

A n a l e e

Universității din Craiova

Seria:

F i l o s o f i e

Nr. 54 (2/2024)

ANNALES DE L'UNIVERSITÉ DE CRAIOVA SERIE DE PHILOSOPHIE, nr. 54 (2/2024)
13 A. I. Cuza rue, Craiova, ROUMANIE

On fait des échanges des publications avec des institutions similaires du pays et de l'étranger

ANNALS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CRAIOVA PHILOSOPHY SERIES, nr. 54 (2/2024)
13 A. I. Cuza Street, Craiova, ROMANIA

We exchange publications with similar institutions of our country and abroad.

Annals of The University of Craiova. Philosophy Series publishes two issues per year, in June and December. The journal is *available in print, but it is also available for download as PDF document at http://cis01.central.ucv.ro/analele_universitatii/filosofie/*

Editor-in-Chief:

Adriana Neacșu, University of Craiova

Managing Editor:

Ștefan Viorel Ghenea, University of Craiova

Editorial Board:

Anton Adămuț, "Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
University of Iași

Giuseppe Cacciatore, University of Naples
"Federico II"

Giuseppe Cascione, University of Bari

Gabriella Farina, "Roma Tre" University

Vasile Muscă, "Babeș-Bolyai" University,
Cluj-Napoca

Niculae Mătășaru, University of Craiova

Alessandro Attilio Negroni, University of
Genoa

Ionuț Răduică, University of Craiova

Adrian Niță, "C. Rădulescu-Motru"

Institute of Philosophy and Psychology of
the Romanian Academy

Vasile Sălan, University of Craiova

Giovanni Semeraro, Federal University
of Rio de Janeiro

Tibor Szabó, University of Szeged

Cristinel Nicu Trandafir, University
of Craiova

Gheorghe Vlăduțescu, Romanian
Academy

Secretary: Cătălin Stănculescu, University of Craiova

ISSN 1841-8325

e-mails: filosofie_craiova@yahoo.com; neacsuelvira2@gmail.com

webpage: http://cis01.central.ucv.ro/analele_universitatii/filosofie/

Tel.: +40-(0)-351-403.149; +40-(0)-724-582.854; Fax: +40-(0)-351-403.140

This publication is present in the following **scientific databases:**

SCOPUS, Philosopher's Index, European Reference Index for the Humanities (ERIH Plus, Philosophy), Regesta Imperii - Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur Mainz, ICI World of Journal, EBSCO, CEEOL.

CUPRINS

J. Edgar BAUER, <i>Michel de Montaigne: Writerly Nudity and the Dissolution of the Sexual Chasm</i>	5
Ana BAZAC, <i>Our Most Important Everyday Use of Kant: the Categorical Imperative</i>	47
Katsiaryna CHURUKANAVA, <i>Wittgenstein and Progress</i>	100
Alex-Flavius DEACONU, <i>A Critical Examination of Jürgen Habermas' Conception of Labour in His Early Writings</i>	119
Kathrin BOUVOT, Gianluigi SEGALERBA, <i>Die Gefahr der Verabsolutierung der kulturellen Identität</i>	136
László Gergely SZÜCS, <i>Hans Joas's "Sacralization Theory" as a Normative Concept</i>	160
Miguel LÓPEZ-ASTORGA, <i>Hintikka's Theorem Does Not Hold in Non-Axiomatic Logic</i>	183
Lucrări prezentate la Colocviul Național FILOSOFIE ȘI EDUCAȚIE, Ediția I, 29 mai 2024, Organizat de UNIVERSITATEA DIN CRAIOVA, FACULTATEA DE ȘTIINȚE SOCIALE	
Adriana NEACȘU, <i>Filosofia ca supremă consolare la Boethius</i>	195
Cătălin STĂNCIULESCU, <i>Gândirea critică ca știință, ca disciplină de studiu și ca experiență spirituală</i>	225
Darius PERSU, <i>Empirische Adäquatheit statt objektiver Beschreibung? Ein kurzer Kommentar über die Relevanz des epistemischen Relativismus zum Verstehen der Wissenschaft am Beispiel des konstruktiven Empirismus Baas van Fraassens</i>	234
Recenzie	
Ștefan Vianu, <i>Sens interzis. Adevăr, devenire, locuire</i>	245
Cătălin Stănciulescu	
AUTHORS/CONTRIBUTORS	248
CONTENTS	249

MICHEL DE MONTAIGNE: WRITERLY NUDITY AND THE DISSOLUTION OF THE SEXUAL CHASM

J. Edgar BAUER¹

Abstract: *On his way to Rome, Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592) made a one-day visit to the city of Vitry-le-François on September 10, 1580. There, he met a female-born man whose male sexual organs had been generated as the erstwhile young girl had been making large strides. The narrative of the event in Montaigne's Essais reflects his interest in the complexities of sexual difference and his critical approach of the regnant scheme of sexual binarity. The present contribution highlights Montaigne's attentiveness to sexual configurations at variance with the male/female template that subtends the normative views upheld by the ecclesiastical and civil authorities of the French sixteenth century. Not being an outspoken advocate of contrarian sexual takes, Montaigne sufficed himself with pointing to the existence of mythological, anthropological and historical accounts implying the categorical inadequateness of subsuming individuals under one of two mutually exclusive sexes. What appears at first to be merely illustrations of anormative sexual forms, is actually meant to open the way toward the validation, within the ambit of sexuality, of Montaigne's foremost ontic principle: "Nature has committed herself not to make any other thing that was not different." On this assumption, Montaigne eventually hints in his comprehensive essay "On some verses of Virgil" at a template of sexual differentiation that dispenses with the prevalent (albeit thoughtless) scheme of dichotomous sexuality. Despite introducing a self-deprecative tone to dissipate possible accusations of propounding an un-Christian stance on sexual matters, the brief passage at stake envisages surrendering the immemorial fixity of sexual compartmentations to the limitless sexual variability that occurs in Nature, thereby setting the theoretical stage for his writerly aspiration to portray himself "tout nud" in a world free of taxonomic closures.*

¹ J. Edgar Bauer, Ph.D.: Lakritz Award for Martin Buber Studies, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1988. Member of the Comité de rédaction and Responsable scientifique of *Encyclopédie philosophique universelle*. Publié sous la direction d'André Jacob. Volume III: *Les Œuvres Philosophiques. Dictionnaire*. 2 tomes. (Paris, France: Presses Universitaires de France, 1992). University appointments in Berlin, Edinburgh, Heidelberg, Jerusalem, Kiel, Ladnun, Lima, New Delhi, Paris, Stuttgart, Tübingen and Ulm. The *ResearchGate* website offers access to a selection of 133 writings by the author in ten languages: <https://www.researchgate.net/profile/J-Edgar-Bauer/stats>

Keywords: *androgyny, bisexual mold (moule), branloire, homosexuality, human form, imagination, nakedness, sexual diversity and variability, sexual individuality, transsexuality.*

ΚΑΛΟΝ ΦΡΟΝΕΙΝ ΤΟΝ ΘΝΗΤΟΝ ΑΝΘΡΩΠΟΙΣ ΙΣΑ

Sophocles as transmitted by Stobaeus in *De superbia* and inscribed on the ceiling (*troisième travée*) of Montaigne's "library" (see Legros, 2000, pp. 399-401; Montaigne, 2005, p. 12).²

1. Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592) has been depicted as a writer "who had read all the Ancients and who will be read by all the Moderns" (Todorov, 1998, p. 74).³ As regards the authors of the past, "thinker and philosopher"⁴ Montaigne was especially fond of African Roman playwright Publius Terentius Afer (ca. 195/185 - ca. 159 BCE), whose works he references twenty-four times (Hoffmann, 2018, p. 1817), to whom he dedicates a whole page of the *Essais* (II, 10, 411),⁵ and whose name he expressly mentions on six occasions (Leake, 1981, p. 1241). Besides sharing the canonical view that

² Two French renderings of the Greek dictum by contemporary Montaigne scholars read: "Penser à niveau de l'homme: bel accomplissement pour un mortel" (Legros, 2000, p. 399) / "Il est bien que le mortel ait des pensées qui ne s'élèvent pas au-dessus des hommes" (Montaigne, 1985, p. 1424).

³ "qui a lu tous les Anciens et que liront tous les Modernes"

⁴ Thus the characterization of Montaigne by Claude Blum in the volume he edited containing the contributions presented at the Montaigne congress in Dakar, Senegal, in 1990. In his preface, Blum points out: "En ce pays de large culture [le Sénégal], Montaigne apparaît, depuis plusieurs générations déjà, comme l'un des fondateurs de ce que l'esprit français a d'universel à transmettre. Les *Essais* y sont considérés comme l'acte de naissance lointain d'une pensée authentiquement libre et qui pose en toute clarté les conditions d'exercice de sa liberté. D'où le sujet choisi en ces lieux et qui ne l'aurait pas été ailleurs, pas encore: 'Montaigne, penseur et philosophe'" (Blum, 1990, p. iii).

⁵ Montaigne's *Essais* are cited and referenced according to the Villey / Saulnier edition: Montaigne, 2021. In this instance, "II, 10, 411" remits to: Second Book, Essay 10, page 411. Quotes from Montaigne's one-page preamble are referenced thus: "Au lecteur, 3."

the slave-born Terence was one of finest stylists of Classical Latin, Montaigne hinted at the defining influence that his philosophical and literary outlook had exerted on him. Among the extant sixty-five philosophical and sapiential inscriptions, which Montaigne instructed to have engraved on the beams and joists of the "library" that was annexed to his castle mansion in the Dordogne, France,⁶ he included a sentence from Terence's *Heauton Timorumenos* (The Self-Tormentor): "HOMO SVM HUMANI A ME NIHIL ALIENUM PVTO" (Legros, 2000, pp. 339-340; see: Montaigne, 1985, p. 1422; Montaigne, 2005, p. 64).⁷ Since the leitmotiv of the common humanness conjured by the dictum reverberates throughout Montaigne's oeuvre,⁸ it can be considered the source of his fundamental contention that "each man bears the entire form of the human condition" (III, 2, 805).⁹

2. The supra-individual "human form" that Montaigne conceives of as granting unity to the empirically given human diversity shapes his outlook already in "Au lecteur" (To the reader), the preamble introducing the first edition of the *Essays* published in 1580.¹⁰ Comprising hardly more than twenty lines, this key text remained basically unchanged in the editions of the *Essais* issued during Montaigne's life and in the posthumous edition of 1595 under the care of Marie de Gournay (1566-1645) (see Frame, 1984, pp. 308-309). Before turning twenty years of age, she had been struck with admiration upon reading the volume, eventually seeking to meet Montaigne personally. In the decade preceding his passing (Frame, 1984, pp. 273-277), de Gournay conducted extensive *conférences*—i.e. conversations—with the author, which facilitated her particularly empathic

⁶ For an architectural description of the third floor of Montaigne's tower, where his "library" was located, and its relation to his writing of the *Essays*, see: Cocula & Legros, 2011, pp. 104-117. As regards the books he possessed, see: Cocula & Legros, 2011, pp. 151-161.

⁷ "I am a man, I consider that nothing human is alien to me" (see Terence, *Heautontimoroumenos* I, 1, 25).

⁸ This is the case even when Montaigne diverts the phrase from its original Terentian meaning, as in the essay "De l'yvrongnerie" (Of Drunkenness) (II, 2, 346).

⁹ "chaque homme porte la forme entiere de l'humaine condition"

¹⁰ On the complex role of the preamble in the argumentative deployment of the *Essays*, see: Henry, 1990.

understanding of his thought. Dubbed by the elderly man as "my covenant daughter" (II, 17, 661),¹¹ Marie de Gournay appears to have embodied the attentive reader that Montaigne had wished for years before making her unexpected acquaintance. An insightful peruser of Montaigne's oeuvre, she had the privilege of experiencing first-hand what he depicts as his "simple, natural, and ordinary fashion, without straining or artifice" (Au lecteur, 3).¹² The advantages of her direct approach of Montaigne has to be qualified, however, inasmuch as his declared commitment to personal transparency was shaded from early on by a significant caveat.

3. As Montaigne suggests from the outset, the reader who has taken the *Essais* in his hands will encounter not merely the general views and opinions of their author, but the unmistakable traits of his individuality. Thus, in a "confessional," proto-Rousseauian gesture, Montaigne details in "Au Lecteur" that "it is myself that I portray,"¹³ that "I am myself the subject matter of my book."¹⁴ Accordant with this admission, Montaigne deploys a striking *captatio benevolentiae* when he declares outright that "my flaws will here be read to the life" (Au lecteur, 3).¹⁵ As though it were a matter of course for a *gentilhomme*, however, Montaigne sets the limits of his writerly self-disclosure in what he terms "the respect for the public".¹⁶ With this seemingly misty phrase, Montaigne hints at the compromise he had to accept in order to fulfil his task as a critical writer. In this context, Montaigne recurs to the hypothetical tense to convey that he would not have considered restricting his self-depiction to what is societally avowable, had he lived under circumstances untouched by the conveniences and comforts that hinder the self-exposure of the human individual in his plain naturalness.

4. Despite his desire of transparency, Montaigne acknowledges that, out of regard for his societal milieu, he will not be able to disclose the entirety of his life and thought. His self-portrayal is thus marred by the faulty execution of what could have been attainable, if societal mores and the

¹¹ "ma fille d'alliance"

¹² "façon simple, naturelle et ordinaire, sans contention et artifice"

¹³ "c'est moy que je peins"

¹⁴ "je suis moy-mesme la matiere de mon livre"

¹⁵ "Mes defauts s'y liront au vif"

¹⁶ "la reverence publique"

cultural realizations they enable would not contravene the potentials concealed in the praeter-cultural, untrimmed human nature. Thus, in the main, the deficiencies of Montaigne's self-depiction are due to the unnatural limitations imposed by the culture of his birth. As he concedes in all desirable clarity,

"Had I been placed among those nations which are said to still live in the sweet freedom of the first laws of nature, I assure you that I would very gladly have portrayed myself here in my entirety and entirely naked" (Au lecteur, 3).¹⁷

It may well be that this revealing passage was meant to resonate with the "purity" (I, 31, 206)¹⁸ of the savages and barbarians living "entirely naked" (I, 31, 208),¹⁹ which Montaigne mentions, for instance, in "Des cannibales" (Of cannibals). In this regard, it is apposite to remark, however, that the cultural settings of such primal nations are indeed "very close to their original naivety" (I, 31, 206),²⁰ but they do not constitute an untarnished reflection of what the preamble terms "the first laws of nature" (Au lecteur, 3).²¹

5. While there is no lack of contemporary scholarship focusing on Montaigne's approach of the ethnological differences between historical and geographical groups, his principled take on sexual difference as the subtending organizational premise of every known human society has remained mostly undertheorized to the present. This is the case even in the otherwise valuable contributions included in the Montaigne dictionaries issued in the recent past. Indeed, neither the impressive *Dictionnaire Montaigne* published under the direction of Philippe Desan (Desan, 2018) nor the *Dictionnaire amoureux de Montaigne*, which was single-handedly penned by André Comte-Sponville (Comte-Sponville, 2020), thematize in

¹⁷ "Que si j'eusse esté entre ces nations qu'on dict vivre encore sous la douce liberté des premiers loix de nature, je t'assure que je m'y fusse tres-volontiers pint tout entier, et tout nud."

¹⁸ "pureté"

¹⁹ "tous nuds"

²⁰ "fort voisines de leur naifveté originelle." On the issue of the closeness of primitive nations to their original condition, see: Balmas, 1900, pp. 89-100.

²¹ "des premiers loix de nature "

due critical depth Montaigne's recourse to the dichotomous "patron" (i.e., model or paradigm) (see III, 2, 807) of sexual difference and his self-inscription therein as a sexually marked "homme" (human being). While Montaigne generally contributes to cementing the age-old binary scheme of sexuality, he signaled on one occasion his design to undermine the disjunctive sexual scheme. In what appears at first as a merely jocular alternative to the immemorial chasm between the sexes, Montaigne actually encapsulates the interpretive key for appraising his numerous references to sexual variations that go beyond the generally expected binarism of nature that purportedly underpins societal decorum.

6. Echoing the praise of the goddess Venus in Lucrece's *De natura deorum* (Book 1, proem) and anticipating Walt Whitman's contention that sex is "the root of roots: the life below the life!" (Traubel, 1914, p. 453), Montaigne postulates that "[t]he whole movement of the world resolves itself into and conduces to this coupling [of sexual love]. It is a matter infused everywhere; it is a center looked at by all things" (III, 5, 857).²² Although in Montaigne's Late Renaissance French the umbrella term *sexualité* was not yet available, his oeuvre encompasses a wide spectrum of observations, insights and formulations that betray his pervasive concern for all things sexual. Accordingly, he depicts several varieties of non-normative sexual orientations and behavior—such as male and female homosexuality (Montaigne, 1992, pp. 118 & 6), pederasty ("licence Grecque") (I, 28, 187-188), sexual relationships between humans and animals (II, 12, 472), and necrophilia (III, 5, 882)—, often seeking to frame them within the anthropological or historical contexts of their occurrence.²³ Moreover, Montaigne references at times aspects of sexuality that are viewed today as socio-political or cultural matters of *gender*. The most salient characteristic of Montaigne's sexual approach, however, is his interest in the corporeal marks of *sex* proper, especially when they escape subsumption under the disjunctive scheme of sexual distribution.

²² "Tout le mouvement du monde se resoult et rend à cet accouplage: c'est une matiere infuse par tout, c'est un centre où toutes choses regardent"

²³ On the issue of non-normative sexuality, Montaigne further points out that one can observe "certain animals addicted to the love of males of their sex" / "certains animaux s'adonner à l'amour des masles de leur sexe" (II, 12, 472).

7. In the essay "Sur des vers de Virgile" (On some verses of Virgil), which was written and revised between 1585 and 1588, the authorial Montaigne evinces in its last lines a sense of tongue-in-cheek self-deprecation that is also present in the remark he addressed to the prospective readers of his self-portrayal to the effect that there is no reason to spend "your leisure on so frivolous and vain a subject" (Au lecteur, p. 3).²⁴ As regards the sexual views he propounds at the end of the Virgil essay, Montaigne is keen on downplaying their import, dubbing them a "notable commentary, which has escaped from me in a flow of babble" (III, 5, 897).²⁵ In writing these lines, Montaigne seems to have forgotten the preamble's assurance to abide by the rules of decorum in sexual matters, as he now sets out to opine—pregnantly and under the sign of pretended ludicrousness—about the knotty issue of the man/woman differentiation. Instead of embracing the purportedly self-evident disjunction of the sexes that Church and civil law enforce, Montaigne raises the perplexing claim that "males and females are cast in the same mold"²⁶ and that "except for education and custom, the difference [between the sexes] is not great" (III, 5, 897).²⁷ Essentially, Montaigne is suggesting the outrageous proposition that the hiatus between man and woman does not hail from nature itself, but rather from the derivative impact of culture. Given his critical aim to de-naturalize the sexual cleavage, it is safe to assume that Montaigne sought to sidestep the wrath of the unthinking, but mighty powers that be by recurring to the probed means of self-disparaging irony.

8. Montaigne appears to have reckoned with the general dismissal of the premise of a unique sexual mold for men and women as counterintuitive foolishness. The idea would have sound less objectionable, however, had Montaigne attempted to offer empirical evidence in its support, or at least a nature-based framework for its intelligibility. As to the empirical backing that is missing in the Vergil essay, it is apposite to note that already the initial pages of Montaigne's *Journal de Voyage en Italie par la Suisse et l'Allemagne* (literally: Journal of travel to Italy through Switzerland and Germany) remits to a case of sexual transmutation that potentially reinforces the notion of a common sexual matrix. The manuscript of

²⁴ "ton loisir en un subject si frivole et si vain"

²⁵ "notable commentaire qui m'est eschappé d'un flux de caquet"

²⁶ "les masles et femelles sont jettez en mesme moule"

²⁷ "sauf l'institution et l'usage, la difference n'y est pas grande"

Journal, which records the travel Montaigne undertook between June 1580 and November 1581, however, soon went missing. Its recovery and publication took place, almost two centuries later, between 1770 and 1774. The reception of the travel journal was certainly not enhanced by the relative abundance of intimate details and sex-related depictions, which easily overstrained the pudibond erudition of clerics and academics of the time.²⁸ With an eye on the anthropological assumptions pervasive in the period, it is noteworthy that one of the most risqué passages in *Journal* was dictated by Montaigne to his secretary in 1580, the same year mentioned in the preamble of the first edition of the *Essais*. The sixteen-line passus, which is part of the narrative concerning the initial stages of Montaigne's journey, expands on a stunning, albeit well attested occurrence that, in contemporary parlance, could be characterized as an unintentionally induced, spontaneous instance of transsexuality.

9. According to the entry concerning Montaigne's stay in the city of Vitry-le-François, he was informed on September 10, 1580 about the remarkable story of a young girl nicknamed "*the bearded Marie*" (Montaigne, 1992, p. 6; emphasis in original).²⁹ As the account goes,

"One day, as she made an effort to jump, the male organs of Marie were generated, and Cardinal de Lenoncourt, the bishop of Chalons at the time, gave her the name of Germain. He is however not married; he has a long and thick beard. We could not see him because he was in the village. There is still in this city an ordinary song in the mouth of girls, in which they advise each other not to make large strides anymore, for fear of becoming

²⁸ This assumption accords well with the fact that Guillaume-Vivian Leydet (? - 1776), who copied Montaigne's autograph manuscript of *Journal de voyage* in 1771, omitted scabrous passages in the narrative concerning the condemnation of a group of Portuguese sodomites. Moreover, he translated into Greek phrases he considered indecorous: "en l'église de saint jean porta latine, certains portugais quelques années y a estoient entrée en une etrange confrerie ils se εμγμενβεβα το ανδρας τοις ανδραις a la messe avec memes serimonies que nous faisons à nos γαμας faisoient leurs pasques ensembles lisoient de mesmes evangile των γαμων [...]" (Moureau, 1982, p. 146). For the uncensored version of the passage, see: Montaigne, 1992, p. 118. Almost two centuries earlier, translations had already been used as a means of censorship against sexual explicitness in medical circles. Thus, the reputed surgeon and physician Ambroise Paré was accused in 1575 "d'utiliser le français qui mettait à la disposition des profanes des questions réservées aux experts" (Dubois, 2023, p. 190).

²⁹ "*Marie la barbue*"

males like Marie Germain" (Montaigne, 1992, pp. 6-7).³⁰

Generally skeptic Montaigne seems to have given credence to the improbable-sounding story, as he remits to its mention in *Des monstres et prodiges*, a surgical treatise by Ambroise Paré (ca. 1510-1590), one of the foremost physicians active in the turmoiled period of France's religious wars (see Montaigne, 1992, p. 7; Paré, 1971, pp. 19-20).³¹ More importantly, Montaigne underscored the credibility of the transsexual event several years later, in the 1588 version of the essay titled "De la force de l'imagination" (Of the power of the imagination). While this reprise contradicts some relevant details of the *Journal* version, it adjoins Montaigne's own explanatory take on the reported occurrence in a way that is meant to endorse its fundamental veracity.

10. The *Essais'* concise assessment of the event begins by downplaying its unexplainable character, given that, on Montaigne's assumptions, the imagination and its creational powers play at times a role in human affairs that comes close to that of Nature:

"It is not so great a marvel that this sort of accident is *frequently* met with. For if the imagination has power in such things, it is so continually and vigorously fixed on this subject that in order not to have to relapse so often into the same thought and sharpness of desire, it [the imagination] is better off if once and for all it incorporates the masculine member *in girls*" (I, 21, 99; emphasis added).³²

³⁰ "Un jour faisant un effort à un sault, ses outils virils se produisirent et le Cardinal de Lenoncourt, Èvesque pour lors de Chalons, luy donna nom Germain. Il ne s'est pas marié pourtant; il a une grand barbe fort espoisse. Nous ne le sceumes voir, parce qu'il estoit au village. Il y a encore en cette ville une chanson ordinaire en la bouche des filles, où elles s'entr'avertissent de ne faire plus des grandes enjambées, de peur de devenir masles, comme Marie Germain."

³¹ For a substantial discussion on "Ambroise Paré tératologue," see: Céard, 1996, pp. 292-314. Contending that "Le dessein de Paré [...] est fondamentalement de 'naturaliser' le monstreux en le dépouillant de toute idée d'imperfection et en le considérant comme la forme extrême de cette variété qui plaît tant à la nature" (Céard, 1996, p. 309), Céard interprets Paré's core theoretical concerns as foreshadowing Montaigne's views on diversity and singularity (see Céard, 1996, pp. 399-408).

³² "Ce n'est pas tant de merveille, que cette sorte d'accident se rencontre frequent: car si l'imagination peut en telles choses, elle est si continuellement et si

In *Journal*, Montaigne was careful to differentiate the case of Marie Germain from that of a transvestite girl named Mary, which the text previously mentions. In her lesbian audacity, Mary married another girl and was consequently punished by hanging for her use of "illicit devices to supply the defect in her sex" (Montaigne, 1992, p. 6).³³ Unlike the convicted Mary, the unmarried Marie Germain truly possessed the "outils virils" (male organs) (Montaigne, 1992, p. 7) / "members virils" (male members) (I, 21, p. 99), which, according to Montaigne's etiological explanation in the *Essais*, were generated by the imagination to avoid the recidivism of phantasmal obsessions. While the *Journal* version makes no mention of the creative imagination as the origin of Marie Germain's sexual metamorphosis,³⁴ it concurs with the later version in underscoring that *he* remained unmarried

vigoureusement attachée à ce subject, que, pour n'avoir si souvent à rechoir en mesme pensée et aspreté de desir, elle a meilleur compte d'incorporer, une fois pour toutes, cette virile partie aux filles."

³³ "inventions illicites à suppler au defect de son sexe"

³⁴ Indicatively, Paré's seventh chapter titled "Histoires mémorables de certaines femmes qui sont dégénérées en hommes," which includes the passage on Marie Germain referred to by Montaigne, does not mention the causality of the imagination. Paré begins to assess the role that the "vertu imaginative" can play in a sexual-procreative context (Paré, 1971, p. 36) only in the ninth chapter captioned "Exemple des monstres qui se font par imagination." By contrast, Montaigne deals with the imagination already in connection with Marie Germain's transsexuality. This textual relocation of the force of the imagination is significant, as it is accompanied by a profound transformation of the concept in correspondence to Montaigne's overarching non-theistic design. As Paré admits, once he begins to regard the monstrous creatures as part of the exuberant creativity of Nature functioning as the "chambriere du grand Dieu" (Paré, 1971, p. 117), "j'y pers mon esprit" (Paré, 1971, p. 139) and "les principes de Philosophie faillent" (Paré, 1971, p. 68). For Montaigne, however, the sense of awe vis-à-vis the diversity and variability of Nature is not meant as a conduit to the "célébration" or "louange" (Jeanneret, 2015, p. 33) of the Creator. Since, in accordance with Montaigne's epistemic principle that humans have "aucune communication à l'estre" (II, 12, 601), there is, philosophically speaking, no way for his phenomenology of ever transformative Nature to transmute itself into a doxology of a creational divinity.

even after her persistent urge for having a penetrative organ of *her* own had been fulfilled.³⁵

11. Montaigne regretted that the mores of his time would not allow him to portray himself "entirely naked." Despite the social pressure exerted by real or presumed forms of censorship, however, Montaigne was anything but prudish when depicting his own genitals and sexual practices. Thus, with the aid of quotes taken from the anonymous Latin collection of *Carmina priapea* (LXXX, 1 & VIII, 4), Montaigne hints at the fact that his own *mentula* (male member) was neither long nor thick (III, 5, 887). As regards his coital activities, Montaigne admitted: "I cannot, without an effort, [...] make children except before going to sleep or make them standing up" (III, 13, 1083).³⁶ Moreover, concerning the ethical aspects of his sexual conduct, Montaigne readily conceded "not being continent" (I, 37, 229)³⁷ nor "very chaste" (III, 5, 847),³⁸ and even acknowledged that "[n]ever was a man more impertinently genital in his approaches" (III, 5, 890).³⁹ In view of his sexual self-disclosures, it is not surprising that Montaigne eventually directed his attention to what he considered the specific differences between the male and female sexual organs. In this regard, however, he appears to have had only a vague notion of the in-depth homology between penis and clitoris or of the similarities between the male and female "parts [...] effectively shameful and embarrassing" (III, 5, 878).⁴⁰ Given the relative scarcity of

³⁵ Jean Céard dedicates the sixth part of his volume entitled *La Nature et les prodiges* to discussing the "Nouveauté de Montaigne." While Céard refers in this context, for instance, to the brief essay "D'un enfant monstrueux" (II, 30, 712-713), he does not examine Montaigne's depiction of his encounter with Marie Germain in "De la force de l'imagination" (I, 21, 99). It is pertinent to note, however, that, as regards its epistemic stance, this passage signals a break with the assumption of presumed miracles or preternatural prodigies when dealing with rational etiologies. Accordingly, Montaigne attributes the cause of Marie Germain's transsexuality to the human imagination, a this-worldly agency capable of bringing about the transformation of a born female into a natural male.

³⁶ "Et, sans m'essayer, ne puis [...] ny faire des enfans qu'avant le sommeil, ny les faire debout"

³⁷ "n'estre continent"

³⁸ "bien chaste"

³⁹ "Jamais homme n'eust ses approches plus impertinemment genitales"

⁴⁰ "parties [...] proprement honteuses et peneuses"

reliable sexual knowledge available to non-physicians of the time, it is remarkable that Montaigne could entertain the general notion of a common mold underlying the man/woman differentiation.

12. Montaigne's attempts to relativize the opposition of the binary sexes can be traced back, in Antiquity, to Galen of Pergamon's (129-216 CE) postulation of their core sameness and, in the sixteenth century, to the views advanced by his older contemporary Ambroise Paré. Against this backdrop, Montaigne dealt with the spinous issue of individual sexual transmogrifications. In the case of Marie Germain, Montaigne took the reflexive phrase "ses outils virils se produisirent" as the point of departure of a causal explanation relating her sexual change to the workings of the creative imagination and its purported capacity to generate realities. Thus, although the concrete circumstance that framed Marie Germain's memorable genital "production" was the physical effort made while jumping,⁴¹ the sustaining rationale of the incident was her persistent desire to possess the external markers of maleness. On these assumptions, Marie Germain's imagination recurred to what Montaigne considered the limitless arsenal of possibilities harbored in Nature and substituted her phantasmal genital fixations by the carnal reality of a penis and testicles. Dispensing with positivistic, supernal or satanic etiologies, Montaigne argues in favor of remaining open for the occurrence of the unexpected, an epistemic attitude necessitated by his ontic premise that "the resemblance of events is uncertain, for they are always dissimilar; there is no quality so universal [...] as diversity and variety" (III, 13, 1065).⁴² In view of these considerations, it becomes apparent that Montaigne's depiction of the

⁴¹ Ambroise Paré's depiction of the circumstances in which Marie Germain developed her male genitals reads as follows: "[...] comme il estoit aux champs et poursuyvoit assez vivement ses pourceaux qui alloient dedans un blé, trouvant un fossé le voulut affranchir ; et l'ayant sauté, à l'instant se viennent à lui desveloper les genitoires et la verge virile, s'estans rompus les ligamens par lesquels auparavant estoient tenus clos et enserrez (ce qui ne luy advint sans douleur), et s'en retourna larmoyant en la maison de sa mere, disant que ses trippes luy estoient sorties hors du ventre, laquelle fut fort estonnee de ce spectacle. Et ayant assemblé des Medecins et Chirurgiens, pour là dessus avoir advis, on trouva qu'elle estoit homme et non plus fille [...]" (Paré, 1971, pp. 29-30).

⁴² "la ressemblance des evenemens est mal seure, d'autant qu'ils sont tousjours dissemblables: il n'est aucune qualité si universelle [...] que la diversité et variété"

transsexual event was meant to accord with his scattered insights into the uniquely sexed individual as a natural emergence that escapes the cultural disjunction between maleness and femaleness.

13. The dichotomous template of sexual difference—like any taxological scheme of living organisms—is challenged, according to Montaigne, by the fundamental fact that "[l]ife is an uneven, irregular, and multiform movement" (III, 3, 819).⁴³ Set in historical perspective, the unusual cases of Marie Germain and the other transsexual girls mentioned in connection with Vitry-le-François appear to confirm the contention Montaigne formulates when discussing the cultural significance of China: "the world is more ample and more divers than either the ancients or we ourselves understand" (III, 13, 1071).⁴⁴ It is thus unsurprising that, in the essay captioned "De la diversion" (Of diversion), Montaigne admits his sense of awe vis-à-vis the world's exuberance of forms, remarking: "Variation always solaces, dissolves and dissipates" (III, 4, 836).⁴⁵ Although the idea of a chasm separating men from women may at first be considered an indispensable instrumentality warranting the existing societal order, it does so at the price of misapprehending and disfiguring the protean deployments of humanity's sexual nature. The inadequacy of the sexual premises on which all known socio-political bodies are grounded is the result of taxological choices made by cultures that have lost sight of the inexhaustible pool of sexual possibilities from which they derive. While Montaigne as a Catholic subject was no enthusiast of historical disruptions and generally acknowledged being "disgusted with innovation" (I, 23, 119),⁴⁶ he readily embraced as a philosopher the "mystic foundation" that relativizes the authority and validity claims of the regnant laws (see III, 13, 1072).⁴⁷

14. Montaigne was seldom explicit about the epistemic consequences to be drawn from his assessment of Marie Germain's transsexuality. His reserve in this regard corresponded to his awareness that any attempt to question and destabilize the binary conception of sexual difference could have

⁴³ "La vie est un mouvement inegal, irregulier et multiforme"

⁴⁴ "le monde est plus ample et plus divers que ny les anciens ny nous ne penetrons"

⁴⁵ "Tousjours la variation soulage, dissout et dissipe"

⁴⁶ "desgousté de la nouvelleté"

⁴⁷ "fondament mystique"

disastrous consequences for the societies it has structured since times immemorial. Montaigne offers a first clue for understanding his handling of the issue in a brief passage that depicts the standpoint of the prototypical sage confronting unjustifiable societal constraints. Indeed, in the early essay titled "De la coustume et de ne changer aisément une loy reçeüe" (Of custom, and not easily changing an accepted law), Montaigne details:

"it seems to me that all peculiar and out-of-the-way fashions come rather from folly and ambitious affectation than from reason, and that the wise man should withdraw his soul within, out of the crowd, and keep it in freedom and power to judge things freely; but as for externals, he should wholly follow the accepted fashions and forms" (I, 23, 118).⁴⁸

The epitome of Montaigne's pronouncements in favor of maintaining the existing foundations of society is his own flawless public adherence to the Catholic religion of his upbringing. His stance in this respect, however, did not hinder him from upholding strictly personal views against religious and civil restrictions that solely rely on the authority of historic traditions and customs.

15. It was in keeping with the *distinguo* between publicly conforming to the accepted uses and laws of the land and the freedom to privately criticize and eventually reject them, that Montaigne was extremely careful when it came to articulating contentions critical of the public code of sexual binarity. In this regard, Montaigne sufficed himself with vaguely suggesting that his own stance on sexual matters should be understood in light of his overarching ontic premises. Accordantly, he advised that "the common notions that we find in credit around us and infused into our souls by our fathers' seed," (I, 23, 115-116)⁴⁹ are not to be regarded as though they were universal and natural. His declared stance notwithstanding, Montaigne's two depictions of Marie Germain's transsexuality carefully avoid signaling any disagreement with the well-established societal organization of the dichotomic sexes. As already

⁴⁸ "il me semble que toutes façons escartées et particulieres partent plustost de folie ou d'affectation ambitieuse, que de vraye raison; et que le sage doit au dedans retirer son ame de la presse, et la tenir en liberté et puissance des juger librement des choses; mais, quant au dehors, qu'il doit suivre entierement les façons et formes receues"

⁴⁹ "les communes imaginations, que nous trouvons en credit autour de nous, et infuses en nostre ame par la semence de nos peres"

mentioned, it is only in the concluding lines of "Sur des vers de Virgile" that Montaigne suggests that the man/woman disjunction does not hail from reason and nature. Montaigne was therewith choosing his most sharply focused essay on love to formulate the sexual implications of his early anti-populist remark that "what is off the hinges of custom, people believe to be off the hinges of reason" (I, 23,116).⁵⁰ Against the backdrop of Montaigne's de-naturalizing approach of sexual binarity, Marie Germain's female-to-male transmutation became a powerful reminder of the impact of Nature's permanent *branloire* on the individual's sexual constitution.⁵¹

⁵⁰ "ce qui est hors de gonds de coutume, on le croit hors des gonds de raison"

⁵¹ Since the epistemic kernel of Montaigne's "flux de caquet" (III, 5, 897) is the assumption of a single mold from which the sexes emerge, his stance is not totally alien to what Ambroise Paré maintains in a passus of the chapter "Histoires mémorables de certaines femmes qui sont dégénérées en hommes," where he discusses the case of Marie Germain. Clearly drawing on Galen of Pergamon's contentions that women produce semen, but remain unaccomplished men because, due to their lesser degree of heat, they are incapable of extruding their genitals outside their bodies (see Galen, 1992, pp. 173, 175; Galen, 1907-1909, vol. II, pp. 296, 299, 301; Galen, 1992, p. 185), Paré maintains: "La raison pourquoy les femmes se peuvent degenerer en hommes, c'est que les femmes ont autant de caché dedans le corps que les hommes descouvrent dehors, reste seulement qu'elles n'ont pas tant de chaleur ny suffisance pour pousser dehors ce que la froidure de leur temperature est tenu comme lié au-dedans" (Paré, 1971, p. 30). Montaigne did not subscribe to the notion that the male and female sexual organs are basically the same, but, rather to the conception of an identical mold ("mesme moule") from which the unique complexion of the sexed individual comes into being. Instead of the unicity of the two sexes differing only as regards the internal/external locus of their occurrence, Montaigne postulates a unique sexual pattern that allows for the emergence of sexes that are not totally contrasting, since they combine in non-repeatable proportions maleness and femaleness. In this reading of Montaigne's *flow of babble*, Paré's single sex giving rise to its two (and only two) spatially-conditioned forms is transformed in a unique sexual pattern capable of varying without end the male/female combinatory that determines the individual's specific sexuality. From this perspective, Paré's scheme of sexual difference is pre-modern not only because of its binary closure, but also on account of the reason he adduces as to why no man has ever become a woman: "Nature tend tousjours à ce qui est le plus parfait, et non au contraire faire que ce qui est parfait devienne imperfect" (Paré, 1971, p. 30).

16. Like everything else in nature, the sexes and sex itself stand under the aegis of what Montaigne calls "branloire" (or "branle"), the terminological concept he deploys for designating reality's universal Becoming. Signally, the semantic scope of the term comes close to what his younger contemporary Giordano Bruno (1548-1600) referred to as "vicissitudine" (Bruno, 2002b, p. 198) and "vicissitudine di trasmutazione" (Bruno, 2002a, p. 742). As to the meaning of both *branloire* and *branle*, it should be noted that much of their Renaissance French distinctness and associative force gets lost when they are rendered in English by the commonplace notions of *movement*, *motion*, and *move*, as is suggested in the following two translated passages:

"Does not everything *move* [branle] your *movement* [branle]?" (I, 20,95) (Montaigne, 2003, p. 80; emphasis added).⁵²

"The world is but a perennial *movement* [branloire]. All things in it are in constant *motion* [branlent]" (III, 2, 804) (Montaigne, 2003, p. 740; emphasis added).⁵³

Beyond referring to mere spatial movement, the notion of *branloire* designates the world's pervasive transformativeness, which is key to Montaigne's unavowed (albeit persistent) attempt to sap the seeming stability of the dichotomic compartmentation of the sexes. It is this alleged permanence that undergirds the Christian-theological conception of the civil (and civilized) society, to which Montaigne paid throughout his oeuvre his most sincere lip service.⁵⁴

⁵² "Tout ne branle-il pas votre branle?" In a modern French adaptation of the *Essais* this passage reads: "Tout n'a-t-il pas le même *mouvement* que le vôtre?" (Montaigne, 2009, p. 117; emphasis added).

⁵³ "Le monde n'est qu'une *branloire* perenne. Toutes choses y branlent sans cesse." This passage reads in modern French: "Le monde n'est qu'une *balançoire* perpétuelle. Toutes choses y sont sans cesse *en mouvement*" (Montaigne, 2009, p. 974; emphasis added).

⁵⁴ Despite his own Catholic ortho-praxis, Montaigne undermines Christianity's onto-theological premises as he propounds a radically de-ontologizing démarche in the name of reality's "continuelle mutation et branle" (II, 12, 601). It is thus not surprising that Montaigne scholars have at times drawn attention to his affinity to the a-theologies of Zen-Buddhism and Tao (see, for instance, Comte-Sponville, 2020, pp. 615-622).

17. Montaigne certainly knew better than to take over and iterate the common doxa concerning the male/female disjunction and its lurking asymmetry in favor of masculinity. In keeping with the limits imposed by the "respect for the public" when it came to self-portraying himself in the nudity he aspired to,⁵⁵ Montaigne revealed obliquely and with great caution his dissenting stance on sexual difference. Thus, while not denying outright the validity attributed to the binary scheme of sexual distribution, Montaigne counterpoints throughout the *Essais* examples and insights that collectively contribute to voiding the assumption of a male/female chasm. Thus, the *Essais* version of the events in Vitry-le-François (see Rigolot, 1992, p. 325) briefly mentions the "frequent" (I, 21, 99)⁵⁶ cases of female-to-male transsexuality among the girls of the area. Remarks of this kind, which are often left uncommented, appear to reflect the subversive sexual concerns that, against all expectancies, latently steer the Catholic raised and law-abiding Montaigne. By interspersing hints about sexual diversity and variability throughout his work, Montaigne was building up the case for a principled reconceptualization of the individual's sexual difference at odds with the all-too simplistic *aut/aut* of the sexes and their alleged fixity in time.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ As regards Montaigne's "idée du nu" and related issues, see the somewhat rhapsodic, but insightful remarks by Albert Thibaudet in: Thibaudet, 1963, pp. 154-162.

⁵⁶ "frequent"

⁵⁷ Montaigne sets the occurrences of transsexuality in or close to Vitry-le-François within a descriptive framework indebted to the empiricism of Renaissance medicine that circumvents the teleology of Christian providence as well as the determinism of the Stoic *fatum*. His approach takes a complexifying turn, however, when he introduces, in the *Essais* version of the narrative, the explanatory notion of *imagination*, which escapes the domain of natural causality but not the ambit of human this-worldliness. What appears at first as a supplement to the expected etiology of nature is, in truth, a decisive step towards its critique, as it aims at revealing the individual's principled exceptionality in a way that is reminiscent of the Epicurean critique of causality (see Hoffmann, 2005, pp. 174-175). In the context of the Marie Germain narrative, the imagination effectuates a transfiguration without recurring to nature's usual pathways of causation. This implies that, as regards Marie Germain, *her rimula* becomes *his mentula*. Both Latin terms are taken from poetical citations that hint at the time-honored disjunctive conception of sexual differentiation (for *rimula*, see: III, 5, 559: for *mentula*, see: I, 49, 298; II, 12,

18. Montaigne, whose first tongue had been Latin (see I, 26, 173; Jouanna, 2017, pp. 35-36; Lazard, 1992, pp. 56-59; Thibaudet, 1963, p. 17), and who perused the Roman and Greek Classic authors throughout his life, must have been attracted from early on by the sexually complex figure of Tiresias, the blind Apollonian seer of Thebes. According to the extant sources, he was transformed by the goddess Hera into a woman for a period of seven years, in which the seeress even bore children (see Geisau, 1979, vol. 5, p. 558).⁵⁸ The foremost transsexual personage of Greek legendary history, Tiresias was almost certainly in the back of Montaigne's

475; III, 5, 855 and 887). Against this backdrop, the Montaignian imagination introduces an element of chance or randomness in the purportedly natural order of the sexes in order to fulfill the anormative inclinations (i.e., the Epicurian *klinamen*) of Marie German as an individual. Such a chance effectuation by the imagination mirrors the regime of a world subjected to the principle that no two individual occurrences can be identical (see III, 13, 1065).

⁵⁸ Clairvoyance and transsexuality, the foremost markers of Tiresias' individuality, point to his knowledge of the future and of his grasp of the opposite sex as capacities beyond the reach of common mortals. Given that the *Essais* throw light on Tiresias's exceptionality, it is surprising that Montaigne remains absent from two significant books dedicated to the ancient seer. In Emilia Di Rocco's *Io Tiresia. Metamorfosi di un profeta*, the author undertakes an analysis of the transformations undergone by the Tiresian myth in the course of Western intellectual history. Arguing that, in the cultural landscape that emerged after the death of Primo Levi (1919-1987)—an unheeded soothsayer of doom—, there is no place "per Tiresia profeta e poeta—per il vate—" (Di Rocco, 2007, p. 397), Di Rocco laconically observes that the prevalent contemporary interest in Tiresias is focused on his protean sexuality. This ascertainment notwithstanding, Di Rocco omits discussing the role of Montaigne as a harbinger of the cultural shift in which the modern significance of Tiresias' sexuality is inscribed. Accordant with Di Rocco's analytical views, Nicole Loroux declared in her 1995 book *The Experiences of Tiresias. The Feminine and the Greek Man* that "it is not the blind seer that interests me here, [but] the Tiresias whose experience of both sexes gives him knowledge about feminine pleasures" (Loroux, 1995, p. 11). Oblivious to Montaigne's role in Tiresias' modern *Wirkungsgeschichte*, the two authors overlook that, from the perspective of the *Essais*, the radical sexual individuality of the ancient priest reflects the universal *branloire* that calls to question the shallow certainties of the dichotomous and immutable sexes. The challenging, in-depth meaning of Tiresias' transsexual vita appears to be effaced from cultural memory, as soon as his testimony for the transformative valence of all-encompassing φύσις is cast aside.

mind as he dictated his report on Marie Germain's sexual metamorphosis on his way to Rome, and then, years later, published a revised account of the event. While Tiresias remains unmentioned in both texts, Montaigne refers to him by name in the 1588 edition of his "Apologie de Raimond Sebond" (Apology for Raymond Sebond) (II, 12, 453). This explicit mention of Tiresias is included in a list of prominent ancient figures headed by Neopythagorean philosopher and thaumaturge Apollonius of Tyana (ca. 3 BCE – ca. 9 CE), who, among other astounding faculties, had the capacity of interpreting the language of animals. Moreover, an implicit reference to transsexual Tiresias is made in the Virgil essay, where Montaigne quotes a verse from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* hinting at the seer's extraordinary gift to play out male and female roles in amorous relationships: "Venus huic erat utraque nota" (III, 5, 854; Publius Ovidius Naso: *Metamorphoses*, III, 323).⁵⁹

19. The dative pronoun *huic* in the Ovidian verse remits to the "ancient priest" (III, 5, 854)⁶⁰ previously alluded to, "who had been a man as well as a woman" (III, 5, 854).⁶¹ It is to reinforce this striking assertion that Montaigne adduces the quotation from *Metamorphoses* indicating that the priestly figure had experienced the carnality of male and female love. Given Tiresias' renown throughout Antiquity, Montaigne had no need to underscore that the unnamed personage was identical with the mysterious seer and animal hermeneut mentioned in the essay on Raimond Sebond (see II, 12, 453). On account of his/her sexual self-transmogrifications, Tiresias could testify that women are, "without comparison, more capable and ardent as regards the effects of love than we [males]" (III, 5, 854),⁶² therewith implying a critical corrective to the generally assumed preponderancy of the male in sexual matters. More importantly though, as "una figura dagli indistinti confine" (a figure of indistinct boundaries) (Di Rocco, 2007, p. 11), the transsexual priest/ess questions the immemorial validity assigned to the disjunctive separation and temporal fixity of the sexes. Against this backdrop, Montaigne's later suggestion about the single origination of the sexes becomes the basis upon which Tiresias's male/female/male transmogrifications evince themselves as mythemic

⁵⁹ "The one and the other [i.e. the male and the female] Venus were known to him."

⁶⁰ "prestre ancien"

⁶¹ "qui avoit esté tantost homme, tantost femme"

⁶² "plus capable et ardentes aux effects de l'amour que nous"

deployments of Nature's unfathomed sexual potentialities. The core of the Tiresian mytheme thus encodes the ontically dimensioned *branloire* of sexuality in its opposition to the chasm that organizes the taxonomic immovability of the binary sexes. Notwithstanding the differing rationales of myth and empirical observation, Montaigne's references to the transsexuals Tiresias and Marie Germain point to his early modern conception of a life-sustained wellspring of sexual variability and diversity as the crux of his sexual critique.

20. Regardless of the complex imbrications connecting the different descriptive dimensions of human sexuality, Montaigne considered them to be naturally anchored in the individual's sexual anatomy and physiology. The male-to-female-to-male metamorphoses alluded to in the Tiresian mythemetic clusters as well as the female-to-male transsexuality of Marie Germain and the other girls in her surroundings were indicative—in Montaigne's understanding—of a *carnal* factuality that stroke a contrast to the more abstractive levels of psychological or societal sexuality, which were to become a privileged focus of sexology in the second half of the twentieth century. Thus, signaling her biological femininity, the female Tiresias bore children, and, as proof of her nature-based masculinity, Marie Germain ejected *somatically* his "male organs" (Montaigne, 1992, p. 7).⁶³ Insisting on the ascertainable concretion of Marie Germain's *new* sexual marks, Montaigne adduced the authoritative confirmation of his sexual transformation by a Cardinal of the Roman Church and by Ambroise Paré's reputed "book on surgery" (Montaigne, 1992, p. 7; see Paré, 1971, pp. 29-30).⁶⁴ Despite the parallels between the ancient and modern transsexual occurrences, the multiple sexual transmogrifications of unique Tiresias mentioned in the mythemetic records and echoed by Montaigne contrast with Marie Germain's one-directional, female-to-male change, which was by no means an isolated event in her region. For, as Montaigne is careful to underscore, the imagination occasionally incorporates the "masculine member *in girls*" (I, 21, 99; emphasis added).⁶⁵

⁶³ "outils virils"

⁶⁴ "livre de chirurgie"

⁶⁵ "virile partie aux filles"

21. Despite the skepticism that permeates his elaborations on God and the universe, Montaigne regarded certain empirically verifiable axioms as the groundwork of philosophical reflection. Thus, having observed that there is no identical repetition of two entities in nature, Montaigne went on to argue that the empirical evidence belies any attempt to dismiss the unique differences between individual things that the inexorable *branloire* of Nature brings about. In a passage at the beginning of "De l'expérience" (Of experience), Montaigne conveys his stance on the issue with enviable concision:

"Dissimilarity intrudes by itself into our works; no art can attain similarity. [...] Ressemblance does not make something so much alike [to something else] as difference makes other [unlike]. Nature has committed herself not to make any other thing that was not different" (III, 13, 1065).⁶⁶

On these assumptions, the exceptionality of Tiresias' sexual transmutations (not seldom regarded as monstrous or miraculous) evinces itself as a quasi-mythic corroboration of Montaigne's rational premise concerning the uniqueness of every natural entity. He thus regrets that the "poor people taken in by their own follies" (I, 27, 179)⁶⁷ tend to overlook or silence the issue, especially when subsuming distinct sexual individuals under identical sexual categories that eventually give rise to hypostatized sexual groups.

