc.rero.ch/record/208826?ln=de>

basic training camps as well as in the staff exercise), mostly successfully; however the minorisation of French, and in particular of Italian, is noticeable.⁹

Thus Lüdi's study (building on others, e.g., Berthele, Wittlin, *et al.*) reveals that communication in the army between the four national languages is pragmatic, contextual, dependent on the language abilities of the people involved, and mostly succeeds on the key role played by multilingual individuals. English does play a role, but it tends to be minor. German, according to Lüdi's findings, is dominant, as one might expect, given the population numbers, and this does have a minorization/alienation effect on French and Italian speakers. Moreover, these findings raise the question of levels of education and second- or third-language knowledge in the army and with it the question of parallelism between military rank and civilian class/economic position in connection with the militia system. I will address this question later.

The situation in the army begs the question as to the country as a whole. The current Swiss constitution (promulgated Jan. 1 2000) is benevolently vague.¹⁰ Article 4 states "The National Languages are German, French, Italian, and Romansh." Article 70 reiterates that "[t]he official languages of the Confederation are German, French and Italian. Romansh is also an official language of the Confederation when communicating with persons who speak Romansh." It further notes "The Cantons shall decide on their official languages" and "The Confederation and the Cantons shall encourage understanding and exchange between the linguistic communities." Moreover, "the Confederation shall support the plurilingual Cantons in the fulfillment of their special duties," and "The Confederation shall support measures by the Cantons of Graubünden and Ticino to preserve and promote the Romansh and the Italian languages." The Federal Chancellery, i.e., the administrative arm of the federal government in Bern, emphasizes on its Website the fact of Swiss multilingualism and outlines its position, which is supportive of multilingualism.¹¹ Nevertheless, public anxiety about an ever growing use of

⁹ Excerpt from Lüdi's forthcoming publication.

¹⁰ Online at <https://www.admin.ch/opc/en/classified-compilation/19995395/201506140000/101.pdf>

¹¹ <https://www.bk.admin.ch/themen/lang/04925/04939/index.html?lang=de>, unavailable in English. "Sprachenfragen nehmen in der schweizerischen Politik und im schweizerischen Recht viel Raum ein, wobei traditionellerweise die Landes- und Amtssprachen im Vordergrund stehen. Die Landessprachen der Schweiz sind nach Artikel 4 der Bundesverfassung Deutsch, Französisch, Italienisch und Rätoromanisch. Die Förderung dieser Viersprachigkeit ist ein zentraler Grundsatz der schweizerischen Sprachenpolitik."

English in the military has recently triggered parliamentary inquiries, information requests in parliament that the executive has to answer.

Thus MP (Nationalrätin) Ms Kiener noted on March 15, 2009 the growing role of English, pointed out that previously the army was a model of multilingualism, and asked the executive how they assess the situation and whether the federal government was willing to again support the use of national languages and suppress English.¹² The answer is that the national languages are still widely used and English restricted to international communication and that the government is limiting English as much as possible.

A similar inquiry from 2014 added an explicitly educational dimension and asked the Federal Council whether the army might not be used for foreign language education of a significant (male) segment of the population. In its reply, the government insists that the army is an integrative national institution, that it does promote multilingualism but that the teaching of national languages to soldiers from different language regions would detract from the main military-defensive purpose of army training, be too costly, and will therefore not be considered.¹³

A brief overview of purpose and main functions of the Chancellery itself, in English, is here, <https://www.bk.admin.ch/index.html?lang=en>. It is the staff office of the Federal Council, i.e., the Swiss executive branch, and maintains, among many other duties, official Swiss government websites.

¹² Inquiry: “Immer mehr werden die Ausbildung und der Dienst in der Schweizer Armee dominiert durch den Gebrauch englischer Bezeichnungen und Ausdrücke. Früher war die Armee vorbildlich in der Pflege unserer Landessprachen.

- Wie beurteilt der Bundesrat diese Entwicklung?

- Ist der Bundesrat bereit, die Pflege unserer Landessprachen auch in der Schweizer Armee hochzuhalten und den Gebrauch der englischen Sprache zu minimieren?”

Reply: “Die Landessprachen der Schweiz werden in der Armee gleichberechtigt gepflegt und angewendet. Der militärische Alltag ist nach wie vor, sowohl in der Ausbildung wie auch im Dienstbetrieb, durch die klassischen Landessprachen geprägt. Die Kommunikation erfolgt in der Regel in der jeweiligen Muttersprache. Englische Begriffe werden dort verwendet, wo es die Zusammenarbeit mit dem Ausland im Rahmen von Einsätzen oder der Ausbildung notwendig macht. Der Bundesrat ist bereit, den Gebrauch der englischen Sprache in der Armee auf das absolute Minimum zu reduzieren.” Die Bundesversammlung – Das Schweizer Parlament. Fragestunde. <https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaeft?AffairId=20095123>

¹³ Interpellation by Didier Berberat, 24 Nov 2014, in the Council of States. The inquiry, together with the federal government reply, can be found here: Die Bundesversammlung – Das Schweizer Parlament. Fragestunde. <https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaeft?AffairId=20144020>

For context I should add that both these inquiries tap into an ongoing broad national debate about Switzerland's multilingualism, how to preserve it, how to approach it in schools and, notably, when to begin English language instruction and whether to privilege it over national languages.

In light of this debate and the fact that there exists no official army-related language policy, what then does the actual language usage in the Swiss army look like? The answer to this question has two parts: the first relates to the official technical and command language of Switzerland's armed forces, the second to soldiers' private, unofficial informal communication. The first is of linguistic interest insofar as it routinely combines a mixture of Swiss dialects and standard high German. Apart from this, it is characterized by its high incidence of abbreviations and acronyms – a typical feature in professional jargon and socio-linguistically interesting only in that many of these abbreviations have a secondary, unofficial meaning that forms part of the second linguistic field discussed here, soldiers' private, non-official language.

The first dimension of army language is codified in a German-English dictionary.¹⁴ It is noteworthy that this dictionary uses in its German column strictly standard high German and thus reduces the existing diglossia, the *de facto* mixture of dialect and standard, from the outset. Command of a language is a mixture of standard and dialect expressions. While there are (unspoken) rules, switching from one to the other brings up the question of military rank: soldiers are held more strictly to receiving and repeating orders in standard German – officers can relax into dialect. Given the overall reluctance of Swiss speakers of German to use standard high German, however, there is a fine line to be observed in the length of utterances in high German to be expected from soldiers. Too long – and a repeated order may, by virtue of pronunciation and localisms, turn humorous instead of appropriately serious and snappy.

Of further note is the fact that there exists no monolingual glossary of Swiss official military language, as there is simply no practical need for it.

The second dimension of language in the military, the private individual communication among soldiers, is more linguistically interesting than the official technical. We noted at the outset that it varies little from everyday civilian language usage – with some notable exceptions to be discussed presently. But let's begin with the reasons for the large overlap between civilian and military

¹⁴ *Milvoc: Wörterbuch militärischer Begriffe* (2014), comp. & ed. VBS (Federal department of Defense, Civil Protection and Sport). This is a German-English and English-German dictionary/glossary of official, technical, and command military terms in two volumes.

parlance or, to put it differently, the veritable absence of a distinct Swiss army language. These are predominantly structural.

First, service time overall is short, soldiers are not isolated from the rest of the population for long periods of time and therefore do not develop strongly divergent linguistic practices. Additionally, this short service time is broken up into smaller pieces, reinforcing the seamless integration of military and civilian life. Second, the *militia* system intensifies civilian-military integration also in the ongoing part-time commitment to military tasks by officers in their civilian jobs (communication, preparation for the next service period, meetings, etc.). Doing such army-service related prep work also implies the characteristic diglossia: one would put something in writing in standard German but make a phone call in dialect, for instance.

The notable distinction between civilian and (private) army language is largely a question of specific lexicon and register, mostly the latter.¹⁵ Soldiers, men out there among other men in the woods and barracks, generally lower their standards of civilian conversational expectations and civility. Certain lexical fields gain prominence. Horst Schuh notes that the largest lexical fields are food, drink, sex, excrement/defecating.¹⁶ Soldiers, he writes, talk “more about shitting than shooting.” Soldiers’ lexicon is characterized by abundant metaphor, and this is where its linguistic creativity resides – besides the innovative alternative meanings assigned to official abbreviations – frequently with social,

¹⁵ Several Internet sites provide glossaries of soldiers’ language: <http://www.wk.devanthey.ch/Lexikon.html>. This is a private person’s website with a compilation of Swiss German military language. The original terms have been largely standardized from their dialectal forms, though.

https://de.wiktionary.org/wiki/Verzeichnis:Deutsch/Soldatensprache_der_Schweizer_Armee – This is probably the most comprehensive compilation of army slang, more comprehensive than Devanthey’s.

<http://www.armee-forum.ch/archive/index.php/t-205.html>. This is another private compilation of contemporary soldier’s terminology, linked to an army-related blog, *armee-forum.ch*.

<https://www.infbat70.ch/index.php/17-highlights/21-soldatensprache>. This is a compilation of terms on an Infantry Battalion’s website, largely identical with the wiktionary site, above. A note on the page acknowledges the link: “Die folgende Aufstellung haben wir in der deutschsprachigen Wikipedia gefunden und leicht angepasst.”

<http://www.snf.ch/de/fokusForschung/forschungsmagazin-horizonte/archiv/Seiten/default.aspx>. This Swiss National Science Foundation link (Nationalfonds, *Horizonte*, June 2009) provides a brief project overview of the Army language research.

¹⁶ H. Schuh, “Sprache und Moral,” in: *Heere International* 3, hrsg. v. H.-A. Jacobsen and H.-G. Lemm, Herford & Bonn: Verlag Mittler & Sohn, 1984, 64–73, here 69.

sexual or other subversive innuendos.

Here are a few harmless examples to start with: the old and odd-looking all-terrain vehicle to pull howitzers, the Swiss-made Saurer 4MH, was called “Heckferrari”; a more recent Jeep-like all-terrain vehicle by the Austrian manufacturer Steyr-Puch was called “Österreichische Strassensperre,” an “Austrian road-block,” on account of the fact that it is vastly underpowered. The earliest jet fighter in the Swiss air force, the British deHavilland Venom, that the Swiss, taking good care as they do of almost everything, kept flying far beyond its useful lifetime, was labeled a “Düsenvelo,” a “jet-bike,” literally, the term thus combining the jet-age aspiration with the simplicity and slowness of a bicycle – analogous in intent to the “Heckferrari.” We see here that the neutral technical terms/names are replaced by more colorful, descriptive, often ironic or satirical monikers.

(Fake) acronyms and abbreviations add their own color, such as: SABTAL – “sicheres Auftreten bei totaler Ahnungslosigkeit.” It translates as “self-assured appearance while being without a clue” and is a leadership principle that soldiers may diagnose in a superior who appears and acts brashly and self-confident when in fact he is an ignoramus. A “Selbstzünder,” literally a “self-detonator,” is the term for a superior, usually of lower rank, such as a corporal, who is full of good intentions and highly active – but with little goal orientation or much to show for it. The positive English term would be a “self-starter.” Another short is “hä-si-be,” the abbreviation for a reply to the question what one’s current assignment is. It stands for “hält sich bereit,” “holds himself ready/available” – when one has in fact nothing to do, is without assignment, and just hanging out. It is used humorously among soldiers, not in soldier-superior interaction.

Kitchen and food, eating, and digesting, according to Schuh, is a prolific lexical field and largely free from the political correctness of our day. Indeed, rice is called “Chinesebeton,” “Chinese concrete”; coffee or cocoa was (at least in my days) termed “Negerschweiß,” i.e., “negro’s sweat,” while the individual bars of dark army chocolate go crudely as “Arschlochbarriere,” an “asshole barrier,” for their constipating effect. Further examples could be listed of course: colorful, highly descriptive, racist, politically incorrect, and therefore mildly subversive. The “Grabstein,” (gravestone) for the American “dog tag,” is metaphorically just as accurate but draws its *tertium comparationis* from a different lexical field and realm of the imagination; and “Toblerone,” for the double rows of huge triangular concrete blocks set into the landscape to prevent enemy tanks from entering a piece of particular geography during WW2 and still existing in

some places, is a visually creative analogy that also makes the object less formidable than it was once meant to be.

The most notorious examples of Swiss soldiers' jargon, revealing the country's remove from the horrors of twentieth-century history, are two terms that show an utterly politically insensitive Swiss military. Until recently, the sick room in barracks, the doctor's office, was still called the "KZ," for "Kranken-zimmer," "sick room)," despite its notorious other meaning the acronym has across the globe. And the hapless puck of canned meat that often was part of MRE's was notoriously and offensively called "gschtampfte Jud," "mashed Jew." In 2010, the Swiss Military Library answered an inquiry regarding the origins and use of this term. As so often in (historical) sociolinguistics, the answer is not clear, but the notion that the term existed even before WW2 seems implausible.¹⁷

Given that the Swiss army as all male there is a tone among soldiers (less among officers, though) – notably when talking about women and, consequently, sex – that one does not find in gender-mixed company. Max Frisch, the well-known 20th-century Swiss writer who served considerable time in the military during WW2, wrote about his experience in two short books, bringing to bear a fine, critical, and notably socially aware point of view. He comments on this phenomenon, emphasizing that particularly around gender discrimination, sexism, and female objectification there existed rather firm lines between civilian and military realms and soldiers stuck to them.

In the hay, after lights-out when one was not supposed to talk anymore, or in a warehouse, where one was allowed to talk, or on watch, during the day, out in the field, during work, in the cafeteria or sitting on boxes, while cleaning and greasing howitzer parts – barely anyone ever mentioned their civilian work. The quintessence of civilian life was the dick. Not everyone was good at dirty jokes, but most of them were happy listeners. If one later met one or the other on furlough with his wife or bride, they were arm in arm. The revolt that drives every dirty joke never referred to one's wife. A place where one never heard dirty jokes: under the shower, stark naked in the steam.¹⁸ (70–71)

¹⁷ The contextualized and somewhat sanitized answer is online; the letter of inquiry to the library was from Daniel Suter; the librarian answering Juri Jaquemet (March 4, 2010). http://www.alexandria.ch/primo_library/libweb/action/search.do?formResourceIdentifier=form_copy&_charset_=UTF-8&v1%28freeText0%29=gestampfter+Jude&vid=A-LEX&ct=facet&ct=BasicSearch&fn=search

¹⁸ M. Frisch, *Dienstbüchlein*, Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp, 1974.

As some of the expressions above relate to old things such as trucks and airplanes that have long been replaced, the question arises as to the historicity or at least the longevity of (Swiss) soldiers' jargon and, somewhat related to this, about the origin of sociolinguistic interest and beginning research into this field in the first place. Schuh notes that research into military jargon began in earnest around 1900, triggered by emerging social and linguistic interest in group languages and (professional) jargon at the time. For the Swiss army, the fact that Bächtold's work starts around WW1 confirms this. Bächtold, notably his glossary, is still referenced today. This is testimony to its value but also to the fact that there have been long periods when army language did not receive much scholarly attention despite consistent high-quality output in dialectology, *Volkskunde* (ethnology) and, from the 60's onwards, in sociolinguistics and pragmatics. Around WW2, the political satirical weekly *Nebelspalter* occasionally published a page on soldiers' talk and military life, often accompanied by anecdotes; and in the late 1970's two small book-length collections of Swiss army jokes, anecdotes, and stories appeared, involving both dialect and high German.¹⁹ Their author, Fritz Herdi, also worked for the *Nebelspalter*. The most recent academic effort is the National Research Foundation project already mentioned, the "Nationale Forschungsprogramm zur Mehrsprachigkeit der Schweizer Armee."²⁰ But overall, notably in the Swiss context, this kind of research is a small field with plenty of cross-referencing. For years, there were few research papers or, more frequently, general comment or sampling of terms, often with humorous intent, on the army and its language. Only recently and in the broader socio-linguistic research contexts of the recent national research project or language education in schools have language issues in the army gained more attention. In conclusion, we have to acknowledge that the situation is in flux as the ongoing army reorganization and reduction reshapes some older parameters. The changes point toward the further leveling of the civilian-military distinction in language usage in Switzerland. The introduction, long in coming, of a civil ser-

¹⁹ F. Herdi, *Heiteres aus feldgrauem Dienst*, Hrsg. v. ASZM, Allgemeine Schweizerische Militärzeitschrift, Frauenfeld: Huber, 1985. This book-length collection of anecdotes, explanations and commentary is followed by a traditional alphabetical list/index of the terms referenced, whereby the standard German notation provides the alphabetical order, the dialectal equivalents, generally more than one, are the referents.

²⁰ Briefly outlined on the SNF's website, <http://www.snf.ch/de/fokusForschung/forschungsmagazin-horizonte/archiv/Seiten/default.aspx>, Horizonte, June 2009, 22. The Forum Helveticum, an umbrella organization of many public political, academic and civic institutions also briefly discusses the topic of military language http://www.forum-helveticum.ch/logicio/pmws/forumhelveticum__armee__de.html

vice option in 1996, had already fractured the demographic serving in the army.²¹ Additionally, the reduced numbers of servicemen, together with the trend toward higher technical specialization, goes against the older trend of forming monolingual units in favor of translanguagual special-knowledge work teams. These trends are probably not outweighed by the now available “Durchdiener” option, i.e., the option to serve one’s military service all in one stretch – which, on the face of it, might lead to the development of a more pronounced military jargon.

To some extent, Frisch’s observations from the 1970’s still hold some sway that the army higher-ups are also the economic higher-ups and leading figures in Swiss civilian and political life. He notes that men who do not get together socially also realize quickly – and the army strengthens this conviction – that they do not mix well in the ranks. The higher ups stay the higher ups – partly for reasons of their “natural” authority, i.e., the authority they practice in civilian life. The assumption and natural acceptance among the troops that their leaders are also “their betters” is, at least implicitly, not uncommon. This leads to a reflexive, largely unquestioned transfer of authority from civilian to military life. (*Dienstbüchlein*, 34–35). Frisch at one point goes so far to call the officers a “caste” (*Dienstbüchlein*, 54) that keeps separate from the troops – and vice versa. Language use, especially switching of register, reflects and confirms this claim.

The Swiss army, not last when discussed from the angle of its language, is thus a good example of the concept of “citizens in uniform.” The men get together in “old boys” cohorts, use the technical vocabulary as necessary and lower their civilian conversation standards a little, notably in gender terms, for the duration of their service. But once back in civilian life and in mixed-gender company, they quickly regain their general decency. This ability to switch from one mode and one code to the other seems almost second nature, a reflection of the militia system, the short service times, the integration of civilian and military life as well as an effect of the small size of the country that allows only minimal separation of military and civilian spaces. Especially for the older cohorts, the annual refresher courses become a form of camping: you rough it for three weeks and then return to everyday life – to your job, your friends, and your language.

²¹ Legally, the EMRK, to which Switzerland signed on in 1974, may not constitute a requirement for a civil service option, but contemporary legal interpretation and practice strongly suggests it should.

POLITICS
IN THE NEW EUROPE

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POLITICS IN THE NEW EUROPE



What's New in the New Europe? Redefining Culture, Politics, Identity was a conference offering a wide range of presentations, with papers exploring subjects as diverse as philosophy, culture and politics. The seven texts in the political part of the ISSEI 2016 proceedings present different epistemic perspectives.

The first section entitled “Referendum as a New Tool of Democracy” consists of three texts which focus on direct democracy in the shape of national referenda – in the Baltic States (in Danuta Maj’s article), as well as Hungary and Albania (in the comparative study by Marcin Pomarański), and Belarus (in Wojciech Ziętar’s analysis).

What follows is a section “New Politics through the Lens of (Modern) History and Philosophy.” Four articles constituting this part look at politics through the lens of (modern) history and philosophy. S. N. Nyeck examines strategic bargaining in East Africa in the 19th century. Inspired by Deleuze and Habermas, Geoffrey Hinchliffe writes about the society of control and the mechanics of rationalization, while Giorgos Kataliakos dissects the idea of “State anti-cosmopolitanism” in his study of Thomas Hobbes’ *Leviathan*. Finally, in their collaborative work Richard R. Weiner and Iván López discuss the economic crisis in Spain that led to the formation of the so-called Indignados Movement.

All of these contributions tangibly prove that the New Europe faces certain challenges, to which remedies cannot easily be found. However, there is a ray of hope. Dr Gesine Palmer (Zentrum Jüdische Studien Berlin-Brandenburg) aptly summarized the ISSEI 2016 conference by stating that

the new challenge to Europe is the upcoming conservative Nationalism in many of its countries as a panicked reaction to economic and migration crises. Before us lies the

task to strengthen belief and trust in the values we – as Europeans – share with the Western world as a whole and to encourage cooperation, while showing due respect to the civil and cultural expressions of national memory and pride.

Let her words accompany all readers of this publication.

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LOCAL DIRECT DEMOCRACY IN LITHUANIA, LATVIA AND ESTONIA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY



Contemporary democracies, adopting the principle of sovereignty of the nation as a collective sovereign, commonly implement model of representative democracy in which power is exercised through representatives elected in democratic elections. It should be noted that the institutions of direct democracy complement representative democracy. These two types of democracy have their supporters and opponents. On the one hand, it is emphasized that the solutions specific to representative democracy allow to simplify and speed up decision-making processes. Another argument in favor of representative democracy is insufficient knowledge of citizens in public affairs. In turn, supporters of direct democracy emphasize that it is essential to involve citizens in the decision-making process. This type of solutions allows for raising the competence of citizens and improves the quality of governance. For these reasons the European countries are trying to implement both models of democracy.

The best practices in the field of direct democracy have been adopted in Switzerland. The vast majority of the Western European countries have regulations allowing the use of direct democracy. The countries of the Central and Eastern Europe after the initiation of processes of political transformation in the late 1980s have changed their internal laws and incorporated the use of direct democracy. Moreover, the states of the Central and Eastern Europe, which acceded to the European Union in 2004, had conducted the accession referenda.¹

This paper considers the issue of a local direct democracy in the Baltic countries: Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. Referendum is the most popular

¹ M. Musiał-Karg, *Referenda w państwach europejskich*, Toruń: Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, 2008, 49.

institution of direct democracy and it is often identified with the concept of direct democracy.² Andrzej Krasnowolski points out that Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia are countries with the shaping practice of referendums, in which the national referendum was conducted at least five times.³ Other institutions of direct democracy include popular initiative, popular referendum and consultations. The main research aim is the analysis of formal and practical dimensions of local direct democracy in the Baltic countries. The analysis of legal acts shows that the institution of direct democracy at the local level is not popular in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. Reasons for this are the consequence of the administrative reform and difficulty in filling the formal requirements.

The legal basis of direct democracy in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia

The tradition of direct democracy in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia dates back to the twenties of the 20th century. National constitutions provided a referendum to resolve the most important matters of the State, such as changing the political system or submitting amendments to the constitution. In the interwar period the referendum was conducted in Latvia in 1922, and in Lithuania in 1938. In addition, during this period another institution of direct democracy – optional legislative referendum, constitutive initiative, legislative initiative and parliamentary plebiscite – had been used in Estonia.

The principles of direct democracy in the Baltic countries are laid down in the national constitutions and other legal texts. For example, the legal basis of direct democracy in Lithuania is contained in the Constitution adopted by citizens of the Republic of Lithuania in the referendum on 25 October 1994 and the Lithuanian Republic Law on Referendum which was adopted by the Lithuanian Seimas (the Lithuanian Parliament) on 4 June 2002. The Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania stipulates that the power in Lithuania may be exercised in two ways: directly by the people

² M. Marczevska-Rytko, *Demokracja bezpośrednia w teorii i praktyce politycznej*, Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 2001, 110.

³ A. Krasnowolski, *Referendum jako instytucja demokracji bezpośredniej w państwach europejskich*, Warszawa: Kancelaria Sejmu, Biuro Analiz i Dokumentacji, 2016, 10.

or indirectly through democratically elected representatives.⁴ Regulations concerning the referendum on the national level are included in the article 9. According to this article, the most important national issues shall be decided by referendum. Referendum may be called by the parliament or if not fewer than 300 000 citizens with the electoral right request so. Procedures for calling and conducting referendum are specified in the Lithuanian Republic Law on Referendum.⁵ This act confirms the principle that the most important decisions regarding the State are taken by citizens or parliament. Participation in the referendum is granted to Lithuanian citizens who are eighteen years of age and over, and have full civil rights. Furthermore, all citizens participating in referendum are equal regardless of their sex, nationality, language, religion, beliefs and opinions. The Lithuanian law on referendum distinguishes two types of referendum – mandatory referendum and consultative referendum. The article 4 of this law provides for five cases in which parliament is obliged to conduct a mandatory referendum, three of them are closely connected with the alteration or provision of the amendment to some part of the Lithuanian Constitution (the first article of the first chapter of constitution: “Lithuania is an independent democratic republic” – amendment; the first chapter “The State of Lithuania” and fourteenth chapter “The Alteration of the Constitution” – provision of amendment). Moreover, the obligatory referendum is managed in case of replacement for Constitutional Act “On the Non-Alignment of the Republic of Lithuania to Post-Soviet Eastern Unions” (adopted on 8 June 1992) and for the Republic of Lithuania’s participation in international organizations, where such participation is associated with partial transfer of the Lithuanian State bodies competence to international organizations or institutions under their jurisdiction.

According to the Lithuanian Republic Law on Referendum, consultative referendum may be held in any important matter concerning the Lithuanian public life, except in cases covered by the mandatory referendum.

The citizens of the Republic of Lithuania also have the right to legislative initiative. No fewer than 50 000 citizens with full public rights may submit the proposal draft of the law to the Seimas, and in this case the Lithuanian Parliament must consider it.

⁴ The Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania (adopted by the citizens of the Republic of Lithuania in the Referendum on 25 October 1992), No. IX-929, article 4 and article 33.

⁵ Lietuvos Respublikos Referendumo Įstatymas, 2002 m. birželio 4 d. Nr. IX-929.

There have been twelve referendums in Lithuania since 1990:

- 1) 1991 – independence from the Soviet Union,
- 2) 1992 – restoration of the institution of the President of Lithuania,
- 3) 1992 – immediate withdrawal of Russian troops and compensation for damages from the Soviet Union,
- 4) 1992 – approving the Constitution of Lithuania,
- 5) 1994 – Law on Illegal Privatization, Depreciated Deposits, and Broken Laws,
- 6) 1996 – amendments to the Constitution of Lithuania,
- 7) 1996 – compensation for lost deposits,
- 8) 1996 – amendments to the Constitution of Lithuania,
- 9) 2003 – the membership of Lithuania in the European Union,
- 10) 2008 – extending the operation of the Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant,
- 11) 2012 – approving the construction of Visaginas Nuclear Power Plant,
- 12) 2014 – ban on sale of Lithuanian land to non-citizens.

Republic of Latvia stands out from the other Baltic states, because after it regained its independence, it was decided to restore the constitution from 1922.⁶ In Latvia national referendum is obligatory in seven questions, which are stipulated in the constitution and the Law on Referendum.⁷ Firstly, if the Saeima (the Latvian Parliament) has amendment articles 1 (“Latvia is an independent democratic republic”), 2 (“the sovereign power of the State of Latvia is vested in the people of Latvia”), 3 (“the territory of the States of Latvia, within the borders established by international agreements, consists of Vidzeme, Latgale, Kurzeme and Zemgale”), 4 (“the Latvian language is the official language in the Republic of Latvia. The national flag of Latvia shall be red with a band of white”), 6 (“the Saeima shall be elected in general, equal and direct elections, and by secret ballot based on proportional representation”), 77 (“If the Saeima has amended the first, second, third, fourth, sixth or seventy-seventh Article of the Constitution, such amendments, in order to come into force as law, shall be submitted to a national referendum”) of the constitution. Secondly, if the President of Latvia has proposed the dissolution of the Saeima. Thirdly, if the President of Latvia has suspended the proclamation of law for two months and during this period a petition by not fewer than one-tenth of the electorate

⁶ The Constitution of Republic of Latvia, https://www.cvk.lv/pub/upload_file/2014/Constitution_2014.pdf.

⁷ Law on National Referendums, Initiation of Laws and European Citizens’ Initiative, adopted by the Saeima on 31 March 1994.

has been received to put the suspended law to national referendum. Fourthly, if the Saeima has not adopted without changes in its contents a draft of law or a draft of amendment to the Constitution submitted by not fewer than one-tenth of the electorate. Fifthly, if Latvia's membership in the European Union must be declared. Sixthly, if substantial changes in the terms of Latvia's membership in European Union must be decided and at least one-half of the Members of Saeima have requested a national referendum on this matter. Seventhly, if not fewer than one-tenth electorate has initiated the recalling of the Saeima. The Latvian constitution in article 73 establishes which issues a referendum may not resolve: "the Budget and laws concerning loans, taxes, custom duties, railroad tariffs, military conscription, peace treaties, declaration of a state emergency and its termination, mobilization and demobilization, as well as agreements with other nations."

Similar to the Lithuanian law, the Latvian legislation guarantees the initiatives of voters. A legislation process may be launched by political parties, coalitions of political parties or a registered association of citizens. According to the Constitution, voters in a number not fewer than one-tenth of electorate have the right to submit to the President a draft of amendment to the Constitution or draft of law and in this situation they're obliged to present the draft to the Saeima. Latvians may initiate a national referendum to recall the Saeima.

Since 1990, eight national referendums have been held in Latvia:

- 1) 1998 - amendments to the Law on Citizenship;
- 2) 1999 - amendments to the law "On State Pensions";
- 3) 2003 - the membership of Latvia in the European Union;
- 4) 2007 - repeal of amendments to the National Security Law and Law on National Security Institutions;
- 5) 2008 - amendments to the Constitution of the Republic of Latvia;
- 6) 2008 - amendments to the law "On State Pensions";
- 7) 2011 - dissolution of the 10th Saeima;
- 8) 2012 - amendments to the Constitution of the Republic of Latvia.

The Constitution of the Republic of Estonia, which was adopted in 1992, stipulates that citizens may exercise the power in the State by electing the Riigikogu (the Estonian Parliament) or through referendum (article 56).⁸ However, in contrast to legislations of other Baltic countries, Estonian law does not

⁸ The Constitution of the Republic of Estonia, RT 1992, 26, 349.

provide the right to citizens' initiative. The right to initiate the referendum is guaranteed exclusively for Riigikogu. The procedures for conducting a referendum were included in the Referendum Act.⁹ The national referendum is obligatory if the Parliament submits amendments to Chapter I and Chapter XV of the Constitution. In the case of other amendments to the Constitution or draft laws, the Parliament may order a referendum.

The Estonian Constitution does not allow to submit to referendum questions which are related to budget, taxation, financial obligations of the state, ratification and denunciation of international treaties, the declaration or termination of a state of emergency and national defence (article 106).

The Estonian Parliament have called two national referendum since Estonia regained its independence from Soviet Union:

- 1) 1992 – approving the new constitution and citizenship,
- 2) 2003 – the membership of Estonia in the European Union.

Local democracy in practice

The constitutions and laws of the Baltic countries do not provide for local and regional democracy, especially referendums. For example, in Lithuania such solutions have not been introduced in both the transition period, as well as a new law adopted in 2002. There are not similar solutions in the legislation of Latvia and Estonia. However, in all Baltic countries the importance of public opinion is highlighted. Some kind of substitutes of direct democracy are guaranteed by laws relating to local government. According to the Lithuanian Law of Territorial Planning and the Law of Territorial Administrative Units of the Republic of Lithuania and their Boundaries, municipal authorities are required to consult any significant change with inhabitants. Latvia is the only Baltic country in which citizens have the right to initiate a referendum. In practice, the regulation are not citizen-friendly, so the institutions of direct democracy on the local level are not very popular.

Estonia has the most experience with direct democracy at the local level. The first local referendum in Estonia was held in 1927 and it was guaranteed with the Law on Alcoholic Beverage. In 2004 the local referendum was conducted in Tallinn. The issue which was submitted to referendum was the

⁹ Referendum Act, RT I 2002, 30, 176.

limitation of night-time sale of alcohol. At the same year inhabitants of Tallinn initiated referendum on reduction of local fees.

Another example of direct democracy at the local level in Estonia were referendums which were conducted in the Ida-Viru county. Ida-Viru is one of fifteen counties in Estonia and it is the most north-eastern part of the country. By ethnic origin the province is significantly different from other parts of Estonia. Before the Second World War Estonians made up approximately 80% of population. The situation dramatically changed after the war, because native Russians were not allowed to return to the USSR. In consequence, the number of Russians increased from 29.5% in 1940 to 85% in 1989. The independence movement in Ida-Viru county had been created in the early 90s. It was a response to the exclusion of the Russian intelligentsia from Estonian political system. As Melvin concluded: “The struggle that developed between Tallinn and the cities of the northeast in 1992–93 was thus due to a complex mix of anti-market sentiment, pro-Soviet sympathy, a centre-region struggle and degree of ethnic-base anxiety.”¹⁰ The referendum was planned in three cities: Narva, Kohtla-Järve and Sillamäe. Finally, it was held only in Narva and Sillamäe, because municipal authorities refused to organize referendum in Kohtla-Järve. The Narva City Council decided to hold a referendum in Narva on the 16 and 17 July 1993, posing the following question: “Do you want Narva to have the status of a national-territorial autonomy within the Republic of Estonia?” The referendum was conducted on 16 and 17 July 1993. In Narva the turnout was 57.4% and approximately 97% eligible voters supported the autonomy. Similar results were obtained in Sillamäe: the turnout was 61% and 98% voters opted to autonomy.¹¹ What is important, referendums in Ida-Viru county were illegal and they were contrary to the regulations of the Estonian Constitution. The final decision on the validity of the referendums has been taken by the Supreme Court of Estonia. The conclusion of decision announced on 11 August 1993 stated: “To satisfy the petition of the Chancellor of Justice of the Republic of Estonia no. 1 of 20 July 1993, and to declare the Narva City Council resolution no. 15/163 of 28 June 1993, entitled ‘The opinion on the Foreigners Act,’ invalid in its entirety.”¹²

¹⁰ N. Melvin, *Russians beyond Russia. The Politics of National Identity*, London: Chatam House Papers, 1995, 48.

¹¹ D. J. Galbreath, “Nation-Building and Minority Politics in Post-Socialist States. Interests, Influences and Identities in Estonia and Latvia,” in: *Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society*, ed. A. Umland, Stuttgart & Hannover: Ibidem Verlag, 2005, 162.

¹² Judgment Of The Constitutional Review Chamber Of The Supreme Court Of 11 August 1993. Review of the petition of the Chancellor of Justice under § 142(2) of the

Legislation of the Baltic countries provide a direct democracy at the national level. National referendum is the most widely used institution of direct democracy in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. What is important, constitutions and laws do not regulate the issues of direct democracy at the local level. The possibility of citizens' direct participation in decision-making is provided by the laws of self-government and local administration.

The weakness of local direct democracy in the Baltic republics is the consequence of lack of citizens' interest in public affairs, as well as the decline of public participation. Another issue is that local authorities have not introduced their own regulations on referendums.¹³

Constitution for the declaration of invalidity of the Narva City Council resolution no. 15/163 of 28 June 1993, entitled "The opinion on the Foreigners Act."

¹³ J. Ruus, "Democratic Participation at the Local Level in Post-communist States: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania," in: *Local Direct Democracy in Europe*, ed. T. Schiller, Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien, 2011, 276.

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NATIONAL REFERENDUMS IN HUNGARY AND ALBANIA: A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE¹



The political transformation of 1989 in Central and Eastern Europe was a catalyst for democratic change in this part of the world. Political enthusiasm of new power elites, as well as ordinary citizens in the post-communist countries has resulted in the adaptation of new legal systems, new economic development patterns and West-European political culture. These changes included instruments of direct democracy such as national referendum. However, in particular countries of the region the latter has not been proceeded proportionately. Different dynamics of social and political changes in various countries have substantially contributed to the process of shaping post-authoritarian civil societies. Citizens in these societies were conscious of their fundamental rights and demanded direct participation in the process of exercising power. On the other hand, these dynamics also played a key role in shaping the attitudes of new political leaders in Central and Eastern Europe, determining their views on the importance of procedures such as the national referendum. The ability to achieve a balanced compromise between societies and their leaders on the citizens' participation in decision-making process is a predictor of political stability and a measure of the strength of democratic principles in this part of the world even today. The aim of this paper is a comparative analysis of legislative solutions and practical application of direct democracy in Hungary and Albania after 1989. The current position of the nationwide referendum institution in both countries is determined by a combination of historical and political conditions, both before and after the political transformation, which

¹ The article is the result of research Project No. 2014/15/B/HS5/01866 founded by the National Science Centre.

are reflected in specific legislative solutions, as well as in the referendum activity of Albanians and Hungarians. The object of our attention will be especially institutional and legal differences determining the development (or regression) of the direct democracy in those countries. Main thesis of the article is the opinion that Hungary and Albania, regardless of their common experiences, represent two different models for adaptation of direct democracy solutions.

Common experiences

The first legal application of the direct democracy principles in Hungary and Albania was introduced during the communist period. In the Hungarian People's Republic the Constitution of 1949 introduced a paragraph providing the Presidential Council – a collegiate head of state, the right to have issues of national importance to vote by a nationwide “plebiscite.”² In the case of the People's Socialist Republic of Albania a similar measure (called “national referendum”) was guaranteed in 1976, but was provided only for “working class.”³ Although in both cases legislative solutions have the colorable and improvised character. In both cases as well, the principles of direct democracy that actually functioned were introduced by amendments to the communist constitutions in the moments of political transformation in 1989 (Hungary) and 1991 (Albania).

In the case of Hungary, legal solutions established by the “Law on Referendum and Popular Initiative” of 1989 proved to guarantee citizens the possibility of real influence on political decision-making process.⁴ According to the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance the law from this period was uncommonly liberal, overtaking solutions of most European countries.⁵ However, the fact of extremely late adoption the new Constitution (which appeared in 2011, so 22 years after the fall of the communist regime) by the Hungarian National Assembly contributed to the progressive reduction

² *Constitution of the People's Republic of Hungary*, Act XX of 1949, Hungary, article 20.

³ *The Constitution of The People's Socialist Republic of Albania*, Law no. 5506 of 1976, Albania, article 5.

⁴ *Law on Referendum and Popular Initiative*, Act XVII of 1989, Hungary.

⁵ K. Medve, “Direct democracy in the Republic of Hungary,” in: *Direct Democracy: The International IDEA Handbook*, ed. V. Beramendi *et al.*, Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 2008, 99.

of direct democracy procedures. Two another amendments to the “old” Constitution, as well as two further electoral laws and five Constitutional Court’s decisions have made the referendum a sensitive and strictly political issue, affecting the stability of the direct democratic law in the eyes of public opinion. Progressive fatigue of the dispute, as well as a disproportion in evaluating the mechanisms of direct democracy have coined strong conviction of the Hungarian political elite to limit the possibility of using national referendum in practice. Fundamental achievement of this decision was the “new” Constitution of 2011.⁶

Convergent socio-political experiences characterized Albanian electoral system from the last decade of the 20th century. Democratic amendments to the communist law, as well as the new Constitution of 1998 were formed in the atmosphere of strong conflict between the political parties and massive social unrest, which took almost a form of civil war. Political turmoil, which resulted in six modifications of Albanian electoral system after 1990 effectively limited the ability to use the instruments of direct democracy in the process of decision-making.⁷ Notwithstanding the provisions of law and the formal administrative decisions guaranteeing the possibility of convening national referendum, the government in Tirana, as well as oppositional political elites of this country did not present special interest in procedures of exercising the power with the help of direct democracy. Moreover, apathetic absence of such involvement is also characteristic to the Albanian citizens, which means that the instruments of direct democracy in this country are practically unused.

Legislative divergences

The first fundamental difference between the Albanian and Hungarian legislation on national referendum is a range of content included in (or excluded from) the procedure of direct democracy. The Albanian law defines these issues only in general and vague way. The Constitution of the Republic of Albania from 1998 states that “the people . . . have the right to a referendum for the

⁶ *The Fundamental Law of Hungary*, dated 25.04.2011.

⁷ V. Stojarová *et al.*, *Political Parties in the Central and Eastern Europe. Central and Eastern Europe Regional Report Based on Research and Dialogue with Political Parties*, Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 2007, 39–40.

abrogation of a law, and to request the President of the Republic to call a referendum on issues of special importance.” Only issues related to the territorial integrity of the republic, the limitation of fundamental human rights and freedoms, the budget, taxes and financial obligations of the state, the imposition or lifting of a state of emergency, as well as a declaration of war or peace, and amnesty cannot be submitted to the referendum.⁸

At first glance, the Hungarian legislation is also quite imprecise in the question of the range of content included in the procedure of direct democracy. The Hungarian constitution of 2011 specifies that the referendum “may be held about any matter falling within the functions and powers of the National Assembly.” But it is much more specific in the list of issues excluded from the national referendum. The constitution itemized: “(a) any matter aimed at the amendment of the Fundamental Law; (b) the contents of the Acts on the central budget, the implementation of the central budget, central taxes, duties, contributions, customs duties or the central conditions for local taxes; (c) the contents of the Acts on the elections of Members of the National Assembly, local government representatives and mayors, or Members of the European Parliament; (d) any obligation arising from international treaties; (e) personal matters and matters concerning the establishment of organizations within the competence of the National Assembly; (f) the dissolution of the National Assembly; (g) the dissolution of a representative body; (h) the declaration of a state of war, state of national crisis or state of emergency, furthermore on the declaration or extension of a state of preventive defense; (i) any matter related to participation in military operations; and (j) the granting of general pardons.”⁹

The key divergence between the Albanian and Hungarian law on referendum includes the problem of changing the constitution. The Albanian Constitution of 1998 clarified by rules of “2003 The Electoral Code” mentions as one of the types of direct democracy procedure the constitutional referendum. It can be ordered only by the Albanian parliament by a two-thirds majority of all its members at the request of one fifth of the deputies. In contrast, the Hungarian law completely excludes the possibility of changing the Constitution by national referendum. However, the decision no. 25/1999 of the Constitutional Court has confirmed that prohibition relates only to constitutional

⁸ *The Constitution of the Republic of Albania*, Law no. 8417 of 1998, articles 150, 151.

⁹ *The Fundamental Law of Hungary*, article 8.

amendments initiated by citizens, and not proposed by Parliament. Theoretically, the amendments made by the latter could be the issue of referendum. However, the problem of changing the Hungarian constitution stays the exclusive competence of National Assembly.¹⁰

The role of Parliament in the procedure of national referendum is the second fundamental difference between the Albanian and Hungarian legislation on direct democracy. The Albanian act “The Electoral Code” from 2003 decides on initiating the general referendum on the proposal of not less than one-fifth of the deputies, as well as on holding of the procedure by the Assembly. Even though the use of this instrument does not require approval of legislative majority in every situation. In the case of national referendum on the issue of special importance the decision can be taken also by the president of the republic, after receiving a favorable opinion of the Constitutional Court.¹¹ Thus, the head of state’s role in the process of setting up the referendum is exactly alike the function of Parliament. Moreover, the Assembly is vested with its own and exclusive competences in the issues of direct democracy, as in the aforementioned procedure of national referendum on changing the constitution.

In the case of Hungary, the role of Parliament in the procedure of direct democracy has been gradually minimized. “Law on National Referendum and Popular Initiative” in 1998 specified functions of the National Assembly in general referendum. The unicameral body received only two main competences: 1) initiation the procedure at the request of one third of the elected Members of the Parliament, as well as 2) obligation on ordering the referendum supported by at least 200 000 constituents or considering the launching of it, if initiators would gather fewer than 200 000 but more than 100 000 signatures. Such a position of the Hungarian parliament was restricted in the last years by the “Fundamental Law of Hungary.”¹² Under the new constitution adopted and promulgated in April 2011 the National Assembly lost the entitlement to order a referendum on the initiative of its deputies and was given only the second competence – launching of the procedure of direct democracy.¹³

¹⁰ L. Komaromi, “Milestones in the history of direct democracy in Hungary,” *Iustum Aequum Salutare* IX.4, 2013, 56.

¹¹ *The Electoral Code of the Republic of Albania*, Law no. 9087 of 2003, Albania, articles 118–132.

¹² *Law on National Referendum and Popular Initiative*, Act III of 1998, Hungary.

¹³ *The Fundamental Law of Hungary*, article 8.

Mandatory national referendum is another difference between the practice of direct democracy in Albania and Hungary. In the case of the first country, all forms of general referendum are optional. There are not any legal provisions for mandatory referendum at the national level. For each project of direct democracy decisive vote belongs to the President of the Republic, as well as for the Central Election Commission and Constitutional Court. In the case of the latter country, the law allows the existence of a special procedure: the obligatory referendum. It does not require any formal approval from the parliament or the president of the republic. The mandatory procedure of direct democracy in Hungary requires a twofold increase in the number of supporters (200 000 signatures) compared to the optional referendum, but it does not require the support of the government administration. Its only condition is the need to fulfill the technical requirements of the application (as the written form of the proposal) specified by the Magyar National Election Commission.

Practical disaccords

The role of a nation in the practice of activating the referendum, which is the consecutive important difference between the Albanian and Hungarian legislation on direct democracy, presents a totally different way. In the case of the prior country you can observe a tendency to minimize the role of the people in the lawmaking process, including the procedures of direct democracy. As Aurela Anastasi, the Professor of Constitutional Law at the University of Tirana noticed citizens' initiatives of a referendum are considered by Albanian politicians "more as an intervention in the legislative power, or as complementary to that."¹⁴ A proof of this is the whole list of legal ambiguities, such as the unclear role of the Central Election Commission in the organization of the national or local referendum, as well as the complicated process of initiating procedures of direct democracy by citizens. Their role is to discourage people from "interfering in the affairs of legislation." This is a completely different approach from the legal solutions adopted in Hungary, where appropriate number of citizens have the right to decide on the establishment of a national referendum, without the approval of the parliament or the president.

¹⁴ A. Anastasi, "Law making citizens' initiatives and the constitutional law in Albania (legislation, jurisprudence, practice)," *Krytyka Prawa* 6, 2014, 81–82.

A tangible proof of such an approach to the role of the nation in the practice of activating the referendum is the divergence in the limits of votes required to determine the legality of the procedures of direct democracy. Albanian constitution allows an optional referendum at the request of 50 000 people, which is ca. 2% of the entire population.¹⁵ In Hungary the same right is already entitled to 100 000 citizens. But it is only about 1% of the entire population.¹⁶ In accordance with Magyar law the doubled number of the citizens has already the right to decide on the procedure of national referendum without the approval of any office or legislative power.

All of the above-mentioned divergences are reflected in the practice of using national referendum procedures. Regardless of legislative guarantees, as well as the political declaration of the government's representatives in Tirana, the atmosphere for conducting direct democracy in Albania is unfavorable. Since the fall of communism in the early 90s of the twentieth century, a national referendum was applied there only three times. Moreover, all three were organized under the provisions of Constitutional Act of 1991. No referendum was held after the adoption of the new Constitution in 1998, which is a clear example of the lack of interest in using direct democracy by the Albanian political authorities. Organized referenda concerned only the key political issues. In two cases, the aim was to achieve social acceptance of the proposed constitutional laws (1994, 1998), and the third – to express opinion on the selection of the preferred system of government (1997).¹⁷

The practice of using direct democracy in the Hungarian legislative procedure is much more common. As the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance emphasizes, the right on referendum applicable for more than 20 years in the country was “exceptionally liberal and surpassed the Corresponding Provisions of many of the West European parliamentary Democracies.” Direct democracy procedures partly limited by the constitution of 2011, resulted in the relative popularity of the institution of national referendum. Seven national referendums on thirteen questions have taken place since 1989. Some of them concerned the fundamental issues from the point of view of the state as the way to select the president of the republic (1989, 1990), membership in NATO (1997) and in the European Union (2003). However, some

¹⁵ *The Electoral Code of the Republic of Albania*, article 150.

¹⁶ *The Fundamental Law of Hungary*, article 8.

¹⁷ A. Kume, “Referendums – analysis and assessment of the Albanian legislation,” *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research and Development* 1 (January 2014), 67–68.

events take more specific issues: the law that enables ethnic Hungarians with non-Hungarian citizenship (2004), patient care exemption from daily hospital fees, as well as tuition fees for students in state-subsidized higher education (2008). The most recent national referendum was conducted in October 2016 and was related to the European Union's migrant resettlement plans. Controversy undertaken in the framework of this issue, as well as the fact of voting the idea when it was practically obsolete, forced to treat the last example of direct democracy in Hungary only in terms of "plebiscite popularity for Victor Orban's government."¹⁸

The comparative analysis of the legislation and practice in the procedure of national referendum in Albania and Hungary after 1989 clearly shows that similar historical, social and political experiences have not led to similar solutions in the context of direct democracy. In the case of Albania, the lack of good will from the government, as well as the citizens' distance from national referendum decided about minimal role of direct democracy in the process of governance, at least in the first years after transformation. In recent years there has been a positive change in the issue in the political elites, as well as ordinary citizens' way of thinking. The symbol of positive change can be 2014 when the Albanian Central Election Commission received over 130 initiatives to launch local referenda. In the case of Hungary, the process was completely opposite. After the initial feeling of delighted approval of direct democracy, which expressed itself in the liberal legislation and impressive activity of the society in the practice of national referenda, there has been a process of gradual renouncement from these principles. Gradual increase in the range of issues that cannot be the subject of a referendum, as well as the enhancing complication of the rules for initiating the national referendum which ultimately materialize in Constitution of 2011 have been a discouragement for the citizens to use this procedure.

¹⁸ Hungarian National Election Office website (Nemzeti Választási Iroda), <http://valasztas.hu/> (30.09.2016).

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NATIONAL REFERENDUM AS AN EXAMPLE FOR LEGITIMIZING AUTHORITARIAN RULE (THE CASE OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS AFTER 1991)¹



n 25 August 1991 the Supreme Council of the Belarusian Socialist Soviet Republic accepted an act about the state independence of Belarus which was equivalent with creation of an independent Belarusian country. The Supreme Council of the Republic of Belarus ratified the agreement concerning creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States on 10 December 1991, sealing in this way a definite decomposition of the Soviet Union and at the same time starting a new era of the Belarus statehood as an independent country. On 23 June 1994 the first free elections for the President of the Republic of Belarus were conducted. Alexander Lukashenka won in the first round of elections gathering support of 44.82% of voters and Viacheslav Kiebicz was second (acting as the prime minister) with 17.33% of social support. Due to a failure to receive absolute majority of votes by one of candidates, on 10 July 1994 the second round was conducted which was won by Lukashenka with a result of 80.4% of support.²

¹ The article is the result of research project no. 2014/15/B/HS5/01866 funded by the National Science Centre.

² V. Silitski, "Explaining post-communist authoritarianism in Belarus," in: *Contemporary Belarus. Between Democracy and Dictatorship*, ed. E. A. Korosteleva, C. W. Lawson, and R. J. Marsh, London/New York: Routledge and Curzon, 2003, 44.

Types of power legitimization

Among many types of legitimization of political systems there are: democratic (based on a rule of a nation's sovereignty), legal (based on a fact that power fulfils binding legal norms), geopolitical (geopolitical location of a state determines specific political actions), national (based on a nation's idea), ideological (defined as authorities reference to specific political values), negative (defined as presenting those in power in a positive way compared to previous authorities or previous political programmes).³

Referendum in the Belarusian legal system

Referendum is one of the direct democracy instruments and it is included in the Belarusian legal system. The constitution of the Republic of Belarus of 1994 assumes that in order to present a position of citizens concerning the most important state issues national referendums can be organized. In the case of a national referendum the President of the Republic of Belarus has a right to organize a referendum upon a motion of: himself, the House of Representatives or the Council of Republic (both houses of parliament) accepted by majority of votes of a full composition of both houses, citizens in a number of at least 450 thousand with suffrages with reservation that each administrative district must be represented by at least 30 thousand citizens. Decisions made in a national referendum are signed by the President of the Republic of Belarus. Specification of constitutional provisions concerning a national referendum is included in the electoral code of 2000.