22. The moral pledge of truthfulness that Montaigne makes in the preamble of the *Essais* presupposes his commitment to rejecting any empirical statement raising claims to universal validity. Thus, despite his declared respect for the civil etiquette banning nudity from authorial self-representations, Montaigne eventually ascertained that the constrictive force of the ban was far from being historically constant. While certainly aware of the challenges he posed early on to sacrosanct beliefs and traditions concerning the difference of the sexes, Montaigne deployed only in the third book of the *Essais* a mechanism of self-disparagement that would allow him to envisage the dissolution of the man/woman binomial

⁶⁶ "La dissimilitude s'ingere d'elle mesme en nos ouvrages; nul art peut arriver à la similitude. [...] La ressemblance ne fait pas tant un [semblable] comme la difference fait autre [différent]. Nature s'est obligée à ne rien faire autre, qui ne fust dissemblable."

⁶⁷ "pauvre peuple abusé de ses folies"

without incurring the severe punishment it would call for if taken seriously. Inscribed within the discursive movement of a book that has been dubbed "infini" (infinite, or rather unfinishable) (Todorov, 2001, p. 7), Montaigne's de-ontologization of the male/female template canceled the theoretical support that underpinned the ban of male nudity in the presence of the *opposite* sex. There being no mutually exclusive sexes in the natural reality Montaigne sought to reveal, it goes without saying that his original concept of "respect publique" had to undergo a thorough revision in order to accommodate his outlook of radical sexual individuation.

23. In view of Montaigne's elaborations on Marie Germain's transsexuality, there is no denying that he heralded contemporary developments in sexual research and medicine. This is especially patent when considering a book on the science of sex differences titled *Sexing the Brain*, which was penned by neurobiologist and animal behaviorist Lesley Rogers. In her contribution, Rogers thematizes instances of anatomical sex changes that have occurred without the assistance of surgical interventions or hormonal medication among the members of families residing in Dallas, Texas, and in the Dominican Republic. In both settings, a genetic condition was diagnosed that caused males to

"have a female physique until they reach puberty, at which point they appear to change sex. The penis begins to grow and the testes descend. Until then, these genetic males look like normal girls and are raised as such. At puberty they change to living as men" (Rogers, 2001, p. 31).⁶⁸

These relatively recent cases of spontaneous transsexuality are obviously reminiscent of the case of Marie Germain, who unexpectedly produced her own "outils virils."⁶⁹ Aside from the clear differences between the

⁶⁸ As Lesley Rogers further details, the genetic condition at stake effects that the males become unable to produce the reductase enzyme that converts testosterone to 5-dihydrotestosterone until they reach puberty. This hormone leads to the growth of the penis and to the testes descending into the scrotum.

⁶⁹ It is worth noting that, according to Ambroise Paré, Marie's sex change took place when she was fifteen years old ("au quinziesme an des son aage") (Paré, 1971, p. 29). Furthermore, Paré's designation of the organs that Marie Germain ejected from her body is more specific than the one deployed by Montaigne. While Paré distinguishes between "les genitoires et la verge virile" (Paré, 1971, p. 21), Montaigne utilizes the more general terms *male organ* or *male member*.

Montaignian narratives and the medical reports as regards the epistemic paradigms on which they rely, both approaches contribute to denting the alleged certainties concerning the separating line between man and woman.

24. Although his depictions and remarks concerning human genitality are closely connected with the other descriptive levels of sexuality he occasionally considers, Montaigne clearly distinguishes between the genital mark of the individual and the other sexual traits that configure his bodily features, psychological dispositions and societal behavior. As a foremost exemplification of the Heraclitan notion that "all things are in flux [...] and perpetual variation" (II, 12, 601-602; see III, 9, 994),⁷⁰ genitality indexes Nature's subtending transformativeness beyond personal or cultural constrictions. Thus, while Marie Germain initially had a little more hair around her chin than other girls, her actual sexual transmogrification took place as her virile *ouutils* came forth at age twenty-two and was in time consolidated as she grew "a big, very thick beard" (Montaigne, 1992, p. 7).⁷¹ The stunning emergence of her male organs called for a re-inscription of her sexuality in a natural framework that, while contravening the fixed sexual assignment of sexuality at the time of her birth, accorded well with Montaigne's overarching philosophical axiom that "there is no existence that is constant, either of our being or of that of objects" (II, 12, 601).⁷² How undramatic the *dénouement* of Marie Germain's transsexual *vita* turned out to be, becomes apparent when considering that he had become an "old and unmarried" man (I, 21, 99)⁷³ by the time Montaigne met him on September 10, 1580.

25. Irrespective of other markers of masculinity Marie Germain may have featured, only *her* penis and scrotum appear to have counted as the definitive proof that she had transformed herself into a man and that she could therefore be societally recognized as such. Confirming her sexual reassignment, Marie received the male name *Germain* either from the Bishop of Saisson (as the *Essais* assert) or from Cardinal of Lenoncourt (in the *Journal* version of the narrative). Needless to say, this divergence is far

⁷⁰ "toutes choses sont en fluxion [...] et variation perpetuelle"

⁷¹ "une grande barbe fort poisse"

⁷² "il n'y a aucune constante existence, ny de nostre estre, ny de celui des objects"

⁷³ "vieil, et point marié"

less significant than the one related to the question as to whether Montaigne actually met Marie Germain. Given the discrepancies between the two reports, it should be kept in mind that while Montaigne dictated the *Journal* version of the narrative *in situ* to his secretary and presumably never properly revised it, the version inserted into the *Essais* in 1588 was reviewed by Montaigne himself each time the book was reissued. Clearly contradicting the assertion in *Journal* that "we were not able to see him [Germain] because he was in the village" (Montaigne, 1992, p. 7),⁷⁴ Montaigne asserts in the *Essais* that "I could see a man" (I, 21, 99)⁷⁵ in Vitry-le-François, to whom the name *Germain* had been given to ratify his female-to-male transformation. Since the *Essais* version constitutes a carefully edited text, the chances are that it is more truthful to the facts it depicts than the one Montaigne dictated years earlier to his amanuensis. Perhaps more importantly though, the two texts differ substantially from one another as regards their broader narrative contextualization. While the *Essais* version is only loosely connected to the previous paragraph mentioning sexual metamorphoses that had occurred earlier in Italy (I, 21, 98-99), the *Journal* entry is preceded by the depiction of a fake sex change that ends up with the execution by hanging of the culprit, a girl named Mary, who had dared to pass as a man.

26. Upon their arrival in Vitry-le-François, Montaigne and his fellow travelers (Thibaudet, 1963, p. 37) heard about the execution of Mary in the nearby location of Montirandet. As to the noteworthy events leading up to the hanging, the travel journal details that years earlier a group of seven or eight girls from Chaumont-en-Bassigni plotted "to dress up as males" (Montaigne, 1992, p. 6)⁷⁶ and live the rest of their lives in their new attire. Amid them was Mary, a weaver by profession, who had settled in Vitry-le-François and whom Montaigne depicts as a "well-disposed young *man*" (Montaigne, 1992, p. 6; emphasis added).⁷⁷ Eventually, Mary became engaged to a woman, but the couple parted soon after. Subsequently, the manly weaver moved to Montirandet, where *he* fell in love with a woman whom *he* married and with whom *he* lived together for several months "to

⁷⁴ "Nous ne le sceumes voir, parce qu'il estoit au village"

⁷⁵ "je peuz voir un homme"

⁷⁶ "de se vestir en masles"

⁷⁷ "jeune homme bien conditionné"

her satisfaction" (Montaigne, 1992, p. 6; emphasis added).⁷⁸ In this period, someone from Mary's native Chaumont became aware of her fake male identity and brought the issue to the courts. Montaigne depicts the resolution of the story following Mary's condemnation in poignant terms. After citing the weaver's declaration that he would rather be hanged than "to go back to the status of a girl" (Montaigne, 1992, p. 6; emphasis in original),⁷⁹ the account mentions what appears to be the courts' actual reasoning behind the condemnation: She "was hanged for her illicit inventions designed to supply the defect in her sex" (Montaigne, 1992, p. 6).⁸⁰ The crime Mary was accused of having committed thus consisted in having come up with devices that allowed *him* to penetrate *his* wife, despite not possessing a penis of *his* own.

27. Unlike Mary the alleged husband, bearded Marie was never troubled by the watchdogs of the judicial system, given that the flesh-and-blood penis she had ejected from her body was deemed proof of her natural masculinity, although he apparently never put it into procreative use. As Montaigne suggests, Marie had always had the strong desire of being the man she will become (I, 21, 99), while Mary identified herself as a man despite her lack of male genitals. The contrast between the unmarried Marie, who became Germain and thus a *de jure* anatomical man, and the masculine-looking Mary, whose female anatomy was at odds with her male desire for women, undoubtedly sharpened Montaigne's grasp of the bio-societal complexities of sexual difference. In the social order of Montaigne's world, there was no doubt that it was the genitivity of birth that determined the sexual assignation of a child. Questioning and scrutinizing the issue (as Montaigne probably did in private) risked an unwelcome complexification of the clear-cut differentiation between man and woman as a condition for establishing potentially procreative unions or for consecrating the lives of presumed anatomical males and females in the exclusive service of the Church. In a Christian cosmos of exclusionary oversimplifications based on the man/woman dichotomy, the hanging of Mary constituted the lesbian correlate to the collective execution by

⁷⁸ "avec son consentement"

⁷⁹ "se remettre en estat de fille"

⁸⁰ "fut pendue pour des inventions illicite à supplir au default de son sexe"

burning of several male/male sodomites hailing from Portugal, who "had entered into a strange brotherhood" (Montaigne, 1992, p. 118).⁸¹

28. Having arrived in Rome, Montaigne took active part in the rich ceremonial and liturgical life of the city. In the entry of March 18, 1581, his travel journal indicates that an acquaintance "humourously" (Montaigne, 1992, p. 118)⁸² mentioned to Montaigne that on that same day, as part of the Holy Week services, the so-called *station* would be celebrated at the Church of San Giovanni Porta Latina, where years earlier the Portuguese same-sexers had been burnt alive.⁸³ As to their lifestyle and sexual mores, Montaigne is careful to point out that

"They married one another, male to male, at Mass, with the same ceremonies that we perform at our marriages, celebrated Passover together, read the same marriage gospel, and then went to bed and lived together" (Montaigne, 1992, p. 118).⁸⁴

The entry does not suggest, however, that the group's liturgical activities would have hardly been possible without the acquiescence and active participation of officiating clerics. This assumption seems unavoidable in view of the public notoriety the brotherhood had attained. Not by chance, "the Roman wits" (Montaigne, 1992, p. 118)⁸⁵ mentioned by Montaigne were outspokenly concerned over the scandalous sodomitic deeds of the otherwise fervent Catholics. As *Journal* highlights, they

⁸¹ "estoient entrés en une estrange confrerie"

⁸² "plaisamment"

⁸³ Although Montaigne makes no further comment on the national appurtenance of the doomed same-sexers, it is well to note that among French and Italian writers of the period, the term *Portuguese* was often used to refer to New Christians from the Iberic Peninsula. In this connection, literary scholar Géralde Nakam points out: "'Nation' désigne une communauté d'étrangers dont les droits sont reconnus en tant que tels. Les termes de 'nation espagnole', ou plutôt encore de 'nation portugaise' désignaient les Nouveaux Chrétiens immigrés d'Espagne et de Portugal" (Nakam, 1993, p. 55). It seems thus safe to assume that the courageous sodomite Portuguese burnt at the stake were either Jewish converts to Christianity or their descendants.

⁸⁴ "Ils se espousoient masle à masle à la Messe, avec mesmes ceremonies que nous faisons nos mariages, faisoient leurs pasques ensemble, lisoient ce mesme evangile des nopces, et puis couchoient et habitoient ensemble."

⁸⁵ "les esprits Romains"

"maintained that since in the other conjunction, of male and female, this circumstance of marriage alone makes it legitimate, it had seemed to these perspicacious people that this other [male/male] activity would become equally legitimate if it would be authorized by the ceremonies and mysteries of the Church" (Montaigne, 1992, p. 118).⁸⁶

29. It hardly needs stressing that, according to Roman Catholicism's moral teachings, the sin of anal penetration committed by a man with another man, with a woman or with an animal deserved severe punishment. Thus, it could only be expected that Montaigne, his Roman acquaintance, as well as the local wits would go out of their way to distance themselves from the *contra naturam* practices of the Portuguese fraternity, which they ridiculed or considered worthy of sardonic praise. Lastly, the sly attempt of the Lusitanians to equate the Church's sacramental legitimization of coital activity in heterosexual marriages with the performance of rites sanctifying their sodomitical unions was of no avail. As the sentence in *Journal* that closes the depiction of their case asserts, "Eight or nine Portuguese of this fine [belle] sect were burnt" (Montaigne, 1992, p. 118).⁸⁷ Although the termination of their daring venture is remindful of the execution of Mary the lesbian weaver, there is a crucial difference between the two legal killings, which derives from the Christian premise of an axiological disparity between man and woman. While both condemnations dealt with transgressions against the other-sex societal order, the assumption of an essential asymmetry between those who do not have a penetrative penis and those who do, led to the divergence between the relatively lenient punishment of Mary by hanging and the atrocious sentence of the sodomite Portuguese to be burned alive at the stake.

30. Had Mary limited the intercourse with his/her wife to touchings and rubbings, the chances are that she would not have been given the capital punishment. As already indicated, however, her sin consisted in the invention and use of artifacts that compensated for her lack of male sexual organ. Being a born woman, she could hardly have been suspected of performing anal-penetrative activities. Given that the accusations against

⁸⁶ "disoient que, parce qu'en l'autre conjonction, de masle et femelle, cette seule circonstance la rend légitime, que ce soit en mariage, il avoit semblé à ces fines gens que cette autre action deviendroit pareillement juste, qui l'auroit autorisée de ceremonies et mysteres de l'Eglise"

⁸⁷ "Il fut bruslé huict ou neuf Portugais de cette belle secte."

her appear to have been focused on her recourse to an ersatz penis to penetrate the vagina—not the anus—of her spouse, it is unlikely that she could have been accused of sodomy. Although the explicit term *sodomy* is absent from *Journal* as well as from the *Essais*, it was inevitably implied when dealing with the coital practices of the Portuguese same-sexers in Rome. Sodomy being in the eyes of the Catholic institution the most abject of carnal sins since it constitutes a direct perversion of the divinely intended order of procreation, its publicly upheld practice among the Iberic parishioners of the Roman basilica called for the most drastic of expiations. Their unheard-of boldness to seal their intrinsically sinful unions with the Church's sacramental blessings, apparently excluded doctrinal or legal argument in favor of leniency.⁸⁸ Considering the almost certain connivance

⁸⁸ Considering what appears to be Montaigne's mild surprise at the ritual and sexual practices of the Portuguese, it is well to remind that marriages between two men accompanied by some kind of sacramental blessings occasionally took place within Catholicism and Orthodox Christianity during the Middle Ages. As historian and philologist John Boswell (1947–1994) argued in his controversial 1994 volume *The Marriage of Likeness: Same-Sex Unions in Pre-Modern Europe*, the rite called *adelphopoiesis* (literally: *the making of brothers*) was viewed in some quarters as a sexual union comparable to marriage (see especially Boswell, 1994, pp. 218-260). Continuing this mostly suppressed Church practice, same-sex marriages have been celebrated in the recent past by some sectors of the Anglican Communion. The blessing of homosexual couples is the subject of an ongoing theological debate within Roman Catholicism. As already Boswell's book title conveys, his arguments are based on the axiomatic distinction between same-sex and other-sex combinatories, so that the kind of tolerance for which he pleaded consisted in the acceptance of male/male sexual conjunctions among Christians. The assumption Boswell shared with his heteronormative Christian colleagues is that there are men and women in created nature. Boswell would differ from them, however, by contending that men and women can be sacramentally united, in accordance to Church traditions, to form either same-sex or other-sex couples. Viewed from a principled stance, Boswell's line of argument contravenes Montaigne's overarching assumption that two individual beings cannot be subsumed under the same sexual category (see: II, 12, 601-602; III, 13, 1065) and thus are not apt to constitute unions based on the identitarian premise of sexual sameness. As a Catholic and historian, Boswell apparently never realized that there is no male/female chasm, but only a continuum of individuals featuring unique combinations of male and characteristics. Never having truly questioned the binary sexual template, Boswell

of at least certain members of the clergy in the group's same-sex marriage celebrations, it is safe to assume that the Church as institution felt constrained to convey its unrestrained reprobation of the sodomitic abomination by turning the Portuguese "belle secte" to ashes.

31. Before undertaking his travel to Rome, Montaigne had already begun delineating the theoretical backdrop for his discussion of sexual diversity. Especially relevant in this regard is the fact that, in the process of writing "De la coustume" between 1572 and 1574, Montaigne attained a clear awareness that human opinions and customs are "infinite in subject matter, infinite in diversity" (I, 23, 112).⁸⁹ This ascertainment undoubtedly had far-reaching repercussions on his grasp of sexuality. His extensive readings allowed him to familiarize himself with views from Classical antiquity and the New World that flatly contradicted the sex-related assumptions that the Renaissance inherited from the Late Middle Ages. Thus, as though to strike a contrast with the prevalent sexual theo-politics of his time and its homophobic approach of same-sex dissidence, Montaigne quotes a passage from none lesser than Aristotle to the effect that "by *custom* as well as by *nature* males do have intercourse with males" (I, 23, 115, emphasis added; see Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, VII, 6).⁹⁰ Moreover, Montaigne seems to have assumed that the Aristotelian view on the naturalness of same-sex sexuality was corroborated by the increasing anthropological evidence provided by conquistadors and world travelers. Thus, he noted in "De la coustume," for instance, that "[t]here are peoples among which public brothels of males, and even [male/male] marriages can be observed" (I, 23, 112).⁹¹

32. Some of Montaigne's aperçus about human sexuality hardly harmonized with the claims to universal validity raised by the anthropological teachings of the Church. The cases of non-normative sexuality Montaigne discusses were obviously intended to underpin the view that all things sexual are subjected to ineradicable variability, thereby

sufficed himself, in the main, with rejecting the claim that only marriages between a man and a woman are sanctioned by Church tradition.

⁸⁹ "infinie en matiere, infinie en diversité"

⁹⁰ "autant par coustume que par nature les masles se meslent aux masles"

⁹¹ "Il en est [des peuples] où il se void des bordeaux publicz des masles, voire et des mariages"

echoing his overarching premise that "constancy itself is nothing but a more languid motion" (III, 2, 805).⁹² Accordant with his epistemic design to reassess sexual diversity, the case of Marie Germain became the empirical fulcrum of a paradigmatic *démarche* seeking to show that sexual differences have the potential to trigger striking forms of sexual dissidence. On this account, Montaigne was extremely prudent when expressing sexual views that could provoke the ire of the ecclesiastical censorship apparatus. Moreover, Montaigne could not allow himself to disregard that, between 1580 and 1581, the papal censors had examined the *Essais* and provided queries and comments related to possible deviations from Church doctrine. Notwithstanding the courteous tone of the interactions between author and censors, the reception of the book in clerical circles remained ambiguous in Montaigne's lifetime (see Frame, 1982, pp. 217-218). Lastly, it did not come as a surprise when, on January 28, 1676, the *Essais* were included in the *Index of Prohibited Books* (see Bakewell, 2011, p. 152; Frame, 1982, pp. 170; 310-311). Against this backdrop, it proved to be a posthumous advantage for Montaigne that he had once invoked the authority of Socrates—"such a holy image of the human form" (III, 12, 1054)⁹³—when defining his own take on the diversity of the human sexual condition.⁹⁴

⁹² "La constance mesme n'est autre chose qu'un branle plus languissant"

⁹³ "une si sainte image de l'humaine forme"

⁹⁴ Montaigne's admiration for Socrates' humanity accords well with his own fundamental assumption that, there being no communication with Being (see II, 12, 601), there is no way of circumventing the skeptical approach of purportedly definitive truths, whether revealed or natural. Religion and philosophy being unable to overcome the doubts posed by the human condition, the already mentioned French structural anthropologist and philosopher Claude Lévi-Strauss contended that Montaigne confronted dogmatical positions by embracing the exemplary attitude of the *sage* vis-à-vis unresolvable existential issues. In his study titled "En relisant Montaigne," Lévi-Strauss depicts Montaigne's way out of his own "scepticisme conséquent" (Lévi-Strauss, 1991, p. 286) in the following terms: "La philosophie de Montaigne pose que toute certitude a la forme *a priori* d'une contradiction, et qu'il n'y a rien à chercher par-dessous. La connaissance, l'action sont à jamais placées dans une situation fautive: prises entre deux systèmes de référence mutuellement exclusifs et qui s'imposent à elles, bien que la confiance même temporaire faite à l'un détruit la validité de l'autre. Il nous faut pourtant les apprivoiser pour qu'ils cohabitent en chacun de nous sans trop de drames. La

33. It is noteworthy that Montaigne deemed opportune to increase the references to Socrates each time a new edition of the *Essais* was issued (see Leake, 1981, p. 1177).⁹⁵ As is patent in the third and last book of the *Essais*, his elaborations on Socrates' non-conforming sexuality grew in precision and depth. Accordingly, the Virgil essay contains Montaigne's perhaps most terse formulations concerning Socrates' understanding of male-male eroticism and his rebuff of pederasty. While modern and contemporary sensibilities have often associated the ancient philosopher with a rather diffuse conception of practicing homosexuality, Montaigne highlighted that Socrates' outspoken attraction to male youths was accordant with his ethical code of conduct. As Montaigne's further elaborations imply, Socrates' erotic loves were not instantiations of what has often been termed Socratic love, let alone *Greek license*, a sexual ethos "rightly abhorred by our customs" (I, 28, 187).⁹⁶ To substantiate his assessment of Socrates' sexual proclivities, Montaigne quotes in the Virgil essay his presumed words as transmitted in Xenophon's *Symposium* (IV, 27). In the cited passage, Socrates deploys a compelling comparison to depict his feelings for a youth he had fallen in love with:

vie est courte: c'est l'affaire d'un peu de patience. Le sage trouve son hygiène intellectuelle et morale dans la gestion lucide de cette schizophrénie" (Lévi-Strauss. 1991, p. 288).

⁹⁵ Consistent with this philological ascertainment, Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911), the theoretician of *Geisteswissenschaften* as disciplines relying on philosophic hermeneutics and analytic (i.e. non-explanatory) psychology, underscored Montaigne's preference for Socrates among the ancient philosophers: "Mit den Skeptikern verwirft er [Montaigne] die ganze Metaphysik, aber er findet mit Sokrates, den er besonders verehrt, in der Reflexion über uns selbst und in dem natürlichen Gesetz des Sittlichen die dem Menschen offenstehende Wahrheit, und alles echt Sokratische vereinigt er zu einer Grundlage für die Leitung des Lebens" (Dilthey, 1977, p. 38). At the same time, however, Dilthey argued that Montaigne surpassed the *weltanschauungs* of Antiquity: "Er [Montaigne] ist Sokratiker, Stoiker, Schüler der Tusculanen, des Seneca und Plutarch. Aber er ist mehr. Der gesammelte Reichtum von Material, die gesteigerte Kraft der Selbstbeobachtung, die Zunahme des Individuellen in der geistigen Physiognomie, eine feinere Modulation gleichsam in der Seelenstimmung reichen über die Alten hinaus" (Dilthey, 1977, pp. 38-39).

⁹⁶ "justement abhorrée par nos moeurs"

"When I had leaned my shoulder against his and brought my head close to his, as we were looking into a book together, I suddenly felt, frankly, a stinging in my shoulder like some animal's bite, and I was more than five days with it prickling, and it flowed a continual itching into my heart" (III, 5, 892).⁹⁷

34. Immediately following Socrates' erotic avowal, Montaigne elaborates on the personal dimension of the philosopher's pronouncements. In this context, Montaigne points to the disproportion between the occurrence of a slight, unintended physical contact and the erotic reverberations it set free in the aging sage:

"A touch, and an accidental one, and by a shoulder, will inflame and alter a soul cooled and enervated by age, and the first of all human souls in reformation!" (III, 5, 892).⁹⁸

Seeking to further gauge Socrates' inordinate feelings, Montaigne asks a rhetorical question that he himself retorts with an enlightened, de-idealizing acknowledgement of the philosopher's full humanity. Thus, after admitting the sexual a-normativity of the "master of masters" (III, 13, 1076),⁹⁹ "the wisest man that ever was, according to the testimony of gods and men" (III, 13, 1076),¹⁰⁰ Montaigne closes this part of his intervention with a curt averment:

"Indeed, why not? Socrates was a man, and wanted neither to be nor to seem anything else" (III, 5, 892).¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ "M'estant [...] appuyé contre son espaule de la mienne et approché ma teste à la sienne, ainsi que nous regardions ensemble dans un livre, je senty, sans mentir, soudein une piqueure dans l'espaule comme de quelque morsure de beste, et fus plus de cinq jours depuis qu'elle me fourmilloit, et m'escoula dans le cœur une demangeaison continuelle."

⁹⁸ "Un attouchement, et fortuite, et par une espaule, aller eschauffer et alterer une ame refroidie et esnervée par l'aage, et la premiere des toutes les humaines en reformation!"

⁹⁹ "le maistre des maistres"

¹⁰⁰ "Le plus sage qui fut oncques, au tesmoignage des dieux et des hommes." This sentence was a comment Montaigne added to the 1588 edition. The Villey-Saulnier text reproduces it in a footnote.

¹⁰¹ "Pourquoi non dea? Socrates estoit homme; et ne vouloit ny estre ny sembler autre chose."

Notwithstanding its occasional hyperbole, Montaigne's line of argument attempts to grasp Socrates' deranging sexuality in a way that belies the commonsensical assumptions concerning the exclusive appropriateness of the male/female combinatory. On the whole, Montaigne's approach of Socrates' homoeroticism accords well with the critical contention subtending what he jokingly dubs his *flux de caquet*: the principled dismantlement of the disjunctive sexes and the rejection of the universal normativity attributed to the conjunction of man and woman.

35. While contributing to undermining the heteronormative premises of Athenian society, the Montaignian Socrates did not embrace the subcultural praxis of coital activity between pederasts and their adolescent partners. Nevertheless, Socrates' exemplary humanity was informed by his same-sex inclinations, leading to the acknowledgement of the specifically ethical dimension inherent to the universal occurrence of male-male sexuality. That Montaigne was aware of Socrates' wholehearted embracement of his homoerotic propensities, however, does not imply that he personally shared them.¹⁰² Despite the divergence between the two men concerning their individual sexual orientations, Montaigne held in high esteem Socrates' challenge of thoughtless sexual conventions, which was effectively at odds with his own docile approach of the regnant sexual mores in sixteenth century France. In this regard, it is worth noting that Montaigne avoided expressing the slightest regret when reporting on the capital punishment that was handed out to same-sex offenders. While it is safe to assume that the condemning judges were convinced of the creational naturalness of heteronormative sexuality, the textual evidence shows that Montaigne's sexual stance was at the antipodes of this kind theological credulity. Being profoundly un-Christian in his core outlook, Montaigne embraced the sexual diversity and variability that Nature brings about, but without accepting or justifying the pederastic forms of sexual intercourse Socrates had rejected with words and deeds. It is certainly not by chance that, in "De l'amitié" (Of friendship), Montaigne rebuffed what he terms the license of the Greeks, remarking that

¹⁰² While Montaigne gives no signs of pederastic inclinations, his "parfaicte amitié" (perfect friendship) (I, 28, 186) with Étienne de La Boétie has been viewed as indicative of a "spiritual" or "structural" homosexuality (see Bauer, 2024, pp. 48-52).

"since it involved, according to their practice, such a necessary disparity in age and such a difference in the lovers' functions, it could not correspond closely enough with the perfect union and harmony [of lovers] that we require here" (I, 28, 187).¹⁰³

36. Montaigne's scrutiny of sexuality began by ascertaining the cumulative empirical evidence supporting the diversity of individual sexual complexions. The result of his sexual observations corroborated the overarching axiom that there is no possible identity between two discrete individuals. Since the existing sexual diversity of individuals hinders on principle the formation of *same-sex (homo-sexual)* conjunctions, any sexual group purportedly based on the sexual sameness of its members—as for example the group of "males," "females," or "third sexers"—evinces itself lastly as a void set. Despite their practical-organizational value, subsumptions of individuals under categories of sexual identity only reflect the arbitrary criteria deployed by cultures to obnubilate the perception of the ongoing proliferation of sexualities in nature. Montaigne's elaborations on the sexual *moule* are thus not meant to advance a conception of sexual difference separating human groups, but rather the idea of a unique modulation of the male/female polarity within each sexed individual. The notion of "human form" Montaigne deploys in critical junctions of his thought is thus neither masculine nor feminine, as it encodes the whole range of sexual variability that each individual actualizes differently. Accordant with this line of thought, Socrates embodied for Montaigne the "holy image" of the "human form," which, being free from specific sexual determinations, allows to actualize those unique potentials of the sexed individual that cultural misunderstandings of human nature seek to uniformize.

37. Montaigne's pithy elaborations on the common sexual *mold* include in their middle a six-line quotation from Latin poet Catullus' (ca. 84 - ca. 54 BCE) *Carmina* (LXV, 19f). The poetical citation appears to underscore Montaigne's "rubor" (blush) when articulating the contrarian sexual views he will eventually halfheartedly recant. While the explicit mention of bio-physical differences between man and woman was deemed to create a sense of social unease and was therefore generally avoided in the

¹⁰³ "pour avoir, selon leur usage, une si necessaire disparité d'aages et difference d'offices entre les amants, ne respondoit non plus assez à la parfaite union et convenance qu'icy nous demandons"

aristocratic circles of a writerly *gentilhomme*, Montaigne counterproductively prolongs and exacerbates the inconvenience by naming the tickly issue at stake and then seeking to elide it. His main design was obviously to target not just the time-honored hiatus between the sexes but also the theo-political power that cements their hierarchical structuration. Implicitly acknowledging that his reading audience could be overstrained by his attempt to sap sexual binarity as the organizing scheme societal life, Montaigne mellows his outrageous proposal by suggesting that it is unworthy of being taken seriously. Interestingly, his rhetorical disclaimer disowns what has been said, but maintains intact the deranging thrust of its articulation. Given that Montaigne's depiction of the Marie Germain event functioned as the initial catalyzer for his shift away from the man/woman template, it is safe to assume that he sought to underpin the cogency of his move by citing Ambroise Paré's averment in *Des Monstres et Prodiges* that Pliny the Elder (23/24–9 CE) mentions a case in which "une fille devint garçon" (a girl becomes a boy) (Paré, 1971, p. 30; see Gaius Plinius Secundus, *Naturalis historia*, VII, 4).

38. Given Montaigne's often references to Nature's exuberance of forms, it would have been philosophically pointless to suggest finite alternatives to the binomial distribution of the sexes (or to the regnant taxonomy of their combinatories: male/female, male/male and female/female). Montaigne thus sufficed himself, at first, with acknowledging the commonsensical, purportedly self-evident approach of sexual difference. His *pro forma* acceptance of the binomial sexual pattern, however, was performed in full awareness of its irremediable inadequacy. As hinted in "Au lecteur," the societal order on which the binding public reverence hinges presupposes assuming the man/woman hiatus, whose pervasive validity prevented Montaigne from portraying himself as he would have liked to: "entire and fully naked." Hindered, under these circumstances, to attain transparency in his self-portrayal as a male-sexed writer, Montaigne deployed his own writing as an oblique means for liberating himself from sexual binarity as the fountainhead of the behavioral code tabooing nudity from the view of the *opposite* sex. In his bid against this constriction, Montaigne drew on his central concept of "human form" to radically de-categorize the individual's sexuality. Given his apprehensions to articulate publicly and unequivocally his design to dismantle the man/woman scheme inherited from millennia of history, Montaigne opted for partially disguising his critical intent. He

thus toned down his unheard-of challenge to propound a non-disjunctive grasp of the individual's sexuality almost two and a half centuries prior to Charles Darwin's (1809-1882) evolution-backed ascertainment that "Every man & woman is hermaphrodite [...]" (Darwin, 1987, p. 384 [Notebook D (1838), No. 162]).

39. Montaigne's Ockhamist-inspired aperçus concerning the impossibility of reducing the sexed individual to a categorial pattern (see Friedrich, 1967, p. 126; Todorov, 2001, p. 21) preluded his path toward questioning the commonplace distinction between male/female love and male-male friendship, an issue that marked his life and thought following his early encounter with the prematurely deceased Étienne de La Boétie.¹⁰⁴ Montaigne's design to de-categorize the individual's sexuality on account of its uniqueness accorded well with the Renaissance taste for the uncommon, eccentric, or deviant that had been thematized by the medical literature, which converged in Ambroise Paré's documentation of unwonted natural phenomena.¹⁰⁵ Moreover, Montaigne's approach of sexual diversity was affine with the worldview subtending the proliferation of *cabinets de curiosités*, in which natural instances were showcased that defied the expected criteria of what life can bring about.¹⁰⁶ Against this backdrop, it becomes apparent that Montaigne's passage positing a unique sexual mold and its eventual diversification, far from being a flow of words "impetuous and harmful" (III, 5, 897),¹⁰⁷ actually constituted the *clef de voûte* of his sexual thought. His attentiveness to the individualized differentiations, on which the variability of sexual forms rely,¹⁰⁸ foreshadowed the modern grasp of sexuality within evolution

¹⁰⁴ As regards the philosophical significance of the friendship between Montaigne and La Boétie, see: Bauer, 2024.

¹⁰⁵ For an analysis of Paré's indebtedness to the Middle Ages and the Renaissance period as regards his conception of sexuality, see: Thomasset, 2023.

¹⁰⁶ On the existence of a "cabinet de curiosités" in Montaigne's library containing "americana," see: I, 31, 208; Cocula & Legros, 2011. p. 113.

¹⁰⁷ "impetueux [...] et nuisible"

¹⁰⁸ Montaigne advanced the notion of a common sexual *moule* as part of elaborations that were purportedly not intended to be taken seriously. While his strategy of ironic self-disavowal may have proved useful to avoid being targeted by censorship, it certainly did not contribute to the adequate reception and assessment of his sexual thought. It is thus not surprising that two recent scholarly

theory as a non-essentialist naturalism (see Bauer, 2012). Although Montaigne was generally disinclined to identify himself with most of the schools of thought that had shaped the Renaissance intellectual landscape, he signally acknowledged being one of the naturalists of his age.

40. Indeed, in a passage of "De la physionomie" (Of physiognomy), Montaigne declared: "We *naturalists* judge that the honor of invention is greater and incomparably preferable to the honor of quotation" (III, 12, 1056; emphasis added).¹⁰⁹ Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), whose intellectual curiosity has been commended for being "pure, personal, and delightfully obsessive" (Isaacson, 2018, p. 2), effectively anticipated by almost a century Montaigne's praise of creativity (see Pedretti, 1977, vol. I, p. 110), when declaring that he would not take "parole" but "sperietia" as the "maestra" that he quotes in all occasions (Leonardo, 1970, p. 14).¹¹⁰ Deploying an empirical outlook that was not unlike that of the Tuscan master, Montaigne approached sexual difference primarily on the basis of his own observations that he sought to underpin with the aid of the then budding science of modern anatomy. Given his interests in these areas, Montaigne felt compelled to critically confront the sexual teachings upheld by Church and State. In a sense, he was particularly apt to fulfil the task due to the theological expertise he had attained as translator of the compendious *Liber creaturarum* (1434-1436)¹¹¹ by early fifteenth-century Catalan philosopher

pieces on Montaigne's understanding of "sexualité" and "sexe," despite being highly informative and witty, overlook the decisive systemic role played by the notion of a unique *moule* of the sexes in his reconceptualization of sexual difference (see Legros, 2018, pp. 1721-1727; Legros, 2006, pp. 87-92).

¹⁰⁹ "Nous autres naturalistes estimons qu'il y aie grande et incomparable preference de l'honneur de l'invention à l'honneur de l'allegation"

¹¹⁰ The immediate context in which the cited concepts appear reads: "diranno che per non avere io lettere non potere bien dire quello, di che voglio trattare or no sano questi che le mie cose son piu da esser tratte dalla sperietia, che d'altra parola, la quale fu maestra di chi beni scrissi e cosi per maestra la in tutti casi allegherò." / "They will say that I, having no literary skill, cannot properly express that which I desire to treat of, but they do not know that my subjects are to be dealt with by experience rather than by words; and [experience] has been the mistress of those who write well. And so, as mistress, I will cite her in all cases." (Leonardo, 1970, p. 14; see Leonardo, 2008, p. 4).

¹¹¹ The treatise eventually became better known as *Theologia naturalis* (see Sebond, 2022a). For the translation of this work by Montaigne, see Sebond, 2022b.

and theologian Raymond Sebond. Despite his personal disinterest in strictly theological matters, Montaigne translated the book upon the request of his elderly father, and consequently became thoroughly cognizant of the biblical and ecclesiastic views on the dichotomous separation of the sexes that he intended to supersede. Against this backdrop, Montaigne sought to self-portray himself in a way that would suffice his radical standards of transparency that ran counter the preoccupations of the societal milieu of his birth. Rebuffing the comforts of widely shared thoughtless doxas, Montaigne argued that the writerly self-disclosure he intended could only be attainable if the individual's sexuality is viewed as a unique reflectance of the universal "human form." Past the Edenic topos of sexual shame, Montaigne was therewith setting the theoretical stage for coping with the sexual misery provoked by the self-apotheoses of masculinism that still haunt the Western mind.

REFERENCES

- BACKWELL, S. (2011). *How to Live or A Life of Montaigne in one question and twenty attempts at an answer*. London, UK: Vintage Books.
- BALMAS, E. (1900). Tradition et Invention dans l'Idéologie des "Cannibales." In C. Blum (éd.), *Montaigne, penseur et philosophe (1588-1988)*. Actes du congrès de littérature française tenu en ouverture à l'année de la francophonie les 20, 21 et 22 mars à Dakar (pp. 89-100). Paris, France: Librairie Honoré Champion.
- BAUER, J. E. (2012). Darwin, Marañón, Hirschfeld: Sexology and the Reassessment of Evolution Theory as a Non-Essentialist Naturalism. In *(Dis)Entangling Darwin: Cross-Disciplinary Reflections on the Man and his Legacy* (pp. 85-102.). Edited by Sara Graça da Silva, Fatima Vieira and Jorge Bastos da Silva. Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- BAUER, J. E. (2024). "Parce que c'étoit luy": On Michel de Montaigne's Ontic Disruption of Sexual Taxonomies and the Individuality of Lovers. *Dia-noesis: A Journal of Philosophy*, 15 (2024), 9-58.
- BLUM, C. (éd.). (1990). *Montaigne. Penseur et philosophe (1588-1988)*. Actes du congrès de littérature française tenu en ouverture à l'année de la francophonie les 20, 21 et 22 mars à Dakar. Paris, France: Librairie Honoré Champion.
- BOSWELL, J. (1994). *The Marriage of Likeness: Same-Sex Unions in Pre-Modern Europe*. New York, NY: Villard.
- BRUNO, G. (2002a). *De la causa, principio et uno*. Commento di Giovanni Aquilecchia. In G. Bruno, *Opere italiane* (Volume primo, pp. 591-746). Commento di Giovanni Aquilecchia, Nicola Badaloni, Giorgio Bàrberi Squarotti, Maria Pia Ellero, Miguel Angel Granada, Jean Seidengart. Torino, Italy: Unione-Editrice Torinese (UTET).

- BRUNO, G. (2002b). *Spaccio de la bestia trionfante*. Commento di Maria Pia Ellero. In G. Bruno, *Opere italiane* (Volume secondo, pp. 169-404). Commento di Giovanni Aquilecchia, Nicola Badaloni, Giorgio Bàrberi Squarotti, Maria Pia Ellero, Miguel Angel Granada, Jean Seidengart. Torino, Italy: Unione-Editrice Torinese (UTET).
- CEARD, J. (1996). *La Nature et les Prodiges. L'insolite au XVI^e siècle*. 2^e édition revue et augmentée. Genève, Switzerland: Librairie Droz S.A.
- COCULA, A.-M. & LEGROS, A. (2011). *Montaigne aux champs*. Mayenne, France: Éditions Sud Ouest.
- Comte-Sponville, A. (2020). *Dictionnaire amoureux de Montaigne*. Dessin d'Alain Bouldouyre. Paris, France: Plon.
- [DARWIN, C.] (1987). *Charles Darwin's Notebooks, 1836-1844. Geology, Transmutation of Species, Metaphysical Enquiries*. Transcribed and edited by P. H. Barrett, Peter J. Gautrey, Sandra Herbert, David Kohn and Sydney Smith. London, UK: British Museum (Natural History) / Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- DARWIN, C. (1993). To Charles Lyell. 10 January [1860]. In [C. Darwin], *The Correspondence of Charles Darwin. 1860*. Volume 8 (pp. 28-29). Frederick Burkhardt, ed. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- DESAN, P. (éd.). (2018). *Dictionnaire Montaigne*. Paris, France: Classiques Garnier.
- DI ROCCO, E. (2007). *Io, Tiresia: metamorfosi di un profeta*. Roma, Italy: Editori Riuniti.
- DILTHEY, W. (1977). *Weltanschauung und Analyse des Menschen seit Renaissance und Reformation* [1914]. 10., unveränderte Auflage. In W. DILTHEY, *Gesammelte Schriften*. II. Band. Stuttgart, Germany: B. G. Teubner Verlagsgesellschaft / Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- DUBOIS, C.-G. (2023). Ambroise Paré et la question des "Hermafrodites." In É. Berriot-Salvadore et P. Mironneau (éds.), *Ambroise Paré (1510-1590). Pratique et écriture de la science à la Renaissance* (pp. 187-198). Paris, France: Classiques Garnier.
- FRAME, D. M. (1984). *Montaigne. A Biography*. San Francisco, CA: North Point Press.
- FRIEDRICH, H. (1967). *Montaigne*. Zweite, neubearbeitete Auflage. Bern, Switzerland & München, Germany: Franke Verlag.
- GALEN. (1907-1909). *De usu partium* [On the utility of the parts]. 2 volumes. Ed. G. Helmreich. Leipzig, Germany: Teubner.
- GALEN. (1992). *On Semen* [De semine]. Ed. P. H. Delacy. Berlin, Germany: Akademie Verlag.
- GEISAU, H. von (1979). Teiresias. In *Der Kleine Pauly. Lexikon der Antike*. Auf der Grundlage von Pauly's Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft unter Mitwirkung zahlreicher Fachgelehrter bearbeitet und herausgegeben von Konrat Ziegler, Walther Sontheimer und Hans Gärtner. Band 5. München, Germany: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag.

- HENRY, C. (1990). "En ma fin est mon commencement": le "Au lecteur" des *Essais*. In C. Blum (éd.), *Montaigne et les "Essais" 1588-1988*. (pp. 221-229). Actes du congrès de Paris (janvier 1988). Prologue de Marcel Tetel. Conclusions et synthèse par Eva Kushner. Paris, France: Librairie Honoré Champion.
- HOFFMANN, G. (2005). The investigation of nature. In U. Langer (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Montaigne* (pp. 163-182). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- HOFFMANN, G. (2018). Térence (Publius Terentius Afer). In P. Desan (éd.), *Dictionnaire Montaigne* (pp. 1814-1819). Paris, France: Classiques Garnier.
- ISAACSON, W. (2018). *Leonardo da Vinci. The Biography*. London, UK: Simon & Schuster.
- JEANNERET, M. (1971). Préface. In A. Paré, *Des monstres et prodiges* [1585], (pp. 7-40). Édition de Michel Jeanneret. Paris, France: Gallimard.
- JOUANNA, A. (2017). *Montaigne*. Paris, France: nrf / Gallimard.
- KOLDEWEIJ, A.M., VANDENBROECK, P. & VERMET, B. (2001) *Jheronimus Bosch. Alle schilderijen en tekeningen*. Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen.
- LAZARD, M. (1992). *Michel de Montaigne*. Paris, France: Fayard.
- LEAKE, R. E.; Leake, D. B.; Leake, A. E. (1981). *Concordance des Essais de Montaigne*. Genève, Switzerland: Librairie Droz.
- LEGROS, A. (2000). *Essais sur poutres. Peintures et inscriptions chez Montaigne*. Préface de Michael Screech. Paris, France: Klincksieck.
- LEGROS, A. (2006). *Fricassée. Petit alphabet hédoniste de Michel de Montaigne*. Tournai, Belgium: Éditions Labor.
- LEGROS, A. (2018). Sexualité. In P. Desan (éd.), *Dictionnaire Montaigne* (pp. 1721-1727). Paris, France: Classiques Garnier.
- [LEONARDO DA VINCI]. (1970). *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci* [Italian/English edition]. Compiled and edited from the original manuscripts by Jean Paul Richter. In two volumes. Volume I. New York, NY: Dover Publications, Inc.
- LEONARDO DA VINCI. (1980). *Scritti scelti*. A cura di Anna Maria Brizio. Torino, Italy: Unione Tipografico-Editrice Torinese (UTET).
- LEONARDO DA VINCI. (2008). *Notebooks*. Selected by Irma A. Richter. Edited with an Introduction and Notes by Thereza Wells. Preface by Martin Kemp. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- LEVI-STRAUSS, C. (1991). En relisant Montaigne. In C. Lévi-Strauss, *Histoire du lynx* (pp. 277-297). Paris, France: Plon.
- LORAUX, N. (1997). *The Experiences of Tiresias. The Feminine and the Greek Man*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- MONTAIGNE, [M. de]. (1985). Les Sentences Peintes dans la "Librairie" de Montaigne. In [M. de] Montaigne, *Œuvres complètes* (1419-1427). Textes établis

- par Albert Thibaudet et Maurice Rat. Introduction et Notes par Maurice Rat. Paris, France: Éditions Gallimard (Bibliothèque de la Pléiade).
- MONTAIGNE, M. de (1992). *Journal de Voyage*. Édition présentée, établie et annotée par François Rigolot. Paris, France: Presses Universitaires de France.
- MONTAIGNE, M. de (2003). *The Complete Works. Essays, Travel Journal, Letters*. Translated by Donald M. Frame. With an introduction by Stuart Hampshire. New York, N.Y.: Everyman's Library.
- MONTAIGNE, M. de. (2005). *Pas plus sage qu'il ne faut*. Textes par Michel de Montaigne. Traduits par Alain Legros. Calligraphies: Stéphanie Devaux, Jean-Marie Dommeizel, Denise Luc, Laurent Pflughaupt. Paris, France: Éditions Alternatives.
- MONTAIGNE, [M. de]. (2009). *Les Essais*. Édition complète. Adaptation en français moderne par André Lanly. Paris, France: Quarto/Gallimard.
- MONTAIGNE, M. de (2021). *Les Essais*. Édition conforme au texte de l'exemplaire de Bordeaux avec les additions de l'édition posthume, l'explication des termes vieilles et la traduction des citations, une étude sur Montaigne, une chronologie de sa vie et de son œuvre, le catalogue de ses livres et la liste des inscriptions qu'il avait fait peindre dans sa librairie, des notices, des notes, un appendice sur l'influence des *Essais*, et un index par Pierre Villey sous la direction et avec une préface de V.-L. Saulnier augmentée en 2004 d'une préface et d'un supplément de Marcel Conche. Paris, France : Quadriga / PUF.
- MOREAU, F. (1982). La copie Leydet du *Journal de voyage*. In F. Moureau & R. Bernoulli (éds.), *Autour du Journal de Voyage de Montaigne 1580-1980* (pp. 107-185). Actes des Journées Montaigne. Mulhouse, Bâle, octobre 1980. Avec une copie inédite du *Journal de Voyage*. Présentée et annotée par François Moureau. Genève, Switzerland & Paris, France: Éditions Slatkine.
- NAKAM, G. (1993). *Montaigne et son temps. Les événements et les Essais. L'histoire, la vie, le livre*. Paris, France: Gallimard.
- PARE, A. (1971). *Des monstres et prodiges*. Édition critique et commentée par Jean Céard. Genève, Switzerland: Librairie Droz.
- PEDRETTI, C. (1977). *The Literary Works of Leonardo da Vinci: Commentary*. Two volumes. New York, N.Y.: Phaidon
- RIGOLOTT, F. (1992). Calendrier et itinéraire du voyage (Juin 1580 – Novembre 1581). In M. de Montaigne, *Journal de Voyage* (pp. 325-333). Édition présentée, établie et annotée par François Rigolot. Paris, France: Presses Universitaires de France.
- ROGERS, L. (2001). *Sexing the Brain*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- SEBOND, R. (2022a). *Theologia naturalis (1436)*. Édition d'Alberto Frigo. Paris, France: Classiques Garnier.
- SEBOND, R. (2022b). *Théologie naturelle (1569;1581)*. Traduction de Michel de Montaigne. Édition d'Alberto Frigo. Paris, France: Classiques Garnier.