After 1991 in Belarus three national referendums were organized. They took place on 14 May 1995, 24 November 1996 and 17 October 2004.

The national referendum of 14 May 1995

Referendum was a part of the ongoing political conflict between the President of Belarus A. Lukashenka and the Supreme Council and the Constitutional Court. As of 1994 the president commenced activities aiming

³ W. Sokół, *Legitymizacja systemów politycznych*, Lublin: Maria Curie-Skłodowska University Press, 1997, 53.

at strengthening of his own position in a political system of the state bodies. At the same time, the Supreme Council aimed at limiting presidential competences. On 1 February 1995 the Supreme Council adopted an act which prevented the President from dissolving the parliament and at the same time accepted that in certain circumstances the parliament could dismiss the President from his position (violation of constitution, committing a crime or a health condition making fulfilment of obligations impossible). As a response to the aforementioned on 20 March the President demanded from the members of the Parliament taking a decision concerning the Parliament self-dissolution and at the same he announced a national referendum concerning constitutional issues and a direction of a state policy. The Supreme Council rejected the president's motion and it reminded that the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus forbade voting in a referendum on constitutional issues. In order to force in the Parliament decisions on a referendum, financing for the Council was limited and on 12 April 1995 militia used force to remove opposition activists from the seat of the Supreme Council who started a hunger strike in protest against activities undertaken by the President which violated the Constitution. Finally, the Supreme Council on 13 April 1995 decided about organizing a national referendum.⁴

Referendum was conducted on 14 May 1995 together with the first round of elections to the Supreme Council. Belarusians answered four questions proposed by the President: 1. Do you agree to give Russian language the same status as Belarusian language? 2. Do you support a proposal to identify a new national flag and emblem of the Republic of Belarus? 3. Do you support activities of the President of the Republic of Belarus aimed at economic integration with the Russian Federation? 4. Do you agree with necessity of introducing changes in binding Constitution of the Republic of Belarus which provides for possibility of advance dissolution of the Supreme Council by the President in the case of systematic or serious violation of the Constitution? Questions 1–3 were obligatory and a result was binding while a question no. 4 had a consulting character.⁵

⁴ P. Foligowski, *Białoruś trudna niepodległość*, Wrocław: Atła 2, 1999.

⁵ *Вопросы республиканского референдума в Республике Беларусь 14 мая 1995 года*, <http://www.rec.gov.by/sites/default/files/pdf/Archive-Referenda-1995-Questions.pdf> (access: 15.06.2016).

Table 1. Results of the national referendum in the Republic of Belarus on 14 May 1995

	Number of citizens who voted yes (in million)	Number of citizens who voted yes (%)	Number of citizens who voted against (in million)	Number of citizens who voted against (%)	Number of null votes (in million)	Number of null votes (%)
Question 1	4 017 213	83.28	613 516	12.72	192 693	4.0
Question 2	3 622 851	75.11	988 839	20.50	211 792	4.39
Question 3	4 020 001	83.34	602 144	12.48	201 337	4.18
Question 4	3 749 266	77.73	857 485	17.78	216 731	4.49
Number of citizens eligible for voting in a referendum 7 445 820						
Number of citizens who took part in the referendum 4 823 482						
Voter turnout (%) 64.78						

Source: Own calculations based on Протокол Центальной Комиссии Республики Беларусь по выборам и проведению республиканских референдумов, <http://www.rec.gov.by/sites/default/files/pdf/Archive-Referenda-1995-Post.pdf> (access: 15.06.016).

Belarusians gave positive answers to all questions. They also decided about equalling Russian language with Belarusian language (83.28 participants of the referendum), a change of the national flag from white-red-white to red-green and a national emblem from Pahonia to the emblem referring to a tradition of the Soviet Union although some changes were introduced (a sickle and a hammer were taken away together with a motto “proletarians of all nations, unite”)⁶ (75.11 of voters), economic integration of Belarus with Russia (83.34 of voters), change of the Constitution and granting the President of Belarus possibility to dissolve parliament before the end of its term in the case of violating the Constitution (77.73 of voters) (see Table 1).

Results of this referendum should be interpreted as a consent of Belarusians to a return to a dependence policy from Russia and social Russification together with approval for presidential activities aiming at strengthening his role and expanding his competencies while limiting competencies of the parliament. It has to be stressed that a way of organizing a referendum and the content of

⁶ On 12 June 1995 president Lukashenka, as a result of the referendum, signed a decree on the change of national symbols. O. Latyszonek, “Symbolika państwowa Białoruskiej Republiki Ludowej,” in: *Białoruś w XX wieku. W kręgu kultury i polityki*, ed. D. Michaluk, Toruń: Mikołaj Kopernik University Press, 2007, 218.

referendum questions was questioned by the opposition. However activities undertaken by the opposition had only symbolic character and they did not stop shifting a state to presidential republic and dictatorship.

The national referendum of 24 November 1996

As in the case of the previous referendum, also a referendum of 1996 was conducted with violation of the constitution and legal acts in the atmosphere of a political conflict between the President and the Parliament. Simultaneously a referendum became for the President a forum of a direct dialogue with citizens while forgetting about the Parliament.⁷ Through a referendum the President gained a political legitimization for activities aiming at introducing superiority of a presidential power with violation of binding legal provisions.

On 7 August 1996 the Supreme Council received a motion made by the President for conducting a national referendum in November 1996. The President proposed 4 questions concerning: a change of independence day of the Republic of Belarus, a change of the Constitution (by transforming the Supreme Council in two-house National Assembly consisting of the House of Representatives and the Council of the Republic, granting the President the right to advance dissolution of the Parliament in certain situations, granting the President the right to appoint a half of composition of the Central Electoral Commission and a half of composition of the Constitutional Court, granting the President the right to organize a national referendum, a free purchase of land and abolition of death penalty). The National Council extended a list of questions and added additional ones and at the same time it changed a referendum date to 24 November 1996.

On 4 November 1996 the Constitutional Court examined compliance of the referendum with the constitution and it claimed that in the case of presidential questions – three of them were of a binding character, but the question concerning

⁷ Małgorzata Podolak summed it up: “organizing in Belarus a referendum above the parliament and using a referendum for changing constitution was violation of democratic procedure of constituting a constitution. The constitutional referendum was expression of modern plebiscitarism of the one-person ruling and using an institution of direct communication with society in order to get approval for activities of a non-democratic character.” M. Podolak, *Instytucja referendum w wybranych państwach Europy Środkowej i Wschodniej (1989–2012)*, Lublin: Maria Curie-Skłodowska University Press, 2014, 317.

acceptance of the new constitution would have a consultation character. As an answer, the President issued a decree on 5 November in which he stated that a question concerning a change in the constitution had a binding character and in the decree of 7 November he stated that a decision of the Constitutional Court was not binding.

A referendum commenced on 9 November. However only on 12 November a presidential draft of the constitution was printed and on 21 November the parliament's draft was printed.⁸ Citizens voting in a referendum prior to those dates could not acknowledge the content of documents they voted about. The Central Electoral Commission evaluated this situation as non-acceptable and the President, as an answer to that, dismissed the president of the Central Commission. A part of deputies submitted a motion to remove the president from his position. Russians interfered in this political dispute and on 22 November a compromise was negotiated which was not accepted by the Supreme Council.⁹ The aforementioned activities did not lead to settling a political crisis. However, a dominating role of the president has to be stressed because the referendum was finally conducted on conditions identified by the President.

On 24 November 1996 Belarusians answered 4 questions proposed by the President of Belarus (1–4) and three submitted by the deputies of the Supreme Council (5–7)¹⁰ in a national referendum: 1. Are you for shifting Independence Day of the Republic of Belarus to 3 July – a day of liberating Belarus from the Nazi occupation in the Great Patriotic War? 2. Are you for accepting the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus of 1994 with further amendments and supplement (a new version of the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus) proposed by the President of the Republic of Belarus A. G. Lukashenka? 3. Are you for a free and unlimited purchase and sale of land? 4. Do you support abolition of death penalty in the Republic of Belarus? 5. Are you for acceptance of the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus of 1994 with further amendments and supplement in versions proposed by deputies from a fraction of communists and agrarians? 6. Are you for a situation in which leaders of local executive power are elected directly by citizens of a specific territorial and administrative unit? 7. Do you agree that financing of all authorities takes place openly and only from the state budget?

⁸ P. Foligowski, *Białoruś trudna niepodległość...*, 215–224.

⁹ *Ibidem*, 224–226.

¹⁰ Вопросы республиканского референдума в Республике Беларусь 24 ноября 1996 года, <http://www.rec.gov.by/sites/default/files/pdf/Archive-Referenda-1996-Questions.pdf> (access: 16.06.2016).

Table 2. Results of the national referendum in the Republic of Belarus on 24 November 1996

	Number of citizens who voted yes (in million)	Number of citizens who voted yes (%)	Number of citizens who voted against (in million)	Number of citizens who voted against (%)	Number of null votes (in million)	Number of null votes (%)
Question 1	5 450 830	88.18	646 708	10.46	83 925	1.36
Question 2	5 175 664	83.73	689 642	11.16	316 157	5.11
Question 3	948 756	15.35	5 123 386	82.88	109 321	1.77
Question 4	1 108 226	17.93	4 972 535	80.44	100 702	1.63
Question 5	582 437	9.42	5 230 763	84.62	368 263	5.96
Question 6	1 739 178	28.14	4 321 866	69.92	120 419	1.94
Question 7	1 989 252	32.18	4 070 261	65.85	121 950	1.97
Number of citizens who were eligible for voting 7 346 397						
Number of citizens who participated in the referendum 6 181 463						
Voter turnout (%) 84.14						

Source: Own calculations based on Сообщение Центральной Комиссии Республики Беларусь по выборам и проведению республиканских референдумов, <http://www.rec.gov.by/sites/default/files/pdf/Archive-Referenda-1996-soob-pdf> (access: 16.06.2016).

In the case of questions proposed by the President of Belarus, Belarusians supported a change of Independence Day (88.18 of voters) and a draft of constitution presented by A. Lukashenka (83.73 of voters¹¹), and they rejected a possibility of unlimited land turnover (82.88%) and abolition of death penalty (80.44%). In the case of questions proposed by the Supreme Council – they were all rejected by Belarusians. Only 9.42 of voters supported a draft of constitution presented by communists and agrarians, 28.14% of Belarusians voted for a direct election of local authorities and 32.18 of citizens participating in the referendum supported sole financing from the state budget (see Table 2). Voter turnout was very high and it reached 84.14% of eligible persons which

¹¹ It has to be stressed that calculations presented by the Central Electoral Commission of the Republic of Belarus in the case of questions no. 2 and 5 include mistakes. A number of votes for, against and null does not sum up to 100. See: Сообщение Центральной Комиссии Республики Беларусь по выборам и проведению республиканских референдумов, <http://www.rec.gov.by/sites/default/files/pdf/Archive-Referenda-1996-soob-pdf> (access: 16.06.2016).

translated into a growth of 16.36% in comparison to a referendum of 1995. At the same time, such a significant growth in number of participants could prove mobilization of supporters of A. Lukashenka with simultaneous legitimization of his ruling. However, this increase was depreciated by accusations towards people who organized the referendum. The states of the Western Europe did not recognize the referendum results due to gross breaches of electoral procedure and democratic rules.¹² However, this did not stop the President from signing a text of the new constitution on 27 November 1996. As a result of signing the constitution, competencies of the president were significantly widened: “the amendment gave the head of the state many significant creative competencies and possibility to issue decrees with a power of an act, giving him a dominant position in a system of main power institutions.”¹³

The national referendum of 17 October 2004

The referendum in 2004 was organized in a completely different political situation than two previous ones. In 1994–1996 the President of the Republic of Belarus fought with legislature and judiciary authorities to achieve his domination and supremacy in a political system. This period is defined as a phase of the presidential position’s consolidation in a political system of the Republic of Belarus. Rafał Czachor stated that just after 1996 in the Republic of Belarus a legitimate authoritarian system with the elements of paternalism was created.¹⁴ After the referendum in 1996 a form of government was created with the President as a head of state exercising his authority in a direct way with mobilizing and using citizens for legitimizing his policy. At the same time the position of different authorities in a political system was eliminated or limited. And the referendum in 2004 referred solely to maintaining and continuing authority of A. Lukashenko in compliance with binding constitutional regulations when

¹² T. Olejarsz, “Kwestie praw człowieka na Białorusi,” in: *Białoruś w stosunkach międzynarodowych*, ed. I. Topolski, Lublin: Maria Curie-Skłodowska University Press, 2009, 100.

¹³ W. Baluk, “Transformacja systemu politycznego Ukrainy, Mołdowy i Białorusi,” in: *Białoruś, Mołdawia i Ukraina wobec wyzwań współczesnego świata*, ed. T. Kapuśniak, K. Fedorowicz and M. Gołoś, Lublin: Instytut Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej, 2009, 29.

¹⁴ R. Czachor, *Transformacja systemu politycznego Białorusi w latach 1988–2001*, Polkowice: Wydawnictwo Uczelni Jana Wyżykowskiego, 2016, 357.

his second and the last term of office was finishing. On 7 September 2004, the President A. Lukashenka signed a decree concerning organization of a national referendum the result of which would be binding.¹⁵ The President decided that Belarusians would answer one question: Do you allow the first President of the Republic of Belarus to participate as a candidate in elections for a position of the President of the Republic of Belarus and do you accept the first part of art. 81 of the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus in the following wording: President is elected for a period of 5 years directly by citizens of the Republic of Belarus based on universal, free, equal and direct suffrage.¹⁶

Table 3. Results of the national referendum in the Republic of Belarus on 17 October 2004

Question – district	Number of citizens who voted yes (in million)	Number of citizens who voted yes (%)	Number of citizens who voted against (in million)	Number of citizens who voted against (%)	Number of null votes (in million)	Number of null votes (%)
Question	5 548 477	87.97	691 917	10.97	67 001	1.06
Number of citizens who were eligible for voting 6 986 163						
Number of citizens who participated in the referendum 6 307 395						
Voter turnout (%) 90.28						

Source: Own calculations based on Сообщение Центральной Комиссии Республики Беларусь по выборам и проведению республиканских референдумов о результатах республиканского референдума 17 октября 2004 года, <http://www.rec.gov.by/sites/default/files/pdf/Archive-Referenda-2004-Itogi-pdf> (access: 16.06.2016) and http://www.c2d.ch/detailed_display.php?/name=rotes&table=votes&id=39265&continent=Europe&countrygeo=116&stategeo=&citygeo=&level=1&recent=1 (access: 16.06.2016).

¹⁵ Указ Президента Республики Беларусь 7 сентября 2004 года, N 431 г. Минск, <http://www.rec.gov.by/sites/default/files/pdf/Archive-Referenda-2004-Ukaz.pdf> (access: 17.06.2016).

¹⁶ *Ibidem*. In relation to a referendum question, substantial formal charges were formulated. Despite the fact that the question was formulated in one sentence, in reality it was a complex sentence consisting of two questions. Opinion on the Referendum of 17 October 2004 in Belarus, European Commission for Democracy through Law, Strasbourg, 8.10.2004. Therefore it caused many problems connected with a correct answering in the case of giving a consent to A. Lukashenka's participation in the upcoming presidential elections and simultaneous rejection of amendments in constitution. Similar doubts appeared in the opposite case. Questions should be formulated in a clear way so as not to raise any doubts in giving a clear answer.

The referendum was conducted on the day of parliamentary elections. A voter turnout was the highest compared to previously conducted national referendums and it was 90.28% of eligible voters. This meant further growth with 6.14% in relation to the referendum of 1996 and 25.5% in relation to the referendum of 1995. 87.97% of people participating in the referendum voted for acceptance of a change (see Table 3). This referendum was a significant element in a process of strengthening the president's power. Charges formulated against people who organized the referendum stressing breaches of democratic standards¹⁷ could not mobilize Belarusians against their President. Belarusians at this stage of statehood functioning are not interested in active social participation. High voter turnout in a national referendum could prove citizen subservience towards authorities that encouraged participation but only in the way and by rules desired by authorities. One cannot forget that voter turnout was partially the effect of procedural manipulations and election fraud. Therefore Belarusians do not engage in political activities.

Three referendums conducted in 1995, 1996 and 2004 contributed to the increase of the president's powers, simultaneously limiting democracy rules.¹⁷ Belarusians supported in referendums a change of constitution allowing the President A. G. Lukashenka to hold a position unlimited number of times and they approved of the system of state bodies with a dominating role of presidential power, also proposed by him. Specificity of national referendums is putting them in the current political conflict and legitimizing policy of president Lukashenka. This is a typical practice in authoritarian countries.¹⁸ In the Republic of Belarus the process of introducing an authoritarian regime had been taking place since 1996 and afterwards there was a process of consolidating authoritarian authority.¹⁹ To a large extent it was organized through a referendum

¹⁷ Article 81 of the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus which was the subject of a referendum question was an integral part of section IV of the Constitution.

¹⁸ R. J. Hill, S. White, "Referendums in Russia, the Former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe," in: *Referendums Around the World. The Continued Growth of Direct Democracy*, ed. M. Qvortrup, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, 33.

¹⁹ D. Altman, *Direct Democracy Worldwide*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014, 88.

as an example of direct democracy institution. In such a way the authoritarian regime uses institutions typical for democracy to implement its own objectives and non-democratic policy.

There are significant charges formulated against organization of referendums from the side of political opposition, and also politicians and countries from the Western Europe which concern violation of legal provisions and democratic procedures. However, this does not change a regime policy that uses a referendum to create a semblance of rule of law existence (legal façade²⁰). In that case we can talk about trying to use legal legitimization. Due to a fact that it is not sufficient, A. Lukashenka's regime refers also to ideological,²¹ geopolitical, national and negative²² legitimization. However, a significant element in the process of legitimizing superiority of presidential power over other powers in Belarus is a national referendum. It allows the President to conduct a dialogue with citizens while ignoring the remaining bodies of a political system.

²⁰ P. Usov, *Powstanie, konsolidacja i funkcjonowanie reżimu neoautorytarnego na Białorusi*, Warszawa: Instytut Studiów Politycznych Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 2014, 139.

²¹ D. Altman, *Direct Democracy Worldwide...*, 12.

²² Alexander Lukashenka stated in 2003: "Aren't the following rules proper for Belarus collectivism, patriotism, social justice, high education prestige, socially useful work without counting for material remuneration – all of this should be organically a part of ideological foundation of the modern Belarusian society." Cited after Z. J. Winnicki, *Ideologia państwowa Republiki Białorusi – teoria i praktyka projektu. Analiza politologiczna*, Wrocław: Oficyna Wydawnicza Arboretum, 2013, 131.

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CONTRACTING NATIONS OR STATUS NATIONS? EVIDENCE OF STRATEGIC BARGAINING IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY EAST AFRICA



onventional wisdom with regard to the political and economic development of Africa gives weight to the colonial origin of the modern state and institutions. However, since the seventeenth century until World War I, African leaders entered into economic and political agreements with foreign firms, early transnational corporations, and signed procurement contracts for the delivery of various goods and services. These contracts present the theorist with an interesting challenge: where (if anywhere) do we place procurement practices in the history of state formation in Africa? I argue that by entering into contractual agreements of various kinds with their European-Asian counterparts, African leaders made it difficult to interpret subsequent changes in global trade and processes of state formation from the vantage point of imperialism and/or colonial interests only.

Drawing from various historical documents,¹ the paper uses process tracing methods and analytic narratives to establish a relationship between historical contractual practices and state formation in the nineteenth-century East Africa. I trace the process through which local political leaders historically sought to secure monopolistic deals over trade with foreign entrepreneurs

¹ A. J. Millette (ed.), *Treaties in Force 1889–1971: Draft List of Treaties and Other International Agreements of Ethiopia*, Addis Ababa, 1973. E. E. Seaton and S. T. Maliti, *Tanzania Treaty Practice*, Dar Es Salaam: Oxford University Press, 1973. S. Rubenson (ed.), *Internal Rivalries and Foreign Threats 1869–1879, Acta Aethiopica, Vol. III*, Addis Abeba: Addis Abeba University Press, 2000. S. Rubenson (ed.), *Correspondence and Treaties 1800–1854, Acta Aethiopica, Vol. I*, Addis Abeba: Addis Abeba University Press, 1987.

through incomplete contracts for tangible economic goods (arms and slave trades, manufactured goods) and intangible political goods or services (security, knowledge, independence). By showcasing agents' bargaining strategies in contractual agreements, the paper sheds lights on notions of sovereignty and independence articulated through public contracting in Africa's political development.

Historical understanding of notions of independence and sovereignty by procurement practitioners in East Africa provides seeds for thought in controversial debate about government outsourcing today. Is outsourced sovereignty always threatening?² Can we outsource sovereignty and remain independent? These are perhaps the most important conceptual queries that make East Africa's historical contractual experience pertinent today as new public-private partnerships for development, including government outsourcing, increasingly call for the use of private means to solve public problems in the developing countries.³

I argue that intangibles such as independence have historically been the return to politics contracting out services and goods from private suppliers. To the extent that historical evidence may help reframe the debate over the means and ends of development today, it is suggested that models of public-private partnerships that do not fundamentally secure the independence of the state in the long run may serve other purposes than development in Africa.

To better capture economic and political dynamics in East Africa and the ways in which contracting tangible and intangible goods transformed political and economic power, I have divided the coast into two sub-regions: the upper-northern region with Ethiopia (also known as Abyssinia in pre-modern era) as the most influential power, and the southern coast with Zanzibar as the leading political and economic broker. The name Abyssinia and Ethiopia are used interchangeably in historical documents scrutinized in this analysis. However, because data analyzed here mostly reflect transactions that took place in early nineteenth-century and beyond, I use the name Ethiopia throughout my anal-

² P. R. Verkuil, *Outsourcing Sovereignty: Why Privatization of Government Functions Threatens Democracy and What we Can do About it*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. The author suggests outsourcing always threatens democracy because there is a fundamental link between sovereignty and democracy.

³ See for example the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals and the Post-2015 Development Agenda calling for more partnership between the public and private sector for a sustainable development (<https://goo.gl/VP4xD0>), September 2014.

ysis. Thus, data summarily capture the contractual transactions under emperor Tewodoros II (1855–1868), as well as during the reign of the briefly self-proclaimed Emperor Tekle Giyorgis II (1868–1872) upon the death of Tewodros, Yohannes IV (1872–1889), and Menelik II (1889–1913). First, I present the general strategic context in each sub-region and follow up with the analysis of disaggregated data to compare the contractual contexts, patterns, and strategic constraints of specific agents.

The upper region

In the nineteenth-century, the Abyssinian Empire (which roughly encompassed what is present day Ethiopia) appeared as the most internationally connected political entity in the northeastern region. Ethiopia's contractual practices rivaled those of old European kingdoms. For they were not just written in a local language (Amharic and Ge'ez), they also bore a particular aesthetic intended to showcase political power at its highest level of sophistication. Signatures, customized ornamental seals, the use of witnesses, a sophisticated diplomatic language, and a variety of styles leave no doubt in the reader's mind about the standing of Ethiopia as a great power among the greatest in this period.⁴ Ethiopia stood as the oldest known place in Africa to foreigners; its ancient Christianity amidst pagans and later Muslim neighbors was a highly symbolic currency that incentivized the Christian kingdoms of Europe and Asia to seek friendship for commerce and military reasons.

Ethiopia's contractual activities mostly took a bilateral form (Table 1.a. and 1.b.) with Italy, Great Britain, France, and the United States from roughly 1840 to 1914. In the context of a long standing history of official negotiations with Europe, Ethiopia's history of public procurement of tangible and intangible goods and services shows that private (commercial and religious) entrepreneurs played a central role as brokers of trade contracts and land concessions. In all figures the vertical axis represents the number of contracts and the horizontal axis the year of the deal.

⁴ S. Rubenson (ed.), *Internal Rivalries and Foreign Threats 1869–1879. Acta Aethiopica, Vol. III*. Addis Abeba: Addis Abeba University Press, 2000. S. Rubenson (ed.), *Correspondence and Treaties 1800–1854. Acta Aethiopica, Vol. I*. Addis Abeba: Addis Abeba University Press, 1987.

Table 1.a. Bilateral and multilateral contractual patterns of Ethiopia

Rows are levels of ET (Ethiopia)			
Columns are levels of CP (contractual patterns [0] bilateral, [1] multilateral			
	0	1	Total
ET	30	2	32
Total	30	2	32

Source: author’s own calculations.

Table 1.b. Contingency table: Ethiopia’s foreign partners. The main contracting parties were Italy, Great Britain, France, and the US. Belgium, Austria-Hungary and Germany were minor trade partners.

	AUH	BL	FR	GB	GR	IT	US	Total
ET	1	1	9	8	1	10	2	32
Total	1	1	9	8	1	10	2	32

Source: author’s own calculations.

Data reveal three peak years in economic and political diplomacy (Figure 1.1. below): First, 1876 after the British punitive expeditions of 1868 when Ethiopia was under Emperor Theodore II. Second, 1889 period marking the Mahdist invasion of Ethiopia (1887–89), the battle of Adwa (1896) where Ethiopians inflicted a monumental defeat to Italian troops, and the treaty of Addis Abeba securing Ethiopian independence under emperors Yohannes IV and Menelik II. Third and last was 1908, the year of the agreement defining the frontier between Ethiopia and the Italian colony, Eritrea, under emperor Menelik II.

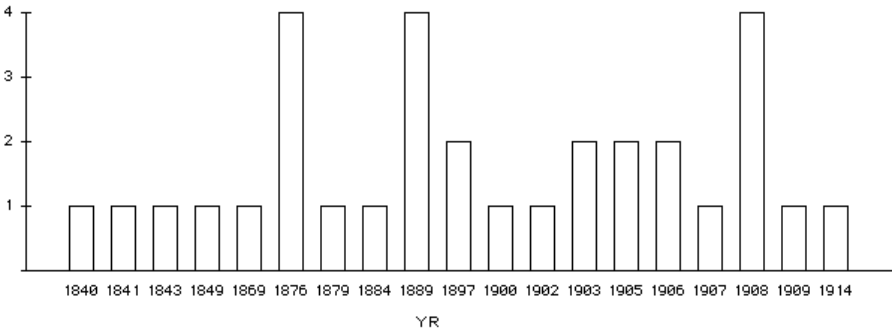


Figure 1.1. Contracting activities of Ethiopia by year (1840–1914)

Y= number of contractual agreements; X= Year.

Source: author’s own calculations.

The correlation between a high volume of contracting activities and Ethiopia's most important historical crises suggests the procurement of goods and services from suppliers took place in a politically stressful environment. Strategy and decisional processes in this context were not necessarily designed to foster economic self-sufficiency, but to preserve political independence; a pre-requisite to creating a lasting union as the country became more centralized.

Before its consolidation in the mid-nineteenth century, independent princes ruled Ethiopia (~ late 1700s to 1855). The country was united and centralized as a state under Emperor Tewodros around 1855. The consolidation of monarchical power was constantly contested by internal rebellion and external aggressions mainly from Egypt. At times Christianity helped promote peace; at other times, it worked against it. Thus, the project of national unity, the centralization of power, and the ambition to be taken seriously at the world stage made international cooperation and domestic coordination paramount to Ethiopia's survival. Starting in 1840, data capture the decisional motivation, the change in political values, and paradoxes of contractual choice in the context of state building when regional princes still had tremendous discretionary power over foreign exchanges.

Ethiopia and France

The Ethiopian case is useful in investigating the ways in which contracting historically transformed political power and institutions and the clash that ensued between collective monopolistic forces and individual aspirations. This struggle for decentralization and centralization is seen in the contractual activities and framing of transactions during the era of princes (1769–1855) “when the regional rulers held the real power in the country and the King of Kings in Gondar became but a puppet in the hands of his regents.”⁵ Ethiopia used Christianity to finesse reputation among the Christian kingdoms of Europe especially with France. On 12 September 1840, a contract between “Sovereign Mahmud Hasan and Badri, judge and religious head, and Edmond Combes charged by the French government, Frederic Broquant, Legion of Honor,”⁶ for the sale of the island of Kordumyat situated in modern day Eritrea, was signed.

⁵ M. Abir, *Ethiopia: The Era of the Princes*, Washington: Praeger, 1970, xxiii.

⁶ S. Rubenson (ed.), *Correspondence and Treaties 1800–1854. Acta Aethiopica, Vol. I*. Addis Abeba: Addis Abeba University Press, 1987, 46.

In ceding to France a piece of land, the Ethiopian sovereign and judge made it clear that they were acting out of their “own free will.”⁷ Three years later, a treaty of friendship was concluded between “Sahle Sillase, king of Shewa & the Great Louis Philippe, king of France” for the peace of Jerusalem promising more preferential concessions.⁸ The Ethiopian kings in this case were regional princes.

The following year (June 16, 1876),⁹ Arnoux was given a political mandate as *envoyé extraordinaire* (extraordinary envoy) to friendly powers in Europe. If the free concession of a coal mine and land did not make sense in the beginning, it becomes clear why Menelik made the move. He wanted a non-state private ally and employed Arnoux with the hope of building a diplomatic front for the defense of Abyssinian interests. As Menelik’s extraordinary envoy, Arnoux was granted the power to defend and protect the territorial integrity and independence of Abyssinia, sign a treaty with Egypt guaranteed by European powers, establish diplomatic and friendly relations with the Christian nations of Europe, raise questions about Egyptian aggression, and to explain the official position of Abyssinia to European powers. This strategy evidences the interdependence of trade and politics. More interestingly, it must be noted that the bundling of trade and politics was an African diplomatic initiative. From an Africanist perspective, Menelik could be seen as a visionary theorist and statesman who stretched the concept of freedom and independence.

The southern region

History has it that when Vasco da Gama reached the East Coast of Africa, he received “a friendly reception at Malindi [because] the ruler of that place was usually at war with his more powerful neighbor at Mombasa and accordingly welcomed the Portuguese as a possible ally.”¹⁰ Through their strategic partner, the King of Malindi, the Portuguese later obtained a lease of the island of Mombasa, – which the African ruler had previously captured – and turned it into a center for proselytization.¹¹ Mombasa therefore passed to the Portuguese and became their administrative capital.

⁷ S. Rubenson (ed.), *Correspondence*. Vol I., 36.

⁸ *Ibidem*, 66.

⁹ S. Rubenson (ed.), *Internal Rivalries*. Vol. III., 241, document 169.

¹⁰ J. Gray, *Early Portuguese Missionaries in East Africa*, St. Martin: Macmillan, 1958, 3.

¹¹ J. Gray, *Early Portuguese Missionaries in East Africa*, chapter 4.

In response to this attempt to capture and replace indigenous natural monopoly with a foreign “managed” control in gold trade, Africans allied themselves with pirates in North Africa to thwart Portuguese plans on the East Coast. Thus the configuration of the strategic context revealed a struggle between competing monopolistic claims; a struggle between the Cross and the Crescent. The Swahili sometimes invoked “Jihad” against infidels and eventually turned to Oman for support. In 1698 Mombasa fell to the Omanis who later established an independent Sultanate at Zanzibar in 1729.¹²

With the entry of the Omanis in the picture, the politics and economics of contracting became interplay between three types of agents separated by land and by sea, yet needing the produce from both sources: the landlocked, the coastal, and the Indian Ocean merchants. The Omani Sultanate at Zanzibar retained control over maritime commerce and secured the cooperation of the Sultans of the mainland by contracting out trade revenues. In the fragmented South at Kilwa, the Omanis “had made an agreement with the Sultan that he should retain his title and one-fifth of the customs dues.”¹³ Zanzibar’s contractual activities peaked around the years 1884 and 1885 followed by a steadily decline only after 1895. This pattern suggests: (a) the influential role of the Indian Ocean slave trade in the making of Zanzibar’s economy, (b) the position of the island as a full-fledged negotiator that colonial powers had to grapple with during the territorial scramble for Africa in late nineteenth-century.

Intangibles: the rise of anti-slavery discourse and policy

Data collected show Zanzibar’s contractual transactions starting in the mid-nineteenth century when abolitionist discourse and policy were in full swing. Before the emergence of abolitionist discourse and policy, the most strategic concerns of different Arab families in East Africa were the consolidation and preservation of their

¹² J. Middleton, *African Merchants of the Indian Ocean: Swahili of the East African Coast*, Long Grove: Waveland, 2004, 35–36. The date varies from different sources. The Sultanate, however, became consolidated only after the defeat of the Portuguese in Mombasa in 1832. The actual transfer of the independent Omani Sultanate from Muscat to Zanzibar took place around 1861; see E. E. Seaton and S. T. Maliti, *Tanzania Treaty Practice*, Dar Es Salaam: Oxford University Press, 1973, 5.

¹³ C. S. Nicholls, *The Swahili Coast: Politics, Diplomacy and Trade on the East African Littoral, 1798–1856*, New York: Africana Publishing Corporation, 1971, 33.

independence from Oman. Politics before early nineteenth-century was therefore dominated by internal feuds between the houses of Mazrui, the pro-independence faction, and the Busaidi in favor of continuing allegiance to Oman. After establishing themselves at Zanzibar in late eighteenth century, the authority of the Mazrui continued to be challenged from Oman and from the mainland.

With the demise of the Portuguese in the region, a strategy was devised to *contract out independence* with Britain stationed at Bombay in India. A letter by Abdulla bin Ahmed sent to Bombay explained that “he was the ruler of an independent state which Said bin Sultan of Oman wished to annex”¹⁴ and declared that he would rather give the said independent state to England. This request was rejected given the close ties that bound Britain and Oman. Notwithstanding this complication, the Mazrui amended their offer by giving “half of [their] revenues”¹⁵ to Britain in exchange for an officer stationed on the coast. The British never formally accepted the offer but changes in discourse over trade practice and policy made their presence in the region necessary. Instead of working with critics stationed at Mombasa, Bombay made the choice to cooperate with Sultan Seyyid Said in Oman who regained control of the East African coast in early nineteenth-century after turning local protests against the Mazrui family to his advantage.

In 1807 the British adopted the Slave Trade Act, which outlawed slave trade in all territories and dominions. Previous attempts to curb the slave trade yielded imperfect results in East Africa the reason being that the Sultan of Oman derived substantial revenues from taxes levied on slave ships from Zanzibar. French merchants at Mauritius and Bourbon islands had independently secured slave trade concessions with Zanzibar and Kilwa in 1776, 1785, and 1819,¹⁶ and they were competing with Portuguese and Spanish merchants. To win the collaboration of Oman, the British strategically likened the slave trade to piracy, which they previously fought alongside Seyyid. The reinvention of an anti-piracy discourse in the forms of a fight against slavery offered the discursive incentive to the Sultan of Oman to agree to a treaty with Moresby in 1822. Given the economic return of the slave trade from Zanzibar to the Omani treasury, this political discourse proved strategically significant because the treaty had effect in Zanzibar where the Omani had previously migrated.

¹⁴ J. Gray, *Early Portuguese Missionaries in East Africa*, St. Martin: Macmillan, 1958, 21.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, 21.

¹⁶ C. S. Nicholls, *The Swahili Coast: Politics, Diplomacy and Trade on the East African Littoral, 1798–1856*, New York: Africana Publishing Corporation, 1971, 198, 131–36.

The Omani edict of 1850, when the contractual history of Zanzibar starts in my sample, forbade slave trading to Indians merchants on the East African Coast leading to, on one hand, the consolidation of Zanzibar authority in the sub-region, and on the other hand, increase in slave capture for local plantation industry.¹⁷ But Sultan Seyyid Said's double-dealings with the slave trade and pirates quickly led some colonial administrators to reconsider the offer from the Mazrui family, as well as new partnerships with other groups in the hinterland.

Africans bargaining opportunities and *choice* of contracting partners became more restricted in late nineteenth-century, thanks to the outright scramble of the continent. Nevertheless, the use of contracts as instruments of cooperation and non-cooperation points to something else in East Africa: a progressive attempt to harness the winds of discontent. To illustrate, political contracts between coastal dwellers and the hinterland with Britain and Germany pulled in and pushed away power from Zanzibar simultaneously. In the year leading to the conference of Berlin in 1885, British negotiators secured treaties with the chiefs Chagga and Taveta in the presence of Sir J. W. Matthews, in which they recognized their loyalty to the Sultan of Zanzibar. Conversely, German treaties signed with many chiefs from the mainland and hinterland tended to disavow Zanzibar's supremacy.

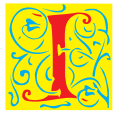
Analyzed from the perspective of European possessions, these historical dealings have mainly been seen as colonial. Nineteenth century swapping of trade and political status between public and private agents ended with the consolidation of a colonial regime. Nevertheless, when one examines the motivational processes and tactical choices from an Africanist perspective, it becomes probable that theory, not the action of the parties, might be at fault here. Scholars have not seen the pedagogical, value-laden relevance of the seemingly subpar African choice in colonial encounters because rational choice assumptions confound strategy with choice and sovereignty with independence.

¹⁷ C. S. Nicholls, *The Swahili Coast*, New York: Africana Publishing Corporation, 1971, 211–15.

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POLITICS IN A SOCIETY OF CONTROL



In a brief pamphlet written in 1992 Gilles Deleuze suggested that the disciplinary society was being replaced by the society of control (Deleuze, 1992). Whereas the disciplinary society was organised through institutional enclosures characterised by mechanisms of surveillance, measurement and the administration of life through instruction, prescription and monitoring, the society of control achieves the administration of life through procedures that take the form of codes, guidelines, and process. Rather than enclosures, it is characterised by an apparent openness. The hallmark of the society of control is the sheer ubiquity of the surveillance and self-surveillance of behaviour through the incessant calibration of behaviours through expectations, perceptions and norms of appropriateness. Whereas in a disciplinary society one could escape (if only temporarily) institutions, no one can escape the networks of relations in which one is enmeshed; nothing is ever finished, training is perpetual and the distinction between work and leisure is finally completely abolished. We could say that in the society of control, power is procedural and the most important kind of knowledge is also procedural – for it is through this kind of knowing that one can change behaviours, motivate individuals, secure funds and grasp the most important weapon of all: leverage over others.

The control society sets its face against the supposed discredited disciplinary society through the promise of freedom from directive supervision and the promise of control of one's life: but for Deleuze whilst these new mechanisms may appear attractive they never achieve their promise. Indeed, the new reality of control leads us to mock grand schemes of emancipation; now we are more mature we can learn to settle for much, much less and find satisfaction in mastering the procedures of our own ensnarement and in small, fleeting victories.

In this situation, political discourse consists of the repeated evocation of empty signifiers that have no connection with the experience of control. We are familiar with them all: freedom from state control (that slogan is particularly mendacious), democracy, responsibility, “grown-up politics,” “the return of power to where it belongs – the people,” “our nation,” etc. The “public” for which this discourse is intended exists on a virtual plane; this is a public of which all are members but whose voices are confined to impotent interventions – tweets, online comments, letters and blogs that remain unread. Above all, this public is a prisoner of the present, an empty present whose links to the past are characterised by historical cliché and antiquarian curiosity.

Rationalisation

It will be instructive to dwell a little more closely on the kind of control that Deleuze indicates. For we must be clear that it is not a control characterised by domination, that is, the purposeful domination of some individuals by others. Nor are these networks of control peculiar to the 21st century – the modes of control, certainly, are recent, but its character was recognised at the beginning of the 20th century by Max Weber.¹ In his *Protestant Ethic*, Weber famously invokes the “iron cage,” signifying the development of procedures and behaviours necessary for a modern economic order whilst “the rosy blush of its laughing heir, the Enlightenment, seems to be irretrievably fading” (Weber, 181–82). Jürgen Habermas provides us with a concise discussion and amplification of Weber’s central thesis. According to Habermas, purposeful rationality includes: the development of techniques to reproduce predicted behaviours; the world so configured that the efficacy of such techniques become progressively easier to achieve; the privileging of ends which preclude ends chosen for affective reasons or relating to tradition; the unwillingness to grant rationality of value postulates or belief systems as regards their content; and, finally and crucially, the development of a methodical conduct and personality (Habermas, 168–71).

Habermas speaks of this form of rationality as “purposive rationality” but if we accept that any kind of practical conduct will have a purposive character then we need to describe this phenomenon in a different way. If the form of rationality described is characterised as “rationalisation” then we can see that it

¹ For an overview, see Sica (2000).

is rationalisation that gives us the “iron cage,” and not rationality or reason as such. And it seems to me that we can amplify Habermas’s account of rationalisation as follows:

a) In the giving and receiving of reasons what counts as a reason is conditioned by requirements of rationalisation and this therefore severely curtails communicative competence viewed as a free activity;

b) Rationalisation does not only disenchant nature but also disenchants those human activities connected with moral, aesthetic and even science because the values associated with those spheres are either nullified or become themselves rationalised, i.e. subject to procedural judgements in which content is underplayed;

c) Behaviours compliant with the imperatives of rationalisation are encouraged through status recognition and monetary reward (for example, pro-active behaviour). The price of non-conformity is non-recognition and irrelevance. One is expected to comport oneself in accordance with the injunctions of rationalisation so that they become a key part of one’s identity;

d) Rationalisation is no longer neutral with respect to values but itself generates values appropriate to the process of rationalisation itself. The most significant of these is achievement and success; these are the goals – the ends of life – that individuals encourage in each other and in which they find the most satisfaction and happiness;

e) “change” itself becomes a positive value not only to be welcomed but to be deliberately brought about. In a culture of rationalisation there must be ceaseless activity and it is incumbent on those with authority to make sure their charges never become too comfortable. This extends not only to employees but also to electorates.

Rationalisation pervades political discourse not only in terms of characterising the means for securing goals; it increasingly characterises those goals themselves. Education, for example, is rationalised through the characterisation of learning as an achievement-process in which assessment lies at its heart. This amounts to more than the mere prizing of good results; the entire process itself is driven by a system of monitoring and evaluation at every stage in which teachers – not just pupils – are held to account.² Moreover, the choices made by

² A good example of the rationalisation of pedagogy is contained in a standard work of pedagogy addressed at university teachers in which the strategy of “constructive alignment” is commended, i.e. the alignment of learning outcomes, learning activities and assessment. This is termed by the authors a “web of consistency.” See Biggs and Tang (2011).

politicians in respect of education are themselves the choices of rationalisation – these are choices which are deliberately exercised and fostered. In the United Kingdom, at least, politicians – both left and right – are the champions of rationalisation.³

The process of rationalisation extends across a range of policy areas so that both the procedures and values of rationalisation are embedded in institutions and pervade the perspectives and practices of all those agents embroiled in them. It is for this reason that the mere invocation of alternate values have limited effect over and above rhetorical value. For the alternate values associated with, say, the Green movement, are themselves only embedded weakly and fitfully. It is interesting, as an aside, that even the traditional values of liberalism or, indeed, political conservatism, have also become rationalised. There is no modern conservative in the whole of Europe who any longer simply wants to conserve: the modern conservative is as much concerned to “drive change” as her liberal or socialist counterpart.

Exploring alternatives

Does the phenomenon of rationalisation derive from some defect of rationality so that the Enlightenment contains the seeds of its own undermining? The problem with this approach is that if rationality per se is deemed suspect then the alternatives must be held to originate in other spheres of activity, such as aesthetics. Yet aesthetics activity is as much beset by rationalisation as any other sphere of activity; one will not find any area of activity unsullied. If one is struck by the way in which solutions and strategies are deliberately chosen that involve rationalisation, then this phenomenon cannot be seen merely as the unfolding necessity of a Reason shorn from any context or traditions. For this species of rationality assuredly does have a context – namely the very culture of rationalisation that its activity generates. Thus a genealogical explanation seems preferable – to this extent one can then affirm the Weberian thesis that rationalisation had its origins in Protestant asceticism and that we are now living with the accumulative effects of instrumentalism, aided by the requirements of industrial organisation and associated technologies, not least the development of real-time communication.

³ For example, both Labour and Conservative politicians have implemented policies of perpetual assessment of pupils aged 5–18 even though alternatives have been clearly spelt out by teachers and educational researchers.

Could it be argued that an alternative could be constructed by thinking afresh our communicative abilities in such a way that rationalisation is side-stepped? This is one way of viewing Habermas's theory of communicative competence. I take it that the idea is that communication (in the sense of the giving and asking for reasons) is seen as primary, that is, that communication "is" embedded in language, not that it ought to be. Rationalisation can then be seen as a deviation of language from its originary, communicative path.⁴ But whatever the merits of communicative action I do not think that its features can be read back into the structure of language in this way. Rather, language can be bent and fashioned to serve the cause of emancipation or repression equally. So, just as rationalisation has not developed through a path of necessity so there is no originary or foundational set of human activities that we can retrieve and use as a basis for a more emancipatory politics. Counteracting the culture and practice of rationalisation is a voluntary act.

But to say it is voluntary does not mean that one cannot draw on activities and discourses that do *not* have rationalisation at their core. What would such practices look like? Alasdair MacIntyre provides us with one picture through conceiving activities in terms of practices. The idea here is that a practice generates its own goods and its own goals and purposes; therefore criteria of excellence are internal to that practice. In this way, it could be said that a practice generates its own rationale, independent of the demands of rationalisation. MacIntyre's definition of a practice is well-known:

By a practice I mean any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realised in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence that are appropriate to, and partly definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved are systematically extended. (MacIntyre, 175)

We can see how this might work, especially through the suggestion that a practice contains its own internal goods. These could be moral or ethical but they could also be aesthetic in the case of, say, the performing arts, or epistemological, in the case of, say, the sciences. It is not, of course, that practices, so understood, do not contain activities that are instrumental and rational-purposive; but these kinds of activities are subordinate to, and partly defined by, what con-

⁴ For this succinct summary, see Rasmussen (1990).

stitutes an internal good. Moreover, given that long established practices have long traditions, these may act as powerful counterweights to rationalisation. For through a tradition, the present can re-connect with the past so that traditions become part of the present. For example, for both musicians and appreciators of jazz, Miles Davis and Duke Ellington are never truly dead and their music forms part of a living tradition that any jazz musician has to address and understand. It is true, of course that the importance of tradition may vary from practice to practice and some practitioners may draw from only the recent past. But the point is that change is something that can be understood in terms of that practice since changes (new styles, new theories) are internally generated through engagement with that practice. In this sense, a practice may be seen as having its own genealogy with its own internal time-structure. That is, a practice can be viewed diachronically so that at any given time its activities are best given a genealogical explanation rather than one which is merely synchronic. Practices generate their own contexts – this implies that it is mistaken to try and explain, say, the rise of Impressionism through an analysis of social and economic conditions of the mid-19th-century France; what those artists themselves thought and believed is far more important since they themselves were responding to a tradition of which they were a part.

All these considerations, it seems to me, can serve to keep the depredations of rationalisation at bay and to diminish its effects. Decisions to interpret internal goods through the lens of rationalisation may of course be made and often are: but they are deliberate decisions that can be contested through the invocation of the claims of the internal goods of that practice. But there are problems, all the same.

First, practices will often require some kind of institutional setting (subject disciplines in universities are a good example) and so the inevitable question arises as to what and to what extent the practice owes the institution that enables it to thrive in the first place. Institutional demands on practices that derive from the demands of rationalisation (for example, demands that are seen as manager-driven) may be impossible to resist. The second is that tightly drawn, compact practices may flourish much better than those which are much more porous and widely deployed. Tighter practices bind practitioners together and reduce the number of contestable aims and methods; looser practices are likely to contain far more contestable aims.

Politics, if it can be viewed as a practice at all, is of the latter kind. For there would appear to be no easy identification of political discourse that all can

share and recognise: the only practice that all can share and recognise is that of rationalisation itself. Hence political discourse is translated into disputes about service provision and household management. The very identity of political subjects is itself rationalised so that such subjects require, for example, personal health analysis or educational performance in the form of learning targets and employability objectives. They need to be told how much alcohol they must drink and what to eat.

The recovery of political discourse, I suggest, must involve the recovery of political traditions the connection with which rationalisation has severed. This recovery also requires the re-birth of the political actor, viewed as an agent who is not subject to needs analysis and service provision but who is viewed as self-directed. I suggest that political discourse needs to centre on the issue of liberty, viewing agents as bearers of liberty, as liberty-bearing. Whatever identity an agent may have – ethnic, gender-based, cultural – their identity as a liberty-bearing actor does not change. In this way a political discourse can be forged that reaches back to the French Revolution, to the English civil war in the seventeenth century, to the practice of politics in Renaissance Florence, back to Roman antiquity. And it seems to me that once liberty is made into a central concern, there can also be constructed a legitimate area of debate in which the answers cannot be foreclosed in advance.

The first concerns the extent to which I am free in the sense that I am not interfered with. Given that all actors have similar claims to non-interference from each other what exactly constitutes interference and, in particular, what constitutes harmful interference.⁵ In particular, from the standpoint of liberty in this historic sense, a regime of rationalisation may be seen as sophisticated forms of interference. This would mean that a narrative of liberty which challenges and undermines rationalisation could be developed. If rationalisation constitutes one tradition of modernity then other traditions can be drawn on. But I would emphasise that the concept of liberty that needs to be employed in this respect is republican liberty, which emphasises the fact that I am only free to the extent that I am not dominated. This then leads into a second area of debate: to what extent should I be protected from domination? If liberty is construed in terms of non-domination,⁶ is all domination illegitimate? To

⁵ I still think the best arguments for so-called “negative liberty” are to be found in Isaiah Berlin’s ideas – see Berlin, 1969.

⁶ The best modern account of liberty as non-domination – republican liberty is by Quentin Skinner (1998, 2002).

what extent should the state foster arrangements whereby individuals develop resistance to domination and thus preserve their liberty? What collective arrangements of governance are needed to uphold liberty in the face of dominance and what kinds of domination are there?

Whilst I do not believe that all political questions can be re-interpreted in terms of liberty it does seem to me that many questions of justice and entitlement can be re-framed as questions of liberty – whether these questions be ones of welfare, education, health or public safety. In doing this we may be able to reconstruct political discourse in which the terms of rationalisation are subordinate to the internal goods of political practice. And the most prized of these goods is, I suggest, that of liberty. But once we see liberty as a concept with a historical tradition then we may be able to construct a “modern humanism” that has liberty at its heart. Humanism tends to be discredited because, I think, it has been colonised by rationalisation. Our humanism is reflected in the way that individual subjects are constructed as passive, as the receivers of services. But a more robust humanism would emphasise the subject as actor – not always victorious, but always as a self-directed agent for whom politics is an activity that involves *actors*.

The three vignettes are examples from the twentieth century in which *political identity* is discussed. In each case, the kind of political identity is questioning, restless but confident. In the first vignette we have a succinct probing of racism in which there is no resolution; in the second the claims of a hybrid political identity are asserted; and the third explores how the identity – i.e. the liberty – of others is systematically denied. All of them address issues of politics but they originate from outside the discourse of politics as such – from literature, poetry and philosophy. Thus to find out what remains of politics implies we may, in part, have to go outside politics; politics itself does not provide the answers it needs nor it is able to frame some of the questions.

Vignettes of modern humanism

Leo Proudhammer

Leo Proudhammer is the central protagonist in James Baldwin's *Tell me how long the Train's Been Gone*, published in 1968. He grows up in Harlem, New York and experiences at first hand the racism of white policeman and

the patronisation of white liberals. But he also experiences freedom – sexual freedom (he is bisexual), a degree of artistic freedom (he is a struggling actor who manages to establish a professional reputation). He also experiences the camaraderie of living with similar young persons with no money but also with no responsibilities either. Leo doesn't always behave well (he flees the well-meaning but slightly clingy Madeleine for the much tougher Barbara) but on the other hand he doesn't try and find excuses for himself either. Above all, he is subject to racism, he is never simply a victim of racism. Here we have him and his brother conversing, having been stopped by a disagreeable New York cop:

“Caleb,” I asked, “are white people - people?”

“What are you talking about, Leo?”

“I mean – are white people - people? People like us.”

He looked down at me. His face was very strange and sad. It was a face I had never seen before. We climbed a few more stairs, very slowly. Then, “All I can tell you, Leo is – well, they don't think they are.”

Julian Tuwim (1894–1953) an excerpt from *We Polish Jews...* (1944)

I am a Pole, because it pleases me. It is my personal and private matter, and I do not intend to submit a report nor an explication, an explanation to justify the basis of it. I do not divide Poles into “native- born” and “non-native-born”; I leave that for the native-born and non-native-born racists, the local and non-local Hitlerites. I divide Poles and Jews, as well all other nations, into intelligent and stupid, honest and thieves, intelligent and dullards, interesting and boring, the oppressing and the oppressed, gentlemanly and the ungentlemanly. I also divide Poles into fascists and anti-fascists. These two camps, are not, of course homogenous, each of them disperses shades of colour of differing intensities. But, the line of demarcation most certainly exists and shortly will be clearly seen. Shades will remain shades but the colour of that very line will be intense and deeper in a marked way.

I could say that in a political sense I divide Poles into anti-Semites and anti-Fascists. Because Fascism is always anti-Semitism. Anti-Semitism is the international language of Fascists.

Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–1980) an excerpt from *Anti-Semite and Jew* (1944)

The anti-Semite has chosen hate because hate is a faith; at the outset he has chosen to devalue words and reasons. How entirely at ease he feels as a result. How futile and frivolous discussions about the rights of the Jew appear to him. He has placed himself on other ground from the beginning. If out of courtesy he consents for a moment to defend his point of view, he lends himself but does not give himself. He tries simply to project his intuitive certainty onto the plane of discourse. I mentioned awhile back some remarks by anti-Semites, all of them absurd: "I hate Jews because they make servants insubordinate, because a Jewish furrier robbed me, etc." Never believe that anti-Semites are completely unaware of the absurdity of their replies. They know that their remarks are frivolous, open to challenge. But they are amusing themselves, for it is their adversary who is obliged to use words responsibly, since he believes in words. The anti-Semites have the right to play. They even like to play with discourse for, by giving ridiculous reasons, they discredit the seriousness of their interlocutors. They delight in acting in bad faith.

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BAD INFLUENCES FROM OUTSIDE: STATE ANTI-COSMOPOLITANISM IN HOBBS' *LEVIATHAN*



Thomas Hobbes' ideas concerning the right education of the citizen and the subsequent sense of indoctrination caused by the dissemination of foreign political teachings into native English lands, is an issue of great interest that has been largely overlooked in the relative literature. This article is a part of the work in progress which aims to broaden the discussion concerning Hobbes' thoughts about education and the prominent position that this aspect holds in his civil science as a whole.

The main focus of this text is to explore Hobbes' proclaimed concerns about the unrestricted dissemination of political knowledge among misinformed citizens with controversial beliefs and about the possible undesirable consequences of this dissemination. The term "State anti-cosmopolitanism" that I will be employing here proposes a reading of Hobbes that detects elitist and exclusivist (hence anti-cosmopolitan) operations at work in his political theory of pedagogy. It will be shown that Hobbes singles out the instructor and scholar as the paradigmatic cosmopolitan figure of the time. This figure is "provided with the antidote of solid reason"¹ and by being protected from the risks of indoctrination, he thereby protects the "borders" of learning and staves off the political consequences that Hobbes deems dangerous to the masses. For the purpose of this analysis I mainly concentrate on *Leviathan* while sporadically drawing insights from Hobbes' mature works that resonate with his educational thought.²

¹ T. Hobbes, "Leviathan or the Matter Form and Power of a Commonwealth Ecclesiastical and Civil," ed. W. Molesworth, *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury*, vol. 3, London, 1997, 314.

² For the aim of this article I mainly focus on his core political narrative *Leviathan* while following his supplementary defense of his political doctrine as found in the letter

Popular ideas and the meaning of foreign sedition

In his political treatise Hobbes arrives at a list of reasons capable of leading people to seditious behavior against, and disloyalty to, the Sovereign order.³ Interestingly, he portrays seven “seditious doctrines” capable of undermining the State, however one is not categorized as such. It is characterized by the author as a “false doctrine.” The reason for this alternative category is the wrong reception of the foreign intellectual material that comes from ancient Greeks and Romans. According to Hobbes, such material may cause serious damage to the Hobbesian Sovereign agency.⁴

Hobbes’ great concern about the uncontrolled dissemination of foreign political material in native English lands can be traced, on many occasions, throughout the second part of *Leviathan*, “Of the commonwealth” and in *Behemoth*.⁵ This concern becomes more comprehensive in chapter 29 of *Leviathan* where Hobbes identifies the reasons which can lead a commonwealth to its ultimate destruction.⁶ Chapter 29 acquires central significance when we consider Hobbes’ basic proposition in *Leviathan*: that is, a discourse “occasioned by the disorders of the English civil war,” a war to which Hobbes was an active witness (1642–49).⁷ Hobbes renders the false doctrine that leads to possible sedition as follows:

... as to rebellion in particular against monarchy, one of the most frequent causes of it is the reading of the books of policy and histories of the ancient Greeks and Romans; from which young men, and all others that are unprovided of the antidote of solid reason, receiving a strong and delightful impression of the great exploits of war achieved by the conductors of their armies, receive withal a pleasing idea of all they have done besides; and imagine their great prosperity not to have proceeded from the emulation of particular men, but from the virtue of their popular form of government . . .⁸

“Six Lessons to the Savilian Professors of the Mathematics,” in: *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury*, Vol. 7, London, 1997 and also in his “Behemoth: The History of the Causes of the Civil Wars of England,” in: *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury*, Vol. 6, London, 1997.

³ T. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Chapter 29: “Of those things that weaken or tend to the dissolution of the Commonwealth.”

⁴ *Ibidem*, 339.

⁵ *Ibidem*, 21: 201–03, 29: 314–16, 30: 326–27; *Behemoth*, 168, 218.

⁶ T. Hobbes, *Leviathan*..., Chapter 29, 308.

⁷ *Ibidem*, “Review” and “Conclusion.”

⁸ *Ibidem*, 29: 314–15.

. . . From the reading, I say, of such books, men have undertaken to kill their kings, because the Greek and Latin writers in their books and discourses of policy make it lawful and laudable for any man so to do, provided before he do it he call him tyrant. For they say not *regicide*, that is, killing of a king, but *tyrannicide*, that is, killing of a tyrant, is lawful . . .⁹

These passages indicate Hobbes' fear of non-domesticated historical ideals. Despite the fact that Hobbes himself was greatly indebted to ancient Greek and Roman ideas, he was worried about the possibility that these ideas were to become widely disseminated among the young. Young people's minds, claims Hobbes, were like "white paper," vulnerable to misconceptions, and consequently regarded as an open threat to "monarchy" of which Hobbes was a thorough supporter. Limiting the means by which seditious education might be disseminated in universities and subsequently affect the young would effectively lead to limiting the possibilities of possible discontents and rebellions.¹⁰

In both passages we notice what Hobbes sees as an obvious misconception related to the reading of Ancient Greeks and Romans by which young people get carried away and deceived: young people are inclined to a reading of Ancient Greeks and Romans that promptly attributes virtues and prosperity to ancient popular forms of government and not to the virtue and charisma of great men in power, as Hobbes would recommend.¹¹ This argument thoroughly reflects Hobbes' commitment to monarchy. It also reflects his ambivalent belief that narratives associated with popular forms of government can be interpreted, even by common students, in such a way that presents no political risk. Through the assistance of appropriate educators the "readings" of such narratives can be taught in a manner consistent with monarchical beliefs and ideas. This pedagogical assistance from loyal educators could decrease potential contamination from the narratives among youths and ultimately decrease possibilities of civil disobedience and acts of rebellion. However, it is worth considering what the reasons were that made Hobbes skeptical about the dissemination of Ancient Greek and Roman ideas among the young.

Hobbes attributes the corruptive nature of Ancient Greek and Roman ideas to the way the young receive and treat these ideas, in relation to democracy. Students attending universities at those times were educated to admire the political

⁹ *Ibidem*, 315.

¹⁰ T. Hobbes, "Six Lessons to the Savilian Professors of the Mathematics" . . . , 335.

¹¹ *Leviathan*, 29: 315, 21: 201.

writings of Aristotle and Cicero, both of whom were figures of great respect and influence for any thinker delving into philosophy and politics, much like Hobbes was. Both Aristotle and Cicero had much to say about politics, policies, and good government. However, both lived under popular states and expressed democratic ideas which were opposed to “monarchy.” For Hobbes, the dissemination of these types of discourse added tension to the already crucial period of civil war in England.¹² Given the context, Hobbes preferred and proposed a distance from those foreign ideas that he considered infectious and dangerous.

As Geraint Parry points out, Hobbes did not quite accuse ordinary people of merely misreading narratives from classical scripture.¹³ Those he blamed for the “misinterpretation” of the classics were none other than the universities and the people of high intellectual esteem who were charged with the duty of educating the young according to the will of the sovereign. It is the “preparation of that mediating role”¹⁴ assigned to the universities for accommodating the flow of knowledge for the sake of peace and stability that seemed deeply vulnerable and needed considerable changes. In his answer to “the Savilian Professors of the Mathematics” Hobbes defended the idea that his doctrine in *Leviathan* should be interpreted by “wiser men” in such a way that could “fit better for public teaching.”¹⁵ His exaggerated belief that he could press reforms to happen by recommending “true doctrine” also involved the idea that his doctrine could actually cure the controversial reading of foreign political doctrines and the uncontrollable publishing of politically dangerous texts.

Another argument indicative of Hobbes’ overarching skepticism toward Ancient Greek and Roman writings relates to the writer’s own venture in life and to his duties as a secretary to the chancellor and as “keeper of secrets.” Following Kinch Hoekstra’s influential exploration on Hobbes’ early correspondence, we find evidence that discreet behavior and secrecy were some of the core characteristics that marked the author’s intellectual career.¹⁶ In a letter received by Hobbes in December 1622 from a friend of his called Robert Mason there seems to be a mutual agreement on the idea that some affairs of the state are expect-

¹² G. Parry, “The Sovereign as Educator: Thomas Hobbes’s National Curriculum,” *Paedagogica Historica*, 34:3 (1998): 711–730.

¹³ T. Hobbes, *Leviathan*..., 712.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, 712.

¹⁵ T. Hobbes, “Six Lessons to the Savilian Professors of the Mathematics”..., 335.

¹⁶ K. Hoekstra, “The End of Philosophy (The Case of Hobbes),” *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, Vol. 106 (2006): 25–62.

ed to remain “closely and secretly managed & not so much as whispered of.”¹⁷ Mason gives voice to Hobbes’ thoughts concerning the communication of state affairs to common citizens and the assumption that some affairs should not be revealed into the public sphere.¹⁸ This view chimes with *arcana imperii*, namely, “the mysteries of the State,” and sums up Hobbes’ valorization of the strict confidentiality in matters of urgent political concern. *Arcana imperii*, a phrase of various, rich connotations is part of the epic proverb in Latin that Mason dedicates to Hobbes: “I do not object to the existence of state secrets; One must understand the danger.”¹⁹ This mysterious and confidential version of Hobbes, helps us shed a different light on Hobbes, the political theorist and educator. Hobbes’ concern to control the foreign political material which is taught and disseminated among the nation can be seen differently if we turn to possible characteristics and virtues that Hobbes attached to “men of great honour” and educators who differ from those who teach fallaciously popular ideas coming from other nations and times. Textual support of this connection may be found at the very end of the first tract quoted earlier where Hobbes deplores the great error imprinted in common people’s minds who do not apprehend rightly and truly the means by which the Ancients earned their prosperity.²⁰ Common people tend to believe, as Hobbes points out, that prosperity in those western countries did not emanate “from the emulation of particular men’s glorious winnings at the battlefields of war and politics, as they ought to be taught, but instead “from the virtue of their popular form of government.”²¹ Hobbes’ praise of “particulars” and talented persons proves his deep commitment to monarchy and attests to his strategic readings of history that serve precise ends and purposes.

Some lines later in the passage, Hobbes says that he could never imagine a wider threat to monarchy than the circulation and reading of books that propagate populist beliefs.²² Further on, Hobbes refers to the class of “discreet masters” as those capable of removing “the venom” of popular ideas from ancient doctrines or narratives and make the course of teaching more aligned with the

¹⁷ *The Correspondence of Thomas Hobbes*, ed. N. Malcom, Oxford University Press, 1994, Letter 1 December 1622.

¹⁸ T. Hobbes, *Leviathan...*, 41.

¹⁹ The proverb is written in Latin as: “*Arcana imperii nihil moror periculum intelligere*,” *Correspondence*, 4.

²⁰ T. Hobbes, *Leviathan...*, 315.

²¹ *Ibidem*, 315.

²² *Ibidem*, 315.

will of the sovereign.²³ Though Hobbes does not give details about the “discreet master” or about how the master would purify the doctrines, we may conclude that, for Hobbes, discretion implies secrecy and strict confidentiality in matters of political urgency.

In order for the sovereign to ensure correct teaching his strong reliance on scientific reason should be considered as one of his most developed skills. State disorders would never seize to exist until sovereigns reach the point of themselves becoming philosophers that delve in people’s minds and souls.²⁴ This process, as I argue in the next section, presupposes the deployment of a new political language that, if used appropriately and consistently, may achieve what Hobbes believes to be a steady system of social relations that may guarantee the endurance of a “steady commonwealth.”

Elitist education and the need for a new political vocabulary

Hobbes’ theory of education aspires to rely on politically weighted definitions that underpin opinions “truly” valid and thus aligned to the pronouncements of the Sovereign.²⁵ Commentators such as J. D. Marshall, G. Perry and M. Bejan have highlighted the major significance given to “the right definitions of things” and to the pivotal role played by language in the deployment of Hobbes’ civil science.²⁶ This is a very important feature of Hobbesian sovereignty; it is the one that actually cements the indisputable relationship between protection and obedience that is so widely discussed throughout *Leviathan*.

But first let us examine Hobbes’ thoughts concerning language. In the introductory chapters of *Leviathan*, Hobbes devotes considerable attention to the correct arrangement and use of “language”:²⁷ for example, the language used

²³ *Ibidem*.

²⁴ T. Hobbes, *Leviathan...*, introduction: x–xi; see also chapter: 31, 357.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, 164.

²⁶ J. D. Marshall, “Education and Obligation in the Commonwealth,” *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (1980): 201–02. G. Parry, “The Sovereign as Educator: Thomas Hobbes’s National Curriculum,” 1998, 713–715. T. M. Bejan, “Teaching the Leviathan: Thomas Hobbes on Education,” *Oxford Review of Education*, 2010, 36:5, 607–626, 614–615.

²⁷ T. Hobbes, *Leviathan...*, Chapter 4, 5.

when practicing public speech must be thoroughly aligned with certain provisional criteria and scientific convictions that are predetermined by the Sovereign's language protocol. Acting otherwise, Hobbes says, will find the speaker "entangled in words, as a bird in lime twigs, the more he struggles the more belimed."²⁸

For Hobbes, the course of thought and demonstration of knowledge follows the principles of mathematics, especially those of addition and subtraction. Following Hobbes, adding together "two words" makes an "affirmation," "two affirmations" make a "syllogism," "many syllogisms" make a "demonstration" and "from the sum (we) subtract one proposition to find the other."²⁹ True science in this sense is the awareness that any action or many actions conjoined together lead to definite decisions and unaltered consequences. At the same time, where these aforementioned principles are deployed there is also permission to treat "reason" and, similarly, political understanding and judgment accordingly.³⁰

For Hobbes, true perceptions are validly registered in people's minds only when different parties agree to authorize some arbitrators or a trusted judge to take on the task of "the supreme lexicographer."³¹ Thus, sovereignty, for Hobbes, emerges due to the people's urgent need to find common ground in language and to build upon common premises regarding the "State," "individual rights," "welfare," "protection," "obedience," and "duties." When no agreement is met, then people become vulnerable to vague terminology.³²

Nevertheless, the invention of scientific language along with its reception and application continue to create difficulties for Hobbes even when people are civilized under the aegis of the sovereign. Civilized people are still vulnerable to errors because educators are ambivalent about committing to the words of the native Sovereign. The reason why educators (and common people) are unsure is because they are interacting with scholars like Aristotle and Cicero whose "words" were predicated to serve completely different and controversial political purposes from the ones "truly" undertaken by the sovereign. One of the principal duties that people have to perform while living under Hobbes' sover-

²⁸ *Ibidem*, Chapter 4, 25.

²⁹ K. Hoekstra, "The End of Philosophy (The Case of Hobbes)," 16, 30.

³⁰ T. Hobbes, *Leviathan*..., 30.

³¹ The term is used by Geraint Parry in "The Sovereign as Educator" (713) with special reference to Sheldon Wolin, *Politics and Vision: Continuity and Innovation in Western Political Thought* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1961).

³² *Ibidem*, 713.

eign is “not to be in love with any form of government they see in their neighbor nations, more than with their own.”³³ Avoiding imitation of foreign affairs matches Hobbes’ plea to abandon the whole course of reading foreign doctrines that demonstrate a lexicon that is entirely irrelevant to that suggested by the “sovereign.”

State anti-cosmopolitanism

By opening up the issue of “bad imprinting” in Hobbes theory, in other words, the influence of foreign (and consequently dangerous) doctrines, we are led to the issue of cosmopolitan openness to encounters with otherness and of how the influential other comes up in Hobbesian thought; hence the relevance of the term “State anti-cosmopolitanism” that I will sketch here. First let us ask: who is susceptible to contamination from bad imprinting according to Hobbes? Is it the educator or is it the student and future citizen?

The answer seems evident (namely, the student) but becomes more ambiguous if we realize that Hobbes portrays both agents as vulnerable to vice due to the infectious effect that the dissemination of seditious doctrine has in society and the obvious incapacity of the State to maintain control. Both the educator and the student are inextricably affected by seditious doctrines because they both lack commitment to the sovereign’s doctrine. Hobbes invites the educators to stay put and defend their positions by seeking re-education on the principles of the true civil doctrine.

Hobbes says in *Behemoth* that universities which, as we understand, hold the seats of elite education “are the fountains of civil and moral doctrine, from whence the preachers and the gentry, drawing such water as they find, use to sprinkle the same (both from the pulpit and in their conversation) upon the people.”³⁴ The objective of true politics as taught in the universities, says Hobbes, should be chiefly directed by the ultimate educator in principle who is none other than the sovereign himself. Thoroughly equipped with the means of an innovative “science of speech” and “right reason” he should perform his duties of teaching true politics first to his chosen

³³ K. Hoekstra, “The End of Philosophy (The Case of Hobbes),” 326.

³⁴ T. Hobbes, *Behemoth*..., 236.

personnel consisting of public ministers “authorized to teach or enable others to teach,”³⁵ preachers, and gentlemen of the best sort “that imbibe good principles in their youth at the universities.”³⁶

Actual educators follow next in Hobbes’ hierarchy, where they form a sort of “critical mass.” Their duty should be to follow the words of the sovereign letter by letter and number by number; their teachings should be carefully monitored by public ministers who would have complete and inalienable authority over them. At the bottom of the hierarchy stands the learner whose bizarre naiveté, declared misunderstanding and natural capacity to desire novelty leaves him unprotected from the risks of indoctrination and contamination. It is easy for the learner to get carried away but also capable for him/her to remain loyal, if the course of learning is safely regulated and abides to the scriptures of the sovereign.

The term “State anti-cosmopolitanism,” which I wish to use here, has affinities with what Leo Strauss calls “the movement away from the study of past (present) States to the free construction of the future state.”³⁷ “State anti-cosmopolitanism” refers to the urgent need undertaken by the Hobbesian sovereign to conceptualize a theory of the State based solely upon his own appeal to reason and thus independent from bad influences which stem from foreign political doctrines. The employment of a new political language against the “foreign others” who question the supreme authority of the State could provide new analytical instruments for explaining domestic politics and regulating foreign influence at the time of Hobbes’ writing. Educators, under the guidance of public ministers, would be instructed to perform “duty” and secure political stability through education, where common citizenry would remain untouched by foreign doctrines and thus protected from foreign indoctrination.

By using education and language under the auspices of Hobbes’ *Leviathan*, the nation forms not only a defense against the “foreign other,” but also an ideal strategy, as led by the Sovereign, to resolve internal conflict and restore the nation’s lost dignity in the international sphere.

³⁵ T. Hobbes, *Leviathan*..., 228.

³⁶ T. Hobbes, *Leviathan*..., 228. See also in *Behemoth*, 237.

³⁷ L. Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes: Its Basis and Its Genesis*, The University of Chicago Press, 1936, 129.

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THE NEW RESILIENCE OF PACTED TRANSITION IN SPAIN



most-overused buzzword of the new century is resilience. Understood as our bouncing back from turbulence, vulnerability, disaster. Somehow, the concept of solidarity has been eclipsed. At best, solidarity has become defined minimally as a synonym for the downward flowing protection of the State. Social solidarity can be better understood as a resilience bubbling up from below in a new form of social pact-ing of *homo reciprocans* rather than *homo oeconomicus*.

With regard to present-day Spain, emerging is a new form of social pacting that is neither opaque nor exclusive. This is a form that is not imbricated within a cartelized or corporatist membrane reminiscent of Franco's Vertical Syndicate, and not sustained in some Post-Franco minimalist Transition toward democratization – a minimalist Transition obsessed with consensus and forgetting the trauma of the Civil War (17 July 1936 – 1 April 1939). That minimalist Post-Franco Transition has been only a surface dismantling of the Vertical Syndicate, making use of direct grants to coopt the trade union movement.

Tides of social insertion

We can discern a new emergent form of bonding connection, and with it a New Transition. It is a form that recalls Spanish traditions of municipal mutual aid initiatives (1840s–1936) within a confluence strategy of municipalist, interurban, and inter-regional pacts among Popular Unity platforms and Tides (*mareas*). These connected with the evolving 15 M (15 May 2011) *Indignados* movement and together they became aligned with an anti-eviction movement (*PAH: Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca*), and a movement of over fifty percent youth unemployment (the *Precariat*).

As such, *Los Indignados* (Stéphan Hessel's Outraged Lost Generation) is not some prefigurative moment or early stage of a new political party called Podemos (Yes We Can!). The Outraged represent alternative experienced forms of life within what Gilles Deleuze refers to as horizontal and rhizomatic networks. They recall André Gorz's meditation on 1968: *Farewell to the Working Class*. They are the actualization of Gorz's prescient sensing of a coming precarious non-class of the temporary and non-unionized in a farewell to the middle class/ *embourgeoisement* social welfare policies antedating the neoliberal epoch.

The Indignados Movement articulates legitimization claims as a response to declining expectations in employment and life chances. Labor and social policy reforms of austerity imposed by the Spanish Government with the impetus of the European Union signify an end to the goals of *embourgeoisement*, associated with the 1959–1975 economic boom and the establishment of a Spanish welfare state with some “patchy nets.”

The 2008 globalized crisis was a crisis in the financialization of everyday life where capacity had been mortgaged, where consumers had been manipulated to become addicted to credit. Spain became confronted with multiple legitimization crises:

- the crisis of the Keynesian welfare state which is eclipsed with the financial Keynesianism of the neoliberal epoch;
- a late developing paternalistic Franco welfare state with promises of *embourgeoisement* is put into crisis, sadly such a welfare state is rooted in concerns of risk rather than those of solidarity;
- the inability to sustain social welfare benefits;
- stagnant wages and growing social inequality;
- the decline of the trade unions and their confederations; and
- the failure of the education system to new technology and market need.

While bringing on a universalizing public health care system and extending the public education system, social democratic Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez (1982–1996) became linked to banking elites like Miguel Boyer and Carlos Solchega who constrain Gonzalez to focus more on inflation than on unemployment. In the agreement to enter the European Union, Gonzalez accepted the condition to flex up labor law reforms. He went on to lead the deregulating of the labor market, as well as dismantling the country's industrial infrastructure – thus eroding its working class organization. This results in a rise of temporary contract work and a decline in the influence of labor unions. At the same time, housing rentals were deregulated.

The 2008 Crisis saw the collapse of the savings and loan credit unions (*cajas caixas*) linked with real estate bubbles and renewable energy bubbles. This ultimately led to a European Union 100 billion Euro bail out and European Central Bank monitored rescue plan. The *caijas* started in the 19th century as pawn shops, not for generating income for shareholders like commercial banks. Of 45 that existed at the start of 2007, only 2 remain. The rest have either been taken over by the government or forced into bank mergers that resulted in wiping out the equity holders. Meanwhile, those at the command posts of both the political-administrative and economic systems concoct schemes to “extract resources” from taxpayers for their own benefit while colonizing the *caijas* to provide easy credit to prop up consumer demand.

The Spain of 2008 and today is a State – a Regime – more than a nation. Afflicted with multiple legitimization crises, de-stabilizing impasses and trauma, a sense of trust in the Regime is vitiated. Consequently, there is a loosening and weakening of the Regime's integrative capacity and resonant capacity of inter-connection. Mistrust of the Regime gives justification for breaking off or changing familiar paths and shaping new ones. A circle of repetition is broken, setting off novel institutional imagined forms and practices.

In the wake of the economic crisis of 2008, Spain has witnessed what Henri Lefebvre would call an “eruption” of liminal spaces of possibility: new spaces of self-spreading flows of new elective affinities; new spaces of becomingness; and critically new spaces of social insertion. Social insertion is understood as a new form and as a new space:

– It is understood as *an embodied form of knowledge, and as new mediated form of politics*: an ensemble of new interpretive frames embedded and lodged

both alongside and within the new Post-Franco Transition State. The Indignados movement is constituted by its own asserted and inserted social frameworks of knowledge and their signifying meaning.

– It is also understood as *a new social space of possibility*: a space of flows, a new moral economy, a new political ecology of social praxis. This is an imaginatively created symbolic space for posing and trying alternative forms of life, new participation codes, and most importantly, new trust networks. Such trust-producing resources provide the “glue” holding together the Indignados as a movement for social insertion: resources that are regenerated as bonds, as shared values and norms, and as realized new capabilities.

Cristina Flesher-Fominaya¹ details the tides of social insertion in Madrid, Barcelona, Galicia, Valencia and Aragón – making possible new types of credit pools and *mutualité*/cooperative enterprises. *Digital interface* between laptops, smartphones and their programs became a new point of conjuncture, and an expansion of spatial capability and autonomy in the development and dispersion of prefigurative movement conceptions, designs, rallies and occupations. This amounts to spatial reorganization – in varieties of “parallel spaces”: the development of new alternatives in infrastructures of political communication, and the production of social learning. Network nodes here are not centrally coordinated; indeed they were becoming increasingly decentered/decentralized.

The concept of social insertion characterizes the movement for an increasingly shared or solidarity-based economy. The intention is to rebuild new social relationships around some radical revision of the market and practices of an excessively commodified environment. Critical movement space constituted in the new social pact-ing can *scale up* the sharing of local initiatives based on what Nobel economic laureate Elinor Ostrom² labels as “reciprocators” (*reciproqueurs*) rather than as individuated entrepreneurs.

¹ C. Flesher Fominaya: “Debunking Spontaneity: Spain’s 15 M Indignados as Autonomous Movement,” *Social Movement Studies* 14/2 (2015), 142–163; and “Redefining the Crisis Redefining Democracy: Mobilizing for the Right to Housing in Spain’s PAH Movement,” *South European Politics and Society* 12/4 (2015), 465–485. Cf. I. Martín, “Podemos y otros modelos de partido-movimientos,” *Revista española de Sociología* 24 (2015), 107–114.

² E. Ostrom, *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions of Collective Action*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

A confluence of tides

The Indignados sees itself as

- organized spontaneously as a parallel universe outside and separate from the power structures of a globalized market; as well as
- a movement of “autonomism: emphasizing horizontality in diffuse and *multi-scalar reconfigurings of spaces with transversal negotiations and projections*.”

What is revealed in the Indignados is a movement strategy of *Confluence of disaffection*, legitimation claims, and collective identity. This Confluence of Tides involves a feeling of righteous breaking off and provocative counterpoint to the referents, rhythms, and resonance of the Post-Franco Transition State. Street demonstrations and occupation of the public squares triggered by the Indignados Movement assemblies overlap, overlay, metamorphosize, and crystallize into all sorts of hybridized and transversal forms. The Movement opens up to a new social ecology of critical spaces with an emphasis on micropolitics wherein there emerge new understandings of citizens’ shared responsibility in managing risks in an age of increased vulnerability.

What is constituted discursively is what Charles Tilly³ called a *trust regime* or a *trust network* wherein there is an imaginary framework with which to reconfigure institutional practices. Trust networking increasingly called paranodality involves more than a single dominating code. As local and horizontal collaborative embodied engagements for solidarity-based exchange and consumption, these Indignados social pacts intend a radical revision of the market by disrupting assimilated neoliberal understandings of how we consume goods and services. In a sense, it is the *double movement* described in 1944 by Karl Polanyi,⁴ by which society knows how to defend and protect itself and its basic needs with their own re-appropriating alternatives in an excessively commodified environment fueled often by debt bondage. Buffeted by more than monopolistic competition forces of globalization, they challenge the illusions of “expansionary growth” which dismantles the protections and benefits of what remains of the social democratic welfare state.

³ Ch. Tilly, *Contentious Performances*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

⁴ K. Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political Origins of Our Times*, Boston: Beacon, 1944. Cf. J. Beckert, “The Great Transformation of Embeddedness: Karl Polanyi and the New Economic Sociology,” MPIfG Discussion Paper 07/1 Max Planck Institut für Gesellschaftsforschung, Cologne, 1971.

Newly created mediations emerged in the Indignados Movement to defend The Social:

- *marea blanca* (white tide) in defense of public health care;
- *marea verde* (green tide) in defense of public education;
- *marea roja* (red tide) focusing on the unemployed;
- *marea violeta* (violet tide) against sexist violence and family abuse; and
- *marea azul* (blue tide) against the privatization of water and social services.

There is a confluence into an anti-austerity coalition of *Marea Ciudadana* (citizens' tides) comprised of hundreds of thousands from 350 organizations from health groups to trade unions to youth groups to shared economy cooperatives.

These are fugitive flashes – fugitive emergent moments – bearers of mutually recognizable signifiers and commitments transversing the force field of finance capital and entrenched elites. J. M. Bernstein⁵ refers to these as flashes of “fugitive ethical moments” that haunt the present as they rupture it out of a time with strong durational intensity.

These fugitive flashes in the wake of the 15 M Indignados Movement include such socially pacted initiatives as:

- solidarity-based barter networks and local community currencies;
- districts of solidaristic economy;
- solidarity purchasing groups/procurement groups;
- time banks where time and skill can be swapped instead of money to enable a community to meet unmet needs where money is not the unit of account;
- microfinancing and social enterprises;
- ethical banks;
- new forms of consumer/producer cooperatives;
- community renewable energy initiatives;
- self-organized eco-housing initiatives;
- insulation-pooling initiatives;
- local organic food schemes; and
- community gardens/sustained agriculture.

There is in the Confluence of Tides the making use of new disposition to blog contentiously: asserting legitimization claims; redrawing space; and renegotiating relations with the State. Blogging diarists become activists persuading co-producing reciprocators of the social re-assertion/insertion in a mutually referent network. The Confluence of Tides is grounded in digitally empowered pub-

⁵ J. M. Bernstein, *Adorno: Disenchantment and Ethics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

lic space where sustainable community-based organizations are devised and put into effect with a more socialist than capitalist sense of a shared economy – a sensibility grounded in solidarity-based exchanges and networks.

As a movement for a socially pacted democracy in Spain, the 15 M Indignados is a broad signifier foreshadowing a more confederal frame of thinking which can imaginatively anticipate and project a more flexible institutional architecture for a poly-centric, and possibly a pluri-national Spain. They harken a socially pacted New Transition.

Such social pact-ing emerges beyond the older mutual aid of *municipalismo*. These are bootstrapping initiatives involving what Ostrom refers to as pooling of common resources and information. They involve social learning by mutual learning, and the making of multi-stakeholder pacts, i.e. codes of mutual reference.⁶

The Confluence of Tides argues for and establishes a solidarity-based economy from the bottom-up, in a way not set down by State institutions. The new social pact-ing in Spain recursively re-embeds and re-inserts the social in the sense of developing roles for sharing responsibility in adapting to managing risk in an epoch of increasing vulnerability. Rather than state-initiated concertation, the new social pact-ing from below is purely civil society initiated within their own general assemblies, the social pacts involves pooling common efforts and information (*en Común*) for bootstrapping across multiple scales, mutually setting standards and triggering sanctions. This amounts to a form of heterarchical and horizontal cooperative risk co-regulation.

Politically, as a left populism, the Indignados movement weaves new forms of local and horizontal collaborative initiatives. A Confluence of new Popular Unity Platform Parties and grass roots initiatives secured control of the main Spanish cities in the May 2015 municipal elections. And with the National Election of December 2015 in view, Confluence sentiment is articulated by autumn in a new national party platform Ahora en Común (AeC). However, the new party Podemos (Yes We Can!) pulls a brake on this momentum.

Constituted and constrained by internal party assemblies (*circulos*). Podemos' meteoric rise led the May 2015 electoral victories. But Podemos resists Izquierda Unida attempts to grab control of AeC. Breaking the knottedness is newly installed Mayor Ada Colau of Barcelona who founded the PAH anti-evictions

⁶ K. Bäckstrand, "Multistakeholder Partnerships for Sustainable Development: Rethinking Legitimacy, Accountability and Effectiveness," *European Environment* 16 (2006), 290–306.

movement. She takes her own Barcelona en Comün party into alliance with Podemos as *En Comün Podem* (In Common We Can. Together with Izquierda Unida, the political party alliance Confluence scores 20 per cent of parliamentary seats (80 out of 350) in the National Elections of December 2015 and June 2016.

Ada Colau⁷ declares that it is time for moving from "occupy to planning democracy." Democracy is understood not just as workplace industrial democracy, but in terms of a transformation in the social relations sustaining the capitalist mode of production. The Indignados will have to move from unmediated politics of rage and affinity groups networking to institutionalizing the new politics of Confluence. This would mean renewing the politics of the Post-Franco Transition State from a perspective of more radical democracy and more solidarity economy projects constituted from the bottom-up and framed in a synergistic network of plural visions of society.

The emergent Sustainable Community Movement Organizations (SCMOs)

The Confluence of Tides reveal a new imaginary – a genealogy of moral re-valuation in the reciprocal solidarity of more socialist-tending shared economy. Social economics, following Francesco Forno and Giacomo D'Alisa, has come to brand this new form as Sustainable Community Movement Organizations, SCMOs.⁸ Such a phenomenon is anticipated in the writings of the young Lewis Mumford: *Sticks and Stones* (1924) and *The Golden Day* (1926). These SCMOs stimulate new awareness, as well as new paradigms of choice and responsibility.

Sustainability – according to the 1987 Bruntland United Commissions Report on Environment and Development – denotes "development that meets the need of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." Sustainable community movement connotes

⁷ A. Colau and A. Alemany, *Vidas Hipotecadas: De la Burja Inmobiliaria al Derecho a la Vivienda*, Barcelona: Angle, 2012. Cf. X. Fina, *Els Cent Primer Dies d'Ada Colau*, Barcelona: Portic, 2012.

⁸ F. Forno and P. Graziano, "Sustainable Community Movement Organizations," *Journal of Consumer Culture* 14/2 (2014), 139–157; and G. D'Alisa, F. Forno and S. Maurano, "Grassroots (Economic) Activism in Times of Crisis: Mapping the Redundancy of Collective Action," *PACO: Partecipazione e Conflitto* 5/2 (2015), 328–342.

- emphasizing not only price and product quality but what can be called “political consumer behavior”; specifically, how we understand the act of consuming a fundamental part of the production process;
- beyond political consumerist awareness, experimenting in alternative modes of sustainable living;
- constituting eco-systems evolving toward sustainability as an open participatory process of empowered voluntary stakeholders;
- cultivating a moral economy wherein durable social bonds of reciprocity and cooperation can be built in terms of “shared stewardship,” re-embedding economics activities in social relations and unveiling a sense of connection;
- “commoning” to foster a collective/cooperative process of social learning and participative decision-making; and
- appropriately gauging contextual scale – “moving to scale” – in best managing production and consumption: not necessarily anti-consumerist but (i) focused on alternative forms of consumption, and (ii) multi-scalar oriented, neither shunning global context nor just focusing on local scale.⁹

Under Mayor Ada Colau’s Barcelona en Comú municipal government has crystallized as a meshwork of new *commoning* SCMO projects that bridge social capital and solidary economy. Ten percent of the city’s economy is based on cooperatives in 1300 specific SCMO ventures. For example, networks like Gulf.net and SemiEnergiaCoop are coordinated by Decim Barcelona (Decide Barcelona) and BarCola, web platforms for public deliberation and decision-making.

In Zaragoza, la Magdalena is a solidarity economy district that brings together some 688 active cooperatives and SCMOs in the province of Aragón. By the end of 2014, those 688 represented a doubling in size in one year. The Luis Bunuel Community Center serves as an important hub, and there is strong assistance from the Zaragoza City Council and the SUSY (Social and Solidarity Economy) Project, a platform of the European Commission of the EU that links 23 national SCMO efforts from Portugal to Estonia.

Like elsewhere in Spain, this meshwork crystallizing and coming together is rooted in traditions of historical *municipalismo*, associationalism and

⁹ G. Alperovitz and R. Hanna, “Mondragón and the System Problem,” *Truthout*, editorial, 1 November 2013. Alperovitz and Hanna discuss the bankruptcy of Fagor Electrod, part of the large Basque cooperative Mondragón as a result of competing in the global market with Chinese companies. They stress “moving to scale”: what we discuss as gauging what level in multi-scalarity of markets and political arenas a cooperative should play.

syndicalism. We can study the durability of presence of this new resilient social pact-ing in the social re-insertion of these SCMO ensembles:

- How they engender webs of mutual recognition among “islands of alternatives in a capitalist sea.”

- How they comprise some sort of networked moral economy.

- How they are connected with each other. Specifically, how they are linked in inter-urban, inter-regional and trans-border networks as chains – chains of solidarity production, procurement, exchange, consumption, and financing in new forms of cooperatives/mutual aid societies.

- How they infuse a regenerated democratic spirit and agenda of the Post-Franco Transition.

The new resilient social pact-ing in Spain is an intersubjective developing of resilience through “communing,” that is through pooling goods and services, and through pooling resources and social learning. Commoning involves founding and enforcing institutions for governing knowledge and resources over time through actions, producing and reproducing connective structures and social bonds over time through actions.

Concretely, the new resilient social pact-ing is grounded in the *decentered mutual stakeholder pact* – known as *the frame agreement*.¹⁰ This is a protocolism of standard-setting and task reciprocity based on continued negotiated rule-making and rule-enforcing. The underlying concept here comes from video compression technology wherein an image is established as a base, and subsequent images are stored only as changes from the base.

¹⁰ K. Bäckstrand, *op. cit.*

A NEW ENQUIRY
CONCERNING
THE OLD WORLD

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A NEW ENQUIRY CONCERNING THE OLD WORLD



he Philosophy section comprises a wide variety of topics and issues, ranging from classical ontology and epistemology, to contemporary political philosophy. Respectively, the division into subsections corresponds to problematics discussed by the authors. The titles of the particular subsections cover the categories of philosophy or, due to the non-use of a dominant theme in the entire monograph, they are merely descriptions of the content.

The subsection entitled 'Eschatology' (papers by William Proios, Stella Marega, Shala Barczewska and Paulina Barańska) is to some extent an exception since the term is associated with theology, having little in common with philosophical enquiry *per se*. The reason for the inclusion is the broad scope of subjects discussed in the entire section, presented from multifarious angles and perspectives transcending the boundaries of philosophy as an academic discipline. This interdisciplinary and all-encompassing approach is undoubtedly connected with the turn of the centuries and the beginning of a new millennium, themes that feature in all papers in this section.

Friedrich Nietzsche is by far the most discussed philosopher (paper by Endre Kiss is exclusively devoted to Nietzsche), which is hardly surprising since his texts, in a natural way, recap paramount themes and leitmotifs discussed during the conference. Emphasis placed on the death and rebirth cycle, so prominent in Nietzsche's writings, is discernable here, regardless of the subject matter, approach and methods of enquiry.

Besides Nietzsche, it is Thomas Hobbes that stands out. This seems to be primarily connected to the recent political events and their reflection in specific problems and challenges faced by the contemporary Europe. Alternatives offered by Hobbes, most thoroughly exposed in the *Leviathan*, but also present in

his other works, deserve a second look in what is generally perceived as the crisis of democracy as we know it.

Curiosity is the most widely discussed concept. Located on the boundary of the early modern and modernity, renaissance and enlightenment, curiosity is key to understanding the paradigm shift that occurred in that period. By extension, it could be perceived as fundamental for contemporary reasoning and *Weltanschauung*. Curiosity comes to light in moments of transition that occur in different periods and philosophical/religious systems. Such liminal borderzones, understood literally and figuratively, are of interest to a number of authors, including Geoffrey Hinchliffe and Giorgos Kataliakos.

In general, the papers offer many new insights and enquiries into philosophical subjects, present in mainstream scholarship as well as research avenues located on the margins of current academic discourse. As a result, the authors discover or rediscover intriguing patterns and ideas even in the works of philosophers who are deemed as milestones in the development of Western thought: Spinoza, Hobbes, Descartes and Nietzsche. By so doing they show the ever-present actuality of philosophy that is, among others, concerned with questions of being and knowing in time; any moment and any time.

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INNOVATIVE PERSPECTIVES OF NIETZSCHE'S POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY IN THE GLOBAL THEORY OF DEMOCRACY



hat Nietzsche's philosophy should be interpreted not as just a new philosophy among others, but also a philosophy of a "new type", makes certainly a problem. In the case of a "political" philosophy, our "natural" innervations are looking toward a system, if not just toward a holistic philosophical system, from which then the "subsystem politics" should derive without any difficulty. In the case of not only non-systematical, but a-, if not just anti-systematical philosophy, the task to reconstruct the politics appears differently.¹

The more intense we study the hermeneutics of Nietzsche's politically implemented philosophical perspectives, the stronger will be our insight that Nietzsche's political philosophy is not only worth a correct and total reconstruction, but can also renew our concept of the evolution of the political thought as well as contribute, at the same time, immediately to the intellectual solution of a range of new theoretical problems.

Why might it have not been so for long, we can on the one hand give a response, while another deeper dimension of the answer is not yet guaranteed at all by new and adequate researches. Without a doubt, it is clear that the possibility of this new view immediately depends on a specific "dialectics of the compromise (*Kompromittierung*)", on the "compromise of the compromise", on Alfred Bauemler's and Georg Lukács' intellectual and moral disqualification.² For a re-

¹ E. Kiss, "Toward the Definition of Friedrich Nietzsche's True Political Philosophy," in: E. Kiss (ed.), *Friedrich Nietzsche and the Global Problems of Our Time*, Junghans: Cuxhaven – Dartford, 1997.

² E. Kiss, "Nietzsche, Bauemler oder die Möglichkeit einer positiven politischen Metaphysik," *Annales Universitatis Scientiarum Budapestiensis de Rolando Eötvös*, Section Philosophica et Sociologica, 16, 1982, 182–196.

searcher, such as the author of these lines, the acts and diverse manipulations of Nietzsche's unique compromise (*Kompromittierung*), in which, by the way, the peculiar thesis of the "social fascism" fully proved itself in an intellectual point of view, were a well known everyday experiment.

The disappearance of the moments of suspicion, always present and poked by the political apparatus against Nietzsche, began a new start. It is more complicated with the other and deeper level of this questioning. Namely, why were we not in a position to recognize and reconstruct Nietzsche's "real" political philosophy also during the supremacy of Bauemler's and Lukács' global promise? On a deeper level, this question leads to systematically hermeneutical problems of principles.

It is above all about the structural position of the unique fundamental enunciations as well in Lukács as also in Bauemler, which have also radiated on the purely hermeneutical levels lying also beyond the politics, so that they allowed, in the true sense of the word, "hermeneutically" no possibility or no hermeneutical space to manifest any political questionings *independently* of the totalitarian options.

The challenge of the reconstruction of Nietzsche's political philosophy, outgrown from the fundamental and general perspectivism of this philosophy, becomes only much greater, if we necessary realize the today concrete assessment of the diverse philosophical aspects. It namely becomes clear that, while some philosophical perspectives are already today the basis of diverse new paradigms, other philosophical perspectives are still occurring up to now either as amazingly new or in other cases as banal.³

The systematical location of Nietzsche's reconstructed political philosophy generates new fundamental theoretical problems. The approach of the political philosophies is generally two-fold. One part thematizes essentially the problematic of the *constitution*, or questions of the other possible integrating institutions of the political community, or of their regulation. Another part of the political philosophies thematizes *against* the problematic of the *power* as focus of all theoretical problems of democracy. (The sketched dual typology could be completed, according to expectations, by the mediatized third type of the political philosophies, namely by the fully elaborated theories of the treaties which, according to expectations, are mediatizing between the *democratical-theoretical* and the *power-oriented* types also objectively and historically).

³ G. Deleuze, *Nietzsche et la philosophie*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1962, 28–35.

Nietzsche is now regarded first effectively as a political philosopher, who is interested, within the objective complex of the politics, above all in the widely understood problematic of the *power*. And thus, Nietzsche's participation in the greatest groups of the typology of the political philosophy apparently comes already to its end.

In my paper I attempt to demonstrate that Nietzsche, just as much rightly, *has to be taken into consideration also for the democracy-theoretical type*. Thus, through the fact that his political thought has been effectively concentrated on the problematic of power, Nietzsche represents a very rare mixture and synthesis between both types. For it is in fact rare amongst the pertinent representatives of the political philosophy that their interest could be balanced that way.⁴

Friedrich Nietzsche appears as a political philosopher, that primarily considers the political field as a core problematic of the political power, that can however conceive the present form of existence of the power in the Modern Age only in the framework of the democratic institutions.

"Europe's democratization" is inexorable,⁵ enunciates his deepest and determining vision, that largely defines his attitude. Already now, the similarity has to be pointed out, that consists in the described character of this enunciation and in that of the sentence "God is dead". Here, we however do not want to affirm any deeper correspondence between both enunciations "God is dead" or "the democratization is inexorable", which would open in principle the possibility of multiple interpretations. It is only about the *similarity* in the attitude of the philosopher in both of these broadest problems of his world-historical time. In the realization of the fundamental similarity in the attitude, the interpretation between Nietzsche's own initiatives and the facts he barely perceived, can make the right choice.

Nietzsche's insight in the process of Europe's inexorable democratization obviously corresponds to a large range of important historical facts and turns, that constitute the European history (which is, in this period, still essentially identical with the world history). We find however, also in the treatment of universally known European facts, some singular qualities of the Nietzschean thought.

⁴ E. Kiss, *Friedrich Nietzsche evilági filozófiája. Kriticismus és életreform között*, Budapest: Gondolat, 2005, 354.

⁵ *Friedrich Nietzsche. Sämtliche Werke. Kritische Studienausgabe* (KSA), G. Colli and M. Montinari (ed.), München, Berlin, New York: dtv, Walter de Gruyter, 1980, Vol. 2, 671.

The most important Nietzschean train and also most constitutive in the theory formation is a temporal train. His knowledge in the inexorable democratization occurs at a time when the revolutions in Europe are not just *not* achieving their objective, but also when operating and occasional even successful *non-democratic* political establishments are arriving on the scene. Exactly this time is characterized almost by a mastership of the *limitation* and *reduction* of democratic institutions (we have to mention Napoleon III or even Bismarck's foundation of German Empire). Regarding the thesis of Europe inexorable democratization, Nietzsche showed *more intellectual imagination* than it would have been necessary earlier in any historical period.⁶

This also means, simultaneously, that Friedrich Nietzsche testifies, in this context, a theoretically generalized, nevertheless non-ideological view of the history. The question occurs immediately, whether Nietzsche cannot be conceived in many references precisely as the articulation of a new paradigm. For directly the aphorism 450 in *Human, All Too Human* "new and old concept of government" borders on the old paradigm and points in the direction of a new one. Here, Nietzsche debates of the change caused in the "government" "by the influence of the prevailing constitutional form of government", i.e. generally in the ruling power exercise, of democratic or pre-democratic provenance. Nietzsche confronts the old and new modes of government" (i.e. of the "democratic power exercise").

No doubt that Nietzsche describes here the characteristics of the specifically democratic exercise of the power directly from two different perspectives with a permanent validity. On the one hand, he points out the end of the bipolar structure of the "above" and of the "below", which also saved up to the later times a leading, however outdated pertinence in the political consciousness. When critically eliminating an archaic idea or perception of the political reproduction, Nietzsche describes also a new phenomenon. It's the new reality of the democratic exercise of the power, while the "above" and the "below" are not two spheres carefully separated from each other, but a sole complex, and invest in their reality a real result of real forces. This result has also a very clearly outlined theoretical concept. From this one however, the political life is explained in a vision of the history and of the society, for this new conception of the political distribution of the power lets make transparent also a social and political reality of the permanent reconstruction (no "above" and "below", but a game of real forces in their concrete state, that abscond any precedent categorization).

⁶ E. Kiss, "Toward the Definition of Friedrich Nietzsche's True political Philosophy", 143.

Nietzsche's often striking description of the new relationship between state and religion is also closely connected with his insight in this new historical context that is envisaged simultaneously in the sphere and *only* in the sphere of the inexorable democratization.

Despite the perception of religion as “opium of the people” (it needs to be emphasized that we are not interpreting the statement in the vulgar-Marxist sense, but rather in that original sense, which Marx adopted from Herder's great philosophy of the history, according to which the “opium” refers to the extent of the earthly sufferings and not to the manipulation of rulers), and on the other hand, the hypothesis of a necessary, nevertheless fateful way of the secularized politics, Nietzsche formulates an almost breath-depriving thesis, or hypotheses about the real political motives of the secularization.

We could call Nietzsche's approach “functional”, that he uses himself by the way in this quotation, since he recurses to the decisive functional change in the “government” for a functional questioning according to the new value of the religion. He describes this fundamental insight in an excellent way, as consequences of this “functional” turn deciding social phenomena (and the beauty defect of the political sciences and of the political theory since Nietzsche consists in the fact, that they have not yet debated with the same determining phenomena, so that Nietzsche thereby also gets the right to be regarded as a pioneer in the domain of the political theory).

Nietzsche thus describes, in the same context, the consequences for the religion, the process that necessarily shook the religion in its social function. When direct interventions of the force of the state are resolved, now they arise and are dispersing into the extreme. Later it is revealed that the religion of sects is hushed up, the process, such as religious attitudes are taken off, as well as the further consequence, that the politics contains an antireligious character. Almost as final word of this description, that can also been assessed and emphasized *as autopoiesis of political and social processes*. Not only the real historical process confirms many times later this description, but the whole reconstruction of this process is also unique and extremely strong in explanations for us.

Friedrich Nietzsche's view on the modern democracy is, as we saw it, anything but hostile. He starts – and here we again point out the strategic analogy of “God is dead” – from the reality and necessity of the modern democracy. In his analysis, his view concentrated on the political power that is – totally consistently – oriented on the democratic context. So he does not consider the realized political democracy as a no longer questionable optimal reality, rather as a political and social reality.

Nietzsche's first analytically deep point in the exploitation of the modern democracy is the problematic of the "short term", said differently, the lack of possibility of a "long term" work construction. It is obvious, that this insight is primarily not only not politically concretized, but also not followed for political motives. It is a pure philosophy of the history, that debates with the new *condition humaine* of the humanity.