- THIBAUDET, A. (1963). *Montaigne*. Texte établi par Floyd Gray d'après les notes manuscrites. Paris, France: nrf / Gallimard.
- THOMASSET, C. (2023). Ambroise Paré: Une vision médiéval de la sexualité et de la génération? In É. Berriot-Salvadore et P. Mironneau (éds.), *Ambroise Paré (1510-1590). Pratique et écriture de la science à la Renaissance* (pp. 18-32). Paris, France: Classiques Garnier.
- TODOROV, T. (1998). *Le Jardin imparfait. La pensée humaniste en France*. Paris, France: Bernard Grasset.
- TODOROV, T. (2001). *Montaigne ou la découverte de l'individu*. Tournai, Belgium: La Renaissance du Livre.
- TRAUBEL, H (1914). *With Walt Whitman in Camden*. Volume 3. New York, NY: Mitchell Kennerley.

OUR MOST IMPORTANT EVERYDAY USE OF KANT: THE CATEGORICAL IMPERATIVE

Ana BAZAC¹

Abstract: *This paper is intended to be a popularisation of Kant practical philosophy's core and climax, the categorical imperative. In the end, every scientific article is one of popularisation, because science means communication and transparency, and the professional articles do this to and between the professionals of a domain. The present offer is a professional article of philosophy. But its purpose is to be understood by more than the colleagues, because the topic is of utmost importance for all of us. For this reason, the paper explains Kant's concepts related to the categorical imperative as a problem (and also the "obscure" a priori and transcendental which prove to be simple characteristics of a level of the human reason/reasonable capacity, and thus of concepts and judgements occurring in this level from concepts, and not from experience), and shows how the moral requirements do operate, unfolding the meanings of the categorical imperative. All of these are developed by Kant as reasoning and understanding occurred in the human mind. But all of these are related – however not directly, a posteriori the human experience – just and always to the everyday practice of humans.*

How these natural constitutive facts of reason do apply in the social life, as duties and rights sanctioned by the law, both in a state and as rights of states, are discussed; and Kant's limits determined by the historical setting in which he lived seem to be largely overcome by him because of the universalizable he reached in the Groundwork when he elaborates the categorical imperative.

The importance of the universalizable through the form of categorical imperative is more emphasised through the references to Nietzsche and Schopenhauer. Actually, this importance consists in its inherent continuation, but by surpassing it.

Keywords: *Kant, modernity, categorical imperative, freedom, the moral duty, rights, political and juridical rights, rights of states, social contract, racism, class domination, Nietzsche, Schopenhauer.*

¹ Division of Logic, Methodology, and Philosophy of Science, Romanian Committee of History and Philosophy of Science and Technology, Romanian Academy.

Introduction

This paper is intended to be a popularisation of Kant practical philosophy's core and climax, the categorical imperative. In the end, every scientific article is one of popularisation, because science means communication and transparency, and the professional articles do this to and between the professionals of a domain. The present offer is a professional article of philosophy. But its purpose is to be understood by more than the colleagues, because the topic is of utmost importance for all of us.

Kant considered the practical philosophy as the scope of philosophical endeavour².

The practical philosophy concerns the interhuman relations, but fundamentally they are moral relations. In other words, they depend on how do the humans consider other humans. We cannot understand the complexity of human intercourses without probing what morality is and, thus, without comprehending the internal tension between what people do when driven by conjunctural motives and, on the other hand, what they would want if they were freed from these motives and free to think about the complex finality of their actions; simpler, between what *is* and what *ought* to be.

But we cannot simply give moral precepts to do this or that / or to not do this or that, because in this manner these precepts remain external wishful thinking, eventually imposed to people through different types of coercion. If we want these precepts be internalised, first of all, we must ask if there is some connection between them and the real will and thoughts of humans: thus, we must question just their capacity to ratiocinate and to link this unfolding of judgements in the middle of desires and passions.

Only after this analysis, can we conclude that the moral precepts are not external prohibitions or urges, but they spring from this capacity. Not only that the human reason controls the human behaviour, but the actions of humans are imbued with *commands* given by reason, no matter how random, arbitrary and inhuman these actions may manifest.

² Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, (1781/1787), Translated and edited by Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood, Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 695: the "essential ends of human reason" (A839/B867), "the preeminence which moral philosophy had over all other applications of reason" (A840/B868).

So, how should we understand this coexistence of different intentions moving back and forth like a shuttle in a loom, and shaping the human morality? Obviously, within a theoretical enterprise that deciphers the ball of moral contradictions. And by theorising, we always must have in view, not the “complexity of practice”, but the beneficiaries of theory, the common people, humanity. Kant felt the reason-to-be of his philosophy just in their service³.

If so, once more the Kantian demonstration of the categorical imperative is not an abstract prescription but just the moral criterion deeply embedded in the human being, and necessarily disclosed by theory as the fundamental, ultimate measure of the proving by humans that they, indeed, stay human. This paper focuses on the categorical imperative as the unique breakthrough that posits this principle near the great principles humankind has discovered and uses.

1. Kant’s paradigm shift⁴ in ethics

Until Kant, the European ethics as a description of the human habits (ἦθος/ethic – ἔθος/habit⁵) and “passions”, was framed by the concepts of

³ Immanuel Kant, *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime* (1764), in *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime and Other Writings*. Edited by Patrick Frierson and Paul Guyer, With an Introduction by Patrick Frierson, Cambridge University Press, 2011, p. 96 (AA XX: 44): “I myself am a researcher by inclination. I feel the entire thirst for cognition and the eager restlessness to proceed further in it, as well as the satisfaction at every acquisition. There was a time when I believed this alone could constitute the honor of humankind, and I despised the rabble who knows nothing. Rousseau has set me right. I This blinding prejudice vanishes, I learn to honor human beings, and I would feel by far less useful than the common laborer if I did not believe that this consideration could impart a value to all others in order to establish the rights of humanity”.

⁴ Paradigm is a so “exemplary” theory/outlook about a phenomenon which is, itself, rather a generalisable type for the phenomena of this sort, that it can substantiate a wide range of phenomena and theories. As it is known, Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 1962, explained the change and evolution of scientific theories not only as continuous research based on a “paradigm” but at the same time as discontinuous shift from the previous to a new one that is *better* than the former, because it allows the explanations of the unexplained aspects by the first paradigm (and for a larger horizon of new phenomena).

virtues and *vices* and by the demonstrations of *necessity* of the first and of *damage and detriment* caused by the latter.

Subordinated to the pursuit of *happiness* – as the only good desired for itself and not as a means to achieve it (Aristotle) – or to the *balance* of pleasure and pain and the *attitudes* towards them, these ethical demonstrations emphasised the determinant function of reason in the control of the feelings, and stated that the ultimate criterion to distinguish between the good and the harmful ones is their role in the development of the human “perfection” (Spinoza, Christian Wolff). The model of “the good” (as perfection) was God (Leibniz). Obviously, all thinkers related the moral enhancement to the benevolent attitude towards others⁶.

Kant changed this perspective. We can say that he questioned both the concept of perfection / moral excellence, and its contents, the virtues. Aristotle proposed that by keeping the middle between human desires and feelings, thus by moderation led by reason, we can arrive to happiness. But what is the middle, how can we measure it? How can we quantify the extension of virtues and vices? What is the criterion of the concrete deeds, is it their *labels*, as they are given by the existing conceptions?

The human perfection is not a moral goal, because this perfection is historically and socially defined: at least we all know – let’ speak as the 18th century thinkers – that, though similar with our modern European ones, the ancient ethical goals and means were however different. Even God – an *Idea*, observed Kant⁷, is not the model of human perfection in regard to concrete human relationships, but only an ideal⁸, thus it depends on the human manifestation of thinking, but not at the level of *a priori* principles giving the objective reasons of duties towards God, but at the level of

⁵ Aristotle was who, in *Nicomachean Ethics*, in *Aristotle in 23 Volumes*, Vol. 19, translated by H. Rackham. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann Ltd. 1934. Book 2, 1., 1103a, made *this* origin of ethics in habits, adding: “And therefore it is clear that none of the moral virtues formed is engendered in us by nature, for no natural property can be altered by habit”.

⁶ See the references to these former ideas of ethics, in Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785), Edited and translated by Allen W. Wood, *with essays by*: J. B. Schneewind, Marcia Baron, Shelly Kagan, Allen W. Wood, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2002, p. 26 (Ak 4: 410).

⁷ Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals* (1797), Introduction, translation and notes by Mary Gregor, Cambridge University Press, 1991, p. 276 (AA VI:487).

⁸ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A816/B844, p. 683.

subjective reasons of duties; and therefore, they have no place within an ethics “that is pure practical philosophy”⁹.

If so, transcendently thinking – namely, critically approaching these problems and constructing the answer as *principles* / deploying judgements in order to arrive to *principles* which issue from a superior level of consciousness and which govern the moral thinking as a matrix, Kant said, a *form* for the concrete individual *maxims* (individual prescriptions for the best actions, including from a moral standpoint, in given circumstances), fitting them to the universal law these principles and their form represent¹⁰ – the criterion cannot be a question of measurement, but qualitative, and it involves, Kant underlines, the *common humanity* in men. Consequently, this humanity means that the criterion must be fit to all humans, and not to the individual in relation with his/her acquaintances. This criterion means and requires the *universalisation* of its action.

Thus, it does not relate only to the individual *qua* individual, but to him *qua* representative of the humanity. And, since all humans are representatives of humanity, it results that the criterion must be always *translatable from any individual to any other individual and all of them*.

Because of their abstract outlook, the philosophers till Kant did not give a *universalizable* criterion, although they thought that their models would be suitable to all men, or at least to all humans qualified to be a person / free / responsible. *Kant conceived of the necessity and possibility of the universalizable moral criterion*.

⁹ Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 276 (AA VI:487-488). See also Kant’s note in 1800: “The concept of God also cannot be proven theoretically and unconditionally, but only conditionally, from a practical point of view, namely the moral-practical point of view. It would be contradictory to seek to acquire favor and happiness from God in the technical-practical point of view, because the will of God to impart these is not consistent with this end”, Immanuel Kant, *Notes and Fragments*. Edited by Paul Guyer, Translated by Curtis Bowman, Paul Guyer, Frederick Rauscher, Cambridge University Press, 2005, p 478 (7321. 1800. LBl L 20. (19: 316).

¹⁰ As a “lawgiving” *faculty of pure reason*, Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 42 (AA VI:214). And he continues: “And since men’s maxims, being based on subjective causes, do not of themselves conform with those objective principles, reason can prescribe this law as an imperative that commands or prohibits absolutely”,

2. The categorical imperative: the scientific explanation of the human moral rigour

2.1. Beyond the popular Golden Rule

Ethics is a philosophical *explanation* and a direct or indirect *prescription* of moral behaviour.

Yes, it is first of all explanation – certainly generating prescription – and just this function of ethics makes it the necessary precedent of every scientific research of moral discernment, capacities, actions, psychology and pedagogy.

What does prescription mean? Ethics, Kant said, is a *material* philosophy having a determinate object (the human behaviour in relation with the human will) and emphasising its laws “in accordance with which everything ought to happen”¹¹. And, he added, “also reckoning with the conditions under which it often does not happen”. But to have a determinate object doesn’t mean only to remove concrete general principles from experience or rather to understand their limited value, but also to have *a priori* knowledge *from concepts alone* – and this enterprise is *metaphysics* – and to arrive to universal principles which are at the same time and lead to “principles of application” to the determinate object (here, morals). However, once more, to speak about application does not mean to derive the moral laws and rules, as well as their infringement from experience, but on the contrary, to strengthen the *a priori* knowledge as a precedent to the “anthropological” analysis (of experience) and in fact as residing in the *nature* of man as foundation of morals¹². And this priority of moral law and duty is even commonly *understood*, even though this law and duty have here empirical grounds¹³. But, by having empirical grounds, this law and duty are *practical principles*, and they are not enough neither as explanation of morality in the nature of man and nor as a prescription.

“One must act morally, we must not treat the others as we do not want to be treated”. Why? The ancestral wisdom of The Golden Rule – that Schopenhauer said being better than the categorical imperative – was a prescription from experience, but did it contain in its depth the moral law of the individual acting according to the *universalizability* of his *ad hoc* moral

¹¹ Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 3 (Ak 4:388).

¹² Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 44 (AA VI: 217).

¹³ Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 5 (Ak 4: 389).

*maxims*¹⁴? Not quite. As we know, the principle of reciprocity the Rule advanced concerned particular relations which supposed a sea of possible non-mutual behaviours able to absorb the losses accompanying the eventual reciprocal good will deployed in those particular relations.

But this historical explanation of the Golden Rule is not enough. The principle of reciprocity, however progressive it was, did not refer to its ground – the *appurtenance to the same species*, reason as common peculiarity, the duty to act *for the sake* of this principle – and neither to its genetical and structural supremacy towards other principles. The Golden Rule did not posit *duty for the sake* of this principle as the only one that gives the *supreme principle of human morality*, the only one that remains after all the other duties vanish and only “inclinations” – read: selfish interests – manifest: thus, as the *supreme principle of human morality* that issues from the unique faculties of reason and has the ultimate function to put order in the human society, to preserve the human life because of its unique manifestation of life. Actually, the Golden Rule does not explain why the infringement of the equality of moral positions of the doer and the receiver would be bad. Since in experience, there is no real equality of moral positions.

The Golden Rule is, obviously, wisdom – that tends to accommodate it with the quest for happiness according to inclinations – but wisdom “also needs science, not in order to learn from it but in order to provide entry and durability for its precepts”¹⁵. Because, since reason and its deep feeling¹⁶ of duty rather disturb the fulfilment of inclinations, people

¹⁴ “A *maxim* is the subjective principle of the volition; the objective principle (i.e., that which would serve all rational beings also subjectively as a practical principle if reason had full control over the faculty of desire) is the practical *law*”, Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 16 (Ak 4: 401).

¹⁵ Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 20 (Ak 4: 405).

¹⁶ Kant did never ignore the feelings – as satisfaction in different degrees (see *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime*, 1864), being “practical postulates” in the aesthetic relations, and obviously as pendant negative worries, or vices. And first, the feelings as sources of knowledge (*Critique of Pure Reason*), *sine qua non* but not sufficient for it. But he privileged the moral feeling of the moral faculty of man that generates the moral law: actually, all the “inclinations” or desire, love and respect, relate to the moral law. See also Ionuț Răduică, “Sentiment empiric și acțiune morală la Kant” [Empirical Feeling and Moral Action in Kant], *Studii de istorie a filosofiei universale*, XXXI/2023, 1, pp. 193-202.

naturally develop a (“*natural*”) *dialectic*” that seeks to realise this fulfilment even despite the commands of reason¹⁷.

But dialectic is a tricky business because at the same time with the deploying of cunning, it seeks the understanding of the moral contradictions and the sense of moral uneasiness in front of them. Consequently, “the common human reason” itself is spurred toward “practical philosophy”¹⁸.

What can this philosophy, more than the common wisdom¹⁹, bring to our understanding of moral principles? *First*, it warns us, as its preliminary condition as a preliminary methodological step, that experience itself – as food of the common wisdom – can never teach us that the moral law valid for all rational beings is an absolute necessity²⁰. As it was said before, the moral experience does not teach us the requirement of universalizability. *Then*, still methodologically, it reminds us that an example can never substitute a concept, i.e., the explanation, the grounding²¹.

Therefore, philosophy can bring the role of “the pure representation of duty and the moral law in general, mixed with no alien addition from empirical stimuli, has, by way of reason alone (which thereby for the first time becomes aware that it can for itself be practical), ...on the human heart so much more powerful than all other incentives that might”²². It is the only

¹⁷ *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 21. (AB, wasn’t Metis one of the first divine representative of cunning as wisdom?)

¹⁸ *Ibidem*.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 29 (Ak 4: 412): “common moral judgment (which is here worthy of great respect)”.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 24 (Ak 4: 408).

²¹ *Ibidem* and p. 25 (Ak 4:409): “Even the holy one of the Gospel must first be compared with our ideal of moral perfection before one can recognize him as holy; he says this about himself too: Why do you call me (whom you see) good? No one is good (the archetype of the good) except the one God (whom you do not see). But where do we get the concept of God as the highest good? Solely from the idea that reason projects a priori of moral perfection and connects inseparably with the concept of a free will. In morality there is no imitation, and examples serve only for encouragement, i.e., they place beyond doubt the feasibility of what the law commands, they make intuitive what the practical rule expresses universally; but they can never justify setting aside their true original, which lies in reason, and in directing ourselves in accordance with examples”.

²² *Ibidem*, p. 27 (Ak 4: 410).

securely determined substrate of the theoretical cognition of moral *a priori* principles.

This securely determined quality arises fully *a priori* from reason and “their dignity lies precisely in this purity of their origin so that they serve us as supreme practical principles”²³. Because the rational beings have the faculty to act not simply in accordance with laws – as the natural phenomena and beings – but in accordance with the *representation* of laws, so of principles: and this accordance involves the *will*²⁴.

2.2. New philosophical instruments: *a priori* moral concepts and *a priori* moral principles

Kant shows that, beyond the *understanding* by humans of the necessity and naturalness of the practical moral law and duty, it is imperious to have a clear emphasis of the *a priori* moral laws: because they are lying *a priori* in our reason, thus *grounding the practical moral principles*; and because even though with this constitutive moral grounding, we, “affected with so many inclinations”, move away from them, simply applying *ad libitum* practical principles. A *critique of the pure practical reason*, similar to the critique of pure reason and having its basis in it, is a “*groundwork*” for the *metaphysics of morals*²⁵ – that shows how the juridical relations are deduced from *a priori* concepts corresponding to the human faculty of reason and, practically, of freedom – and deals just with the *a priori* moral laws, in order to obtain access to them (to mobilise our will *according to them*) and to shed light on the structural conditions of their application²⁶.

Although it may sound as too abstract and even funny – for us, who do know that everything, including the abstractions from abstractions, have ultimately an empirical source and a psychological and neurophysiological explanation never ignoring the concrete experience – it is about a “methodological” level of reason: that which develops the

²³ *Ibidem*, p. 28 (Ak 4: 411).

²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 29 (Ak 4: 412).

²⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 7 (Ak 4: 391).

²⁶ *Ibidem*. And thus (Ak 4: 390), “a metaphysics of morals is indispensably necessary not merely from a motive of speculation, in order to investigate the source of the practical principles lying *a priori* in our reason, but also because morals themselves remain subject to all sorts of corruption as long as that guiding thread and supreme norm of their correct judgment is lacking”.

methodological, “managerial” principles used at the “practical” level that applies them: in different domains, of course. For example, when in the theoretical domain we search for the causes of a phenomenon this is a practical level of application: of the methodological principle that there is always a relation between cause and effect, that a context, allowing correlations, is not a cause, or it is only in a metaphorical sense etc. Or, when in practice we analyse the relations between humans and animals, we have in background the methodological principle that the cruel treatment of subordinated beings is morally wrong because etc. This methodological level of thinking is called by Kant “the pure reason”.

Thus, related to our problem of morals, it is also about something real: 1) a *level* of the human volition, that of “pure will”, analogous to the “pure thinking” of principles from concepts alone, and that level of pure will is the level that drives 2) the practical will; because it deals with and develops “*motives* that are represented as such fully *a priori* merely through reason”. The *empirical* motives are raised as “universal concepts through the comparison of experiences”²⁷. But beyond them, there must be *a priori* causes of the human morals. These causes form the moral law.

And these causes and this moral law give the unique peculiarity of man as a rational being. More: these causes and this moral law give the unique peculiarity of *all rational beings*, of the rational being as such. Consequently, the unique peculiarity of the rational being is “the supreme principle of morality”²⁸. The rational beings have the unique faculty to act in accordance with the *moral law*.

2.3. Moral duty as a command of reason, an imperative

And the duty *for the sake of the moral law* founds all the *moral feelings*, the human *conscience* with its first proofs of good will: love and respect. Duty is the representation of the moral laws and is a command of reason, an *imperative*. The imperative relates the will to the objective moral law, but as we know the will not necessarily follows it, and thus the imperative is not a subjective maxim.

All imperatives are “formulas of the determination of action, which is necessary in accordance with the principle of a will which is good in some way”, and they divide into *hypothetical* imperatives where the action is a

²⁷ Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 6 (Ak 4: 390-391).

²⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 8 (Ak 4: 392).

means for something else, and *categorical*, where the action is good in itself and necessary as the principle of the will that is in accord with reason²⁹.

The categorical imperatives relate the *human individual* and *humanity* in an intermingled whole³⁰ that alone is capable of reason. They are *formulas* which prescribe the minimum *mandatory conditions* – namely, prescription of an end in *any* action – *for an end and an action to be human/moral*. They are not “imperatives of skill”, of “how to think the execution of the action that the imperative commands”, but rather “merely how to think the necessitation of the will that the imperative expresses in the problem”³¹. Formulas *to impose to the will to act morally, humanlike*. They are not imperatives or counsels “of prudence”, which prescribe the adequation of means to ends, and concretely, to happiness that is an empirical, undetermined concept. The categorical imperatives of morality concern the (human/moral) will, and thus only as restrictions do they concern the ends. No “pragmatic” or “utilitarian” – in the present meaning of these words – evaluation of actions according to their empirical ends is considered, thus no empirical end is present in the categorical imperatives. Which are *forms*, obviously, but they have *contents*: because the *necessity* they reveal are not presuppositions³², but certainties demonstrated as *interdependence of human reason and morality*.

These certainties once more show that the categorical imperative of morality is deduced *a priori* from concepts, and it is a *law*, the moral law. “I connect the deed *a priori* with the will, without a presupposed condition from any inclination, hence necessarily (though only objectively, i.e., under the idea of reason, which would have full control over all subjective motivations). This is therefore a practical proposition that does not derive the volition of an action analytically from any other volition already presupposed (for we have no such perfect will), but is immediately

²⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 31 (Ak 4: 414).

³⁰ “Nothing in the world is holy but the right of humanity in our person and the right of human beings. The holiness consists in our never using them merely as means, and the prohibition against such a use lies in freedom and personality”, Immanuel Kant, *Notes and Fragments*, p. 476e, 7308. 1780–89. Pr 119, at §177, in *Imputatio legis*: 308.

³¹ Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 34 (Ak 4: 417).

³² *Ibidem*, p. 35 (Ak 4: 419).

connected with the concept of the will of a rational being, as something not contained in it”³³.

2.4. The categorical imperative(s)

There is a single one categorical imperative: “Act only in accordance with that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it become a universal law”³⁴.

Or “Act in accordance with maxims that can at the same time have themselves as universal laws of nature for their object”³⁵.

However, it has some *forms* which, all together, constitute the “categorical imperative”, namely, the corpus of formulas (*the moral law*) relating each individual to humanity and deriving the moral feature of individuals from the reason common to all rational beings:

1) because its universality is *as if* it would be the universal law of nature (“So act as if the maxim of your action were to become through your will a universal law of nature”³⁶); or “Act as though your maxim should serve at the same time as a universal law (for all rational beings)”³⁷; or “Act in reference to every rational being (to yourself and others) so that in your maxim it is always valid at the same time as an end in itself”/ “Act in accordance with a maxim that at the same time contains its own universal validity for every rational being”³⁸;

2) The formula of *humanity as end in itself*, because “Rational nature exists as end in itself”³⁹: “Act so that you use humanity, as much in your own person as in the person of every other, always at the same time as end and never merely as means”⁴⁰; and *humanity is end in itself if everyone aspires to further the ends of others*⁴¹; the “principle of humanity and of every rational nature in

³³ *Ibidem*, p. 37 (Ak 4: 420).

³⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 37 (Ak 4: 419).

³⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 55 (Ak 4: 437).

³⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 38 (Ak 4: 421).

³⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 56 (Ak 4: 438).

³⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 55 (Ak 4: 437-438).

³⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 46 (Ak 4: 429).

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 46-47 (Ak 4: 429).

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, p. 48 (Ak 4: 430).

general as end in itself (which is the supreme limiting condition of the freedom of the actions of every human being)⁴²;

3) the third practical principle of the will, as the supreme condition of its harmony with universal practical reason⁴³: “the idea of the will of every rational being as a will giving universal law”⁴⁴/ “the idea of the will of every rational being as a universally legislative will”⁴⁵ or “the principle of every human will as a will legislating universally through all its maxims”/ “if there is a categorical imperative (i.e., a law for every will of a rational being), then it can command only that everything be done from the maxim of its will as a will that could at the same time have as its object itself as universally legislative”⁴⁶ ; “*Not to choose otherwise than so that the maxims of one’s choice are at the same time comprehended with it in the same volition as universal law*”⁴⁷ : this is the principle of the autonomy of the will;

4) The formula of the *realm* of ends, that is “a systematic combination of various rational beings through communal laws”⁴⁸: “Do no action in accordance with any other maxim, except one that could subsist with its being a universal law, and hence only so that the will could through its maxim at the same time consider itself as universally legislative”⁴⁹; or “*Act in accordance with maxims of a universally legislative member for a merely possible realm of ends*”⁵⁰.

⁴² *Ibidem*, pp. 48-49 (Ak 4: 430-431).

⁴³ *Ibidem*, p. 49 (Ak 4: 431).

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 50 (Ak 4: 432).

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, p.58 (Ak 4: 440).

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 51 (Ak 4: 432). And continues with the inference: “For rational beings all stand under the law that every one of them ought to treat itself and all others never merely as means, but always at the same time as end in itself. From this, however, arises a systematic combination of rational beings through communal objective laws, i.e., a realm that, because these laws have as their aim the reference of these beings to one another as ends and means, can be called a ‘realm of ends’ (obviously only an ideal)”.

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 52 (Ak 4: 434).

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 56 (Ak 4: 439).

(All maxims have:

- (1) a *form*, which consists in universality, and then the formula of the moral imperative is expressed as: 'That the maxims must be chosen as if they are supposed to be valid as universal laws of nature';
- (2) a *matter*, namely an end, and then the formula says: 'That the rational being, as an end in accordance with its nature, hence as an end in itself, must serve for every maxim as a limiting condition of all merely relative and arbitrary ends';
- (3) a *complete determination* of all maxims through that formula, namely 'That all maxims ought to harmonize from one's own legislation into a possible realm of ends as a realm of nature'⁵¹).

The moral law/the categorical imperative is a real level of the moral thinking. It is felt by people⁵², and felt as being contradictory to the empirical principles, felt as a moral dissonance between the *imperative human duty they feel in their deep down* and the *divergent empirical pragmatic "requirements" and maxims*; the proof is just their tendency to avoid it, to resist to it and to transform its universality into a simple general (and abstract) requirement⁵³.

All the imperatives of duty can be deduced from the categorical imperative⁵⁴.

2.5. Kant against moral relativism

Everything in the human behaviour is related to experience.

And the many faceted experience generates, of course, the idea of *relativity* of beliefs, and, because they have the same origin, of their *equivalence*. The human maxims correspond to this concrete feature of experiences, and thus the hypothetical imperatives to act, for instance, for

⁵¹ *Ibidem*, p. 54 (Ak 4: 436).

⁵² Immanuel Kant, *Toward Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch* (1795), in *Toward Perpetual Peace and Other Writings on Politics, Peace, and History*, Edited and with an Introduction by Pauline Kleingeld, Translated by David L. Colclasure with essays by Jeremy Waldron, Michael W. Doyle, Allen W. Wood, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2006, p. 100, (AA 8: 375-376): "at least the following is clear: that human beings are no more able to fully abandon the concept of right".

⁵³ Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 42 (Ak 4: 424).

⁵⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 37 (Ak 4: 419).

territorial integrity of a state and its right to adhere to any international organisation, or for the right of the individual to do what he/she considers to fulfil his/her happiness, *coexist* with actions to stop the international organisations and their *de jure* or *de facto* members which want to conquer and subdue countries and peoples, and also with actions which forbid the “absolute” right to do whatever he/she thinks to make him/her happy. (On the contrary: “those sanctions are called ‘pragmatic’ which really flow not from the rights of states, as necessary laws, but from provision for the general welfare”⁵⁵).

*But the relativity of beliefs*⁵⁶/ *the concrete different determination or conditioning of beliefs is not tantamount to moral relativism*. Kant gave the first, and fundamental, decisive argument against the moral relativism that flourished in the centuries after him: the will as a faculty of reason to impel actions is not the human peculiar and suitable faculty to attain the desires and needs of the individual, the instinct would be more fit for⁵⁷; it is the *good will*, related in a way or another to reason, and having as a purpose just the goodness in itself and not the efficiency of action for an arbitrary end⁵⁸.

Duty is a transcendental concept, corresponding to the inner feeling bearing the good will, and its deep power is to evaluate the hypothetical purposes, maxims and imperatives from the standpoint of the categorical imperatives which show the ultimate reason-to-be of goodness: *one cannot infringe the reason to treat the others as ends in themselves, as unique and unrepeatable individuals representing, each of them, the species of rational beings on the Earth, if one wants to keep one’s own representativeness of the human species and of its reason*.

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 33 (Ak 4: 417).

⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 45 (Ak 4: 427-428).

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 11 (Ak 4: 395).

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 12 (Ak 4: 396).

Therefore, the *good will* is *moral*, belongs to morality. Only the *will* belongs to the *instinctual* life, and because it is related to the preservation of the animal organism, it involves the senses which are the best and reliable instruments to show to it how is the reality to which it must respond. The senses are absolutely reliable for the information about reality, but in humans they are amended by the human reason, i.e., they are processed and interpreted by it in different levels of *forms* of thoughts (analysed by Kant) and of *contents* of thoughts. The moral level is the content background of the contents’ levels.

In fact, not the duty as an intermediary moment between the good will and action is important / as a trigger of the action according to the good will. But just the categorical imperatives, the *contents* (of duty) which are posed by the human reason to ultimately confront the hypothetical purposes, maxims and imperatives. "This cannot be done". *The categorical imperatives are those which forbid the moral relativisation, the drowning of actions, will and their "legitimizing" into the ocean of meaninglessness of humanity, of the human worth: into the ocean that destroys the telos of the human being, the what for (of) humanity.*

Kant specifies that in hypothetical situations with purposes in accordance to them, people measure, namely, give a *price* to the ends: the *market prices* – showing that the objects of needs and inclinations can be exchanged – and the *affective "prices"* of our feelings related to the imagination of our "satisfaction"⁵⁹. If this is the case, if ends have prices, and each end having an "equivalent"⁶⁰, does this not mean that there would be no other criterion for measuring moral goodness than a perpetual relative pricing of ends? Are not things relative?

No, because *some ends have no equivalent*, and these ends concern the human beings – whose value cannot be priced, because they all have their inner worth, thus *dignity*⁶¹ – and whose end is worth in themselves: so, they have no equivalent, or *only at the extent that they are moral according to the categorical imperatives*. A moral action according to the categorical imperatives is equivalent to another moral action according to the categorical imperatives. "Now morality is the condition under which alone a rational being can be an end in itself, because only through morality is it possible to be a legislative member in the realm of ends. Thus, morality and humanity, *insofar as it is capable of morality*, is that alone which has dignity"⁶².

⁵⁹ Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, pp. 52-53 (Ak 4: 434).

⁶⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 52.

⁶¹ "The dignity of humanity in one's own person is personality itself, that is, freedom; for one is only an end in oneself insofar as one is a being that can set ends oneself. The irrational, who cannot do that, have worth only as means", Immanuel Kant, *Notes and Fragments*, p. 476e, 7305. 1780–89. Pr 110, at §165, in *Gradus imputabilitatis* (19: 307).

⁶² Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 53 (Ak 4: 435).

I underlined the words from the above quote. Yes, every human being has his/her value as a representative of humanity, thus as an *end in himself/herself*. From this standpoint, all humans are equivalent to each other. But the human dignity is attained, is manifesting, *if and only if* he/she “legislates” on behalf of the whole humanity and thus, of every other human being. All humans and every one of them is dignified – as a rational being – and thus, have dignity as a *potentiality* (let’s use Aristotle’s term). But their dignity is real, *actual* only at the extent they manifest according to the deep moral requirement of treating every human being always as an end in itself, as a unique and unrepeatable representative of humanity, having thus an unmeasurable value.

3. The rights under the operations of freedom and moral duty

However, how is the practical behaviour of humans, consonant with the apparently rigid command of their moral reason?

It is, and Kant demonstrated the coherence of the moral process in a theory that unfolded the correspondence between the objective and subjective cognitive basis and the ethical concepts, offering a so fine articulation that it is not surpassed until now. Ethics as *scientific knowledge* of morals and the moral reason was that which Kant founded. It’s obvious that he wrote in historical circumstances which shaped his concrete views about different practical relations. We may not adhere to all these views, but we cannot reject his scientific explanation of the consistency of moral humanism.

3.1. Kant conceived of his practical philosophy on the very modern concept of *freedom*⁶³, both in “the external and internal use of choice”, determined by “laws of reason”⁶⁴. In the internal use of reason, freedom has the value

⁶³ “Freedom (independence of being constrained by another’s choice, insofar as it can coexist with the freedom of every other in accordance with a universal law, is the only original right belonging to every man by virtue of his humanity”, Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 63 (AA VI: 237). This is, Kant demonstrates, the “only innate right”. (See also Kant’s note from 1800: “The concept of freedom and its reality cannot be proven in any way except through the categorical imperative”, Immanuel Kant, *Notes and Fragments*, p 478 (7321. 1800. LBI L 20. (19: 316)).

⁶⁴ Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 42 (AA VI:214).

of a regulative *principle* of speculative reason⁶⁵, generating *unconditional* practical laws, called *moral*. For the imperfect human, these laws appear as *imperatives*. But in the external use, freedom manifests as practical /technical principles, *conditionally* commanding.

The imperatives *represent* the *practical actions* as *objectively necessary* and make them necessary not thinking to an end possible through an action, but thinking directly to the *form* of the action. The form is what is formalizable in our level of reason that gives the principles of thinking and action, thus which are *a priori*. And here, the imperatives represent the highest moral ends legitimating any practical relation/action. Once more, the imperatives are transcendental, principles of (pure) reason, imposing the *obligation*, the “necessity of a free action”⁶⁶ (thus, *as if* exclusively from thinking to the form of the necessary action). While the conditional technical principles, appearing as maxims of subjects, are *juridical*, and they are connected with an authorisation to use coercion. But in a society of citizens, coercion is, beyond its transcendental form – a mutual use of coercion, *but that is consistent with everyone’s freedom in accordance with universal laws of necessary actions*⁶⁷ – a tendency.

Already Leibniz said that one cannot choose between alternative attitudes if one is not free. And the modern thinkers sang odes to civil liberties.

The huge importance of the principle of freedom did not appear only in the early modern European thinking, this principle being the fundamental assumption of the modern political philosophy that prepared and gave the legitimacy of the modern social transformation; but also in this process itself and its fall under the perversion of the “misunderstanding” of the social condition of the workforce: just of the social constituent that made credible the power of the modern rulers, thus giving these rulers the power to influence the general public of destitute, of those who were to fight for the modern transformation and without which the modern revolutions and even the passive support of modernisation in these and other countries would not have occurred. The ancients spoke about freedom, but this was only the condition of the few. This *asymmetry of*

⁶⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 48 (AA VI:221). Here, the term “speculative” means theoretical, specific to the transcendental domain emphasized by the theoretical philosophy.

⁶⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 48 (AA VI:222).

⁶⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 57 (AA VI:232).

freedom as a structural difference in status between the ruling strata and the ruled has been inherited in all societies based on the system of domination-submission. But the modern asymmetry as such was not tantamount to the ancient one. The abolition of serfdom was the premise for the generalisation of the status of citizen, capable of undertaking on his own modern acts of individualistic prosperity and, after a long struggle, capable of voting power, thus of the first political right.

But not this was the case in Prussia⁶⁸. For this reason, Kant specified that the metaphysical foundation of the juridical relations – concerning the subjects “between whom a relation of right to duty can be thought of” – supposes a division “in Accordance with the Relation of the Subject Imposing Obligation to the Subject Under Obligation”, namely, between the first with “beings that have only duties but no rights” / “men without personality (serfs, slaves)”, and between “beings that have rights as well as duties” / “a relation of men to men”⁶⁹.

3.2. Duty “is the action to which someone is bound”⁷⁰, and “a deed is *right* or *wrong* ...insofar as it is conform to duty or contrary to it”⁷¹.

The “duties of Right” are “*real*”⁷², namely *juridical*, and not imposed by the human morality of the duty of virtue, of love and respect towards other humans⁷³, and are specific only to relations between free men. Why? Because only between free men can *contractual* relations be established. And the contract is *public* (because it is and must be accountable; AB, this is the basis of transparency), and the justice (called “Right”) that corresponds to contractual relations is “public Right” („*bürgerliche Recht*” – because of

⁶⁸ “Friedrich Wilhelm I had destroyed serfdom in his domains in 1717. The particular code of the great Frederick, as we have seen, purported to abolish it throughout the kingdom; but, in reality, it only made its harshest form, *Leibeigenschaft*, disappear; he preserved it in its softened form, *Erbunterthänigkeit*. It was not until 1809 that it ceased entirely”, Alexis de Tocqueville, *L’Ancien Régime et la Révolution*, in *Ceuvres complètes*, volume 4, Paris: Éditions Lévy, 1866, p. 355, Note 5, Date of abolition of serfdom in Germany.

⁶⁹ Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 66 (AA VI: 241).

⁷⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 59 (AA VI: 222).

⁷¹ *Ibidem*, p. 50 (AA VI: 224).

⁷² *Ibidem*, p. 66 (AA VI: 241).

⁷³ *Ibidem*, § 23- § 25, pp. 243-244 (AA VI: 448-449); § 37-§ 41, pp. 254-257 (AA VI: 462-465).

the medieval tradition of freedom of townsmen) of the “civil society”, because only this society “secures what is Mine or Yours by public laws”⁷⁴. This was the basis of Kant’s *utopian liberalism*: the highest – until him – level of freedom, the civil, the *bürgerliche*, as a guarantee of general freedom and justice as fairness.

And this utopian liberalism was in fact assumed by the modern *proles* when they hoped that its tenet will liberate their condition. Only when they felt the limits of modern citizenry, did they begin to use it in order to fight for their real possibility to choose. And the Kantian philosophical foundation of the civil freedom – linking an assertoric description of *what is* with the deontological *what should be* – showed both the limits and the openness of civil freedom. Kant was aware of the limits: the deontological prescription is always the proof of the awareness of the shortcomings of the real, but the modern freedom was for him an unfinished given, thus a basis to enlarge it. Accordingly, the Kantian philosophical foundation is pendant with the position of modern working classes.

More precisely, the symmetry between Kant’s foundation of the utopian modern freedom and his practical hope of that which was to follow has in view a concept that was not used as such by Kant but can be derived from the “*exception for ourselves*” towards the universal moral law⁷⁵, thus was supposed as: *exceptionality* in front of the modern law. The Middle Ages’ nobles, kings and clergymen were outside the rigours of the law, it was and is well-known. But the *modern* law implied equality of citizens before the law. No citizen was to be treated by the law as he/she would have been above the law. This exclusion of the exceptionality of some citizens implied the cancellation of privileges and their substitutions only with rights. Obviously, this substitution did not fully occur, as it is also well-known. But the *theoretical principles of the modern law* had and have a huge importance: it was precisely on their ground that the process of concretisation and enlargement of the modern law took place.

The enlargement concerned also the *international modern law*. Actually, this law was forged on the assumption of *equality of states before the laws* – which are forms, do not forget – which impose the international

⁷⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 67 (AA VI: 242).

⁷⁵ Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 42 (Ak 4: 424).

rights and duties of states⁷⁶. And the international modern law was forged – though this was rather implied because of the non-citizenship of the colonised in huge territories which were not states, but colonies⁷⁷ – on: 1) the principle of equality (only) of *citizens* worldwide, since all have the rights of citizenry, and 2) the principle of *pre-eminence of the modern people* – constituted from citizens, equal before the law, as the bearer of the power of the state / as the sovereign in the territory of the state⁷⁸ – over “*the state*” and any eventual privileged or representative group⁷⁹.

⁷⁶ It's all the more alarming that *legal exceptionalism* was instituted both by international bodies – for instance, concerning Israel, the UN that did not oppose to the acquisition of land by force, to the ethnic cleansing of Palestine in Nakba (1947-1948) and later, including today, after 7 October 2023, and to the Oslo Accords – and states (as the international impunity of American military).

From a Kantian theoretical standpoint, the imposition of *legal exceptionalism* is a backward step to a pre-modern situation. It institutes an internationally accepted *impunity*, that is to say, annulling of the legal sanctions of some actors. But since the legal sanctions exist and they were established for all actors according to the modern equality before law, the legal exceptionalism broke the supremacy of law as such, generating precedence and the weakening of the internal and international order.

The struggle for a world of right is historical, involving all types of internal and international actors and organisations. Nowadays, the International Court of Justice, the principal judicial organ of UN, ruled on a request for an advisory opinion submitted by the UN General Assembly (International Court of Justice, *Advisory Opinion – Legal Consequences arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem*, 19 July, 2024 – <https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/186/186-20240719-adv-01-00-en.pdf> –) that substantiated the infringement of the modern law by the legal exceptionalism given to and assumed by Israel. (This legal exceptionalism is based on two fake premises: that imperialist Great Britain's “donation” of Palestine to the European Jews, subjected to the WWII Nazi “final solution”, is legitimate, and that a coloniser would have the right to defend itself from the colonised).

⁷⁷ Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, § 50, p. 146 (AA VI: 338): “a province (in the sense the Romans used this word)”.

⁷⁸ Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, § 51, pp. 146-147 (AA VI: 338).

⁷⁹ As a result, the modern people inhabiting a territory has the *formal* right to choose the state that organises it and it would consider as its representative. But this *formal* right does not lead to an anarchical situation of the world, (that, in Kantian reasoning, would be more inconvenient to the peaceful international

3.3. Kant was contradictory, of course.

On the one hand, he considered the European modern law as a model of legitimacy of the juridical laws which had to regulate the structural *asymmetrical* social (economic) relations.

On the other hand, he considered that this model *was* not only *to be* surpassed by its improvement that must take into account its accordance with the transcendental foundation, but also that in reality it does not bring a betterment of the social condition of the many. The fact that the citizen population is in a state of *citizen immaturity* because of their “laziness and cowardice” does not mean that only they are guilty for their “self-incurred minority”, because this state is induced just by “a free state” that “does not dare to say” but imposes to all: “Argue as much as you will and about what you will; only obey”⁸⁰. On the contrary, precisely this apparent freedom – as “freedom of spirit” – reduces and even stops the use of reason in questioning their obedience, while, when it happens, the obvious lack of freedom/rights fuels the general awareness of this situation even until transposing it “gradually” into a maturity that “becomes capable of *freedom in acting*”. In what direction? Well, Kant did not further deal with perverse actions which in fact strengthens citizens’ state of submission. He only showed that it’s the “nature” of man *to reason* so as he finds the *human* direction of freedom of acting⁸¹. This direction is always practical, namely not only as actions but also and foremost as *transposition of the moral principles of reason into actions* which are more and more according to their prescriptions.

Do we not see Kant’s clairvoyance regarding the present? *The freedom to do anything, but within the confines of obedience towards the domination-*

relations than the imposition of authority of states and the existing order based on asymmetrical international relations), because it is always intertwined with the “contents”, the thorough *reasons* of opposition of a people to a state. Can we conceive that the Russian-speaking people who separated from Ukraine would have separated if the Ukrainian state had not imposed an absurd and so destructive Russophobic policy, since from centuries the Ukrainians and the Russians lived together peacefully?

⁸⁰ Immanuel Kant, “An Answer to the Question What is Enlightenment” (1784), in Immanuel Kant, *Practical Philosophy*, Edited by Mary Gregor, Introduction by Allen W. Wood, Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp. 11, 22 (AA VIII:35, AA VIII:42).

⁸¹ *Ibidem*, p. 21 (AA VIII: 41).

submission frame, is accompanied just by restrictive forms to exert the real freedom of press and expression, emphasised by Kant, to debate all the way the causes and consequences of political actions; and the more the freedom to do anything becomes more devoid of moral restraints, drowning the individual in the river of addictive stimuli and transforming him/her into an obeying animal being, the more the pessimism related to the ways of changing the present system crisis of the former triumphant modern era becomes deeper. Isn't freedom without moral restraints only apparent?

Kant could only be contradictory regarding the ideological axioms of his worldview. But as we saw, he felt their clash and solved it just by developing the "transcendental" ethical principles which *found* all the human actions and endeavour. Actually, *these principles are* – indeed, are – *the critique of the liberal freedom*.

3.4. Freedom is a *faculty*, a capacity of the free will. But "only freedom in relation to the internal lawgiving of reason is really a capacity"⁸², and this internal lawgiving imposes both freedom and the principle of accordance of duties and rights with the objective state of the human free will, in the concrete manifestation of juridical relations.

As a capacity of the free will, freedom is the condition of human *dignity*: the humans are worthy towards the other animals because they have reason, namely *the reason to arrive to the moral law*. Briefly, the humans have dignity because they are moral: and according to the moral law that is forged by their reason *beyond* and *before* any empirical examples of interhuman relations, considered Kant. We know nowadays that the moral principles are reasoning appearing within the human experience, but Kant was right by showing that the moral "*a priori*" principles form a kind of superior level towards the empirical moral judgements.

The concept of human dignity is specific to humans just because of their reason, and obviously the moral reason changes the animal aspect of humans. Animals, and generally the living beings, behave "as machines", answering to stimuli. This mechanistic aspect is encountered in humans, too. Not only in their biological/ bio-psychological process, but also in the

⁸² Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 52 ((AA VI:227).

social one: when they obey to the administrative requirements⁸³ aiming at the common good. We do not cross the street when the traffic light is red, but we do when it is green, and we do it mechanically, we thinking to our problems. Sometimes another person waiting near us is impatient and begins to cross the street before the green, and because we behave mechanically, we tend to follow the person, believing that the light changed. But the experience taught us to see the semaphore, to confront the signs given by it with the action of the person: namely, our mechanical behaviour became aware and our consciousness stops us to act irrationally.

However, *neither we nor an enlightened government should not confound the administrative orders and the political ones*. Because the latter reflect *power relations*, thus aims of different *groups* to acquire their own good on the expense of lower classes, and this type of restrictive good clashes with the common good. Consequently, in the political public space we must *express* our standpoints and we must feel free to do this. Here we must not behave mechanically obeying, but expressing our standpoints as “a scholar” does⁸⁴. But how does the scholar proceed? He always shows the *reasons* of his theories, the *causes* of facts, in a transparent manner, just for challenging the analysis of theories by other scholars.

Therefore, in the political public space, neither we nor the enlightened government must not consider us “machines”. Generally, what is important is that the human living being is always “more than a machine”⁸⁵. But just in the modern countries – don’t forget, we are in the 18th century – the human being is put “in a class together with the other living machines”, thus attributing them “the awareness that they are not free beings”⁸⁶, in the name of an “anything goes” political theory that considers only the efficiency of political control from above and removes

⁸³ Immanuel Kant, “An Answer to the Question What is Enlightenment”, p. 13 (AA VIII:37): “affairs conducted in the interest of a commonwealth a certain mechanism is necessary, by means of which some members of the commonwealth must behave merely passively, so as to be directed by the government, through an artful unanimity, to public ends (or at least prevented from destroying such ends). Here it is, certainly, impermissible to argue; instead, one must obey”.

⁸⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁸⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 22 (AA VIII:42).

⁸⁶ Immanuel Kant, *Toward Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch*, (p. 102 (AA 8: 878)).

from it the concepts and ends of “freedom and equality” of citizens, the only ones which must found the end of politics itself.

4. How do the moral requirements operate?

Freedom means to *choose an end* without being constrained by others. This end transposes into an action, and thus to have an end is an act of freedom, not a natural effect⁸⁷. The categorical imperative of “the pure practical reason”, a methodological imperative “which connects *the concept of duty* with that of an end in general” implies the existence of the moral categorical imperative: where the moral end is at the same time a duty, and where the duties are at the same time ends. The “ends which are also duties” are “*one’s own perfection and the happiness of others*”⁸⁸.

Let’ see them closely.

4.1. The human is both an *individual* and a *species being*. This last quality was substantiated by Kant⁸⁹ – and later, by Marx – as a *frame* of the particular qualities of belonging (to a state, to a gender, to a family, to a nationality, thus to a *group*). The human is a species being in that he/she is *moral*, and only if she/he is *moral*. And he/she is *moral according to the “moral law” constitutive to his/her being*: the *categorical imperative*, the *duty to treat every human according to his/her appurtenance to the human species*, namely, always as an *end of the existence of the human species as such*, and not only as an empirical means for an individual or for individuals.

The first duty of a human is just the duty to treat all the others as human beings. Accordingly, and even though the concepts of duty, right, freedom are formalised in social norms, the *duty to exercise the moral law existent in every human being towards every human being* is primary, the first of all other duties and the fundamental justification of all other duties.

Of course, duty is an *idea* which we have concerning an action in view to fulfil an end, and this idea is an impetus, an urge toward the

⁸⁷ Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 190 (AA VI:385).

⁸⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁸⁹ Kant used the term *humanity* – belonging to humanity/“according to the *humanity* of man” – and to be represented “according to the *humanity*” meant for him to distinguish between “the right of humanity in our own person” and “the right of men”, or, differently put, between “the end of humanity in our own person” and “the end of men”, Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 65 (AA VI: 240).

action⁹⁰, but if we judge the humans as beings endowed with reason, we understand that just this universal faculty allows, and requires, moral relationships between them, governed by their innate peculiarity to deduce from their motley experience not only abstract notions – already present in this experience – but also *concepts* as superior abstractions from abstract notions, and *principles*, universal and necessary judgements related to both experience and concepts. All of these are ideas, and through them we act according to our human uniqueness.

Now, as it is known, to every duty a right⁹¹ corresponds. It is obvious that we can think the human morality as a “categorical imperative” stating that every human being has the *right* to be treated always as an end and not only as a means. But this form of the moral law is wrong, incorrect⁹²: because the rights are given *from without* the human individual – they are depending on other humans, on other wills – or *the moral law as deep consideration and feeling of every human being is given from within the human individual, from his own reason*. The duty is – before being socially formalised and thus transmitted from without, educated, imposed – an internal propensity toward a certain behaviour that it is *judged* as the best: necessary and rational, that is, supposed to be general. *The duty is a transcendental principle*, Kant explains, because it arises from a level of reason that grounds the practical judgements. This is the reason Kant did not construct the foundation of ethics on the basis of rights.

⁹⁰ The idea of duty is “the incentive to action”, *ibidem*, p. 46 (AA VI: 219).