Closely related to this, Nietzsche analyzes the abolition of the contrast "private and public"⁷ as the direct consequence of the new European democracy. The qualities of this insight cannot at all be measured solely by the factual contents of the insight, but show themselves in their true dimensions, only together with their entire intellectual context. For the analysis started with the affirmation of the changed relation between "above" and "below", continued through the proof of the lost function of the religion for the government, explained the extreme, the self-organisational successful increase of the competition between state and religion. The thesis (and the analysis) about the "abolition of the contrast" between private and public dimensions gets only in this whole context its entire importance. It does not reveal as a pure "idea", as an appropriate perspective maybe born at random from the workshop of a great thinker, but in principle as a consequence of any relevant development of the most important motives and components of the European politics and of the European societies. These ideas are not dictated by diverse and unknown impressions or passions, they are the outflow of a long and strained analytical work.

The thesis contains no "criticism" of the democracy, it is the description of one of its most essential tendencies, that precisely seems to have been in our days realized (Nietzsche could probably not have foreseen this) through the concretization of the neo-liberal conception of the state. For the vision of the "private entrepreneurs", who take care of the "old work" remaining from the old "government", adopts in our days a serious and worthy form. It is quite particularly important for Nietzsche's comprehension, that he does not conceive himself this final product of his analyzes as an analysis of the value ideas.

It is a particularly favorable moment also in that respect, that the extent of the relevance of the human image becomes here visible in Nietzsche. For the main tendencies in the development of the state or of the democratic institution are no mechanical determinations or otherwise fatalistic components for the mankind or for the society, but "opportunities", with a somewhat more modern

⁷ KSA 2, 305.

language “challenges”, to which man or the society gives answer. It is, as said, a very productive moment, because it makes transparent any superposed dependence of the human image and (amongst other) of the political philosophy, which is rather rarely expressed in Nietzsche through explicit formulations.

At this point, it is important to us, in a period of Nietzsche’s research when Alfred Baeumler’s and Georg Lukács’ shadows can still be alive from time to time, that Nietzsche’s real positions become obvious even in the context of the most critical points of the modern democracy.

Nietzsche’s fundamental vision on the democracy does not contain only the clear idea realized in this process, but also the idea of a political mechanism, that above all fell strongly into the theoretical oblivion because of the history of the twentieth century not has’nt stand in sign of the undivided ruling democracy. According to the fundamental thesis (“Europe’s democratization is inexorable”), which, as we have seen, gives its fully validity to Nietzsche’s political philosophy, it however sets itself through the announcement of this political mechanism so fallen in oblivion.

Nietzsche clearly describes the specificity of the democracy, that it can problemless build its opposition in its own deployment, a kind of “dynamical totalitarianism” of the democratic institution, that can create the opponents. The criticism of the democracy, the fears enthusiasming it were revealing in the course of the history already over and over again as effective enough to reinforce the establishment, or the system of the democratic institution.

That the strengths and the ability of implementation of the Nietzschean theory of the democracy or (because this theory of the democracy is still in a non-elaborated form), of Nietzsche’s political philosophy, consist in the fact that Nietzsche even assigns to the institution of the political democracy a definite position in a positively conceived overall human development (what guarantees immediately his commitment in this institution already from the beginning).

This work applies as an essay of reconstruction of Nietzsche’s political philosophy on the basis of his perspectivistic philosophy. Its efforts were directed toward demonstrating that, for Nietzsche, the institution of the modern democracy was not only an evidence, that he had rather incorporated already many times in his historical-philosophical option. Nietzsche is however not simply one of the most pertinent political philosophers, who put up their conceptions in the framework of the modern democracy, but one, that could formulate, through his main interest in the political power, also numerous new theoretical insights about this system.

These insights function as transitions to the reconstruction of Friedrich Nietzsche's other political-philosophical positions, for his analysis of the *power* and *socialism*, of the *mass* and *liberalism*, or of the etatism and *utopia*.


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THE BLASPHEMY OF EUROPE /THE EUROPE OF BLASPHEMY

 In this paper, I consider the utterance of Friedrich Nietzsche's madman that "God is dead"¹ as the "first" European blasphemy which transgresses the sacred in an attempt to recapture a meaning of life without any reference to God. The madman, after announcing the death of God, asks the following questions: "What festivals of atonement, what sacred games shall we have to invent? Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us? Must we ourselves not become gods simply to appear worthy of it?"² The questioning by the madman points to an apprehension that mortals can utilise the power taken from God to invent new games of power.

This paper focuses on what I see as a deification of the human, and I politicize its blasphemous character. Though today's politics appears to be grounded in the "temporal world, the temporal aspect of reality"³ of our secular age, the metaphor of God is still at work. For secularism implies an "understanding in which our moral, spiritual or religious experience and search takes place,"⁴ one which still seeks to express the secular in terms of "what was once theologically thought as realization, fulfilment and plenitude."⁵

¹ F. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. W. Kaufmann, New York: Vintage Books, 1974, 181.

² *Ibidem*, 181.

³ R. Panikkar, *Worship and Secular Man*, London: Orbis Books, 1973, 10.

⁴ Ch. Taylor, *A Secular Age*, Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2007, 3.

⁵ M. Papastephanou, "Ethics after God's Death and the Time of the Angels," *Cosmos and History: The Journal of Natural and Social Philosophy* 8, January 2012, 94–130.

Politics is still engaged in God-making operations,⁶ where the metaphor of God appears as a mechanism that works in “analogical relations; in that sense it tends to essentialize the link between the terms of the analogy (in our case, it tends to suture the relation between the empty place of power and the force occupying it).”⁷ To this purpose, I explore whether the political forces of cryopreservation of human embryos and European unification⁸ occupy in an analogical manner God’s empty space of power. Attention is drawn to how the political process of each project can be theogonic in its character, as it brings to the fore the noticeable difference between the “healthy” and the “weaker” species. In the case of cryopreservation of embryos, I look at how the process of eugenic selection generates a preference for the healthier embryos over the weaker ones, and in the case of European unification, I investigate whether such a project still retains in its political process elements of the Auschwitz⁹ selection between the strongest and the weaker species.

To this purpose, Giorgio Agamben’s concept of a politically constituted life and Jacques Derrida’s idea about the capital of sovereignty will be deployed to tease out the contradictory elements that arise out of these projects. The arguments about these projects will be positioned in a wider context, one which measures whether it is valid to claim that in democracy people still have a fair share of political power. In the final section, I utilise Jan Patočka’s arguments about the crisis of European heritage to argue about how European politics can ease the burdensome sense of the blasphemous from the name of Europe, if it reduces its persistent tendency to deify its political power.

⁶ A. Wernick, “From Comte to Baudrillard: Socio-Theology after the End of the Social,” *Theory, Culture and Society* 17, December 2000, 55–75. My attention to this article was drawn by the paper of M. Papastephanou mentioned in endnote 5.

⁷ E. Laclau, “Democracy and the Question of Power,” *Constellations* 8, March 2001, 3–14.

⁸ É. Balibar, *We the People of Europe – Reflections on Transnational Citizenship*, trans. J. Swenson, Princeton University Press, 2004, 3.

⁹ M. Thad Allen, “The Devil in the Details: The Gas Chambers of Birkenau, October 1941,” *Holocaust & Genocide Studies* 16, June 2002, 189–216. “Auschwitz has become a metonym for the horror of the Holocaust. Auschwitz-Birkenau-Monowitz [...] was a slave-labor empire, killing center, and human switchyard in one”.

Cryopreservation of human embryos: The fictional future of bodies

In this section, I discuss the technology of reproductive medicine that controls the cryopreservation¹⁰ of human embryos¹¹ in the context of the technocratic model.¹² This paradigm holds that the body is a machine that can be separated into a number of component parts. It was Michel Foucault who in his 1979 lecture on *The Birth of Biopolitics*¹³ pointed out the seminal distinction between a “semantic linking of governing (*gouverner*) and modes of thought (*mentalité*) [one which] indicates that it is not possible to study the technologies of power without an analysis of the political rationality underpinning them.”¹⁴ Rather, what becomes significant at this stage is whether such “political rationality,” the manner it takes charge of the “lives” of embryos, contains theogonic traces.

The pragmatic line of thinking in the technology of the cryopreservation of embryos, to ease the suffering of childless couples by promising a future bountiful with children, is expressed in terms of a redemptive language, one which implies the meaning of the salvation of our species. What becomes more noticeable at this stage is that the eugenic selection of embryos carries the implication that not all species merit the same salvation. The course of actions governing the eugenic selection of embryos by means of Preimplantation Genetic Diagnosis (PGD) distinguishes between: a “negative eugenic selection”, avoiding implanting embryos with genetic diseases or disabilities; and a “positive eugenic

¹⁰ *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines “cryopreservation” as “the process of storing cells, tissue, etc., at very low temperatures (typically around –200°C) in order to maintain their viability”.

¹¹ *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines “embryo” as “the unborn human offspring, esp. during the early stages of development”.

¹² R. Davies-Floyd, “The Technocratic, Humanistic, and Holistic Paradigms of Child-birth,” *International Journal of Gynaecology and Obstetrics* 75, November 2011, 5–23, <http://davis-floyd.com/uncategorized/the-technocratic-humanistic-and-holistic-paradigms-of-childbirth/> (23 May 2016).

¹³ M. Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics* – Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978–1979, ed. M. Senellart, trans. G. Burchell, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

¹⁴ T. Lemke, “‘The Birth of Bio-politics’: Michel Foucault’s Lecture at the Collège de France on neo-liberal governmentality,” *Economy and Society* 30, January 2001, 190–207.

selection”, that is, “the selection for traits unrelated to disease or disability.”¹⁵ The saving of the healthier species by the technology of reproductive medicine sounds more glorious, as these future children will possess the highest potential of expected well-being (EWG).

The point whether the technocratic model depoliticizes the “lives” of the embryos is discussed in the context of Giorgio Agamben’s concept of “bare life”. For Agamben, the “originary structure of Western politics [which] consists in an *ex-ceptio*, in an inclusive exclusion of human life in the form of bare life”¹⁶ brings about a distinction between politically qualified lives, which are entitled to rights, and bare life, stripped from any political qualification and entitlement to rights. Agamben’s distinction can turn the laboratories of cryopreservation into a “zone of contested and intensified political stakes around the threshold between what some would consider ‘prelife’ and what is to be identified as nascent human life, meaningful human life, and/or rights-bearing life.”¹⁷ The contestation about the exceptionality of the healthier embryos is amplified in the manner the neo-liberal market, as the “organizing and regulative principle underlying the state”¹⁸ appropriates the niche of reproductive medicine.

According to Foucault, the state loses its power to regulate the market, a loss that brings about a permanent change to the paradigm of the economic man (*homo oeconomicus*). Now, the economic man no longer operates as a partner of exchange with a “theory of utility based on a problematic of needs” but as “an entrepreneur of himself.”¹⁹ The technocrats of the cryopreservation position reproductive medicine in the domineering strategies of the market to promote the healthier embryos as a panacea for our endangered species. On the market, the high cost of these technologies, and the resulting limitation on the number of couples who can really access them, ultimately presses us to wonder whether the politics of the entrepreneur evokes again the “theogonic mythology of sovereignty.”²⁰ Both the entrepreneur and the cryopreservation specialist are in a state of exception, and like the sovereign,

¹⁵ M. Walker, “Eugenic Selection Benefits Embryos,” *Bioethics* 28, June 2014, 214–224.

¹⁶ G. Agamben, *The Use of Bodies*, trans. A. Kotsko, Redwood City CA: Stanford University Press, 2016, 263.

¹⁷ P. Deutscher, “The Inversion of Exceptionality: Foucault, Agamben, and ‘Reproductive Rights,’” *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 107, Winter 2008, 55–70.

¹⁸ T. Lemke, “The Birth of bio-politics...,” 200.

¹⁹ M. Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*..., 225–226.

²⁰ J. Derrida, *Rouges: Two Essays on Reason*, trans. P.-A. Brault and M. Naas, Redwood City CA: Stanford University Press, 2005, 17.

have a “power to decide, to be decisive, to prevail, to have reason over or win out over and to give force of law.”²¹

The effect of the market on the technologies of reproductive medicine, that favour the choice of the healthier embryos, can result in the “fetishization of all things ‘bio’.”²² This “fetishization” gradually erases the consistent value about the cryopreservation of human embryos. In this uncertain context, the economic factor considers the material resource of human embryos both as an asset and as a commodity. As an asset, such a resource is perceived as a “tangible or intangible resource to produce value and, at the same time, has value as property [...] [while as] a commodity [the resource] is an object produced for exchange.”²³ The value of reproductive technologies varies according to these contrasting positions, and in this sense,

the political economy of the life sciences depends on the realization of value from financial and knowledge assets through exchange on markets that are not only characterized by social order and social structures, as Aspers (2007, 2009) argues, but also by *social expectations*.²⁴

European unification: Remains of a fictional unity

The cindery foundations of European unification are reflected in Derrida’s poignant claim, “what remains without remaining from the holocaust, from the all-burning, from the incineration the incense.”²⁵ According to Primo Levi and Leonardo de Benedetti, at the Auschwitz camp, a routine procedure took place, the

“selection of the Muslims” (this picturesque term denoted precisely these extremely emaciated individuals) [...] with the most physically broken down being singled out to be dispatched to the gas chambers.²⁶

²¹ *Ibidem*, 13.

²² K. Birch and D. Tyfield, “Theorizing the Bioeconomy: Biovalue, Biocapital, Bioeconomics or...What?,” *Science, Technology, & Human Values* 38, May 2013, 299–327.

²³ *Ibidem*, 302.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, 322.

²⁵ J. Derrida, *Cinders*, trans. N. Lukacher, intr. C. Wolfe, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014, 25.

²⁶ P. Levi with L. De Benedetti, *Auschwitz Report*, trans. J. Woolf, New York: Verso, 2006, 71–72.

The Holocaust becomes a symbol of two different “gestures”, one that represents an authoritarian politics privileging the fittest while producing the daily burning of two thousand corpses in the furnaces and the other of political inaction by the British/American governments that had received preliminary information about what was happening at Auschwitz and no steps had been immediately taken.²⁷ Today, we ask whether the process of European unification repeats these two “gestures”, particularly when European politics privileges the “strongest” nations over the “weakest” ones, and when such politics fails to take action in the face of issues where destruction on a large scale happens, as in the case of immigration.

According to Rodolphe Gasché, the project of European unification is an infinite task, as it always seeks to strike a balance between the temporal suspension, and momentary invocation, of the name of Europe. While the former gesture allows us to cease thinking that European politics is always authoritarian, the latter presses us to remember European politics as being hospitable and responsible.²⁸ European politics must retain the name of Europe. Without such name citizens would run the risk to live in a “myriad of provinces, into a multiplicity of self-enclosed idioms or petty little nationalisms, each one jealous and untranslatable.”²⁹

Zygmunt Bauman claims that European politics must “venture, experiment”³⁰ in the fraught connection between political gestures that lead to no novelty as they keep repeating the “capital of a centralizing authority,”³¹ and other political gestures which create a new “dialectical process and open history.”³² But to bring about this new “dialectical process”, we need

to have the courage (or the madness) to ask in today’s conditions: under what conditions might it become possible again? Where are the potentialities for a different future? How can they be released by assigning responsibility for the past but avoiding

²⁷ M. Fleming, “Allied Knowledge of Auschwitz: A (Further) Challenge to the ‘Elusiveness’ Narrative,” *Holocaust & Genocide Studies* 28, April 2014, 31–57.

²⁸ R. Gasché, *Europe, or the Infinite Task: A Study of a Philosophical Concept*, Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009, 346–347.

²⁹ J. Derrida, *The Other Heading: Reflections on Today’s Europe*, trans. P.-A. Brault and M. B. Naas, intr. M. B. Naas, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1992, 39.

³⁰ Z. Bauman, *Europe – An Unfinished Adventure*, Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2004, 2.

³¹ J. Derrida, *The Other Heading...*, 30.

³² J. Derrida, *Cinders...*, 26.

the fruitless exercise of repeating it?³³

Knowing that “sovereignty is round; it is a rounding off”,³⁴ the vicious cycle of authoritarian politics is difficult to break. In this sense, one measures whether the political process of European unification leads again to “actual conformity,”³⁵ as it happened in the Enlightenment. According to Jacques Rancière, in order to bring an interruption in European authoritarian politics, we have to “seek the principle of politics and of its supplementary nature in the conjunction, or disjunction, of the two terms ‘people’ and ‘power’.”³⁶ In this sense, the politics of Europe remains in great debt to its people, as it has to rise to the challenge to explore new political channels on the relation between “power” and “people”. It is at the moment of such decision, that we rise to the impossible task of asking ardently what really our responsibility towards the other is. We may find a partial answer to the above questions in this claim by Derrida:

“Perhaps”, one must always say perhaps for justice. There is an *avenir* for justice and there is no justice except to the degree that some event is possible which, as event, exceeds calculation, rules, programs, anticipations and so forth. Justice as the experience of absolute alterity is unrepresentable, but it is the chance of the event and the condition of history.³⁷

The Europe of blasphemy: Politics as *bricolage* in a godless warehouse

Throughout this article, I discussed the examples of the projects of cryo-preservation of human embryos and European unification to question whether these games of power in the void of God did really invent new political gestures. In this sense, the technocrats of today look more like *bricoleurs* engaged

³³ É. Balibar, *We, the People of Europe...*, 3.

³⁴ J. Derrida, *Rouges...*, 13.

³⁵ T. Adorno and M. Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, New York Verso, 1979, 12.

³⁶ J. Rancière, “Should Democracy Come? Ethics and Politics in Derrida,” in: P. Cheah and S. Guerlac (eds.), *Derrida and the Time of the Political*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009, 274–288.

³⁷ J. Derrida, “Force of Law: The ‘Mystical Foundation of Authority,’” in: D. Cornell, M. Rosenfeld and D. Gray Carlson (eds.), *Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice*, Routledge, 1992, 3–67.

to take whatever task is at hand. Claude Lévi Strauss distinguishes the *bricoleur* from the engineer by telling us that the former “is adept at performing a large number of diverse tasks; but, unlike the engineer, he does not subordinate each of them to the availability of raw materials and tools conceived and procured for the purpose of a project.”³⁸ The work of politics, rather than just ending in the programme of the camps at Auschwitz, as Agamben implies, can appear more to be a *bricolage*, a spectacle of an extensive repertoire where the lives of others are entertained. In this sense, politics, rather than appearing as in the process of assembling parts and engineering them in a project with a specific end, appears to be motivated by piecemeal process.

By way of conclusion, we may ask what else can be fleshed out from what Badiou calls the programme of the Godless man, one which is entertained in the oscillation between “radical humanism and radical anti-humanism?”³⁹ Whether politics has arrived to give us a meaning of life outside the reference to God may no longer be significant, as at this stage what matters is that we remember how damaging it is when we forget the heritage of the human soul, a forgetfulness which according to Jan Patočka dates back to the sixteenth century when

another motif comes to the fore, opposing the motif of care of the soul and coming to dominate one area after another, politics, economics, faith, and science, transforming them in a new style. Not a care *for the soul*, the care to *be*, but rather the care to *have*, care for the external world and its conquest, becomes the dominant concern.⁴⁰

It is the conquest of the privileged selection of healthy embryos and the European political strategy that favours only the people of certain nations rather than others that keeps reminding us of this consistent persistence by politics to deify its political power. In our nihilistic world, which looks more like a godless warehouse, the time and place of the intervention by a political gesture which brings justice to the other is always a work in progress, a work that seeks to ease the burdensome sense of the blasphemous from the name of Europe. Perhaps.

³⁸ C. Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, trans. G. Weidenfield and Nicholson Ltd., University of Chicago Press, 1966, 17.

³⁹ A. Badiou, “The Joint Disappearance of Man and God,” in: A. Badiou, *The Century*, trans. A. Toscano, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2008, 165–178.

⁴⁰ J. Patočka, *Heretical Essays in the Philosophy of History*, trans. E. Kohák, ed. J. Dodd, Open Court, 1996, 83.

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FACING NIHILISM. CAMUSIAN ROUTE TO RESHAPE POLITICS

*The government of persons is replaced
by the administration of things...*

Friedrich Engels, *Anti-Dühring* (1878)

*S'il n'y a pas de nature humaine, la plasticité de l'homme
est, en effet, infinie. Le réalisme politique, à ce degré, n'est
qu'un romantisme sans frein, un romantisme de l'efficacité.*

Albert Camus, *L'homme révolté* (1951)



According to Jürgen Habermas, Europeans are living inside a “technocratic spiral”. “New Old World” politics seems to be characterised by the recurring exclusion of democratic solutions in favour of technical and intergovernmental ones. All these choices are legitimated with an idea of “efficacy” and “pragmatism” that implies that the chosen “technical” policy is the “less evil” one in order to politically “survive”, without giving any other reason to legitimise the voluntary and progressive erosion of people’s participation. Until now it has been useless to underline that such a praxis that has, with its discourse, created within the electorate a sort of hate and disgust towards reasoned politics and the same establishment. A hostility that can feed populism, mistrust, and isolationism (as the Brexit vote showed). The main “solution” to growing “revolutionary” impulses within the electorate is still found in a pragmatic and technically inspired “agreement” or imposition out of any democratic representation. From this point of view the winner—the national executives in this case—is always right: no matter if they are authoritarian or against the more essential rules of liberal democracy or human dignity. Surviving as the true son of the supposed “end of ideologies”, this kind of “realism” is—as shown

by Albert Camus—intrinsically nihilist since it leads directly to pure “political cynicism”, or the idea that the only thing that matters is to take and manage power whatever the cost. Following this, it is possible to arrive at *sacrifier les autres*, as the recent migrant crisis has sadly shown us. Against such an attitude Camus underlines how it is fundamental to re-affirm a living measure—the ability of men to create and introduce a defined meaning inside history—and to struggle to maintain a continuous tension among realism and morality. From this point of view the Franco-Algerian writer stresses the importance of Art as educational tool that introduces the exigency to choose inside the “reality”, to refuse a part in order to give form to the other. Within this movement that, preserving human nature, says simultaneously “no and yes” it is possible finally to find, according to Camus, our route to reshape politics.

A characteristic of nihilism is, according to Camus, the idea that “everything is possible/licit” and, starting from that, society develops a true *indifférence pour la vie*. Paradoxically such a social attitude is built upon the religious, sacralised, reaction to the absurdity of life, the *impuissance à croire* in a defined meaning. It is not the absence of belief, but the conscious or unconscious construction of absolute and totalizing belief that closes any possibility to face the truth. From this point of view, nihilism is the son of the absurd condition of man: in order to refuse absurdity, human beings created an absolute that gives a fully, closed (and, as it is closed, false), sense of the world. To say it in Camusian Nietzsche logic—which, according to Camus, was the first to have a consciousness about nihilism — “le nihiliste n’est pas celui qui ne croit à rien, mais celui qui ne croit pas à ce qui est.”¹

The same Nietzsche, following the argumentation of the Rebel, ended with a “deification of fatality” (and of the consequent “will of power”) —to accept to be as one is, avoiding the will to change ourselves and transform the condition of society—in order to emerge from the situation of total absurdity, described by the German philosopher as the moment in which it affirmed the need to recognise the fatality of the earth as the truth.² Contemporary nihilism is thus, in Camus’ words, a new religious reaction to human, the condition that—using the instruments of philosophy (which returns to theological concepts, such as Marxism) and considering the historical bankruptcy of Christianity—force

¹ A. Camus, *L’homme révolté*, Paris: Gallimard, 1951, 96.

² See *Ibidem*, 100.

humanity to sacrifice itself and its truth to avoid facing it.³ It is “moral” in its deepest sense: in that it renounces the difficult but virtuous and true tension of life to institute a total solution, end, belief. These new religions, in more detail, are Biology, History and—at the very end—pure Power/Fact. If the first two are the direct expression of 19th century civilisation, the last is their consequence. In effect the cult of “immanence”—biological diversity or historical process—ends with the absolute exaltation of the existing Power, of what is the expression and motor of reality. To echo Alexandre Kojève, the true “Hegel” fought by Camus:

what is good is what exists, to the extent that it exists. All action, since it negates existing givens, is thus bad: a sin. But sin can be pardoned. How? Through its success. Success absolves crime, because success is a new reality that exists.⁴

There is no possibility of independent human judgement, no value that can be used to criticise what it is. From this point of view, the religion of History becomes the religion of the mere “fact”, of the pure, and self-legitimising, strength. As Camus wrote, criticising revolutionary Marxist thought, this reactionary apology of the fact lead to political cynicism as the main effect of contemporary nihilism:⁵

³ On the relationship between nihilism and theology in the thought of Camus, see M. Sharpe, *Camus Philosophe. To return to our beginnings*, Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2015, 98–145.

⁴ A. Kojève, *Introduction à la lecture de Hegel*, Paris: Gallimard, 1947, 95. About Camus as critic of Kojève, see P. Sabot, *Les mésaventures de la dialectique. Camus critique de Kojève dans «L'Homme révolté»*, in: D. Lyotard (ed.), *Albert Camus contemporain*, Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, Villeneuve d'Ascq, 2009, 45–60.

⁵ “If, in fact, to ignore history becomes the same as denying reality, it is still alienating oneself from reality to consider history as a completely self-sufficient absolute. The revolution of the twentieth century believes that it can avoid nihilism and remain faithful to true rebellion, by replacing God with history. In reality, it fortifies the former and betrays the latter. History in its pure form furnishes no value by itself. Therefore one must live by the principles of immediate expediency and keep silent or tell lies. Systematic violence, or imposed silence, calculation or concerted falsehood become the inevitable rule. Purely historical thought is therefore nihilistic: it wholeheartedly accepts the evil of history and in this way is opposed to rebellion. It is useless for it to affirm, as compensation, the absolute rationality of history, for historical reason will never be fulfilled and will never have its full meaning or value until the end of history. In the meanwhile, it is necessary to act, and to act without a moral rule in order that the definitive rule should one day be realized. Cynicism as a political attitude is only logical as a function of absolutist thought; in other words, absolute nihilism on the one hand,

One of Hegel's commentators, Alexandre Kojève, of left-wing tendencies it is true, but orthodox in his opinion on this particular point, notes Hegel's hostility to the moralists and remarks that his only axiom is to live according to the manners and customs of one's nation. A maxim of social conformity of which Hegel, in fact, gave the most cynical proofs. Kojève adds, however, that this conformity is legitimate only to the extent that the customs of the nation correspond to the spirit of the times—in other words, to the extent that they are solidly established and can resist revolutionary criticism and attacks. But who will determine their solidity and who will judge their validity? For a hundred years the capitalist regimes of the West have withstood violent assaults. Should they for that reason be considered legitimate? Inversely, should those who were faithful to the Weimar Republic have abandoned it and pledged themselves to Hitler in 1933 because the former collapsed when attacked by the latter? Should the Spanish Republic have been betrayed at the exact moment when General Franco's forces triumphed? These are conclusions that traditional reactionary thought would have justified within its own perspectives. The novelty, of which the consequences are incalculable, lies in the fact that revolutionary thought has assimilated them. The suppression of every moral value and of all principles and their replacement by fact, as provisional but actual king, could only lead, as we have plainly seen, to political cynicism [...]⁶

In the very end, to believe in History results in believing in force, in the simple ability to impose a reality (to make things work, no matter how or why), but such faith is the most nihilistic of all because, as it was well understood by Rousseau, it is impossible to create a social meaning around mere force.⁷

How to face such a philosophy—with its inherent social attitude—avoiding a return towards a classic religious/theological approach?⁸ It was Camus's contention that it is necessary to start from a fundamental truth. Confronting himself with Nazism, the author of the *Myth of Sisyphus* arrived at the notion to individuate an element that allows itself to build meaning starting from the absurd condition of life:

absolute rationalism on the other. As for the consequences, there is no difference between the two attitudes. From the moment that they are accepted, the earth becomes a desert". A. Camus, *L'homme révolté*, Paris: Gallimard, 1951, 360–361. Each translation from the French editions is made by the author of this essay.

⁶ A. Camus, *L'homme révolté*..., 185.

⁷ "Force is a physical power, and I fail to see what moral effect it can have. To yield to force is an act of necessity, not of will -- at the most, an act of prudence. In what sense can it be a duty?" J.-J. Rousseau, *Du Contrat Social, ou principes du droit politique*, Amsterdam: Metalibri, 2008, 13.

⁸ That is the classic way of authors such as Augusto del Noce and, in a different way, Massimo Cacciari. See A. del Noce, *Il suicidio della rivoluzione*, Roma: Aragno, 1978 e M. Cacciari, *Il potere che frena*, Milano: Adelphi, 2013.

I, on the contrary, chose justice in order to remain faithful to the world (*la terre*). I continue to believe that this world has no ultimate meaning. But I know that something in it has a meaning and that is man, because he is the only creature to insist on having one. This world has at least the truth of man, and our task is to provide its justification against fate itself. And it has no justification but man; hence he must be saved if we want to save the idea we have of life. With your scornful smile you will ask me: what do you mean by saving man? And with all my being I shout to you that I mean not mutilating him and yet giving a chance to the justice that man alone can conceive.⁹

Man is the only being that pretends justice. He is the only being that refuses injustice, to be as it is,¹⁰ the same absurd condition to attempt to build something other. He is the only being who can say no to what exists, and also to his same life, because his priority is linked to the reason of his life.¹¹ And—through such a capability—Camus finds a dynamic and living element that characterises the human being: the possibility to revolt, to be an existential and political rebel. And such an element—without being a transcendental element—is not a historical one. It is a constant possibility of man that could be manifested only inside history/reality, as the only opportunity that man has, without coinciding exactly with it. As he wrote in *The Rebel*:

History, necessary but not sufficient, is therefore only an occasional cause. It is not absence of values, nor values themselves, nor even the source of values. It is one occasion, among others, for man to prove the still confused existence of a value that allows him to judge history. Rebellion itself makes us the promise of such a value. Absolute revolution, in fact, supposes the absolute malleability of human nature and its possible reduction to the condition of a historical force. But rebellion, in man, is the refusal to be treated as an object and to be reduced to simple historical terms. It is the affirmation of a nature common to all men, which eludes the world of power. History, undoubtedly, is one of the limits of man's experience; in this sense the revolutionaries are right. But man, by rebelling, imposes in his turn a limit to history, and at this limit the promise of a value is born.¹²

⁹ A. Camus, *Lettres à un ami allemand* [1945], in: A. Camus, *OEuvres*, Gallimard, 2013, 476.

¹⁰ "Man is the only creature who refuses to be what he is". A. Camus, *L'homme révolté...*, 24.

¹¹ See the dialogue between Diego and La Peste in A. Camus, *L'état de siège* [1948], in: A. Camus, *OEuvres Complètes*, 766.

¹² *Ibidem*, 311.

Thus, such an affirmation of a “common human nature” through revolt goes directly against the nihilism of the religion of power. In fact it destroys the point on which the contemporary cult of the “is right as it is” found its theoretical strength: the absence of a non-transcendental criterion to judge reality.¹³ The point is clear to Camus who sometimes used the expression “human nature” to underline such a turning point. “If there is no human nature, then the malleability of man is, in fact, infinite. Political realism, on this level, is nothing but unbridled romanticism, a romanticism of expediency.”¹⁴

The interesting point of such a Camusian approach is that it does not underline any substantial character of “human nature”, identifying it just with a possibility that is unique within the universe: to give meaning and justice to a differently absurd and silent reality. Only a human can try to feel and do something like that. But—and that is the core point of *The Rebel*—it must be done while respecting himself, his unique dignity, and the limits that this same capability impose upon him. He cannot—in order to create justice—destroy the world or human dignity and life. He cannot transform humans into objects because humans, different from objects, are capable of saying no, to be moral actors inside the reality. From this point of view, to revolt is in itself a “measure” in a double way: first, it potentially acts against the religious (which aspires to totalise everything) approach to reality, against the domination of man over man and against the menace to destroy human dignity, and second, it is in itself a theoretical criterion to judge the same reality. To put the latter point differently: it is fundamental to fight to preserve the possibility of man revolting, fighting in order to respect such a fundamental dignity and do what is possible to allow to it to explicate in a non-totalitarian way its attitude towards justice.¹⁵ According to Camus, in fact, “it is true that we cannot

¹³ “La Révolte” creates a value that goes beyond the same individual. See A. Camus, *Remarques sur la Révolte*, in: Aa. Vv., *L'existence*, Gallimard, 1945, 11–13.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, 297.

¹⁵ “Far from demanding general independence, the rebel wants it to be recognized that freedom has its limits everywhere that a human being is to be found—the limit being precisely that human being’s power to rebel. The most profound reason for rebellious intransigence is to be found here. The more aware rebellion is of demanding a just limit, the more inflexible it becomes. The rebel undoubtedly demands a certain degree of freedom for himself; but in no case, if he is consistent, does he demand the right to destroy the existence and the freedom of others. He humiliates no one. The freedom he claims, he claims for all; the freedom he refuses, he forbids everyone to enjoy. He is not only the slave against the master, but also man against the world of master and slave”. *Ibidem*, 355.

‘escape History’, since we are in it up to our necks. But one may propose to fight within History to preserve from History that part of man which is not its proper province.”¹⁶

Such a philosophy has its political and educational effects. It implies, politically, to act following the rule of measure that affirms:

When the end is absolute, historically speaking, and when it is believed certain of realization, it is possible to go so far as to sacrifice others. When it is not, only oneself (soi-meme) can be sacrificed, in the hazards of a struggle for the common dignity of man. Does the end justify the means? That is possible. But what will justify the end? To that question, which historical thought leaves pending, rebellion replies: the means.¹⁷

It is necessary to manage politics in order to preserve the only creative reality, that is man. That goes directly against contemporary nihilism, of the “everything is possible/licit”, against the idea of revolt that becomes a “revolution” (here Camus criticised the Marxism of his times) or a religious attempt to totalise everything and—in so doing—destroy that same man in the name of “immediate efficacy”. In fact:

It is then possible to say that rebellion, when it develops into destruction, is illogical. Claiming the unity of the human condition, it is a force of life, not of death. Its most profound logic is not the logic of destruction; it is the logic of creation.¹⁸

Thus, far from being a passive limit (just to avoid doing something), such an attitude/philosophy implies a positive, creative one. That is the reason for which—to give an example—Camus fought to create an international democracy that would guarantee to men the grounds upon which to build peaceful relationships (we are at the beginning of the cold war), or to institute a European Federation that will give to Europeans a new prospective of “justice” among peoples and individuals. For the same reasons Art assumes, in Camusian thought, a fundamental “educative” and “preparatory” value. Writing, Painting, and Playing are activities that teach the exigency to choose inside the “reality”, to refuse a part of it in order to give form to the other.

¹⁶ A. Camus, *Ni victimes ni bourreaux* [1946], in: A. Camus, *À Combat. Éditoriaux et articles, 1944–1947*, Paris: Gallimard, 2002, 670.

¹⁷ A. Camus, *L’homme révolté...*, 365.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, 356.

Art chooses¹⁹ and creates inside history following the exigency of freedom and dignity at the heart of every man. It operates in the same direction as the rebellion:

The procedure of beauty, which is to contest reality while endowing it with unity, is also the procedure of rebellion. Is it possible eternally to reject injustice without ceasing to acclaim the nature of man and the beauty of the world? Our answer is yes. This ethic, at once unsubmitive and loyal, is in any event the only one that lights the way to a truly realistic revolution. In upholding beauty, we prepare the way for the day of regeneration when civilization will give first place—far ahead of the formal principles and degraded values of history—to this living virtue on which is founded the common dignity of man and the world he lives in, and which we must now define in the face of a world that insults it.²⁰

So what? How can such a thought teach us something today in an epoch in which the cult of history has been dead for a long time and in which the old revolution appears dead? Seeing things more closely in reality show us—as we saw at the beginning—that contemporary “realism”, the cult of efficacy, of technocracy, is the direct offspring of the 20th century cult of history. After the death of History—or better, of a teleological philosophy of it—what remained was the cult of strength and the attitude of political cynicism, the exaltation of what exists—of what “function”—and of the mere “fact”. Such a world of post-historicism has been a world of triumphant political and moral nihilism that, after forty years, is facing a growing transnational request—or, cry—of justice. We can say to the “realist”: “it’s the Revolt baby!” But, as Camus taught us, *hic sunt leones*. Revolt in effect, following its desire of justice, can generate a return of nihilism—in a form that today looks like Manichaeism—that could be so dimeasured and absolute such as was the kind of nihilism that it fought before. It can become a Revolution, following the lexicon adopted by Camus in *The Rebel*. The danger is that in wanting to fight the establishment, the current revolt will culminate in the huge destruction of western society, and with an aggression to those felt to be enemies (such as migrants or ethical or social groups

¹⁹ “... unity in art appears at the limit of the transformation that the artist imposes on reality. It cannot dispense with either. This correction which the artist imposes by his language and by a redistribution of elements derived from reality is called style and gives the recreated universe its unity and its boundaries. It attempts, in the work of every rebel, to impose its laws on the world, and succeeds in the case of a few geniuses. “Poets,” said Shelley, “are the unacknowledged legislators of the world”. *Ibidem*, 336.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, 345.

simply perceived as different).²¹ Finally, Camusian thought helps us against two different contemporary nihilisms: the living one of post-historicism and the growing one of mistrust and isolation. It teaches us that in order to achieve a new kind of politics, we have to bear the weight of a new institutional and social creation—European and International, as Camus had already sustained in the Forties²²—without giving up the “exhausting tension” of measure.

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²¹ On the concept of establishment, see: O. Jones, *The Establishment and how they get away with it*, Penguin: London, 2015.

²² See: T. Visone, “International Dictatorship or International Democracy. A Discussion of Albert Camus’ 1946 Considerations,” in: *Perspectives on Federalism*, Vol. 7, Issue 2, 2015, 116–133.

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BEYOND TOTALITARIANISM: POLITICS, RELATIONALITY AND NARRATIVITY

The Self and its relationality to the world



Contemporary political philosophy has repeatedly underlined the inadequacy of western political anthropology and its supposedly rational, autonomous and self-sufficient Self. It has rejected the untenable account of a sovereign subject and underlined man's needs for relationship and nurturance as well as the complex bonds of interdependence which arise from his vulnerable and fragile constitution.¹ A relevant impulse towards this goal has been given by feminist works on philosophy and anthropology, which have stressed the natural dependency of man and the unsaid gender biased prejudices that characterise western modern ethics as well as its political thought and underlying public/private split.

I have from time to time hinted at the relevance of a feminist approach to politics and society.² My actual interest turns, nonetheless, to a different strand of thought, which construes man's subjectivity on relationality but does not pay any specific attention to gender and is scarcely sensible to the political potentialities of the feminine. I am referring to Günther Anders, Hannah Arendt's first

¹ In the context of the Italian philosophical and political theory, particularly relevant are the works of E. Pulcini and A. Cavarero. Cfr. E. Pulcini, *The Individual without Passions. Modern Individualism and the Loss of Social Bond*, Lanham: Lexington Books, 2012; Ead., *Care of the World. Fear, Responsibility and Justice in the Global Age*, Dordrecht: Springer, 2012. As for Adriana Cavarero, cfr. *Relating Narratives: Storytelling and Selfhood*, London & New York: Psychology Press, 2000.

² M. Pia Paternò, *Dall'eguaglianza alla differenza. Diritti dell'uomo e cittadinanza femminile nel pensiero politico moderno*, Milano: Giuffrè, 2008; Ead., *Donne e Diritti. Percorsi della politica dal Seicento a oggi*, Roma: Carocci, 2012.

husband, who discussed at length with his wife the topic of subjectivity and man's relationality to the world.³

Unlike Arendt, Anders is all but famous; particularly so in Anglo-Saxon countries. This is due to the fact that his major philosophical work, *Die Antiquiertheit des Menschen*, has never been translated into English. The only philosophical works we can read in English are an essay on Heidegger's Philosophy and a youth essay —“The Pathology of Freedom”—the translation of which only dates back to 2009. No wonder that—the French and Italian translations of his work notwithstanding —Anders is not known world-wide.

“The Pathology of Freedom” is the English translation of one of the two essays published in French in the Thirties: one of which has been translated by Emmanuel Levinas.⁴ Due to the Nazi takeover in 1933, Anders was obliged to escape from Germany and lived in Paris as a refugee until 1936, when he moved to the United States. At the time of his exile in France he had occasion to attend the famous lectures that Alexandre Kojève was delivering on Hegel at l'École pratique des hautes Études. Many later *maitres-à-penser* met there: George Bataille and Jacques Lacan among them. There was much talk of Hegel's conceptions of Reason and of Man: a subject which, in Kojève's words, distinguishes himself from animals due to his immaterial needs and his desire for recognition.⁵

There is no massive reference, in Anders' works, to Hegel's master-slave dialectic which Kojève exposed during his lessons in the late Thirties, at a time when Anders had already moved to America. But his “Pathology of Freedom” gives us some important hints related to his stance on the subject and the world he lives in. According to his idea, the difference between man and animals is due to man's “basislessness”:⁶ whereas animals instinctively know the world, man lacks a comparable Integrations-Koeffizient. According to Anders “man does not foresee his world [...] He is not cut for any material world, cannot antici-

³ G. Anders, *Die Kirchenschlacht: Dialoge mit Hannah Arendt*, G. Oberschlick (ed.), München: Beck, 2011.

⁴ Anders had presented in 1930 before the Kant Society of Frankfurt and Hamburg: *Die Weltfremdheit des Menschen*. At the time of his exile in France Levinas translated the first 24 pages of the manuscript and let it be published in *Recherches Philosophiques*, IV, 1934–5 with the title *Une interprétation de l'a-posteriori*.

⁵ A. Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1969.

⁶ G. Anders, “On the Pseudo-Concreteness in Heidegger's Philosophy”, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 3 (1948), 346.

pate it in its determination [...] he needs experience [...] to put it paradoxically, artificiality is the nature of man and his essence is instability.”⁷

It is on this specific anti-essentialistic conception of man that I will try to build my own argument. I will do so by entwining this anthropology with some interesting points advanced in contemporary psychoanalysis and literature. I will therefore try to knot Anders’ arguments together with those presented by a leading Italian Lacanian psychoanalyst Massimo Recalcati and to an Italian literate: Pier Paolo Pasolini. There are strong objective bonds between these authors who share a similar interpretation of western post-World War Two consumer societies. They targeted them defiantly as “totalitarian”: a sort of totalitarianism that is stripped of its ferocious mask and whose violence makes no use of terror. They referred to a soft,⁸ scientist, postmodern or post-ideological totalitarianism:⁹ but did not shrink before the actualisation of this word. Anders went so far as to speak of a “totalitarianism of pleasure” whereas Recalcati actualises Lacan’s “jouissance” so as to talk of a “totalitarismo del godimento”:¹⁰ our hypermodern times are depicted as strongly resembling mid-century Nazi or Soviet totalitarianism because of their common absence of limits and successful—albeit extremely differently obtained—annihilation of liberty and “desire”. Rather the particular problem they refer to is not the “Captive Mind”, as depicted in Milosz’s masterpiece. The kind of totalitarianism they have in mind—albeit soft, is a much more far reaching one: it entails a dominion which is not prevalently exercised upon the minds of the people since it affects their feelings, bodies and wills.

The risk of a new totalitarianism

Neither Anders nor Pasolini or Recalcati were the first to denounce the analogies existing between “traditional” totalitarian States and the specific totalitarianism of democratic societies. But what is here at stake is a particular

⁷ G. Anders, “Pathology of Freedom. An Essay on Non-Identification,” in: *The Life and Work of Gunther Anders. Emigré, Iconoclast, Philosopher, Man of Letters*, G. Bischof, J. Dawsey, B. Fetz (eds.), Wien: Studien Verlag, 2014, 145–146.

⁸ G. Anders, *Die Antiquiertheit des Menschen*, Band II, München: Beck, 1980.

⁹ M. Recalcati, *L'uomo senza inconscio. Figure della nuova clinica psicanalitica*, Milano: Cortina, 2010, 320.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, 324.

version of this attention to the totalitarian dimension within the liberal democracies of our contemporaneity; one which holds on to the critique of the instrumental reason as theorised by Horkheimer and Adorno, but is rather sceptical about the possibility that subjects might individually free themselves through the liberation of the “pleasure principle”, as envisaged in *Eros and Civilization*. No “narcissistic” revolution à la Marcuse is conceived by any of them¹¹ to dispose of the Promethean man who is, in his own words, the archetype-hero of the performance principle.¹²

Anders, Pasolini and Recalcati share one common belief: man has undergone such relevant changes in present consuming societies that nothing short of a reference to an—already occurred—anthropological revolution would do to adequately name this new state of things.¹³ The revolution they are speaking of has not freed the individual and liberated the pleasure principle; it has rather enslaved man with chains he himself is eager to impose on himself. That is why they give Marcuse’s talk of a repressive desublimation¹⁴ a somewhat different—and even more disquieting—shading: whereas he had hinted at the fact that hyper-hedonism strips enjoyment of any limit but enhances, in fact, the reality of dominion, the focus of Pasolini’s, Anders’ and Recalcati’s attention is positioned both on the restrictions of liberty and on their enhancing effect on pleasure (Anders) and enjoyment (Lacan, Recalcati). Although they all accurately describe the concealment of coercion which takes place in consumer societies, they also focus their attention on the particular kind of (perverse) pleasure which illiberty is capable of producing.

Consider Anders, who was so well acquainted with Marcuse that they even shared the same home for a short while, at the time of their American exile in the Forties. His point of view is that science and technology have completely

¹¹ M. Recalcati, *Elogio dell’inconscio. Dodici argomenti in difesa della psicanalisi*, Milano: Bruno Mondadori, 2007, 55–63. As for Anders, see P. P. Portinaro, *Il principio disperazione. Tre studi su Günther Anders*, Torino: Bollati e Boringhieri, 2003, 141.

¹² H. Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization, A Philosophical Enquiry into Freud*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1955.

¹³ G. Anders, *Die Antiquiertheit des Menschen*, Band 1, München: Beck, 1956, 239: “wir sind nun nicht einfach nur Vertreter einer neuen geschichtlichen Generation von Menschen, sondern, obwohl anatomisch natürlich unverändert, durch unsere völlig veränderte Stellung im Kosmos und zu uns selbst, *Wesen einer neuen Spezies*”. Cfr. P. P. Pasolini, *Lutheran Letters*, New York: Carcanet Press, 1987, 33.

¹⁴ H. Marcuse, *One-Dimensional man. Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Societies*, London: Routledge, 1964.

revolutionised society in the Twentieth Century: neither the *homo faber* nor the *homo creator* have their place in it anymore; they have been ousted by the *homo materia*, a new-sprung kind of man who is devoid of any personal will and completely subjected to the imperatives of technology.¹⁵ Anders therefore argues in favour of a re-consideration of democracies and emphasises the abundance of restrictions on liberty taking place within them as a consequence of the endless possibilities provided by new technologies: totalitarianism, he argues, should not primarily be thought of as something referring to some authoritarian states; it rather identifies the specific trend and the real nature of technique. In the totally brain-washed US population, every subjectivity is simply and radically “cancelled”, he announces. Violence and loss of freedom have reached such an absolute degree of perfection in the soft versions of totalitarianism, that there is no use of terror (and absolutely no need of it) in these so-called democracies: “nowadays Hitler and Stalin are superfluous”, because subjection is already a *fait accompli*, making orders and prohibitions simply not necessary¹⁶ any longer.

A totalitarianism of pleasure is therefore ensuing from democratic consumer societies: Anders prognostic here joins the analysis of both Recalcati and Pasolini. The point the latter makes in his *Scritti corsari*, is that post World War new fascism—or totalitarianism—is a more insidious and destructive form, which assimilates and homologises every difference among men through consumerist levelling. The new culture of consumer societies is the most repressive totalitarianism ever seen,¹⁷ he argues, pointing to the fact that it imposes a cruel and degrading conformism that changes the very nature of the people and burrows into the inner depth of their conscience. That’s why in his pedagogic work—*Gennariello*—he urged his contemporary Neapolitan double of Rousseau’s Émile, to reject any culture of degradation and refuse any acceptance¹⁸ of a society where enjoyment is transformed in an imperative that does not liberate life; rather, it enslaves it.

These critiques of western hyper-materialism and of its subsequent loss of liberty are highly valued in the works of Massimo Recalcati, who identifies in Pasolini’s movie *Salò o le 120 giornate di Sodoma* a good account of the pathologies arising in capitalistic societies through the excesses they foster and the constraint they covertly exercise. Recalcati’s point of view is enriched with some

¹⁵ G. Anders, *Die Antiquiertheit...*, II, 14, 17.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, 131–187. am2, 178–9.

¹⁷ P. P. Pasolini, *Scritti corsari...*, Milano: Garzanti, 1975, 126.

¹⁸ P. P. Pasolini, *Lutheran Letters...*, 24.

Lacanian intuitions, which confer to his texts a different insight to our present discontent and the psychological pathologies flourishing in our environment. His main concern is devoted to the consequences of today's pathological dependency on consumption, whereby people are reduced to bare instruments of enjoyment deprived of any restraint, which cancels desire and enslaves life in an ever repeating compulsion. This perverse post-ideological enjoyment is analysed both in its inmate void and consequences *vis à vis* of desire.¹⁹ According to the psychoanalytic understanding of desire as a sentinel of the Unconscious, Recalcati stresses its role in defying any adaptation to the “principle of reality” and shows great concern for the consequences of its collapse in western capitalism: its eclipse is said to have brought about a new kind of slavery in which people (deprived of their unconscious selves), are condemned to pursue a flat and nihilistic enjoyment centred on a compulsive consumption which leaves them constantly unsatisfied and enhances atomisation and self-seclusion. Learning on Lacan's theories, Recalcati depicts today's totalitarianism as an “inner catastrophe”²⁰ which is the consequence of an effacement of the singularity of the subject and oblivion of the irreducibility of desire.

In lieu of a conclusion: learning from Günther Anders' narrative approach

The descriptions of totalitarianism taken into account face us with a number of problems on both the theoretical and political level. Not only do they force us to take conscience of the doubtful usefulness of such an enlarged concept of totalitarianism, but they also leave us with little hope in politics: either ban it altogether and ask for a heroic resistance deprived of any perspectives in the future; or else look for hope within domains that could hardly be properly defined as political.

Conscious of this difficulty and willing to explore new paths of research, I suggest here a weak version of a possible use of politics today. In order to express it, I will be basing it on the kind of political-philosophical reporting which characterised Anders' writing activity in the Sixties. After having licensed

¹⁹ M. Recalcati, *L'uomo senza inconscio*, 320; ID., *L'eclissi del desiderio*, in: *Forme contemporanee del totalitarismo*, Torino: Bollati Boringhieri, 2007, 61–79.

²⁰ *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan*. Book VII, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis, 1959–1960*, New York and London: Norton & Company, 1992, 327.

the first volume of his major philosophical text—*Die Antiquiertheit der Menschheit*—Anders devoted his attention to a series of political events, to which he afforded a narrative style, mixing personal experiences and psychological insights with political events and rational judgment. He wrote on the Vietnam War, the space race, the destruction of Europe and the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

On top of these mentioned works are two publications which consist of two remote dialogues: one with the son of a Nazi criminal who was at the time on trial in Jerusalem²¹ (and who never answered to Anders' urging plea for a public standing on the question of guilt); and the other with one of the pilots who had taken part in the bombing of Hiroshima²² and who in the aftermath seemed unable to cope with the consequences of his deed. Unlike Eichmann's son, the latter corresponded at length with Anders, giving occasion to a rich correspondence which went as far as to involve America's President John Fitzgerald Kennedy. In applying to Eatherly's affair the conceptual categories he had worked out in his philosophical works, Anders not only helped Eatherly to come out of the psychiatric hospital in which he had been detained following several episodes of sociopathic behaviour, but provided ample proof of some of the risks entailed in technology and in an acritical acceptance of mere ideological discourses. Anders' understanding of the American pilot's uncanny behaviour helped both him and his readers to afford the question of the possibility of politics and investigate the new—albeit meagre—forms of responsibility and advocacy still available in the context of techno-totalitarian consumerist societies, where the discrepancy between man's hypertrophic productive capacity and his less advanced capability for feeling and perception is at its climax. Anders therefore considered Eatherly's failure to cope with his conscience as good news: his mental disease certified that there still was some hope that man could become aware of his responsibilities and have a chance to recover the discrepancy between his capability of producing things and his scarce ability in reproducing them mentally.