⁹¹ The “moral concept of right” – thus, a *form* – concerns the obligation within a relation of one person to another person’s choice, provided that both have freedom, *ibidem*, p. 56 (AA VI: 230), while the “universal principle of right” is: “Any action is *right* if it can coexist with everyone’s freedom, in accordance with a universal law, or if on its maxim the freedom of choice of each can coexist with everyone’s freedom in accordance with a universal law”, *ibidem*.

⁹² “But why is the doctrine of morals usually called (especially by Cicero) a doctrine of *duties* and not also a doctrine of *rights*, even though rights have reference to duties? The reason is that we know our own freedom (from which all moral laws, and so all rights as well as duties proceed) only through the *moral imperative*, which is a proposition commanding duty, from which the capacity for putting others under obligation, that is, the concept of a right, can afterward be explicated”, *ibidem*, p. 64 (AA VI: 239).

4.2. Therefore, the first duty of the human individual is his/her duty *qua* species being. Why is the duty of the human individual *qua* individual not the first human duty? Because the already mentioned *conatus* in its Spinozian meaning – the tendency to persist⁹³ – is specific to every living being, to every animal, or the human has reason, thus it's the *duty arisen from human reason* that is specific to this species, and not the instinctual will to live.

However, is this Kantian moral priority not absurd? Would our individual survival – of course, with our loved ones – not be our first duty? And perhaps not even with our loved ones – an aviation principle in case of emergency is to put our masks on first and not our children's masks, isn't it –? No, the Kantian priority is not absurd; and the above example is absurd, as all of us have the commonsense to understand it. Kant considered that *in everything we do we must stay humans*, because otherwise there is no more *human uniqueness* as human sentiments, culture, edification of a world that enriches "the starry heaven", but a simple animalic accident in the cosmic evolution.

It's obvious that the first duty of man to himself is "to preserve himself in his animal nature". But, although first, this duty is not principal⁹⁴, because *if this "natural end" is not fulfilled in a moral way*, the result is not the lasting of a "person" – a living being having reason and, essentially, a moral reason that allows him to being responsible⁹⁵ – but of an animal. And the basis of the moral way of the first duty of man to himself – implying even the right to be authorised to take the life of those who assail me – is to not infringe both the right of others (who have the same first

⁹³ As we know, Spinoza and the early modern philosophers related *conatus* to every being, not necessarily a living one. Later on, in the endeavour to explain life as an integral phenomenon, the biologists were puzzled and, for instance, some ones considered that Aristotle's *entelechy* (as internal cause and force of the continuous identity of an organism during and governing action/movement/change; thus, as Spinozian *conatus*) is the concept explaining the *vital* phenomenon. See Hans Driesch, *The Science and Philosophy of the Organism*, The Gifford lectures delivered before the University of Aberdeen in the year 1908, Volume II, London, Adam and Charles Black, 1908.

⁹⁴ Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 218 (AA VI: 421).

⁹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 50 (AA VI: 223).

duty of man) and the law⁹⁶. For this reason, a methodological duty to oneself is to control the impulses to excesses and moral vices: and this

⁹⁶ Here Kant answers to the nowadays ardent problem of the “right of pre-emptive actions”. There is a huge difference, Kant says, between the right to kill an assailant – this right being both *moral*, and only from a moral standpoint being recommended “moderation” in exercising the right to kill the aggressor, and *lawful* – and on the other hand, a “supposed right” to kill someone who did nothing to harm. This supposed right is absurd: because in order to be a right it must correspond to a *state of necessity* (Kant gave the example of someone in a shipwreck who shoves another off a plank that cannot support both) and this state is already *instinctive*, outside reasonableness. And thus, *to a state of necessity only the primary duty to preserve one’s life corresponds, and not a right.*

For this reason, we can characterise from a *moral* standpoint such state of necessity, as well as the guy himself after his fact: “from outside” we cannot say that the guy who saved his life by drowning the other is guilty (according to the primary duty), because we understand that his instinct of self-preservation was stronger than the restraint required by the moral law; but, and even though, the guy himself feels deeply shocked and considers his deed as profoundly immoral, because now as always he has “in his soul” the moral law to help the other human being as helping their common humanity; and thus, because he knows that they both belong to this species, for him this *internal moral law* is the instance, and not the instinct of self-preservation: although he knows as well that this instinct governed him in that unfortunate moment. (The example of Kant, the guy drowning the other in order to save himself, reminds us the Medusa’s shipwreck (1816), see Nebiha Guiga, Aurélien Portelli, « Les récits du radeau de la Méduse : L’histoire d’une situation extrême au prisme des violences et des sorties de guerre », *Napoleonica. La Revue*, 2023/2 (N° 46), p. 139-172).

[Kant raised an extremely important issue of existential *state of necessity* or, in present researches, *extreme situation*, synonymous to *extreme violence* related to war and getting out of the war (see Véronique Nahoum-Grappe, « Anthropologie de la violence extrême : le crime de profanation », *Revue internationale des sciences sociales*, 2002/4, p. 601-609; Michèle Battesti, Jacques Fremeaux (dir.), *Sortir de la guerre*, Paris, Presses de l’Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2014); but synonymous also to perplexity and defeatism in peacetime (Ana Bazac, “*Conatus* and the worth of life in a time of crisis”, in *Philosophy and Crisis: Responding to Challenges to Ways of Life in the Contemporary World*, 2013 Conference Proceedings, G. Maggini, H. Karabatzaki, V. Solomou-Papanikolaou and J.Vila-Chã (Eds.), vol. II, Washington D.C., Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, book series IV. “Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change”, vol. 11, November 2018, pp. 137-152). What

control is not at all impossible or a superhuman effort, because every human has “conscience”: “an internal court in man” that judges his/her thoughts and behaviour⁹⁷.

Actually, the humanlike, moral way to realise one own’s preservation is manifesting as the other duties of *man to himself*: the already mentioned *one’s own perfection* and *the happiness of others*⁹⁸. The first must be understood – as Kant did⁹⁹ – as enhancement of moral capacities; today we say, capacity of creation (thus, development of the self), “to be” and not “to have”, as Fromm formulated. The second, extremely important today, confronts our own happiness and the conditions we can create for the happiness of others. Some ones consider that their own survival would

is common to these different faces of the state of necessity is the challenge of the moral law and the generalisation of an abductive movement from this law].

However, Kant posed the problem of *juridical sanctionability* of this fact, of a presumed correspondence between an instinctual state of necessity and the external juridical sanctions as right/wrong, namely the position of society represented by the legislator in front of instinctual states of necessity. Well, society itself – as if it would be a single human – takes over the moral self-judgement of the guy: (from a societal standpoint) the fact “must not be judged” as blameless, he was not innocent and *if* there would exist objective sanctions, a law, for punishing him, he would be. But there is no law for this fact, thus the guy is “*inculpabile*”, he cannot be deferred to justice. And thus, he neither can be punished; or, conversely, an *instinctual* violent action of self-preservation is not a wrongdoing against a right and thus it is unpunishable (“*impunibile*”). And Kant underlines that the juridical practice has both a subjective basis (in front of reason) and an objective basis (in front of “a court”), and we must not confound them: in front of the juridical reason, the guy is not punishable, but in front of a court he could be brought and judged, *if* there was a law for his act. Because, ultimately, the court represents *vox populi*, the moral conscience. (From this distinction, we can deduce the necessity to legislate according to the complex multitude of facts, thus to establish rights and juridical duties in order to *prevent infringements against the reason-to-be of justice*).

⁹⁷ Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, § 13, pp. 233-234 (AA VI: 438, 439).

(We do remember Socrates’s internal “daimon” (Plato, *Apology*, 31d. In: *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, Vol. 1 translated by Harold North Fowler; Introduction by W.R.M. Lamb. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann Ltd. 1966) who forbade wrongful intentions but who never urged him, do we?)

⁹⁸ Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, pp. 191-192 (AA VI: 386-387); and pp. 192-193 (AA VI: 387-388).

⁹⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 195-196 (AA VI: 392-393).

mean having their present conditions, from which, as philanthropists, they would give others “what they can”¹⁰⁰, but in fact never sacrificing an iota from their well-being and the official imaginary about it. However, the result never consists in fulfilled conditions for the happiness of others. But not even for the philanthropists: because they feel that their behaviour is hypocritical and inefficient. And this feeling harms not only their happiness but also their *moral integrity*: when we do not consider “the *dignity* of humanity” in the other persons, we cannot consider this dignity in our own person, because we deprive both them and us from the “prerogative of a moral being, that of acting in accordance with principles, that is, inner freedom”, and so we make them and us “a plaything of the mere inclinations, and hence a thing”¹⁰¹.

Kant said that the duty “to sacrifice a part of my welfare to others” is only a “wide one”, not a universal law, because it does not prescribe how much would we sacrifice to others’ wellbeing¹⁰². However, it is not a question of quantity, but of quality: we must “sacrifice” until the others have the conditions to fulfil their own happiness without alms from us¹⁰³.

Therefore, do not forget that Kant developed *methodological/transcendental principles to substantiate /legitimate the ethical approach of humans’ relationships*. The principle of duty does not impose a rigorist, ascetic behaviour and life¹⁰⁴.

Duty is necessary – is a principle of reason – because, as Kant saw in his indirect experience of historical and philosophical information, as well as in his direct experience, *the humans have not a natural propensity to the public good since they are motivated by the duties to themselves*: and thus, they seek the public good *at the extent* this goal and situation would be beneficial to themselves. Actually, just this representation belonged to the modern social contract theorists.

But duty is a *determinant* principle because the humans think, judge, and thus reason is what directs people to actions. And this principle is

¹⁰⁰ See Ana Bazac, “Global injustice: what is known, what is assumed and what is promised?”, *Studia UBB, Philosophia*, 58 (2013), No.2, pp. 145-157.

¹⁰¹ Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 216 (AA VI: 420).

¹⁰² Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 197 (AA VI: 393).

¹⁰³ As in the well-known liberal saying: “do not give them fish, give them a fish hook”; isn’t it?

¹⁰⁴ Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 209 (AA VI: 409).

necessary because it *balances* the natural “duty” to preserve oneself, and in the best conditions, and on the other hand, the social duties which, ultimately, ensue from the categorical imperative. Indeed, *reasonability* and the *deep moral level of reason* of fundamental principles of motivations and actions generate the *mediation* of duty between humans and their actions.

4.3. Just these principles are the basis of “virtues and vices”, of good or bad actions and behaviours. People can *understand* what they have to do in front of different empirical situations. As a result of this understanding, people construct *ad hoc* the *maxims* which come from their free will/ “free choice”¹⁰⁵ and are only methodological “suggestions” of morally efficient answers/actions, thus of their adequacy to the “commands”¹⁰⁶ of reason. The maxims as *means* to some ends concern only the condition to “qualifying for a possible giving of universal law”. On the other hand, the end that is also a duty can make it a law “to have such a maxim”, “although for the maxim itself the mere possibility of agreeing with a giving of universal law is already sufficient”¹⁰⁷.

In order that the maxims of actions may conform to the above condition, ethics gives them laws. The ends, on the other hand, are duties, and their essence is the *duty* of the empirical duties to being part of the maxims which accord with the moral universalizability, with the categorical imperative.

Accordingly, the virtues arise from the *will*, and not from the faculty of free will, because will is “a capacity for desire that, in adopting a rule, also gives it as a universal law”. Virtue is an inner determination for free actions in conformity with the representation of this universal law. “But two things are required for inner freedom: being one’s own *master* in a given case ..., that is, subduing one’s affects, and ruling oneself ..., that is, *governing* one’s passions”¹⁰⁸. The virtuous determination measures the ends and their correspondence to means, as a duty: for this reason, virtue is self-

¹⁰⁵ Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 52 (AA VI: 226).

¹⁰⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 44 (AA VI:216), p. 193 (AA VI:389).

¹⁰⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 193 (AA VI:389).

¹⁰⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 208 (AA VI: 407).

control and the aware precedence of the law as condition to feel the pleasure¹⁰⁹.

4.4. This is the reason of the correspondence between duties and rights. The rights are given by justice (*jus*), but they are *founded* by moral¹¹⁰, namely by the transcendental principle: “Any action is *right* if it can coexist with everyone’s freedom in accordance with a universal law, or if on its maxim the freedom of choice of each can coexist with everyone’s freedom in accordance with a universal law”¹¹¹. Transposed to the juridical law/ “the universal law of Right”, the principle is: “so act externally that the free use of your choice can coexist with the freedom of everyone in accordance with a universal law”; it “is indeed a law, which lays an obligation on me”¹¹². Consequently, the strict law (Right) can also be represented as a fully reciprocal use of coercion that is consistent with everyone's freedom in accordance with universal laws¹¹³. This is the reason of the union of *mutual* moral rights – love and respect – as *principles*, as *rights of virtue*.

5. “The Right of Nations” is “the Right of States”¹¹⁴

If there is a Right regulating the relations between the citizens of a state, there is not – and not only during Kant’s time – a Right of nations: because the states have no the equality that the citizens of a state have, an equality of the citizen status. Accordingly, the states cannot have a universal law of international Right that would regulate the contracts between them as juridical (Kant says, “moral”) persons.

For this reason, the international *status quo* is in a “nonrightful condition”¹¹⁵. “This nonrightful condition is a *condition* of war (of the right of the stronger), even if it is not a condition of actual war and actual attacks

¹⁰⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 183 (AA VI: 378). And he continues: “if *eudemonism* (the principle of happiness) is set up as the basic principle instead of *eleutheronomy* (the principle of the freedom of the internal lawgiving), the result is the euthanasia (easy death) of all morals”.

¹¹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 56 (AA VI:230).

¹¹¹ *Ibidem*.

¹¹² *Ibidem*, p. 56 (AA VI:231).

¹¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 57 (AA VI: 232).

¹¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 150, § 53 (AA VI: 343).

¹¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 151, § 54 (AA VI: 344).

being constantly made (hostilities)”¹¹⁶. To put an end to this situation, “a league of nations in accordance with an idea of an original social contract is necessary, not in order to meddle in one another's internal dissensions but to protect against attacks from without”. The league of nations is an alliance that does not copy the social contract within a state, implying a sovereign to whom the citizens transferred their rights to rule the commonwealth, but it is only an association¹¹⁷.

But, Kant continues, the nonrightful condition is that of “lawless savages”¹¹⁸ for whom only the right to declare war is natural. However, it is not even a universal law of the present states: because only the “free states”¹¹⁹ can have this right. Anyway, both the right to declare war and to prepare or prevent war take part from the Right of nations that is deeply contradictory: one cannot “even form a concept or to think of law in this lawless state without contradicting oneself”¹²⁰. This is why Kant enumerates aspects of war and post-war which are right and aspects which are not, in the confrontation of unjust enemies. But “what is an *unjust enemy* in terms of the concepts of the Right of Nations in which – as is the case in a state of nature generally – each state is judge in its own case?”¹²¹ It is, Kant answers, “an enemy whose publicly expressed will (whether by word or deed) reveals a maxim by which, if it were made a universal rule, any condition of peace among nations would be impossible and, instead, a state of nature would be perpetuated”¹²².

In a state of nature, the *rights* acquired by states – through war or otherwise – are only *provisional*. The only solution for a “perpetual peace, the ultimate goal of the whole Right of Nations” is “an association of states” called “a permanent congress of states”¹²³. But rationally, this Right of Nations can never be but, it itself, provisional. In order to arrive to a

¹¹⁶ *Ibidem*.

¹¹⁷ *Ibidem*. It seems that Kant supports the tendency of “multipolarism” and considers that an international alliance as a hierarchical construction cannot exist – or last –.

¹¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 151, § 54 (AA VI: 344).

¹¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 151, § 55 (AA VI: 344).

¹²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 153, § 57 (AA VI: 347).

¹²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 155, § 60 (AA VI: 349).

¹²² *Ibidem*.

¹²³ *Ibidem*, p. 156, § 61 (AA VI: 350).

juridical universal principle – the only one guaranteeing a peaceful community of all states, because all states have the common terrestrial home, this is Kant’s argument – that allows free commerce and movement through clear contracts¹²⁴, a “cosmopolitan Right” must be conceived of¹²⁵.

¹²⁴ Kant examines the right to make a settlement on the land of other nation (Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 159, § 62 (AA VI: 353). We should not forget that it is about free states, thus this right requires a specific contract. But Kant also discusses this problem related to peoples, and not to states (“Hottentots, Tungusi and most of the American Indian Nations”) and here he claims also a contract, one “that does not take advantage of the ignorance of those habitants”. This claim is based on the principle of *justice*, and no pretext of beneficial results of the infringement of justice (as, he insists, the “civilising of these backward peoples”, pretext already used for the excusing of the bloody introduction of Christianity in Germany; or as the cleaning of the states that colonise from “corrupt men”) is legitimated.

And Kant relates the injustice made to the colonised peoples to the injustice emphasised by the European “Ancien Régime” against the French Revolution where “the revolutionaries” can pretext that “when constitutions are bad it is up to the people to reshape them by force”. By putting the important problem of justice during the revolutionary upheavals, Kant said: injustice made first cannot be the price for latter justice (*ibidem*).

However, not only under the influence of the winners of the French Revolution. The problem is indeed related to the bigger one: the legitimating of the popular revolts.

As it is known, Kant oscillated between the idea of gradual reforms – helping also the transformation of the civic culture of people into an enlightened one – and the idea that the revolutions are allowed when these reforms do not happen (when “concept of right is an empty thought”, and the rulers do not fulfil their duty toward s the people, *ibidem*, p. 96 ((AA 8: 372)). But he distinguished between revolution as a political transition to a legal state, like the “transfer” of sovereignty from the king to the National Assembly, which thus both became the representatives of the people, and, on the other hand, revolution as unlawfully use of the sovereignty of the people (See also Reidar Maliks, “Kant and the French Revolution”, *Las Torres de Lucca. Revista internacional de filosofía política*, 12(2), 2023, pp. 113-119).

But with all this swing, Kant could not annul the idea of sovereignty of the people as the ultimate origin of realisation of the pure juridical principles which are transposition of the moral right. Accordingly, he *supported the right of the French Republic to defend itself from the counter-revolutionary European armies*: “Even if the impetuosity of a revolution provoked by a bad constitution were to bring about a

more lawful one illegitimately it should no longer be deemed permissible to return the people to the previous constitution, even though under the old constitution any person who had violently or maliciously participated in that revolution would have rightly been subject to the punishment accorded rebels". The illegitimate manner Kant refers to is the deployment of the French Revolution from the first moment of *transfer of sovereignty* to the National Assembly in June 1789 (and after which still a constitutional monarchy followed) to that of *declaration of republic* in 1792. Kant considered that the 1789 moment was a legal one (*The Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 133 (AA VI: 323).

Kant's argument for the right of the French Republic to defend itself was: "one cannot demand of a state that it abandon its constitution, even if the latter is despotic (which indeed makes it a stronger one with regard to foreign foes), as long as the danger exists that it could be swallowed up by other states. It must therefore be permissible to delay the carrying out of such a change of constitution until a more fitting opportunity arises", Kant, *Toward Perpetual Peace*, *ibidem*, p. 96 (AA 8: 372).

Kant summarized his conception about the French Revolution in *The Conflict of Faculties* (1790), chapter 6. On an event in our time which proves this moral tendency of the human race (Ak 7: 85 and 86) (see Immanuel Kant, *Toward Perpetual Peace and Other Writings on Politics, Peace and History*, cited edition, pp. 155-157). Here he separated the reasoning about the Revolution as such from the evaluation of the mindsets of humans, related to the Revolution.

Concerning the second aspect, Kant showed that the "sympathy in wish that borders on enthusiasm" is caused by the *moral* capacity of the human race. However, "enthusiasm is aimed solely at the *ideal* and, indeed, at the purely moral, to which the concept of right belongs". Consequently, "the outside, viewing public then sympathized with this feeling of exaltation without the least intention of participating". It is a very realistic picture of the average "prudence", isn't it?

Concerning the reasoning about Revolution, Kant emphasised that the transcendental moral as a cause generates a transcendental concept of *right*: "that a people must not be hindered by other powers in giving itself a civil constitution that it itself regards as good". And the fulfilment of this right is a duty. But still a duty, says Kant, is that "only such a constitution of a people is *in accordance with right* and morally good in itself which, in its nature, is made such that wars of aggression are avoided as a matter of principle". This prevention of war is assured by a "republican constitution, at least in its conception". (Kant saw that monarchical constitutions cannot prevent wars).

Well, what to be done when other countries attack the country governed on the basis of a republican constitution? This country must defend itself, as showed above.

6. Kant's endeavour to solve the paradox

6.1. Who is the origin of Right in modern states?

Is it the people? The people – the peoples – constitute the humankind that is the end in itself in the order of nature, and that manifests as peoples. And humankind and the people must be free in order to emanate and realise reason and thus, morals according to the moral law of human beings. *Kant equates freedom with juridical freedom.* Now, in order to have laws

But if the need of a republican constitution is a transcendental need, the citizens from a monarchical state have *no the right* to change the constitution into a republican one. Because the monarchy (Kant refers to England, “a country that lies more than a hundred miles from the site of the revolution”) has in its possession “extended territories in Europe” and in order to keep them (“maintain itself”) “amidst powerful neighbors”, “perhaps” this monarchical constitution is the best. And just because of this economic power of the state, “the grumblings of the subjects are not due to the government’s domestic policies” (the same was said by Tocqueville when discussing the causes of the Revolution in a prosperous state). There are only some ones who protest against “its policy toward foreign nationals when it, for instance, hinders foreigners in forming a republic, and are in no way proof of a people’s dissatisfaction with its own constitution”.

Therefore, the dialectics of things shows a tangled situation. On the one hand, the subjects rise up – and must do this – for “the *principle*” that is “capable of the universality of a rule”, their *freedom*, based on their rationality, to demand “according to the *formal* principle of his will, (a) government for the people (in) which the people co-legislates”; (AB, we remember, with the sovereign). “It is something which no government, however beneficent it may be, may infringe on”. But too much radicalism is not good, so “this right is always only an idea whose implementation is restricted by the condition that its *means* are consistent with morality, which the people must never contravene, and it may not be realized by means of revolution, which is always unjust”.

On the other hand, the uprising of the people is never allowed because of its misery and neither because of lacks in its well-being. On the contrary, if it obeys “like obedient sheep, led by a kind and understanding master, well fed and strongly protected, would have nothing to complain about concerning their welfare”. Consequently, “Autocratic *rule* and yet republican *governance*, that is, in the spirit of and analogous to republicanism, are what makes a people content with its constitution”. This was the theoretical recipe for both the “constitutional monarchies” and the *modernisation without political revolution* (as Gramsci called this, “passive revolution”) that was the process suited for all the modern states, irrespective of their form of governance.

¹²⁵ Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 158, § 62 (AA VI: 352).

guaranteeing the juridical freedom, a legislation is needed. A multitude as such cannot legislate so as the freedom of all be guaranteed: this is the reason of the *original contract* that *transfers* the will of “the united people itself” to the sovereign, at the same time *subjecting* its individual members to the “*commander*”, that who legislates¹²⁶.

The origin of Right is thus the original contract and, subsequently, the sovereign.

The sovereign is the *public authority* that represents the people as the ultimate sovereign / that unites the people through laws: but we must not confuse the physical representative – a *physical person*, the king, a prince – and the juridical one, a *juridical person* that governs as a triad of legislative, executive and judiciary authorities, Kant underlines. For this reason, not the physical person is important, but the juridical one. The public authority/the government is thus mandated to realise the Right which, in turn, corresponds to the will of the people to constitute itself into a state.

In principle, the government legislates and applies the juridical law that, for the mentioned reason, is “so holy (inviolable) that is already a crime even to call it in doubt in a *practical way*, and so to suspend its effects for a moment”¹²⁷. In this sense, it “follows” that “the head of a state has only rights against his subjects and no duties (that he can be coerced to fulfil)”¹²⁸.

6.2. Where are the people?

Obviously, in the contract all and every one transfer their capacity to control themselves and pursue their own well-being to a social body, the representative public authority. This public authority is now that which, *separated from the people*, has the capacity to control the people, it is its sovereign. In Kant, as in the modern Constitutions, a contradictory situation is given: on the one hand, the people – by becoming free as contract able persons – is the new sovereign; in fact, only a sovereign, self-legislating man, can initiate a contract, thus even the original contract; on the other hand, the free people transfer its sovereignty to a separate public authority.

¹²⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 158, § 47, p. 127 (AA VI: 315).

¹²⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 130 (AA VI: 319).

¹²⁸ *Ibidem*.

This contradictory situation is real. The appeal to the people is a legitimating trick: the modern ruling classes, constrained by their own struggle to become again legitimate in front of the ruled, and obviously, constrained by the struggle of the ruled, felt that the mentioning of the sovereignty of the people would be the founding principle of the acceptance by the ruled of the modern “social peace”. In Kant, “the rights of humankind” that is represented in the moral reason manifests as juridical rights of the people and, internationally, of the free peoples. These rights, as Right, are “sacred” and thus their formulation is a *categorical imperative of politics*: one cannot respect them with “a half measure” and “devise a hybrid, pragmatically conditioned right (between right and utility)”¹²⁹. There are no principles which remain principles if they are applied with half measure. Nevertheless, in Kant the people is sacred, but not sovereign. Therefore, its destiny is to *wait* for benevolent masters and its own cultural development (AB, as a way of ascension on the social ladder, since it’s simply about individuals, isn’t it?). However, just for this reason of its own cultural development in a domination-submission based society, people resist.

6.3. Kant as imbalanced balancer

Obviously, all of the above tableau is, as Kant underlined n times, only a *theory, ideas* represented from pure reason, as a “perfectly rightful constitution”; or even as “the Idea of a civil constitution as such, which is also an absolute command, that practical reason, judging according to concepts of Right, gives to every people”, is *sacred* and irresistible”. Therefore, *we cannot oppose theoretical norms to facts from experience*: this is Kant’s defence against those who protested against his interdiction of the right of the people to oppose tyranny. And *epistemologically*, he was right. A theory must be fought with other theoretical constructions.

However, just *he* was that who made an incorrect judgement: because he presumed that when *people* opposed to unjust and cruel masters, they would have opposed to the principle of representativity as such¹³⁰. Or, it’s

¹²⁹ Kant, *Toward Perpetual Peace*, *ibidem*, p. 104 (AA 8: 380).

¹³⁰ Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 176 ((AA VI: 372): “And even though this constitution may be afflicted with great defects and gross faults and be in need eventually of important improvements, it is still absolutely unpermitted and punishable to resist it”.

obvious that no one questioned this principle – and even, most of times, no one questioned the principle of social hierarchy as such –. Would the lawless state after sedition have been the motive of Kant’s incorrect judgement? Well, not quite. Because he himself made another wrong assumption: that *those in power* would support the principle of Right as a realisation of the original contract. But he wrote about “their *practices* intent to betray the people”¹³¹, when they do not impose constrains according to the principle of freedom¹³², when there is a large distance between the principle of Right that realises the moral reason and the political practices which infringe “the rights of humankind (which) must be sacred, whatever it may cost those in power”¹³³. Thus, Kant himself mixed the theoretical demonstration of the *objective* character of the juridical principles – which is based on the moral foundation issued from reason, and, once more, which is objective in that these principle “can be realised”¹³⁴ – with the practical reference.

But the practical reference is poor. Not in the sense that he did not criticise enough the modern political practices: his scope was different, theoretical, the emphasis of principles. But just in the sense that the *deduction from the transcendental categorical imperative cannot stop at the level of juridical and political freedom*: people are free not only as sellers and buyers, and voting the representatives from the body of the sovereign to whom their transferred their sovereignty. But fundamentally, as access to resources so as to develop everyone’s manifestation as end in itself *sine qua non* to the manifestation of humanity as end in itself. And the access to resources is not a relation between the individual and the material and digital objects, simpler said, between man and matter: it is a relation between man and man, thus between man and the real social culture without which he remains a simple being aiming at its survival. But, obviously, Kant could not develop all the way the deduction from transcendental principles.

¹³¹ Kant, *Toward Perpetual Peace*, *ibidem*, p. 97, (AA 8: 373).

¹³² *Ibidem*, (AA 8: 374).

¹³³ Kant, *Toward Perpetual Peace*, *ibidem*, p. 104 (AA 8: 380).

¹³⁴ *Ibidem*.

7. Nevertheless, Kant's theoretical groundwork is a guide that cannot be avoided

7.1. Kant's solution to the limits of the modern freedom and right

Would this Kantian encampment into an unsolved paradox be the proof of his place only on the shelves of the history of philosophy?

Kant was the son of his epoch that, because the modern system was just proving its historical superiority, was not that where practical radical alternatives and forces able to emphasise the limits of the modern ends and means could be generated. For this reason, Kant took over the modern political ends – as juridical freedom and formal juridical rights, and political rights as the vote.

But at the same time, he saw their limits. How and on what basis could these limits be surpassed was the question that troubled him. It is not about the critique of the modern concrete political and juridical experiences. Fundamentally, this critique does nothing bring about: the everyday and everywhere practice has both good and intolerably bad aspects; but these aspects are labelled according to different outlooks. How can we know that some ones or other ones are true?

The answer removed from the empirical analysis, restricting itself within a *theoretical deduction from concepts, and deployment of principles*. Was it a restriction? No, Kant demonstrated, because the principles evolve from the human *reason*, as *moral* principles, which determine the juridical and political forms. Only the principles are *universal* and *necessary* and thus, only they are the criteria of our understanding of the practical organisation of the modern society.

The practical life, including the social – juridical and political – one, advances practical ends. But these *ends* are transitory, so a consistent theory of the *practical reason* cannot start from them. The only starting point is the *moral end that manifests as moral freedom* in the “external relations” of humans towards humans: “act so that you can will that your maxim should become a universal law (whatever the end may be)”. And this starting point is that of the *form* of the practical reason¹³⁵.

Let's once more review Kant's deduction: the human *reason* implies *freedom of ratiocinating*, (the “transcendental freedom” which we deduce from concepts but which is the *sine qua non* condition of reason¹³⁶) and, by

¹³⁵ Kant, *Toward Perpetual Peace*, *ibidem*, p. 100 (AA 8: 377).

¹³⁶ See also Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, p. 3 (AA V: 3).

using it for the understanding of morality¹³⁷, it leads to the *moral freedom*, that is able to deduce the *principle of categorical imperative*. Simpler, in Kant's words: freedom is the condition of moral law, and the moral law is "the condition under which we can first *become aware* of freedom"¹³⁸. And, at the same time, the *freedom of ratiocinating* + *the moral freedom* leads to the practical freedom, that is, the *juridical and political freedom*. As external condition of benevolent reforms instituted by the sovereign and of the general progress of the enlightenment of the people.

Thus: *reason – freedom – moral freedom – the categorical imperative*.

But Kant did not carry the deduction from the categorical imperative to the end: since the categorical imperative is a command of reason, it is so powerful that it itself leads to a much larger moral freedom than that driving to juridical and political freedom. Because, although a transcendental principle, the categorical imperative can be felt by every human being endowed with reason. It is not restricted to philosophy as the highest criterion to understand the human morality, but it is an inner propensity toward its practical application in the interhuman relations, toward a *real practical freedom*.

Thus, the above formula is continuing, and must continue: ...*the categorical imperative – the real practical reason*. In its theoretical explanation, so not in descriptions of practical defects.

However, a valid theoretical conclusion is never aimed at contributing only to theoretical development (this involving also science, of course), but also and always to the real human life. And the *real practical freedom* is never reducible to *some* aspects: this is why the categorical imperative is moral, concerns morality.

Obviously, Kant could not go forward in his epoch. The above remark is made not as a criticism of Kant, it would be absurd, but as a methodological opening for us.

7.1. Why the categorical imperative is the measure and proof of man's unique position in nature

The categorical imperative is indeed the principle that criticises the modern system. It is impassable when we want to justify practical attitudes and relations, the more so the political ones.

¹³⁷ Ibidem, p. 5 ((AA V: 5).

¹³⁸ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, p. 4 (AA V: 4).

And it is the universal and necessary criterion and landmark to judge all the human relations. It *does not cover them, neither does it substitute their different contents, and nor does it reduce them to an abstract uniform manifestation.*

As we saw, the rights of humankind – juridically transposed as the Right – are *forms* able to impose to different contents of interhuman relations the *fairness* of equality of treatment of all humans in these relations. But what is fairness? It inevitably involves these contents through the concept of *justice*. And justice is not only the equal juridical and political freedom, but also the freedom of access to resources, freedom without which one cannot choose the ways¹³⁹ of being human, of having moral freedom.

The human being is the ultimate end of nature here on Earth, Kant concludes, and this *idea* appears not as a result of the analysis of nature's evolution and determinism but as a conclusion emphasised by the reflective judgement that interprets man with its reason as the *entity that gives the teleological meaning to nature*, as teleological purpose of nature. Not nature has selected man as its culmination, more, this is not the result of the natural part of man with his harmful inclinations – which show that “man himself does all he can to work for the destruction of his own species”¹⁴⁰ – but just man's capacity to give purposes: even a “final purpose” “that requires no other purpose as a condition of its possibility”¹⁴¹. And this unique capacity of man is his *freedom through reason* that generates a “legislation regarding purposes” “unconditioned from any external

¹³⁹ And to *autonomously choose the ways of being human* depends on the *real access* to the material and cultural elements which constitute the “*dominant model of life*, imposed by the results of science and technology”. Accordingly, this criterion of autonomously choosing the ways to having moral freedom is not reducible to a “quantitative revendication”, but it involves (the freedom) to conceive of and act for the practical re-writing of the structural relations of the social organisation. See André Gorz, „Avant-propos”, *Les Temps Modernes*, 196-197, sept.-oct. 1962, pp. 386-400, here 386-390.

The freedom to conceive the alternative to the capitalist social organisation is necessary to understand the legitimating myths of this organisation, which are based on fallacies which, moreover, twirl around the quantitative, see Richard D. Wolff, *Understanding Capitalism, Democracy at Work*, 2024.

¹⁴⁰ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, *ibidem*, p. 317 (AA 5: 430)

¹⁴¹ *Ibidem*, p. 322 (AA 5: 434).

cause"¹⁴². If, on the contrary, he remains at the level of natural inclinations which restrict and even annul his freedom to conceive unconditioned purposes, therefore, if he is not manifesting as a unique moral reality ("moral subject"), then he fails to be "the supreme cause" that gives the purposes of creation¹⁴³, and he fails even to be the ultimate end of nature on Earth. The human being fulfils its *reason-to-be* just through and because of the moral ability¹⁴⁴ to conceive and follow the *categorical imperative*.

7.3. The social contract, racism and class domination: Kant's limits, evolution and hopes

Kant was the son of his age. By assuming the social contract theory, he took over the *prejudices* of the Western modern capitalism, prejudices which reflected the structural need of capitalism: to have an endless labour force in order to exploit an endless space. In the wake of the European political theorists, the social contract that he considered constitutive of the human society is, in fact, imbued with two types of prejudices: one is the *colonialist* one¹⁴⁵ that considered the subjugation of "inferior" races as normal, inherent, and the other is the *class domination*.

He took over the argument of difference of culture and civilisation between the Western powers and the Africans and North and South American Indians who were enslaved. This argument was *visible*: but as power relations, we underscore. However, even in his *Lectures on Physical Geography* (1782) where he endorsed racism and colonialism¹⁴⁶, thus after *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781), he failed to *question the concept of social contract itself*, that which is *not visible* and is – as it was for Kant – an assumed philosophical task. Until *Groundwork*, Kant advanced the idea of *separation* between the *a posteriori* analysis and conclusions and, on the other hand,

¹⁴² *Ibidem*, p. 323 (AA 5: 435).

¹⁴³ *Ibidem*.

¹⁴⁴ This Kantian demonstration is consonant with the scientific proofs and analysis of the "recency of man". See Robert N. Proctor, "Three Roots of Human Recency: Molecular Anthropology, the Refigured Acheulean, and the UNESCO Response to Auschwitz", *Current Anthropology*, Volume 44, Number 2 April 2003, pp. 213-239.

¹⁴⁵ Charles W. Mills, *The Racial Contract*, Cornell University Press, 1997.

¹⁴⁶ Discussed in Pauline Kleingeld, "Kant's Second Thoughts on Colonialism", in Katrin Flikschuh and Lea Ypi (Eds.), *Kant and Colonialism: Historical and Critical Perspectives*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014, pp. 43-67.

the “*a priori*”/deduction of moral relations from transcendental concepts and principles.

Accordingly, in his work *coexisted* both the discriminative *particularism* – the view of constitutive inferiority of some races and people – and the *universalism* of, once more keep attention, free persons¹⁴⁷. Still from a methodological standpoint, this coexistence is killing the prestige of philosophy and even of universalism. The fact that from Kant’s moral normative universalist view (the categorical imperative) *does not ensue*¹⁴⁸, and indeed, *does not ensue* discriminative particularism does not annul their coexistence. The *description* of races with cultural features *transposed as psychological shortcomings* is, indeed, a part of a discriminative “social ontology”. But this fact shows not only something that is easily understandable – the determinant role of the *social* (race, class and gender) *position*, that includes also *the assumed social position through the assumed ideology* of Eurocentrism and social contract, on the theories about society and man – but also that the social contract theory as such is/addresses an “epistemically idealized intersubjectivism”, as “a hypothetical agreement of all under epistemically idealized conditions”¹⁴⁹. And in this frame, opposition against racism has no place¹⁵⁰. But Kant *evolved*, and then the

¹⁴⁷ See Charles W. Mills, *Blackness Visible: Essays on Philosophy and Race*, Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 1998, pp. 44, 71, 107-108, 110-111, 114; Dilek Huseyinzadegan, “Charles Mills’ ‘Black Radical Kantianism’ as a Plot Twist for Kant Studies and Contemporary Kantian-Liberal Political Philosophy”, *Kantian Review*, Volume 27, Special issue 4, 2022, pp. 651-665.

¹⁴⁸ Georg Geismann, “Why Kant Was Not a ‘Racist’”, *Jahrbuch für Recht und Ethik/Annual Review of Law and Ethics*, Vol. 30: 1, 2022, pp. 263–357; Georg Geismann, *Kant’s Alleged Racism: The Failure of Charles W. Mills (and all too many others)*, Tartu Ülikool, 2016, <https://dspace.ut.ee/server/api/core/bitstreams/2afd2e74-3078-41b0-bd69-6530f711472f/content>.

¹⁴⁹ Charles W. Mills, *Blackness Visible*, pp. 47, 48.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 112: “Resistance to subpersonhood becomes an ongoing subterranean tension within the racial polity. The persons of mainstream philosophy, being ghostly disincorporate individuals, can take their personhood for granted, because they are really white persons conceptualized without reference to the nonwhite subperson population. Subpersons, however, have to fight for their personhood (against the opposition of the white population, who, insofar as they maintain their

anterior separation between the *a posteriori* and the *a priori* was annulled: *the moral universal as universalizable, the categorical imperative, opposes any particularism.*

Consequently, after *Groundwork*, there is nothing in Kant to show racism¹⁵¹, on the contrary, as already pointed out, Kant criticised it, both empirically and theoretically, as infringement of the principles of right¹⁵².

Did Kant evolve also concerning the class domination? Here not evolution, but the *coexistence of divergent ideas* is more suitable. This coexistence is clear just in the late work. The *normative* perspective that demonstrates the principles of equal moral freedom leads in fact to the idea of general progress – first of all, cultural, Kant emphasised – and, we can speculate about his undeclared beliefs, thus, this general progress will not keep the present social relations: in Prussia there still are serfs¹⁵³, but not in England and France, isn't it? So, the moral normativity leads to the dilution and absurdity of class domination. But at the same time, the practical reality where order and the division of labour, thus including the necessity to obey this order, are obligatory, imply that class domination is unavoidable. Therefore, it seems that just the practical political and juridical freedom requires class domination: as a relation between the rulers and the ruled. Remember Kant's idea of interdiction to protest otherwise than through petitions. In this, we can conclude that the idea of social contract as such had in view a *minimalist* state, normal for the modern bourgeois aspirations to disembarrass their will of profit from constrains from below, including from those mediated by the medieval institutions of charity: the juridical and political freedom is enough for the new dominant class, and people had to wait for the reforms of the enlightened sovereign correcting the "eventual" bad aspects.

However, once more, this is not a deficiency of Kant, but of his epoch. Marx will be able to show that the analysis of the concrete as starting point to disclose its laws is *consonant* with the deduction of moral principles. So

racist beliefs, have a vested material, psychic, and ontological interest in continuing nonwhite subpersonhood)".

¹⁵¹ Samuel Fleischacker, "Once More Unto the Breach: Kant and Race", *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*, Volume 61, Issue 1, 2023, pp. 3-28.

¹⁵² As Pauline Kleingeld, "Kant's Second Thoughts on Colonialism", showed.

¹⁵³ As he mentioned in *Observations*, p. 93 (AA XX: 40): "a rich man who has won his fortune through extortion from his peasants".

obviously, we cannot remain only at this abstract moral normativity, since the human life is more complex.

Nevertheless, the normative level of demonstration is cardinal from the standpoint of *necessary and universal moral knowledge and commitment*. And the categorical imperative revealed at this level is the only *moral criterion* that overthrows the inherently historically determined limits of the modern practical reason.

Anyway, we must assume all the attitudes and facts of the forerunners. We climb on the shoulders of giants just because we do this, not because we select what would be, in a moment or another/from a standpoint or another, profitable.

7.4. The use of reason for immoral ends and means: Kant and Nietzsche

Kant showed the antagonism between the reasonability of man and, on the other hand, the use of reason for immoral behaviours and ends. And also, between knowledge and “persuasion” that is so general¹⁵⁴. For his part, by seeing the modern concrete use of knowledge, Nietzsche arrived to the conclusion that its results – the “truths” – are only instruments of our will to power, to live by legitimating it in front of other people (who do the same) as truth¹⁵⁵: but in fact, it is not. In theoretical philosophy, Nietzsche gave a radical constructivist turn to Kant’s conception of mind mediated knowledge of *experience* – thus, of the “unconditioned” – depicting the mind mediation as origin of regulative *fictions* useful to the description of the world in different perspectives¹⁵⁶, even by the common sense that assumes them as “the truth” that becomes a general criterion of knowledge¹⁵⁷; consequently, the difference between reasonability and the immoral use of reason seems of little importance. However, he showed that just the different perspectives through which the world is approached

¹⁵⁴ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 820/B 848, pp. 684-685; A 825 / B 853, p. 687.

¹⁵⁵ Peter Peinzger, “Interpretation und Machtwillen. Nietzsches Denkwirtschaften als fictive Welten,” Renate Reschke (Hrs.), *Nietzscherforschung, Band 20*, Akademie Verlag, 2013, pp. 31-46.

¹⁵⁶ Pietro Gori, “Nietzsche’s Fictional Realism: A Historico-Theoretical Approach”, *Estetica. Studi e Ricerche*, IX, 2019, pp. 169-184.

¹⁵⁷ Pietro Gori, “On Nietzsche’s Criticism Towards Common Sense Realism in Human, All Too Human I, 11”, *Philosophical Readings*, IX, 3, 2017, pp. 207-213.

allow us to judge them. Though relative, values point also a critique of the modern radical individualism¹⁵⁸. But, once more, Kant's categorical imperative is more than an empirical critique of society. As it is known, an old saying considers that the end justifies the means. Kant's categorical imperative opposed: no matter how many ends and means, ultimately, it's the value of the human person as *end*, and the contingent ends cannot contradict it. If so, the perspective about ends cannot be relativistic: accordingly, neither about means, because they also must correspond to the fundamental moral end. Reason means to expose the *reason-to-be* of the *Weltanschauung* that is the basis of the behaviour.

7.5. Kant and Schopenhauer: the categorical imperative is more efficient than compassion

Kant explained that morals are (result from and constitute) within the experience of humans. In this experience, they arrive to conclusions – abstract empirical ideas – describing the vices, virtues, the good, the evil, precepts and interdictions and, generally, the moral relations. Such a precept is the Golden Rule.

But the human reason also arrives to transcendental ideas – deductions from both empirical and transcendental concepts which are regulative for the deployment of empirical cognition – and these transcendental ideas can be seen as and have the role of regulative precepts for the entire understanding of morality. For this reason, first of all only at the conceptual level of the human consciousness are these regulative ideas – actually, there are only those formulating the aspects of the categorical imperative – “fountain and basis”¹⁵⁹ of morality. But, because reason belongs to every

¹⁵⁸ Pietro Gori & Paolo Stellino, “Il prospettivismo morale nietzscheano”, *Syzygetesis*, (2), 2015, pp.109-128.

¹⁵⁹ This is the formulation of the Royal Society of Holland in its question in 1810, to which Schopenhauer responded. But the formulation that contains the above words – “Is the fountain and basis of Morals *to be sought for* in an idea of morality which lies directly in the consciousness (conscience), and in the analysis of the other leading ethical conceptions which arise from it? Or is it to be found in some other source of knowledge?” – is mentioned in Radoslav A. Tsanoff, “Schopenhauer's Criticism of Kant's Theory of Ethics”, *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 19, No. 5 (Sep., 1910), pp. 512-534; in Arthur Schopenhauer, *The Basis of Morality* (1841), Translated with Introduction and Notes by Arthur Brodrick Bullock, Cambridge, Trinity College, London, Swan Sonnenschein and Co, 1903, p.

human being, the humans can (since Kant was human, too) arrive to, learn and apply the categorical imperative. So, indeed, the fountain and basis of morals is an idea, but this idea is not absolutely separated from the real empirical moral life, from the conscience of people: it is only the proof that the human being with its reason is an absolutely new and different entity compared to nature, and just from its *differentia specifica*, reason, can we and must we explain the human conscience and reactions, and thus the role of ideas as mediator between man and the world.

Kant constructed the transcendental precept of morality – the categorical imperative – from the *a priori* of “pure practical reason”, but this is not something incomprehensibly abstract and frightening: it is only a *level* of reason, of cognition, where the reasoning from transcendental concepts (they themselves having been deduced from empirical concepts) takes place. Actually, what is the reason of this transcendental level at all? Its reason is determined by the (explanation of) necessary and universal ideas which, as it is known, exist. Simply, Kant saw that there are different “degrees” of necessary and universal:

- a lower degree related to empirical representations,
- a higher degree related to the form of representations,
- a superior degree related to the (knowing of these) forms and degrees, knowledge resulted as categories which, obviously, have cognitive power only applied to empirical representations, and
- the highest, the (knowledge of) principles ensued from concepts via judgements which take place in the intellect. These principles – as principles of thinking – are “applied” indirectly by reason to the empirical domain, but the humans can be aware of them. Thus, the pure reason is the highest level of reason where the judgements are directly related only to concepts which are *a priori*, do not follow from experience.

Kant was interested in showing how the ideas are constituted, and how the abstract, and the necessary and universal ideas are constituted: and he arrived at the interdependence of levels of thinking, where the highest, transcendental level has the highest regulative function of thinking.

5, the question reads: “Why do philosophers differ so widely as to the first principles of Morals, but agree respecting the conclusions and duties which they deduce from those principles?”. Actually, it is Schopenhauer’s “translation” as a stimulus for signalling his opposition to Kant’s ethics.

Concerning the ethical domain, the categorical imperative is such a transcendental principle. It shows that the humans can understand how they *should /ought* to behave, even though they have different and opposed contingent goals. And not only people can understand, but also – in fact, precisely because, ultimately, this transcendental idea is in their conscience and pushes them – they can behave how they must do from a moral standpoint. This is the force of the *a priori*, of the transcendental.

Schopenhauer considered that the *ought* must be related to experience, and the *suffering* that is the feature of the concrete human life is so deep that not an ethereal hazy principle does repel it, but *compassion*. It's understandable why did he focus on compassion¹⁶⁰, but this concept cannot substitute the categorical imperative. Because just compassion is vague, both from a quantitative and qualitative point of view – how to manifest it, and how much to give etc. – while the categorical imperative is very explicit, excluding both the quantitative aspect and the ignorance of qualitative explanation.

As was mentioned, duty is not the effective origin of the categorical imperative, but only the concept regulating the moral law. As moral beings, we have duties. The categorical imperative does not issue from the concept of duty, but from the concept of moral reason. We must manifest our moral reason, our capacity to think as rational beings in society. And the principle regulating this obligation resulted from the moral reason – this is the moral law: to behave as rational beings, we must do this, since we have reason (and, ultimately, according to the categorical imperative) – the categorical imperative, does not impose virtue and austerity, neither the arrogant neglecting of passions, and nor an indefinite requirement of reciprocal attitudes, but on the contrary, reveals the exact *content* of what moral obligation and moral reason do mean. In the interhuman relations, every human is both *means* and *end*. Here, *end* do not mean particular conjunctural goals, but, through the pursuing of these ends, everyone's fulfilment as a unique human, namely rational, being. Just this content is related to experience and has meaning: but only indirectly, mediated by the obvious conclusion of the concrete experience is it felt by humans. And

¹⁶⁰ Ana Bazac, "Arthur Schopenhauer's mirror: the will, the suffering, the compassion as philosophical challenges", *Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai, Philosophia*, Vol. 64, No. 3, December 2019, pp. 195-225.

Kant showed that, au fond, this end is the ensue of reasoning, his groundwork of morals giving it as a necessary cognisance for humans.

Neither philosophy in general, nor moral philosophy/ethics are disconnected from experience. But they are philosophy, then they search for an explanation that connects experience with the universal and the necessary emphasised by the human reason. From sympathy and compassion – though abstract concepts, but related to both the historical and structural contingent¹⁶¹ – does not result the *how* and the *what does they consist of*. Consequently, they cannot be considered moral imperative principles, emphasised by knowledge.

Obviously, the humans are (the most) complex creatures on Earth. They have heart and flesh, and not only reason: i.e., they behave according to this fundamental triunity. And always and according to different facts and goals, one of them seeming to outrun the others. But the common people understood their united value, while philosophy, in its quest for essence, rather highlighted a hierarchy and their *asymmetrical* importance in the human behaviour.

In Kant too, the humans are complex. The categorical imperative does not annul this. It's just that it is the supreme moral criterion for judging all the human relationships. We have no other supreme moral criterion.

Instead of conclusions

Through its *universal* of the human being – the moral capacity to discern all the way to the end the good and the evil as attitude to not use the other humans only as means but always also as ends – and thus, the unique moral *universalizable*, Kant's categorical imperative drew attention on the *any* human being: as a representative of *humanity* an of *every other any human being*.