Through his political narrative Anders himself aimed at contributing to this goal. He, proved there exists (however small) a chance to contribute to the fulfilment of the specific task, had envisaged for philosophy in his own

²¹ G. Anders, *Wir Eichmannssohne. Offener Brief an Klaus Eichmann*, München: Beck, 1964.

²² G. Anders, *Burning Conscience. The Case of the Hiroshima Pilot Claude Eatherly told in his Letters to Gunther Anders*, Hamburg: Rowohlt Verlag, 1961.

days: the task of working at an enlargement of moral fantasy.²³ But to do so, he argued, it is necessary to be aware of the superliminal: an effect occurring in the face of too great or too much distressing phenomena, which blur man's capacity for evaluation and judgment. Through this political narrative Anders aims therefore at re-individualising numbers and supplementing any mere intellectualistic perception with those essential components of comprehension provided by feeling and imagination.²⁴ He intervenes—politically—as the guardian of a fiction which provides us with facts²⁵ we would not have been able to detect ourselves due to the difficulties entailed in the perception of events “that we can produce more than we can mentally reproduce” and which are too distant or “too big for our imagination and the emotional forces at our disposal.”²⁶ Through narrative these facts can be recovered: reducing their magnitude the story-teller can preserve them and make them accessible: it is only through a “fiction” that—in our present context—facts can be made clear and understandable.²⁷ That was how Anders contributed to the non-re-nounceable task of building bridges between man's hopes and the real world²⁸ in which he lives, empowering imagination so as to envisage the consequences of his actions.

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²³ G. Anders, *Antiquiertheit...*, I, 271–293.

²⁴ G. Anders, *Nach “Holocaust”* 1979, in: *Besuch im Hades*, München: Beck, 1997, 201.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, 202–203.

²⁶ G. Anders, *Burning conscience...*, 3–4.

²⁷ G. Anders, *Nach “Holocaust”* 1979, 181: “Nur durch fictio kann das factum, nur durch Einzelfälle das Unabzählbare deutlich and unvergessbar gemacht werden”.

²⁸ G. Anders, *Burning conscience...*, 86.

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WHAT IS AND IS NOT UTOPIA



topia is indiscriminately charged with pathologies such as teleology and stability in much contemporary political-philosophical literature. Yet, a closer conceptual examination of utopia shows that there is no compelling argument about utopia being intrinsically linked to such pathologies. Therefore, I argue, conceptions of utopia that justifiably invite such charges are projections of epochal, indeed, specifically modern, understandings of the notion. The static and teleological semantic contents of the term are in no way indispensable. In other words, if we ask again the question about what is and is not utopia and whether utopia is comprehensible and theorizable without predicates of teleology and stability, we will come up with a reconceptualization of utopia that challenges modern framings of the notion. In this paper, I deal with such questions and explore why utopia is not inescapably unrealizable, teleological and finalist, too determinate and, consequently, tyrannical. Drawing from relevant sources (I rely mainly on Marianna Papastephanou's theory and I show its relevance to such conceptualization),¹ I take issue with those thinkers who, in the effort to stave off bad utopianism, resort to defining utopia as empty of content or as exclusively processual. I side with those sources² which consider a degree of determinacy important for conceptual, explanatory, justificatory and normative reasons.

¹ M. Papastephanou, *Educated Fear and Educated Hope: Utopia, Dystopia and the Plasticity of Humanity*, Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2009.

² *Ibidem*.

Questions about meaning, definition and conceptual borders of a notion are sometimes treated as emanating from a modernist passion for order. Thus, asking such questions is often considered a very un-postmodern thing to do. My posing the question “what is and is not utopia?” evidently questions and rejects this stance. Let me briefly state my argumentative grounds for persisting on conceptual work: 1) semantic contents are indispensable to making sense of a term because, as we know, since Ludwig Wittgenstein, any use of language presupposes some meaning and simultaneously establishes it. In other words, those theorists who avoid semantic thematizations of the concepts that they are using, employ a meaning nevertheless. 2) By implication, decisions against efforts to define and re-define a notion unwittingly perpetuate hegemonic and standardized meanings. Head-on discussions of issues such as utopia, with no prior effort to demarcate a conceptual/definitional space, leave modern sedimentations of what counts as utopia untouched. 3) Avoiding semantic questions ironically blocks, instead of promoting, the kind of postmodern interrogation that combats conceptual ossifications and essentializations. Therefore, instead of reflecting intentions of policing the conceptual borders of utopia or of pinning down its meaning once and for all, my discussion below indicates why terminological operations of inside and outside reveal a boundary discursivity³ that enhances our awareness of what should be re-thought and re-formulated within utopian studies. Finally, let me state that this boundary discursivity does not reinforce a “modern vs postmodern” binarism. Conceptualizations of utopia by many thinkers who are largely classified as “modern” offer us valuable insights for deconstructing modern reifications of utopia and simultaneously for undoing the very taxonomy into this or that epochal or philosophical categorization. Hence, below, I glean such insights from various thinkers without grounding this operation in the “modern vs postmodern” divide.

After such preliminary remarks, let me state some general orientations which frame conceptual work on the notion of utopia. The concept of utopia as the image of a desirable reality of collective life should be approached negatively (e.g. via *reductio ad absurdum*) in order: (a) to be distinguished from dreams of personal flourishing; (b) to be differentiated from a single subset of utopia, e.g. images of the ideal city; and (c) to be separated from nostalgic, escapist and ideological visions. Additionally and more importantly, (d) it should be explained why utopia is not by definitional necessity unrealizable, teleological

³ M. Papastephanou, “The Conflict of the Faculties: Educational Research, Inclusion, Philosophy and Boundary Discourses,” *Ethics and Education* 5 (December, 2010).

and finalist, too determinate and consequently tyrannical. Finally, (e) it must be clarified why there is no need to grasp utopia as empty of content or processual, as it has been proposed. Such research orientations may open up space for re-defining what utopia might be through defining utopia negatively (by referring to what does not satisfy semantic conditions of utopia).

Utopia versus personal, exclusively political, nostalgic, escapist and ideological visions

Ruth Levitas explains why utopia differs from personal dreams and ideals of personal flourishing by emphasizing the conceptually constitutive role that a common, collective happiness has for utopian vision.⁴ From Ernst Bloch we receive the view that, although the most common version of utopia is that of an ideal city, utopia is a much wider set involving conscious dreaming of perfectibility.⁵ Also, Bloch's notion is not limited to political projects. This entails that utopia could be, for instance, technological, medical or scientific. Notice again that "the utopian element in such visions lies in the fact that they do not concern just a personal dream of gratification but rather a collective ideal of happiness;"⁶ therefore, thought they are not as such political, they may surely be politicized.

Lack of conscious awareness of utopian aspiration is conceptually important because it demarcates what should be construed as crypto-utopian, instead of utopian. According to Roy Jacques, crypto-utopia "is a form of idealized vision of the world that pretends not to be a vision at all."⁷ Does this mean that every conscious vision of the collective good deserves the name "utopia"? The answer is that there is no compelling argument for such conceptual elasticity; on the contrary, there is more reconceptualising merit in further distinctions.

⁴ R. Levitas, *The Concept of Utopia* (2nd ed.), Oxford, Bern, Berlin, Bruxelles, Frankfurt am Main, New York & Wien: Peter Lang, 2010.

⁵ E. Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, Vol. 1, trans. N. Plaice, S. Plaice & P. Knight, Cambridge & Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1986, 5.

⁶ M. Papastephanou, *Educated Fear and Educated Hope: Utopia, Dystopia and the Plasticity of Humanity*, 26.

⁷ Quoted in Richard M. Simon, "Habitus and Utopia in Science : Bourdieu, Mannheim and the Role of Specialties in the Scientific," *Studies in Sociology of Science* 2 (June, 2011), 27.

Utopia should be distinguished from those visions that do not demand drastic change; in other words, visions are not utopian when they do not aim at transfiguring the current dystopian⁸ or simply undesirable reality. Instances of the above, are visions that “function purely in escapist, nostalgic, regressive, crypto-utopian and even anti-utopian ways” that effect psychic discharge.⁹ For instance, we may employ the designation “nostalgic” rather than “utopian” for those visions which long for a past instead of dreaming about a different future. To Levitas, the escapism in question is a pathology of utopia,¹⁰ a degeneration of it rather than a constitutive attribute. Finally, from Karl Mannheim we may borrow the insight that a vision which is not accompanied by willingness to transfigure reality should be called ideological rather than utopian.¹¹ In other words, action may be a conceptual criterion for what should count as utopian vision. Action as a criterion of utopia, renders millenarianism a non-utopian vision: the ideal situation is expected to come through divine intervention and not through human action.¹²

To sum up, utopia is an ideal about collective life (and not about individual flourishing) that involves conscious acknowledgement of its being a vision (thus, it is not crypto-utopian). It claims a radical change of current realities (in this sense, it differs from ideology) and concerns the future (so, it is neither nostalgic nor escapist).

Utopia is often understood as indispensably unrealizable, teleological and static or too determinate and consequently tyrannical, leaving no room for affirming utopianism. However, some scholars, especially philosophers who are placed in the category “postmodern” by most commentators, have tried to disconnect utopia from teleology and determinacy by proposing that utopia be considered as empty of content or as strictly processual. In her book *Educated Fear and Educated Hope*, Marianna Papastephanou has argued that utopian

⁸ Dystopia here has the meaning of “the blackest representation of an existing or possible society where most qualities of life are absent” and in this sense, “dystopia can help generate utopia”. V. Geoghegan, “Ideology and Utopia,” *Journal of Political Ideologies* 9 (June, 2004), 151.

⁹ M. Papastephanou, *Educated Fear, Educated Hope: Utopia, Dystopia and the Plasticity of Humanity*, 41.

¹⁰ R. Levitas, *The Concept of Utopia*, 89.

¹¹ K. Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge*, trans. L. Wirth & E. Shils, New York: A Harvest Book, Harcourt, Brace & World, 1936.

¹² K. Kumar, *Utopianism*, Buckingham: Open University Press, 1991, 36.

formalism and processualism is no less susceptible to the dangers that postmodern thought has feared. More recently, Papastephanou has explored how Michel Foucault has, in his passage from earlier anti-utopian remarks to utopian vision in his Iranian writings and later to half-hearted endorsement of liberal utopia, led utopianism to new pitfalls, precisely by assuming content-void and a formal direction of utopia.¹³

Utopia is often rejected as unrealizable. Its vernacular sense as unrealistic daydreaming has given utopia a bad name. Why, indeed, is the concept of utopia commonly understood in this way? The answer that we may draw from utopia's conceptual history concerns the fact that utopia became associated with a present, romanticized, idyllic elsewhere, an already existing ideal destination that needs only to be found and imitated (e.g. the New World of the Americas).¹⁴ Ultimately, the ready-made, supposedly utopian destination turned out to be nothing more than a product of utopianizing projections, descriptions and inscriptions far from the idealization that beautified them. Consequently, many people "conclude that utopia is simple futile."¹⁵ Past utopian dreams, like socialist projects, failed to be realised. More broadly, "the hitherto inauspicious record of humanity" concerning ideality has, regrettably, raised anthropological objections to the realizability of utopian visions.¹⁶ On why this should not be the case, Bloch's approach is quite illustrative: "as long as the reality has not become a completely determined one, as long as it possesses still unclosed possibilities, in the shape of new shoots and new spaces for development, then no absolute objection to utopia can be raised by merely factual reality."¹⁷

Another anti-utopian argument is that utopia is indiscriminately teleological, detailed and finalist. This approach to utopia ignores and even contradicts that "the overwhelming majority of utopias were not written as depictions of

¹³ M. Papastephanou, "Of(f) Course: Michel Foucault and the Dreamworlds of the Mobile Philosopher", paper presented at the 6th International Philosophy of Education Conference, Tilos, Greece, 01–05 July 2016.

¹⁴ M. Papastephanou, *Educated Fear, Educated Hope: Utopia, Dystopia and the Plasticity of Humanity*.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, 105.

¹⁶ Marianna Papastephanou, "Utopian Education and Anti-utopian Anthropology," *International Education Studies* 6 (February, 2013), 26.

¹⁷ E. Bloch, *The Principle of Hope...*, 197.

unchanging perfection.”¹⁸ Furthermore, this approach overlooks that the fulfilment of each wish leaves a feeling of incompleteness and unsatisfaction. In Theodor W. Adorno’s terms, “the fulfilment of the wishes takes something away from the substance of the wishes.”¹⁹ Since the fulfilment of wishes and realization of projects is by definition not finalist, utopias, as wish expressions, are not finalist either.

Although utopia can be a mere possibility rather than imminently fulfilled *telos*; although it is not by its very nature associated to a final destination unchangeable over time; and although the wish-fulfilment is by definition at odds with finalism and plenitude, utopia was charged with teleology and stability. It is not hard to explain this impasse: utopia was associated with teleology and stability because of the assumption that if a situation is perfect, it should never change. Therefore, a dilemma emerges: on the one hand, utopia should describe the perfect place, an alternative picture to a current dystopia (otherwise, with nothing to propose, it is pointless to criticise any current status). On the other hand, utopia is compelled to avoid “bad utopianism”, “defined as lack of connection with the actual historical process”; and, it is compelled to avoid “finalism”, “defined as closure of the historical process.”²⁰ The role that “critique” plays in utopia and the interrogation of what counts as “perfection” resolve this dilemma: on the one hand, “a society denying its members the political right to contest its structure or consider its change would be automatically imperfect.”²¹ On the other, “a society is perfect not when it reaches a state of no further change, but on the contrary, when it reaches a state of reflective and sensitive response to time, that is, to suffering involved in existential misfortune.”²² In other words, preventing critique entails imperfection, and critique itself involves change. Therefore, utopia can be descriptive of an ideal destination without being teleological and static. As to why perfection rather than betterment is appropriate to utopia, here is just an indication of the related line of argument: the proposed, desirable *topos*

¹⁸ L. Tower Sargent, “In Defence of Utopia,” *Diogenes* 53 (February, 2006), 13.

¹⁹ E. Bloch, *The Utopian Function of Art and Literature: Selected Essays*, trans. J. Zipes & F. Mecklenburg, London: MIT Press, 1989, 1.

²⁰ M. Cooke, “Redeeming Redemption: The Utopian Dimension of Critical Social Theory,” *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 30 (June, 2004), 413.

²¹ M. Papastephanou, *Educated Fear, Educated Hope: Utopia, Dystopia and the Plasticity of Humanity*, 169.

²² *Ibidem*.

should be “perfect” and not, as Ivana Milojevic suggests “better”,²³ because, as Papastephanou rightly wonders, “in a world that millions go hungry, can utopia be a matter of lesser number going hungry?”²⁴

However, in the relevant literature, this line has not been pursued, as, so far, the main road out of the impasse has been to empty utopia of all content and to associate this void with formal processes of change. Most theorists accept with too few questions the assumption that even the slightest indication of utopian content brings along modern pathologies such as teleology and stability. They thus argue that utopia should be considered as an endless journey, a voyage without destination. Yet, new problems crop up when we consider utopia in this way: first, such utopia may turn into escapism; second, the journey can be contested “only by setting an end” to it.²⁵ Taking these into account, utopian thought should deny the closure in the desired destination, not the destination itself.

Utopia is often reconceptualised on grounds of formalism. In emphasizing form over content, such conceptualizations capture utopia as empty, as involving an ethical void. Jürgen Habermas, Axel Honneth and Martin Seel amongst others argue that “critical social theory is supposed to identify only the formal characteristics of possible ‘good societies’, avoiding all substantive images.”²⁶ However, some utopian content is absolutely necessary, because a utopia empty of content cannot be motivational nor justificatory about what would be worth pursuing.²⁷

A utopia as a vision empty of content and unable to motivate subjects toward change sharply contradicts and undermines the fact that a utopia depends on, and presupposes, a degree of rupture with the current reality. That is, utopia requires content not only as regards its own direction but also as what it aspires to overcome or contest. In other words, the disruption of the dystopian present is a conceptual criterion of what counts as utopian vision, which distinguishes the latter from escapist and ideological visions. Utopian content of a kind and

²³ I. Milojevic, “Hegemonic and Marginalised Educational Utopias in the Contemporary Western World,” *Policy Futures in Education* 1 (September, 2003), 445.

²⁴ M. Papastephanou, *Educated Fear, Educated Hope: Utopia, Dystopia and the Plasticity of Humanity*, 180.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, 53.

²⁶ M. Cooke, “Redeeming Redemption: The Utopian Dimension of Critical Social Theory”: 416.

²⁷ *Ibidem*; M. Papastephanou, *Educated Fear, Educated Hope: Utopia, Dystopia and the Plasticity of Humanity*.

a degree is important for one more reason:

the meaning of the good and the new is decisive for discerning which utopian plan expresses, say, a dangerous secularized or religious fervour and which is about a more defensible futurist desire.²⁸

The rejection of the (supposedly unnecessary) utopian content has been supported by thinkers who argued that utopia should be considered strictly as a process. For instance, Louis Marin argues that it is useful to conceive utopia as a process and not as a representation²⁹. As he explains, utopia as representation “stands as a perfect idea above any limit, it asserts an originary or eschatological projection beyond any frontier, its universal validity by making all details explicit.”³⁰ Marin points out that the utopian image gives a location to all journeys and routes, yet it negates them as well, because “the eye that sees it is an abstract eye, since it has no viewpoint: its place is everywhere and nowhere.”³¹ This is because, as I interpret it, the described destination does not exist at present. In a nutshell, Marin argues against utopian representation because the latter, in its abstraction, denies its own image. Thus, in his terms, we have to consider utopia as a process, or, in terms of Fredric Jameson who follows Marin on this, as *energeia*, so it ceases to be about “sheer representation, [...] [about] the ‘realized’ vision of this or that ideal society or social ideal.”³²

However, the supposed tension between an as yet non existing *topos* and the representation of it can be rejected empirically. For instance, in many feminist utopias, the education of women (desirable *topos*) was represented from an abstract point of view. Yet, that did not function against the hope for the realization of feminist educational utopias; the “abstract eye” that was seeing the “abstract” desirable destination of women’s education, did not deny the destination, and it certainly contributed to the approximation of that destination almost, or more or less, to global level.

Additionally, dangerous pitfalls lurk in approaching utopia as a process: such approaches render utopia a mystical dream, “where all the features of

²⁸ *Ibidem*, 133.

²⁹ L. Marin, “Frontiers of Utopia: Past and Present,” *Critical Inquiry* 19 (Spring, 1993).

³⁰ *Ibidem*, 413.

³¹ *Ibidem*.

³² F. Jameson, *The Ideologies of Theory*, London & New York: Verso, 2008, 392.

a utopian image are withdrawn from public intelligibility and interrogation.”³³ Then, a vision that “smacks of bad utopianism” (to use Bill Reading’s parlance here) is indiscernible from a vision whose utopianism is worthy.

One possible objection here could be that, only if we consider utopia empty of content or absolutely processual, we can avoid a too determinate utopia and thus authoritarianism. As Maria Louisa Berneri remarks, authoritarian utopias, since they impose a detailed model that it should be strictly adhered, deprive individual freedom.³⁴ However, beyond the two extreme options (utopia either as too determinate leading to authoritarianism or as empty of content/processual), there is a moderate one:

the picture of the desirable world must be indeterminate enough so as to avoid authoritarianism and its arresting of time [and at the same time] it must be determinate enough so as for committed agents to undertake justificatory responsibility for it.³⁵

Papastephanou places utopia in special relation to determinate content while also refuting the anti-utopian argument according to which utopia is impossible because, supposedly, no determinate utopia can fully be realised. Let us unpack this point: Mark Kelly argues that “we cannot model society with enough accuracy to know what features can obtain simultaneously.”³⁶ Consequently, as Kelly claims, “it is *a fortiori* impossible to know whether we can realistically produce a given utopia from the starting conditions that actually obtain.”³⁷ However, as Papastephanou argues, if a utopian vision is not too determinate and detailed (to avoid authoritarianism),³⁸ it is precisely because of this lack of full determination that it escapes the predicament of detailed implementation.

³³ M. Papastephanou, *Educated Fear, Educated Hope: Utopia, Dystopia and the Plasticity of Humanity*, 107–108.

³⁴ M. L. Berneri, *Journey through Utopia*, New York: Shocken Books, 1971.

³⁵ M. Papastephanou, *Educated Fear, Educated Hope: Utopia, Dystopia and the Plasticity of Humanity*, 108.

³⁶ M. GE Kelly, “Against Prophecy and Utopia: Foucault and the Future,” *Thesis Eleven* 120 (February, 2014), 109.

³⁷ *Ibidem*.

³⁸ M. Papastephanou, *Educated Fear, Educated Hope: Utopia, Dystopia and the Plasticity of Humanity*.

This paper explores utopia negatively, i.e. through what utopia is not. This negative exploration helps us roughly demarcate what utopia might be, at least in the minimalist sense that Papastephanou has developed in her book: utopia, then, is a vision of ethico-political implications for collective life, which acknowledges that it demands a drastic transformation of the present reality and undertakes to justify the “why” of this demand. Additionally, as indicated, since there is no compelling argument that utopia is unrealizable or inescapably teleological and finalist, too determinate and consequently tyrannical, we can distinguish pernicious utopias from desirable ones. Indeed, we have to draw such a distinction because, as Alain Badiou argues, failing to do so entails that we deny to human beings the hope to change the present reality radically, and thus, to forbid them their humanity as such.³⁹ Therefore, it may be said that the argumentation presented in this paper constitutes an “anti-anti-utopian” position and, hence, a position in favour of hope and radical change.

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CURIOSITY AND UNCERTAINTY



One might argue that there are two kinds of curiosity. The first kind is dangerous for whoever and whatever is the object of curiosity. For the agent of curiosity is fully cognisant of his or her own powers and fully aware of their scope and their limits. The strange and the other is confronted only to be transformed, normalised and regularised. Even if the object of curiosity is 'left alone' it only exists on sufferance. In Adorno's and Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, the curiosity of Odysseus not merely disenchants the world but denudes it of all the things that made it worthy of curiosity in the first place.¹ Francis Bacon – Baconian enquiry – although driven by curiosity, strives to encompass all that it investigates for the benefit of mankind.

But there is another kind of curiosity that is driven by uncertainty and is content to remain uncertain. It stops short of fully satisfying curiosity. The mind of the person who has this kind of eye for the curious is one which is comfortable with uncertainty, a mind that knows it cannot comprehend everything and has no desire to. But is it possible to maintain this rather wholesome curiosity? Does not the act of curiosity destroy that which provoked it? I shall suggest that Derrida's idea of *différance* helps us to maintain an attitude of composure as the curious other escapes capture through signifiers as its meaning slips from view only to re-appear slightly changed. As Keats understood (through his idea of negative capability), uncertainty is the handmaiden of curiosity. But it also enables us to be at home in the world.

Curiosity can be viewed as a certain fascination with the world. It is almost a badge of our humanity, as if showing a lack of interest in the world is letting the side down; we have a duty to exercise our curiosity. So curiosity in the be-

¹ See T. Adorno and M. Horkheimer, *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*, London: Verso, 1979.

ings and doings of humans places a value on those activities and phenomena as if anything at all undertaken by humans is potentially worthy of our interest. This vision is extended to the natural world in which animals are endowed with any number of human emotions – affection, courage, solidarity, steadfastness, determination. The value placed on curiosity is a part of modern mythology, an inflated humanism, a non-critical humanism. So on this view, not to be curious is somehow to be less than fully human.

We can explain this inflated humanism as a desperate attempt to re-enchant a world irredeemably disenchanted through a relentless process of rationalisation. The framework of purposive rationality involving the subordination of nature to calculation in which it becomes a mere instrument of human preference; the corresponding lack of interest in exploring values and the meaning of value; and the accompanying rationalised self-identity which insists that ones emotions, needs and preferences be self-managed – all these are ingredients of rationalisation.² Within the interstices of rationalised behaviour and reflection there is, of course, some room for views and perspectives of acceptance, of seeing phenomena on their own terms, a ‘letting be’. But if this letting be is itself driven by a mythology of re-enchantment then it is doomed to failure because it is itself driven by a humanism desperate to exclude rationalisation. The result is that nature is merely endowed with non-calculative meaning but still reflecting the privileging of the human perspective. One way of exemplifying such privileging is through vaunting the claims of curiosity. Consequently we might even be tempted to suppose that a lack of curiosity might be worth cultivating if our curiosity is always in danger of being freighted with an inflated humanism. A studied indifference to what lies around us may be worth developing – if we don’t notice things then we are less likely to do harm.

But such indifference merely brings a fresh set of problems; surely, it might be said, we are destined to feel as if the world is our home: surely we need to ‘love the world’ as Hannah Arendt suggested;³ and if we are teachers, we need to convey this disposition to our children and students. This, it might be said, forms the background to curiosity and is what motivates it; our interest in events, actions and phenomena is not merely constituted by a mode of enquiry – it is

² See the account in J. Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, Vol. 1, Cambridge: Polity Press 1991, 169–171.

³ Arendt made this claim in connection with education: “Education is the point at which we decide whether we love the world enough to assume responsibility for it” (H. Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, London: Faber and Faber, 1959, 196).

motivated by a love and attachment to the world. Without this love, curiosity could become arbitrary at best and at worst motivated by a predatory desire. A love of the world may even be taken quite literally – not long ago on BBC radio a space astronaut was speaking of gazing from his spacecraft at this colourful, fascinating, huge orb, suspended in black space which seemed, he said, to be alive – and not merely seemed but emphatically *was* a living thing towards which it was impossible to be indifferent. Such a love of the world would need to derive from the fact that the world is worthy of love. But, as Weber observed, this is what many salvation-religions deny; their rejection and abnegation of the world helps to develop an inner-religious motivation characterised by asceticism⁴ And is well-known, Weber linked this ascetic behaviour, which was given shape by the formation of early modern commerce as well as early Protestantism, with rationalisation and disenchantment. Hence we can start to see why the vaunting of curiosity can seem so hollow; there is no world-view against which one can develop a reasonable curiosity, that is, one that is not motivated by world-denying regard or one that is converted into an inflated self-regard in which the world is treated merely as a reflection and plaything of the self.

Jane Bennett has explored the theme of disenchantment in her book *The Enchantment of Modern Life*. She suggests that that enchantment, or re-enchanting, may involve a certain plasticity with respect to identity and gives a number of examples, including:

[...] the criminal fiend, Catwoman; ...the oceanic woman in Luce Irigaray's *Marine Lover*; (to) the strategic insects in a 1996 documentary; [...] the goat-kite in Michel Tournier's *Friday*;....Alex, an African Grey parrot learning to use abstract concepts.⁵

But whilst these examples (and there are others) certainly serve to persuade us that identity may be subject to change it is not clear why these amount to enchantment. For it could be argued that they merely serve to emphasise our dis-encharnted world in that we are unable to find ordinary things and happenings of any interest but instead are driven to fictional alternatives that present a different world, certainly – but not necessarily an enchanted one. It seems

⁴ See H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1948, 323–359. The link between asceticism and rationalisation is discussed in Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1930, especially 181–182.

⁵ J. Bennett, *The Enchantment of Modern Life*, Princeton University Press, 2001, 17.

to me, rather, that enchantment depends on being curious about the world, a willingness to take the world as it is but to see it afresh. Ordinary things like sparrows, oak-leaves, spring daffodils, a child's gesture, a fashion design, a piece of dance-theatre – all of these may present themselves as enchanted if we are able to experience them aright.

The meaning of curiosity extends to how we comport ourselves with respect to the world and each other and what a credible humanism might look like. It could be said that curiosity involves a double effect:

1. We frame the object or phenomena as an object of interest in terms of its colour, shape and size and its apparently out-of-the ordinary characteristics;
2. But at the same time we 'let go' of this object thus constituted through a deliberate entertainment of differing, random thoughts and impressions;
3. But this 'deconstruction' is entirely dependent on its having been constituted and framed. We cannot let this framing go, which remains as a trace;
4. What animates and drives this process is the spirit of uncertainty – whether it be framed as an 'object' or as a random collection of impressions.

This spirit of uncertainty was spoken of by Rilke:⁶

I am so afraid of people's words.
Everything they pronounce is so clear:
this is a hand and that is a house,
and beginning is here, and the end over there.

Their meaning frightens, their mockery-play
And their claims to know what's coming, what was;
No mountain thrills them now; their estates
And their gardens abut directly on God.

I warn; I ward them off. Stay back.
It's a wonder to me to hear things sing.
You touch them and they stultify.
You are the destroyers of things.

Kierkegaard also makes a similar point when he distinguishes between objective and subjective thought. In the former case, thought abstracts from the thinking subject and translates everything into results; but in the latter case, the thinker is aware of his own thought as a process and is less concerned in resolving this

⁶ R. M. Rilke, *Selected Poems*, trans. S. Ranson and M. Sutherland, Oxford University Press, 2011.

thought into fixed entities. By delaying resolution, by putting off a conclusion, what subjective thought also leaves room for uncertainty.⁷ This willingness to delay, this play of links and connections is not something that is controlled or managed. Rather this 'play' is the effect of 'letting be' in which, as it may seem, the connections are not made by one but *for* one whereby the connections and links do their own work. But a spirit of uncertainty is vital: for no matter how sure we might be that the constituted object is indeed 'thus and so' we need to entertain the possibility that we may be mistaken and that the more we place trust in our framing powers so the more we should mistrust them as well.

The power of the 'trace' is discussed by Jacques Derrida⁸ in terms the grasping of meaning at a semiotic level – the idea being that a term never gives us, just by itself, a full meaning: carried with that term are also the differences from other terms that give a meaning its specificity but which also give that meaning a shifting character. It is mistaken to suppose that the 'play of differences' is something that *we* bring to the scene and that meaning is somehow within our power to construct as we wish. Rather, *differance* – and its accompaniment of the *trace* – has a certain necessity inscribed within its economy since without this play of differences, meaning would not be possible. I am using the concept of a 'trace' in an extended way to show how our different modes of comportment with respect to the world also have an inscribed necessity within them.

But this deployment of the trace of a constituted object complemented by the free play of its properties runs parallel with another, deeper process as well. This is the proposition that the world always was disenchanted and this disenchantment is something that can never be wished away, never forgotten, never un-remembered. I am not here speaking of the idea of life which, in its very meaning encapsulates the concept of a life ending, of death, as if the very prospect of death in itself sullies our experience of the world. Rather it is the very monotony and repetition of the sheer effort of living – its dull necessity, its dreary tasks to perform, its often bleak landscape.⁹ If we do have a love of the

⁷ See S. Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, Princeton University Press, 1941, 68. See also the valuable discussion by D. Wood, *Philosophy at the Limit*, London: Unwin Hyman, 1990, 105–117.

⁸ See, for example, the essay 'Differance' in J. Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. A. Bass, London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1982, 3–27.

⁹ I am thinking particularly here of Hanna Arendt's description of the incessant swing of labour, tied to the uncasing changes of the seasons and driven by sheer necessity. See H. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, University of Chicago Press, 1958.

world then there is also this always ever-present disenchantment as well, acting as a trace of our love and joy of the world. And what we do *not* need is for this disenchantment to be wished away, for this necessity to be vaunted up as meritorious accomplishments. This is what rationalisation does. It inflates dreary repetition into something noble and laudable by dressing up the accomplishments of purposive rationality – whether at school or in the workplace – as worthy of recognition and praise. But by inflating the claims of necessity in this way we can no longer love the world because our love becomes displaced; the beloved merely becomes something that we have fashioned through rationalisation. What we end up loving and valuing is our own rationalisation – our own ‘iron cage’ as Weber put it¹⁰ and the products of that rationalisation, including a rationalised world. Our curiosity, far from being a ‘letting be’ is driven by a recognition of ourselves in the object, as something we have already fashioned.

But if we accept that our relationship with the world is partly characterised by *both* disenchantment and uncertainty then maybe we can start to have multiple relations with the world including love – and even fear. If then, we retain this disenchantment in the form of a trace perhaps we may even come to see even some of our ordinary beings and doings as odd – even curious. But without the trace of disenchantment we may find that total enchantment leads to appropriation and destruction, fuelled by a destructive curiosity.

I think the spirit of curiosity is well illustrated in Bob Dylan’s song, *Mr Tambourine Man*.¹¹

Hey ! Mr Tambourine Man, play a song for me
I’m not sleepy and there is no place I’m going to
Hey ! Mr Tambourine Man, play a song for me
In the jingle jangle morning I’ll come followin’ you.

Take me on a trip upon your magic swirlin’ ship
My senses have been stripped, my hands can’t feel to grip
My toes too numb to step, wait only for my boot heels
To be wanderin’
I’m ready to go anywhere, I’m ready for to fade
Into my own parade, cast your dancing spell my way
I promise to go under it.

¹⁰ In Weber (1930), 181.

¹¹ First issued in 1965 on the LP *Bringing it all back home* (Columbia Records).

Here, Dylan is summoning up his Muse, the Tambourine Man. Perhaps all of us, if we are to exercise genuine curiosity cannot do it alone and need a muse, just like Dylan. But that is for another paper.

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THE 'LUST OF THE MIND': CURIOSITY IN HOBBS' *LEVIATHAN*



Thomas Hobbes includes "curiosity" to an extended catalogue of the passions that he principally distinguishes as beneficial or detrimental to human kind. In this light curiosity holds up a prominent position in his thought which he considers as the motivating factor that leads people to discover new worlds and broaden their horizons. An indicative definition of curiosity as found in Hobbes' *Leviathan* proceeds as follows:

Desire to know why, and how, curiosity; such as is in no living creature but man: so that man is distinguished, not only by his reason, but also by this singular passion from other animals; in whom the appetite of food, and other pleasures of sense, by predominance, take away the care of knowing causes; which is a lust of the mind, that by a perseverance of delight in the continual and indefatigable generation of knowledge, exceedeth the short vehemence of any carnal pleasure.¹

Curiosity regarded as 'the care of knowing causes' and as 'a lust of the mind' intrigues our own curiosity to further explore its meaning as conceptualized and developed throughout *Leviathan*. Curiosity, according to Hobbes, distinguishes humans from animals since humans seek to know the causes leading to human actions whereas animals are only concerned with the need for self-preservation. This distinction becomes both broader and more specific when Hobbes describes human actions as consequences precipitated by certain causes, hence giving the consequences precise meaning and significance.

¹ T. Hobbes, *Leviathan or the Matter Form and Power of a Commonwealth Ecclesiastical and Civil*, ed. W. Molesworth, *The English works of Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury*, Vol. 3, London 1997, 44.

The train of regulated thoughts is of two kinds: one, when of an effect imagined we seek the causes or means that produce it; and this is common to man and beast. The other is, when imagining anything whatsoever, we seek all the possible effects that can by it be produced; that is to say, we imagine what we can do with it when we have it. Of which I have not at any time seen any sign, but in man only; for this is a curiosity hardly incident to the nature of any living creature that has no other passion but sensual, such as are hunger, thirst, lust, and anger.²

For Hobbes humans unlike any other beings have the ability to direct their thinking towards a purpose. Their intention to seek the cause of possible effects leads them unavoidably to a circle of

wonderings principally motivated by the need to know, namely curiosity: Curiosity, or love of the knowledge of causes, draws a man from consideration of the effect to seek the cause; and again, the cause of that cause; till of necessity he must come to this thought at last, that there is some cause where of there is no former cause, but is eternal; which is it men call God. So that it is impossible to make any profound inquiry into natural causes without being inclined thereby to believe there is one God eternal;³

Curiosity inspires scientific inquiry into the causes capable of producing calculated effects. Human mind for Hobbes is designed exactly for bringing beneficial purposes to a desirable end, and this is a process essentially characterized by love' of acknowledging causes. Indeed it is only rarely that Hobbes makes use of favourable emotional grammar to describe human characteristics. For Hobbes human nature is greedy, nasty and egotist, however when he comes to speak about science and 'scientific inquiry' things take a different vein. Science and religion constitute two divergent aspects of human life that must affect the whole process of human thought in completely different ways and degrees.

Kathryn Tabb acutely observes that the matter of curiosity in *Leviathan* presents not just as "[...] a delight in causes but an appetite for a particular kind of original knowledge: that of hitherto unexperienced effects of experienced causes."⁴ Hobbes links directly the passion of curiosity to that of novelty when saying:

² *Ibidem*, 13–14.

³ *Ibidem*, 92.

⁴ K. Tabb, "The fate of Nebuchadnezzar: Curiosity and human nature in Hobbes", *Hobbes Studies* 27, 2014: 23.

Joy, from apprehension of novelty, ADMIRATION ; proper to man, because it excites the appetite of knowing the cause.⁵

Admittedly the passion of novelty for Hobbes prompts people to new paths of scientific discoveries prospectively delightful and more beneficial for the human kind.

What we may say here is that Hobbes portrays curiosity in a sense similar to what David Hume made in a later stage more explicit in his distinction between ‘scientific curiosity’ and ‘trembling curiosity’. The former is principally associated with “pure love of truth” that prompts people into scientific inquiry. The latter refers to superstitious faith to religion that keeps people confined to a primitive state of thinking.⁶ Hobbes by his behalf encouraged people to search for the real causes of matters that prove for their knowledge foremost beneficial, though he never lost faith to God as to be the principal cause of all things existing. The believe that humans are curious beings and because of this reason they are never lead to decay and misery may be traced in the writings of Francis Bacon when he says that for “... knowledge there is no satiety, but satisfaction and appetite are perpetually interchangeable.”⁷ In Bacon’s case much like Hobbes “...the rhythms of curiosity were those of addiction or of consumption for its own sake, cut loose of need and satisfaction.”⁸

According to Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park among the early modern thinkers that appreciate the most the role that curiosity played to the progressive formation of the modern subject was undoubtedly Thomas Hobbes.⁹ Curiosity to ‘touch’ the causes of desirable or unfortunate effects in life forms what Hobbes calls an “appetite of knowledge”. The next argument that I am here call to deal with adheres to this: how does ‘epistemic curiosity’ in Hobbes theory gets politicized in the course of building up’ his Leviathan.

⁵ T. Hobbes, *The English works of Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury*, 45.

⁶ D. Hume, *The Natural History of Religion*, Stanford University Press 1957, Section 2,3.

⁷ F. Bacon, *Advancement*, in: *Works of Francis Bacon*, Vol. 3, 317.

⁸ L. Daston and K. Park, *Wonders and the order of Nature*, New York: Zone Books New York, 307.

⁹ K. Tabb, *Hobbes Studies* 27, 307.

Curiosity and the attribution of manners

Chapter 11 entitled “Of the difference of manners” is of particular interest to our purpose. Hobbes begins this chapter by defining what he calls ‘manners’, namely “...those qualities of mankind, that concern their living together in peace and unity”. People are by their nature greedy desiring endless satisfaction of their needs but also desiring frequent confirmation that they do indeed experience a content life. The variety of ways by which people achieve ‘happy life’ differs according to the diversity of passions inscribed in each diverse human being. Furthermore, people achieve happy/content life, through their varied “... opinion[s] that each one has of the causes, which produce the effect desired.”¹⁰ In showing the importance of seeking for causes that guarantee peace and unity among individuals, Hobbes underscores the role that ‘ignorance’ plays to the expression of unhealthy symptoms and misbeliefs. People as he says are greedy enough “[...] to desire power after power that ceases only in death.”¹¹ The fact of their ignorance though creates an extra danger that prevents people from remaining confident about their goals in life which he identifies in five broad sets of reasons.¹² One set stems from people’s greedy nature which induces them to rely solely on their own scientific convictions and thus disregard the opinions of others. A second one is designated as the unwillingness of people to understand meanings correctly due to “ignorance of the (right) signification of words”.¹³ The third set relies on the fact that people’s judgments are most times explicitly aligned to their personal advantage. The fourth set is people’s partial understandings of their duties and responsibilities to the collective. While the fifth denotes people’s tendency to believe and disseminate lies of various sorts.

In all these reasons mentioned above Hobbes highlights ‘ignorance’ as to be the major constraint that prevents people from living together in peace and unity. For Hobbes ‘ignorance’ would gradually wither away if only curiosity could be directed accordingly towards the development of ‘manners’ namely – living together in peace and unity. For achieving this long-term goal people should remain closely committed to the idea of maintaining a commonwealth and their appetite for knowledge thoroughly aligned to that purpose.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, 87.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, 86.

¹² *Ibidem*, 90, 92.

¹³ *Ibidem*, 90.

In the section following next I focus on the second part of *Leviathan* entitled as the commonwealth with reference to the chapter of the passions and manners, in my attempt to understand the meaning of curiosity and how can we make sense of curiosity's political significance in the course of Hobbes' thought.

Curiosity getting politicized

Hobbes was particularly aware that peaceful coexistence could be possible only through a common understanding among people that 'passions' (at least the variety of them) perform a rather dangerous role in human life leading to grievance and constant war. In the avoidance of unforeseen consequences people should agree altogether to form a sovereign body capable of monitoring human passions and administering human life. In the process of building up this sovereign body called Leviathan, Hobbes comes face to face with a great challenge that is: to speak about the causes that weak or tend to the dissolution of a commonwealth.

It is my argument here that even though Hobbes has thoroughly delineated the passage of humans from natural state to civic state due contract, he never managed to give plausible solutions to the problem of how does 'ignorance' affects the course of knowing causes, namely 'curiosity', and consequently the development of 'manners', namely the matter of living together in peace and unity. This negative characteristic of human nature, namely ignorance that interestingly Hobbes lives aside from the list of passions, never withers away but rather intensifies in a great degree when the writer speaks about the causes leading to the dissolution of a commonwealth.

In the aforementioned chapter (23 of *Leviathan*) we notice that the matter of 'ignorance' comes back to the scene and plays a decisive role in misguiding the masses towards undesirable paths. People are tentative to turn against the commonwealth Hobbes argues, in a variety of ways and for a number of reasons. I will confine myself on making visible only one point which I believe indicates the matter of ignorance operating as a constraint towards the attribution of causes that Hobbes thinks fit for maintaining a steady commonwealth.

When Hobbes points out the causes leading to extensive state disorder, he believes that this happens primarily because people are yet in-mature to reckon what is beneficially 'good' for them and 'just' as a collective. Similarly they are led to believe that by replacing the form of their own government with that of a foreign state, things will prove considerably better in the near future. Hobbes

draws these conclusions by his experience of civil war as taking place in England between the years 1642–49. He was a chief defender of the current constitution of monarchy in England and believed that any attempt to establish different forms of government would prove in the long run essentially catastrophic.

For Hobbes a considerable amount of people in England believed that “change” in governmental policy could only be achieved through the adoption of other forms of government that come from neighboring nations. His opinion sounds too confident when saying:

And I doubt not, but many men have been contented to see the late troubles in England out of an imitation of the Low Countries; supposing there needed no more to grow rich, than to change, as they had done the form of their government. For the constitution of man's nature, is of itself subject to desire novelty. When therefore they are provoked to the same, by the neighborhood also of those that have been enrich by it, it is almost impossible for them, not to be content with those that solicit them to change ; and love the first beginnings, though they be grieved with the continuance of disorder ; like hot bloods, that having gotten the itch, tear themselves with their own nail, till they can endure the smart no longer.”¹⁴

An important idea that is of an interest to us is simply in passing here: Hobbes bares recognition to the fact that people seek not only conceptual changes in their lives but also political ones when they are in the need to or influenced by other factors. Hobbes never seize on reminding us that people's nature is designed in such a way so as to desire novelty. But when the matter becomes urgently political, that is of saving a commonwealth from its ultimate distraction Hobbes appears skeptical and in a sense controversial. He equates the importance of something being new with that of mere imitation of the Low Countries' forms of government. He now sees people's expressed curiosity to make sense of other forms of government as potentially dangerous for the stability of monarchical state.

This intrinsic shift of people to turn against the commonwealth that they themselves have created indicates as I believe the various ways and grades that ignorance operates in the Hobbesian system of thought as a constraint towards the development of manners proper for maintaining peace and stability. In that sense the intentions of the curious learner to find out more about other states of living and forms of government, takes the character of a contempt action that if practiced will unavoidably lead to unforeseen consequences.

¹⁴ T. Hobbes, *The English works of Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury*, 314.

This presentation is a project under study that seeks to reevaluate the meaning of curiosity in Hobbes' political theory and further on to enrich the weaponry of conceptual understanding in Hobbes studies. Though Hobbes might be the most widely discussed theorist in the tradition of modern political theory there are certain aspects of his thought that are systematically neglected either ignored presumably considered as far too complex for our understanding of contemporary politics. The matter of curiosity should be considered as one of them. The study of Hobbesian curiosity has only just begun.

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PEACE AND WILDERNESS



ost postmodern philosophy tends to set peace discourse aside. The present paper takes issue with this tendency and explores some reasons for such a neglect of rethinking peace. Relying on a longer work,¹ the paper exclusively focuses on one aspect of wilderness and peace that may be indicated with the metaphorization of peace as homeless. Thus, the paper presupposes the ground that the longer work has covered. Such ground comprised mappings of some of the multiple political operations of the ‘metaphoricity’ of wilderness. It also comprised illustrations of how such metaphoricity heightens our awareness of the world of today: a world where peace is absent and various excuses and alibis for this absence play a pacifying role. Contemporary reality was there sketched as a constructed wilderness, unsuitable and unlikely *qua* peace’s dwelling place. The figurative substratum of that critique was formed through brief references to Aristophanes’ comedy *Peace*.

This paper condenses the main thesis of the longer essay, which can be summed up as follows: the naturalization and normalization of the homelessness of peace that may be extrapolated from some postmodern discourses should be interrogated. Some discourses within the broad designation ‘post-modern’ make room for viewing the lack of abode as ontologically more appropriate for peace. Thought through, such discourses imply that all search for a home for peace amounts to seeking a stable, conflict-free and orderly world and ostensibly reflects a by now obsolete metaphysics of presence. Granted, these discourses offer us the opportunity to realize the need for a nuanced notion of conflict. And they show us the inescapability and significance of some conflicts for life – an issue neglected in a modernity obsessed with order. But,

¹ M. Papastephanou, “Where Does True Peace Dwell?” in: *Pedagogy, Politics and Philosophy of Peace*, ed. C. Borg and M. Grech, London: Bloomsbury, 2017.

by also failing to discern between detrimental conflict and desirable controversy, these postmodern discourses ironically run the risk of metaphysically, though unwittingly, naturalizing and normalizing the human-made wilderness that blocks true peace.

Wilderness

In Cornelius Tacitus' *Agricola*, the Caledonian leader Calgacus urged his people to war against the Roman Empire to secure their freedom. The first paragraph of his speech ended with the famous dictum: 'Theft, slaughter and rape, the liars call Empire; they create a wilderness and call it peace'. Ever since, 'they create a wilderness and call it peace' has become widely-known and widely-used. The implicit tension between peace and its façade has often been encountered in various political writings throughout the centuries. Yet, after Immanuel Kant's monumental essay 'Perpetual Peace', too few works deal head-on with peace within the continental philosophical persuasion.² Especially postmodern continental thought seems to have conceded all philosophical engagement with the notion of peace to modern liberal accounts.

Granting peace a possible 'home' depends on the onto-anthropological association of peace and wilderness. In Calgacus' dictum, *solitudo*, wilderness, often translated as 'solitude', 'desolation' or 'desert', is not natural but constructed, since 'they create' it, that is, it is human made. The subject creating it is in plural; an aggressive, imperialist 'they' committing atrocities and cloaking them with the euphemism 'peace'. But, beyond the dictum, in many cases, the 'they' having the upper hand cannot be clearly distinguished from a subjected, docile and impotent 'we'. Nor can it be personalized and neatly demarcated from complex, capillary and 'productive' forms of power that modern and postmodern subjects fail to resist. Nevertheless, even if the creation of wilderness burdens a specific agential collective subject, the perpetuation of wilderness also burdens passive recipients. The latter tolerate and often condone, instead of combating, power operations that effect wilderness – a wilderness that, against hopes for perpetual peace, becomes eternal pacification.

Resistance to the constructed wilderness (and, thus, the hope of peace becoming a resident in the human world) presupposes, in my view, faith in the possibility

² I. Kant, "Toward Perpetual Peace," in: *Political Writings*, ed. H. Reiss, trans. H. B. Nisbet, second edition, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

of doubleness of peace – a doubleness that comprises a true and ideal peace as well as a pseudo-peaceful state of affairs. Discerning a wilderness that is only nominally peace inserts a critical distance between a façade of peaceful coexistence and a true or genuine irenic life. If the former is constructed rather than natural to humans, the possibilities of overcoming it for the sake of hosting the latter in our world increase.

The distinction between true peace and pseudo-peace – whose possible de-constructibility never annuls the necessity of drawing it – is compatible with, and illuminates, another distinction, that of negative and positive peace. Whereas positive peace involves notions such as justice and equality, negative peace is simply the absence of direct violence or war.³ It is a state of affairs where ‘no active and organized military violence is taking place’. The negative sense is ‘the most common understanding of peace, not only in the context of international politics’, but also ‘in the context of the peace and war debate.’⁴ *Pax romana* is an example of negative peace sliding into a façade of harmony, a state of affairs where the absence of violence through legal arrangements, military forces and social repression secures a pseudo-peace. The critical distance that Calgacus inserted between the created wilderness and the name ‘peace’ indicates the necessary critical contrast between a facile negative peace, on the one hand, and a positive one of genuine transcendence of the constructed wilderness, on the other hand.

Yet, we should also consider whether wilderness is inherently connected to peace or to war because, if wilderness is an inescapable ontological state, then, logically, the distinction between genuine and pseudo-peace (and the political prospect it opens) collapses. Whereas in Calgacus’ dictum wilderness is created, in much modern philosophy (and less explicitly in postmodern philosophy) the wilderness obstructing peace has been thought as natural, and war has been seen as inherent to the *condition humaine*. Thomas Hobbes, for instance, whose over-riding concern had been a kind of peace, had naturalized war as a pre-contractual state of affairs – a ‘state of nature where, without law and order, life is nasty, brutish and short’.⁵ As a natural state of war against all, an ‘anarchy of equals’ naturally inclined to fight and always in danger of mutual extinction, wilderness represented for many moderns the dystopian, though original, hu-

³ V. Bartolucci and G. Gallo, “Beyond Interdisciplinarity in Peace Studies: The Role of System Thinking” (2008), 7, 8. The article can be found here: <http://pages.di.unipi.it/gallo/Papers/Interdisciplinarity&Peace.pdf>

⁴ *Ibidem*, 8.

⁵ J.D. Marshall, “Thomas Hobbes: education and obligation in the Commonwealth,” *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 14, 2, 1980, 194, 199.

man condition that reflected their onto-anthropological self-understanding *qua* egoistic and belligerent beings. Such beings can avoid and mitigate their natural condition and inclinations (the natural wilderness) only through a pact.⁶ As a contractual state of a hierarchy of appeased, ‘safe’ and tamed egoists, wilderness (this time in Calgacus’ sense of a state that passes for peace) represented the limit to utopia of modern imagination, the only attainable best possible world. For a naturally tarnished human being is unable of true and genuine peace.