Consequently, the *groups* – as means of survival through real or imaginary solidarity and community – have, too, as ultimate criterion of their legitimacy and viability, the fulfilment of the categorical imperative.

¹⁶¹ Sympathy is an eternal human feature (opposed to egotism, insists Schopenhauer), but it may be absolutely opposed to compassion; one can sympathise a selfish mate, isn't it? While compassion depends on suffering; and when in society the structural organisation assures the dignity of all, it is reduced to some private relations.

The different forms of groups as coagulated or imposed communities have lasted in *history* due to historical conditions.

But *structurally*, they proved to be, and are, viable *only if they meet the condition, ethically formulated, of the categorical imperative*. No historical symbol and narrative legitimating the survival of a group at the expense of other group is stronger than the criterion of categorical imperative. Because these historical symbols and legitimating narratives contradict both humanity *as a rational and creative species* and the humanity of *every* human being, including of those reclaiming their survival at the expense of other group.

The categorical imperative principle is, for ethics, as Darwin's theory is for biology. They are *paradigms* for the development of science and human cognition: and cognition never remains only thought. Kant paved the way to the quest for the practical universalizable.

REFERENCES

- ARISTOTLE. *Nicomachean Ethics*, in *Aristotle in 23 Volumes*, Vol. 19, translated by H. Rackham. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann Ltd. 1934.
- BATTESTI, Michèle, Jacques Fremeaux (dir.). *Sortir de la guerre*, Paris, Presses de l'Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2014.
- DRIESCH, Hans. *The Science and Philosophy of the Organism*, The Gifford lectures delivered before the University of Aberdeen in the year 1908, Volume II, London, Adam and Charles Black, 1908.
- BAZAC, Ana. "Global injustice: what is known, what is assumed and what is promised?", *Studia UBB, Philosophia*, 58 (2013), No.2, pp. 145-157.
- BAZAC, Ana. "Conatus and the worth of life in a time of crisis", in *Philosophy and Crisis: Responding to Challenges to Ways of Life in the Contemporary World*, 2013 Conference Proceedings, G. Maggini, H. Karabatzaki, V. Solomou-Papanikolaou and J.Vila-Chã (Eds.), vol. II, Washington D.C., Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, book series IV. "Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change", vol. 11, November 2018, pp. 137-152.
- BAZAC, Ana. "Arthur Schopenhauer's mirror: the will, the suffering, the compassion as philosophical challenges", *Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai, Philosophia*, Vol. 64, No. 3, December 2019, pp. 195-225.
- FLEISCHACKER, Samuel. "Once More Unto the Breach: Kant and Race", *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*, Volume 61, Issue 1, 2023, pp. 3-28.
- GEISMANN, Georg. *Kant's Alleged Racism: The Failure of Charles W. Mills (and all too many others)*, Tartu Ülikool, 2016,

- <https://dSPACE.ut.ee/server/api/core/bitstreams/2afd2e74-3078-41b0-bd69-6530f711472f/content>.
- GEISMANN, Georg. "Why Kant Was Not a 'Racist'", *Jahrbuch für Recht und Ethik/Annual Review of Law and Ethics*, Vol. 30: 1, 2022, pp. 263–357.
- GORI, Pietro. "On Nietzsche's Criticism Towards Common Sense Realism in Human, All Too Human I, 11", *Philosophical Readings*, IX, 3, 2017, pp. 207-213.
- GORI, Pietro. "Nietzsche's Fictional Realism: A Historico-Theoretical Approach", *Estetica. Studi e Ricerche*, IX, 2019, pp. 169-184.
- GORI, Pietro & Paolo Stellino. "Il prospettivismo morale nietzscheano", *Syzetesis*, (2), 2015, pp.109-128.
- GORZ, André. „Avant-propos", *Les Temps Modernes*, 196-197, sept.-oct. 1962, pp. 386-400.
- GUIGA, Nebiha, Aurélien Portelli, « Les récits du radeau de la Méduse : L'histoire d'une situation extrême au prisme des violences et des sorties de guerre », *Napoleonica. La Revue*, 2023/2 (N° 46), p. 139-172.
- HUSEYINZADEGAN, Dilek. "Charles Mills' 'Black Radical Kantianism' as a Plot Twist for Kant Studies and Contemporary Kantian-Liberal Political Philosophy", *Kantian Review*, Volume 27, Special issue 4, 2022, pp. 651-665.
- INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE. *Advisory Opinion – Legal Consequences arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem*, 19 July, 2024 – <https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/186/186-20240719-adv-01-00-en.pdf>.
- KANT, Immanuel. *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime* (1764), in *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime and Other Writings*. Edited by Patrick Frierson and Paul Guyer, With an Introduction by Patrick Frierson, Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- KANT, Immanuel. *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781/1787), Translated and edited by Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood, Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- KANT, Immanuel. "An Answer to the Question What is Enlightenment" (1784), in Immanuel Kant, *Practical Philosophy*, Edited by Mary Gregor, Introduction by Allen W. Wood, Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- KANT, Immanuel. *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785), Edited and translated by Allen W. Wood, *with essays by*: J. B. Schneewind, Marcia Baron, Shelly Kagan, Allen W. Wood, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2002.
- KANT, Immanuel. *Critique of Judgment* (1790), Translated, with an Introduction, by Werner S. Pluhar, With a Foreword by Mary J. Gregor, Indianapolis/Cambridge, Hackett Publishing Company, 1987.
- KANT, Immanuel. *Toward Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch* (1795), and *The Conflict of Faculties* (1790), in *Toward Perpetual Peace and Other Writings on Politics, Peace, and History*, Edited and with an Introduction by Pauline Kleingeld, Translated by David L. Colclasure with essays by Jeremy Waldron,

- Michael W. Doyle, Allen W. Wood, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2006.
- KANT, Immanuel. *The Metaphysics of Morals* (1797), Introduction, translation and notes by Mary Gregor, Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- KANT, Immanuel. *Notes and Fragments*. Edited by Paul Guyer, Translated by Curtis Bowman, Paul Guyer, Frederick Rauscher, Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- KLEINGELD, Pauline. "Kant's Second Thoughts on Colonialism", in Katrin Flikschuh and Lea Ypi (Eds.), *Kant and Colonialism: Historical and Critical Perspectives*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014, pp. 43-67.
- MALIKS, Reidar. "Kant and the French Revolution", *Las Torres de Lucca. Revista internacional de filosofía política*, 12(2), 2023, pp. 113-119
- MILLS, Charles W. *The Racial Contract*, Cornell University Press, 1997.
- MILLS, Charles W. *Blackness Visible: Essays on Philosophy and Race*, Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 1998.
- NAHOUM-GRAPPE, Véronique. « Anthropologie de la violence extrême : le crime de profanation », *Revue internationale des sciences sociales*, 2002/4, p. 601-609.
- PEINZGER, Peter. "Interpretation und Machtwillen. Nietzsches Denkwirklichkeiten als fictive Welten," Renate Reschke (Hrs.), *Nietzscheforschung, Band 20*, Akademie Verlag, 2013, pp. 31- 46.
- PLATO. *Apology*, In: *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, Vol. 1 translated by Harold North Fowler; Introduction by W.R.M. Lamb. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann Ltd. 1966.
- PROCTOR, Robert N. "Three Roots of Human Recency: Molecular Anthropology, the Refigured Acheulean, and the UNESCO Response to Auschwitz", *Current Anthropology*, Volume 44, Number 2 April 2003, pp. 213-239.
- RĂDUICĂ, Ionuț. "Sentiment empiric și acțiune morală la Kant" [Empirical Feeling and Moral Action in Kant], *Studii de istorie a filosofiei universale*, XXXI/2023, 1, pp. 193-202.
- SCHOPENHAUER, Arthur. *The Basis of Morality* (1841), Translated with Introduction and Notes by Arthur Brodrick Bullock, Cambridge, Trinity College, London, Swan Sonnenschein and Co, 1903.
- SURPRENANT, Chris W. "A Reconciliation of Kant's Views on Revolution", *Interpretation – A Journal of Political Philosophy*, Volume 32, Issue 2, 2005, pp. 151-169.
- TOCQUEVILLE, Alexis de. *L'Ancien Régime et la Révolution*, in *Œuvres complètes*, volume 4, Paris, Éditions Lévy, 1866.
- TSANOFF, Radoslav A. "Schopenhauer's Criticism of Kant's Theory of Ethics", *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 19, No. 5 (Sep., 1910), pp. 512-534.
- WOLFF, Richard D. *Understanding Capitalism, Democracy at Work*, 2024.

WITTGENSTEIN AND PROGRESS*

Katsiaryna CHURUKANAVA¹

Abstract: *In this article, I consider the concept of progress and Ludwig Wittgenstein's attitude towards it. The difficulty we face when attempting to unambiguously define and even understand such a phenomenon as progress gives rise to some confusion in our perceptions and analysis. Moreover, this difficulty may distort our understanding of certain philosophers' thoughts on progress. Given that Wittgenstein lived during a time of remarkable scientific discoveries, but also of tragic historical events, examining his thoughts on progress seems both intriguing and fruitful. The aim of this article is not to identify any specific stance that Wittgenstein articulated with regard to progress, but rather to attempt to demonstrate that today many of his ideas can be effectively utilised to better understand progress and its role.*

Keywords: *Wittgenstein, progress, conservatism.*

Introduction

Nowadays we hear a lot of talk about progress. Many areas of our lives, both public and private, are bound up with this concept. But what does the word 'progress' truly signify? This question is more pertinent today than ever before, and answering it requires careful consideration. I present my reflections on this issue in the first part of this article, where I also briefly outline the emergence and consolidation of today's progressive thinking paradigm. In the second part, I examine Ludwig Wittgenstein's thoughts on progress from two key perspectives: what he was specifically discussing when he addressed the topic of progress, and whether he was indeed so negatively disposed towards it. The third part contains opinions regarding Wittgenstein's political views, i.e. not the philosopher's own political views, but others' opinions of them, the careful examination of which provides us with a broader perspective on the issue of progress.

Aknowledgments

This article was written with the support of "Excellence Initiative - Research University" program (Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, Poland).

* I'm grateful to Stephen Dersley, who helped me to prepare the English version of this article.

¹ Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, Poland.

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-4115-0891>

This article does not aim to present a definitive account of Wittgenstein's stance on progress or of his socio-political views; neither do I present my own views on the latter. The purpose of this article is to take a closer look at the philosopher's judgements, with the aim of gaining a better understanding of his philosophy, as this should help us apply it more successfully in today's realities.

What do we know about progress?

Maybe self-improvement isn't the answer.

Maybe self-destruction is the answer.

Chuck Palahniuk *Fight Club*

Do you believe in progress?

I think most people would answer yes to this question, without a moment's hesitation. However, if I refuse to be satisfied with this answer and follow Socrates' example, by prompting my interlocutors to clarify exactly what they mean by progress, I will most likely hear that progress is improvement, optimisation, development, a forward movement. This is a quite common and thoroughly justified intuition – in Latin, progress is translated as “movement forward, development, success”. If we continue and aim for greater precision, when the discussion turns to what or whom this improvement concerns I will probably hear that it is the improvement of “everything”, “everyone”, or simply “our life”. Such responses and reasoning – although I must admit I have yet to test them in practice – seem to be along the lines of what the majority of people would accept without reflection. This makes the attempt to understand such a seemingly simple yet very mysterious phenomenon as progress all the more interesting. Thus, to reason about progress, or to at least say something sensible on this topic, it is necessary to define what I mean when I talk about progress. Starting from a general definition of progress as a movement forward, or directed development from a lower level to a higher one (i.e. complexity), we can conclude that it is above all a process. A process which, in itself as a phenomenon, i.e. in isolation, cannot exist (in the way that a chair can exist as an object of the material world, which can be considered, with all the necessary reservations, in isolation from this world). To understand anything about a particular process, we correlate it with this or that aspect of objective reality (or subjective reality – this issue is not fundamental in

the context of this reasoning and will not be considered in more detail). Therefore, to contemplate progress, we must first determine what we are speaking of in relation to progress, that is, we have to define the domain of reasoning. It would be peculiar to speak of the progress of everything: “everything” is such a broad concept that it could justifiably be equated to “nothing”.² Barbara Kotowa attempted to categorise the areas in which the concept of progress is applied – in her article “Cultural Images of the World: How is Moral Progress Possible?”. She distinguishes cognitive progress in science, (artistic-aesthetic) progress in art, and moral progress.³ Without directly addressing the content of this article now, I refer only to this categorisation, which I consider not only justified but indeed necessary when contemplating progress within the framework of today’s thinking paradigm.⁴

When we speak of progress today, we tend to have scientific and technological progress in mind; less frequently, we mean social progress (including cultural and/or civilisational progress as its variations); and we almost never refer to progress in art. By scientific and technological progress, we usually understand the development of technology, the accumulation and expansion of scientific knowledge. It is precisely in this sense that Wittgenstein used the word progress when he made a rather famous entry in his journals:

Our civilization is characterized by the word progress. Progress is its form, it is not one of its properties that it makes progress. Typically it constructs. Its activity is to construct a more and more complicated structure. And even clarity is only a means to this end & not an end in itself.

For me on the contrary clarity, transparency, is an end in itself.

MS 109 204: 6-7.11.1930⁵

² Alexander Piatigorsky, in a manner characteristic to him, often reiterated during his public lectures that the words “everything,” “always,” and “all” are detrimental to philosophical thought, and he prohibited their use by his students.

³ Barbara Kotowa, “Kulturowe obrazy świata: jak możliwy jest postęp moralny?”, *Filo-Sofija* 36 (1/2017), pp. 137-150.

⁴ Rupert Read addresses the necessity of altering this paradigm in “Wittgenstein and the Illusion of ‘Progress’: On Real Politics and Real Philosophy in a World of Technocracy”, a work to which I will return later.

⁵ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, trans. Peter Winch, edited by Georg Henrik von Wright in collaboration with Heikki Nyman, Oxford 1998, p. 9.

Rupert Read conducts an analysis of Wittgenstein's attitude towards progress, including this quote, and points out that: "Technological progress is simply what our society does. This is what Wittgenstein is saying. But that by no means implies that such progress is always to be welcomed."⁶ I shall return to Wittgenstein's stance on progress a bit later.

It is also necessary to draw attention to other issues. I have described progress as a process, but I often highlight a different characteristic, referring to progress as an idea. This implies that progress is not something we uncover as belonging immanently to this world, but rather something we bring into the world to structure it, describe it, and understand it. As an idea, progress is ontological, yet as a process it is epistemic. If we agree with this definition (and this is my position), then many interesting aspects arise in the consideration of progress: the relationship with our perception of time, the connection with worldviews (the cultural-religious aspect), anthropocentrism, scientism, internal contradictions as an idea and as a process, etc. (however, all these topics – that are certainly necessary for explaining and gaining a better understanding the nature of what we call progress today – fall beyond the scope of the present article).

When did we first begin to speak of progress? In terms of the concept that seems closest to our current understanding, progress appears – on this point the majority of scholars agree – in the Age of Enlightenment, specifically in France, and became entrenched after the French Revolution. Indeed, what could bolster enthusiasm and faith in the development of society towards ever greater perfection than the motto "Liberty. Equality. Fraternity"? Therefore it is hardly surprising that this idea was most fully developed in the works of the avant-garde thinkers of the revolution: Anne-Robert-Jacques Turgot and Nicolas de Condorcet.

They were perhaps the first to articulate the idea that progressive development is primarily associated with Reason, and that it can continue indefinitely into the future.

Such is the object of the work I have undertaken; the result of which will be to show, from reasoning and from facts, that no bounds have been fixed to the improvement of the human faculties; that the perfectibility of man is absolutely indefinite; that the progress of this perfectibility, henceforth

⁶ Rupert Read, "Wittgenstein and the Illusion of 'Progress': On Real Politics and Real Philosophy in a World of Technocracy", *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement* 78 (2016), pp. 265-284.

above the control of every power that would impede it, has no other limit than the duration of the globe upon which nature has placed us. The course of this progress may doubtless be more or less rapid, but it can never be retrograde; [...]⁷.

This understanding of progress as a rational act of reason took root and became the precursor of today's scientific approach to progress. Around the same time, the awareness and study of history began to develop, and more importantly, history began to be perceived as a process moving from the past towards the future. The development of this consciousness led to the formation of the idea of historical progress in Hegel's philosophy, and subsequently in Marx's (historical materialism). What was in the past came to be seen as a rung on the ladder to the present, and the present as a rung on the path to the future (of course, in Hegel's philosophy this image is somewhat different, but the trend is broadly the same). In this way, the idea of progress as a societal process of development moving inevitably towards an ever-improving future took shape.

It goes without saying that, like many ideas, the idea of progress was divisive and gained opponents as well as proponents. Perhaps the most well-known opponent of the Enlightenment idea of progress was Jean-Jacques Rousseau. It is also worth remembering Georges Sorel, who was very sceptical of the ideas of the French Enlightenment *philosophes* and their fascination with reason and rationality. In his book *Illusions of Progress*, he wrote the following about Condorcet: "It would be impossible to herald in more enthusiastic terms the passage from literature to journalism, from science to the rationalism of the salons and debating societies, from original research to declamation."⁸

Intriguingly, Sorel recalls the thought of Blaise Pascal, a strategy which will also be characteristic of Wittgenstein: "But we must not confuse the scientific use of reason with what is usually called, rationalism. Pascal attacked the latter fraudulent practice mercilessly, not only because he was

⁷ Marie-Jean-Antoine-Nicolas Caritat Condorcet, *Outlines of an historical view of the progress of the human mind*, trans. M. Carey, available at <https://oll.libertyfund.org/title/condorcet-outlines-of-an-historical-view-of-the-progress-of-the-human-mind>, accessed 07 november 2023.

⁸ Georges Sorel., *The Illusions of Progress*, translated by John and Charlotte Stanley, California, 1972, p. 24.

a Christian, but also because his mind could not admit pseudo-mathematical reasoning to be used for answering moral questions.”⁹

The rejection of the idea of progress remained unchanged throughout subsequent history and continues to be so in contemporary times. Alongside the proponents of progress, there are always its sceptics and opponents.¹⁰ Wittgenstein is also considered to be an opponent of progress.

Let us now make a slight digression and pose another question: towards what or where is progress directed? Again, a fairly common intuition is reflected in the answer “towards happiness”, whatever this rather vague statement means. However, this is neither necessary nor even evident:

Why shouldn't someone become desperately unhappy? It is one human possibility. As in 'Corinthian Bagatelle', this is one of the possible paths for the balls. And perhaps not even one of the rarest.

MS 138 9b: 25.1.1949¹¹

This is not merely an indication of the possibility of development, but rather what I consider to be of great importance: in one way or another, progress is today perceived as the idea of development towards something that should be better than what has been before and/or is at present. This also implies a certain continuity across generations, but this is entirely non-obvious and optional:

If someone prophesies that the generation to come will take up these problems & solve them that is usually a sort of wishful thinking, a way of excusing oneself for what one should have accomplished & hasn't. A father would like his son to achieve what he has not achieved so that the task he left unresolved should find a resolution nevertheless. But his son is faced with a new task. I mean: the wish that the task should not remain unfinished disguises itself as a prediction that it will be taken further by the next generation.

⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 16.

¹⁰ Today, Steven Pinker is one of the most renowned advocates and promoters of the idea of progress. Yuval Noah Harari could be classified as a skeptic, while John Gray is more likely aligned with the opponents. It is worth noting that neither the terror which swiftly replaced the ideals of the French Revolution, nor the atrocities of the two World Wars from the beginning and middle of the 20th century, managed to alter the general paradigm of thinking about the progressive development of humanity, even among its skeptics and opponents.

¹¹ Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, p. 92.

Returning to the issue of the direction of progress, I would like to highlight a Marxist connotation that is still in circulation today: the liberation of people from the necessity of labour by providing them with an unconditional basic income, in order to create the conditions for their development as individuals. This idea reaches us “from the depths of the ages”, but its ominous connotations in today’s realities still seem to be poorly thought out, although Hannah Arendt addressed this issue in the mid-20th century:

The modern age has carried with it a theoretical glorification of labor and has resulted in a factual transformation of the whole of society into a laboring society. The fulfilment of the wish, therefore, like the fulfilment of wishes in fairy tales, comes at a moment when it can only be self-defeating. It is a society of laborers which is about to be liberated from the fetters of labor, and this society does no longer know of those other higher and more meaningful activities for the sake of which this freedom would deserve to be won [...] What we are confronted with is the prospect of a society of laborers without labor, that is, without the only activity left to them. Surely, nothing could be worse.¹³

Nonetheless, we are not inclined to perceive any danger in the idea of progress. Perhaps we simply do not reflect on it with sufficient seriousness.

If we cast our gaze back to recent history, we observe that the relatively optimistic attitude towards the idea of progress prevalent in the 18th and 19th centuries, and even at the dawn of the 20th century, gave way to a more sombre and pessimistic disposition by the mid-20th century. Prominent figures such as Walter Benjamin,¹⁴ Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno,¹⁵ and Ludwig Wittgenstein, expressed their reservations and scepticism.

The truly apocalyptic view of the world is that things do *not* repeat themselves. It is not e.g. absurd to believe that the scientific & technological age is the beginning of the end for humanity, that the idea of Great Progress is a bedazzlement, along with the idea that the truth will ultimately be known; that there is nothing good or desirable about scientific knowledge &

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 46.

¹³ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, Chicago, 1998, pp. 4-5.

¹⁴ See the quote regarding Paul Klee’s *Angelus Novus* in Walter Benjamin’s *Theses on the Philosophy of History*.

¹⁵ In *Dialectic of Enlightenment*.

that humanity, in seeking it, is falling into a trap. It is by no means clear that this is not how things are.

MS 133 90: 7.1.1947¹⁶

It is crucial to remember that progress is also a process that we attribute to a specific area of our life. Attention must then be drawn to the context of the mid-20th century, when the pessimism of many thinkers of the time regarding scientific, technological, and moral progress was entirely justified. The faith placed by Kant in the Enlightenment and the maturity of humanity, as well as Turgot and Condorcet's belief in a future of endless, rational progress, stumbled through concentration camp barracks and was blinded by the nuclear explosions at Hiroshima and Nagasaki.¹⁷

What did Wittgenstein think about progress?

I have already mentioned that in the discourse on this subject, Wittgenstein is considered to be one of the opponents of progress, which is not surprising given his notes on the issue. However, it is impossible to speak of progress in general or progress in everything, and each time we talk about progress, we mean – even if we are not fully aware of this ourselves – something specific: scientific and technical progress, moral progress, social progress. Perhaps we are even thinking of something very specific: progress in medicine, in child-rearing, or in space exploration. It is not enough, therefore, to say that Wittgenstein had a negative attitude towards progress; it is necessary to specify exactly what he might have meant by this.

It is no secret that as a person Wittgenstein was quite extraordinary, or even atypical, when compared to other philosophers, especially his contemporaries. Nowadays people tend to think that a fuller understanding of his philosophy can be gained through some consideration of his personality and way of life. Without delving deeper into this issue, I believe it is necessary to highlight Wittgenstein's idiosyncratic attitude towards religion, or rather towards faith, which in turn shaped his unique approach to ethics. Why is this important? Our ethics emerge from (and are shaped by) our worldview, and thus influence our behaviour. At the same time, our worldview is shaped by certain ideas, and our behaviour shapes our lives. Here, I refer to what the philosopher himself termed "forms of life" and

¹⁶ Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, p. 64.

¹⁷ This does not negate the idea of progress as a process, but highlights its various aspects and draws attention to progress as an idea.

“following a rule,” which are inextricably linked with “language games”. I believe that all the processes described above are not always – and it would probably be more accurate to say that they are very rarely – conscious and deliberate: “What has to be accepted, the given, is—so one could say—*forms of life*.”¹⁸ However, while we may not be able to abandon a form of life (because when we abandon one, we inevitably find ourselves in another – in order for us to walk, there must be rough ground under our feet¹⁹), it is entirely possible for us to change internally. It is necessary to develop an ethical system based on the idea of the need for personal development, then behaviour and life will be oriented towards continuous self-improvement: to change the world, one must change oneself.

If life becomes hard to bear we think of improvements. But the most important & effective improvement, in our own attitude, hardly occurs to us, & we can decide on this only with the utmost difficulty.

MS 132 136: 7.10.1946²⁰

Within such an ethical system, it would make sense to talk about the progress of the individual – although in this case, one tends to speak of development instead. The emergence of new technologies and the expansion of scientific knowledge, while they may change the form of life – and indeed do change it, sometimes radically, they were not regarded by Wittgenstein as progress that could be directly attributable to the individual, i.e., progress in the true sense of the word.

Just because a new technological innovation has occurred, it does not mean that we should really describe that as progress²¹.

Therefore, I maintain that for Wittgenstein progress in its conventional understanding pertains to the advancement of science and technology, and it is this sense that he refers to in his notes. It would be an error to categorise Wittgenstein as a general opponent of progress: he does not propose that we revert to being “noble savages”, he rather challenges the paradigm of thinking in terms of scientific and technological progress.

¹⁸ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe, Oxford 1958, p. 226.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 46.

²⁰ Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, p. 60.

²¹ Rupert Read, “Wittgenstein and the Illusion of ‘Progress’: On Real Politics and Real Philosophy in a World of Technocracy”.

Let us consider the quote from Nestroy with which Wittgenstein begins the *Philosophical Investigations* (hereinafter referred to as PI): “Anyway, the thing about progress is that it always seems greater than it really is”.²² R. Read notes that, in his opinion, Wittgenstein²³ directs this thought towards himself and his own progression in philosophical thought – and this might be the only context in which progress does not refer to what the philosopher identified as the form of civilization of his time. Contrary to the view that one should distinguish “two Wittgensteins” – the early one, from the period of the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (hereinafter TLP), and the late one, from the period of the PI – thus implying two different philosophies, I adhere to the position that Wittgenstein’s thinking was consistent throughout his life. As an example, it can be pointed out that already in the TLP he signals his negative attitude towards attempts to conflate and equate scientific and life problems, and his opinion on this matter remains unchanged later on. Metaphorically speaking, in the TLP Wittgenstein examines the human skeleton, while in the PI he proceeds to consider the person in flesh, encompassing the entire diversity of their interactions with the external world. Around 1930, in a conversation with Drury, Wittgenstein remarked:

My father was a businessman and I am a businessman too; I want my philosophy to be businesslike, to get something done, to get something settled. [...]

There is no one central problem in philosophy, but countless different problems. Each has to be dealt with on its own. Philosophy is like trying to open a safe with a combination lock: each little adjustment of the dials seems to achieve nothing; only when everything is in place does the door open²⁴.

In this mode of thought, it is entirely reasonable to ask the question: How can one claim to possess universal knowledge²⁵ capable of

²² The fate of this quote is also intriguing, and more can be read about it in Kevin Cahill’s “The Concept of Progress in Wittgenstein’s Thought”, *The Review of Metaphysics*, 1 (60/2006), pp. 71-100.

²³ Wittgenstein insisted in his letter to the publisher that this quote was an indispensable part of his book. For more on this subject, see Kevin Cahill’s work..

²⁴ Maurice O’Connor Drury. *Conversations with Wittgenstein. Ludwig Wittgenstein. Personal Recollections*, Editor R. Phees, Oxford, 1981, pp. 112-182.

²⁵ In this context, we are not discussing philosophy in general or Wittgenstein’s attitude towards metaphysics/ontology and the possibility of constructing unified systems.

transforming society or creating conditions in which the majority can lead a life of contentment without investing personal effort?²⁶ This seems to be a search for a universal panacea, whose existence appears highly improbable. Yet, this notion of universality and externalisation is embedded in our conventional understanding of progress. We are accustomed to the idea that there is a direction of development, which can be represented as an arrow shooting from the past, through the present, and into the future of humanity, with the assumption that the situation cannot deteriorate.²⁷ This is, of course, a very generalised and rough description, but on the whole it does not seem inaccurate to me. A manifestation of this way of thinking can be found in Steven Pinker's book *The Better Angels of Our Nature*, in which the author attempts to demonstrate, using statistical data, that we can confidently claim that progress is occurring in all areas of human life. Without delving into an analysis and critique of this approach (which I believe to be flawed), I would like to quote John Gray, a critic of Pinker:

What people like Pinker do is to attempt to manufacture meaning from figures, numbers and statistics. In my book I suggest that there might be, in the near future, a state-of-the-art electronic tablet that continuously generates that kind of meaning from numbers. In fact, I suggest that those who believe in reason—but at the same time lack any deeper religious faith and are too weak to live in doubt—should turn to the sorcery of numbers.²⁸

Victor Klemperer expresses a similar attitude to progress:

I have lived through three epochs of German history, the Wilhelmine era, the Weimar republic and the Hitler period. The republic, almost suicidally, lifted all controls on freedom of expression; the national Socialists used to claim scornfully that they were only taking advantage of the rights granted them by the constitution when in their books and newspapers they mercilessly attacked the state and all its institutions and guiding principles using every available weapon of satire and belligerent sermonizing. There were no restraints whatsoever in the realm of

²⁶ Note that we typically think within the paradigm of happiness and/or prosperity, and we hardly ever come across thought on virtue.

²⁷ However, this concept is changing, and today the situation looks somewhat different in Western Europe: some residents are uncertain whether their children and grandchildren will have a better standard of living than they do.

²⁸ The full text of the interview available at <https://www.vice.com/en/article/exmj3e/john-gray-freedom>, accessed 25 august 2023.

the arts and sciences, aesthetics and philosophy. Nobody was bound to a particular moral dogma or ideal of beauty, everyone was free to choose. This motley intellectual freedom was celebrated as a tremendous and decisive leap forward compared with the imperial age.²⁹

Conceiving of progress as a linear process is not only erroneous but also perilous: it diminishes our vigilance and our ability to respond swiftly. In the real world, things and situations seldom evolve exactly as we anticipate or even plan (although the emergence and rapid development of artificial intelligence may alter this):

The truly apocalyptic view of the world is that things do not repeat themselves. It is not e.g. absurd to believe that the scientific & technological age is the beginning of the end for humanity, that the idea of Great Progress is a bedazzlement, along with the idea that the truth will ultimately be known; that there is nothing good or desirable about scientific knowledge & that humanity, in seeking it, is falling into a trap. It is by no means clear that this is not how things are.

MS 133 90: 7.1.1947

A man's dreams are virtually never realized.

MS 133 118: 19.1.1947

It could only be by accident that someone's dreams about the future of philosophy, art, science would come true. What he sees is a continuation of his own world in his dream, that is to say PERHAPS his wish (and perhaps not) but not reality. It might still happen that a person's photograph, e.g., changed with time, almost as if he were aging on it. But its changes then take place according to their own laws & why should they lead in a parallel direction to the development of the real person?

MS 134 27: 10-15.3.1947³⁰

In the light of these passages, I do not believe that Wittgenstein was directly and negatively disposed towards progress itself, even in its scientific understanding, but rather against the belief held by the majority people (contemporary to the philosopher and representatives of a specific territory, i.e., a specific cultural code) that it is possible to delegate responsibility for the future to some ongoing process that will lead to a necessarily positive outcome. For if we believe that history is unfolding along a straight line

²⁹ Victor Klemperer, *The Language of the Third Reich*, trans. M. Brady, London 2000 p. 20.

³⁰ Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, p. 64, 65.

from a starting point to an endpoint, and that this is always development, or a movement that invariably leads to improvement,³¹ then it is much easier to believe in and accept some form of historical determinism. In such a belief framework, there can be a growing tendency to relinquish or transfer responsibility – not to some religious Absolute, but to an impersonal, historically confirmed, and scientifically approved process, which we call progress. And this may have irreversible consequences.

Wittgenstein often expressed pessimistic sentiments, for example concerning the current state of the philosophical community (focusing primarily on England and Western Europe), or the future after World War II. The following note exemplifies this proclivity:

The hysterical fear of the atom bomb the public now has, or at least expresses, is almost a sign that here for once a really salutary discovery has been made. At least the fear gives the impression of being fear in the face of a really effective bitter medicine. I cannot rid myself of the thought: if there were not something good here, the philistines would not be making an outcry. But perhaps this too is a childish idea. For all I can mean really is that the bomb creates the prospect of the end, the destruction of a ghastly evil, of disgusting soapy water science and certainly that is not an unpleasant thought.

MS 131 66 c: 19.8.1946³²

Ray Monk asserts: “What links this apocalyptic anxiety with his hostility to academic philosophy is his detestation of the power of science in our age, which on the one hand encouraged the philosopher’s ‘craving for generality’, and on the other produced the atomic bomb.”³³

This pessimism was not unique to Wittgenstein. Similar thoughts were expressed by Robert Oppenheimer, referred to as the ‘father’ of the atomic bomb, following its use in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This is discussed by Kai Bird and Martin J. Sherwin in their biography of the scientist:

“We have made a thing, a most terrible weapon,” he told an audience of the American Philosophical Society, “that has altered abruptly and profoundly the nature of the world [...] a thing that by all the standards of the world we

³¹ We are not talking here about philosophical reflection on progress, but about a certain general common perception and attitude towards progress.

³² Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, p. 55.

³³ Ray Monk, *Ludwig Wittgenstein. The Duty of Genius*, New York, 1990, p. 789.

grew up in is an evil thing. And by so doing [...] we have raised again the question of whether science is good for man?"³⁴

Wittgenstein maintained a distinctly negative attitude towards the scientific-technological form that progress took in his civilisation,³⁵ yet he offers no alternative. He does not formulate ideas for potential changes in society and its future life, proposes no plan for improvement, and does not point out the 'correct' path. In this, Wittgenstein remains highly consistent: there is no universal solution, and the only thing we can and must strive for is clarity of thought.

Wittgenstein and socio-political views

If you were not a revolutionary in your youth, you lack heart; if you have not become a conservative in your old age, you lack wisdom.³⁶

There is little to be said about Wittgenstein's attitude to politics: he did not express himself directly, and political philosophy was not among his interests. The only thing we can do if we wish to define the philosopher's political position is to interpret his actions and some of his statements. But is that really so important? Can Wittgenstein's political views be of any use to us today in any way? Probably not. Nevertheless, given our topic is progress and Wittgenstein's attitude towards it, I would like to consider the issue of his image as a conservative thinker.³⁷ I would like to make clear that I think it important not to assign Wittgenstein to this or that camp, but instead to show that his reflections can be fruitfully used to change the way we approach any opposition.

When discussing conservatism or a conservative way of thinking, it is hard to see how it can successfully coexist or work together with with progress or progressive thought. David Bloor, in his analysis of Mannheim's

³⁴ Kai Bird, Martin J. Sherwin, *American Prometheus. The Triumph and Tragedy of J. Robert Oppenheimer*, New York, 2006, EPUB, Chap. 2.

³⁵ Again, the complexity of the discourse on progress is evident: a negative or positive attitude towards progress implies it is acceptance as an accomplished fact and/or that it is unfolding in the world in its linearity.

³⁶ This saying is often mistakenly attributed to Churchill.

³⁷ For example, Andrew Lugg "Was Wittgenstein a conservative thinker?", David Bloor "Wittgenstein jako myśliciel konserwatywny", Lotar Rasiński *Śladami Marksa i Wittgensteina*.

philosophy, writes that the conservative style of thinking emerged as a reaction to the French Revolution³⁸ when unreflective traditionalism was forced to defend itself. This instantly created an opposition between the revolutionary and the conservative. The former always advocates moving forward, into the future, while the latter consistently looks to the past.

What is really at issue is a matter of attitudes towards time, and attitudes towards the present moment in time. Mannheim brings this out clearly when he says that for the progressive, natural law thinker the present is the beginning of the future. For the conservative thinker, by contrast, the present is the end of the past.³⁹

However, can this characterization really be construed as indicating an attitude towards change and hence progress? When Wittgenstein is described as a conservative thinker, reference is made to *Philosophical Investigations*, where he discusses following a rule, not based on the interpretation of that rule—i.e., sensible understanding (as that would lead us to an infinite regress)—but based on practice, i.e., blindly: “To obey a rule, to make a report, to give an order, to play a game of chess, are customs (uses, institutions)”⁴⁰ Customs and traditions are closely tied to the past and arise only as a result of specific practices. The future is also present, but it is always in some way mediated by the past, dependent on it. As I mentioned earlier, Wittgenstein believed that we are always already in a certain form of life, that we have to master it before we can reflect upon it. Those who study Wittgenstein from the perspective of conservatism also put forward other arguments derived from the evidence of his biography. So the question arises as to the possibility of any meaningful criticism of the existing socio-political system, or of a phenomenon such as revolution, within a given system of reasoning. One can respond in various ways, depending on the interpretation of Wittgenstein’s thought (I will not delve into this question here, but I refer readers to Lotar Rasinski’s book *Śladami Marksa i Wittgensteina*, in which the author conducts a fairly detailed analysis). Wittgenstein himself made the following notes:

³⁸ David Bloor, “Wittgenstein as a Conservative Thinker”, *The Sociology of Philosophical Knowledge* (2000), p. 5.

³⁹ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁰ Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, pp. 118-119.

Where there is bad management in the state, I believe, bad management is fostered in families too. A worker who is ready for a strike⁴⁴ at any time will not bring up his children to respect order either.

MS 135 102: 27.7.1947

The revolutionary will be the one who can revolutionize himself.

MS 165 204: ca. 1944⁴¹

It might seem that these notes clearly indicate the philosopher's distinctly conservative thinking. However, I do not see this as conservatism. Rather, on the one hand, I see an appeal to tradition and thus to cultural memory, due to the need to maintain order (I deliberately omit the issue of a badly-managed economy), and on the other hand, an appeal to reconsider attempts that come from the outside and seek to force radical change upon society, which is the essence of revolution. The former aligns Wittgenstein with the thoughts of some Russian philosophers, according to whom progress is not found in the future, but in the past.

If you wish to be a man of the future, contemporary man, do not forget Father Anchises and the native gods amidst the smoking ruins. [...] The saviour shall be saved. This is the mystery of progress - there is no second and there will not be. (Anchises – a relative of the Trojan King Priam, beloved by Aphrodite, who bore him a son, Aeneas. With the fall of Troy, Aeneas carried the elderly father on his shoulders out of the burning city. After long wanderings, Aeneas settled in Italy, his descendants founded Rome, and the Julian clan, tracing its origins back to him, gave the first dynasty of Roman emperors.)⁴²

I would relate the second aspect to Wittgenstein's requirement for clear thinking: as Monk writes, Wittgenstein once told Drury that he would like to have as an epigraph to his book (PI) the words of the Earl of Kent from King Lear (Act I, Scene IV): "I'll teach you differences".⁴³ And this is truly significant when it comes to changes, especially those brought about by revolutions. Revolution is associated with radicalism, and conservatism more with reformism. However, this distinction in its usual sense is erroneous, as Erich Fromm points out:

⁴¹ Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, p. 72, 51.

⁴² Władimir Sołowjow, *Tajemnica postępu*, available at: <http://www.magister.msk.ru/library/philos/solovyov/solovv23.htm>, accessed 13 august 2023.

⁴³ Monk, *Ludwig Wittgenstein. The Duty of Genius*, p. 869.

Reform which is not radical, in this sense, never accomplishes its ends and eventually ends up in the opposite direction. So-called "radicalism" on the other hand, which believes that we can solve problems by force, when observation, patience and continuous activity is required, is as unrealistic and fictitious as reform. Historically speaking, they both often lead to the same result. The revolution of the Bolsheviks led to Stalinism, the reform of the right wing Social Democrats in Germany, led to Hitler. The true criterion of reform is not its tempo but its realism, its true "radicalism"; it is the question whether it goes to the roots and attempts to change causes—or whether it remains on the surface and attempts to deal only with symptoms⁴⁴.

Certainly, I do not reject the idea of revolution outright, just as, in my opinion, Wittgenstein did not either (after all, his sympathy towards the Soviet Union is no secret); it simply does not fall within his area of interest. I reiterate: what matters is the clarity of thinking and the clarity of "language games" within the appropriate "form of life". Revolution, after all, is not devoid of ambivalence either.

In every revolution, be it political, social, artistic or literary in nature, there are always two principles at work: on the one hand the appetite for the new, whereby the total contrast with what was previously valid is swiftly stressed, and on the other the need to connect with the past, to use tradition as a defence. What one is doing isn't absolutely new, rather it is a return to those things which the foregoing age had shamefully rejected, a return to humanity, the nation, morality or the true nature of art, and so on⁴⁵.

Therefore, reasoning within the dichotomy of conservative-revolutionary (especially if this also matches by analogy to being 'for or against' progress) does not seem to me to be particularly effective. On this matter, I am not inclined to place Wittgenstein in a certain "camp"; I rather endeavour to apply his ideas constructively, and thus to reflect upon (as does R. Read) our contemporary understanding of progress and our relationship to it.

Conclusion

To sum up the foregoing considerations, I am convinced that Wittgenstein's philosophy can help us elucidate many aspects of thinking about such an ambiguous and complex phenomenon as progress. In this article, I once

⁴⁴ Erich Fromm, *The Sane Society*, London, 1956 p. 266.

⁴⁵ Klemperer, *The Language of the Third Reich*, pp. 77-78.

again attempted to focus attention on the heterogeneity of progress and the impossibility of thinking about it “generally”. To meet the challenges we face today, an integrated approach is essential.

[...] sanity and mental health can be attained only by simultaneous changes in the sphere of industrial and political organization, of spiritual and philosophical orientation, of character structure, and of cultural activities. The concentration of effort in any of these spheres, to the exclusion or neglect of others, is destructive of all change. In fact, here seems to lie one of the most important obstacles to the progress of mankind. [...]

[...] Undoubtedly one step of integrated progress in all spheres of life will have more far-reaching and more lasting results for the progress of the human race than a hundred steps preached—and even for a short while lived—in only one isolated sphere. Several thousands of years of failure in “isolated progress” should be a rather convincing lesson.⁴⁶

When discussing the necessity of an integrated approach to solving problems associated with progress, it is imperative to remember that only through comprehending our own grounding in a “form of life”, reflecting upon this form, and appropriately reforming “language games” will we be led to progress, not merely in form, but in substance.

REFERENCES

- ARENDRT, Hannah, *The Human Condition*, Chicago, 1998.
- BIRD, Kai and Sherwin, Martin J., *American Prometheus. The Triumph and Tragedy of J. Robert Oppenheimer*, New York, 2006.
- BLOOR, David, “Wittgenstein jako konserwatywny myśliciel”, *Logos*, 5-6 (35/2002), pp. 47-64.
- CAHILL, Kevin, “The concept of progress in Wittgenstein’s thought”, *The Review of Metaphysics*, 1 (60/2006), pp. 71-100.
- CONDORCET, Marie-Jean-Antoine-Nicolas Caritat, *Outlines of an historical view of the progress of the human mind*, trans. M. Carey, <https://oll.libertyfund.org/title/condorcet-outlines-of-an-historical-view-of-the-progress-of-the-human-mind>.
- DRURY, O’Connor, *Conversations with Wittgenstein. Ludwig Wittgenstein. Personal Recollections*, Editor R. Phees. Oxford, 1981, pp. 112-182.
- FROMM, Erich, *The Sane Society*, London, 1956.
- KLEMPERER, Victor, *The Language of the Third Reich*, trans. M. Brady, London 2000.
- KOTOWA, Barbara, “Kulturowe obrazy świata: jak możliwy jest postęp moralny?”, *Filo-Sofija*, 36 (1/2017), pp. 137-150.

⁴⁶ Fromm, *The Sane Society*, pp. 264-265.

- MONK, Ray, *Ludwig Wittgenstein. The Duty of Genius*, New York, 1990.
- READ, Rupert, "Wittgenstein and the Illusion of 'Progress': On Real Politics and Real Philosophy in a World of Technocracy", *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement*, 78 (2016), pp. 265-284.
- SOŁOWJOW, Władimir, "Tajemnica postępu",
<http://www.magister.msk.ru/library/philos/solovyov/solovv23.htm>.
- SOREL, Georges, *The Illusions of Progress*, trans. John and Charlotte Stanley, California, 1972.
- WITTGENSTEIN, Ludwig, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe, Oxford 1958.
- WITTGENSTEIN, Ludwig, *Culture and Value*, trans. P. Winch, edited by Georg Henrik von Wright in collaboration with Heikki Nyman, Oxford 1998.

A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF JÜRGEN HABERMAS' CONCEPTION OF LABOUR IN HIS EARLY WRITINGS

Alex-Flavius DEACONU¹

Abstract: *This paper revisits Jürgen Habermas's early conceptualization of labor, emphasizing its framing as instrumental action. While recognizing that Habermas's instrumental model—centered on efficiency and control over nature—captures a vital dimension of labor, the analysis argues that it overlooks labor's full emancipatory potential. To address this limitation, the paper proposes supplementing the instrumental model with communicative action, emphasizing the interplay between labor's technical and moral-social dimensions. By integrating these complementary perspectives, the paper advances a more comprehensive understanding of labor's role in human emancipation.*

Keywords: *Jürgen Habermas, labor, instrumental action, emancipation.*

1. Introduction

This paper examines Jürgen Habermas's conception of labor as articulated in his early writings,² specifically his analysis of labor through the lens of instrumental action. Reassessing these early works is timely for several reasons. First, instrumental accounts of labor remain dominant in contemporary philosophical discussions,³ and Habermas's early writings provide a robust foundation for such accounts. Instrumental approaches often bracket moral and ethical considerations, treating them as external to the rationality governing labor processes. These approaches define labor's rationality in terms of increased efficiency, the development of productive

¹ West University of Timisoara, Romania.

² The main works by Jürgen Habermas considered in this paper are *Theory and Practice*, trans. John Viertel (Boston: Beacon Press, 1974); *Knowledge and Human Interests* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971); and "Technology and Science as Ideology," in *Towards a Rational Society: Studies in the Philosophy of Social Science*, trans. Jeremy J. Shapiro (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970).

³ Axel Honneth, "Work and Recognition: A Redefinition," in *The Philosophy of Recognition: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Hans-Christoph Schmidt am Busch and Christopher F. Zurn (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010), 223–240.

capacities, and control over nature.⁴ Second, Habermas's early writings include attempts to elucidate the specific emancipatory potential of labor, efforts that extend beyond the narrow confines of the instrumental model. As this paper will show, these writings expose underlying tensions between defending an instrumental account of labor and introducing premises that challenge it.

The critique advanced in this paper, grounded in the assumptions of Habermas's own framework, contends that his account of emancipation surpasses the boundaries of the instrumental model by incorporating an anthropological-transcendental conception of labor. While the instrumental dimension of labor—centered on technical mastery and control over nature—is necessary, it is insufficient to fully account for labor's emancipatory potential. To provide a more comprehensive understanding of labor's role in human emancipation, it is crucial to supplement Habermas's "analytically explainable" link between labor and instrumental action with a connection to communicative action. Labor's emancipatory potential, therefore, relies not only on its technical achievements but also on the needs and purposes it fulfills, which derive their legitimacy through communicative, rather than instrumental, action. Ultimately, Habermas's framework necessitates the recognition of communicative action as an essential counterpart to instrumental action in fully realizing labor's emancipatory potential.

This paper begins by outlining Habermas's instrumental model of labor. It then examines the tensions between development and emancipation in Habermas's account, arguing that communicative action must be integrated into any comprehensive theory of labor's emancipatory role. The conclusion proposes that a revised conception of labor, incorporating both instrumental and communicative actions, provides a more robust framework for understanding labor's contribution to human emancipation.

2. Labour as Instrumental Action: Development through the Control of Nature

The strengths—and, as this paper will argue, the limitations—of Habermas's instrumental model of labor stem from his conception of labor

⁴ Nicholas H. Smith, "Three Normative Models of Work," in *New Philosophies of Labour: Work and the Social Bond*, ed. Nicholas H. Smith and Jean-Philippe Deranty (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 181–206.

as a form of purposive action. In this framework, labor is primarily oriented toward the control and manipulation of natural processes, with technical knowledge continuously informing and enhancing the efficiency of labor activities. This section highlights the strengths of Habermas's argument, grounded in the "analytically explicable connection" between labor processes and purposive-rational action.⁵ The productivity of labor can be improved through the application of technical knowledge, technologies, and competencies, thereby ensuring increased control over nature. While this connection is plausible, unpacking it requires a closer examination of Habermas's typology of actions.

Decisive for Habermas's typology is the distinction between "orientation to success" and "orientation to reaching understanding."⁶ Purposive-rational actions are oriented toward success, while communicative action is oriented toward reaching agreement. Within the category of purposive-rational actions, Habermas distinguishes between instrumental and strategic actions. Instrumental actions are directed toward the control of nature, whereas strategic actions involve complexes of behaviors aimed at gaining control over "cooperative human beings." For the sake of brevity and clarity, this paper considers only the "analytical connection" between labor processes and instrumental action.

Although both instrumental and strategic actions are oriented toward success rather than understanding, they differ in the specific rules they follow and the meaning of "success" appropriate to each. Instrumental actions adhere to technical rules, with success measured by how effectively goals are achieved in the physical world. Strategic actions, on the other hand, follow the principles of rational choice, with success determined by how effectively they influence the decisions of "rational opponents" in the desired direction.

More specifically, the attributes of instrumental action can be identified through the types of rules governing it and the type of knowledge used to evaluate the validity of these rules. Instrumental action is governed by technical rules derived from empirical knowledge, enabling

⁵ Jürgen Habermas, "Reply to My Critics," in *Habermas: Critical Debates*, ed. John B. Thompson and David Held (London: Macmillan, 1982), 267. I also draw on Thomas McCarthy's exposition of Habermas's typology; see Thomas McCarthy, *The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1978), chap. 1.

⁶ Habermas, "Reply to My Critics," 263.

the development of predictions about observable phenomena.⁷ A second criterion, closely related to the first, concerns the conditions under which the validity of these rules can be confirmed. Valid technical rules produce correct, empirically verifiable predictions, and their refinement depends on the accumulation of technical knowledge about natural processes. Today, the empirical-analytical sciences are the primary contributors to this body of technical knowledge. Indeed, a key element of Habermas's conception of epistemology as social theory is the recognition of the empirical-analytical sciences as a reflexive system of purposive-rational action.⁸

Labor shares several key features with instrumental action. Both are oriented toward nature—if we understand "nature" not merely as the domain of beings other than humans but also as encompassing human beings in their natural, corporeal condition. From this perspective, humans themselves can be objectified, studied, and controlled, much like any other natural process. Furthermore, labor activity is governed by technical rules, and the laborer relies on technical knowledge to perform work tasks. Building chairs, constructing bridges, transforming landscapes, and other productive activities require adherence to standardized technical rules and the accurate application of technical knowledge. The improvement of labor activities and processes, therefore, depends significantly on the advancement of technical knowledge about natural processes and its integration into labor practices. Finally, as a form of purposive-rational action, labor necessitates a degree of competence or skill from the laborer. The more skilled the laborer, the greater their likelihood of success in activities requiring specific skill sets. In summary, instrumental action, as a type of purposive-rational action, aligns with labor in three fundamental aspects: its orientation toward nature, its reliance on technical rules and knowledge, and its requirement for competence or skill in execution.