Especially from modernity onwards, war rather than peace was viewed as the true and natural human condition, one that could only be mitigated contractually. A natural state of war against all has been a strong spatial metaphor, raising ‘natural’ obstacles to peace or naturalizing the socio-political failures to construct a permanent residence for peace. In a wilderness conceived as natural or as framed by natural parameters, true peace cannot find a home. The peace that suits such spatiality can only be ‘pseudo’ or, at best, a brittle balance or a dim semblance.⁷

But natural wilderness was, at times, also conceived as an idyllic and happy state, a long surpassed golden age, ‘an age before strife and suffering’.⁸ Often, this wilderness utopianized and romanticized the ‘primitive’ spatialities that Westerners encountered outside their ever receding borders and construed as pre-contractual. But more often, it offered the means for what can be called ‘inverted

⁶ Though John Locke’s version of the pact differed from Hobbes’, it shared some of the Hobbesian naturalization and anthropological accommodation of strife at the pre-contractual level. And it slid into the constructed wilderness that Calgacus chastised by practically attenuating or disregarding claims to justice and equality of women, the poor and the ‘uncivilized’.

⁷ The social contract tradition from Hobbes and Locke down to much current liberalism legitimizes itself *via* the intro-state wilderness that it presupposes as symbolic yet natural and aspires to surpass. Immanuel Kant’s (1991) perpetual peace and vision of international right/cosmopolitan law extends the social contract to inter-state relations to lead the world beyond its wilderness and turn it into peace’s stable, everlasting and proper home. Kant is rather ambivalent about the naturalness of the wilderness of the pre-cosmopolitan state of affairs: at times it seems more constructed than natural, but, at times, Kant attributes it to anthropological parameters such as the ‘unsocial sociability of men’, the ‘foul stain of our species’ and the ‘radical’ *qua* rooted cruelty inherent in humanity. For a critical account on Kant’s position, see: M. Papastephanou, “Utopian Education and Anti-utopian Anthropology,” *International Education Studies*, 6, 2013, 2, 22–33.

⁸ C. Zammit, “Responding to the Call of Peace: in memory of a future that might have been,” in: *Lorenzo Milani’s Culture of Peace*, ed. C. Borg and M. Grech, New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2014, 77–90.

utopianization': the utopia of 'primitive' simplicity was wholly grafted on foreign lands, though not affirmatively, as in most utopianizing tactics, but rather negatively and dismissively. The remote space offered no ground for a nostalgic longing for return to humanity's original home. Rather, its Golden Age utopianization opened it up as a primitive space, a hitherto empty though fertile land for western inscription.⁹

Through such operations, philosophy often reflected, abetted, crystallised or sleepwalked society's way to violence.¹⁰ Some injustices tended to occur mostly elsewhere inflicted by the philosophers' dwelling places upon other spatialities, on supposed 'wildernesses' in 'need' of the Western man's taming and civilizing industriousness. The colonial example of *terra nullius* provides yet another sense of wilderness, that of the foreign, un-cultivated natural spatiality whose supposed non-utilization by its inhabitants legitimizes conquest and *pax romana* effects.

⁹ A case in point is the logic of *terra nullius* (empty, uncultivated land) in Locke. Locke saw the colony of Virginia as in a 'state of nature', which 'state of nature' justified the colonial enterprise and exploitation. Virtue, for Locke, is then associated with the kind of productive labour that replenishes earth and justifies peoples' earning of titles to lands and goods. Conversely, people inhabiting land 'that they either cannot or will not develop' may be treated as 'aggressors against those who can and would develop that land'. Wayne Glausser gives a detailed account of how such assumptions framed Locke's endorsement of slave trade and participation in the institutions of slavery and his exceptions to people's right to defend their country when it is threatened by conquest. Such an exception is the following: 'if a native population should "resist conquest of their waste land, they become aggressors in war", and the developers may justly kill them and enslave captives'. Eager to make his mark on the *tabula rasa* of American waste land, Locke considered wasteland a 'wilderness' awaiting 'the virtuous energy of European developers, who may find themselves killing, enslaving and philosophizing in the interests of development'. (W. Glausser, "Three approaches to Locke and the slave trade," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 1990, 200–215.

¹⁰ In a context of powerful empires (often mis-recognized as nation-states) that continued to form the setting of western states of exception throughout (post-) modernity, various injustices were bequeathed to later generations as impossible and intractable legacies. For instance, such a case of western states of exception was the reality effected by the fact that a colonial metropolis would issue the Atlantic Charter by which the principle of peoples' self-determination was affirmed, only to come some years later to exempt some colonies from the exercise of that principle in order to keep them under its control for geopolitical purposes. Creating exceptions to self-determination rendered the western state in control of the colony exceptional, a case where the relativization of principles is supposedly appropriate. The colonial spaces that suffered such an exception (denying their freedom) were burdened with the impossible situation that this very exception created and are still struggling with the concomitant political 'legacy'.

Peace's home and homelessness

If the human world-as-wilderness is constructed rather than natural, then the causes of war must be sought neither in a supposedly human condition nor in characterological, psychologistic and moralist explanations. Amartya Sen's response to such issues is that 'an enlightened attitude to war and peace must go beyond the immediate' to seek underlying, 'deeper' causes. In looking for such causes 'the economics of deprivation and inequity has a very plausible claim to attention.'¹¹ To accommodate peace human beings should reconsider and reshape their world and undo its wilderness, at least that which is effected by needless cruelty rather than by unavoidable misfortune. To illustrate through literary/narrative imagination: in Aristophanes' *Peace*, the dwelling place of a deified though exiled peace is sought beyond the then current state of affairs. In the play, war is not inevitable and its state is human-made and de-naturalized.¹²

And in the here and now? Can a poly-centric capitalist world be peace's dwelling place? No, because, as Walter Mignolo succinctly puts it, such a world is not 'a de-colonial world'. The poly-centric, capitalist world does not dispense with 'the colonial matrix of power and the colonial and imperial differences regulating the field of forces in the modern/colonial world.'¹³ A de-colonial cosmopolitanism shall be 'the becoming of a pluri-versal world order built upon and dwelling on the global borders of modernity/coloniality.'¹⁴ Here, global borders evoke contact zones where different people meet. In most contemporary postcolonial theory these zones are considered sites where the promise of better politics may materialize. The underlying faith in plurality that singles out the global border as the possible abode for peace invites, in my opinion, one of Iris Young's questions. Young doubted whether Europe has shown any signs of recognizing its past. We may adapt this to apply to powerful collectivities beyond Europe, those that are also typically designated as Western up to the global imaginary of the 'global city', the contact zone, the pluri-versal global border. 'Colonialism was not just a vicious process of

¹¹ A. Sen, "Violence, identity and poverty," *Journal of Peace Research*, 45, 1, 2008, 5–15.

¹² M. Papastephanou, "Where Does True Peace Dwell?" in: *Pedagogy, Politics and Philosophy of Peace*, ed. C. Borg and M. Grech, London: Bloomsbury, 2017.

¹³ W. Mignolo, "Cosmopolitanism and the De-colonial Option," *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 29, 2010, 124.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, 117.

modernization, but a system of slavery and labor exploitation'. What are the signs that European people and states (or the de-colonial 'cosmopolitans' of a pluri-versal global border) 'have responded to a call for accountability with gestures of contrition and reparation?'¹⁵

Through our framework so far, let us ask the questions: what is our world,¹⁶ the hardly surprising world of today, the one supposed to host peace? From what genealogy has it emerged? Can peace dwell in a predatory world without justice, in a world of double standards and states of exceptions that compromise the universality of law, in a world of *Realpolitik* where acquisitive and power-hungry mentalities hold sway?

Our world, the unsurprising world of today, also contains peace education. Sharon Anne Cook gives a very rich and detailed account of how peace is understood in the theoretical context of peace education.¹⁷ Yet, radical critique of the existent, radical self-questioning and awareness of the need for radical redirection do not surface at all in that account. All the self-reflective turn to the real is exhausted in realizing (in the multiple senses of the word) its global possibilities of interconnectedness, as if oppression cannot occur when people are side by side. Thus, a 'domesticated' reflection bypasses the role that a deeper discontent with current realities and with the lip-service to discursively hegemonic ideals such as tolerance, diversity and respect should play.

Our world also hosts radical theoretical subversions of the search for peace's home or for a peaceful home. Global justice is often treated as easily deconstructible or as a residue of Kantian, obsessive visions of perpetual peace. Thus, deconstruction and deconstructibility sometimes become polemical tools for undermining the other's claims to justice, but never for questioning one's own claims to relativizing justice. In this way, deconstructive operations often contribute to the perpetuation rather than to undoing injustices. Yet, neither justice is so easily deconstructible nor is one's recourse to time-honoured mindsets of sophistry as unnoticeable as it so far seems.

¹⁵ I. M. Young, "De-Centering the Project of Global Democracy," in: *Old Europe, New Europe, Core Europe*, ed. D. Levy, M. Pensky and J. Torpey, Verso: London, 2005, 157.

¹⁶ The "is" of this question should not be read in the metaphysical sense that it acquires in specialized idioms of metaphysics. It refers to the socio-political constructed reality that invites our critical attention. Such attention was usually described by Theodor Adorno and other Frankfurt School theorists as 'a critique of the existent'.

¹⁷ S. A. Cook, "Reflections of a Peace Educator: The Power and Challenges of Peace Education With Pre-Service Teachers," *Curriculum Inquiry*, 44, 4, 2014, 489–507.

Can peace dwell in a world where even philosophy tends now to legitimize conflict indirectly by asserting that we live in an imperfect world where disorder may be celebrated as redemptive, where we are all refugees as the language that constructs us is never a true home, and that, by extension, true peace might be *the refugee par excellence*?¹⁸ I see such dangerous theoretical implications in Jacques Derrida's *Monolingualism* but, admittedly, to unpack and justify this claim the full length of another essay would be necessary. Hence, I state this as a relevant though as yet non-theorized claim.¹⁹

The issue about the limited human potentiality in an imperfect world underpins much postmodern discourse. It directs it not only to accepting the homelessness of peace but even to giving onto-anthropological permanence to such homelessness. Thinkers who have never experienced the true state of exile celebrate it figuratively. It will come as no surprise if they start to explore the space that is purportedly opened by the supposedly *endemic* homelessness of peace (notice the ironic and deliberately paradoxical use of 'endemic' here, a term that etymologically involves 'having a stable home'). They glorify the figure of the refugee and its rootless potentialities, unable as they are to distinguish the ontological space of the precariousness of articulated order (and homelessness/lack of permanent residence of meaning) from the political space of a people deprived of home through acts of violence. Deep down, a reason for this inability to discern nuance is, in my view, an unspoken though operative conception of the natural inevitability of conflict. Instead of de-naturalizing war and the constructed wilderness to which the operation of naturalization offers an alibi, much current theory surrenders the hope for peace. It treats peace as obsessive order. It sees it as a last vestige of the modern fascination with revolutionary optimism or of a longing for wholeness, harmony and consensus in a dissonant world that renders all this naïve and futile.

The underlying assumption of those who welcome this view may be that the post-modern debunking of grand narratives is a/the recipe for peace; that war and conflict are brought about by such narratives, particularly those spurred by modern optimism. Certainly, modern optimism is not

¹⁸ To acknowledge the importance of dissent without normalizing conflict I draw a distinction between conflict and controversy: a conflict-free world would not be a controversy-free world, so, a commitment to resolving conflicts does not necessarily affirm appeasement or an obsessive sense of order.

¹⁹ J. Derrida, *Monolingualism of the Other, or, the Prosthesis of Origin*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998.

only untenable within the confines of a constructed wilderness, as I have argued in the longer work,²⁰ but it is even dangerous in its implicit, hegemonic assumptions for reasons that are well-known and we need not delve into them. But those who unquestioningly give in to the post-modern 'promise' of '*petits récits*' fail to notice that, if thought through to its ultimate implications, the wholesale incrimination of order, consensus, perfectibility and utopia leads to a deconstruction of the very search for peace's 'home'.²¹ The glorification of the figure of the refugee as a general condition for all of us and, by implication, of notions such as peace may render the question about peace's 'home' expendable and thus declare peace a 'refugee' *par excellence*. Such are, in my view, the implications of Sharon Todd's book *Toward an Imperfect Education*.²² The book critiques the assumed goodness of humans that underwrites the idea of humanity and explores how antagonistic human interactions such as conflict and violence are a fundamental aspect of life in a pluralistic and imperfect world, thus giving ontological 'citizenship' to wilderness and making peace's 'residence rights' irrelevant.

The philosophical idioms that I have criticized render the very question about the dwelling of peace expendable, obsolete, meaningless, a residue of old metaphysics, an un-sophisticated longing for abode, rootedness and stability. If the authority of such approaches mainly derives from their academic currency then, perhaps, the answer to them might be a deliberate and thoughtful obsolescence. Critiquing such philosophical idioms as mostly new liberal self-exculpating tactics, we may realize that the state of refugee is not ontologically determined/determining for peace. It is rather a condition constructed by the constantly (re)created wilderness in which we live. So long as human beings continue to find 'naturalizing' or 'ontologizing' paltry excuses for the wilderness they create and perpetuate, true peace will remain an exile. Like Sophocles' *Antigone*, true peace is *hyspi-polis* (aspiring to the best imaginable polis) and for this reason it will remain *a-polis* (home-less) in our wild world of today.

²⁰ M. Papastephanou, "Where Does True Peace Dwell?" ...

²¹ As for the postmodern faith in the debunking of grand narratives, suffice it here to refer to the fact that Alain Badiou has already exposed the grand narrative character that this faith ironically has acquired and his vehement critique of some postmodern tenets.

A. Badiou, *Manifesto for Philosophy*, trans. N. Madarasz, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999, 31.

²² S. Todd, *Toward an Imperfect Education: Facing Humanity, Rethinking Cosmopolitanism*, Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2009.

The causes of war along with the perpetuation (or exculpations) of injustices may range from material ones related to profit up to more symbolic ones related to naturalizing the created wilderness and taking it for-granted. Lack of attentive care to the contextual aspect of world problems and to their complexity proves that, even when intentions are good, an uneven or limited cultivation of intellectual and ethical virtues blocks the required nuance in understanding and critiquing various realities.

Perhaps the paradox of peace is that, in the world today, its cause may not be promoted by the irenic talk that follows the contours of the existent without changing it, like a caress. It may be promoted by the confrontational words that hammer the existent, by the cynic and sarcastic idiom that transfers *polemos* from the battlefield to the philosophical language game. ‘Unveiling the world requires us to acknowledge the crimes against humanity – genocide, slavery, colonization, incarceration and impoverishment.’²³ In my view, it requires more than just acknowledging them. It requires radical redirection, more imaginative ways out of the current situation and more ability to go beyond established metonymies of atrocities. A true unveiling of the world also presupposes that we retrieve the non-thematized issue, the pending ethical debt, and the unresolved world problem. World-disclosure can use an idiom that destroys the lame excuses for the current situation, de-naturalizes alibis and de-beautifies a world that sees itself, despite indications to the opposite, as the best possible or as requiring facile solutions. Possibly, unveiling the world requires an acknowledgement of its wilderness as constructed and a dose of *contemptus mundi*, even an averted, horrified eye.²⁴

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²³ M. A. Darder, “Peace Education in a Culture of War,” in: *Lorenzo Milani’s Culture of Peace*, ed. C. Borg and M. Grech, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 94, 204.

²⁴ Perhaps that was why, in Aristophanes’ *Peace*, Trygaeus turned to the audience and dystopianized it by addressing it in a way that evokes an interplay of transcendent and immanent gaze: ‘How small you were, to be sure, when seen from heaven! You had all the appearance too of being great rascals; but seen close, you look even worse’. See: <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristophanes/peace.html>


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THE LOGIC OF RESENTMENT IN THE GLOBALIZED WORLD

Nietzsche's notion of resentment and the logic of double negation

n his work *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche analyzes the notion of resentment and its consequences on human action. For him, resentment is a condition which affects individuals who feel weak and threatened and who are not capable or strong enough to unfold in a positive way the energies of life. In this sense, resentment can be considered as a form of hatred growing from powerlessness. It is generated by a profound sentiment of dissatisfaction with one's own condition of existence, and this feeling of discontent is projected towards the external and associated with a determinate person or group of people, made responsible for the unsatisfactory self-image. In reality, resentment can be produced by social, economic, and intellectual disparities. The decisive aspect is, however, that the subjective feeling is clearly prevailing over the objective condition and state of things. Without the feeling of discontent and weakness, resentment would not conspicuously appear.

The shifting of guilt and responsibility to an external agent (mostly a collective agent, if the phenomenon is to be considered as socially relevant) is an essential complementary issue entailed in resentment, and it depends, according to Nietzsche, on a logical inference: "I suffer: it must be somebody's fault."¹ Thus, instead of analyzing one's own condition, the resentful man concentrates on an external subject which is made accountable for one's own misfortune. This is due to the fact that the resentful man already possesses a devaluated im-

¹ F. Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals*, trans. H. B. Samuel, New York: Boni and Liv-
eright, 1921, III-15, 135.

pression of the self (first negation). Thus, the revaluation of his self can be performed only indirectly, by ascribing bad qualities and behavior to someone else, i.e. the presumed guilty (second negation). Being burdened with the sentiment of inadequacy, the resentful man can recover from it exclusively by a radical double negation (a negation of negation which does not recuperate any positive meaning from the negative moment), which confers on him a positive value only in opposition to the negative other.

This double negation in the form of radical opposition has momentous consequences also from a psychological and moral vantage point, since the negative moment is charged with a correspondingly negative value judgment. The negation represented by the “targeted” other, estimated as the guilty and responsible counterpart, is from a psychological view-point the chief reason for one’s own defeat and devaluation, and from a moral standpoint the embodiment of the bad and the evil. This implies that there is no dialogical possibility of argument or confrontation, but the negative other is someone (or something, considering the innate tendency to objectification) whose even remote existence constitutes a present and perceptible threat. On the other hand, the consideration of this other as the identified guilty provides a revaluation of one’s own self and a temporary relief, but it is accompanied by a permanent sense of frustration by being impeded from the intrinsic unfolding of one’s own energies and capabilities because of the influence of the hindering other. Thus, the negative other becomes the focus of one’s own attention, the permanent point of reference as well as the inexorable negating limit.

According to Nietzsche, this causes an attitude and an agency which are intrinsically reactive, i.e. always conceived in the relation to the negative “other”. In fact, Nietzsche delineates the *reactive agency* by means of an opposition, which is centered on the conceptual pair *active-reactive* and is respectively traced back to the noble and the resentful man. In Nietzsche’s understanding, active agency implies being substantially concerned with one’s own interests, objectives, and capacities. From this perspective, the motivation of agency is self-centered and self-reliant, and the ends aimed at are self-determined. In doing so, active agency is essentially positive and self-strengthening, and it pursues an enhancement of the self which originates from the inside.

By contrast, reactive agency is always aroused and provoked from the outside. The resentful man, being constantly concerned with the negative and hindering other, is always determined by his agency and acts in the form of the reply, without conceiving of something really spontaneous and original.

Moreover, as the other is perceived as hostile and guilty of impeding the development of the self, the resentful man is predominantly motivated by a form of revenge which is not actuated as an immediate reaction or impulse, but as a strategy of delay and ambush. Surely, revenge becomes creative and produces series of actions, but these are not self-determined and self-strengthening, since they are focused in and conditioned by the external, negative other, and they spring up from a position which “says no from the very outset to what is outside itself, different from itself, and not itself.”²

As a consequence, the logic of double negation performed by resentment shows itself to be intrinsically destructive: all its objectives and proposals are centered on the elimination or disempowerment of the guilty other and forgetting the person’s own potential and aims. Moreover, this externally motivated reaction is only momentarily relieving and in reality steadily accompanied by frustration, since it bases on a negative image of the self which can be overthrown only by the persistence of the negative other. This has the internally contradictory and ironic consequence that the other cannot be destroyed, and even if he were destroyed, he would persist as an ineradicable counter-image, since the identity and the agency of the resentful man are constitutively reliant on it. When the targeted “other” disappears or loses his conflictive potential, the resentful man cannot break the logic of the radical double negation and needs a surrogate for his identity-building structure: either the enemy image is perpetuated as a fictive menacing presence, or it is substituted by a new one. On principle, the resentful man is plagued by an existential dilemma, because the defeat of his enemy compulsorily implies upsetting his identity, his agency, and his aims. Nietzsche had already stated elsewhere: “He who lives for the sake of combating an enemy has an interest in seeing that his enemy stays alive.”³

Although Nietzsche shows no sympathy for resentment or the resentful man, he nevertheless admits that forms of social and political justice can help diminish resentment and the power of all negative energies and forces triggered by its rising:

Everywhere where justice is practiced and justice is maintained, it is to be observed that the stronger power, when confronted with the weaker powers which are inferior to it (whether they be groups, or individuals), searches for weapons to put an end to

² F. Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals...*, I–10, 17.

³ F. Nietzsche, *Human, All-Too-Human*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale, Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1984, Part I, Aph. 531: *The life of the enemy*, 183.

the senseless fury of resentment, partly by taking the victim of resentment out of the clutches of revenge, partly by substituting for revenge a campaign of its own against the enemies of peace and order, partly by finding, suggesting, and occasionally enforcing settlements, partly by standardizing certain equivalents for injuries, to which equivalents the element of resentment is henceforth finally referred.⁴

Accordingly, justice is considered by Nietzsche not as a product of resentment, but as an expression of positive energy opposing it.⁵ Thus, he signals that the introduction of a system of law with a conception of justice re-equilibrating violations and offences contributes to reducing resentment, firstly because it enacts a system of at least partial compensation, and secondly because it facilitates creating in the subjects injured “a more and more *impersonal* valuation of the deed.”⁶ The idea that a general and objective system of justice is applied accustoms to diminishing the feeling of vindictiveness or the desire for revenge and leads to confide in a superior (legal and political) instance, which is taken to issue a sound judgment.

Max Scheler and the social roots of resentment

Scheler also analyzes the phenomenon of resentment and connects it with a situation of weakness which affects individuals, social groups, and nations. In his view, resentment rises when 1) the sentiment of self-esteem is hurt, and 2) the subject concerned is or feels unable to restore it through a direct and open agency. Therefore, resentment affects the vindictive person who feels constrained to hide his or her personal unease and sentiment of humiliation:

The vindictive person is always in search of objects [...]. This vengeance restores his damaged feeling of personal value, his injured honor, or it brings satisfaction for the wrongs he has endured. When it is repressed, vindictiveness leads to *resentment*.⁷

⁴ F. Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals...*, II–11, 64.

⁵ Cf. P. Stellino, “Affekte, Gerechtigkeit und Rache in Nietzsches *Zur Genealogie der Moral*”, *Friedrich Nietzsche – Geschichte, Affekte, Medien*, ed. V. Gerhardt, R. Reschke, Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2008, 247–255, here 249.

⁶ F. Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals...*, II–11, 65.

⁷ M. Scheler, *Ressentiment*, trans. L. Coser, in: www.mercaba.org/SANLUIS/Filosofia/autores/Contemporánea/Scheller/Ressentiment.pdf (last accessed on 08th Oct. 2016), 7.

Accordingly, resentment is connected in Scheler also with a negative and reactive attitude, which is chiefly directed to the external and influenced by it. The main feature of resentment is the persistence of that negative attitude which is accompanied with a sentiment of impotence and cannot be immediately satisfied, but has to be delayed because of the disadvantaged position or situation of the self. Powerlessness and forced inhibition provoke a constant grudge and a sense of permanent frustration.⁸ This can be momentarily compensated with detractive speaking and acting, which are nevertheless unsatisfying in the long run, since they performatively show the impossibility and incapacity of open talk. The logic of resentment is therefore characterized by the persistence in the negative as well as by the constant radical use of negation. Also for Scheler, the targeted “other” is perceived as the radical negative and the source of all evil and injustice. Correspondingly, the negative strategy adopted implies a systematic undermining and diminishing of their power and image, in order to progressively corrode the worthiness of their being. The good ends up by being defined only in opposition to the negative embodied by the other:

The formal structure of *resentment* expression is always the same: A is affirmed, valued and praised not for its own intrinsic quality, but with the un verbalized intention of denying, devaluating, and denigrating B. A is played off against B.⁹

Thus, the negative other is the departure and the external source of every judgment of value. Also for Scheler, resentment prevents from focusing on one’s own energies and aims, and creates a relation of dependence upon the negated other.

Additionally, Scheler underlines that the motivations of resentment are not only to be sought in the psychological attitude of the subject affected, but also reside in objective specific conditions which influence their personal and social conditions.¹⁰ These conditions are in particular created in societies where the equality of right, the equality of suffrage, economic, social and educational opportunities are taken for granted, but they coexist, *de facto*, with significant differences of *real* power and disparity in the *realistic* chances of attaining social positions and degrees. In this sense, static and hierarchical societies, such as the premodern ones, are less subject to resentment, because their members are

⁸ Cf. M. S. Frings, *The Mind of Max Scheler*, Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1997, 147.

⁹ M. Scheler, *Ressentiment*, 20.

¹⁰ Cf. R. Olschanski, *Ressentiment*, Paderborn: Fink, 2015, 19–20.

familiar with social differences and they consider them as a quasi-natural order of things. Equally, societies where social differences are smoothed and which offer a wide spectrum of possibilities and of chances are also less vulnerable, since individuals confide in sufficient and articulated opportunities of self-realization and of social recognition. By contrast, when factual differences of power obstacle or impede formal possibilities apparently given, resentment is nourished.

Another favoring condition of resentment is the presence of a system of competition taken to extremes and complemented by a situation of general instability and uncertainty. The resentful man is steadily relating to the external and establishing his values with reference to the negative "other". A social situation constantly promoting comparison and confrontation, judging, classifying, and scoring, especially if it is centered on limited targets and goods, nourishes resentment and constrains the less qualified, the less successful, or even the momentarily successful who fears losing his privileged position to constantly be put to the test. Consequently, the diminishing of the other becomes one of the most widespread and common strategies in order to prevent their possible success and to avoid the endangering of one's own position.

However, resentment increases when a person or a group doubt on their capacity of gaining or maintaining a favorable position, judge themselves to be unjustly disadvantaged, and do not believe in their realistic chances of improvement. Then, their attitude and behavior appear denigrating and detractive. They show themselves to be creative only in their original ways of belittling the other, but not in their capacity of producing, from the inside, new energies and aims.

Globalization and resentment

The question then is: can the category of resentment apply to the main constellations produced by globalization and explain any relevant negative reactions and side effects? It has to be said first that Nietzsche's attitude towards the tendencies of his time anticipating the trend to globalization is not only negative, since he also emphasizes some significant chances entailed in it.

First, the habit of comparison between different mentalities, ideas, and cultures, is only been made possible by a change in the style of life which provides sufficient opportunities to get out of the narrow and closed horizon of one's own culture which characterized past epochs and to get into contact with different perspectives and approaches to life. This allows one to gain distance and

a more articulated and comprehensive view. Additionally, cultural comparison offers a multiplicity of solutions and ways of approaching problems which can allow for reciprocal development, provided that it is not only used to confirm one's own view, but it strengthens instead the attitude of thankfulness towards all (and also the past) cultures.

Second, the perspective of the globalized world induces for Nietzsche to overcome egoistic interests and narrow-minded aims, and confronts individuals with the fundamental challenges concerning the whole planet: "Human beings [...] can now create better conditions for the propagation of humans and for their nutrition, education and instruction, manage the earth as a whole economically, balance and employ the powers of humans in general."¹¹

Third, the globalizing perspective introduces more dynamism, mobility, a will to discovery and transformation which well corresponds to the way of thinking of the free spirits, to their propensity to unrest, rootlessness, and allegiance to the new.

Nevertheless, the challenges of globalization and its economic, social, and political consequences not only have enhanced the possibilities of contact and profitable interweaving, but they have also contributed to destabilizing the social as well as the cultural traditional models and values, undermining the sense of security and protection they conveyed to the people, and exposing them to the uncertain and the risk of downfall. Although Nietzsche appreciates the mentality of risk and the challenges advanced by the new, he contemporarily criticizes the increasing speed and rush of modern time, time pressure, and the prevailing ideals of work, efficiency, productivity, which create unease and guilty conscience in those who prefer slowness and contemplative life.

In the globalized world, resentment characterizes a very widespread attitude and presents the features depicted by Nietzsche and Scheler on a large scale. It suits people who are not in a secure position and do not feel self-confident, but are confronted with inexplicit, deep-rooted, and haunting fears of loss and deprivation. These also often depend on a concrete worsening of condition and a connected sentiment of impotence. The negative "other", with reference to globalization, is especially embodied by two different categories: on the one hand, anonymous forces and elitist groups of power, which appear to decide about the destiny of the people, being unconcerned for their real conditions of life and their well-being; on the other hand, the "other" embodied

¹¹ F. Nietzsche, *Human All-Too-Human*, Part I, Aph. 24: *Possibility of progress*, 25.

by a national, racial, gender, or ethnical group, which is perceived as a real or remote threat to the security and the future of the group of belonging.¹² As the category of resentment shows, the fear of a negative future condition is much more affecting than reality itself.

Thus, resentment in the globalized world affects all the people (and they are not few) who feel threatened, endangered, and overwhelmed by uncontrollable groups of power and by negative “others” who put their attained well-being at stake. They represent a dangerous concurrence because of the proximity created by mass migrations, reduction of distances, and high technology. Also in this new context, the logic which applies is that of the radical double negation, with its pertaining destructive potential. The envisaged solution requires the rejection of the negative other, which nevertheless cannot possibly be attained as desired. This provides a sentiment of powerlessness, negative attitudes and energies which focus on the indirect and hidden strategies of devaluation, de-traction, and denigration. As a consequence, positive aims and targets are set in the background.

About the reasons of the growing of resentment in globalized society, they are undoubtedly, as Nietzsche and Scheler remarked, chiefly psychological, deeply residing in subjects who feel insecure, unsatisfied, surrounded by several kinds of unease and fear, and intimidated by the restless and extremely rapid changes of conditions which destabilize their feeling of security and the familiar environment. Nevertheless, some social and political elements also contribute to strengthening the feeling of resentment: the difficulty of state-sized democracies to cope with worldwide operating powerful groups,¹³ an extremely accentuated mentality of competition and comparison, which increases the level of capacities and requisites required and makes individuals worried and insecure about their future, a form of ranking which is nearly exclusively focused on economic and technological superiority and determines a very restricted group of winners, and a large quantity of losers with vanishing self-esteem.

Although Nietzsche and Scheler clearly dislike the resentful man, they are nevertheless keen on emphasizing the importance of justice for reducing resentment and its destructive and inhibiting consequences. Nietzsche, in particular, underlines how the idea that also less powerful and privileged individuals can

¹² Cf. R. Olschanski, *Ressentiment...*, 188 ff.

¹³ Cf. R. Bellamy, “Between Cosmopolis and Community: Justice and Legitimacy in a European Union of People”, *Nationalism and Globalization*, ed. S. Tierney, Oxford/Portland: Hart, 2015, 207–232.

confide in an equal and fair treatment, helps reduce the feeling of diffidence and suspect which accompanies resentment and its devastating influence. The sentiment that only powerful groups and organizations can decide over the people and that there are no institutional settings and instances which are enabled and willing to defend also the weaker, nourish the sense of powerlessness, the resentment, and also the search for unequal and unfair solutions. To successfully oppose this, it has to be reckoned with the fact that the resentful man is not only the one who lost all or has no perspectives, but also and even more he who has a limited well-being which is perceived as endangered and vacillating.¹⁴

The fact of creating a new competition among the different needs and degrees of poverty and scarceness is not a desirable solution. It would only signify exasperating competition also with respect to the social welfare. Rather, a general feeling of more security, differentiated and moderate competition, the creation of real chances and the provision of a better distribution of goods (favoring the many, and possibly most of the people), could help reducing resentment and encourage the commitment to those worldwide, ecumenical aims and challenges referred to by Nietzsche.¹⁵ Also the articulation of different values and aspects to which cultures and nations can be recognized as having made differentiated, but worthwhile contributions, could imply less competition or a more constructive form of implementing it, more oriented to integrate the different positive issues than to define winners and losers, the better and the worse, the useful and the inadequate. Finally, security and change, stability and movement should be featured in a more equilibrated way, so that people do not feel overwhelmed by external subjects and factors, are enabled to exert a democratic control over them, and also maintain a basic sense of security. This would provide the reassuring feeling that the human component, and also the simple individuals, have a chance and a priority over the system.

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¹⁴ Cf. W. Benz (ed.), *Ressentiment und Konflikt*, Schwalbach: Wochenschau, 2014, “Einleitung”, 11.


¹⁵ Cf. F. Nietzsche, *Human All-Too-Human*, Part II, Aph. 179: *Our age's good fortune...*, 257.

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THE SHORTCOMINGS OF A CONCEPT INERTIA AND CONATUS IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF SPINOZA

n the third part of the *Ethics*, Spinoza express the desire to talk about “human actions and appetites just as if it were a question of lines, planes, and bodies” (E3, Appendix).¹ With this sentence, it seems clear that Spinoza sides with Hobbes and Descartes and that he wants to construct a mechanistic theory of the affects. In the same part of the *Ethics*, Spinoza also introduces the concept of *conatus*: “Each thing, as far as it can by its own power, strives to persevere in its being” (E3P6), Spinoza says. One will immediately understand this concept of *conatus* as the core concept of his mechanistic theory of the affects, the concept without which this mechanistic account of the affects would be impossible.

However, in the second part of the *Ethics*, there is another concept that could have accomplished that same goal, namely, the principle of inertia. In the words of Spinoza, “A body which moves or is at rest must be determined to motion or rest by another body, which has also been determined to motion or rest by another, and that again by another, and so on, to infinity” (E2L3). Interestingly enough, in the philosophy of Hobbes, the concept of *endeavour/conatus* is much nearer to the Spinozistic principle of inertia in its meaning than it is to the Spinozistic version of the *conatus*. However, Hobbes is still able to construct a deeply mechanistic theory of the affects with this concept, and one may think that Spinoza should have been too.

In this paper, I aim to address the question of why Spinoza has decided to use the concept of *conatus* rather than the principle of inertia to achieve his goal of constructing a mechanistic theory of the affects. I will then argue that for this

¹ E. Curley, *A Spinoza Reader: The Ethics and Other Works*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994. For the *Ethics*, I will use the conventional method of citation.

purpose, the principle of inertia had serious shortcomings that only the *conatus* could resolve.

This question will give us insights into the larger problem of the interaction, or absence of one, between the concept of *conatus* and the principle of inertia. As one should immediately notice, both concepts must be conceived as a kind of principle of conservation: a principle of conservation of the being in the case of the *conatus*, a principle of conservation of motion in the case of inertia. But, on the one hand, Spinoza introduces the principle of inertia in his physics for never using it again in all of his philosophy while, on the other hand, the *conatus* is one of the most used concepts in the *Ethics*. In short, the two concepts seem to possess a high level of similarity without any explicit connections between them.

Against the idea of an identity between the two principles

Some great Spinoza scholars have proposed a quite interesting solution to the problem of the relation between these two principles. Amongst them, we can mention Jonathan Bennett,² John Carriero³ and Lee C. Rice.⁴ As Valtteri Viljanen rightly says: for them, “the notion of *conatus* refers to a certain kind of *metaphysical inertia* through which finite things act, but by this nothing more is meant than that there is an attribute-neutral tendency in things to remain as they are.”⁵ This inertial reading can be summarized in saying that, in the same way that the inertia prevents a body to modify its state of motion by itself, the *conatus* prevents a singular thing to modify its being by itself. In this reading, the two principles are understood as one.

Despite its consistency, I would like to argue that this reading is mainly wrong. The problem is that this reading seems to be based on the idea that E3P6

² J. Bennett, *A Study of Spinoza's Ethics*, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1984; J. Bennett, “Teleology and Spinoza's Conatus,” *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 8, no. 1, 1983, 143–160.

³ J. Carriero, “Conatus and Perfection in Spinoza,” *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 35, no. 1, 2011, 69–92.

⁴ L. C. Rice, “Emotion, Appetition, and Conatus in Spinoza,” *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 31, no. 1, 1977, 101–116.

⁵ V. Viljanen, *Spinoza's Geometry of Power*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012, 107.

is deduced solely by E3P4 and E3P5. The two propositions read as follows: “No thing can be destroyed except through an external cause” (E3P4); and “Things are of a contrary nature, that is, cannot be in the same subject, insofar as one can destroy the other” (E3P5). Were only of these two propositions, we could certainly say that the inertial reading is right.

But we must absolutely notice that there are, in fact, two lines of argumentation in the demonstration of E3P6. The inertial reading correctly places the emphasis on the idea that a thing cannot destroy itself, an idea which is confirmed by the formula *as far as it can by its own*. This idea is proven by the chain of argumentation that goes from E3P4 and E3P5 to E3P6. But the inertial reading does not put enough emphasis, if any at all (like in the case of Bennett), on the idea of power. Yet, this idea of power is probably the most important characteristic of the *conatus*, and it is introduced by E1P25C and E1P34 before the idea of the impossibility of auto-destruction. These two propositions, which are central to the *Ethics*, discuss the infinite power of God (E1P34) and about the part of that power that each singular thing expresses (E1P25C). I take the reference to these two propositions as essential to the correct understanding of the core of the concept of *conatus*. Now, it is clear that the idea of power seems to be totally absent from the concept of inertia, suggesting a profound difference between the two concepts.

However, in the *Principia*, the link between what we can consider as the ancestor of the *conatus* and the principle of inertia is clear: the principle of inertia is directly deduced from the *conatus*, since it is added as a corollary to the proposition introducing it. The question is why would Spinoza, who directly deduced the principle of inertia from the *conatus* in the *Principia*, not do the same in the *Ethics*?

In fact, I think that this problem is quickly resolved when we examine the evolution of the concept of *conatus* between the *Principia* and the *Ethics*. To fully see this evolution, it is important to read the Latin version of these texts. In the *Principia*, the philosopher states that “*Unaquaeque res, quatenus simple et indivisa est, et in se sole consideratur, quantum in se est, semper in eodem statu perseverat*” (PPC2P14). In the *Ethics*, though, Spinoza slightly changes the definition: “*Unaquaeque res, quantum in se est, in suo esse perseverare conatur*” (E3P6). At first sight, we can see that the two definitions are similar in various ways: (1) these two definitions apply to the same object: “*unaquaeque res*,” which means all singular things; (2) we must notice the presence of the same formula *i.e.* “*quantum in se est*”; (3) and most importantly, these

two definitions clearly describe something that we must define as a principle of conservation.

But, besides these similarities, there is one very important difference between the two versions of the definition. Rather than using the formula *perseverare conatur* as he will do in the *Ethics*, in the *Principia*, Spinoza only uses the verb *perseverare* without adding *conatur*. I take it to be of the first importance that the definition of what many commentators⁶ rightly consider as the ancestor of the *conatus*, does not even include the word *conatus*.

As Alexandre Matheron rightly mentions, and as it should now be clear, there is a notable evolution of the meaning of the *conatus* theory in the philosophy of Spinoza between the *Principia* and the *Ethics*. In the *Short Treatise*, Matheron says, “Spinoza talks about the striving of each thing to persevere in its *state* and to reach a better state: a static formulation and a dynamic one are juxtaposed without further explanations.”⁷ However, in the *Principia*, after the *Short Treatise*, there is only a static definition. Then, according to Matheron, the *Ethics* gives a dynamic meaning to the *conatus* and a strictly static meaning to the principle of inertia.

Even if Matheron is basically right, I think that we can clarify a little bit what he is saying. There are two major differences between the definition of the *Ethics* and the preceding definitions: (1) the use of the word ‘*state*’ or ‘*being*’; (2) the presence or not of the word *conatus*. I will address these two major differences in detail since they are of the upmost importance for my purpose.

Before the *Ethics*, it seems that Spinoza almost exclusively used the word *state*⁸ to talk about the *conatus*. Such is obviously the case in the *Principia*, and it also is in the *TTP*. On the contrary, in the *Cogitata metaphysica*, the philosopher uses the words “state” and “being” indifferently, as if there was no difference between the state and the being of a thing. Therefore, it must seem difficult to sustain that the use of the word *being* in the *Ethics* is of some importance.

⁶ Just to name one amongst many: M. Della Rocca, “Spinoza’s Metaphysical Psychology,” in: *The Cambridge Companion to Spinoza*, ed. D. Garrett, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, 196. Even though Spinoza does not use the word *conatus* in it, I still think that the definition of the *Principia* is the ancestor of the definition of the *conatus* of the *Ethics*. Alexandre Matheron also thinks the same.

⁷ A. Matheron, “Le Problème de L’évolution de Spinoza Du Traité Théologico-Politique Au Traité Politique,” in: *Spinoza: Issues and Directions*, ed. E. Curley et P-F. Moreau (Leiden: Brill, 1990), 268.

⁸ The state of a body is nothing else than the set of physical properties of a body and all the relations this body entertains with other bodies.

But I still think that the word *being* is quite important, in the *Ethics* at least. The fact is that between the *state* of a thing and its *being*, there is a *huge* difference, difference that Spinoza must have somehow finally noticed when he was writing the *Ethics*. This difference is much clearer in the original version of the text. Spinoza says that: “*Unaquaeque res quantum in se est, in suo esse perseverare conatur*”. Here, a better translation for the word *esse* is probably *existence* rather than *being*. I think that it is what Spinoza tried to say and nothing else.

I think that the difference between the state and the being of a thing is significant with respect to the difference between the *conatus* and the principle of inertia. But for seeing why, we must first talk about the second major difference in the *conatus* theory of the *Ethics*. This difference is quite obvious and of a much greater importance than the first one. Indeed, there is a very strong difference between the fact that a thing perseveres in its state or in its being, and the fact that a thing *strives* to persevere in its state or in its being. In fact, we can easily see that the presence or the absence of the word *conatus* determines if the principle is dynamic or not. In the *Ethics*, I take it to be absolutely evident that the *conatus* is a dynamic principle.⁹ As we already highlighted it, the very fact that the demonstration of the *conatus* points toward the concept of power seems to be a strong enough argument to understand the *conatus* as a dynamic principle.

Now, what about the principle of inertia? Is it, as according to Matheron, a *static* principle? This claim seems to be plainly true. Once again, there is strong textual evidence to sustain this interpretation. The demonstration of the principle of inertia points toward the radical determinism and *not directly* toward the concept of power like the definition of the *conatus* does. The demonstration refers to E1P28. If we read the definition of the principle of inertia and E1P28, we can easily see that Spinoza basically gives a physical meaning to a metaphysic principle:

Proposition 28, Part 1: “Every singular thing, or any thing which is finite and has a determinate existence, can neither exist nor be determined to produce an effect unless it is determined to exist and produce an effect by another cause, which is also finite and has a determinate existence; and again, this cause also can neither exist

⁹ For a very good introduction to a reading of the *conatus* that correctly puts the emphasis on the concept of power, see V. Viljanen, “The meaning of the *conatus* doctrine,” in: *Spinoza’s Geometry of Power*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 105–144, in particular 125–144. See also G. Deleuze, *Spinoza et le Problème de L’expression*, Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1968.

nor be determined to produce an effect unless it is determined to exist and produce an effect by another, which is also finite and has a determinate existence, and so on, to infinity”.

Lemma 3: “A body which moves or is at rest must be determined to motion or rest by another body, which has also been determined to motion or rest by another, and that again by another, and so on, to infinity”.

The shortcoming a concept

In light of all of this, it might be useful to summarize the major arguments in favour of my thesis. Firstly, we saw that there are in the *Ethics* two principles of conservation and that these two principles are not explicitly linked together. We also saw that in the *Principia* these two concepts *were* linked, which forces us to explain why it is the case in the *Principia* but not in the *Ethics*. We then stated that there is a clear evolution on the meaning of the *conatus* in the philosophy of Spinoza: in the *Ethics*, the *conatus* is a *dynamic* principle that expresses a part of the infinite power of God, whereas the principle of inertia is a *static* principle.

But, to be absolutely clear, it may also be useful to explain what I mean by a *static* principle. If I call the principle of inertia a *static* principle, it is because the phenomenon which is described by the *lemma 3* of the *Ethics* is exclusively deterministic. In other words, we know that from a given state of motion and rest will necessarily follow another determined state of motion and rest. A *dynamic* principle is a much more flexible principle. In respect to a *dynamic* principle, when an individual is confronted to a given state of affairs, this individual will act in some determined ways (*ways* and not way: the plural is very important).

This thesis is confirmed by the way in which each definition is written and used. On the first hand, in the case of the principle of inertia, a change in the state of a given body is clearly coming exclusively from outside of that body. By this I mean that the cause of the change in the state of a body cannot come from the inside of that body. On the other hand, according to the *conatus* theory, “each thing, as far as it can by its own power, strives to persevere in its being” (E3P6). Unlike the definition of the principle of inertia, we can see that the *conatus* theory supports the idea of a striving to act and that this striving comes from the inside of a given thing and *not* from the outside of it. This displacement of the cause from the outside to the inside was necessary: the theory of the affects of Spinoza needed

it. Indeed, because it is based upon that idea of a striving that “pushes” from the inside of the thing. Here, we can see the importance of the concept of *power*. An affect appears when the outside and the inside are confronted with one another, when the power is aided or restrained. The principle of inertia was absolutely unfit for that purpose because when a body “expresses” its inertia, it does not really *act*. The inertia is just a property of a body and there is nothing that “pushes” inside that body: something *reacts* but nothing *acts*. It also explains why it is only in the *Ethics* that the *conatus* and the inertia are really distinguished: it is only in the *Ethics* that Spinoza wants to construct a theory of the affects.

I must absolutely answer a possible objection to this distinction. I am not saying that the theory of the affects of Spinoza is not mechanistic. Yet, when Spinoza wants to talk about the affects, even if he wants to do it in a mechanistic way, he still uses *psychological* laws instead of *physical* laws. My point is only to say that between the *physical digression* and the third part of the *Ethics*, Spinoza chose to use another point of view. From a static point of view, he switched to a dynamic point of view.

The point in this paper was not to say that there is no link between the principle of inertia and the *conatus*. I wanted to stress that given the radical determinism of Spinoza, these two points of view are *only* two different kinds of explanations. In my view, Spinoza preferred switching his point of view in the third part of the *Ethics* because the *conatus*, as a *dynamic* principle, is much more useful when comes the time of talking about the affects. In addition, both demonstrations of the *conatus* and of the principle of inertia point towards the same set of propositions, namely E1P15 and E1P25, though not in the same way. The radical determinism, which is described by these two propositions, is somehow at the roots of the two principles. Hence, the link between the concepts of *conatus* and inertia exists, but it is an *indirect* one.

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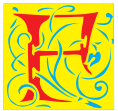
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THE PROBLEM OF UNCONSCIOUS PERCEPTION IN THE EARLY ENLIGHTENMENT: THE CASE OF DAVID-RENAUD BOULLIER



or early modern readers, Descartes's views on animals were both scandalous and fascinating. His intriguing description of animals in terms of mechanism, coupled with the denial of any immaterial principle operating behind their observable behavior, prompted various critical reactions, which from the second half of the seventeenth century tended to focus on the problem of unconscious perception. On the Cartesian view, human cognition is accompanied by reflective consciousness, and clearly belongs to immaterial beings, whereas bodily interactions rely on mechanical principles. The challenge leveled against this dichotomy attempted to point out that certain mental states are both essential to the animal and irreducible to either bare mechanism or conscious mental operations. What this objection suggests is that between the uncontroversial cases at the two extremes there exists an intermediate realm, a gray zone of cognition as it were where an immaterial agent performs unconscious operations. Such a middle ground is crucial for understanding animal life, for it allows the proponents of the anti-Cartesian case to argue that although animals are incapable of reflexive thought (and for this reason cannot aspire to the highest privilege of immortality) they transcend the limits of pure mechanism. In this manner, unconscious, or not fully conscious, perceptions provide a model for animal cognition.

This area of uncertainty between higher cognition and lower mechanism plays a prominent role in David-Renaud Boullier's (1699–1753) *Essai philosophique sur l'âme des bêtes*. As this book, first published in two volumes in 1728, is the most elaborate early eighteenth-century study of the animal soul, it

lends itself as an ideal starting point for the examination of the issue.¹ Boullier's thought has original aspects,² but equally interesting is the way in which he summarized and combined the most important intellectual trends of his age.³ In this paper I want to contribute to our understanding of Boullier's thought by focusing on his views about unconscious animal perception. Before providing a brief account of his basic insights, I will start out with some of his sources.

From our special point of view one of the most important sources of Boullier's thought is the Cambridge Platonists' attack against the Cartesian concept of mind. Their position can be summarized in two theses taken from Henry More. The first one concerns the Cartesian *res extensa*. More insists that *extended things* are not identical with matter, for spiritual beings are also extended. The difference between spiritual and material extension is that whereas matter is always divisible and impenetrable, spirits are indivisible and penetrable: they

¹ There is a modern re-edition of the original work by J.-P. Marcos: *Essai philosophique sur l'âme des bêtes* (1728). Paris, Fayard, 1985. I consulted, however, the second eighteenth-century edition, which, after thoroughgoing emendations, was published in an augmented form almost ten years later in 1737 (2 vols. Amsterdam, François Changuion). All references in the text are to volume number followed by the page number of this edition.

² Boullier's approach was new and thought-provoking even if the idea of an immaterial, but mortal animal mind had been advanced two years before the first edition of the *Essai* by Jean-Pierre de Crousaz in his *De mente humana* (Groningen 1726). See L. C. Rosenfield, *From Beast-Machine to Man-Machine*, New York, Octagon Books, 1968 (First edition: 1941), 75–76.

³ Boullier's relation to John Locke has been clarified by John Yolton who in his *Locke and French Materialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991) dedicated a whole chapter to Boullier's *Essai*. A pathbreaking introduction as it was, the focal point of Yolton's research has been Locke, and for this reason other interesting facets of Boullier's thought have been relegated to the background. For other important studies regarding different aspects of Boullier's thought see Albert G. A. Balz, *Cartesian doctrine and the animal soul*, in: *Studies in the History of Ideas*, 3, 117–177; L. C. Rosenfield, *op. cit.*; R. H. Popkin, *The High Road to Pyrrhonism: Studies in Hume and Scottish Philosophy*, R. A. Watson, J. E. Force (ed.), San Diego: Austin Hill Press, 1980, Chapter 355–362; A. M. Radier, *Un défenseur de Pascal au XVIIIe siècle: David Renaud Boullier, 1699–1759*, Paris: publisher not identified, 1948; R. H. Popkin, David-Renaud Boullier et l'évêque Berkeley, in: *Revue Philosophique de la France et de l'Étranger*, 148, 1958, 364–370; J. C. O'Neal, L'évolution de la notion d'expérience chez Boullier et Condillac sur la question de l'âme des bêtes, *Recherches sur Diderot et sur l'Encyclopédie*, 29, 2000, 149–175; M. Degenaar, *Molyneux's Problem: Three Centuries of Discussion on the Perception of Forms*, trans. M. J. Collins, Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1996, 46.sqq.; J. Schøsler, *David-Renaud Boullier—disciple de Locke? : quelques remarques sur la question de la matière pensante*, in: *Studies on Voltaire and the eighteenth century*, 323, 1994, 271–277.

can occupy the same place as other extended beings do. The second central claim is that the *res cogitans* does not belong exclusively to human nature. On the Platonist view the whole universe is full of spiritual beings which penetrate matter and exist in bodies. Spirits are vital forces which lend life and activity to the otherwise inert and dull matter. They are responsible not only for human thoughts, but *animal behavior, vegetation and corporeal sympathies* as well. Spirits work as formative principles moving bodies from inside, and endowing them with physical and biological properties that go beyond the resources of a simple mechanism. A body animated by a spirit is called by Henry More its *vehicular body*. Immaterial agents operating in and through their vehicular bodies are responsible for the regular behavior of the universe. They serve as formative principles and give rise to teleological operations and biological organization at different levels of the nature.