The concept of development emerging from the relationship between labor and instrumental action centers on increasing control over natural

⁷ Jürgen Habermas, "Technology and Science as Ideology," in *Towards a Rational Society: Studies in the Philosophy of Social Science*, trans. Jeremy J. Shapiro (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970), 92.

⁸ For an overview of Habermas's notion of the sciences as systems of purposive-rational action, see, among others, John Keane, "On Tools and Language: Habermas on Work and Interaction," *New German Critique*, no. 6 (Autumn 1975): 82–100; see also Axel Honneth, *Critique of Power: Reflective Stages in a Critical Social Theory*, trans. Kenneth Baynes (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), chap. 7.

processes. In this narrow sense, the rationalization of labor can be understood as the enhancement of our ability to control and transform nature—a process advanced through the accumulation of technical knowledge, which is reintegrated into labor practices. However, this instrumental perspective fails to fully capture the broader potential of labor, as it neglects the essential fact that labor is a fundamental human activity. To fully illuminate labor's intrinsic potential, the action-theoretical view of labor as merely instrumental action must be integrated into an anthropological framework.

3. Labour and its Role in Human Emancipation

In Habermas's early writings, which form the focus of this paper, the theoretical framework is grounded in an account of human emancipation. Drawing on the works of Hegel and Marx, Habermas argues that labor embodies distinct emancipatory potentials. In this context, emancipation refers to the process by which rational human self-determination is achieved through liberation from internal (e.g., ideology) and external (e.g., material) constraints, mediated by various forms of action, such as interaction or labor. More specifically, Habermas conceptualizes labor as an activity with emancipatory potential by synthesizing Hegel's account of labor as a medium for the formation of subjectivity, as articulated in his Jena writings, with Marx's notion of "objective activity."⁹ Habermas's interpretation of Hegel's Jena lectures provides a critical context in which labor is revealed as a fundamental medium for both the formation of subjectivity and the emancipation from external nature. Unlike philosophies of reflection, which posit the formation of subjectivity as a monological act of self-reflection, Hegel asserts that this development is mediated by dialectical relationships, where the "I" functions as only one of the poles.¹⁰ Within this theoretical framework, labor serves as a crucial medium for the formation of subjectivity in its engagement with external nature.

The dialectics of labor represents the process by which the initial condition of bondage, characterized by the "animalistic spirit" of immediate drives and desires, is transcended. Labor achieves this transcendence by

⁹ Jürgen Habermas, "Labour and Interaction," chap. 4 in *Theory and Practice*, trans. John Viertel (Boston: Beacon Press, 1974).

¹⁰ Habermas, "Labour and Interaction."

subjecting the subject to the constraints of nature in a twofold manner. First, it requires the suspension—or rather the postponement—of drive satisfaction, as the fulfillment of desires depends on goods yet to be produced.¹¹ Second, it subjugates the subject to the laws of nature. The subject can intervene in natural processes only to the extent that its energies and efforts are objectified as natural forces. Tools serve as the distinct medium of the subject's objectification in labor, as they translate, so to speak, the causality of nature into technical rules that the subject must abide by while laboring. However, in employing tools, the subject is not merely subjected to the causality of nature but also actively uses these tools to control natural processes for its own benefit, namely, the satisfaction of drives and desires. Thus, the dialectic of labor entails the objectification of the subject, which assumes a "thing-like" appearance, and is realized in the formation of a "cunning" consciousness that "controls the natural processes through its tools."¹²

In Hegel's Jena writings, the dialectics of labor is one of three media of subjectivity formation, alongside linguistic symbolization and interaction, which together constitute the movement of the Spirit's self-constitution. However, as Habermas shows, the model outlined in these writings remains underdeveloped, and the three dialectics lose their centrality—or disappear altogether, as in the case of the dialectics of labor—in Hegel's mature conception of the Spirit. According to Habermas, this shift occurs because Hegel further develops his model based on the premises of a philosophy of identity. In this framework, although nature

¹¹ In Hegel, this possibility is explained through the dialectics of linguistic symbolization. Linguistic symbolization enables things to be represented *in absentia* and designated in their meaning for consciousness. As a result, in contrast to the "animalistic spirit," for which experiences are given immediately as sensations, consciousness distances itself from the objects of immediate perception and experiences itself as a subject for which nature holds meaning. Yet, because symbols are its own products, consciousness experiences itself as objective by encountering nature as both its other and as meaningful. Through the dialectic of representation, with language as its medium, the "being of consciousness" and "the being of nature" become separated "for consciousness" (see Jürgen Habermas, "Labour and Interaction," chap. 4 in *Theory and Practice*, trans. John Viertel [Boston: Beacon Press, 1974]).

¹² Habermas, *Theory and Practice*, 155.

initially appears as the "other" of subjectivity, it is revealed, in the course of the Spirit's self-development, to be subjectivity in disguise.¹³

Habermas finds Hegel's metaphysical framework of the philosophy of identity unconvincing. However, recognizing the value of the idea of labor dialectics, he seeks to develop it further by appealing to Marx. In Habermas's view, one of Marx's greatest achievements is his materialist development of the dialectics of labor, which explains the emancipatory potential of labor. For Marx, the dialectics of labor does not signify the process by which nature, initially disclosed as the absolute "other" of Spirit, is ultimately revealed as subjectivity in disguise. This self-limitation is consistent with Marx's rejection of the philosophy of identity. Instead, Marx understands dialectics as the process through which the human species externalizes its productive powers—transforming nature—experiences these powers and their outcomes as objectified "otherness," and overcomes the condition of alienation by reappropriating these externalized powers. In other words, labor mediates the "synthesis" of subjectivity and nature. Unlike Hegel, however, Marx does not conceive this synthesis as absolute; through labor, nature does not disclose itself as subjectivity. Rather, the relationship between subjectivity and nature is understood in terms akin to Kant's transcendental philosophy: objective nature is not nature in itself but the counterpart of the "objective activity" of subjectivity. Nevertheless, Marx diverges from Kant by explaining the "synthesis" not as the achievement of transcendental consciousness but as the accomplishment of the human species engaged in labor. Through labor, the world is disclosed as a space in which "reality appears subject to conditions of the objectivity of possible objects of experience."¹⁴ Against idealist philosophy, Marx's materialism posits that the basic categories of reality—those that structure human experience and ground the possibility of objective knowledge of nature—are not the accomplishments of transcendental consciousness or absolute mind but the achievements of the species' "objective activity," labor.¹⁵ Habermas contributes to this argument by asserting that the possibility of objective knowledge of nature is

¹³ Habermas, *Theory and Practice*, 162–163.

¹⁴ Although this may not necessarily appear so to social agents, i.e., the laboring subjects (see Jürgen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests* [Boston: Beacon Press, 1971], 27).

¹⁵ Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 27–30.

epistemologically secured because the conceptual-perceptive schemes through which nature is experienced and objectively known are “rooted in deep-seated structures of human action.”¹⁶

Habermas draws on Hegel and Marx to conceptualize labor as a medium of emancipation from the constraints of external nature in a twofold sense. First, labor serves to make nature available to human needs and purposes. It achieves this by bringing natural processes under human control and transforming them in desired directions. Second, emancipation extends beyond control over natural processes to include the formation of subjectivity. In Hegel's idealist philosophy, the process of emancipation also involves the development of a "cunning consciousness." In contrast, Marx's materialist perspective interprets the self-formation of the human species as the subject pole of labor processes—through which nature is brought under human control—as a natural outcome of the development of the productive forces.

4. The Tensions between Development and Emancipation in Habermas' Conception of Labour

The analysis of Habermas's account of labor in his early writings, as discussed thus far, reveals underlying tensions regarding the potential of labor. In the narrow sense of labor as instrumental action, the internal goal of labor is the control of natural processes, which serves as the criterion for measuring the development of productive forces. However, within the broader context of emancipation, control over nature emerges as a necessary but insufficient condition for liberation from external constraints. As previously noted, Habermas's account of the dialectics of labor presupposes an additional stage—one he mentions but does not fully develop in terms of its conditions for realization or its significance for emancipation through labor. Labor is not solely aimed at controlling natural processes; rather, it seeks to make nature—through that control—available to satisfy human needs and purposes. Emancipation from the constraints of external nature is achieved not merely through environmental control but through the production of goods and commodities that fulfill human needs. In this sense, labor contributes to human emancipation by transforming nature to serve human purposes.

¹⁶ Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 36–37.

The tension between the concept of development within the instrumental view and the notion of labor-based emancipation could, in theory, be resolved in favor of the instrumental-technical conception of labor if the conditions for emancipation were implied within it. However, as argued in this section and the next, this is not the case. Nor can labor's contribution to emancipation be considered external to its *telos*. In simple terms, the mediated satisfaction of human needs and purposes is a condition for labor-based emancipation, one that cannot be fulfilled by instrumental rationality alone, as described in Habermas's analysis of labor as instrumental action. To make explicit the connection between human needs or purposes and the emancipatory potential of labor, it is useful to examine Habermas's commentary on Hegel's conception of labor as a medium for subjectivity formation. Habermas endorses the notion that the labor process

terminates in mediated satisfaction, the satisfaction in the commodities produced for consumption, and in the retroactively changed interpretation of the needs themselves.¹⁷

There are two main claims in the above quote. The first states that the endpoint of labor is "mediated satisfaction," specifically the production of commodities suitable for consumption that fulfill human needs and purposes. This implies that labor must be guided not only by technical knowledge about natural processes but also by knowledge of the needs and purposes it seeks to satisfy. Without this second form of knowledge, labor processes might achieve control over nature and the production of commodities, but these accomplishments would be insufficient for emancipation if the resulting products fail as mediums for satisfying needs. Labor processes contribute to emancipation when they incorporate knowledge of these needs and allow themselves to be guided by it during commodity production. Successful labor results in commodities with functional properties that can be realized precisely within the context of need and purpose satisfaction. For example, producing a comfortable chair requires transforming wood, which establishes a relationship between labor and external nature. However, beyond this transformation, the process must also incorporate knowledge of the need to sit, what this need entails, and the distinction between comfortable and uncomfortable sitting.

¹⁷ Habermas, "Labour and Interaction," 155.

Only by integrating such knowledge can the labor process result in a comfortable object for sitting. Additionally, the chair may serve aesthetic purposes, reflecting stylistic elements or cultural and moral norms.¹⁸ In this sense, knowledge about the needs and purposes of the human species—and the development of a feedback mechanism between labor and this knowledge—represents a crucial condition for labor to play a role in human emancipation. Emancipation through labor, therefore, entails two fundamental conditions: the expansion of labor's productive powers to enhance the control and transformation of natural processes, and the incorporation of knowledge regarding the needs and purposes to be satisfied through labor's products.

The notion of labor as instrumental action is compatible with labor-based emancipation only if the conditions of labor *development* are sufficient to explain the possibility of *emancipation*. More specifically, this compatibility holds only if knowledge concerning the needs and purposes mediately satisfied by labor can be understood as an achievement of instrumental action. While the argument that the first condition of emancipation—the development of labor forces—derives from the achievements of instrumental action is compelling, it is less evident that instrumental action alone can fulfill the second condition. Admittedly, technical knowledge is necessary for the production of useful goods. The transformation of "nature" into goods depends on technical knowledge about the properties of objects valuable to human life and the technical procedures by which these objects can be shaped and transformed in desired directions. However, while technical knowledge is required to translate purposes and needs into technical problems that the labor process can address, it does not itself pertain to human purposes and needs. Rather, it concerns their translation into solvable technical problems and, as such, presupposes an underlying understanding of human purposes and needs.

The second part of the quote provides valuable insights, suggesting that the understanding of needs and purposes is not solely the result of technical knowledge. It states that the dialectic of labor culminates in "the

¹⁸ Support is offered by Boltanski and Chiapello's sociological finding that even in contemporary societies, the products of labor are linked not merely to utilitarian considerations but also to the notion of the "common good." See Luc Boltanski and Ève Chiapello, *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Gregory Elliott (London: Verso, 2018).

retroactively changed interpretation of the needs themselves.” This implies that needs are not fixed or predetermined; rather, what qualifies as a need to be fulfilled through labor is shaped, in part, by labor processes’ capacity to meet those needs and purposes. As productive capacities expand, so too does the scope of needs and purposes that can be satisfied within natural constraints. Habermas emphasizes this trajectory of development, highlighting that the evolution of labor processes and the increased power of control they bring reshape our understanding of human needs and purposes. This transformation occurs through reflection and reinterpretation, which depend on both the plasticity of human needs and the interpretive processes that shape them. At the same time, the stage of development of labor processes exerts a determining influence on the plasticity of needs and their reinterpretation.

This raises a central question: is the understanding of needs and purposes, gained through interpretation, an achievement of instrumental action? The following section argues that, despite Habermas's emphasis on the interrelation between technical knowledge feeding back into labor processes and shaping the form of needs and purposes, other premises of his theoretical framework support the view that this interpretation-based understanding—central to the process of emancipation from external nature through labor—is not a product of instrumental action. Instead, it arises from a second, distinct form of action that is irreducible to the first: communicative action.

5. Beyond Instrumental Action: The Role of Communicative Action in Labour's Emancipatory Potential

The argument thus far has established that the mediated satisfaction of needs and purposes relates to the goal of labor in connection with the possibility of emancipation. Knowledge of these needs and purposes guides the labor process, as they determine the commodities to be produced. This section contends that such knowledge cannot be purely technical. Simply put, the question of which needs and purposes labor should serve—where this service is a condition for labor to assume an emancipatory role—cannot be answered solely on the basis of technical knowledge or the developmental potential of labor as instrumental action. This section further reinforces the argument by asserting that the mediated satisfaction of needs and purposes through labor is insufficient to realize its emancipatory potential. The moral quality of these needs and purposes is

also essential. As will be shown, basic Hegelian premises underpinning Habermas's typology of action support the idea that understanding their moral quality is not an achievement of instrumental action but of a fundamentally distinct form of action: communicative action.

This distinction becomes clearer when we examine Habermas's account of communicative action.¹⁹ He categorically differentiates communicative action from instrumental action based, among other criteria, on the types of rules that govern it and their specific conditions of validation. Communicative action is governed by consensual norms established between at least two subjects, norms that define "reciprocal expectations regarding behavior."²⁰ These norms are valid only if they arise from mutual understanding and are affirmed through the recognition of obligations that emerge from them. Individuals become competent participants in interactions by internalizing these norms—a process embedded in socialization that contributes to the development of personality structures. Additionally, analogous to his pairing of instrumental action and labor—as a type of action and a fundamental activity of the human species, linked through the "analytically explainable connection" that illuminates the emancipatory potential of labor—Habermas establishes a similarly close connection between communicative action and interaction. This pairing highlights the specific emancipatory potential of interaction. As with labor, a key context in which Habermas explores the relationship among interaction, communicative action, and emancipation is his commentary on Hegel's Jena writings.

In Hegel, interaction represents a distinct medium of subjectivity formation, involving a process in which the "I" is only one pole and self-identification is achieved through the reconciliation of the "I" with the other individual. More specifically, interaction serves as the medium within which practical self-consciousness and the moral identity of the "I" are realized. Accordingly, interaction enables participants to freely develop their subjectivity, but only insofar as it entails mutual recognition. This occurs when the terms of interaction are not unilaterally imposed by one party through force but are instead the outcome of communication free

¹⁹ Jürgen Habermas, "Technology and Science as 'Ideology,'" in *Towards a Rational Society: Student Protest, Science, and Politics*, trans. Jeremy J. Shapiro (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970), 91–92.

²⁰ Habermas, "Technology and Science as 'Ideology,'" 92.

from compulsion. Hegel illustrates the formation of intersubjectivity free from compulsion as a dialectical process mediated by struggles for recognition. As Habermas observes, it is not “unconstrained intersubjectivity itself” that is dialectical—since this represents the endpoint of the formative process—but rather “the history of its suppression and reconstitution.” The formation of the moral self—this dialectical process—is, according to Habermas, triggered when the moral basis of interaction, consisting of “the complementary interchange of noncompulsory communication and the mutual satisfaction of interests,” is disrupted.²¹ Such disruption occurs when one party negates the moral foundation of social life by “putting himself as an individual in the place of the totality.” In doing so, the perpetrator not only violently negates the identity of the other by refusing to recognize it as a self-standing identity, but also undermines the foundation of their own identity, which is rooted in intersubjectivity. Consequently, the “criminal” experiences alienation not only from the other but also from themselves. This condition of alienation, rooted in violent self-assertion, can be overcome only when “the dialogic relationship of recognizing oneself in the other,” through which both parties “experience the common basis of their existence,” is restored.²² Habermas’s reconstruction of the logic and *praxis* characterizing the dialectics of moral life leads to the conclusion that the establishment of “unconstrained intersubjectivity” in interaction depends on communicative action.²³ In other words, interaction functions as a medium of emancipation only insofar as it supports the development of moral self-identity free from domination. Ultimately, only unconstrained communication can transform interaction into a medium of moral emancipation.

Equally important for our discussion, Hegel’s dialectics of moral life points to the idea of complementary needs and interests as an ethical ideal, with communication free from domination as a condition for achieving it. In this regard, Hegel seeks to overcome the empty formalism of Kant’s morality of duty by presenting the moral relation as a *praxis* of life.²⁴ This moral relation is made possible by the prior—albeit initially unacknowledged—interconnection of the lives of participants. Hegel

²¹ Habermas, “Labour and Interaction,” 148.

²² Ibid.

²³ Habermas, “Labour and Interaction,” 152.

²⁴ Ibid., 150–152.

conceives the self-formative process mediated by the dialectic of moral life as incorporating the mutual disclosure of needs and purposes that participants can recognize as their own and regard as legitimate aims of cooperative interaction. The expansion of communication within interaction allows for the retrospective reinterpretation of those needs and purposes whose realizability is ensured by the institutional framework of society. In this sense, we can speak of emancipation in relation to needs and purposes when barriers to the evaluation of their desirability are overcome through communication free from coercion. Therefore, knowledge regarding the needs and purposes to be socially satisfied cannot be purely technical, nor can it result solely from instrumental action. Instead, it is an achievement of communicative action within interaction. With this clarification, the foundation for critiquing the reduction of labor to merely instrumental action has been fully established.

6. A Critique of the Instrumental Model

To reiterate, Habermas maintains that labor is the medium of emancipation from external nature and attributes the developmental potential of labor to the achievements of instrumental action. This account correctly identifies the achievements of instrumental action as one of the conditions under which labor contributes to emancipation from external nature. The development of technical knowledge enhances the human species' power over objectified natural processes, while labor processes themselves rely on this power to increase production capacity. The productivity of labor is augmented through the application of technical knowledge. As instrumental action, labor is understood as a productive activity enabled by the control over natural processes and guided by technical knowledge, resulting in the transformation of nature.

However, a closer examination of the premises underlying Habermas's conception reveals that emancipation through labor presupposes not one but two conditions: the expansion of control over natural processes and the production of goods capable of satisfying human needs and purposes. The instrumental account of labor on which Habermas relies fails to fully develop the idea that the dialectic of labor, which elucidates the dynamics of emancipation from nature, is not achieved solely through the instrumentalization of natural processes but also through the mediated satisfaction of needs and purposes.

Labor cannot be reduced to instrumental action because, unlike instrumental action, it relies not only on technical knowledge but also on practical knowledge to fulfill its purpose. As demonstrated, the fundamental premises of Habermas's own framework lead to the conclusion that the problem of needs and purposes belongs to the dialectic of moral life. Unconstrained intersubjectivity emerges as a precondition for the mutual clarification of needs and purposes—a condition that is not given but achieved through the expansion of free communication in interaction. Since the increase in the productive powers of labor cannot provide guidance regarding the needs and purposes whose material preconditions are created by labor, the emancipatory potential of labor transcends the category of instrumental action.²⁵

Accordingly, the Hegelian premises of the action-theoretical framework in Habermas's early works—within which the dialectics of labor and moral life are articulated—lead to the conclusion that the emancipatory potential of labor is rooted in both the achievements of instrumental and communicative action. This potential is fully realized only when the interrelation between these dialectics is acknowledged, rather than treating them in absolute isolation, as Habermas tends to do. Indeed, the level of development of labor power is relevant to determining

²⁵ Other critiques of the instrumental model of labor focus on the question of the worker's subjectivity and its relevance for the notion of labor. For example, Axel Honneth, Jean-Philippe Deranty, and others argue that the instrumental model is reductionist and deficient because it overlooks the fact that labor matters to workers—not purely for its instrumental nature, but also as a distinct medium of self-confirmation. Without passing judgment on this critique, I note that the argument proposed in this paper is distinct by engaging with the goal of labor as recognized by the instrumental model, making the case that labor depends not only on technical but also morally relevant knowledge to achieve its basic goal: emancipation from external nature. For critiques focused on the subjectivity of the worker, see Axel Honneth, "Work and Instrumental Action: On the Normative Basis of Critical Theory," in *The Fragmented World of the Social: Essays in Social and Political Philosophy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 15–49; Christophe Dejours, Jean-Philippe Deranty, Emmanuel Renault, and Nicholas H. Smith, *The Return of Work in Critical Theory: Self, Society, Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018); Richard Sennett, *The Craftsman* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009); Andrea Veltman, *Meaningful Work* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

the content of needs and purposes, as without adequate development, the satisfaction of needs and fulfillment of purposes dependent on labor would remain empty or utopian. However, the production of goods, even under conditions of increased productive power, fails to support the reproduction and development of the human species if it serves no needs or satisfies ideologically defined needs. Perhaps the most striking contemporary reflection of the inadequacy of the instrumental model is the ecological crisis. This crisis arises from the development and application of labor processes, which, despite increasing control over nature, result in environmental destruction. One could argue that this trajectory contradicts genuine human purposes, as emphasized by ecological critiques. A society in which labor is directed toward perpetual development but produces goods that serve no real needs—or the wrong kinds of needs—is on a path to moral self-destruction. In such a society, labor that ensures only the "mediated satisfaction" of these needs cannot be considered emancipatory.

7. Conclusion

This paper has shown that, within Habermas's framework, labor operates in both a narrow and a broader sense. In its narrow, instrumental sense, labor focuses on controlling nature, with the criterion of progress being the development of productive power. In its broader sense, labor encompasses the activity through which humans secure the material basis of their existence. This broader perspective integrates not only instrumental action but also the practical knowledge required to address human needs and purposes. In this context, labor must be understood in relation to the dynamics of moral life, where unconstrained intersubjectivity and communicative action are essential for fulfilling human needs.

As discussed, the connection between labor and moral development becomes evident when considering that labor's effectiveness in supporting human reproduction and development depends on producing goods that fulfill authentic human needs, rather than those shaped by ideology or defined unilaterally. A society that fails to align labor with genuine needs risks moral decline, thereby undermining the possibility of emancipation. Consequently, the developmental potential of labor in its purely instrumental sense falls short of encompassing the full meaning of emancipation. True emancipation involves not only productivity and control over nature but also an ethical orientation toward satisfying legitimate human needs through free and communicative interaction. From

the perspective of human emancipation—the central concern of Habermas's critical social theory—the instrumental model of labor requires correction.

REFERENCES

- BOLTANSKI, Luc, and Ève Chiapello. *The New Spirit of Capitalism*. Translated by Gregory Elliott. London: Verso, 2018.
- DEJOURS, Christophe, Jean-Philippe Deranty, Emmanuel Renault, and Nicholas H. Smith. *The Return of Work in Critical Theory: Self, Society, Politics*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2018.
- HABERMAS, Jürgen. *Knowledge and Human Interests*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1971.
- . “Labour and Interaction.” In *Theory and Practice*, Chapter 4. Translated by John Viertel. Boston: Beacon Press, 1974.
- . “Reply to My Critics.” In *Habermas: Critical Debates*, edited by John B. Thompson and David Held, 219-83. London: Macmillan, 1982.
- . “Technology and Science as ‘Ideology.’” In *Towards a Rational Society: Student Protest, Science, and Politics*, translated by Jeremy J. Shapiro, 81-122. Boston: Beacon Press, 1970.
- HONNETH, Axel. *Critique of Power: Reflective Stages in a Critical Social Theory*. Translated by Kenneth Baynes. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991.
- . “Work and Instrumental Action: On the Normative Basis of Critical Theory.” In *The Fragmented World of the Social: Essays in Social and Political Philosophy*, 15-49. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995.
- . “Work and Recognition: A Redefinition.” In *The Philosophy of Recognition: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, edited by Hans-Christoph Schmidt am Busch and Christopher F. Zurn, 223-40. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010.
- KEANE, John. “On Tools and Language: Habermas on Work and Interaction.” *New German Critique*, no. 6 (Autumn 1975): 82-100.
- MCCARTHY, Thomas. *The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1978.
- SMITH, Nicholas H. “Three Normative Models of Work.” In *New Philosophies of Labour: Work and the Social Bond*, edited by Nicholas Smith and Jean-Philippe DERANTY, 181-206. Leiden: Brill, 2011.
- SENNETT, Richard. *The Craftsman*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009.
- VELTMAN, Andrea. *Meaningful Work*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.

DIE GEFAHR DER VERABSOLUTIERUNG DER KULTURELLEN IDENTITÄT*

Kathrin BOUVOT¹, Gianluigi SEGALERBA²

Abstract: *In our study, we analyse aspects of Sen's criticism of specific interpretations of cultural identity. We shall see that, in Sen's view, different interpretations of cultural identity can be given. The different ways in which cultural identity is interpreted correspond to different ways of living one's culture; they are connected to different interpretations of religion and religious identity too. Throughout Sen's inquiry, we find the following interpretations of cultural identity:*

- *The first interpretation of cultural identity, which corresponds to Sen's interpretation of cultural identity, considers cultural identities as the results of many components which constantly evolve (this might be defined as the flexible, dynamic, and inclusive view of identity).*

- *The second interpretation considers cultural identity as rigid, complete, isolated, and given once and for all (this could be defined as the rigid and static conception of cultural identity). The second conception of identity corresponds to the aim of producing people and groups as isolated systems.*

Sen investigates the psychological mechanisms connected to the rigid interpretation of cultural identity. Individuals can be manipulated through the rigid interpretation of cultural identity. Sen shows that cultural identities can be used to marginalise all those individuals who do not belong to those same cultural identities: this kind of cultural identity is constructed in order to divide individuals, groups, peoples, countries, and nations from each other. Cultural identities can be used to create a group which, as such, does not exist at all or is not so homogeneous and uniform as those who plead for this concept of cultural identity think and want other people to think. The group is created artificially by an artificial cultural identity. The rigid cultural identity of certain sectors of people means the exclusion of other sectors of

* Wir sind Frau Prof.in Dr.in Adriana Neacșu, Herrn Prof. Dr. Cătălin Stănculescu, Herrn Darius Persu und all den Mitgliedern der Redaktion von *Analele Universitatii din Craiova, Seria: Filosofie* für die Möglichkeit, diese Arbeit auf *Analele Universitatii din Craiova, Seria: Filosofie* zu veröffentlichen, zu tiefer Dankbarkeit verpflichtet. Die Verantwortung für die Inhalte und für die Thesen, die wir in diesem Aufsatz darlegen, liegt selbstverständlich bei uns.

¹ Universität Wien, Österreich.

² IEF – Instituto de Estudos Filosóficos, Faculdade de Letras, Universidade de Coimbra, Portugal.

people. This kind of cultural identity is built to bring about enmity and hostility between individuals, groups, nations, countries, and communities: the aim of this cultural identity is to produce hostility in a group towards other groups.

In Sen's view, cultural identities always result from a plurality of cultural components. Cultural identities take elements from other cultural identities. Therefore, cultural identities are not isolated systems: they are the product of a historical development which involves the participation of different individuals, groups, and cultures. Moreover, cultural identities are not made once and for all: on the contrary, cultural identities are dynamic phenomena which continuously take in new elements.

For our investigation, we refer to Amartya Sen's study Identity and Violence. The Illusion of Destiny.

Keywords: Amartya Sen, Identität, Kultur, Gruppe, Huntington, Krieg, Kommunitarismus, Tradition, Schicksal, Klassifikation, Gewalt.

1) Einführung

In unserer Studie möchten wir einige Bemerkungen über die kulturelle Identität zum Ausdruck bringen. Dazu werden wir uns auf die Beobachtungen stützen, die Amartya Sen über dieses Thema erarbeitet hat. Im Besonderen werden wir die These vertreten, dass das Resultat jedweden Prozesses der Verabsolutierung der kulturellen Identität, durch welche die Existenz ein und nur einer kulturellen Identität für jede Person und die unentrinnbare Zugehörigkeit einer Person zu einer kulturellen Identität und zu einer Gruppe behauptet werden, die Ergebnisse nach sich zieht, dass die Personen Besitz von Traditionen und von Gruppen werden, dass die Individuen in Gemeinschaften aufgelöst werden, welche die nämlichen Individuen aufheben und kontrollieren, und dass sich jede Gesellschaft aus parallelen, miteinander kaum oder miteinander überhaupt nicht kommunizierenden Gruppen/Gemeinschaften zusammensetzt.

Der Auffassung der Menschen als Entitäten, die alle in sich selbst eine einzige kulturelle Identität tragen, steht nach Sens Auffassung die korrekte Interpretation der kulturellen Identität jedweden Individuums entgegen, dass jedes Individuum an sich selbst eine Pluralität von verschiedenen kulturellen Bestandteilen ist:

- Das scheinbar Eine ist an sich selbst eigentlich ein Vieles.
- Die scheinbar monodimensionale kulturelle Identität ist eigentlich eine Pluralität von kulturellen Identitäten, da jede kulturelle Identität aus mehreren Bestandteilen besteht, aus zahlreichen Komponenten entstanden

ist und kontinuierlich neue Elemente eingliedert.

- Der Mythos des Ursprünglichen ist mithin vollkommen unbegründet und entspricht nicht dem Wesen der kulturellen Identitäten.
- Die kulturelle Identität ist an sich selbst etwas Dynamisches und nicht etwas Statisches.
- Desgleichen kommt die Auffassung der monodimensionalen kulturellen Identität nicht der Art und Weise, wie ein Individuum mit seiner eigenen kulturellen Identität lebt, gleich: Kein Individuum lässt sich, bei Licht besehen, auf ein einziges Schema, d.h., auf eine monodimensionale kulturelle Identität reduzieren³. Kein Individuum wird von einer einzigen Tradition absorbiert (es sei denn, dass das Individuum manipuliert wird).

2) Der Ursprung der Probleme

Im Laufe unserer Studie werden wir uns mit zwei Begriffen der kulturellen Identität auseinandersetzen:

- Eine Interpretation, welche die kulturelle Identität als ein aus vielen Komponenten herauskommendes Ergebnis ansieht (dies könnte als die flexible, dynamische und inkludierende Auffassung der kulturellen Identität bezeichnet werden), und
- eine Interpretation, welche die kulturelle Identität als etwas Monodimensionales erachtet (diese könnte als die starre, statische und exkludierende Auffassung der kulturellen Identität benannt werden).

³ Es ist nicht zu vergessen, dass die Reduktion der Individuen auf bestimmte kulturelle Identitäten eine Geringschätzung der in Rede stehenden Individuen mit sich bringen wird oder zumindest zu einer Geringschätzung derselben Individuen führen kann. Es ist diesbezüglich vor Augen zu halten, was Sen z.B. über die Vorurteile gegen Iren und Inder zum Ausdruck bringt, die zu den Zeiten der irischen und der bengalischen Hungersnöte seitens der Kolonialmächte verbreitet wurden, wenn Sen die Ursachen für diese Hungernöte untersucht (siehe dazu *Poverty and Famines*, Seiten 39–153; *Die Identitätsfalle. Warum es keinen Krieg der Kulturen gibt*, Seiten 115–117 – vergleiche Seiten 104–106 der Originalausgabe *Identity and Violence. The Illusion of Destiny*; siehe dazu *Development as Freedom*, Seiten 170–175). Die Überzeugung, dass ein und nur eine kulturelle Identität für eine bestimmte Gruppe existiert, kann dazu dienen, eine bestimmte Gruppe in eine bestimmte Schublade zu legen. Diese Überzeugung kann desgleichen auch dazu dienen, das Verfahren einer bestimmten Gruppe als zur Ausübung bestimmter Handlungen unentrinnbar determiniert einzustufen.

Die zweite Auffassung der kulturellen Identität entspricht dem Ziel, Menschen und Gruppen als voneinander isolierte Systeme zu produzieren.

Jede Betonung der kulturellen Identität, als ob sie etwas Monodimensionales und damit mit den anderen kulturellen Identitäten inkompatibel wäre, ist dafür verantwortlich, dass das Individuum in seiner Vielfalt – womit auch dessen Rechte gemeint sind – nicht ausreichend berücksichtigt werden kann bzw. sogar hinter einer zu eng definierten Interpretation der Identität zu verschwinden droht. Das Individuum läuft wegen dieser Konzeption der kulturellen Identität Gefahr, sich selbst einer größeren Organisation (z.B. Staat, Gemeinschaft) unterzuordnen oder unterordnen zu müssen.

Eine verabsolutierte Auffassung der kulturellen Identität enthüllt sich, bei genauerem Hinsehen, als ein künstlich erarbeitetes ideologisches und machtpolitisches Instrument zur Annullierung des Individuums qua Individuum, zur aufgeprägten Inklusion der Individuen in starre Gruppen, zu dem dieser Inklusion entsprechenden willkürlichen Ausschluss anderer Individuen, zur aufgezwungenen Homogenisierung bestimmter Gruppen und zur Verbreitung von Ausgrenzung und Intoleranz.

Für die Kritik jeder einzelnen monovalenten Konzeption der kulturellen Identität werden wir uns in diesem Zusammenhang vorwiegend auf die Studie von Amartya Sen *Die Identitätsfalle. Warum es keinen Krieg der Kulturen gibt* (Originalausgabe *Identity and Violence. The Illusion of Destiny*) stützen⁴.

3) Amartya Sens Ansatz über die kulturelle Identität⁵

Wir möchten als Ansatz zum Nachdenken über die kulturelle Identität einige Beobachtungen verwenden, welche Amartya Sen in seinem Buch *Die Identitätsfalle. Warum es keinen Krieg der Kulturen gibt* zum Ausdruck

⁴ Wir möchten diesbezüglich anmerken, dass z.B. auch das Buch von Jonathan Sacks, *The Dignity of Difference. How to avoid the Clash of Civilisations* uns zahlreiche Ideen über die Art und Weise gegeben hat, wie Auseinandersetzungen zwischen Personen, welche verschiedene Traditionen haben, vermieden werden können.

⁵ Sens Interesse bezüglich der kulturellen Identität gilt zwar vorwiegend der Welt der Erwachsenen. Jedoch wendet sich Sens Interesse auch an die Welt der Kinder.

gebracht hat. Der Kern der Mitteilung von Sen ist unserer Meinung nach, dass jede Entität, sei sie ein Individuum, sei sie eine Gruppe, sei sie eine Kultur, sei sie eine kulturelle Identität, sei sie eine Nation, sei sie eine Zivilisation immer ein Vieles, eine werdende und sich ändernde Pluralität ist. Jede Entität ist etwas Mannigfaltiges, etwas Plurales, auch wenn sie sich als etwas Monodimensionales wahrnimmt und wahrgenommen werden will.

Die Monodimensionalität, die absolute Monovalenz, die „nicht kontaminierte“ Singularität existieren, bei Lichte besehen, nicht. Der Behauptung, dass ausschließlich eine kulturelle Identität für ein Individuum existiert, liegen dementsprechend bestimmte machtpolitische Ansätze zugrunde, welche auf die Manipulation des Individuums hinzielen. Sen kritisiert in seinem Buch verschiedene Auffassungen, wie z.B.:

- Jedes Individuum hat ein und nur eine einzige kulturelle Identität, d.h., ein und eine einzige Kultur.
- Jedes Individuum muss nach ein und einer einzigen Kulturzugehörigkeit eingeordnet werden.
- Jedes Individuum erkennt seine eigene kulturelle Identität an (d.h., es wählt sie nicht) und kann sich von dieser kulturellen Identität nicht distanzieren (jede bestimmte kulturelle Identität ist eine zweite Natur für das Individuum; das Individuum ist seine kulturelle Identität und nichts anderes als seine kulturelle Identität)⁶.

Sen kritisiert z.B. die Struktur der konfessionellen Schulen, da die konfessionellen Schulen, statt die Integration zwischen Kindern verschiedener Herkunft zu fördern, die Kinder selbst in Gruppen einsperrten, zwischen denen es an wechselseitigen Kontakten mangle oder mangeln könne. Es bildet eines der stärksten Anliegen von Sen, dass die Individuen – sowohl die Erwachsenen wie auch die Kinder – vor allen Dingen als Individuen (und nicht, z.B., als Mitglieder einer Gruppe) betrachtet werden: Die Individualität der Personen darf nicht durch die Vermittlung oder unter der Bevormundung einer Gruppe gedeutet werden: Jedes Individuum ist zuerst ein Individuum; die Zugehörigkeiten, die immer im Plural genommen werden müssen, kommen danach.

⁶ Durch die verschiedenen Werke von Sen hindurch lässt sich feststellen, dass Sen keine besondere Zuneigung für all die Theorien hat, welche einen Verzicht auf die Rechte der Individuen zur Förderung der Wirtschaft, der Kultur, der kulturellen Identität befürworten. Das Individuum ist die erste und letzte Instanz im Rahmen der Interpretation von Sen; Reduktionismen sind nicht erwünscht.

Sen ist der festen Überzeugung, dass jedes Individuum an sich selbst eine Vielfalt ist. Individualität ist an sich selbst Pluralität von (kulturellen) Komponenten. Jedes Individuum entsteht aus der Überschneidung von unterschiedlichen Traditionen⁷. Insofern hat ein Individuum eine Pluralität von kulturellen Identitäten in sich selbst, wobei dem Individuum die Wahl zusteht, welche kulturelle Identität in welchem Lebensabschnitt die wichtigste kulturelle Identität für ihn ist.

Kulturelle Identität ist nach Sens Ansicht kein Schicksal, sondern sie entsteht aus einem Willensakt. Ebenfalls bildet die Kultur, nach welcher ein Individuum eingeteilt werden könnte/müsste, nichts Schicksalhafteres, d.h., eine bestimmte Kultur ist nicht eine zweite Natur für das Individuum, von welcher sich das Individuum nicht befreien kann. Die kulturelle Identität, welche jedes Individuum mit sich bringt, konstituiert keine Entdeckung einer Natur, welche das Individuum dominiert und determiniert. Jede Kulturform, die ein Individuum besitzt, beeinflusst zwar das Individuum, ohne jedoch das Individuum zu determinieren.

Sen weist mehrmals im Laufe seiner Studie darauf hin, dass die Kultivierung einer kulturellen Identität seitens eines Individuums immer das Resultat einer Wahl seitens desselben Individuums ist. Gleichzeitig besteht Sens Ziel darin, ans Licht zu bringen, dass die Verabsolutierung einer kulturellen Identität zuungunsten aller anderen Formen von Kultur, die jedes Individuum eigentlich besitzt, ein Potenzial an Gewalt hat. Die

⁷ Die Auffassung, dass sich ein Eines – wie es für die kulturelle Identität der Fall ist – bei Licht besehen, als ein Vieles herausstellt, gilt nicht nur für ein Individuum, sondern auch für eine Kultur, eine Gesellschaft, eine Gruppe und so weiter. Jedes scheinbar monodimensionale Phänomen lässt sich in einer Vielfalt von Wurzeln und Bestandteilen aufteilen. Sens Methodologie lässt sich am deutlichsten dadurch kennzeichnen, dass jedes geschichtlich gewordene Phänomen immer aus einer Pluralität von Komponenten entsteht. Es existiert nicht eine vermeintliche absolute Originalität einer bestimmten Kultur. Eine Kultur birgt hingegen mehrere Kulturen und Einflüsse in sich, da sie aus unterschiedlichen vorangehenden Beiträgen entsteht und sich durch verschiedene gegenwärtige Beiträge entwickelt. Jede Form von Kultur und von kultureller Identität kommt immer aus verschiedenen Komponenten heraus. Das Individuum, das in einem Milieu entsteht, entsteht infolgedessen in einem Milieu, welches in sich selbst trotz der Scheins der Uniformität und der Singularität immer eine Mannigfaltigkeit und eine Pluralität birgt. Eine Kultur ist immer eine Einheit von vielen Komponenten: Jedwede Einheit ist eigentlich Pluralität.

Instrumentalisierung einer kulturellen Identität dient dazu, Menschen zu dominieren und sie nach der eigenen Willkür zu lenken. Eine verabsolutierte kulturelle Identität trennt die Gruppen voneinander und dominiert zugleich in einer Gruppe; Sen ist sich selbst der Gefahren einer verabsolutierten Interpretation der kulturellen Identität wohl bewusst.

Sens Bestreben gilt im Laufe des Buches, zu veranschaulichen, dass die Möglichkeit eines Dialoges zwischen Menschen darin besteht, die wechselseitigen Überschneidungen der verschiedenen kulturellen Identitäten zu finden. Falls hingegen eine Gesellschaft entsteht, die aus parallelen Gemeinschaften besteht, welche miteinander nichts Gemeinsames haben und haben wollen, ist diese Gesellschaft dazu verurteilt, auf die allergrößten Schwierigkeiten bei der wechselseitigen Kommunikation zwischen ihren Bürgern zu stoßen und einem Klima von potenziell ausbrechender Gewalt ausgesetzt zu sein. Der Multikulturalismus der parallelen Gemeinschaften ist, bei Licht besehen, eine Form von pluralem Monokulturalismus, in welcher jedes Individuum in den Traditionen der eigenen Gemeinschaft gefangen bleibt.

4) Beispiele für Sens Auffassungen

Wir werden jetzt einige Beispiele von Sens Argumentationen anführen. Im nachstehenden Text legt Sen dar, dass die Einteilung der Menschen nach einigen wenigen und starren Kriterien der Vielfalt der Menschen nicht gerecht werden kann⁸:

„Die Politik der globalen Konfrontation gilt vielfach als natürliche Folge religiöser oder kultureller Spaltungen der Welt. Die Welt wird sogar, wenn auch nur implizit, zunehmend als ein Verbund von Religionen oder Zivilisationen verstanden, wobei man sich über alle anderen Blickwinkel, unter denen die Menschen sich selbst sehen, hinwegsetzt. Dieser Sichtweise liegt die merkwürdige Annahme zugrunde, daß es nur ein einziges, überwölbendes System gebe, nach dem man die Menschen einteilen kann. Wenn man die Weltbevölkerung nach Zivilisationen oder Religionen unterteilt, gelangt man zu einer «solitaristischen» Deutung der menschlichen Identität, wonach die Menschen einer und nur einer Gruppe

⁸ Zitate von auf Englisch verfassten Texten haben wir, wenn die nämlichen Texte in die deutsche Sprache übersetzt worden sind, im Rahmen dieser Darlegung aus den deutschen Übersetzungen der Texte genommen. Da die Zitate einiger deutscher Texte noch der alten Rechtschreibung folgen, haben wir die alte Rechtschreibung für diese Zitate beibehalten.

angehören (die hier durch Zivilisation oder Religion definiert ist, während man früher die Nationalität oder die Klassenzugehörigkeit in den Vordergrund stellte).“⁹

Sen bestreitet, dass die Welt (oder ein Staat) als ein Verbund von Religionen, Zivilisationen oder Gemeinschaften angesehen werden kann. Die Auffassung von denjenigen¹⁰, welche die Menschen nach einem einzigen Unterteilungskriterium einteilen, geht davon aus, dass ein Individuum nur auf eine einzige Kultur, auf eine einzige kulturelle Identität und auf eine einzige Gruppe zurückgeführt werden kann. Die kulturelle Identität scheint nach dieser Auffassung, als etwas interpretiert zu werden, die absolut, einzig und all die anderen kulturellen Identitäten ausschließend ist¹¹. Einen Menschen nach einem einzigen Aspekt zu klassifizieren, ist missdeutend:

„Mit einer solitaristischen Deutung wird man mit ziemlicher Sicherheit fast jeden Menschen auf der Welt mißverstehen. Im normalen Leben begreifen wir uns als Mitglieder einer Vielzahl von Gruppen – ihnen allen gehören wir

⁹ Siehe dazu *Die Identitätsfalle. Warum es keinen Krieg der Kulturen gibt*, Seite 8 (vgl. die Originalausgabe *Identity and Violence. The Illusion of Destiny*, Seite xii).

¹⁰ Siehe diesbezüglich Sens Kritik an Huntigtons Thesen in *Die Identitätsfalle. Warum es keinen Krieg der Kulturen gibt*, Seiten 54–56, 60–63 und 117–119 (vgl. die Originalausgabe *Identity and Violence. The Illusion of Destiny*, Seiten 40–43, 46–50, 106–108).

¹¹ Sen weist in seinem Buch darauf hin, dass die kulturelle Identität nach dieser Interpretation als etwas gilt, das entdeckt und somit nicht gewählt werden darf. Das Ziel davon, die kulturelle Identität als etwas auszugeben, das entdeckt wird, und damit nicht gewählt werden darf, besteht darin, zu verdeutlichen, dass das Individuum aus dieser Identität nicht austreten kann: Denn eine Person kann nicht aus der eigenen Natur austreten. Identität ist infolgedessen nach dieser Sichtweise etwas Natürliches und Angeborenes, nicht etwas Kulturelles und Erworbenes. Sens Strategie geht hingegen immer davon aus, dass eine kulturelle Identität nicht etwas Absolutes ist, weil eine jede kulturelle Identität bei genauerem Hinsehen immer das Ergebnis anderer vorangehender Kulturformen ist, so dass sie nie aus dem Nichts entsteht, immer auf ihr selbst vorausgehende Kulturformen trifft und immer enge Verbindungen mit anderen Kulturformen hat. Das absolut Ursprüngliche existiert nicht. Darüber hinaus hat das Individuum immer die Möglichkeit, zu wählen, ob es eine bestimmte kulturelle Identität annimmt oder hingegen ablehnt und welches Gewicht es einer bestimmten Komponente insgesamt verleihen will.

an. Eine Person kann gänzlich widerspruchsfrei amerikanische Bürgerin, von karibischer Herkunft, mit afrikanischen Vorfahren, Christin, Liberale, Frau, Vegetarierin, Langstreckenläuferin, Historikerin, Lehrerin, Romanautorin, Feministin, Heterosexuelle, Verfechterin der Rechte von Schwulen und Lesben, Theaterliebhaberin, Umweltschützerin, Tennisfan, Jazzmusikerin und der tiefen Überzeugung sein, daß es im All intelligente Wesen gibt, mit denen man sich ganz dringend verständigen muß (vorzugsweise auf Englisch). Jede dieser Gruppen, denen allen diese Person gleichzeitig angehört, vermittelt ihr eine bestimmte Identität. Keine von ihnen kann als die einzige Identitäts- oder Zugehörigkeits-Kategorie dieser Person aufgefaßt werden¹². Angesichts unserer unausweichlich¹³ pluralen Identität müssen wir im jeweils gegebenen Kontext entscheiden, welche Bedeutung wir unseren einzelnen Bindungen und Zugehörigkeiten zumessen.“¹⁴

Die Auffassung, dass eine einzige kulturelle Identität vorliegt, beschädigt bei genauerem Hinsehen jedweden Versuch, ein stichhaltiges und vertrauenswürdigen Bild des Menschen zu bekommen: Denn der Mensch ist eigentlich nicht das, was die Befürworter der absoluten und monodimensionalen kulturellen Identität behaupten.

Sens Kritik an der solitaristischen Deutung besteht unter anderem darin, dass das Individuum nicht so ist, wie die solitaristische Position das Individuum deuten will: An sich selbst ist jedes Individuum immer eine Art Vielfalt. Das Individuum gehört einer Vielzahl von Gruppen und damit eine Vielzahl von kulturellen Identitäten an, deren Wichtigkeit und Relevanz je nach den Lebensabschnitten und den Interessen der Individuen anders werden kann. Welche kulturelle Identität von Mal zu Mal als die wichtigste kulturelle Identität gilt, wird von Mal zu Mal z.B. vom

¹² Es liegt kein Grund vor, weshalb eine Komponente ein größeres Gewicht als eine andere Komponente haben sollte; es obliegt dem Individuum, zu entscheiden, welcher Komponente das Individuum eine größere Wichtigkeit verleihen will. Die Entscheidung ist Sache des Individuums; die Bestimmung davon, welche Komponente wichtiger ist, entsteht aus der freien Entscheidung des Individuums.

¹³ Die Theoretiker der absoluten kulturellen Identität erachten die Einzigkeit der kulturellen Identität als unentzinnbar; Sen ist seinerseits der Ansicht, dass die Pluralität der kulturellen Identitäten unausweichlich ist.

¹⁴ Siehe dazu *Die Identitätsfalle. Warum es keinen Krieg der Kulturen gibt*, Seiten 8–9 (vgl. die Originalausgabe *Identity and Violence. The Illusion of Destiny*, Seiten xii–xiii).