How do these formative principles operate in the body? Glisson, More and Cudworth and other proponents of the tradition, take up a fundamental distinction popularized by Julius Caesar Scaliger (1484–1558) in the 16th century between *reason (logos)* and *reasoning (logismos)*. Scaliger holds that souls that penetrate bodies have some innate power to organize them from inside and in accordance with a teleological plan prescribed to them by the creator. Thus, the *telos* that the formative principles realize in the matter is not their own, and does not depend on their deliberation, it is rather the divine goal engraved into their innermost nature, so that they cannot help accomplishing it when following the instinct of their unconscious desires. Though these internal principles act *with reason*, they lack explicit knowledge of the ways in which they work. In order to act in accordance with reason, lower spirits—which exist embodied in matter—have to entertain perceptions and desires, even if they do not have the awareness of what they are perceiving (or even of the fact *that* they perceive anything).

It is at this point that the Platonist theory comes close to the problem of unconscious perception. Consider some of Cudworth's examples, taken from Plotin's *Enneads*, the dancer who skillfully moves her legs without attending to or the lute player who routinely puts her fingers in the right place on the instrument without paying attention at what she is doing. These examples are of utmost interest, since the latter can be found in Descartes as well who—in sharp contrast with Cudworth—refers with it to the operation of a purely mechanical system. Descartes's point is that certain bodily organizations are flexible enough to receive new physical dispositions and to take up new habits as they undergo different external stimuli. The play of a well trained musician, who ac-

quired knowledge through a long practice, results from the mechanical motion of her muscles disposed to follow a certain routine encoded in her fingers. In Descartes, the musician can play different tunes just because her body serves as a physical memory predisposed to operate in a certain way. In Cudworth, by contrast, this example is meant to shed light on the way in which the *mind* operates. The orderly behavior of the body derives from a special operation of the mind, an operation performed not by attentive thoughts but by unconscious perceptions and blind desires. Thus, the operation of the formative principles can be modelled on the way in which *inhabited mental control* (as it is called nowadays) is realized, unconsciously, unbeknownst to the agent, or on the periphery of his or her consciousness.

This contrasting use of one and the same example, allows us to get more precise on the central issue. It shows that the main question does not simply relate to reflex motions, which can be realized mechanically, or higher cognitive processes, which require reasoning (notice that these problems are located at the two extremes of a scale), rather the main issue concerns the realm in between, the behavior which (as some contemporary cognitive scientists put it) we do better “unconsciously than consciously.”⁴ The core question is, then, if corpuscular philosophy, taken in isolation from higher (spiritual) resources, can be upgraded so much as to account for the apparently goal oriented animal behavior; or – alternatively – if spiritual operations are to be downgraded to the extent that they explain animal behavior through unconscious mental automatisms.

On the examination of Boullier’s references to Cudworth, it is clear that unconscious perceptions have an important role to play in the explanation of animal behavior. In Boullier’s view, the animal body is united with and governed by an immaterial soul, and animal behavior cannot be accounted for without explicit reference to the perceptions and desires of an immaterial principle. That said, the animal soul is not a human *res cogitans*, since its cognitive resources are very limited. Although animals are incapable of reflection and reasoning, their mental operations must be reduced to partly *conscious* and partly *unconscious* perceptions and desires. The latter operate instinctively, roughly in the same way as *formative principles* do in Cudworth and his Platonist colleagues. Note, however, that Boullier parts company with them when they extend the role of unconscious desires and perceptions to the whole universe, and sides with the Cartesians in that they reject the notion of ‘extended’ spirits pervading the

⁴ B. J. Baars, *A Cognitive Theory of Consciousness*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, 1995.

whole nature. All he retains from the Platonist movement is just the mechanism of unconscious and semi-conscious operations that explain instincts and animal sensitivity.

With respect to unconscious perception Boullier is also indebted to Leibniz. When explaining the animal mind, he accepts that the soul represents its body, and perceives *everything* that happens in it (II. 107). Furthermore, Boullier makes it clear that the immediate object of the soul's perceptions is not the whole body, but only a tiny part of it, an undetermined parcel of the brain which serves as the organ of thought. This part is called the *sensorium* (II. 75. note; 90). Being attached to it, the mind cannot but perceive all physical motions occurring in the sensorium. Thus, the sensorium is like a magnifying lens collecting the rays from other parts of the body and the external world (II. 128).

This Leibnizian layer of Boullier's thought goes together with the clear rejection of the preestablished harmony. Taking a characteristic eighteenth-century anti-metaphysician stance, Boullier is prepared to detach Leibniz's theory of perception from its metaphysical underpinnings. He makes use of a Leibnizian epistemology, but attempts to engraft it into a more traditional account of causality. Therefore, in Boullier's view, it is not a monadic principle that expresses all the changes of the body, but an immaterial spirit which, so long as exists, continuously affects the *sensorium* and is affected by it. Thus, for Boullier the soul that one has to attribute to animals is a *res cogitans* endowed with cognitive powers of limited scope. The limitation is reflected in the fact that the greatest part of their perceptions remains under the limit of consciousness. It is like a Cartesian mind inhabited by mostly unconscious thoughts.

As to the question of what makes a perception conscious or unconscious, Boullier's answer is straightforward: conscious thoughts can be perceived separately apart from each other. If too many perceptions are given at the same time, the mind cannot make out the details, and gets just one confused impression about the whole (II. 92 sqq; 101). At this general point Boullier is still indebted to Leibniz. But as regards the particular elaboration of the idea, his insights prove to be original. He holds that two factors are responsible for the phenomenology of the conscious sensation. The first one is the number of motions to be perceived at the same time. The other and more important factor is the time elapsed between two subsequent acts of perception. Put together, Boullier's thesis is that the phenomenology of perception depends on psychological factors that relate to the temporal process of perception. He realizes that in order to fulfill different cognitive operations, the human mind needs different time-slots

(II. 88–90). What he is advancing here is similar to illusions called by later by Gestalt-psychologists *phi-phenomenon* and *beta-movement*. These are optical illusions caused by a series of still images, which viewed in a rapid succession are perceived as a continuous motion. Boullier's point is similar. He finds that the basis of the phenomenology of sensation depends on the time lag between two subsequent stimuli. If sensations come too quickly, they run together because the soul fails to differentiate one from the other. Boullier states as a general principle that the shortest time needed for the discernment of two percepts is the basic unit of our psychological life and time-experience (II. 96). Stimuli that fail to match this pace, blur and do not display distinct conceptual contents. They are like a candle quickly moved around. As the sweeping of the candle causes the illusion of a trail of light, a flow of perceptions, which is too rapid to be grasped in all details, gives rise to confused sensations. Brief exposure does not permit the mind to stop at each perception, but as the content of each singular perception is getting lost, a new quality is engendered. On Boullier's account this is the origin of sensations as opposed to ideas which, due to the number of harmonious percepts coming in the required rhythm, permit the soul to spell out what they contain.

Let me take a last step and sketch the outlines of Boullier's system that emerge from the elements reviewed. What we have so far is this. In sharp contrast with the Cartesian view, Boullier attributes an immaterial soul to animals (II. 73; 134). Nevertheless, animals do not enjoy reflexive thoughts – what occurs in them, is just a series of elementary sensations. They undergo a stream of perceptions the rhythm of which, determined by material processes in the brain, is beyond their control. Although perceptions always represent something to the soul, much of the content remains under the limit of consciousness, and only a small part of the sensations emerge from the current and become conscious in a confused form. Perceptions of both types are accompanied by desires which induce new bodily motions just to make them affect the *sensorium* with new sensations again.

The upshot of this reciprocal process is not the picture of a ghost in the machine. What Boullier attempts to do is to describe the delicate relation between a sensitive principle and a bodily mechanism, which are connected to and affect each other in the animal. Let me elaborate on this point by providing an example the core of which is given in Boullier (II. 172. sqq). Imagine a baroque play of perspective, a peep-box with a stage in it, and with different perspectival decorations in the background. The decorations display a marvelous landscape

with a *jardin à la française*, paths and parterres created in geometric shapes, distant cottages and hamlets. Then imagine a child who, peeping into the box, inadvertently touches a hidden spring on the external surface of the device, causing a dramatic change thereby in the scene. All of a sudden, the garden, and the mountains disappear, and a completely new scene pops up with wild forests, grim rocks and a cascade. Being completely unaware of the reason of the change and the working of the mechanism, all the child did was just to touch one part or another of the box, and receive a set of completely new perceptions. Notice that the subsequent scenes may affect her with different feelings. After the disappearance of the cheerful cottage-scene she may be terrified seeing a wild forest that scares her. But as she goes on to touch and see, she may learn how to control the unknown mechanism. When it provides her with unpleasant scenes she learns step-by-step how to elicit more pleasant ones, and how to stabilize them. Boullier's simile is meant to highlight the way in which animal soul is connected to a corporeal mechanism which has its own physical rules unknown to the soul. Through the successive operations on the body, to which the soul is attached, the *sensorium* affects the soul with ever new sensations and affections which in turn produce new motions in the body.

Another example of Boullier's is a slightly modified version of Descartes's report of the fountains in the royal garden at Saint-Germain-en-Laye (II. 175). Descartes, in his report of the famous grottos and waterworks designed by the Francini bothers compares the visitors who enter the artificial caves to the external objects affecting the sense organs of the "statue of earth" (a kind of *bête machine* or *homme machine*) described in his work.⁵ It is clear that through the simily Descartes intends to illustrate the way in which external objects modify the sense organs of the machine and trigger an automatic response thereby. Boullier lays the emphasis on a different point. In his description the visitors walking into the *grotto* do not symbolize external objects that bring about a mechanical response, but represent a soul which, connected to the hidden mechanism of the body, inadvertently causes motions, and receives new perceptions occasioned by the mechanism. As visitors walking here and there cause different monsters to emerge, so the soul acting on the body makes the bodily mechanism produce various scenes to its own surprise, delight or scare. Then these emotions affect the *sensorium* with new motions which in turn

⁵ Cf. R. Descartes, *Oeuvres*, ed. Ch. Adam, P. Tannery, 12 vols., Paris, 1996, XI. 131. English translation: J. Cottingham, R. Stoothoff, D. Murdoch (eds.), *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, 2 vols., 1984–1985, Cambridge: Cambridge U.P.I., 100–101.

give rise to other views and so on. The whole process is governed by the joint action of the soul, the body and the environment surrounding the animal. As the soul becomes more and more familiar with the bodily responses which its emotions produce, it gains more and more control over its own affective states that depend on the body.

Note that the whole process occurs partly on the level of conscious sensations and partly on the level of unconscious perceptions and desires. The soul that perceives the totality of motions displayed by the *sensorium*, responds to each of its *petites perceptions* by a corresponding appetite. Thus the task it has to accomplish is to produce and stabilize those advantageous loops that connect its own actions with the required perceptions received. Boullier emphasizes that the establishing of these feedback mechanisms requires a learning process that first operates on the level of consciousness, since what is needed for forming the right dispositions is the joining of the right sort of emotions of the soul with the appropriate motions in the body. A hunting dog has to feel the fear of being beaten since the desire to eat the partridge is something heavily felt. Only if the right sort of response has been strengthened enough can the whole process be transposed to the unconscious level of operation where the *modus operandi* becomes that of the unconscious mental processes described by the Cambridge Platonists.

The key point of the whole scheme is the temporal process of learning: after an initial phase of acquiring new skills – a tentative process that demands much conscious effort from the agent – the newly acquired behavior produces new bodily dispositions, becomes habitualized, and, finally, fades into the unconscious background of the mind. The bedrock of the process is a mutual tuning of joint systems by means of coordination, accommodation, and an economic interplay of partly conscious and partly unconscious mental functions. What Boullier elaborates, then, is an elegant account of sense-perception based on reciprocal interaction. His approach is surprisingly modern inasmuch as it does not rely so much on metaphysical issues (prevalent in both Descartes and Leibniz) as on the dynamic interplay of various sub-systems working together for an harmonious whole. Whereas his initial ambition had been to solve some metaphysical problems regarding the animal soul, his work proved to be more stimulating for the posterity as a step towards a much more down-to-earth psychology of learning.⁶

⁶ My researches have been supported by OTKA projects No. 104574, 112542, and 116234.

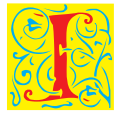
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CONFLICTS OF THE SOUL AND MIND-BODY INTERACTION IN DESCARTES'S *PASSIONS OF THE SOUL*



In the following paper, I aim to provide a clear account of Descartes' explanation of akratic behaviour in his *Passions of the Soul*.¹ The analysis of Descartes' arguments will give me the occasion to remark on some aspects, which I regard as seminal for the understanding of his controversial theory of mind-body interaction through the pineal gland.² In particular, I will focus on Descartes' insights into his theory of the "Natural Institution" and the role of the body as the effective place where the "conflicts of the soul" are determined to occur.

In the first section I will briefly recall the Platonic theory of the partitioning of the soul, presenting it—in agreement with a long interpretive tradition—as Plato's answer to the philosophical problem of akratic behaviour. In the second, I will introduce Descartes' arguments in favour of the unity

¹ A reduced version of this paper was presented on July 13, 2016, at the University of Lodz, within the frame of the 2016 ISSEI Conference. The research was supported by the *Fonds de recherche du Québec – Société et culture (FRQSC)*, whereas the participation to the conference was generously supported by the *Décanat des études* of the UQTR. I am grateful to Syliane Malinowski-Charles, who organised the panel "The Question of Life in 17th-Century Mechanism," for her useful comments on previous versions of this paper. All English quotations of Descartes's works are from Cottingham, Stoothoff, and Murdoch 1984 (hereafter abbreviated as "CSM"). English quotations of Descartes's correspondence are from Cottingham *et al.* 1991 (abbreviated as "CSMK"). The abbreviation "AT" refers to Adam and Tannery 1897–1813.

² In a recent article, Lisa Shapiro correctly points out the importance of Descartes's *Passions of the Soul* with regard to this topic: "The account of the passions, or emotions, developed in the *Passions of the Soul* opens new lines of approach to the long-standing Mind-Body Problem, as well as fuels a new line of inquiry into Descartes's and other rationalists' ethics" (Shapiro 2006: 268).

of the soul, and identify their possible polemical targets. In the third, I will analyse Descartes' treatment of the notion of "conflicts of the soul" and his characterisation of the role of the body in determining the origin of these conflicts. In the following section, I will analyse Descartes's account of mind-body interaction, focusing on the autonomy of the body, its union with the soul, and the activity of the soul. I will complete this analysis by considering Descartes' remarks on the "natural institution" of a correspondence between psychological and physiological states. These considerations will clarify Descartes' references to an indirect activity of the mind upon the body, and of the body upon the mind, and will help understand the means by which Descartes maintains the existence of akratic behaviour and the unity of the soul at the one and the same time.

The partitioning of the soul on Plato's account

According to a traditional interpretation of the Platonic account of the human soul, the coexistence of different and conflicting parts of the soul explains why, in our common everyday experience, we often feel torn by competing desires or feel our will overwhelmed by compelling inclinations, passions, and drives that oppose our free judgments and resolutions.³ In *Phaedrus* Plato writes:

We must realize that each of us is ruled by two principles which we follow wherever they lead: one is our inborn desire for pleasures, the other is our acquired judgment that pursues what is best. Sometimes these two are in agreement; but there are times when they quarrel inside us, and then sometimes one of them gains control, sometimes the other.⁴

In a later passage within the same dialogue, Plato puts forward his famous metaphor of the human soul as resembling a flying chariot, which is pulled in diffe-

³ See, for example, Burnyeat 1976; Moline 1978 and 1981: 53–78; Annas 1981: 123–146; Irwin 1995: 219–222; and Bobonich 2001: 204–206. See also Frede 1992; and Miller 1999: 100, who understand Plato's theory of the multi-parted soul as a reply and a tentative solution to the problems generated by Socrates's ethical intellectualism and the relevant underlying psychology, which—as they are exposed, for instance, in Plato's *Protagoras*—implied, amongst other things, a denial of akratic conduct.

⁴ Plato, *Phaedrus*, 237d–238a, Nehamas and Woodroof, 1997, 516–517.

rent directions by two different winged horses, and is led by a single charioteer. He writes:

Here is what we must say about [the] structure [of the human soul]. [...] Let us then liken the soul to the natural union of a team of winged horses and their charioteer. [...] To begin with, our driver is in charge of a pair of horses; second, one of his horses is beautiful and good and from stock of the same sort, while the other is the opposite and has the opposite sort of bloodline. This means that chariot-driving in our case is inevitably a painfully difficult business.⁵

In the wake of these paragraphs taken from Plato's *Phaedrus*, one might also be tempted to recall Plato's most famous tripartition of the soul, as exposed by means of Socrates' words in the Fourth Book of the *Republic*—although, in that context, the description of the human soul and of its parts was ultimately meant to support Plato's theory of the just polis.⁶ Hence, by recurring to a political metaphor, Plato writes:

Injustice [in a man] must be a kind of civil war between the three parts [of the soul], a meddling and doing of another's work, a rebellion by some part against the whole soul in order to rule it inappropriately.⁷

As noted above, according to the most common reading of these passages, Plato's peculiar way of partitioning the human soul into conflicting faculties or parts was the kind of explanation he provided to justify what we may call, after Aristotle, the phenomenon of the akratic conduct, that is, a traditional philosophical conundrum which is also sometimes addressed as the problem of the weakness of the will.

Now, several questions could be raised, concerning this way of reading Plato's remarks on the nature of the human soul. For instance, whether the soul is to be regarded as essentially divided into parts—that is also to say, whether the soul can still exist and be considered the same without one or more of these parts being actively present in it; whether these parts can exist

⁵ Plato, *Phaedrus*, 246a-b, Nehamas and Woodroof, 1997, 524. See also the description Plato provides of the two horses, in *Phaedrus*, 253b-e, Nehamas and Woodroof, 1997, 531.

⁶ See Plato, *Republic*, 434d-445c, Grube and Reeve, 1997, 1066–1076.

⁷ Plato, *Republic*, 444b, Grube and Reeve, 1997, 1075. See also Plato, *Republic*, 586e, Grube and Reeve, 1997, 1194.

separately from each other, and constitute therefore separate autonomous souls; or else, whether these distinct faculties, or parts of the soul, are actually two or three, according to Plato.⁸ All these problematic points notwithstanding, in the present circumstances I am willing to take the opinion shared by the majority of interpreters as valid, that is, that according to Plato the human soul is effectively divided into conflicting parts, and these conflicts—or this “civil war,” to retain Plato’s metaphor—occurring between different parts of the soul are meant to explain what we may call *akrasia*, or the weakness of our will. I am willing to do so, for it seems to me that this was also Descartes’ take on Plato’s psychology.

The unity of the soul on Descartes’ account

As a matter of fact, Article 47 of Descartes’s *Passions of the Soul* directly tackles this commonly accepted Platonic viewpoint on the nature of the soul and on the origin of akratic behaviour, in order to confute it. The title of the article suggests as much: “On what are the conflicts that are usually supposed to occur between the lower part and the higher part of the soul.”⁹ Descartes’ following explanation confirms it:

All the conflicts usually supposed to occur between the lower part of the soul, which we call “sensitive,” and the higher or “rational” part of the soul—or between the natural appetites and the will—consist simply in the opposition between the movements which the body (by means of its spirits) and the soul (by means of its will) tend to produce at the same time in the gland. For there is within us but one soul, and this soul has within it no diversity of parts: it is at once sensitive and rational too, and all its appetites are volitions. It is an error to identify the different functions of the soul with persons who play different, usually mutually opposed roles—an error which arises simply from our failure to distinguish properly the functions of the soul from those of the body. It is to the body alone that we should attribute everything that can be observed in us to oppose our reason.¹⁰

⁸ The reader interested in deepening these points may refer to Shields 2007 and Shields 2014 (2010). These two articles question the commonly accepted reading of Plato’s psychology I have just exposed.

⁹ CSM I, 345 / AT XI, 364.

¹⁰ CSM I, 345–346 / AT XI, 364–365.

Other arguments in favour of the essential unity of the soul, and against any division of the soul into different parts, can be found in several other places within Descartes' works. Similar to this case, they are often accompanied by considerations regarding the radical distinction between the mind and the body, and their absolute heterogeneity. A very long and articulate passage is in the *Twelfth* of Descartes' *Rules for the Direction of the Mind*,¹¹ whereas in the *Sixth Meditation* we may read:

There is a great difference between the mind and the body, inasmuch as the body is by its very nature always divisible, while the mind is utterly indivisible. For when I consider the mind, or myself in so far as I am merely a thinking thing, I am unable to distinguish any parts within myself; I understand myself to be something quite single and whole.¹²

Now, in the light of these passages, a careful reader may object that the main polemical target of Descartes' arguments in favour of the unity of the soul could have rather been the traditional Aristotelian scholastic view, according to which the different faculties or functions ascribable to an individual human soul were, in fact, "really distinct from each other and from the soul itself."¹³ This is, to cite a notable example, Marleen Rozemond's point of view, when she writes:

In denying that the faculties of the soul are parts of the soul, and really distinct from it, Descartes is rejecting a long tradition in Aristotelian scholasticism of seeing the human soul as ontologically complex in the sense of containing really distinct parts. On a view often referred to as the "unitarian view," found in Suárez and widely attributed within scholasticism to Aquinas, a human being has a single soul, but its faculties are really distinct from each other and from the soul itself. [...] Insofar as Descartes's point is to reject the idea that the faculties of the soul are really distinct from it[, it] really means that he is taking a stance within a scholastic debate.¹⁴

¹¹ CSM I, 42 / AT X, 415.

¹² CSM II, 59 / AT VII, 85–86. I emended the CSM translation of the Latin word *integram*, by substituting the English term "complete" with "whole," as suggested by M. Rozemond, "The Faces of Simplicity in Descartes's Soul," *Partitioning the Soul: Debates from Plato to Leibniz*, ed. K. Corcilius and D. Perler, Berlin/Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2014, 221, n. 6.

¹³ M. Rozemond, "The Faces of Simplicity in Descartes's Soul" ..., 230.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*. It is to be noted, however, that Rozemond mainly focuses her analysis on the argument in favour of the unity of the soul that Descartes exposed in his *Sixth* and *Second Meditations*. On the other hand, D'Arcy 1996, 246, maintains that the concept of "conflicts of the soul," used by Descartes, is a reference to the Platonic tradition of thought.

Along with the scholastic “unitarian view,” Rozemond also mentions another possible target of Descartes’ arguments: the so-called “pluralist view,” according to which “within a human being there are at least two really distinct substantial forms or souls.”¹⁵ An advocate of this view was Ockham, who, “while rejecting the idea that the faculties are really distinct from the soul, held that a human being contains a sensitive and an intellectual soul.”¹⁶

Now, whether Descartes had in mind Plato’s theory of the soul when he was arguing in favour of the unity of the soul, or rather Aquinas’, or Suárez’s, or else Ockam’s view, that does not change the terms of the problem I would like to discuss here. Indeed, as Rozemond herself acknowledges, the problem of finding a consistent explanation of the peculiar phenomenon we regard as the akratic behaviour, remains the same. In a somewhat naïve way, we are all aware that our desires may occur to clash with our best judgments, and that they sometimes seem to prevent us from acting according to the pronouncements of our reason. How do we explain, then, what we perceive as a kind of psychological conflict happening entirely within our soul, without disrupting the singularity of the individual soul itself? As Rozemond writes:

We might feel some inclination in the direction of more ontological complexity when reminded of the problem of psychic conflict: how should we understand a conflict between our will and some rebellious appetite? Do we need parts of the soul in some sense to address that question, either different souls or really distinct faculties?¹⁷

Now, not only—I argue—does this question retain all its validity; as a matter of fact, it becomes much more pressing in the case of a philosopher such as Descartes, who, as we have just seen, rejects the traditional view that the human soul may be either multiple or composed by different parts. Therefore, in the following sections, I plan to unfold Descartes’ original answer to the problem of *akrasia*. Given the nature of Descartes’ arguments, I believe that such explanation could be of some help, in order to better understand Descartes’ controversial account of the relationship and interaction between the human mind and body.

¹⁵ Rozemond 2014, 230.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, 232.

Conflicts of the soul and conflicts in the body

In the aforementioned Article 47 of the *Passions of the Soul*, Descartes undertakes to debunk the theories which affirm the existence of conflicts between different parts of the soul. As we have seen, Descartes affirms the essential unity of our soul. He firmly denies that there may exist different parts in it, or that there may exist different kinds of souls in us, corresponding to unique faculties or conflicting functions. As a consequence thereof, he rejects the existence of any psychological conflict between different parts of the soul, or between different souls pertaining to a single individual: “there is within us but one soul,” Descartes says, “and this soul has within it no diversity of parts.” How can Descartes justify this claim, however, once presented with the evidence of the phenomenon of a self-aware akratic conduct?

As we shall see, Descartes does not deny the existence of self-aware akratic behaviour in humans. Nor does he deny the possibility of accounting for a kind of weakness of the will. The psychological conflicts that the Platonic and the scholastic “unitarian” traditions of thought ascribed to different parts, functions, or faculties existing within a single soul, and that Ockam and the “pluralist” tradition ascribed to different souls, are in fact to be understood, according to Descartes, as conflicts which sometimes occur between the free activity of the soul—of which we are conscious and masters—and the autonomous functioning of the body—of which we are aware in our mind, yet do not fully control. To be more precise, Descartes goes as far as to suggest that what is commonly felt and regarded as a merely psychological conflict is rather the result of conflicts which effectively take place in our body alone.

At the beginning of Article 47, Descartes describes what we perceive as conflicts in our soul as the result of opposing forces, acting at the same time upon a precise part of our body—that is, upon our pineal gland.¹⁸ According to Descartes, the pineal gland is, on the one hand, the physiological origin and end of all voluntary and spontaneous movements of our body¹⁹ and, on the other hand, “the principal seat of the soul,”²⁰ or the place in the body “where

¹⁸ All these conflicts consisting simply, in Descartes’s words, in “the opposition between the movements which the body (by means of its spirits) and the soul (by means of its will) tend to produce at the same time in the gland” (CSM I, 345–346 / AT XI, 364–365).

¹⁹ CSM I, 340 / AT XI, 352. See also the Article 34 of Descartes’ *Passions of the Soul* (CSM I, 341 / AT XI, 354–355).

²⁰ CSM I, 340 / AT XI, 352.

the soul exercises its functions more particularly than in the other parts of the body.”²¹ Therefore, Descartes argues, what we call conflicts in our soul are rather events which happen within a physiological framework.²² They are physiological events of which we nevertheless perceive the effects in our mind, insofar as the moving of our pineal gland transmits an image of them to our mind. Nonetheless, Descartes maintains, we commonly believe them to be the other way around, purely psychological events—conflicts between reason and passions, as it were—, for we clearly feel in our soul the psychological effects of certain bodily dispositions that stand in the way of our free will of judging and acting, without being able to know, however, by which means our bodily dispositions actually constrain our thoughts. Since we cannot fail to feel these effects in our soul, and since they seem to occur against our will, we generally address these perceptions as “passions” in our soul. As Descartes writes in Article 26 of the *Passions of the Soul*:

We cannot be misled [...] regarding the passions, in that they are so close and so internal to our soul that it cannot possibly feel them unless they are truly as it feels them to be. [...] Even if we are asleep and dreaming, we cannot feel sad, or moved by any other passion, unless the soul truly has this passion within it.²³

However, Descartes also claims, we do not know the real physiological causes that produce those dispositions in our body, along with the corresponding mental states in our mind:

²¹ CSM I, 340 / AT XI, 351.

²² Byron Williston perfectly summarises the whole point, when he writes: “Descartes has shifted the locus of conflict from the soul to the pineal gland” (Williston 1999: 48). This consideration, however, seems sufficient to Williston to dismiss all the physiological aspect of Descartes’s treatment of the conflicts of the soul. “Such conflict,” he writes, “is not akratic because it is not properly speaking mental. It is conflict between a thought and the merely habitual movements of the body which are themselves manifested in characteristic ways in the disposition of spirits in the gland” (Williston 1999: 48). Williston’s take on the problem, although extremely insightful and based on the correct assumption that Descartes was committed to ethical intellectualism, does not allow him to take into account, as a genuine expression of akratic behaviour, the fact that the mind can perceive, according to Descartes, the effects of simultaneous and opposed forces acting upon the pineal gland. Conversely, he contends that “[t]he two forces cannot [...] be simultaneously present to the mind,” and consistently concludes that “strict akratic action is not possible” within Descartes’s framework (Williston 1999: 47).

²³ CSM I, 338 / AT XI, 348–349.

The perceptions that we refer only to the soul²⁴ are those whose effects we feel as being in the soul itself, and for which we do not normally know any proximate cause to which we can refer them. Such are the feelings of joy, anger and the like, which are aroused in us sometimes by the objects which stimulate our nerves and sometimes also by other causes.²⁵

As a consequence thereof, we are erroneously induced to admit the existence of different kinds of will, faculties, or appetites within a single thinking substance, in order to explain the simultaneous existence in our soul of perceptions that comply with our free willing and reasoning, and perceptions which we undergo and which seem instead to drive our will away from our deliberations. If we knew the real origin, or the “primary cause” of the passions in our soul, we would also know, as Descartes asserts in Article 51, “that the ultimate and most proximate cause of the passions of the soul is simply the agitation by which the spirits move the little gland in the middle of the brain.”²⁶ Hence, Descartes concludes:

So there is no conflict here except in so far as the little gland in the middle of the brain can be pushed to one side by the soul and to the other side by the animal spirits (which, as I said above, are nothing but bodies), and these two impulses often happen to be opposed, the stronger cancelling the effect of the weaker.²⁷

Mind-body interaction

We see it clearly: what happens in the case of the so-called conflicts of the soul, in Descartes’ view, is that two opposing forces act simultaneously upon a single extended object—namely, our pineal gland. On the one hand, our pineal gland moves according to the activity of our soul; on the other hand, our pineal gland also receives the movements transmitted by our bodily activity, through the flowing of the animal spirits into our brain. As Descartes states, “these two impulses often happen to be opposed, the stronger cancelling the weaker.”

²⁴ These “perceptions that we refer only to the soul” are what Descartes properly defines as the “passions of the soul” in his *Treatise*.

²⁵ CSM I, 337–338 / AT XI, 347–348.

²⁶ CSM I, 349 / AT XI, 371.

²⁷ CSM I, 346 / AT XI, 365.

Now, it seems evident that, in order to be tenable, Descartes' conclusion requires an account of how the soul and the body can interact and affect each other through another body—i.e., the pineal gland. How can the soul, that is, a substance with no extension (hence, with no shape, no mass, and no speed, amongst the other properties), exert any force upon a body? How can this force, originating from the soul, be commensurate with a certain quantity of movement and be applied to an extended thing? And, further, how can the force of our soul and the mechanic impulses originating in the body be opposed to each other, eventually cancelling the effects of each other?

Descartes' theory of mind-body interaction has always raised a lot of eyebrows, and I do not mean to defend it against its many critiques—amongst whom we may count, to begin with, Pierre Gassendi,²⁸ Princess Elizabeth of Bohemia,²⁹ and Henry More.³⁰ In the rest of my paper, I will limit myself to providing an accurate exposition of Descartes' argument for the mind-body interaction, as it unfolds in his *Passions of the Soul*, with the purpose to clarify how Descartes relocates the problem of the weakness of the will from the traditional psychological domain to the physiological domain, in order to defend the essential unity of our soul. To achieve this goal, as we have seen, Descartes describes the so-called conflicts of the soul as the effect of the simultaneous action of two different substances upon a single part of the body. I would start, therefore, by recalling what Descartes states at the beginning of the *Passions of the Soul*, as to what we should understand as “action” and “passion.” In the first Article of the *Treatise*, Descartes writes:

What is a passion with regard to one subject is always an action in some other regard. [...] Whatever takes place or occurs is generally called by philosophers a “passion” with regard to the subject to which it happens and an “action” with regard to that which makes it happen. Thus, although an agent and patient are often quite different, an action and passion must always be a single thing which has these two names on account of the two different subjects to which it may be related.³¹

²⁸ CSM II, 235–237 / AT VII, 339–341.

²⁹ AT III, 661.

³⁰ AT V, 385. For a brief, yet insightful summary of these criticisms, see Tollefsen 1999. For more general remarks on the various lines of criticism of Descartes's account of mind-body interaction, see M. D. Wilson, *Descartes*, New York: Routledge, 2005, 180–193. See also L. Shapiro, “Descartes's Passions of the Soul,” *Philosophy Compass* 1, 3, 2006, 271.

³¹ CSM I, 328 / AT XI, 327–328.

This premise, which opens the whole *Treatise on the Passions*, seems to me to be intended also to support Descartes' thesis of the mind-body interaction. According to this thesis, we will see, all spontaneous actions of the body, insofar as they are transmitted to our soul through the movement of the pineal gland, occur to be passions in the soul. Through the pineal gland, the soul perceives the effect of the autonomous activity of the body and, in this sense, we may say that the body acts upon the soul, by acting upon the pineal gland. Conversely, all actions and volitions of the mind, insofar as they entail a corresponding movement by the pineal gland, are transmitted to the body, so that our volitions can be called passions in the body.

What is important to note here is that in the case of the so-called conflicts of the soul—which, as we have seen, are really to be understood as conflicts in the body—we must consider two agents acting simultaneously upon a single patient. Both the soul and the body can exert their force upon the pineal gland with the possibility of causing a clash, which is represented in the mind as a conflict where free will and reason, on the one hand, are opposed to bodily drives and appetites, on the other hand. To understand how this may happen, we have to analyse how the human body and soul can act autonomously and independently from each other, and how their respective autonomous activities can oppose each other if simultaneously applied to the movements of the pineal gland. First, I will focus on the autonomy, or spontaneity of the human body. Then, I will focus on the union of body and soul. Finally, I will comment on the freedom of the mind, in order to draw my conclusions.

The autonomy of the human body

Descartes stresses several times that the human body can be conceived of as an autonomous machine, and that there exists a spontaneous activity of the body, not requiring the presence of any spiritual principle in order to be able to perform itself. Articles 4 to 6 of the *Passions of the Soul* are devoted to this topic,³² but we can find the same thesis also expressed in the incipit and conclusion of his *Treatise on Man*.³³

³² CSM I, 329–330 / AT XI, 329–331.

³³ CSM I, 99 / AT XI, 120; CSM I, 108 / AT XI, 202: “I should like you to consider that these functions follow from the mere arrangement of the machine's organs every bit as naturally as the movements of a clock or other automaton follow from the arrangement of its counter-weights and wheels. In order to explain these functions, then, it is not necessary to conceive

As to the “mechanism of our body,” as Descartes calls it, he is convinced that our body is so composed that each modification in our nervous system, through the flow of the animal spirits towards the brain, modifies the position of the pineal gland, which is located at the centre of the brain. Vice-versa, each modification of the position of the pineal gland modifies in turn the flow of the animal spirits from the brain towards one or another part of the body, producing brain activity and local muscular movements. We can find the description of this “mechanism of our body” in Article 16 of the *Passions of the Soul*, notably entitled “How all the limbs can be moved by the objects of the senses and by the spirits without the help of the soul,”³⁴ and—as to the central role of the pineal gland—in Article 31 of the same text.³⁵

The union of mind and body

Let us move now to the union of the body and the mind. Descartes claims that our mind is of such a nature that it perceives all the modifications that are mechanically produced in our pineal gland by the activity of our body, and that each modification of the position of the pineal gland corresponds to a perception in the soul. As he writes in Article 34 of the *Passions of the Soul*, the nature of the soul “is such that it receives as many different impressions—that is, it has as many different perceptions—as there occur different movements in this gland.”³⁶

By this passage, I assume, Descartes is restating his theory of the “Natural Institution”—as Margaret Wilson suggestively called it.³⁷ We may find traces of this theory in Descartes’ *Optics*, for example, when he writes that “it is ordained

of this machine as having any vegetative or sensitive soul or other principle of movement and life, apart from its blood and its spirits, which are agitated by the heat of the fire burning continuously in its heart—a fire which has the same nature as all the fires that occur in inanimate bodies.”

³⁴ CSM I, 335 / AT XI, 341–342: “Every movement we make without any contribution from our will—as often happens when we breathe, walk, eat and, indeed, when we perform any action which is common to us and the beasts—depends solely on the arrangement of our limbs and on the route which the spirits, produced by the heat of the heart, follow naturally in the brain, nerves and muscles. This occurs in the same way as the movement of a watch is produced merely by the strength of its spring and the configuration of its wheels.”

³⁵ CSM I, 340 / AT XI, 352.

³⁶ CSM I, 341 / AT XI, 355.

³⁷ See M. D. Wilson, *Descartes...*, 182–191. Her analysis sheds much light on the problematic aspects of this theory in Descartes’s works.

by Nature” that our soul perceives the objects according to the way in which the nervous system modifies the brain.³⁸ However, the most complete formulation of this theory is found in the *Sixth Meditation*. There, we shall see, Descartes’ theory of mind-body interaction does not rely on any separate analysis as to how mutual causation can result from different substances. Rather, this interaction between different substances, and the subsequent correspondence between psychological and physiological states, is an effect which can only be understood within a theological framework—as a fact due to God’s infinite goodness, good will, and absolute power³⁹—, and then be corroborated by common everyday experience.

Any given movement occurring in the part of the brain that immediately affects the mind produces just one corresponding sensation; and hence the best system that could be devised is that it should produce the one sensation which, of all possible sensations, is most especially and most frequently conducive to the preservation of the healthy man. And experience shows that the sensations which nature has given us are all of this kind; and so there is absolutely nothing to be found in them that does not bear witness to the power and goodness of God. For example, when the nerves in the foot are set in motion in a violent and unusual manner, this motion, by way of the spinal cord, reaches the inner parts of the brain, and there gives the mind its signal for having a certain sensation, namely the sensation of a pain occurring in the foot. This stimulates the mind to do its best to get rid of the cause of the pain, which it takes to be harmful to the foot. It is true that God could have made the nature of man such that this particular motion in the brain indicated something else to the mind; it might, for example, have made the mind aware of the actual motion occurring in the brain, or in the foot, or in any of the intermediate regions; or it might have indicated something else entirely.⁴⁰

According to this paragraph, it is only because of God’s perfection, which entails supreme goodness,⁴¹ that certain physiological states happening within our

³⁸ CSM I, 169 / AT VI, 134–135. In Descartes’ *Passions of the Soul*, see Articles 36 and 50: “By entering into these pores [the spirits] produce in the gland a particular movement which is ordained by nature to make the soul feel this passion” (CSM I, 342 / AT XI, 357); “Words produce in the gland movements which are ordained by nature to represent to the soul only the sounds of their syllables when they are spoken or the shape of their letters when they are written” (CSM I, 348 / AT XI, 369).

³⁹ Were it not for its theological and finalistic foundation, based on God’s love towards humans, we may regard the natural correspondence of psychological and physiological states in Descartes as a “brute fact,” to employ Michael Della Rocca’s terminology (see, in this regard, M. Della Rocca, “PSR”...).

⁴⁰ CSM II, 60–61 / AT VII, 87–88.

⁴¹ See, for example, CSM II, 37–38 / AT VII, 53–54.

body correspond to certain mental states happening within our mind, as we can experience in everyday life.⁴² If God had chosen otherwise, there would be no such correspondence, or it would be different by nature.⁴³ As a consequence of God's goodness and will, therefore, insofar as they produce impressions and modifications in the pineal gland by triggering our nervous system, the soul perceives external objects, some biological functions, and some movements of the body.⁴⁴ In this sense, according to Descartes, the body acts upon the mind, inducing thoughts in it, as it were, through the movements of the pineal gland.

The activity of the soul

As to the activity of the soul, Descartes holds it as evident that our mind can be conceived separately from the body to which it is joined, that it is free, and that, except for the perceptions that it passively receives from the activity of the body, it can lead its thoughts autonomously. For example, in Article 39 of his *Principles of Philosophy*, Descartes affirms that the freedom of our will "is so evident that it must be counted among the first and most common notions that are innate in us."⁴⁵ In Article 41 of the *Passions of the Soul* he also writes:

⁴² As evasive as it may sound, this argument is interesting insofar as it seems aimed at disposing of the problems ensuing from the claim of a direct causation between substances of a different nature. In fact, Descartes seems willing to accept that no spiritual activity or idea can be deduced from, or associated with the moving of a body, without further explanation. Indeed, Descartes argues, only a supremely powerful and good being can have ordered the things in such way, by disposing the human mind to perceive certain representations and passions "on the occasion" of certain bodily dispositions (for references in Descartes's works concerning a similar employment of the controversial expressions "on the occasion" and "to give the occasion," see, for example, the First Chapter of *The World* [CSM I, 82 / AT XI, 5–6], his *Treatise on Man* [CSM I, 102–103 / AT XI, 143–144; CSM I, 106 / AT XI, 176], his *Optics* [CSM I, 166 / AT VI, 114], his *Sixth Replies* [CSM II, 295 / AT VII, 437], and his *Comments on a Certain Broadsheet* [CSM I, 304 / AT VIII B, 359]). This argument also provides Descartes with the means to contend that ordinary observations around the union of the mind and body cannot help but confirm the attributes of God that can be deduced by considering only its innate idea—such as its supreme perfection, power, and goodness.

⁴³ This could include the case of a possibly "deceiving God."

⁴⁴ CSM I, 337 / AT XI 346–347.

⁴⁵ CSM I, 205–206 / AT VIII A, 19.

The will is by its nature so free that it can never be constrained. Of the two kinds of thought I have distinguished in the soul—the first its actions, i.e. its volitions, and the second its passions, taking this word in its most general sense to include every kind of perception—the former are absolutely within its power and can be changed only indirectly by the body, whereas the latter are absolutely dependent on the actions which produce them, and can be changed by the soul only indirectly, except when it is itself their cause. And the activity of the soul consists entirely in the fact that simply by willing something it brings it about that the little gland to which it is closely joined moves in the manner required to produce the effect corresponding to this volition.⁴⁶

Thus, by freely thinking, the mind can also operate upon and along with its body. Thoughts produced by the free will of our soul must in fact correspond to precise modifications in the position of the pineal gland, according to the Natural Institution decreed by God. These movements of the pineal gland trigger in turn mechanical reactions in our nervous system and consequent movements in our body. Therefore, since the gland assumes the position corresponding to an individual's volitions each time,⁴⁷ voluntary movement in the

⁴⁶ CSM I, 343 / AT XI, 359–360.

⁴⁷ It is to be noted that Descartes takes good care in delimiting the potentially infinite range of this claim, to avoid absurd consequences being deduced from it. As we have seen from Descartes's argument in the *Sixth Meditation*, the perceptions or ideas joined to the various positions or movements of the pineal gland, according to God's Natural Institution, are only those which are more useful to the preserving of the body. Conversely, not all possible volitions that a mind can imagine are in fact joined to a movement or a position of the gland. See, for example, Article 44 of the *Passions of the Soul*: "Our volition to produce some particular movement or other effect does not always result in our producing it; for that depends on the various ways in which nature or habit has joined certain movements of the gland to certain thoughts. For example, [...] the movement of the gland, whereby the spirits are driven to the optic nerve in the way required for enlarging or contracting the pupils, has been joined by nature with the volition to look at distant or nearby objects, rather than with the volition to enlarge or contract the pupils" (CSM I, 344 / AT XI, 361–362). Now, Descartes's references to human habits, conceived of as an alternative source of mind-body states correspondence might appear potentially destructive for the Natural Institution theory; or, at least, they may suggest a "subtle shift" from the position he held in the *Sixth Meditation*, as pointed out by L. Shapiro, "Descartes's *Passions of the Soul*" ..., 272. In the *Passions of the Soul* Descartes seems to try to avoid the problem by recurring to his theory of memory, understood as a kind of plasticity of the body (see the Article 42 of the *Passions of the Soul*, CSM I, 343–344 / AT XI, 360). Whereas the mind can do nothing to change the order according to which God has joined certain perceptions to certain bodily states, the passions associated with those perceptions can be changed in favour to others, on the basis of past experiences.

body is produced as an effect. In this sense, Descartes asserts, the soul acts upon the body, by “pushing” and “moving” the pineal gland.⁴⁸

Natural institution and indirect action

According to the passages I cited from Descartes’ works, the union between the human mind and body can be simply denoted as a mutual and necessary correspondence existing between some thoughts in the mind and some movements of the pineal gland in the body, instituted by nature according to God’s masterplan. It is because of this constant correspondence of bodily and mental states, provided the body and the mind can act autonomously and independently from each other, that they can eventually act upon each other and be acted upon by each other, simultaneously. Despite the appearances, I am persuaded that with this theory Descartes is not proposing a naïve solution to the mind-body interaction problem. For—as Descartes states clearly in Article 41 above quoted—the action of one substance upon the other cannot be a direct action. Very simply put, mind-body interaction cannot be understood as a sort of psychokinetic power, as it were.

“Each volition is naturally joined to some movement of the gland,” Descartes writes in Article 44 of the *Passions of the Soul*.⁴⁹ What we have to maintain

For example, through the aid of memory, the mind can remember courage and act with courage when it perceives fear, and respond with love to the hate it may feel. When a behavioural pattern of such sort permanently modifies the corporeal cavities through which the spirits flow after a certain external object is perceived, the passion associated to the perception of an object is modified accordingly. See, in this regard, Articles 36, 45, 46, and 50 of Descartes’ *Passions of the Soul* (CSM I, 342 / AT XI, 362–364; CSM I, 345 / AT XI, 356–357; CSM I, 348 / AT XI 368–369).

⁴⁸ See Article 34 of Descartes’ *Passions of the Soul*: “The small gland which is the principal seat of the soul is suspended within the cavities containing these spirits, so that it can be moved by them in as many different ways as there are perceptible differences in the objects. But it can also be moved in various different ways by the soul, whose nature is such that it receives as many different impressions—that is, it has as many different perceptions as there occur different movements in this gland. And conversely, the mechanism of our body is so constructed that simply by this gland’s being moved in any way by the soul or by any other cause, it drives the surrounding spirits towards the pores of the brain, which direct them through the nerves to the muscles; and in this way the gland makes the spirits move the limbs” (CSM I, 341 / AT XI, 354–355).

⁴⁹ CSM I, 344 / AT XI, 361.

here, according to Descartes' Natural Institution theory, is just the strict correspondence that necessarily exists between certain mental states, on the one hand, and certain bodily states, on the other hand.⁵⁰ For we shall not overlook that, according to Descartes, the only activity that we may attribute to the soul is the thinking (that is, to perceive and to will things), whereas the only activity pertaining to a body is movement in space.⁵¹ Moreover, as Descartes adds in the *Passions of the Soul*, the soul does not know how the body machinery works, and it totally ignores how the pineal gland shall be moved in order for the body to perform certain actions.⁵² As a matter of fact, the soul only represents to itself those actions it wants the body to perform, as objects of its volitions: "as when our merely willing to walk," Descartes writes in Article 18 of the *Passions of the*

⁵⁰ It is better to recall that Descartes holds this correspondence between bodily states and thoughts as self-evident, inasmuch as we cannot fail to experience it in our everyday life. As he writes in a letter to Arnauld, "[t]hat the mind, which is incorporeal, can set the body in motion is something which is shown to us not by any reasoning or comparison with other matters, but by the surest and plainest everyday experience" (CSMK, 358 / AT V, 222). In another letter, addressed to Elizabeth, Descartes lists the union between the mind and the body amongst the primitive notions of knowledge: "I consider that there are in us certain primitive notions which are as it were the patterns on the basis of which we form all our other conceptions. There are very few such notions. First, there are the most general—those of being, number, duration, etc.—which apply to everything we can conceive. Then, as regards body in particular, we have only the notion of extension, which entails the notions of shape and motion; and as regards the soul on its own, we have only the notion of thought, which includes the perceptions of the intellect and the inclinations of the will. Lastly, as regards the soul and the body together, we have only the notion of their union, on which depends our notion of the soul's power to move the body, and the body's power to act on the soul and cause its sensations and passions" (CSMK, 218 / AT III, 665).

⁵¹ See, for example, Descartes' *Principles of Philosophy* I, § 8–9 and 32 (CSM I, 195 / AT VIII A, 7–8; CSM I, 204 / AT VIII A, 17), and *Principles of Philosophy* II, § 23 (CSM I, 232–233 / AT VIII A, 52–53).

⁵² Emanuela Scribano argues that this claim is also at the origin of some later occasionalist developments of the mind-body interaction theory, such as those found in Arnold Geulincx and Nicolas Malebranche. According to Scribano, both Geulincx and Malebranche maintained within a Cartesian framework the "epistemic condition of causality," that is, a principle according to which "it is necessary to be aware of the means by which an effect is produced to be able to produce it" (in Latin, "*quod nescis quomodo fiat, id non facis*." See J. P. N. Land, *Arnoldi Geulincx Antverpiensis Opera Philosophica*, Vol. 3, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1891–1893, 205–206). The origin of this principle, Scribano contends, can be traced back to Galen's works on human anatomy and the formation of the human foetus. Traces of the same principle can also be found in Tommaso Campanella and Pierre Chanut. See, in this regard, E. Scribano, "Quod nescis quomodo fiat, id non facis. Occasionalism against Descartes?," *Rinascimento* 51, 2011, 63–86.

Soul, “has the consequence that our legs move and we walk.”⁵³ The same concept is also stressed in a letter to Elizabeth:

There is no doubt that the soul has great power over the body, as is shown by the great bodily changes produced by anger, fear and the other passions. The soul guides the spirits into the places where they can be useful or harmful; however, it does not do this directly through its volition, but only by willing or thinking about something else. For our body is so constructed that certain movements in it follow naturally upon certain thoughts: as we see that blushes accompany shame, tears compassion, and laughter joy.⁵⁴

Descartes’ treatment of the so-called “conflicts of the soul” clarifies and confirms this aspect of his theory—that is, that the way in which the mind and body act upon each other can only be indirect. Hence, Descartes concludes in Article 47 of the *Passions of the Soul* that we have been analysing so far by writing:

Such a conflict is revealed chiefly through the fact that the will, lacking the power to produce the passions directly [...], is compelled to make an effort to consider a series of different things, and if one of them happens to have the power to change for a moment the course of the spirits, the next one may happen to lack this power, whereupon the spirits will immediately revert to the same course because no change has occurred in the state of the nerves, heart and blood. This makes the soul feel itself impelled, almost at one and the same time, to desire and not to desire one and the same thing; and that is why it has been thought that the soul has within it two conflicting powers.⁵⁵

To conclude, according to Descartes, the proximate cause of what we usually regard as conflicts in our soul—when the force of our passions, that is, seems to prevent us from following our free judgements, will and deliberations—is the upshot of a quite complex physiological activity, of which we perceive the effects in our mind. Because of our bodily constitution, it may naturally happen that the impression of an external object on the pineal gland causes our nervous system to react and dispose our body to execute certain movements. This reaction, in turn, may trigger a sort of neural feedback that, passing through the heart,

⁵³ CSM I, 335 / AT XI, 343.

⁵⁴ CSMK, 237 / AT V, 65.

⁵⁵ CSM I, 346 / AT XI, 365–366.

reinforces the pineal gland in its position and the body in its disposition.⁵⁶ Through the pineal gland, the soul perceives this natural inclination of the body to act autonomously in some determinate ways, and regards it as a sort of involuntary will and appetite.⁵⁷

Descartes provides the example of our natural and almost unstoppable inclination to run away at the sight of terrifying things.⁵⁸ This is a purely physiological mechanism though, and the soul cannot do anything to prevent it—it just perceives it.⁵⁹ The only way in which the soul can limit (and eventually halt) the effects ensuing from this spontaneous activity of its body, is by the only power of which it is capable: that is, to employ its freedom of thinking and focus on states of mind that can indirectly induce physiological reactions, contrary and opposed to those caused by the passions themselves.⁶⁰ If the soul succeeds in this endeavour—that is, if the soul sticks to its thoughts, as it were, concentrating on its volitions and deliberations despite the stream of appetites brought about by the passions—, then the pineal gland will naturally and necessarily assume the position corresponding to the individual's new mental attitude, causing as a consequence a flow of spirits into the body that will naturally oppose those generated by the passions.⁶¹ In this sense, according to Descartes, the conflicts that see the soul opposed to the automatisms of the body, in order to get control over the body, reveal the strength or the weakness of one's soul.⁶² This claim works as a reply and a solution to the problem from which we departed, that is, the existence of *akrasia*. Without denying its existence, self-aware akratic conduct can be understood, on

⁵⁶ Descartes describes this physiological process in Articles 36–38 of his *Passions of the Soul* (CSM I, 342–343 / AT XI, 356–358).

⁵⁷ CSM I, 343 / AT XI, 359.

⁵⁸ CSM I, 342 / AT XI, 356–357.

⁵⁹ CSM I, 342–343 / AT XI, 358.

⁶⁰ CSM I, 345 / AT XI, 362–363.

⁶¹ Williston's remarks on the importance of the withdrawal of attention in determining one's akratic behaviour are very significant in this sense. Yet, he does not seem to me to sufficiently consider the physiological mechanism on which attention is based, in Descartes. Our capability of paying attention to things is in fact subject to the same forces which act upon the pineal gland (Descartes hints at this mechanism in the Article 43 of his *Passions of the Soul*, CSM I, 344 / AT XI, 361). As a consequence, Williston assimilates the withdrawal of attention to a kind of self-deception (B. Williston, "Akrasia and the passions in Descartes," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 7, 1, 1999, 46).

⁶² CSM I, 347 / AT XI, 366–367.

Descartes' account, as a conflict arising from the interaction of two substances joined in an extended spot, leaving at least one of the two substances—i.e., the individual soul—united in its nature.

However, Descartes also holds that the proper instruments of a strong soul are “firm and determinate judgements bearing upon the knowledge of good and evil,” and that “[t]he strength of the soul is not enough without the knowledge of truth.”⁶³ Once again, we see, the “weapons” with which the soul can indirectly act upon the body and tackle the passions are purely spiritual, and exclude any direct contact between different substances. Experience teaches us in fact that the more the arguments that accompany the resolutions of our will are sound and adherent to the truth, the more the mind is capable of sticking to its thoughts and purposes, and the less it is distracted by less important perceptions, desires and appetites that may come to its attention through the body. Well-founded arguments can also quell appetites that are harmful to our well-being, by providing good reasons to perform different actions.⁶⁴ Therefore, the train of thought of a well-thinking mind, Descartes suggests, adheres by its own strength to the free deliberations of the soul and is less dependent on perceptions and drives coming from the body. This may happen, as we have seen, because the movements of the pineal gland must match, by natural institution of God, the actual states of mind. Therefore, when the soul endeavours to reason, the movements of the gland and the body's ensuing activity will adhere more closely to the dictates of the soul that originates from the power of the soul alone considered, and will oppose more resistance to the forces acting on the gland through stimuli coming from the external world.

This final assumption, united with the belief that the soul can always combine its absolute freedom of thinking with the solidity of clear and distinct reasoning, leads Descartes to claim optimistically, at the end of the First Part of *The Passions of the Soul*, that “[t]here is no soul so weak that it cannot, if well-directed, acquire an absolute power over its passions.”⁶⁵ In this way, Descartes ends up defending both the unity of the soul and the ethical intellectualism against Plato's theory of the partitioned soul, while arguing at the same time for the possibility of akratic behaviour in humans.

⁶³ CSM I, 347 / AT XI, 367.

⁶⁴ See Articles 45 and 49 of Descartes's *Passions of the Soul* (CSM I, 345 / AT XI, 362–363; CSM I, 347 / AT XI, 367–368).

⁶⁵ CSM I, 348 / AT XI, 368.

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RE-THINKING THE HUMAN CONDITION IN THE AGE OF MODERNITY



From where does the anxious suspicion arise that the biblical eschatology of *last things* and *end times* is rapidly approaching? Apocalypse originates in the ancient Greek word *apokalypsis*, which means to uncover what you could not see before—to reveal. The biblical use of the word “apocalypse” means that which is revealed by divine intervention. For purposes of this paper I will adhere to the ancient Greek meaning which can be stated as simply taking note of that which has been overlooked.

One thing that has not been overlooked is how European history is riddled with violence over religious beliefs. The modern response has been to diminish religious relevance. But that was followed by unparalleled nationalistic violence in the 20th century. Today, 21st Century Europe remains embroiled in religious conflicts despite its best efforts to avoid them. In the hope of pursuing a more promising path to peaceful existence, I offer some overlooked biblical and secular observations about the human condition.

Modernity originates with Western culture; and that culture is overwritten with Christendom. To re-think the human condition begins with re-thinking the biblical. But to that there is resistance. Europe has turned Christendom into a relic. It has turned away from entanglement in conflicts over dogma and moral certainty by embracing the materiality of an endless progress regulated by the modern equivalent to spirituality found in an enforcing of liberal Democracy.

The belief in the endless amelioration of human conditions that is imbedded in the word “progress” has no last things or end time. Instead, progress is about endless change. Its relationship to eschatology seems clear enough: the eschatological tribute to last things has given rise to the modern answer of endless offerings through progress. But progress presupposes knowledge of human

needs as well as what it is to be human. If human beings were instinctual then progress would conform to satisfying the instinct. But we are not instinctual. Instinct is an existence in which freewill and choice are overridden by subservience to a predetermination. In Christian eschatology there can be no belief in human instinct because, without freewill, there would be no freedom to accept salvation. Biblically, sin or salvation is a choice. Hence, for freewill to be free it must be at minimum, sin *or* salvation. Biblically, human beings bring a multi-directional intentionality to every condition. Being without an instinct is essential to the relationship between eschatology and progress. Unlike all the creatures of the earth, being human, biblically represented in the generic as man, is the creature without boundaries, appearing to be seemingly limitless. That is where progress compensates for eschatology by representing man without last things or an end time. Progress is the logical and reasonable representation of a future with unlimited possibility: antidote to the eschatological.

But there is a problem with being non-instinctual. Being unbound to instinct, man needs to judge: to make choices and decisions. And judgment in the West is historically associated with the biblical. Judgment is the power to both make [to judge] and to receive judgment [to be judged]. There is no pre-determined right or wrong/good or bad for the creature lacking instinct; but every choice involves those judgments. The significance of this is that human judgment originates in having a need—a need to judge: where instinct resides in all other creatures, need occupies man.

Instinct, *that pre-determiner of choice-less action*, frees all other creatures from responsibility for their actions. Man lacks that creaturely freedom. This places man squarely in the position of being condemned by having the need to judge. But man is not simply the product of conditions or environment, man is both the sum of his judgments and greater than that sum because of freewill. Thus man is not bound to the past as prologue.

Logic, reason, and nature

Born into freedom, in a world limited by the boundaries of nature's methodological systems of selection and evolution, is the paradox of conditions confronting mankind. In answer, the human condition manifests itself by producing morality; by imitating the boundedness found in nature. Forging the constructs of moral boundaries to oppose a boundless origin in freewill has

always plagued mankind. The possibility for endless progress versus the eschatological boundedness recycles the ancient dilemma in which the limitless are confronted with the limited. In the response to the conflict between freewill and moral boundaries there arises a dependence upon logic and reason.

From infancy, having need can be understood to be the cause of the infant's fear of annihilation: every human need, lacking instinctual directedness, becomes the possibility of an ending; a potential fall into the abyss of personal extinction—death. The human response to that fear is universal—mastery. From toilet training to language, man gains mastery as attempted compensation for having need. Not just any need, but for originating in need, as in original need. Human mastery is not just the desperate attempt to conquer need itself, it is also the attempt to gain compensation for having need in the first place—for being without a creaturely instinct.

The absence of instinct becomes the need to make and receive judgment: to judge and be judged. It is in this context that the human infant experiences hunger as an injustice because it is experienced as a need—as a threat. Thus, the injustice of needing to make and receive judgment originates at the outset of birth.

After infancy, childhood takes hold by responding to need through the literalism of logic. Human logic is derivative of nature. Charles Darwin discovered the origins of that logic in his discovery of natural selection: the completely literal logic of process in nature. The discovery ignored how man imitates nature in a desperate attempt to escape the complex demands of freewill. But that is not man's only retreat from the reality of conditions.

After the literalness of logic comes discovery of the symbolism of reason in nature. Darwin describes it in nature as evolution. But where logic acts as the sighting of the trees, reason is the proclaiming of a forest. But human reason is only a foil against the uncertainties of living with freewill. Reasoning is man attempting to imitate the evolutionary formations found in nature. But because man has freewill none of this is natural to him. It remains his need to make and receive judgments—to judge and be judged. All of which, from need driving man to mastery for compensation for having need, and logic and reason handicapping man with the predictable limitations of nature, are prevalent in both the East and the West.

Both East and West are hobbled by the need for the pure literalism of logic (originating in natural selection) as an excuse for man's choices, while using reason to cripple man with a need for the pure symbolism of symbolic immortality (originating in nature's evolution).

Logic manifests itself in the complete literalism of the need for individual choices. Reason is manifested in the pure symbolism of symbolic immortality expressed through culture or revolution. Like Rome holding together an empire over logically divergent others, Tito held together Yugoslavia within a tent of reason until the logic of individualism—religious and ethnic, propelled its dissolution.

Historically, reason and logic have been used to civilize man. There is the open space of the agora in which political man took first steps. This was followed by religious man obtaining the dominance of his mastery in the moral management of the home through placement in the church/synagogue. The third one is psychological man who learned to institute a therapeutic morality by securing a process for returning to individual justification. All are causal of human neediness manifesting a mastery to compensate for having need in the first place. Conflating them into economy, as Karl Marx did, missed the human point.

The effect is to shorten the distance between individual and communal mastery with totalization: promising to promote peace by therapeutically homogenizing humankind with manageable interiors for conforming to manageable households derived from management of public space. For which liberal Democracy has become instrumental by elevating compensation to a *just reward*. But all those spaces are man-made, not ontologically human.

Gospel censure of all morals and every morality

Unlike the East, Western culture is overwritten with a Judeo-Christian story. In the Christian portion of the story there is the censure of all morals and every morality in the Gospel. But observing that the Gospel censures all morals and every morality does not easily come to mind. There are those who believe that the commandment to love our neighbor was a moral commandment. But that can be shown to be a mistaken assumption.

We are told in the Gospel that the most important commandment is to love God with all one's heart, mind, and soul. The second most important commandment is to love our neighbor as ourselves. We are further informed to love God, not worship Him—the Sabbath made for man not man for the Sabbath. In telling us to love our neighbor we are warned against falling into the narcissism of self-worship by being told to love our enemies. Approaching God with love and approaching others with love becomes the fulfillment of all

commandments. The boundless approach of love serves seamlessly where relationships and associations can only fail.

Paul addresses the significance of love. Summed-up—love is immeasurable and un-possessing. Paul also addresses the question of following human logic and reason. He tells us to give up our childlike ways. He can say this because before there is human logic or reason there is love. Infants are born with love. They show love in the faith by which they reach out without knowing. Faith is the action of love. Faith is not blind, it simply frees us to see and hear without the need to judge. But out of infancy comes the child: where there was faith, trust enters. The unbounded existence in the womb had no need of connections or associations or relationships. Like freewill, the primal experience of being human is the absence of boundaries: freedom from need. The dawning of the end of boundless existence, when being human becomes being man-made, becomes the need, as Sigmund Freud discovered, to make the connections of relationships from the experience of associations. It is when we go from being in the world to being of the world.

The Gospel censure of morals and morality raises the question of human need. It does so by addressing our originating in a need to approach God with love—the easy yoke and light burden. The Gospel Ministry is filled with healing and granting through unbound faith in God. The miracles act to vanquish human need as promissory of the coming of a new heaven upon a new earth. The Gospel condemnations of the immoral and amoral are also evidence of the censure. Because, in presenting a censure of morals and morality, it becomes incumbent to establish that the censure is not an invitation to immorality. The censure is always a call to righteousness—to the eternal.

Because of man's freewill, the Gospel uses parables to illustrate the censure. Parables serve to encourage us toward the path of righteousness by urging us away from the path of valuation found in the measurements and possessions of morality. The parables insistently challenge moral norms with seeming paradoxes of inconsistency: the field hand beginning near workday's end receiving the same as the one who began at start of day; the prodigal son being equally received in his father's house as the son who never left; or, how the last may be as the first and the first as the last. The parables serve to censure the measurements of morality without judging them, without condemning them. The Gospel censure is the gentlest of urgings.

The Gospel is finalized with betrayal and sacrifice leading to crucifixion followed by resurrection. Many had believed that it was sacrifice that was the

example of the prophesized Messiah in the Old Testament. But, in the resurrection, the power of betrayal and sacrifice prove to be only temporal—like morals. The many were only partly correct, the example was of sacrifice, but of sacrifice having no lasting power or authority over the righteous.

After the ministry of ending need with faith in loving God, the crucifixion and resurrection proved to be for fulfilling the rendering unto Caesar that which is Caesar's. Caesar exemplifies the human way: betrayal—crossing the Rubicon with his army, and sacrifice—assassinating Caesar to save the Republic.

Historical or Augustinian Christendom attaches a morality of faith (a loyalty/betrayal order) to the Gospel. Attaching the profane to the biblically sacred originates first in the Old Testament. The primary example is the one in which being divinely chosen becomes the defensible boundaries of a moral condition: first, the nation of Israel, then Judea, culminating in Jewish culture. Augustinian Christendom attempts to imitate that example. Except that, in the Old Testament, the offerings of moral possibilities are presented in stark contrast to prophetic calls to righteousness. But Augustinian Christendom does not offer moral possibilities in contrast to righteousness. Instead, attaching their morals to the Gospel, they usurp the Gospel censure to condemn all *other* morals and every *other* morality—including the Judaic. And, in their imitation, they take pride in claiming the mantle of Christian nation or Christian culture while studiously ignoring the conflict in the Old Testament juxtaposition of moral possibilities versus righteousness. In that juxtaposition resides the Judaic struggle over the conflict between obedience to the strictures of moral laws, and serving the fulfillment of prophetic calls to righteousness. That cultural and individual internal struggle over conflict can become embroiled in needing moral defenses against the intrusions and probing's of other moralities and sanctities.

Genesis provides another example of the profane being attached to the sacred for divine purposes. A record of the Hebraic family is precisely given: especially in the begetting, but also in detailed accounts of the secular activities of the Hebraic families. They are preserved in accord with the will of God. But honoring the Hebraic with sacred memorialization can also be seen as preparation for the Hebraic to honor His Son as He honored the sons of the Hebraic. On presenting this observation to a Christian theologian I was immediately rebuked, with the indignation of "*What about our freewill?*" The very possibility was felt to be an unfair pre-determination that slandered man's freewill: as if all the efforts of men had

been pre-judged to failure. The Christian theologian is not alone in rejecting the Old Testament pre-determination of the Son as Messiah. The Judaic and Islamic also each have long held grounds for rejecting it as slander. But here is the crucial biblical point, and essential eschatological reference. Man has always been free to be freed from sin, but without preparation for the Son, then man is burdened with the *need* to bring about his own salvation. And God, knowing man, knows that man does not respond well to need. The biblical preparation for the Son lifted the burden of need from man, it freed man.

Despite the Gospel censure it has become common for individuals, communities, societies, and a culture to use the Gospel for claiming a moral high ground. It has enabled them to wield a power beyond their means or reckoning. But it is trespass, and trespass promotes violence. Falsely authorizing the Gospel for moral purposes misrepresents the censure as the judgment of a condemnation. The usurpation promotes a ceaseless aggression against all other moralities: appearing as culture or religious wars by turning man against man.

So long as the Christianized usurp the Gospel message by avoiding and ignoring the Gospel censure they will continue to incite anti-Semitism. Usurping the Gospel for moral purposes produces anti-Semitism. Judaism is targeted by Christianized morality's practiced avoidance of the Gospel censure of all morals and every morality. Instituting a moral Christendom corrupts the Gospel message with hatred and jealousy for all *other* moralities, beginning with the Judaic. Ultimately usurpers turn to violence because they can never defeat Judaism on moral grounds. The pogroms, the Inquisition, and the Holocaust, were all signatory to that stalemate.

From Old to New Testament each suffers the loss of its own biblical delivery into salvation with resigned acceptance of moral reign over the very promise of righteousness that censures all morals and every morality.

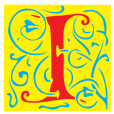
Enigmatically, the Gospel way of example has presence without the conditionality of any moral equivalence. Paradoxically, the juxtaposition of moral conditionality beside prophetic righteousness appears unfinished. The Gospel enigma and the Judaic paradox are at the troubled heart of modernity's condition in which the denial of "last things" is fraught with attraction to the completion of judgment.

Biblically, the word judgment means condemnation. Righteousness is the call to abjure from judging, to abjure from condemning (abjuring from an eye for an eye): only one without sin can remain unscathed by that double edged sword—that making and receiving of judgments.

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THE MEANINGS OF APOCALYPSE IN ERIC VOEGELIN'S LIFELONG ENQUIRY



In December 1964, answering to the colleague Gregor Sebba, Eric Voegelin wrote him a letter containing a single sentence: “Today we are living in an age of apocalyptic politics.”¹ The statement implied primarily a daunting concern for the devaluation of the term “apocalyptic”, at that time so inflated by its redundant diffusion in Western imagery that every new attempt to approach the theme would have seemed unnecessary or at least irrelevant.

Nowadays things do not seem to be changed. Present (and future) wars, humanitarian crisis, rise of extremist and fundamentalist tendencies, but also climate changes, ecological disasters, exhaustion of natural resources, and many other phenomena are often labeled as “apocalyptic”. The willingness to understand the reasons why the advanced, rational, secular Western society is still so dependent on an ancient, symbolic, religious word so much as to make of it the formula for the interpretation of most of the contemporary crisis, is legitimate.

The search for a convincing answer brings us back precisely to Eric Voegelin. It is well known that many modern interpretations about connections between religion and politics, political messianism, religious violence and also recent exploits of global terrorism are in debt, more or less explicitly, to his theories. It is less known that retracing Voegelin's philosophical itinerary, it turns out that the topic of Apocalypse not only crosses the whole his work, but also constitutes a key point in the comprehension of his philosophy.

The aim of this paper is to bring in evidence the progressive deepening of the role of the Apocalypse in Voegelin's intellectual path, making more clear why the apocalyptic theme stands as one of the dominant symbols in the self-interpretation of Western society.

¹ E. Voegelin, *Selected Correspondence 1950–1984 (Collected Works of Eric Voegelin)*, Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, Vol. 30, 480–481.

Political symbols

The most suitable starting point for a recognition on Voegelin's theory of apocalyptic symbolism is the 1938 essay *Die politischen Religionen*:² a brilliant attempt to offer a clarification of the concept of "political religion" and together an interpretation of National Socialism. Moreover, it appeared also as a dispute against Hans Kelsen's doctrine of right,³ more precisely against its claim to stand as a substitute for a political theory. Although Voegelin acknowledged the strength of Kelsen's regulatory system and shared its theoretical validity, he rejected the idea of a reduction of the State in the narrow frame of a system of rules: a national system, argued the scholar, is rather the set of relationships between the state and its symbolic references.

The theoretical approach used by Voegelin was not welcomed at the time of publication: to question Kelsen's assumptions, and to propose the analysis of symbols as alternative to the theory of law, placed Voegelin in an unpopular position. The essay was criticized even by those intellectuals who, like Thomas Mann, disputed Voegelin's lack of firm denunciation of totalitarianism and advocated a more explicit moral critique.⁴

The aim of *The Political Religions* has been defended by Voegelin in the introduction to the 1939 edition, where he answered to criticism remembering that the struggle against National Socialism should not have been just ethical, because this would miss the essential core of the problem, since "a deeper and much more dangerous evil is hidden behind the ethically condemnable actions."⁵ The answer was sought instead in a more serious and deep crisis, grounded in the "secularization of the soul" and in the misleading renewal of the religious symbolism, that had brought the modern era to a tacit and guilty legitimacy of the forces of evil. Identifying and describing the religious roots of evil was therefore needed beyond a merely ethical critique, insufficient in the battle against the barbarism of the Dark Age.⁶

To prove his belief, Voegelin outlined an historical paradigm of the po-

² E. Voegelin, *Die politischen Religionen*, ed. M. Henningsen, Wien, 1938. E. Voegelin, *The Political Religions*, in: *Modernity without Restraint (Collected Works, Vol. 5)*, 19–73.

³ H. Kelsen, *Das Problem der Souveränität und die Theorie des Völkerrechts. Beitrag zu einer Reinen Rechtslehre*, Tübingen: Mohr, 1920.

⁴ Thomas Mann letter. Eric Voegelin Papers, Hoover Institution Archives, Box 24, file II.

⁵ E. Voegelin, *Modernity without Restraint...*, 24.

⁶ *Ibidem*, 25.

litical religions, starting from the failed experience of the Egyptian empire of Amenophi IV, and analyzing the sacred symbols that gradually have followed over time by the disappearance of Egyptian state religion till the rise of modern national states: the solar symbol of Hierarchy, the *Ecclesia* or *Corpus Mysticum*, Spiritual and Temporal, Apocalypse, Leviathan and finally the whole concept of religious experience, that turns from faith into political obedience. All these religious symbols in the course of time have been emptied of their original sacred contents and transformed in supports of immanent experiences, with the consequence of legitimating erroneous intellectual and political constructions.

Among these symbols, that of Apocalypse undergoes major redefinitions and insights in Voegelin's later writings. Its importance is due to its function of representing not only the close derivation of the political symbolism from the religious one, but also the models of the development of history. Human history, indeed, is ordered through a symbolic interpretation founded on the premise that historical events represent "an expression of the will of God in history."⁷

Apocalypse and history

In the chapter of *The Political Religions* dedicated to the symbol of Apocalypse, Voegelin argues that the sequence of Western symbolic interpretations of history had its origins with St. Paul and was developed later by Augustine, achieving its most significant step in the twelfth Century thanks to the Calabrian abbot Joachim of Fiore. Interpreting the correspondences between the Old and the New Testament, Joachim hypothesized the existence of a tripartite division of history in three eras: the realm of the Father (from Adam to Christ), the realm of the Son (from Christ to 1260) and the realm of the Holy Ghost (from 1260 till the Day of Judgment). The crucial factor in Joachim's theology was not the division of history in three ages, but the determination to consider the Third Kingdom, the realm of ultimate perfection, like an imminent era of completeness and a time of spiritual renewal that would bring peace on Earth. Thanks to a method of interpretation called by Voegelin "the formula for a spiritual and intellectual movement", Joachim's tripartite division of history settled that the last time would have been not represented by the Church of Christ, but by the future spreading of the Holy Spirit.

⁷ *Ibidem*, 50.

Joachim's interpretation was absorbed at first by the Franciscan spiritualists, who identified in Francis of Assisi the dux of the apocalyptic prophecy, and in the monastic community the replacement of the worldly Church. In the apocalyptic symbol were placed therefore the expectations for the earthly realization of the perfect realm of peace and freedom; the hopes that the Church poured into the afterlife have been transformed in the belief of the realization of an immanent perfect kingdom. Joachim's theology of history, in other words, "forms the historical basis for the apocalyptic dynamics in modern political religions."⁸

The problem of gnosticism

The issue of apocalyptic symbolism has been subsequently fulfilled in a series of lectures gave in 1951 at the University of Chicago and collected in *The New Science of Politics*,⁹ one of Voegelin's most successful publications. The aim of the work was to identify the reasons of the "pathological condition of modernity", consisting precisely in a range of wrong ideological constructions as historicism and positivism and political ideologies as Marxism, Fascism and Nazism.

In *The New Science* the problem of Apocalypse is connected mainly with Gnosticism: not surprisingly, this has caused many problems of understanding. Voegelin's reference to Gnosticism is due to its soteriological doctrine, alternative to Christian doctrine of salvation. In the original Gnostic belief the world was considered corrupt and evil, and salvation was considered possible only through an escape from material existence, through the awareness of the divine nature of every man and thanks to the illumination given by *gnosis*, which means precisely "knowledge".

Around the 2nd Century Gnosticism was outclassed by the spread of Christianity and remained only an underground current. When secularization led to the end of Christian belief in the afterlife, men, feeling the need to find a substitute for faith, found it in what Voegelin called "modern Gnosticism". The term doesn't indicates a religious doctrine or a structured movement, but rather an attitude, a way of thinking and action.

⁸ *Ibidem*, 51.

⁹ E. Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics: An Introduction*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987.

As in ancient Gnostic doctrine, in modern Gnosticism the world is considered still evil and corrupt, but salvation is deemed possible within the reach of human action. Salvation can be achieved not thanks to knowledge of the divine spark as in the ancient Gnosticism, not thanks to divine grace as in Christianity, but thanks to a human intervention that makes possible a change of the conditions of existence.

Voegelin identified the origin of modern Gnosticism in the secularization of the supernatural expectations, a phenomenon he defined with the formula “immanentization of the eschaton”: the concept includes the transfiguration of the symbol of the Apocalypse, moving from a transcendent level to an historical one.

According to Voegelin this process began exactly with the reception of Joachim of Fiore’s theory of the Third Kingdom, and should be seen as the first step in a process of culpable and deliberate denial of the reality of history. Voegelin argues that modern thought has, in many ways, taken over the Joachimitic idea of the Third Kingdom, using it for the creation and development of new historical paradigms: the age of positive science for Comte, the realm of freedom for Hegel, the classless society for Marx and Engels. In all these cases, the idea of the Final Kingdom has been transfigured and filled in with revolutionary expectations.

Voegelin still developed this thesis, radicalizing further in two successive essays collected in the work *Science, Politics and Gnosticism*.¹⁰ In these writings he highlights how the transfiguration of the symbol of Apocalypse invests the level of history and the anthropological dimension of the man with hazardous political and ideological connotations. The assignment to history of a transcendent purpose that in reality it does not own, forces modern man to pour all his energies in the final transformation of the inner-worldly reality: an expectation that will never find full satisfaction.

Metastasis of history

Simultaneously to the studies on the Gnostic character of modern mass movements, Voegelin also investigated the problem of the decline of messianism, a phenomenon strictly connected with the arise of the inner-worldly apoca-

¹⁰ E. Voegelin, *Science, Politics and Gnosticism: Two Essays*, in: *Modernity without Restraint*, ed. M. Henningsen, Washington D.C.: Regnery Gateway, 1968, 243–313.

lypse. Interesting developments were presented at a conference in 1959,¹¹ where he underlined the necessity to coin a new term that would exceed the concept of Gnosticism and that should identify more precisely the belief in the transfiguration of the human nature. This term is *metastasis*: it indicates the movement of reality beyond the present structure of order, into a new state.

Metastasis means for Voegelin the change in the constitution of being envisaged by the prophets, a trend felt again in modern world after the disintegration of the precarious medieval Christian synthesis and also evident with the emergent spiritual crisis of the modern world. At the beginning of the eighteenth Century, indeed, the transcendental faith sustaining the eschatological symbolism was swept away by the spread of secularism, while the old apocalyptic symbolism was replaced by a new kind of messianism, a school of thought called “philosophy of history”.

The *metastasis* itself became a new sort of faith that opened the way to the apocalyptic tendencies in modern world: “When the transfiguration through a royal act of faith does not occur, and the political disaster reach insurmountability, the metastatic type of speculation then gives way to the apocalyptic type, which expects disorder of catastrophic magnitude to be ended by divine intervention.”¹²

Elaborating the concept of *metastasis*, which will become one of the most significant and recurring concepts in his philosophy, Voegelin comes also to the discover that Gnosis and Apocalypse have developed about at the same time, but independently; moreover, both are not directly linked to the immanentization of the eschaton. While Gnosis concerns a human knowledge for the transformation of reality, the metastatic apocalypse derives from the Israelite prophets’ belief in a transfiguration of reality through an act of faith.¹³

From history to consciousness

In 1965 Voegelin gave a series of lectures, the *Geschichtsphilosophie Vorlesung*, where he faced three main problems: the theoretical problem of the idea of progress, the philosophy of history as part of the revolutionary practice, the

¹¹ E. Voegelin, “The West and The Meaning of Industrial Society”, in: *The Drama of Humanity and Other Miscellaneous Papers 1939–1985* (Collected Works, Vol. 33), 89–111.

¹² E. Voegelin, *Order and History, Volume V, In Search of Order* (Collected Works, Vol. 18), 48.

¹³ E. Voegelin, *Autobiographical Reflections* (Collected Works, Vol. 34), 93–95.

apocalyptic structure of history.¹⁴ While working on these materials, Voegelin had already reached a new important acquisition which had a major influence on all of his subsequent philosophy. The finding concerned the impossibility of separating the historical dimension from the existential one. Since the order of consciousness originates the problems of the human order in society and history, Voegelin guessed that the order of human existence finds its foundation in consciousness: this brought the need to include the philosophy of history into the broader context of the philosophy of consciousness.

The implications of the transition to the philosophy of consciousness are clearly expressed in *Anamnesis*,¹⁵ a key work of reflection on the nature of consciousness and the method of philosophical analysis. *Anamnesis* (a term Voegelin borrows from Plato, meaning recollection of a prior being) is the meditative process through which can emerge the philosophy of order: Consciousness is an experience of participation in the ground of being and not something given that can be deducted as a theory. Theory, indeed, is an illusion.

At this stage of Voegelin's enquiry the contents change, as well as the goals have changed: the research on political tension, and consequently on the apocalyptic voltage, moves to an existential quest about the underlying tension from which disorder arises.

The crucial points in the development of Voegelin's philosophy of consciousness became clear during the writing of *Ecumenic Age*, a complex effort which took 17 years and led the scholar to break his original project on history of order started in 1956 with *Israel and Revelation*. The awareness was the unavoidable shattering of the structure of unilinear history. "Voegelin gradually realized that many societies, religions, thinkers, and politicians from ancient Sumeria to present-day Fourth of July speakers had symbolized history as a unilinear stream of meaning that began in a mythical past and culminated in their own existences", explains James Rhodes, "Apparently, there is a deep-seated urge in the human spirit to view the passage of time this way. Unhappily, history had to be falsified to get the lines of meaning to work. There was no cycle, no course of history such as *The New Science* had proclaimed."¹⁶ History does not exist: there is a drama of history, but its meaning

¹⁴ E. Voegelin, "Geschichtsphilosophie. Vorlesung Sommer Semester 1965", München: Occasional Papers, Eric-Voegelin-Archiv, No.68 (July, 2008).

¹⁵ E. Voegelin, *Anamnesis: On the Theory of History and Politics* (Collected Works, Vol. 6).

¹⁶ J. M. Rhodes, "On Voegelin: His Collected Works and His Significance," *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 54, No. 4, Autumn, 1992, 621–647.

is unknowable; there are facts in history, but their interpretation is subjective. The “patterns of meaning” do not develop in an univocal and linear sense but in an inextricable “web structure” “that had to be followed ‘backward and forward and sideways.’”¹⁷

Apocalypse does not represent more the structure of the unilinear history but takes on another nuance: it is configured as *historiogenesis*,¹⁸ a construct that reveals the “obsession with unilinear history”, a sort of symbolisms “created to assuage the anxiety of existence.”¹⁹

The practice of dying

Without claiming to put an end point in this survey, is still possible make some concluding remarks related to the existential value of the Apocalypse in Voegelin’s thought. In the essay *Eschatology and Philosophy. The Practice of Dying*,²⁰ the apocalyptic theme takes on a further, important meaning, linked to the transcendent nature of man and to the eschatological tension of history.

Voegelin argues that, if philosophy wants to deal with the problem of history, it should acknowledge its fundamental eschatological character: the process of history indeed is not immanent, but moves in the in-between of this-worldly and other-worldly reality. Man’s nature therefore is not a constant, as classical philosophers knew, because the human itself participates in the eschatological movement of history.

Man’s existence is ordered by the awareness of his eschatological destiny: “this does not mean than the nature of man can be transfigured within history” but that man’s nature “become luminous for its eschatological destiny”.²¹ Men are directed toward eschatological perfection, but their “pilgrimage” is still a worldly route.

Furthermore, while history is characterized by a tension toward the beyond, human movement beyond the structure of reality is a movement beyond

¹⁷ *Ibidem*.

¹⁸ E. Voegelin, “Anxiety and Reason”, in: *What is History? And Other Late Unpublished Writings* (Collected Works, Vol. 28), 52–110.

¹⁹ Thomas A. Hollweck and Paul Caringella, Editors’ Introduction to *What is History?*, xxi.

²⁰ E. Voegelin, “Eschatology and Philosophy. The Practice of Dying”, in: *Autobiographical Reflections* (Collected Works, Vol. 34), 145–148.

²¹ *Ibidem*, 147.

death. Voegelin, gathering the legacy of Classical philosophy, calls this movement *athanaizen*, which means “to immortalize”. The apocalyptic tension arises when individuals are not able to attune their life with this movement: the desire of a “shortcut to perfection” requires a change in the structure of being and, as Voegelin had already figured out, the transmutation of reality can only be obtained by violence and destruction.

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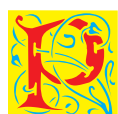
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IMAGINING THE END OF THE WORLD: POLISH PERSPECTIVES



redictions regarding the end of the world are not new; however, they do seem to be increasing in frequency. As of July 10, 2016, Wikipedia lists 172 doomsday predictions from 66 B.C. to the present, with 61 in the 20th century and 31 from 2000 onward. An alternative website, Rationalwiki, lists 67 predictions during the 20th and 21st centuries, several of which differ from Wikipedia. A few of the apocalyptic predictions listed on these websites include those of the Jehovah's Witnesses (1914, 1915, 1918, 1920, 1925, 1941, 1975, 1997), Jim Jones (1967, 1978), Heaven's Gate (1997), Y2K (January 1, 2000), Harrold Camping (September 6, 29 and October 2, 1994; March 31, 1995; May 21 and October 21, 2011), the end of the Mayan calendar (December 21, 2012), and John Hagee and Mark Biltz's Blood Moon Prophecy (April 2014 – September 2015). The fact that both Jim Jones' movement and Heaven's Gate ended in mass murder-suicides demonstrates the level of fear and desperation evoked by doomsday prophecies, as well as the power held by their promoters. This phenomenon provides many areas for research. What is more, thanks to the Internet and various forms of social media, these once local apocalypses are quickly shared across the international community, thereby eliciting, if not outright demanding, a response.

In this paper, we focus on how Polish-speaking people cope with this heightened state of uncertainty through the creation and propagation of internet memes. Specifically, we look at Polish image macros and demotivators as

a window into understanding how this online community responded to 2011 and 2012 doomsday predictions. These dates were chosen because of the different motivation behind them: Camping claimed biblical inspiration for his dates of May 21 and October 21, 2011, whereas the December 21, 2012 apocalypse coincided with the end of the Mayan calendar and received scientific as well as popular responses.

We begin by providing some elements of Polish culture that may have influenced Poles' attitudes to these predictions. Then we explain what internet memes are and why they provide a valid and perhaps even ideal medium for exploring responses to the anxiety or uncertainty caused by these doomsday premonitions. This is followed by a description of the method used for gathering and classifying the memes. The results section presents the responses exhibited in the memes for both time frames. The discussion summarizes the results and offers suggestions for future research.

Polish cultural elements

The cultural and historical complexity of Poland makes it difficult to hypothesize responses to these apocalyptic potentialities. On one hand, there are several reasons to expect Poles to ignore them. Polish people score moderately when it comes to being future-oriented; that is, they tend to deal with issues as they arise rather than plan ahead.¹ Furthermore, the communist past encouraged scepticism and distrust, particularly as regards popular media.² In terms of religion, citizens are largely Roman Catholic, which provides believers with an alternative end-of-the-world scenario as well as suggestions on how to best prepare spiritually. However, there are also reasons to believe that Poles' curiosity, and perhaps anxiety, would be awakened by the predictions. Despite the strong position of the Roman Catholic Church, the population is largely superstitious; for example, a significant number of Poles believe in the relevance of the zodiac.³ At the same time, Polish people often turn to experts for answers to

¹ L. Kolman *et al.*, "Cross-cultural differences in Central Europe," *Journal of Managerial Psychology* 18:1 (2003), doi:10.1108/02683940310459600.

² P. Sztompka, "The ambivalence of social change. Triumph or trauma?," *WZB Discussion Paper*, P 00-001 (2000).

³ E. Krajewska-Kułak *et al.*, "Current view of the traditional superstitions in general population of Podlaskie province. Preliminary study," *Progress in Health Sciences* 1:2 (2011).

questions or to learn about exotic cultures and alternative or hidden wisdom.⁴ Channels such as Discovery and National Geographic are popular and many of the articles covering the Mayan apocalypse were published in the scientific sections of newspapers and magazines.⁵

Internet memes and image macros

To understand what memes are, it is necessary to begin with the definition provided by Richard Dawkins, who coined the term in 1976 in an attempt to describe cultural transmission as a natural and evolutionary process. According to Dawkins, the noun *meme* is “conveys the idea of a unit of cultural transmission, or a unit of imitation. [...] Examples of memes are tunes, ideas, catch-phrases, clothes fashions, ways of making pots or of building arches. [...] memes propagate themselves [...] by leaping from brain to brain via a process which, in the broad sense, can be called imitation.”⁶ The resulting field of mimetics has been both applauded and criticized by scholars of various disciplines.⁷

As communication via the internet increased, this term was borrowed or, as Dawkins puts it, “hijacked”, to describe what Davidson defines as a “piece of culture, typically a joke, which gains influence through online transmission.”⁸ More recently, Börzsei has argued that this definition is overly simplistic, if not outdated. Instead, she follows the internet database “Know Your Meme” in arguing that an internet meme is identified by the fact that it is changed and adapted as it is passed from person to person.⁹ This project follows previous

⁴ L. Kolman *et al.*, “Cross-cultural differences in Central Europe”...

⁵ “Co oglądają Polacy” [What Poles are watching], *portalmedialny.pl*, 16.01.06, <http://mediafm.net/art/32076/co-ogladata-polacy.html>.

⁶ R. Dawkins, *The selfish gene*, 30th anniversary ed., Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, [1976] 2006, 192.

⁷ E.g., P. Chilton, “Manipulation,” in: *Discursive Pragmatics*, ed. J. Zienkowski, J.-O. Östman and J. Verschueren, Vol. 8, Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2011, 176–89.

⁸ R. Dawkins, *Saatchi & Saatchi New Directors' Showcase*, Cannes, 2013. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GFn-ixX9edg>; P. Davidson, “The Language of Internet Memes,” in: *The social media reader*, ed. M. Mandiberg, New York: New York University Press, 2012, 120–134, 122.

⁹ L. K. Börzsei, “Makes a Meme Instead: A Concise History of Internet Memes,” *New Media Studies Magazine* 7 (2013), 4.

work by Börzsei, Dynel, and Piekot and focuses on online image macros and demotivators as examples of internet memes.¹⁰

Image macros were chosen because of their joke-like structure and because humour plays an important role in coping with anxiety and uncertainty.¹¹ Moreover, they have been recognized as a valid modality of communication for a variety of reasons. Firstly, internet memes exemplify contemporary language in use and comprise both a genre and “a part of vocabulary for Internet users.”¹² Secondly, because internet memes “have to be really well suited to their environment [...] the cultural zeitgeist,” in order for them to not only pass from user to user but to also be changed and modified, they can be viewed as a form of internet discourse that is representative of online users.¹³ Thirdly, they contain a number of elements—film scenes, cultural and historical events and personalities, idiomatic phrases—and their intertextual nature provides a broad representation of how members of society view and interact with these cultural icons.¹⁴ Because internet meme creation and propagation is both participatory and culturally relevant, it is the ideal medium for analysing a community’s response to a threat or event, such as the apocalypse. For these reasons, it is believed that this form of intertextual communication will provide valuable insight into Polish perceptions of these doomsday warnings.

Method of data collection

May 1 – October 31, 2011, and December 1–31, 2012, were the time frames chosen for analysis. This was intended to provide a contrast between Camping’s 2011 predictions regarding Jesus’ imminent return, first on May 21

¹⁰ M. Dynel, “‘I Has Seen Image Macros!’ Advice Animal Memes as Visual-Verbal Jokes,” *International Journal of Communication* 10, (feature) (2016). T. Piekot, “Pictorial representation of idioms in Internet humour,” in: *Estonia and Poland: Creativity and tradition in cultural communication*, ed. L. Laineste, D. Brzozowska and W. Chłopicki, Vol. 1: *Jokes and their relations*, v.2, Tartu: ELM Scholarly Press; Eesti Kirjandusmuuseumi Teaduskirjastus, 2012.

¹¹ M. Dynel, “‘I Has Seen Image Macros!’ Advice Animal Memes as Visual-Verbal Jokes”...; N. A. Kuiper *et al.*, “Humor Styles and the Intolerance of Uncertainty Model of Generalized Anxiety,” *Europe’s Journal of Psychology* 10, nr 3 (2014), doi:10.5964/ejop.v10i3.752.

¹² L. Börzsei, “Makes a Meme Instead: A Concise History of Internet Memes”... 24.

¹³ Don Caldwell, quoted in Sam Leith, “What does it all meme?,” *Financial Times*, 14.10.11, <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/2/027fefe6-f4b7-11e0-a286-00144feab49a.html>.

¹⁴ T. Piekot, “Pictorial representation of idioms in Internet humour”...

and then on October 21, and predictions corresponding with the end of Mayan calendar on December 21, 2012, and at times connected with Nostradamus. The image macros were found using Google search and the terms *koniecswiata/koniecświata (memy)* [end of the world (memes)] for the two periods. Polish meme-creating websites were also visited, but their search engines were not able to pull up as many results as Google.¹⁵ Each image macro was marked for the attitude it presented. For some memes, more than one response was marked. For example, memes featuring politicians were marked both “political” and according to the perspective conveyed. The categories used were derived from the content of the memes rather than prescribed in advance. Moreover, the memes and their categories were discussed and agreed upon by both researchers (American and Polish) to decrease personal and cultural biases. Once the memes were categorized, metacategories (themes) were chosen to help organize and summarize the results. The graphs in the results section depict the total number of perspectives/responses identified in the memes.

It must be added that each search conducted on Google brings up similar, albeit slightly different results, which differ from day to day as well as computer to computer. For this reason, we look at the numbers given in the graphs as representative rather than absolute, and as a guide for understanding the Polish online community’s responses to end times predictions.

Results

As mentioned above, the memes were categorized according to the perspective(s) or attitude(s) they conveyed regarding Camping’s end-of-the-world predictions in 2011 and the end of the Mayan calendar in 2012. Twenty-nine memes were included in the 2011 analysis; 132 memes in the 2012 analysis.¹⁶ Some memes exhibited more than one response to a given prediction, thus the total number of responses in the graphs below exceed the number of memes analysed.

¹⁵ <http://memy.pl/>; <http://demotywatory.pl/>; <http://fabrykamemow.pl/>. Only those images/cartoons that had been modified by internet users were included in the analysis.

¹⁶ This discrepancy suggests less interest in the 2011 predictions made by a foreign (American) pastor than the end of a calendar of an ancient and foreign (Mayan) civilization. It would be an interesting issue for further research; however, it falls outside the scope of the current project.

Camping's 2011 predictions

Camping was trained as a civil engineer and was a self-made millionaire by age 35. In 1959, after years of in-depth Bible study, he began broadcasting his religious views. One of his key interests was numerology and calculating the world's end. Although he began making predictions as early as 1970, his 2011 predictions received the most publicity, resulting in both an increase in followers, on one hand, and ridicule, on the other. They also proved to be the costliest with 5,000 billboard warnings, not to mention printed materials in as many as 75 languages, paid for by his listeners.¹⁷ Followers also quit jobs, sold possessions and travelled to convince fellow citizens to prepare for Jesus' return. While the date was well publicized in the U.S., it seems to have made only a small impact on Polish internet society. Only twenty-nine image macros were found. The graph in Figure 1 highlights the responses to the predictions as expressed in the image macros analysed.

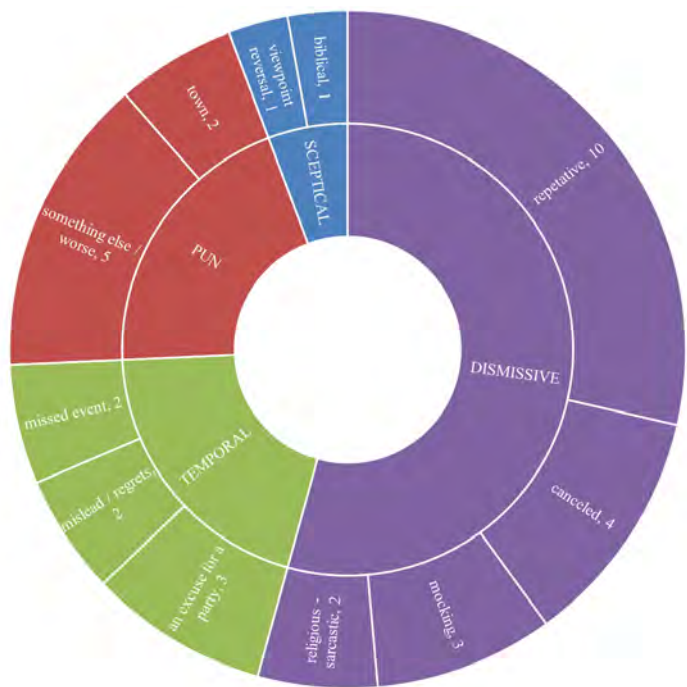


Figure 1. Memes in 2011

¹⁷ http://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/18/us/harold-camping-radio-entrepreneur-who-predicted-worlds-end-dies-at-92.html?_r=0.

The image macros cast doubt onto the validity of Camping's predictions. The *sceptical* metacategory includes "biblical" and "viewpoint reversal" memes. The former contrasts Camping's predictions with what the Bible says about the apocalypse, namely, that we will not know the day or hour. The latter reminds the reader or viewer that, one way or another, the end of the world will occur for each of us as we all must face death.

Those in the *puns* metacategory rely on a play on words for their humorous response. In two demotivators, the Polish village KoniecŚwiata [end of the world] is presented as an alternative interpretation, making a trip there the best opportunity this generation has of experiencing the world's end. Other memes use "the end of the world" as a hyperbole and suggest an alternative event that they find equally as shocking or devastating, such as Mondays or waking up at 6am on a Saturday to watch the apocalypse (not) unfold. One of these memes, the text of which can be translated *The end of the world didn't come, but something much worse is getting closer: / Monday / End of the World / In demo version each week*, appears in both 2011 and 2012 datasets.

Temporal memes focus on enjoying the here and now. Some of these express frustration with the fact that both dates predicted by Camping fall on the weekend: should one of his predictions be accurate, weekend plans would be ruined. Alternatively, if the predictions fail, the party will continue and so will life, which could lead to disastrous consequences for those who behaved as if they could enjoy a life free of consequences.

Dismissive is the largest metacategory. It includes memes that mock those who accepted the predictions, suggest the apocalypse is easily cancelled by a notice on Facebook or a movie star, or reassure viewers that since they have survived so many end-of-the-world predictions, they will likely survive this one as well.

Within this set of memes, it is interesting to see how religious issues were (not) addressed. Several of the demotivators include pictures of Camping's billboards and van, which encouraged the passer-by to repent and make himself/herself right with God. However, none of the commentaries provided by the internet users made reference to this aspect of preparing for the apocalypse. The focus instead was on using the billboard as a backdrop for creating a humorous or sarcastic response. Another meme completely deviated from the biblical narrative prompted by Camping's prediction. It depicted God or Jesus as a representative of the Barcelona football team arm-wrestling the devil, identified with Manchester United. Not only could this image itself be viewed as sacrilegious, but also its presupposition, i.e., that the devil, rather than God, decides when the world ends.

December 21, 2012, and the Mayan calendar

The end of the Mayan calendar on December 21, 2012 was believed to signal a cataclysmic end of the world. This opened the door to a number of speculations, discussed in both scientific and popular culture sections of Polish newspapers. The internet memes addressing these doomsday predictions are much more numerous and much more varied than those developed in response to Camping’s predictions. The graph in Figure 2 presents the diversity of these responses.



Figure 2. 2012 memes

In general, the memes did not seem to take the threat seriously. The majority are *dismissive* and fall on a continuum from simply ignoring the whole event with the phrase “nieobchodze” [I don’t celebrate] to mock those who acted on the prediction. Within this metacategory there were several memes in which famous personalities were blamed for or took responsibility for causing,

cancelling, or defeating the doomsday threat: Vladimir Putin, Chuck Norris, MacGyver, and Radom's "Chytra baba" (Stingy woman).¹⁸ Some of these, along with others, took advantage of the opportunity to comment on political or social issues. For example, several of the politically motivated image macros criticized then Prime Minister Donald Tusk and/or his party's fiscal policy.

Creators of image macros also focused on the temporal. These memes discussed upcoming events—such as plans for Christmas or New Years—and how these would be missed or changed. For example, one meme used the Mayan prediction to explain an early showing of the movie *Home Alone*, affectionately referred to in Poland as "Kevin", which has become a Christmas Eve tradition. Others saw the impending apocalypse as an excuse to party. Assuming the reckless attitude that the end of the world can inspire, others mocked those who, believing the end was near, did something that otherwise would have been foolish.

Wordplay is also more frequent and varied. Examples include *With their calendar the Mayans taught us, that if you don't finish something...it's not yet the end of the world*, as well as "Mayan" *Mayans—end of the world in December / 'Decemberians'—end of the world in May!* (Figure 5). Another creative meme template suggested that Gangnam Style dance of the Korean band PSY was actually the fulfilment of Nostradamus' prophecy. These memes claimed the dance's popularity either portended the end of the world or gave reason to hope it would come quickly. This was an example of a meme borrowed from an English-speaking culture, cut and pasted, untranslated, into a Polish frame.

Sceptical covers three responses. One, using the "philosoraptor" template, questions the accuracy of the Mayan prediction against the Bible. The others either focus on each person's individual apocalypse/death or, as a deviation from the 2011 memes, suggest other calendars, such as those on one's mobile phone, could be alternative portenders of the world's end.

Discussion and suggestions for future research

Polish internet meme creators did not seem to take any of apocalyptic scenarios studied here seriously. While Camping's predictions appear to have been largely ignored by Polish internet users, those that did address them were

¹⁸ In the 2012 data, thirteen memes included at least one politician, nine included another well-known Polish personality, and thirty-one were based on foreign personalities or cartoon characters.

sceptical. One response that is visible in the 2012 data, but absent from 2011, is the notion that the end of the world would be a good thing. Apart from this, the image macros could be placed into the same metacategories. However, the 2011 memes did not offer the cultural or political alternatives present in the 2012 memes. The reasons for these differences are unclear. One possibility is that the religious nature of the predictions controlled the responses, another is that the event did not receive enough coverage.

This paper presents only the beginnings of what promises to be an interesting study into Polish responses to doomsday warnings. Further analysis could include a comparison of news articles and readers' online comments to see to what extent they coincide with the opinions expressed in the memes. Alternatively, a project could look at doomsday memes of other cultures and language groups.

Moreover, this also shows potential for future research into the cognitive mechanisms involved in the creation and transfer of memes. What elements of shared knowledge are presupposed in meme creation or required for their interpretation? How does the speech act of an image macro frame interact with new super-imposed lexical content? Answers to these questions would improve our understanding of the processes of conceptual blending and the transfer/translation of cultural elements.

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Photos from the Conference¹



¹ Photos by dr Tomasz Fisiak.