Zusammenhang, in welchem das Individuum lebt, oder vom Interesse, welches das Individuum pflegt, bestimmt. Es soll infolgedessen berücksichtigt werden, dass das Gewicht jeder Form von kultureller Identität je nach den Zusammenhängen anders werden kann. Einerseits ist die kulturelle Identität eigentlich eine Vielfalt an kulturellen Identitäten; andererseits ist jede kulturelle Identität etwas, das nicht eine endgültig bestimmte Position innerhalb des Bereichs der verschiedenen kulturellen Identitäten, die eine Person haben kann, belegt. Kulturelle Identität ist etwas Dynamisches, sich Entwickelndes, sich Veränderndes. Es wird sofort klar, was wegen einer falschen Auslegung der kulturellen Identität auf dem Spiel steht:

„Unser gemeinsames Menschsein wird brutal in Frage gestellt, wenn man die vielfältigen Teilungen in der Welt auf ein einziges, angeblich dominierendes Klassifikationsschema reduziert, sei es der Religion, der Gemeinschaft, der Kultur, der Nation oder der Zivilisation – ein Schema, dem in Sachen Krieg und Frieden jeweils einzigartige Wirkung zugeschrieben wird. Die Aufteilung der Welt nach einem einzigen Kriterium stiftet weit mehr Unfrieden als das Universum der pluralen und mannigfaltigen Kategorien, welche die Welt prägen, in der wir leben. Sie läuft nicht nur der altmodischen Ansicht zuwider, daß «wir Menschen alle ziemlich ähnlich sind» (über die man heutzutage gern – und nicht ganz unbegründet – spottet, weil sie allzu unbedarft ist), sondern auch der seltener erwähnten, aber sehr viel plausibleren Auffassung, daß wir *auf mannigfaltige Weise verschieden* sind. Die Hoffnung auf Eintracht in der heutigen Welt beruht in hohem Maße auf einem klaren Verständnis der Vielzahl unserer menschlichen Identitäten und der Einsicht, daß diese sich überschneiden und damit einer scharfen Abgrenzung nach einem einzigen unüberwindlichen Einteilungskriterium entgegenwirken.“¹⁵

Die Auffassung, dass ein einziges Klassifikationsschema existiert, ist nach Sens Erachten an sich selbst falsch. Es hat in diesem Zusammenhang keine Wichtigkeit, ob das Klassifikationsschema auf der Religion, auf der Gemeinschaft, auf der Kultur, auf der Nation oder auf der Zivilisation basiert: Denn es ist eigentlich die Überzeugung selbst, dass ein einziges Klassifikationsschema existiert, die von Grund auf falsch ist. Die Menschen können nicht nach einem einzigen Kriterium klassifiziert werden, da die

¹⁵ Siehe dazu *Die Identitätsfalle. Warum es keinen Krieg der Kulturen gibt*, Seiten 9–10 (vgl. die Originalausgabe *Identity and Violence. The Illusion of Destiny*, Seiten xiii–xiv).

Menschen, – damit jedes Individuum meined –, in sich selbst verschiedene Komponenten tragen. Auf der anderen Seite ist zu bemerken, dass die Einteilung nach einem monodimensionalen Kriterium die Menschen in wechselseitig fremde Gruppen kategorisiert. Diese Art Einteilung führt die Menschen auf Gruppen zurück, die ein für alle Male gegeben sind.

Es soll in diesem Zusammenhang zwischen zwei Interpretationen von kultureller Identität, d.h., einerseits dem starren und andererseits der flexiblen Interpretation der kulturellen Identität unterschieden werden, welche verschiedene Ziele vor sich haben. Die Interpretation der kulturellen Identität, welche die kulturelle Identität als etwas Einförmiges ansieht, scheint, eine kulturelle Identität, die mit einem Kriegszustand zusammenhängt oder einen Kriegszustand vorbereitet, zu sein: Diese Art kultureller Identität uniformiert und homogenisiert künstlich die Menschen der Gruppe, von welcher sie die kulturelle Identität konstituiert, isoliert die Menschen dieser bestimmten Gruppe von den anderen Gruppen, welche eine andere kulturelle Identität haben, und gilt als etwas „Wasserdichtes“ im Verhältnis zu anderen Kulturformen. Diese Interpretation der kulturellen Identität bildet etwas Autarkisches, da sie anscheinend keine Überschneidungen und keine Kontaktpunkte mit anderen kulturellen Identitäten hat und haben will. Diese Art kultureller Identität ist etwas, das unabhängig von anderen kulturellen Identitäten entsteht (besser gesagt, entstanden sein will); darüber hinaus ist diese Art kultureller Identität etwas, das an sich selbst ein für alle Male gebildetes Ganzes ist.

Sen setzt sich dieser Auffassung entgegen, da er der festen Überzeugung ist, dass die Eintracht zwischen Menschen auf die Existenz von kulturellen Identitäten angewiesen ist, welche Flexibilität und Biogsamkeit erweisen, welche, mit anderen Worten, nicht statisch, sondern dynamisch sind: D.h., die Eintracht zwischen Menschen hängt von einer Konzeption der kulturellen Identitäten ab, welche miteinander kommunizieren, an andere Kulturformen etwas verleihen und von anderen Kulturformen Elemente nehmen. Sie ändern sich stetig, indem sie sich entwickeln. Sen ist anscheinend der Ansicht, dass sich die kulturellen Identitäten aus einer Pluralität von Bestandteilen bilden und stetig bilden werden, indem sie immer wieder neue Elemente einverleiben. Sein Ansatz bezüglich dieses Begriffes der kulturellen Identität ist sowohl eine Analyse der kulturellen Identität wie auch eine Präskription für die nämliche

kulturelle Identität¹⁶, und zwar in dem Sinne, dass die kulturelle Identität an sich selbst immer aus unterschiedlichen Elementen besteht (sie ist nie etwas Monodimensionales, Einförmiges, Statisches) und dass die kulturelle Identität so sein soll, wenn vermieden werden will, dass das Gewaltpotenzial der monodimensionalen kulturellen Identität explodiert oder zu explodieren droht. Die Menschen sind nicht alle auf eine einzige Art und Weise verschieden, so dass sie starren Gruppen zugewiesen werden können; die Menschen sind auf mannigfaltige Art und Weise verschieden, und zwar in dem Sinne, dass sie alle wegen der Pluralität ihrer Merkmale immer verschiedenen Gruppen gleichzeitig zugewiesen werden können. Kulturelle Identität heißt kulturelle Identitäten.

5) Die Gefahren der starren kulturellen Identität

Sen hält sich auf der anderen Seite nicht geheim, dass die kulturelle Identität eine Waffe werden kann, falls die Interpretation einer statischen, monodimensionalen, ausgrenzenden und starren kulturellen Identität überhandnimmt:

¹⁶ Der Begriff der monodimensionalen kulturellen Identität entspricht einer kulturellen Identität, die auch konstruiert werden kann, indem den Menschen eingeredet wird, dass ihre kulturelle Identität monodimensional ist, d.h., indem im Individuum das Bewusstsein des Vorliegens einer Pluralität von Komponenten für ihre eigene kulturelle Identität ausgeschaltet wird. In diesem Sinne werden die Menschen davon überzeugt, dass sie ein einziger Inhalt sind, der von allem anderen verschieden ist und von allem anderen bedroht wird. Der Mechanismus besteht darin, dass auf der einen Seite ausschließlich die wechselseitigen Unterschiede und die wechselseitigen Inkompatibilitäten gezeigt und betont werden und auf der anderen Seite die Existenz von Kontaktpunkten negiert wird. Es ist möglich, einen starren Begriff der kulturellen Identität zu bilden und dementsprechend eine starre kulturelle Identität in eine bestimmte Gruppe einzupflanzen; diese Art kultureller Identität ist etwas Künstliches, da die kulturelle Identität an sich selbst immer Überschneidungen mit anderen kulturellen Identitäten hat. Sen ist der festen Überzeugung, dass die kulturelle Identität an sich selbst keine starre kulturelle Identität ist. Jedoch lässt Sen nicht außer Acht, dass zumindest einige Menschen bestimmten ideologischen Manövern hörig werden können. Siehe diesbezüglich Sens Schilderungen der Kämpfe zwischen Hindus und Muslimen in Bengalen im Jahre 1943, die er selbst miterlebt hatte (siehe dazu *Development as Freedom*, Seite 8; *Die Identitätsfalle. Warum es keinen Krieg der Kulturen gibt*, Seiten 179–182 – vgl. die Originalausgabe *Identity and Violence. The Illusion of Destiny*, Seiten 170–173).

„Das Gefühl der Identität mit einer Gruppe kann, entsprechend angestachelt, zu einer mächtigen Waffe werden, mit der man anderen grausam zusetzt.

Viele der Konflikte und Grausamkeiten in der Welt beruhen denn auch auf der Illusion einer einzigartigen Identität, zu der es keine Alternativen gibt. Die Kunst, Haß zu erzeugen, nimmt die Form an, die Zauberkraft einer vermeintlich überlegenen Identität zu beschwören, die andere Zugehörigkeiten überdeckt, und in einer entsprechend kriegerischen Form kann sie auch jedes menschliche Mitgefühl, jede natürliche Freundlichkeit, die wir normalerweise besitzen mögen, übertrumpfen. Das Ergebnis ist dann entweder krude elementare Gewalt oder heimtückische Gewalt und Terrorismus im globalen Maßstab.“¹⁷

Sen ist sich selbst der Gefahr bewusst, die das Gefühl der kulturellen Identität mit einer Gruppe repräsentiert: Dieses Gefühl kann die Wurzel der Konflikte werden. Das Gefühl kommt aus der Illusion heraus, dass eine absolute kulturelle Identität existiert, im Verhältnis zu welcher keine Alternative existiert. Sie wird dazu verwendet, um Hass gegen Gruppen, die vermeintlich eine andere und inkompatible kulturelle Identität haben, zu schüren; die Gefahr ist diesbezüglich, dass dieses Gefühl jede andere Form von Gefühl annulliert. Aus diesem Gefühl kann leicht ein Klima von Gewalt entstehen; jedenfalls trägt die Konzeption der starren kulturellen Identität ein Gewaltpotenzial und eine Gewaltbereitschaft in sich.

„Die Identität kann ja eine Quelle von Reichtum und Freundlichkeit wie auch von Gewalt und Terror sein, und es wäre nicht sinnvoll, die Identität insgesamt als ein Übel zu betrachten. Wir müssen uns vielmehr die Einsicht zunutze machen, daß die Stärke einer kriegerischen Identität durch die Macht *konkurrierender* Identitäten eingeschränkt werden kann. Diese können natürlich auch die große Gemeinsamkeit einschließen, daß wir alle Menschen sind, aber daneben viele sonstige Identitäten, die jeder gleichzeitig hat. Das führt zu anderen Einteilungen der Menschen und beschränkt die Möglichkeit, eine besonders aggressive Anwendung einer bestimmten Einteilung auszubeuten.“¹⁸

Sens Ziel besteht nicht darin, jede Form von kultureller Identität zu verurteilen: Er will jedoch mit Nachdruck darauf hinweisen, dass eine

¹⁷ Siehe dazu *Die Identitätsfalle. Warum es keinen Krieg der Kulturen gibt*, Seite 11 (vgl. die Originalausgabe *Identity and Violence. The Illusion of Destiny*, Seite xv).

¹⁸ Siehe dazu *Die Identitätsfalle. Warum es keinen Krieg der Kulturen gibt*, Seite 19 (vgl. die Originalausgabe *Identity and Violence. The Illusion of Destiny*, Seite 4).

starre kulturelle Identität an sich selbst negative Auswirkungen haben kann und dass eine starre kulturelle Identität an sich selbst eine Gefahr ist. Die Wurzeln der Gefahren wohnen den Merkmalen der starren kulturellen Identität inne: Da diese kulturelle Identität monodimensional und ausgrenzend ist, da sie jeden Einfluss vom Außen als eine Kontamination ausgibt, da sie Kontakte mit anderen kulturellen Identitäten ablehnt, isoliert sie die Individuen und die Gruppen dermaßen voneinander, dass sie wechselseitig völlig fremd bleiben. In Krisenzeiten bildet diese Lage gute Bedingungen für die Manipulation durch den Hass.

„Die fanatische Gewalt überall in der Welt ist heute nicht minder primitiv, nicht minder reduktionistisch als vor sechzig Jahren. Die grobe Brutalität beruht auch auf einer Begriffsverwirrung bezüglich der Identitäten der Menschen, die aus vieldimensionalen Menschen eindimensionale Kreaturen macht. (...) Diejenigen, die Verfolgung und Gemetzel befehlen, kultivieren geschickt die Illusion der singulären Identität, die ihren gewalttätigen Absichten dienlich ist. Daß die Illusion einer einzigen Identität, die für aggressive Zwecke ausgebeutet werden kann, bei denen Anklang findet, die gewohnheitsmäßig zur Gewalt aufrufen, ist nicht erstaunlich, und es ist kein Geheimnis, daß man sich große Mühe gibt, alles auf diese eine Dimension zu reduzieren. Unverständlich ist nur, warum die Kultivierung der singulären Identität so erfolgreich ist, wo doch jeder sehen kann, daß die Menschen vielfältige Zugehörigkeiten haben. Der Trick, jemanden unter dem Aspekt nur einer seiner zahlreichen Identitäten zu kategorisieren, ist, wie schon gesagt, geistig sehr primitiv, aber offenbar wirkungsvoll und demnach eine leicht zu handhabende Täuschung. Man sondert die Gruppe, die angegriffen werden soll, unter dem Aspekt der einen Identität aus und erklärt, diese Identität selektiv und hetzerisch hervorhebend, die übrigen Verbindungen und Zugehörigkeiten für unwesentlich (...) Das Kultivieren von Gewalt stützt sich auf niedrige Instinkte und nützt sie aus, um die Freiheit zu denken und die Möglichkeit besonnener Reflexion auszuschalten. Es stützt sich freilich, wie wir zugeben müssen, auf eine Art Logik, eine *fragmentarische* Logik.“¹⁹

Die Gefahren der absoluten kulturellen Identität lassen sich durch die Macht von verschiedenen kulturellen Identitäten beheben, und zwar in dem Sinne, dass das Bewusstwerden davon, dass eine Person an sich selbst

¹⁹ Siehe dazu *Die Identitätsfalle. Warum es keinen Krieg der Kulturen gibt*, Seiten 183–184 (vgl. die Originalausgabe *Identity and Violence. The Illusion of Destiny*, Seiten 174–176).

eine Pluralität von kulturellen Identitäten ist, es bewirken kann, dass keine Verabsolutierung der kulturellen Identität erfolgt und damit auch der Gefahr, die vom Ausbruch der Gewalt der absoluten kulturellen Identität repräsentiert wird, vorgebeugt wird.

6) Kritik des Kommunitarismus

Sen ist von den kommunitaristischen Ansätzen alles andere als überzeugt, wie die folgende Stelle bezeugen kann:

„Viele kommunitaristische Denker neigen zu der Ansicht, eine dominierende gemeinschaftliche Identität sei lediglich eine Sache der Selbsterkenntnis, nicht aber der Wahl. Es fällt jedoch schwer zu glauben, daß ein Mensch wirklich keine Wahl hat, zu entscheiden, welche relative Bedeutung er den verschiedenen Gruppen beimißt, denen er angehört, und daß er seine Identität lediglich zu «entdecken» braucht, so als handele es sich um ein rein natürliches Phänomen (wie etwa bei der Feststellung, ob es Tag oder Nacht ist). In Wirklichkeit treffen wir alle – und sei es auch nur stillschweigend – ständig Entscheidungen über die Prioritäten, die wir unseren verschiedenen Zugehörigkeiten und Mitgliedschaften beimessen. Die Freiheit, über unsere Loyalitäten und die Rangfolge der Gruppen, denen wir angehören, selbst zu entscheiden, ist eine besonders wichtige Freiheit, die anzuerkennen, zu schätzen und zu verteidigen wir allen Grund haben.“²⁰

Sens Opposition zum kommunitaristischen Denken kommt in diesem Kontext klar heraus. Die Kommunitaristen vertreten nach Sens Urteil folgende Ansichten:

- Es existiert eine dominierende gemeinschaftliche kulturelle Identität; d.h., es existiert eine kulturelle Identität und nicht eine Pluralität von kulturellen Identitäten. Die Dominanz einer kulturellen Identität ist etwas Statisches, etwas ein für alle Male Bestimmtes.
- Das Individuum erkennt an, dass eine dominierende kulturelle Identität existiert und dass es dieser kulturellen Identität gehört. Es hat den Anschein, dass das Individuum nach dieser Interpretation der kulturellen Identität etwas anderem als sich selbst gehört. Das Individuum gehört nicht sich selbst, sondern seiner kulturellen Identität: Das Individuum spielt im Vergleich zur kulturellen Identität und zur Gruppe lediglich eine Nebenrolle.

²⁰ Siehe dazu *Die Identitätsfalle. Warum es keinen Krieg der Kulturen gibt*, Seite 21 (vgl. die Originalausgabe *Identity and Violence. The Illusion of Destiny*, Seite 5).

- Der Eindruck, den man aus der Beschreibung der Positionen der Kommunitaristen bekommt, ist, dass die Kommunitaristen das Individuum als etwas, das in einer Entität, die es transzendiert, aufgelöst werden muss, ansehen.
- Sen verteidigt seinerseits auf entschiedene Art und Weise den Primat des Individuums über jede Form von Zugehörigkeit hinaus. Das Individuum kommt zuerst; die kulturellen Identitäten folgen. Das Individuum ist nicht Besitz von etwas. Es existiert keine Entität, welche das Individuum transzendiert; das Individuum darf nicht auf etwas anderes reduziert werden. Das Individuum löst sich nicht in einem höheren Organismus auf.
- Die Kommunitaristen deuten das Verhältnis des Individuums mit der kulturellen Identität als eine Frage der Entdeckung, der Anerkennung, und nicht der freien Wahl. Es hat den Anschein, dass die Kommunitaristen ein Individuum als eine Entität ansehen, die sich vor der kulturellen Identität verneigt und verneigen soll.
- Die Kommunitaristen deuten die kulturelle Identität als ein natürliches Phänomen. Sen deutet hingegen die kulturelle Identität als ein kulturelles Phänomen, in Bezug auf welches jedes Individuum eine gewisse Unabhängigkeit beibehält. Die Strategie der Kommunitaristen zielt darauf ab, die kulturelle Identität als eine Natur zu interpretieren, aus welcher eine Person nicht austreten kann.
- Jede Form von kultureller Identität ist nie etwas, deren Wert ein für allemal bestimmt worden ist.
- Letztendlich bleibt der Mensch bei Sen immer ein freies Wesen: Die grundlegende Differenz zwischen den Kommunitaristen und Sen liegt darin, dass die Kommunitaristen den Menschen als das Subjekt einer kulturellen Identität ansehen, wohingegen Sen den Menschen als ein freies Wesen interpretiert, das sich von der eigenen kulturellen Identität und von den eigenen kulturellen Identitäten, wiewohl sie auch wichtig sein können, freimachen kann.
- Bei Sen zählt immer die Wahl des Individuums: Die freie Wahl des Individuums hat die Priorität. Das Individuum kann ferner sich selbst immer frei bestimmen, vorausgesetzt, dass das Individuum sein Selbstbestimmungsvermögen verwenden will²¹. Die kulturelle Identität ist

²¹ Diesbezüglich wird Sen von Christman kritisiert. Siehe dazu Christman, *The Politics of Persons. Individual Autonomy and Socio-historical Selves*, Seiten 199–203.

kein Käfig.

– Der Unterschied zwischen Kommunitaristen und Sen besteht grundsätzlich darin, dass Sen der Selbstbestimmungsfreiheit einen Wert verleiht, welchen die Kommunitaristen nicht anerkennen. Das Recht auf Selbstbestimmung ist das, was die Verabsolutierung der kulturellen Identität am meisten gefährdet.

7) Die Überschneidungen der Identitäten als Lösung gegen die Intoleranz

Sen liefert sein Rezept gegen die Manipulationen, welche die Existenz von starren kulturellen Identitäten propagieren:

„Das auch nur stillschweigende Beharren auf einer alternativlosen Singularität der menschlichen Identität setzt nicht nur uns alle in unserer Würde herab, sondern trägt überdies dazu bei, die Welt in Flammen zu setzen. Die Alternative zu einer einzigen, alles andere zurückdrängenden und Unfrieden stiftenden Einteilung besteht nicht in der wirklichkeitsfremden Behauptung, wir seien alle gleich. Das sind wir nicht. Die große Hoffnung auf Eintracht in unserer aufgewühlten Welt beruht vielmehr auf der Pluralität unserer Identitäten, die sich überschneiden und allen eindeutigen Abgrenzungen entgegenstehen, die nur ein einziges, angeblich unentrinnbares Unterscheidungsmerkmal kennen. Unser gemeinsames Menschsein wird brutal in Frage gestellt, wenn unsere Unterschiede reduziert werden auf ein einziges, willkürlich erdachtes Einteilungsschema, dem alles andere untergeordnet wird.

Die wohl schlimmste Beeinträchtigung entspringt der Vernachlässigung und Leugnung der aus der Anerkennung unserer pluralen Identitäten resultierenden Rolle der Vernunft und der Wahlfreiheit. Die Illusion einer einzigen Identität stiftet weit mehr Unfrieden als das Universum der pluralen und mannigfaltigen Unterscheidungen, welche die Welt, in der wir leben, prägen. Weil die alternativlose Singularität die Welt nicht angemessen beschreibt, beschneidet sie unser politisches und gesellschaftliches Urteilsvermögen in schwerwiegender Weise. Die Illusion der Schicksalhaftigkeit fordert einen ungewöhnlich hohen Preis.“²²

Singularität steht Vielfalt entgegen. Sen führt klar aus, welche Konsequenzen das Befürworten der Auffassung hat, dass die menschliche

²² Siehe dazu *Die Identitätsfalle. Warum es keinen Krieg der Kulturen gibt*, Seite 32 (vgl. die Originalausgabe *Identity and Violence. The Illusion of Destiny*, Seite 19).

kulturelle Identität singular ist: Die Welt geht in Flammen auf. Die solitaristische Deutung verfiicht folgende Ansätze:

- Es herrscht eine Inkompatibilität zwischen Kulturen. Daher herrscht eine Inkompatibilität zwischen Gruppen und Individuen; es existiert ein wechselseitiger Kampf der Kulturen, der Gruppen und der Individuen.
- Kulturen sind vollständig gebildete Gefüge (d.h., es liegt keine Entwicklung der Kulturen vor), daher existiert keine Kommunikation zwischen Kulturen.
- Das Individuum gehört einer Kultur und kann aus der Kultur nicht austreten (aus der eigenen Kultur auszutreten zu versuchen, käme dem Versuch gleich, dass das Individuum aus sich selbst auszutreten versuchte).

Das Individuum muss nach dieser Anschauung sowohl entdecken und anerkennen, dass es einer Kultur als seiner eigentlichen Natur gehört und sich vor dieser Kultur verneigen muss. Das Individuum kann sich nicht für eine andere Kultur entscheiden. Die Auffassung, dass jeder Mensch Besitz einer absoluten kulturellen Identität ist, die ihn zum Mitglied ein und einer einzigen Gruppe macht, bringt im Verhältnis zu all den Menschen, welche dieser Kultur nicht gehören, eine ausgrenzende Attitüde im Verhältnis zu diesen selben Menschen mit sich.

Sen ist der Ansicht, dass die Auffassung, welche der Idee der absoluten kulturellen Identität opponieren muss, nicht in der Behauptung der Gleichheit der Menschen bestehen kann. Die Auffassung, die als Abhilfe gegen die Gefahren jedwedens Versuchs, die kulturelle Identität zu verabsolutieren, gelten soll, soll nach Sens Ansicht in der Überschneidung der kulturellen Identitäten bestehen: Ausschließlich durch die Anerkennung der Vielfalt und der wechselseitigen Überschneidung der kulturellen Identitäten, die jedes Individuum in sich selbst hat, kann das gefährliche Potenzial der Absolutheit der kulturellen Identität bekämpft werden.

8) Parallele Gesellschaften

Sen drückt sich klar bezüglich des Multikulturalismus aus: Multikulturalismus heißt nicht parallele Gesellschaften. Multikulturalismus heißt, dass die Individuen, auch wenn sie aus verschiedenen Kulturen kommen, alle zusammen an den Aufgaben der Gesellschaft teilnehmen. Multikulturalismus ist Zusammenarbeit.

„Ein wichtiges Problem ist die Unterscheidung zwischen Multikulturalismus und dem, was man «pluralen Multikulturalismus» nennen könnte. Gilt die Existenz einer Vielfalt von Kulturen, die möglicherweise wie Schiffe in der Nacht aneinander vorbeifahren, als gelungenes Beispiel für Multikulturalismus? (...) Wenn dagegen zwei Stile oder Traditionen nebeneinander existieren, ohne sich zu treffen, muß man eigentlich von einem «pluralen Monokulturalismus» sprechen. Die lautstarke Verteidigung des Multikulturalismus, die wir dieser Tage häufig vernehmen, ist oft nichts anderes als ein Plädoyer für pluralen Monokulturalismus.“²³

Sen ist sich davon bewusst, dass der Begriff „Multikulturalismus“ mehrere Interpretationen zulässt. Er akzeptiert nicht als die richtige Interpretation vom Multikulturalismus die einfache gleichzeitige Anwesenheit verschiedener Kulturen in einem Land, falls diese Kulturen miteinander keine Kontakte haben. Dieser Zustand scheint ihm, vielmehr eine Form von pluralem Monokulturalismus zu sein, der an sich selbst die wechselseitige Trennung der verschiedenen Gruppen beibehielt, da die Gruppen nach dieser Auffassung keine Kontakte miteinander hätten.

Der Punkt ist, dass die Existenz einer Pluralität von Gruppen und von Kulturen in einem Land an sich selbst keine Garantie für die Existenz eines echten Multikulturalismus ist: Wenn die Gruppen einander fremd bleiben, wenn die kulturellen Identitäten keine Kontakte miteinander haben, kann lediglich von parallelen Gemeinschaften die Rede sein. Sens Idee von Multikulturalismus ist eine andere, da er für die Anwesenheit von verschiedenen kulturellen Identitäten in jedem Individuum plädiert und dementsprechend die Kontakte zwischen Gruppen befürwortet. Sens Ansatzpunkt ist nie die Gruppe, sondern immer das Individuum, welches sich durch die Aufnahme in sich selbst von verschiedenen kulturellen Identitäten entwickelt²⁴.

²³ Siehe dazu *Die Identitätsfalle. Warum es keinen Krieg der Kulturen gibt*, Seiten 165–166 (vgl. die Originalausgabe *Identity and Violence. The Illusion of Destiny*, Seiten 156–158).

²⁴ Sacks hat in seinem Buch *The Dignity of Difference. How to avoid the Clash of Civilisations* interessante Betrachtungen über die Art und Weise zum Ausdruck gebracht, wie ein Konflikt zwischen Kulturen vermieden werden könnte. Sacks weist darauf hin, dass das wechselseitige Verschieden-Sein der Gruppen als konstitutiv erachtet werden sollte (d.h., die Verschiedenheiten zwischen den

„Eine der zentralen Fragen ist dabei, wie die Menschen gesehen werden. Soll man sie einstufen nach den überkommenen Traditionen, speziell der überkommenen Religion der Gemeinschaft, in die sie zufällig hineingeboren wurden, und soll diese ungewählte Identität automatisch Vorrang haben vor anderen Zugehörigkeiten nach politischer Einstellung, Beruf, Klasse, Geschlecht, Sprache, Literatur, sozialen Engagements und vielen sonstigen Verbindungen? Oder soll man sie begreifen als Menschen mit vielen Zugehörigkeiten und Verbindungen, über deren Prioritäten sie selbst entscheiden (und wofür sie die Verantwortung aufgrund einer wohlwogenen Wahl übernehmen) müssen? Und soll man die Gerechtigkeit des Multikulturalismus vornehmlich danach beurteilen, wie weit Menschen von unterschiedlicher kultureller Herkunft «in Ruhe gelassen werden», oder danach, wie weit sie in der Fähigkeit, wohlwogene Entscheidungen zu treffen, durch soziale Bildungschancen und durch die Teilnahme an der Zivilgesellschaft sowie an den politischen und wirtschaftlichen Vorgängen im Land positiv unterstützt werden? Diesen eher grundsätzlichen Fragen kann man sich nicht entziehen, wenn man den Multikulturalismus gerecht beurteilen will.“²⁵

Der Punkt ist: Wer entscheidet wie die Menschen angesehen werden sollen? Welcher ist der Faktor, der die größte Wichtigkeit verdient? Sen zieht Religion, politische Einstellung, Beruf, Klasse, Geschlecht, Sprache, Literatur, soziales Engagement als alternative Weisen, ein Individuum zu klassifizieren, in Betracht: Welche sollte die wichtigste Einteilung sein? Die Methode von Sen liegt darin, das Individuum als einen Komplex von

Gruppen weder eliminiert noch verachtet werden sollten). Die Einheit setzt die Verschiedenheit voraus; jede Form von Universalismus, der all die Differenzen eliminieren will, ist abzulehnen. Zudem sollte nach Sacks Ansicht immer zwischen Gottes Botschaft und der Interpretation, welche von Gottes Botschaft erarbeitet wird, unterschieden werden. Wir Menschen haben lediglich Interpretationen; die absolute Wahrheit steht keinem Menschen zu. Es scheint uns, bei Sacks problematisch zu sein, dass, wiewohl die Verschiedenheiten unentbehrlich sind, das Risiko nichtsdestoweniger besteht, dass durch Sacks Auffassungen eine Art Gesellschaft mit parallelen und miteinander nicht kommunizierenden Gemeinschaften zustande kommt.

²⁵ Siehe dazu *Die Identitätsfalle. Warum es keinen Krieg der Kulturen gibt*, Seite 159 (vgl. die Originalausgabe *Identity and Violence. The Illusion of Destiny*, Seite 150).

Zugehörigkeiten und Verbindungen zu bewerten, ohne dass das Individuum mit seinen Komponenten identifiziert wird²⁶.

„So wichtig unsere kulturellen Identitäten auch sein können, sind sie doch nicht völlig isoliert von anderen Einflüssen auf unser Selbstverständnis und unsere Prioritäten. Der Einfluß der Kultur auf das Leben und Handeln der Menschen ist unbestritten, aber es müssen doch einige Einschränkungen gemacht werden. Erstens ist die Kultur bei aller Bedeutung nicht die einzige Bestimmungsgröße unseres Lebens und unserer Identitäten. (...) Die explizite oder implizite Annahme, Kultur sei etwas Gleichbleibendes, kann völlig in die Irre führen. Die Versuchung des Kultur determinismus gleicht oft dem aussichtslosen Bemühen, den Anker der Kultur an einem schnell dahintreibenden Boot festzumachen. (...) Die Kultur darf nicht als eine isolierte, von anderen Einflüssen unabhängige Größe verstanden werden. Die oft stillschweigende Annahme der Abgeschlossenheit kann sehr trügerisch sein.“²⁷

Kultur und kulturelle Identität entwickeln sich; sie sind nicht etwas Starres. Sens Untersuchung ist der Versuch, die Freiheit des Individuums zu

²⁶ Bezüglich Sens Strategie sind die Auffassungen von Christman in seinem Buch *The Politics of Persons. Individual Autonomy and Socio-historical Selves* sehr interessant (siehe dazu die Seiten 199–203); Christman ist der Ansicht, dass sich Sens Analyse eigentlich auf dem Boden der Normativität bewegt. Christman trifft unserer Meinung nach auf einen wichtigen Punkt, wenn er die Ansicht äußert, dass Sens Auffassungen als normativ zu interpretieren sind: Denn Sens Studie lässt sich tatsächlich auch als eine Untersuchung darüber deuten, wie und warum eine Verabsolutierung und Isolierung der kulturellen Identitäten und der Kulturen zu vermeiden ist. Christman kritisiert einige Aspekte von Sens Vorgang und von Sens Schlussfolgerungen, wie z.B. die Wahlfreiheit der kulturellen Identitäten: Christman merkt diesbezüglich an, dass ein Individuum nicht jedwede Form von kultureller Identität wählen darf. Diesbezüglich ist zu bemerken, dass dieser Aspekt von Sen berücksichtigt wird, da Sen darauf hinweist, dass die Wahlfreiheit der kulturellen Identitäten nicht eine absolute Wahlfreiheit ist, d.h., die Wahl der kulturellen Identität hat, wie jede Form von Wahl innerhalb eines wirtschaftlichen Rahmens, mit einem bestimmten Rahmen zu rechnen. Die Tatsache, dass jede Wahl einer kulturellen Identität innerhalb eines begrenzten Rahmens erfolgen muss, hindert nicht daran, dass auch innerhalb eines begrenzten Rahmens eine Pluralität von kulturellen Identitäten immerhin vorliegt.

²⁷ Siehe dazu *Die Identitätsfalle. Warum es keinen Krieg der Kulturen gibt*, Seiten 122–123 (vgl. die Originalausgabe *Identity and Violence. The Illusion of Destiny*, Seiten 112–113).

schützen: Falls das Individuum als eine Entität erachtet wird, die in seiner kulturellen Identität, in seiner Gruppe, in seiner Nation, in seiner Kultur, in seiner Sprache gefangen ist und gefangen bleibt, ist das Individuum nicht mehr als ein freies Wesen einschätzbar²⁸.

9) Schlussbemerkungen

– Aus unserer Sicht muss eine Konzeption von kultureller Identität, welche den Ansprüchen und Erfordernissen einer multikulturellen Gesellschaft gerecht werden will, berücksichtigen, dass es unmöglich ist, einen Menschen auf eine kulturelle Identität festzulegen bzw. zu reduzieren. Jedes Individuum entsteht und besteht aus zahlreichen kulturellen Identitäten, welche nebeneinander existieren können, sich jedoch auch überschneiden und ineinanderfließen können, sodass die kulturelle Identität jedes einzelnen Menschen als eine komplexe und absolut einzigartige Summe unzähliger kultureller Identitäten begriffen werden muss.

– Es existiert nicht nur eine einzige kulturelle Identität; jede kulturelle Identität entsteht aus verschiedenen kulturellen Identitäten. Jede Person ist ein Vieles: Sie bringt in sich selbst eine Pluralität von kulturellen Identitäten und von Kulturen; sie kann nicht auf eine einzige kulturelle Identität zurückgeführt werden.

– Die Verabsolutierung der kulturellen Identität dient zum Zweck, die Mitglieder der von dieser kulturellen Identität gekennzeichneten Gruppe zu vereinigen, die Gruppe von anderen Gruppen zu trennen und all diejenigen, welche zur bestimmten Gruppe nicht gehören, auszugrenzen. Kulturelle Identität spaltet; der Prediger der kulturellen Identität ist letzten Endes einer, der die Gruppen voneinander trennen, die Individuen

²⁸ Ein Individuum, das im Besitz einer kulturellen Identität wäre, ohne zu dieser kulturellen Identität auch nur auf Distanz gehen zu können, wäre ein Individuum, das von seiner kulturellen Identität als Geisel genommen wäre. Da die Verabsolutierung der kulturellen Identität ein Instrument zur Bemächtigung der Individuen werden kann, falls jemand die Individuen davon überzeugen kann, dass sie einer bestimmten kulturellen Identität gehören, die anderen kulturellen Identitäten ausgrenzt, ist zugleich damit zu rechnen, dass die Existenz einer kulturellen Identität dazu verwendet wird, um der Individuen Herr zu werden (siehe diesbezüglich Sens *Die Identitätsfalle. Warum es keinen Krieg der Kulturen gibt*, Seiten 183–184 und 186–187; vgl. die Originalausgabe *Identity and Violence. The Illusion of Destiny*, Seiten 174–176 und 178–179).

manipulieren und Unfrieden stiften will.

– Die Verabsolutierung einer einzigen kulturellen Identität und die Auffassung, dass jede kulturelle Identität eine Art Reinheit in dem Sinne ist, dass eine kulturelle Identität und eine Kultur keine Überschneidung mit anderen kulturellen Identitäten und anderen Kulturen hat, konstituiert für jedes Individuum eine Zwangsjacke.

– Die Behauptung, dass jedes Individuum ein und eine einzige kulturelle Identität hat, die identisch mit der kulturellen Identität einiger Individuen und die verschieden von der kulturellen Identität anderer Individuen ist, dient zugleich zur erzwungenen Inklusion einiger Individuen in eine bestimmte Gruppe und zum Ausschluss anderer Individuen aus derselben Gruppe. Sie inkludiert einige Individuen und schließt zugleich andere Individuen aus, wobei sie sowohl gegenüber den inkludierten wie auch den ausgeschlossenen Individuen ein unmittelbares Gewaltpotenzial hat.

– Der Verabsolutierung der kulturellen Identität sollte die Auffassung entgegengestellt werden, dass jedes Individuum ein Vieles ist, dass die kulturelle Identität eines jeden Individuums sowohl etwas ist, das aus vielen Komponenten besteht, wie auch etwas ist, das nicht still ist, sondern sich ständig entwickelt und transformiert.

– Die kulturelle Identität ist nicht ein Schicksal, sondern ein Willensakt: Die Verantwortung für die eigene kulturelle Identität, damit auch die Verantwortung für eine eventuelle Verabsolutierung eines einzigen Aspektes meinend, trägt immer das Individuum. Jedes Individuum kann entscheiden, welcher kulturellen Identität das Individuum in einem bestimmten Moment einen größeren Wert im Verhältnis zu anderen kulturellen Identitäten gibt. Diese Entscheidung soll aber unter keinen Umständen als eine endgültige Entscheidung gelten.

– Der Primat in Sachen der Verbindungen des Staates soll an das Individuum gehen. Gemeinschaften und Gruppen verdienen zwar eine gebührende Berücksichtigung; trotzdem ist der Staat nicht eine Föderation von Gemeinschaften oder von Gruppen. Der Staat besteht aus Individuen und soll sich an die Individuen wenden; Vermittlungen durch Gemeinschaften, welche das Individuum absorbieren wollen, sind gefährlich.

– Der Punkt ist, dass eine Wahl getroffen werden muss zwischen der Auffassung, dass das Individuum nach einer Tradition kommt und sich der Tradition unterzuordnen hat, oder ob das Individuum die erste und letzte Instanz ist.

BIBLIOGRAPHIE

- CHRISTMAN, J., *The Politics of Persons. Individual Autonomy and Socio-historical Selves*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK – New York 2009.
- HUNTINGTON, S.P., *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, Simon & Schuster, New York 1996; dt. Übersetzung: *Kampf der Kulturen*, Europa-Verlag, München, Wien 1996.
- NUSSBAUM, M.C. – Sen, A. (Hrsg.), *The Quality of Life*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1993.
- SACKS, J., *The Dignity of Difference. How to avoid the Clash of Civilisations*, Continuum, London/New York 2003; dt. Übersetzung: *Wie wir den Krieg der Kulturen noch vermeiden können*, Gütersloher Verlagshaus, Gütersloh 2007.
- SEN, A., *Poverty and Famines. An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1981.
- SEN, A., *Development as Freedom*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York 1999; dt. Übersetzung: *Ökonomie für den Menschen. Wege zu Gerechtigkeit und Solidarität in der Marktwirtschaft*, Carl Hanser Verlag, München/Wien 2000.
- SEN, A., *Identity and Violence. The Illusion of Destiny*, Penguin Books, New York, London 2006; dt. Übersetzung: *Die Identitätsfalle: warum es keinen Krieg der Kulturen gibt*, Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, München 2010.

HANS JOAS'S "SACRALIZATION THEORY" AS A NORMATIVE CONCEPT¹

László Gergely SZÜCS²

Abstract: *The German social theorist Hans Joas has put forward the thesis that the development of human rights is not to be traced back to anti-religious secularism: what we are talking about here is a peculiar process of sacralization, in the course of which an "aura of sacredness" is created around the members of modern societies. Kantian philosopher Otfried Höffe thinks that Joas strives to create an "affirmative genealogy": i.e. the elaboration of a method following which we could get an overview of the "authentic history" of the development of human rights and acknowledge the claim to the validity of these rights at the same time. The theory of Joas is seen by Höffe as the unauthorized intervention of a sociologist into the area of rational philosophical argumentation. In my study, I'm trying to outline an answer on Höffe's criticism. Firstly I'm demonstrating that according to Joas's view the normative philosophy can be replaced by a historical-sociological analysis. Instead, he was thinking in terms of a complementary relationship: he regarded that the involvement of the perspective of historical sociology had a seminal effect on the reconsideration of the familiar normative positions. Secondly that I'm trying to outline Joas's normative theory in contrast of Habermas's discourse theory. I'm arguing that the development and maintenance of rational discourses depend on preserving certain social practices that evolve spontaneously: consequently, comprehensive social criticism cannot be purely based on the requirement of the discursive rationality. Finally, I will also highlight the problems and restraints of the "Joasian" normative theory.*

Keywords: *Hans Joas, sacralization, human rights, social philosophy, sociology of religion.*

German social theory expert Hans Joas has strongly criticized the position (mainly associated with Max Weber) according to which the process of modernization should basically be described as a process of secularization

¹ The writing of this paper was supported by MTA's (Hungarian Academy of Sciences) Premium Postdoctoral Research Program. I'm grateful for Györgyi Sárík, who helped me to prepare the English version of my paper.

² Budapest City Archives, Budapest, Hungary.

(Joas, 2017: 167). In his view, it is through reaching an understanding of the new types of sacralization processes that we can comprehensively examine modern societies. In his book entitled *The Sacredness of the Person*, for example, he has put forward the provocative thesis that the development of human rights is not to be traced back to anti-religious secularism: what we are talking about here is a peculiar process of sacralization, in the course of which an “aura of sacredness” is created around the members of modern societies.

Joas’s concept received sharp criticism. However, the sharpest criticism was expressed by philosophers rather than the representatives of historical sociology. Kantian philosopher Otfried Höffe thinks that Joas strives to create an “affirmative genealogy”: i.e. the elaboration of a method following which we could get an overview of the “authentic history” of the development of human rights and acknowledge the claim to the validity of these rights at the same time. The problem is, however, that the skeptical approach of the contemporary theoretical expert to the classical perspective of historical philosophy means accepting that it is impossible to bridge the gap between the genesis that takes the historical eventualities into account on the one hand, and the philosophy that requires the affirmation of the criteria of sensible justification on the other hand. Thus, it is very difficult to understand how we could manage to justify the validity of legal norms by following the method of historical genesis. In Höffe’s opinion, in such a way, what we have at best is the opportunity to present their “acceptability” or “plausibility”. Höffe thinks that the analysis presented by Joas, which mostly relies on the ideas expressed by Durkheim, is not supplemented by a philosophical reasoning that requires a claim for rational validity (Höffe, 2011). This is why the work of Joas is seen by Höffe as the unauthorized intervention of a sociologist into the area of rational philosophical argumentation, as opposed to which the apologetics of classical philosophy should be elaborated (Fonk, 2013: 127-128).

In my study, I argue for the following: Joas did not claim that the set of the normative criteria of philosophy can be replaced by a historical-sociological analysis. Instead, he was thinking in terms of a complementary relationship: he regarded that the involvement of the perspective of historical sociology had a seminal effect on the reconsideration of the familiar normative positions. It is from the aspect of this assumption of mine that I have re-read the analyses of Joas on the development of the norms of human rights and human dignity. First, I am going to explain that

when he formulated his criticism of Beccaria and Foucault (which was seemingly only historical), what Joas was striving for was in fact the examination of the interaction between historical sociology and the normative theories. He considered that if no authentic historical concept of the evolution of human rights can be outlined, the realistic direction of the humanization of modern societies cannot be identified either, consequently, we will also fail as normative theoretical experts. I am showing that Joas finds the fundamentals of the authentic history of the evolution of human rights in the ideas of Durkheim, along with the key points of reference of the new normative theory. I have described the resulting normative theory in contrast with the discourse theory of Habermas. According to the evolving theory of Joas, the development and maintenance of rational discourses depend on preserving certain social practices that evolve spontaneously. Consequently, comprehensive social criticism cannot be purely based on the requirement of observing the norms of discursive rationality. There is a more inherent historical perspective, starting out from which a theoretician may shed light on the successful and unsuccessful versions of individualization and may point out those structural problems which prevent rational decision-making in certain social situations. Finally, I will also highlight the problems and restraints of the evolving normative theory.

The prohibition of torture and the perspective of the Enlightenment

Joas thinks that in order to explore the nature of human rights, it is not sufficient to subject the human rights declarations of the late 18th century to theoretical analysis. What one should rather focus on is the circumstances of their generation, i.e. those cultural changes which resulted in that modern individuals can think of themselves as persons possessing universal rights. For finding the sources of validity, he wishes to present the social situation in which these declarations could bear fruit: as early as when these declarations were drafted, masses of people could already discover in them the expression of their self-interpretation and need for autonomy. In his view, the changes of the European penal culture designate the group of phenomena through which the characteristic features of “deep cultural transformation” can be explored. The starting point of the cultural change was the first half of the 18th century: it was from this point in time that Europe began to see torture as a less and less legitimate method for finding out the truth and coercing confessions. In

parallel to this, torment presented as a public spectacle became a less and less acceptable method of the execution of punishment. The disputes on whether the state legitimately disposes over the lives of its citizens began already before the issuance of the declarations. The establishment of modern Western style prisons as the typical institutions for the execution of punishment was an important step in this process. A result that was achieved much later was the prohibition of capital punishment in most European and North American states (Joas, 2011: 64).

The falling into the background of the method of inquisition is usually mentioned as part of the narrative of the Enlightenment. This is why Joas first of all discusses the 1764 work of Cesare Beccaria entitled *On Crimes and Punishments*: this is the most comprehensive work on the legitimate sources of punishment written in the spirit of the Enlightenment (Joas, 2011: 66). According to the image of society presented in the book, political societies have been dominated by senseless habits for several centuries: both torture and violence allowed by the “criminal procedure” are the remnants of a by-gone age, whose habits have already been transcended and which has not been overcome by humanity due to their laziness. This historical concept also sets the position of the enlightened intellectual. It is the responsibility of the philosopher to explore a method by relying on which the “original”, rational individual, who is not subjected to power relations, becomes visible behind the useless traditions and deep-rooted prejudices (Joas, 2011: 67).

Beccaria describes “prehistoric” individuals as free parties endeavoring to establish contractual relations. The principle that determines the conclusion of such contract is familiar from the subsequent history of political ideologies as the fundamental principle of utilitarianism: we act correctly if we provide “the greatest happiness to the greatest number of people.” (Beccaria, 1967: 53). The option of a criminal procedure is created by the social contract: the exclusive aim of punishment is to prevent the members of society from falling back to the chaotic state in which they feel that their lives and property are threatened by others. Thus, the limitations of legitimate punishment are also determined by this contract. Those punishments which jeopardize the achievements of the contract or the natural freedom of the individual are illegitimate. Beccaria thinks that in this way, the penal laws can be derived from the principles of the contract in a deductive system. He thinks that it can also be quantified to what extent individual actions facilitate or obstruct the enforcement of

the common good. If this is true, the extent of legitimate punishment can be determined in a quantitative system of relations. This means that a society should take action against some of its members with a force (and with no greater force) which is equivalent to the threat that the actions of these members of society pose to the common good and to the extent of the resoluteness of the endeavor of these members of society to commit their crimes (Joas, 2011: 68).

The irrational nature of torture-based punishment and inquisition becomes obvious in this formal system. Beccaria defines an early, peculiar version of the “law of diminishing marginal utility”. According to this principle, a society that threatens its members with brutal punishments in fact gradually makes these members accustomed to tolerating the aggression that is targeted against them. As the members of such a society become more and more immune to pain, step by step after each punishment, political societies must “raise the stakes” higher and higher, and they have to apply increasingly cruel methods to curb criminal activities. On the other hand, Beccaria thinks that the consistent and predictable execution of moderate punishments is much more effective for the protection of the common good than threatening with excessively violent forms of retaliation. Inquisition seems more like a resilience test than a means to find out the truth. Its application in society is absolutely dysfunctional: the hardened and aggressive criminals will usually withstand torture; weak innocent persons, who are the more useful members of society, will break sooner (Joas, 2011: 69).

The illegitimate nature of capital punishment also comes from the nature of the contractual relations. The contracting parties who feel that their lives and property are at risk, have well calculable interests in sacrificing the smallest possible part of their personal freedom on the altar of peace or the common good. Thus, in the contract, they do not relinquish the right to dispose over their own lives. This means that a state which applies capital punishment apparently only acts according to the legitimate penal norms, while in fact it wages a war against its own citizens. Of course, the rare situation in which someone is excessively dangerous for the maintenance of the contractual system is also conceivable; where not even the threat of imprisonment breaks his resolve or organizational skills. If in such a situation, political power is compelled to apply the method of capital punishment, rationality dictates that the sentence should be executed in a way regulated by law, publicly, rapidly and in the least

painful manner possible. It is here that the critical remarks of Beccaria become very sharp, as the practices of executions are not in line with the above-described rational principles even in more developed societies (Joas, 2011: 69-70).

Critical remarks concerning the contractual concept

Joas thinks that Beccaria, as many other philosophers, overrates the role played by the idea of a social contract in establishing humane procedures. Beccaria himself acknowledges that in many kingdoms of the time, serious efforts had been taken to reduce torture well before the creation of his theory: inquisition was officially banned in Sweden in 1734, while the same was done in Prussia in the forties, under Frederick II (although actual practice many times contradicted these endeavors). In France, the procedure based on torture has been restricted since the mid-18th century. Thus, any such representation that presents the reduction of the misuse of power as a single act is wrong. What we are talking about here is not an “agreement” coming out of the blue but a complex social process that began before the Enlightenment (Joas, 2011: 70).

I assume that Joas does not formulate his simple criticism of Beccaria here, i.e. that the conclusion of the social contract can be denied historically. What he rather does is that he explains that the contract theory carries hidden historical presumptions, so presenting the “real history” as opposed to the theory also affects the normative consequences of the theory. On the one hand, the problem is that in Beccaria’s “history”, a civilized present is separated from a barbaric past by a one-time enlightenment, a fast learning process or a kind of “growth”. But it is also a problem that this history is “told” from the perspective of a norm that is defined as eternal. As most authors of contract theory, he assumes that the protection of human life is a moral command that is most deeply rooted in the human heart. This means that penal law, or even the history of mankind as such depends on the clear recognition of this law. Of course, the historian recognizes that the earlier legal systems do not even tacitly presuppose the priority of the protection of human life: punishing blasphemy and profanity was in fact always a priority over sanctioning the termination of a simple, profane life (Joas, 2011: 72). However, it is more important that the history of law can also be presented more adequately from the perspective of these norms: seen from the perspective of the Enlightenment, the world of the past, which seemed to be homogeneous and confusing, appears in a more logical order. The

image of such societies which attempt to sanction the violation of sanctity and high treason in the most efficient way possible emerges, in accordance with the skills of the society in question, and their view of the order of the world.

The critical remarks made by Joas, however, concern that Beccaria, in the context of contract theory, cannot authentically describe the moral intuitions of the modern individual with regard to punishment. On the one hand, he cannot really understand that suicidal intentions are condemned, what is more, in many cases even sanctioned by the enlightened world as well. This makes no sense in the formal system of the social contract. If the parties in the state of nature do not transfer their right of disposal over their own lives to the society, it makes no sense not to have the freedom to take their own lives. It also causes problems that Beccaria basically argues for the necessity of the social contract by referring to the utilitarian principle. Thus, his theory is ultimately unable to define the normative source of the conviction according to which the lives of all humans are to be protected. In the logical system of the contractual concept, the ultimate normative judgment depends on the benefits to the community or the majority of the contracting parties. However, from this position, it is very difficult to explain why the termination of human life, which may be valuable or valueless for the common good, is equally regarded as a horrendous crime and why penal law is not permissive concerning the termination of “useless lives”. The critical remarks may perhaps be generalized as follows: on the one hand, it is difficult to explain from the perspective of the modern contractual tradition that in modern societies, where individual autonomy has been elevated to the rank of the most important value, the individual is by far not as free to dispose over his own life as over his own property. On the other hand, from this viewpoint, it is difficult to understand how in the very same societies, the universal command of the protection of individual lives has become independent from the value hierarchy dominated by assumed social usefulness, which is basically merocratic.³

³ Axel Honneth regards the parallel “democratization” and “meritocratization” of the values related to a person as one of the key tendencies of the bourgeois capitalist society and modernization, see, for example (Honneth, 2003: 163)

Total control and social inclusion

Joas aims to outline a theoretical alternative which grasps the logics of the penal system of pre-modernity and which allows that the illusions of modernity are also highlighted by exploring the premodern roots of penal norms. Thus, it is not surprising that in his theory, he also quotes the work of Michel Foucault entitled *Discipline and Punish*. Foucault, on the level of everyday communication, described the peculiarity of the old type of punishment based on bloodshed from the logics of duels. Just like a duel, a premodern “punishment” in general does not sanction the violation of a formal rule but a “one-time act”, the violation of the moral integrity of an individual, a trauma in one’s life. Foucault studies those types of torture, from the side of the central power, which were elevated to the rank of a public, festive event by the absolutist regimes. Thus, torture is presented as a ritual during which the ruler restores his sovereignty violated by the perpetrator. Torment and physical pain appear as the unavoidable elements of punishment in this system: the “natural” order of power can only be restored if the perpetrator “burns in the flame of the power” of the sovereign. Thus, contrary to the typical interpretation of the Enlightenment, punishment based on torture cannot be interpreted as a remnant of barbaric tribal retaliation. In fact, it is the logical and indispensable element of a peculiar rule of law. In this system, all violations of law can be interpreted as a direct attack against the sovereign (the source of law), i.e. as high treason. The capital crime, i.e. open rebellion against the ruler is the absolute point of reference for minor crimes. Thus, minor physical pain involved by the punishment is ultimately meant to remind the perpetrator of the pain of death, i.e. the ritual restoration of the power of the sovereign (Foucault, 1990: 66-67; Joas, 2011: 78). However, (in this work of his), Foucault does not pay attention to those correlations which arise from the changes of the foundations of sovereignty. The history of modernity is described from the perspective of abstract *rule* that restructures societies in all circumstances and the transformation of the culture of punishment is derived from the changes in ruling techniques. This is why the description of the history of modern prisons is at the core of his work, from the world of casamates through the modern prisons that aim at “the rule of the intellect” to the *panopticon* that allows total observation.

Joas’s criticism of Foucault is based on the observation that Marcel Gauchet made on another important piece of work of Foucault entitled *The*

History of Madness. Foucault thinks that in the Middle Ages, insanity was regarded as “a normal part of creation”: this view of the world had led to a high extent of social acceptance from the side of the other members of society. However, with the advent of the Enlightenment, i.e. the creation of “the culture of rationality”, this approach changed radically and those in power ensured that the insane “are kept away” and excluded from society by the establishment of total institutions (mental hospitals, asylums). However, Gauchet thinks that the theory of Foucault rests on a mistake: it is in fact the most radical form of keeping distance that is manifested in the medieval “tolerance”: an insane person is not a part of the human race, he occupies a totally different place in the order of creation, so he requires little attention. This approach basically changes as a result of the absolutist social organization (this is already regarded by Gauchet as an important part of modernity), which intends to transcend the richly differentiated society of the Middle Ages by making everybody a subordinate of absolute power, and thus, a part of society.

In Joas’s view, there is an analogy in the situation of an insane person and a criminal. One can recognize that in Western societies, it was only after modernization that the need for “reintegrating criminals into society” as the equal members of society emerged. From this, he draws the conclusion that the endeavor of prisons, and in general, of the new institutions, to control behavior was preceded by a more deeply-rooted process: a challenge that can be identified from exercising absolutist power through the homogeneous nation states and the citizens’ nation states to the welfare states, i.e. that a unified society should be formed; that those individuals who were earlier regarded as unintegratable should increasingly be involved in the social processes (Joas, 2011: 79). From this position, the plans that point to the direction of growing observation, intellectual control or the calculation of action are not the indispensable elements of modernity. What they can rather be interpreted as are inadequate, sometimes antihuman responses to challenges that seem to be unsolvable: as an answer to the question how the gap between man and man, arising from the difference of socio-cultural backgrounds, socialization, as well as mental or physical differences can be bridged during social practices.

The concept of sacredness

Joas strives to reconstruct a new type of social integration mechanism, in creating which he relies on Durkheim's theory but interestingly, his work on the sociology of religion gets more attention than his analysis of the division of labor in society. Joas's starting point is Durkheim's famous definition of religion: „[A] religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden — beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them” (Durkheim, 1915: 47). According to a plausible critical remark, the key problem in this definition of religion is that it places another hazy concept requiring definition in the center of his argumentations on religion, which is the concept of the *sacred*. Thus, essentially, he shifts the problem of definition.⁴ Joas emphasizes that Durkheim most of all refers to an experience when he defines “sacred”, according to which, even in very different social formations, individuals experience the presence of power when they meet an object that is considered sacred. This power may be “transplanted” by the profane individual into himself, and he feels that he partakes in something pure, as an impure person. Some of Durkheim's critics think that what underlies the wording “the migration of forces and energies” is the intention to ultimately describe the social movements as the game of forces and counter-forces, without a more in-depth study of social subjects, built on a scientific analogy. However, in Joas's opinion, in Durkheim's line of thoughts, the views of pragmatist philosopher William James can be discovered (Joas, 2011: 93). According to this view, there is nothing in the cognitive convictions of religious individuals and their religious dogmas explained in a theoretical form from which the social scientist could understand the deeper reasons for their actions and cooperation in a religious community. The reasons can only be explored through understanding its peculiar dynamics, i.e. by recognizing that the members of religious communities spontaneously, i.e. not consciously build a system of rituals and common actions around certain “objects”, joining which the power of the community may be experienced as the source of their own vitality. The phenomenon that the members of a community may have a common world view, in the context of which the chaotic world appears to be in order and the individuals find their own roles in this world, is due to

⁴ See the consistent explanation of the counter-argument in: (Spiro, 1966: 89).

the intensive experience that they have when they become involved in this action.

After reviewing these considerations of sociology of religion, Joas draws attention to those contemporary approaches which also explain the formation of the various “secular” world views by the process of sacralization. According to these, secular nationalism, Marxist socialism and combatant liberalism became a unifying power because they created their own sacred “objects” and ritual forms of action. In my opinion, what one should think of here are the belief in a “sacred homeland”, the “party”, “the revolutionary labor class”, or “unalienable human rights”, national or workers’ movement pantheons, the festive processions organized around these, as well as the national and international holidays, taking oaths and credos, which appear besides the religious holidays. These are the examples that have shown Joas that the traditional definition-related correlation of sacredness and religion can be reversed. The concept of sacred cannot be derived from religion, while sacralization is a process that determines the evolution of each culture. Of course, sacredness is also constitutive for religion but a religion will only be established if the credos and practices built around the sacred become systematic and determined by a dominant social institution. However, seen from “the level of social organization”, it would be hard to say why French nationalism, Soviet-type communism or mainstream liberalism cannot be called a religion in the sense of the definition given by Durkheim. From Joas’s interpretation of Durkheim, however, the conclusion can be drawn that the dichotomy of sacred and profane cannot be matched with the dichotomy of religious and secular (Joas, 2011: 94-95). The formation of modern societies can also be presented from the perspective of such sacralization processes which take place more and more independently from the religious institutions in the traditional sense of the word.

Cultural transformation and the logic of punishment

For now, let us return to our original question: how can the transformation process examined by Joas be interpreted? From his criticism of Beccaria, what follows is that the adequate story of how a Western person thinks about the punishment of the other person can be properly told if one assumes that the violation of sacred things has always been considered the gravest sin. We could see that offending or killing profane persons has generally not been a grave sin all through history. On the other hand, Joas

concluded from the analyses of Foucault's works that through studying the absolutist regime of punishments, it is possible to explain the logic of the Western penal system. Thus, the transformation under review can be described as the "individual person" having gradually taken the place of an infrangible sovereign who ruled from the grace of God, in the modern rule of law and public morality. The attacks against this sovereign, which are manifested by word or action, should not simply be described in terms of the rational-legal model of causing material damage but rather, by using the analogy of high treason. Thus, it can be concluded, that in its original sense, modern punishment should be interpreted as an activity during which the members of society ritually restore the power balance built on individual persons.

This grows into a more general image of society seen from the perspective of the above-described interpretation of Durkheim. This means that the expression "sacralization of the person"⁵ refers to a typical process of the evolution of modern society, during which various prohibitions, beliefs and common practices are built around the individual person, in order to unify the members of society into a broad moral community, in line with the moral challenges of the period in question. According to the Durkheimian analysis presented above, Joas should create such a reconstruction of modern society in which the modern system of institutions can be modeled as a form of joint action built around and using the "power" of this sacredness. Also, he should prove the assumption that there is a comprehensive "world view" underlying the particular beliefs of the members of society, the cornerstone of which is the individual.

We may critically remark that ultimately, Joas fails to reconstruct such a comprehensive view of society and the world. He only examines to what extent it provides an adequate explanation for the changes in the history of penal law and disciplining. However, he shows it very convincingly that several phenomena that made no sense in the theories of

⁵ Durkheim usually speaks about the sacralization of the individual or the cult of the individual. Joas thinks that it is more accurate to talk about the sacralization of the person: in his view, the concept of a person or a personality makes a stronger reference to the social restraints of the individual and it expresses the social relationality of human life more clearly, so it can be juxtaposed with the image of the individual who follows egoistic preferences. (Joas, 2011: 83-84; Dirscherl-Dohmen, 2013: 71)

Beccaria or Foucault can be explained from the perspective of Durkheim's theory. It was difficult to explain from the perspective of Beccaria's theory why those persons who attempt suicide are morally condemned – if one of the discoveries of modernity was the very idea that the rational individual freely disposes over his or her own life. The key, in Joas's opinion, is that the basis for new modern morality is not self-determination according to personal discretion but the faith, unjustifiable on a rational basis, that one's body and one's person are "sacred", so it also deserves respect and protection from one's own arbitrary interventions.⁶

It is also from the perspective of this deeply rooted cultural characteristic that the logic of the modern penal and disciplining order can be explained. The modern individual is a part of an order of action, in which he recognizes himself and the other person as an untouchable "sacredness". However, thus he will encounter an important dilemma when he has to decide on a punishment of appropriate weight. As a result of the cultural changes that took place at the beginning of modernization, we are now more sensitive to the physical abuse of other persons, so finding an efficient and deterrent punishment becomes one of the most important public affairs. Paradoxically, however, the same process results in that the members of society become more sensitive to the suffering of criminals as well - even to the suffering of those to whom the gravest sin, i.e. a brutal attack against the "untouchable" human body and human life is attributed. The creation of the institution of the modern prison answered this dilemma. The "deprivation of liberty" as the typical form of punishment serves the purpose that any attack against an individual person should not be sanctioned at the cost of a new violation of this "sacredness" (Joas, 2011: 98).

This means that as an empirical observer, Foucault is right in that the evolution of the new system of punishment did not only go hand in hand with the pushing into the background of torment and inquisition but also, with increasing control over the body. He is also right when he says that these control mechanisms later served as examples for the perfection of the oppressive mechanisms of various institutions. However, the driving force of change was not the abstract rule that institutionalizes the new forms of oppression but the formation of such a social integration process which is

⁶ Joas later traces this idea back to the view of "life as a gift" that has taken root in the Western culture and the Judeo-Christian world (Joas, 2011: 232-233).

somehow built on the idea of individual inviolability. From Joas's perspective, it can be assumed that there are adequate and inadequate methods of enforcing the expectations related to the sacredness of the person in society. Thus, Joas's theory, as opposed to that of Foucault, ideally also makes it possible that repression for its own sake be pushed into the background. It is a question how we can move on to the reconstruction of Joas's normative theory from here.

Historical sociology and philosophy

Joas's historical analysis was built on the assumption that, by examining the history of punishment and disciplining, a change that took place in the early 18th century can be shown, in the course of which torture targeted at causing suffering to the human body has become a less and less legitimate tool of punishment and disciplining. He proved that the point of this change was most convincingly expressed by the social theory of Durkheim, according to which it was the challenge of the integration of extensive, complex societies that was underlying this change. Joas thinks that in accordance with the Durkheimian assumption, the basis for the development of each society and culture is the presence of sacredness (churches, dignities, sovereigns, sacred objects, etc.), around which the system of well-coordinated actions may be built spontaneously. According to the assumption, this is the same in modern society too, the only difference being that the individual person has become the "sacred core" of the operating societies (Joas, 2011: 81), replacing clerical or secular dignities.

In the spirit of Joas's theory, we can say that the basis of the validity of human rights norms is not a fundamental principle that can be rationally proven but a basic experience of the members of well-integrated societies. On the one hand, the individual is faced with the diverse forms of offences and humiliation. These experiences are structured by a system of institutions that is increasingly built on the formal acknowledgement of equality. Thus, the individual, as part of the modern system of actions, may recognize himself and his antagonist as a person with equal human dignity again and again. This means that the human rights doctrine is somehow the theoretical rendition of the basic experience constituting this important source of inspiration and its normative consequences (Möllers, 2011). However, it is a problem that Joas shows the significance of these norms from the perspective of their social functions. But in such a way the question

remains whether one can state anything about the validity of the norms from the perspective of the Durkheimian theory. It creates further tension that Durkheim and Joas explain the bases of the validity of human norms from a perspective of the sociology of religion. From this viewpoint, though, different from the intentions of Joas, the distance between the theoretical viewpoint and the norms that are in principle worth identifying with will grow. At first sight, this approach suggests that the examination of the evolution of human rights norms should emotionally not touch the researcher in the same way as if he examined the functional role of the religious practices of the distant past or distant worlds.

In order to be able to outline a possible solution, it is worth considering the historical context in which Durkheim's theory evolved. As Joas also points out, the direct motivation for the generation of the idea on the sacralization of the individual was provided by the Dreyfus Affair. The position taken by the official propaganda and the army was that the intellectuals who stood by the Jewish officer disregarded the interests of the homeland, that they were anarchists who believed in nothing but who elevated the individual to the rank of the sacred. It was originally this argumentation that encouraged Durkheim to explore the duality inherent in the concept of individualism. He juxtaposed the position of "appropriately interpreted individualism" with that of "egoistic individualism", i.e. such a deeply rooted set of norms which is the basis of the moral that rests on modern social integration and the acknowledgement of individual autonomy. It is of critical importance that Durkheim shows this normative system in a religious context. Thus, the charge that those who took the side of Dreyfus elevated the individual to the rank of sacredness loses its negative connotation. Individualism as seen by Durkheim openly appears as the "religion of modernity", and Durkheim can articulate his elevated standpoint as the follower of this "religion", according to which the violation of the integrity of an individual is a sin of the same gravity as dishonoring sacredness (Durkheim, 1986).

It is perhaps from this perspective that the position of Joas is also outlined. In his analysis of Durkheim, Joas turns against the enlightened position (which, e.g. appears in the works of Beccaria) according to which the validity of the norms is decided in a rational philosophical dispute and which makes the validity of the rights dependent on the sacralization of the enlightened lawmaker. For establishing validity, we have no other ultimate criterion but concluding that certain norms constitute a comprehensive

source of inspiration for the members of society, the mechanisms of constraint-free cooperation are built on these norms and they fundamentally structure the individual's view of the world. Thus, the criteria of the validity of the norms are rooted in a thorough social process, on which a theoretician can only exert a limited effect. However, Joas's Durkheimian analyses of sin, punishment, individualism and human dignity also show that a theoretical expert is not only capable of giving an authentic account of the critical norms but he can also highlight the adequate and inadequate interpretations of these norms. The aim is to show how a human's desire for freedom or justice can be fulfilled in certain historical-cultural conditions.⁷

Sacrality and rational discourse

At this point, however, the critical remarks concerning the ideas of Joas should be reconsidered. As we have seen, in Joas's opinion, the validity of norms ultimately depends on the non-conscious, social acceptance of certain "sacred" things. This idea fundamentally contradicts the assumptions of modern moral and political philosophy, according to which the validity of norms should rest on voluntary, sensible and public consent. In order to be able to outline a possible answer, it is worth paying attention to Joas's brief observation about Jürgen Habermas. At one point of his work entitled *The Theory of Communicative Action*, Habermas calls the transition to modernity the "linguistic transformation of the sacred (Versprachlichung des Sakralen)" (Habermas, 2011: 331-332). He describes a process in the course of which "language increasingly takes the place of religion". Our common symbols are formed less and less during the experience of sacredness and more and more in the course of communication aimed at mutual understanding. Later, it is this very thought that leads to the elaboration of Habermas's theory on legitimation: while in traditional societies, religious rituals played the key part in the crystallization of the values that determined action, modernity is built on the presumption that the validity of norms can only be clarified in an unlimited, rational discourse (Joas, 2011: 95). Thus, in the works of Habermas, one of the most

⁷ Closely related to this idea, Joas, in Chapter 4 of his book, quoting Ernst Troeltsch, encourages the elaboration of a concept the normative viewpoint of which is tied to the identification of tacitly presumed "ideals" by the members of the society of a certain period rather than to "eternal norms" (Joas, 2011: 156-164).

radical theories of secularization is outlined: one of the most important basic conditions of modern legitimacy is that the participants of a discourse should not be able to refer to alleged “sacred” things and that the discourse situation should be fundamentally liberated from the effect of ritual actions. Sacrality and discursive rationality are concepts excluding each other in this context.

In Joas’s opinion, Durkheim also accepts that the gaining ground of the norms of communication and the spreading of the culture of rational argumentation have radically transformed the world view and ideals of the modern human (Joas, 2011: 96). Durkheim analyzes those institutions at several points which are the safeguards of the spreading of the new culture: the modern Parliament, the political debates, the courts that ensure formal procedures. Probably Durkheim would also agree that in these institutions and at these forums, the participants of the debates expect each other to accept the norms of “communicative rationality” (by using the later Habermasian term). As compared to the later Habermasian approach, however, what is much more emphatic is that the problem-free maintenance of these rests on a deep emotional relationship which ties us to the different practices and procedures. Not even the formation and operation of scientific debate groups that seemingly work purely on the basis of formal rules can be explained merely as the institutionalization of the standards of communicative rationality. For their survival, it was primarily the taking root of the *scientific ethos* that was necessary, which motivates the parties to intensively take part in the debates in the course of quasi-ritual common actions.

It is even more important that the problem-free operation of the Parliament, the courts and the scientific community is based on such social conditions the creation of which is independent from the conscious intentions of the persons who take part in the discursive process. Maintaining them presumes the evolution of a historically unique situation in which the parties become more sensitive to the suffering of the other person than earlier, i.e. they become capable of identifying with the perspective of the other person, independently from the social status of the other party. Earlier, it was this very transformation that was explained by the sacralization of the person, the evolution of the quasi-ritual system of actions that is built around him. Thus, from Durkheim’s perspective, it is worth reviewing the idea according to which a normative system based on sacrality and one which is based on communicative rationality appear as

each other's rivals. If the method of establishing validity built on rational discussion pushed the significance of sacral-ritual actions into the background with a final effect, then we would not be able to identify the source of the cohesion which allows the coordination and reproduction of "discursive" institutions. Thus, following Durkheim's reasoning, Joas formulates the hypothesis according to which the coming into the foreground of the norms of communicative rationality does not mean the suppression of sacrality but rather, it is the unique "linguistic expression" of a modern sacralization process, i.e. the sacralization of the person (Joas, 2011: 96).

For this assumed Joasian interpretation of a rational discourse, it is perhaps worth noting the analyses of two Regensburg-based theologians, i.e. Erwin Dirscherl and Christoph Dohmen. They argue for relying on the concept of sacrality used by grace theology in order to be able to understand the concept of dignity as used by Joas. In their analysis, the nature of "sacredness" shows itself in the experience of grace. We can partake in an experience of grace irrespective of our merits: what we are talking about here is a gift from God, the purpose and function of which remains hidden from human thinking, which strives to explore the causal relations, merits and utility relations (Dirscherl-Dohmen, 2013: 73). According to the analysis, on the one hand, the "quality of sacredness" is associated with the idea of "subjective evidence": we can reach a solid understanding without being able to rationally identify the source of understanding. What is more, the experience of "sacredness" does not mean cognitive certainty but rather, an intensive emotion that boosts action or thinking without our being able to indicate the source of inspiration.

From this image of sacredness, one can approach the concept of human dignity analogously. This means that human dignity appears as something "obvious" for the actors in certain social circumstances: the validity of other norms is derived from it but the source cannot be rationally identified. The individual, as an arguing member of a well-functioning discourse community, may intensively experience that both he himself and his antagonist have equal dignity. What we are talking about here is a source of inspiration, which encourages the members to participate in the debate, and a deep conviction, which is the prerequisite for conducting a sensible debate with each other on practical issues. Joas would also agree that after the norms of human dignity take root in society, the norms and the laws have to be justified in a basically rational and free

debate. However, he thinks that such a comprehensive discourse on the reasons which also identifies the ultimate source of the validity of the norms is unaccomplishable (Joas, 2011: 72). The justification procedure will inevitably stop at reaching certain subjective and irrationally accepted evidences, which will be spontaneously accepted by the participants of the discourse but in support of which they cannot bring up any arguments.

Joas does not mention what these evidences are. Anyway, it is plausible to think that without the expectation of tacitly accepting the other person as equivalent in a situation of debate, as one who is able to formulate a better argument than us, irrespective of his social status, it is impossible to conduct a wide-reaching rational debate. It may also be discussed how this expectation can be represented in the different institutions of society which would provide an appropriate framework for conducting such debates. However, it is not in the discourse that the expectation of “equivalence” within the debate gains legitimacy: it becomes an expectation that fundamentally structures our lives and way of thinking through an unconscious social process, which is independent from the discussion.

In Joas’s interpretation, there are such normative expectations which evolve independently from the members of society or the participants of the discussion. What derives from this is that the perspective of social criticism cannot be purely tied to the theory of discourse, or to calling the norms of discursive rationality to account. There is a more deeply-rooted historical perspective, starting out from which the theoretician can map the differences in the Western type of social development, as well as the successful and pathological versions of individualization. In principle, by this, such social circumstances can be disclosed which may be responsible for the repeated failure of the possibility of a rational discourse in certain societies, despite organizing forums for such discussions. Such societies may be pointed out in which the organization of the institutions takes place on the basis of a Western example but the possibilities of constraint-free action are still not available. For instance, because the members of society do not recognize the individual equivalent to them in the other person; or they do not see the dignified and inviolable person in themselves either.

Emerging problems

What we could see up to this point is that Joas fruitfully reinterpreted Durkheim’s theory of society. On the one hand, he explained that the

authentic story of the transformation that has led to the prohibition of inquisition, torture and at many places, capital punishment in the Western world can only be told adequately from a reconsidered Durkheimian position. From this Durkheimian perspective, a possible basis for the legitimacy of human dignity has evolved. This means that in modern societies, such forms of integration and constraint-free joint action became possible in which the individuals can recognize themselves and their antagonists as inviolable “saints”. At the same time, in certain cases, they will be capable of identifying with the other person in an empathetic way, irrespective of the other person’s social status. Human dignity and the system of human rights norms built on it basically do not gain their legitimacy in a rational discourse. However, a theoretical discussion is one of those modern collective forms of action in which a person can discover in himself and in the other person the individual with dignity, in which they can best assert their needs. A rational discussion as a collective action, however, cannot be maintained without the possibility of changing perspectives, without the tacit acknowledgement of the dignity of the other person.

However, in the analysis of Joas, the social-theoretical status of the concept remains unclarified all through. Placing the problem of “comprehensive cultural transformation” in the center suggests that Joas wishes to interpret the narrative about the “sacralization of the person” as a comprehensive metanarrative of Western modernization as a whole (although Durkheim had probably no such intentions). If this is so, then all the tendencies and developments, or antihuman destruction, etc. in Western modernity are in some way related to this process of sacralization, as well as the adequate and inadequate solutions for the related challenge of inclusion. Some other points in the text, however, suggest that modernization should rather be seen as a wide-ranging process of differentiation. This means that modernization made it possible that, “becoming free” from the traditional religious background, parallel sacralization processes be conducted. But thus, the option of an all-embracing metanarrative can be excluded: the “sacralization of the person” is only one of the tendencies whose exploration may create the opportunity for searching for the foundations of a totally different “secular system of beliefs”.

However, as a result of this duality, it is very difficult to say which direction to follow when we wish to present the most serious pathologies

of modern societies, for example, when we wish to grasp the point of totalitarian or other inhuman regimes. In the case of these, are we talking about the wrong turn that the “great Western transformation”, i.e. the sacralization of the person has taken? The situation is that the establishment of these systems does not seem to be exceptional or transitional. Is all this about the misunderstanding of the expectation of an increasing inclusion, execution by the “equivalent party” with the wrong means, which will ultimately backfire and end up in inhuman acts (as we have seen in Joas’s criticism of Foucault)? Or, shall we discover the conscious and quasi-ritual violation of sacred things in the mass-scale violation of dignity (as in the case of destroying altars and damaging graves)? In most cases, Joas tends to describe the big social problems as the result of the conflict of opposing processes of sacralization: for example, the ideal of individual morality is threatened due to the process of the sacralization of the race, the nation or the social class. What Joas says about the anti-capital punishment attitude is the following: this is repeatedly faced with the opposition of the nationalistic “civilian religion” dominant in the Southern part of the USA.⁸ However, by using this explanation, we seem to give up the assumption according to which there is a dominant process of sacralization which is the basis of all modern social changes: one of the “modern systems of beliefs” may overcome the other one and may define, in the long term, the world view of acting individuals and it may coordinate their actions (without coercion).

In such a way, however, we come across a question that touches upon the construction of the normative theory. Joas argued for that the activity performed by the normative theoretician is mostly aimed at explaining the history of the normative system that he also accepts, as well as the possibility of the adequate realization thereof. In the case of human rights and dignity, we have seen that the ultimate basis of their legitimation was the “subjective evidence” that cannot be traced back to anything, which is revealed in the course of the right collective action. In the Joasian sense, one can interpret the conflicts of the multicultural societies of our age as the conflict of the opposing processes of sacralization. If, however, in this

⁸ For example, Joas thinks that in the debate on capital punishment, the acceptance of the sacrality of the person gets in conflict with the nationalistic civilian religion that repeatedly gains momentum in the Southern part of the USA (Joas, 2011: 103-104).

situation, there is no theoretical reason for attaching special significance to the sacralization of the person or the related normative expectations, what will explain connecting the perspective of the normative social theoretician to human dignity (rather than to the nation, or any other sacralization tendency that evolves spontaneously)? In our analysis, we could see that Joas assigned an important role to the principled thinking of the philosopher and the social theoretician during the procedure of legitimation. But we could also see that this is ultimately not related to a universal perspective, from which one could decide between the opposing traditions; so ultimately, it will also be doubtful whether it is capable of depicting a comprehensive normative view of society.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- BECCARIA, Cesare: *Über Verbrechen und Strafen* (Nach der Ausgabe von 1766.), Insel Taschenbuch, Frankfurt am Main, 1998.
- DIRSCHERL, Erwin; DOHMEN, Christoph: *Heiligkeit - Einzigkeit - Alterität*, in: *Heiligkeit und Menschenwürde. Hans Joas' neue Genealogie der Menschenrechte im theologischen Gespräch*, Herder, Freiburg, 2013.
- DURKHEIM, Émile: *The elementary forms of religious life* (1915), Translated from the French by Joseph Ward Swain, George Allen & Unwin LTD. London; The MacMillan Company, New York.
- DURKHEIM, Émile: *Der Individualismus und die Intellektuellen* (1898), in: Hans Bertram (Szerk.), *Gesellschaftlicher Zwang und moralische Autonomie*, Frankfurt 1986.
- DURKHEIM, Émile: *Über soziale Arbeitsteilung* (1893), Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main, 1988.
- FONK, Peter (2013): *Ethische Anmerkungen zur konstitutiven Bedeutung von Genese*, in: *Heiligkeit und Menschenwürde. Hans Joas' neue Genealogie der Menschenrechte im theologischen Gespräch*, Herder, Freiburg.
- FOUCAULT, Michel (1976): *Überwachen und Strafen. Die Geburt des Gefängnisses*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main.
- JOAS, Hans (2017): *Die Macht des Heiligen. Eine Alternative zur Geschichte von der Entzauberung*, Suhrkamp, Berlin.
- JOAS, Hans (2011): *Die Sakralität der Person. Eine neue Genealogie der Menschenrechte*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main, 2011.
- HABERMAS, Jürgen (1981): *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns. Zur Kritik der funktionalistischen Vernunft*, Band 2. Suhrkamp, Frankfurt.
- HONNETH, Axel (2003): *Umverteilung als Anerkennung. Eine Erwiderung auf Nancy Fraser*. In: Axel Honneth és Nancy Fraser: *Umverteilung oder Anerkennung?*

Eine politisch-philosophische Kontroverse. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2003.

HÖFFE, Otfried (2011): *Was kann Kant dafür, dass er kein Soziologe war?* FAZ, 2011.11.27.

<http://www.faz.net/aktuell/feuilleton/buecher/rezensionen/sachbuch/hans-joas-die-sakralitaet-der-person-was-kann-kant-dafuer-dass-er-kein-soziologe-war-11543331.html>

MÖLLERS, Christoph (2011): *Etwas am Menschen ist heilig*, Die Zeit, 2011. Oktober 13. <https://www.zeit.de/2011/42/L-S-Joas> <https://www.zeit.de/2011/42/L-S-Joas>

O'NEILL, Onora (2006): *The Method of A theory of Justice*, in. *Klassiker Auslegen: Rawls: Eine Theorie der Gerechtigkeit*, (szerk. Otfried Höffe), Akademie Verlag.

SPIRO, Melford Elliot (1966): *Religion: Problems of Definition and Explanation*. In. Banton, M. *Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion*. Tavistock, London.

STEIN, Tine (2007): *Himmliche Quellen und irdisches Recht. Religiöse Voraussetzungen des freiheitlichen Verfassungsstaates*, Campus, Frankfurt am Main.

HINTIKKA'S THEOREM DOES NOT HOLD IN NON-AXIOMATIC LOGIC

Miguel LÓPEZ-ASTORGA¹

Abstract: *Hintikka's theorem relates what is impossible to what is forbidden. It provides that if something is impossible, that cannot be permitted. There are logical demonstrations of the theorem. Those demonstrations follow requirements of classical, modal, and deontic logics. However, there are also accounts based on psychological theories trying to explain why people's tendency should be to reject it. I will attempt to account for the probable rejection of the theorem by people too. But my explanation will resort to Non-Axiomatic Logic. I will argue that, from the latter logic, linking possibility and prohibition is preferable to linking impossibility and prohibition. So, Hintikka's theorem does not hold in Non-Axiomatic Logic.*

Keywords: *Hintikka's theorem, impossibility, Non-Axiomatic Logic, possibility, prohibition.*

Introduction

Hintikka's theorem is well-known. It provides that if something cannot be the case, that is forbidden. It is often expressed as follows:

$$(1) \forall x (\neg\Diamond x \Rightarrow \neg Px)$$

Other ways to express the theorem are to be found in the literature (see, e.g., (12) in Øhrstrøm, Zeller, & Sandborg-Petersen, 2012, or (HT) in López-Astorga, 2017). (1) is a formula in first-order predicate calculus. '∀' represents the universal quantifier, '¬' is the negation symbol, '◇' stands for the modal operator of possibility, '⇒' denotes the material conditional, and 'P' symbolizes the deontic operator of permission.

Acknowledgments

Project ANID FONDECYT Regular N° 1240010, "Modus Tollendo Tollens y condicionales de obligación: Un análisis de los efectos facilitadores del criterio estoico."

¹ Institute of Humanistic Studies, Research Center on Cognitive Sciences, University of Talca, Talca Campus (Chile).

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6004-0587>

The theorem is counterintuitive and accordingly hard to accept. One might ask "...why should what is impossible also be forbidden? What is the point in not permitting the impossible?" (Øhrstrøm et al., 2012, p. 451). We have logic demonstrations of it (see, e.g., Prior, 2012, and the analysis of the latter paper in Øhrstrøm et al., 2012). Those demonstrations respect the technical meanings of 'possibility' in modal logic and 'permission' in deontic logic. But we can also find works trying to explain the reasons why individuals' general tendency should be not to admit Hintikka's theorem. To do that, for example, a contemporary cognitive theory was considered. That theory is the theory of mental models (e.g., Johnson-Laird, 2023; Jonson-Laird, Byrne, & Khemlani, 2024). Based on this theory, people build mental representations when processing sentences. Given a sentence such as (1) expressed in natural language, those mental representations can prevent from accepting Hintikka's theorem (López-Astorga, 2017).

My purpose here is to attempt to show that in Non-Axiomatic Logic (e.g., Wang, 2013, 2023. From now on, I will use 'NAL' to refer to the latter logic; it is the usual abbreviation to name it) the theorem does not hold. NAL is the logic from which NARS (Non-Axiomatic Reasoning System; see also, e.g., Wang, 2006), that is, a computer program, comes. NARS is not intended to work as the human mind, but it does try to make inferences in a similar manner to people (e.g., Wang, 2013). I will not review whether NARS makes inferences in that way. I will only propose that its logical system, that is, NAL, does not allow accepting (1). My point will be just that, in this case, NAL does appear to work in a way akin to our mind.

The present paper will be divided into two sections. In the first one, I will describe the components NAL seems to need to deal with sentences such as (1). In the second section, I will present my account of the reasons why sentences such as (1) should be rejected in NAL.

A brief description of NAL

The statements in NAL are 'inheritance statements' linking subjects and predicates (e.g., Wang, 2013). A typical inheritance statement in NAL is (2).

(2) " $S \rightarrow P \langle f, c \rangle$ " (Wang, 2013, p. 40; Definition 3.8).

In (2), S denotes the subject of the inheritance statement. Being the subject means being in a set: in the extension of the predicate, which is P in (2). In turn, P is also an element in a set: the intension of S . Thus, what copula ' \rightarrow ' in (2) provides is "...that S is in the extension of P and P is in the intension of S " (Wang, 2013, p. 40; Definition 3.8; italics in text). This is important because, as indicated in most works explaining NAL, those are not the habitual meanings for 'extension' and 'intension' in logic. While ' \rightarrow ' has isomorphic properties with ' \Rightarrow ' (e.g., Wang, 2013; Definitions 9.2 and 9.3), what (2) establishes is what is expressed in (3).

$$(3) \quad "(S \rightarrow P) \Leftrightarrow (S^E \subseteq P^E) \Leftrightarrow (P^I \subseteq S^I)" \text{ (Wang, 2013, p. 20; Theorem 2.4).}$$

In (3), ' \Leftrightarrow ' represents biconditional relation as understood in first-order predicate calculus, X^E stands for the extension of X , and X^I denotes the intension of X .

Regarding $\langle f, c \rangle$, it is the truth value of the statement. The first component, f , is 'frequency'. It is calculated by means of the formulae in (4).

$$(4) \quad "f = w^+/w" \text{ (Wang, 2013, p. 29; Definition 3.3); } "w^+ = |S^E \cap P^E| + |P^I \cap S^I|" \text{ (Wang, 2013, p. 28; Definition 3.2); } "w = |S^E| + |P^I|" \text{ (Wang, 2013, p. 28; Definition 3.2).}$$

As it can be inferred from (4), w^+ refers to the 'positive evidence' of the statement, and w stands for the 'total evidence' of that very statement.

As far as c in (2) is concerned, it is the 'confidence' of the statement. NAL also has a formula to calculate it:

$$(5) \quad "c = w/(w + k)" \text{ (Wang, 2013, p. 29; Definition 3.3).}$$

The role of k in (5) is that of a constant. In NAL, it is habitual to consider it to be equal to 1 (for reasons for that, see, e.g., Wang, 2013).

Components f and c are important in NAL in several senses. For the present paper, one of the reasons why they are relevant is that one might think that f and c play the role of quantifiers in other logics. NAL works with a basic assumption: the Assumption of Insufficient Knowledge and Resources

(AIKR; in addition to Wang, 2013, this assumption is addressed in detail in, e.g., Wang, 2011). The assumption implies that there are always doubts about the evidence reviewed. It is always possible to get new evidence, which can change the current values of f and c . From this point of view, we can think that if we use f and c , quantifiers such as the existential and the universal quantifiers in first-order predicate calculus become irrelevant (e.g., Wang, 2023).

On the other hand, there are many inference rules in NAL. The system enables to make inferences such as deductions, inductions, abductions, revisions, etc. (e.g., Wang, 2013; for a brief explanation of some of the rules, see, in addition, Wang, 2023). However, the rule that is interesting here is the ‘choice rule’. Given a question such as ‘ $? \rightarrow P$ ’, that is, a question about the most appropriate subject for a predicate, NAL also has a formula to determinate what option to choose. That formula allows calculating e , that is, the ‘expectation value’. It is the formula in (6).

$$(6) \quad "e = (w^+ + k/2)/(w + k)", \text{ or } "e = c \times (f - 1/2) + 1/2" \text{ (Wang, 2013, p. 48; Table 4.2).}$$

The alternative with highest e will be the alternative to select.

All this can also be shown by means of an example. Taking AIKR into account, let us suppose a fictional scenario such as the following.

The system knows ten people. eight of those people are Asian, and two of them are European. Out of the eight Asian people, five are Chinese and three are Japanese. One European person is German, and the other one is Portuguese. This information enables to build inheritance statements (7) to (16).

$$(7) \quad \textit{Asian} \rightarrow \textit{Person} (1, 0.89)$$

This is because $w = 8$ and $w^+ = 8$ for (7).

$$(8) \quad \textit{European} \rightarrow \textit{Person} (1, 0.67)$$

This is because $w = 2$ and $w^+ = 2$ for (8).

(9) *Chinese* \rightarrow *Person* (1, 0.83)

This is because $w = 5$ and $w^+ = 5$ for (9).

(10) *Japanese* \rightarrow *Person* (1, 0.75)

This is because $w = 3$ and $w^+ = 3$ for (10).

(11) *German* \rightarrow *Person* (1, 0.5)

This is because $w = 1$ and $w^+ = 1$ for (11).

(12) *Portuguese* \rightarrow *Person* (1, 0.5)

This is because $w = 1$ and $w^+ = 1$ for (12).

(13) *Chinese* \rightarrow *Asian* (1, 0.86)

This is because $w = 6$ and $w^+ = 6$ for (13) (if *Person*^l is the intension of *Person*, $\{Chinese\} \in Person^l$, and $\{Asian\} \in Person^l$).

(14) *Japanese* \rightarrow *Asian* (1, 0.8)

This is because $w = 4$ and $w^+ = 4$ for (14) ($\{Japanese\} \in Person^l$, and $\{Asian\} \in Person^l$).

(15) *German* \rightarrow *European* (1, 0.67)

This is because $w = 2$ and $w^+ = 2$ for (15) ($\{German\} \in Person^l$, and $\{European\} \in Person^l$).

(16) *Portuguese* \rightarrow *European* (1, 0.67)

This is because $w = 2$ and $w^+ = 2$ for (16) ($\{Portuguese\} \in Person^l$, and $\{European\} \in Person^l$).

With these data, NAL can respond to questions such as ' $? \rightarrow Person'$ ', ' $? \rightarrow Asian'$ ', or ' $? \rightarrow European'$ '. In the case of the first question, that is, ' $? \rightarrow Person'$ ', we need to calculate e for inheritance statements (7) to (12). Let $e(7)$, $e(8)$, $e(9)$, $e(10)$, $e(11)$, and $e(12)$ be the expectation values of, respectively, (7), (8), (9), (10), (11), and (12). (6) allows calculating them.

$$-e(7) = 0.94$$

$$-e(8) = 0.83$$

$$-e(9) = 0.92$$

$$-e(10) = 0.88$$

$$-e(11) = 0.75$$

$$-e(12) = 0.75$$

Because the highest value is $e(7)$, the answer to ' $? \rightarrow Person'$ ' would be *Asian*.

If the question were ' $? \rightarrow Asian'$ ', we would require the values of e for (13) and (14). Let $e(13)$ and $e(14)$ be the expectation values of, respectively, (13) and (14). Then,

$$-e(13) = 0.93$$

$$-e(14) = 0.9$$

Since $e(13) > e(14)$, the response would be *Chinese* in this case.

Finally, the values of e necessary to respond to ' $? \rightarrow European'$ ' would be those of (15) and (16). Let $e(15)$ and $e(16)$ be the expectation values of, respectively, (15) and (16). (6) leads us to:

$$-e(15) = 0.83$$

$$-e(16) = 0.83$$

In this situation, the system could not choose between *German* and *Portuguese*, as the expectation value is the same for both (15) and (16). Beyond the way NAL can solve difficulties such as this one, what is important now is that the components of this logic described above can show that statements akin to (1) would not be prioritized in it. The next section addresses this point.

Hintikka's theorem and NAL

To consider (1) from NAL, the first thing to do is to translate a formula such as (1), which is a formula in first-order predicate calculus including operators from modal and deontic logics, into an inheritance statement such as those of NAL. The universal quantifier is not a problem. As said, if truth values such as f and c are included, no quantifier should be used. We are never sure about evidence in NAL. So, we cannot state definitively, for example, that all elements in a set are a subset of another set, or that an intersection between two sets exists. In NAL, the values obtained with its formulae are always variable. Thus, (1) can be transformed into (17).

$$(17) \quad \neg\Diamond x \Rightarrow \neg Px \langle f_x, c_x \rangle$$

This does not suffice. The material conditional is only used in NAL at the meta-level to describe it (e.g., Wang, 2013). Hence, ' \Rightarrow ' needs to be replaced by ' \rightarrow '. As indicated, there is an isomorphism between the material conditional in classical logic and the inheritance copula in NAL (e.g., Wang, 2013; Definitions 9.2 and 9.3). Besides, transformations of conditionals in classical logic into inheritance statements in NAL are to be found in the literature. For example, there are works in which that was done to apply NAL to philosophical frameworks (see, e.g., López-Astorga, 2024, where NAL is combined with the testability process Carnap, 1936, 1937, proposed). So, one might think that changing (17) for (18) is justified.

$$(18) \quad \neg\Diamond x \rightarrow \neg Px \langle f_x, c_x \rangle$$

The problems remaining are those caused by modal operator ' \Diamond ' and deontic operator ' P '. NAL can remove those problems in several ways. Following works such as Wang (2013), one of these ways is to deem them as terms with extension and intension. ' \Diamond ' can refer to *Possible*, and ' P ' can denote *Permitted*. Given that in (18) both terms are negated, we should think about terms such as *Impossible* and *Forbidden*. That allows us to come to (19).

$$(19) \quad \text{Impossible} \rightarrow \text{Forbidden} \langle f_x, c_x \rangle$$

At this point, to know how (19) would be processed in NAL, we would have to calculate f_x and c_x . That does not seem to be easy. However, there

are other options that may not be so difficult. For instance, we can think about the status of (19) in NAL considering at the same time both an inheritance statement such as (20)

$$(20) \quad \textit{Possible} \rightarrow \textit{Forbidden} \langle f_y, c_y \rangle$$

And a question such as (21).

$$(21) \quad ? \rightarrow \textit{Forbidden}$$

According to (6), the answer to (21) could be neither *Possible*, by virtue of (20), nor *Impossible*, by virtue of (19). It could be another term different from both the system knows. But we can argue that NAL will always prefer *Possible*, or (20), over *Impossible*, or (19), in this case. If this is shown, we will be able to claim that the inheritance statements similar to what (1) expresses have low frequency values in NAL.

As indicated above, "...why should what is impossible also be forbidden? What is the point in not permitting the impossible?" (Øhrstrøm et al., 2012, p. 451) are valid questions. Questions such as these ones make sense because in real life we hardly find impossible actions that are forbidden. I am not saying that we cannot find impossible and forbidden actions. What I am saying is that it is difficult to find them.

The opposite happens in the case of (20). Most forbidden conducts are possible conducts. Therefore, we can think that NAL always has evidence in favor of (20), no matter how little information it has. Let w_{19^+} and w_{20^+} be the positive evidence in favor of, respectively, (19) and (20). It is obvious that (22) holds.

$$(22) \quad w_{20^+} > 0$$

But (23) is not obvious.

$$(23) \quad w_{19^+} > 0$$

What does be also evident is that $w_{19^+} < w_{20^+}$.

Let w_{19} and w_{20} be the total evidence for, respectively, (19) and (20). In a fictional scenario in which the amount of evidence for (19) and (20) is the same, that is, in a fictional scenario in which $w_{19} = w_{20}$, 24 holds.

$$(24) \quad [w_{19}/(w_{19} + k)] = [w_{20}/(w_{20} + k)] = c_x = c_y$$

Still, all that has been said leads to (25).

$$(25) \quad [(w_{19}^+ + k/2)/(w_{19} + k)] < [(w_{20}^+ + k/2)/(w_{20} + k)]$$

Although $w_{19} = w_{20}$, given that $w_{19}^+ < w_{20}^+$, we must admit that $f_x < f_y$. Accordingly,

$$(26) \quad [c_x \times (f_x - 1/2) + 1/2] < [c_y \times (f_y - 1/2) + 1/2]$$

Let $e(19)$ and $e(20)$ be the expectation values of, respectively, (19) and (20). If (25) and (26) are the case, then (27) is the case.

$$(27) \quad e(19) < e(20)$$

But (27) leads to respond to (21) with *Possible*. As indicated, depending on the data the system has, the answer can be a term different from both *Possible* and *Impossible*. However, what appears to be undeniable is that *Possible* is always preferable over *Impossible* as a response to (21).

Conclusions

Hintikka's theorem has been demonstrated following general technical requirements of classical, modal, and deontic logics. In the literature, we can find explanations based on psychological theories accounting for why, despite that, people can tend not to accept the theorem.

In this paper, I have tried to do the same within NAL framework. What the theorem provides can be expressed as an inheritance statement in NAL. Quantifiers are not necessary in the latter logic; it includes truth values such as f and c that seem to eliminate their necessity. On the other hand, the isomorphism between the material conditional in classical logic and the copula in inheritance statements in NAL also helps convert what the theorem indicates into an inheritance statement. In addition, the

operators of possibility and permission, from, respectively, modal logic and deontic logic, can be understood as terms in NAL.

From this point on, we can calculate the expectation value for both a statement indicating that what is impossible is forbidden and a statement establishing that what is possible is forbidden. Given that it is evident that the second statement will have more positive evidence than the first one, if the two statements have the same confidence value, the second statement will have a higher expectation value.

By virtue of the choice rule, the higher expectation value means that the statement linking what is possible to what is forbidden should be selected before the statement relating what is impossible to what is forbidden. Therefore, in NAL, if we ask about the subject of the predicate *Forbidden*, the tendency will be to prioritize *Possible*. One might think that this is more like the way people can understand the theorem.

NAL has much more resources and components than those described in the present paper. There are other manners to address Hintikka's theorem from NAL. Those manners might be different in terms of simplicity and rigor from mine here. However, they can hardly lead to opposite conclusions. It is difficult to accept Hintikka's theorem in NAL.

REFERENCES

- CARNAP, R. (1936). Testability and meaning. *Philosophy of Science*, 3(4), 419-471. <https://doi.org/10.1086/286432>
- CARNAP, R. (1937). Testability and meaning – Continued. *Philosophy of Science*, 4(1), 1-40. <https://doi.org/10.1086/286443>
- JOHNSON-LAIRD, P. N. (2023). Possibilities and human reasoning. *Possibilities Studies & Society*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/27538699231152731>
- JOHNSON-LAIRD, P. N., Byrne, R. M. j., & Khemlani, S. (2024). Models of possibilities instead of logic as the basis of human reasoning. *Minds & Machines*, 34(19). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11023-024-09662-4>
- López-Astorga, M. (2017). What is possible and what is permitted: Hintikka and Prior. *Analele Universitatii din Craiova, Seria Filosofie*, 39(1), 57-66.
- LÓPEZ-ASTORGA, M. (2024). Scientific testability following the Assumption of Insufficient Knowledge and Resources. *SATS*. <https://doi.org/10.1515/sats-2023-0020>
- ØHRSTRØM, P., ZELLER, J., & SANDBORG-PETERSEN, U. (2012). Prior's defence of Hintikka's theorem. A discussion of Prior's "The logic of obligation and the obligations of the logician". *Synthese*, 188(3), 449-454. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11229-011-9936-2>

- PRIOR, A. N. (2012). The logic of obligation and the obligations of the logician. *Synthese*, 188(3), 423-448. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11229-011-9935-3>
- WANG, P. (2006). *Rigid Flexibility: The Logic of Intelligence*. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/1-4020-5045-3>
- WANG, P. (2011). The assumptions on knowledge and resources in models of rationality. *International Journal of Machine Consciousness*, 3(1), 193-218. <https://doi.org/10.1142/S1793843011000686>
- WANG, P. (2013). *Non-Axiomatic Logic: A Model of Intelligent Reasoning*. Singapore: World Scientific. <https://doi.org/10.1142/8665>
- WANG, P. (2023). The role of copulas in reasoning. Technical Report #17. *Temple AGI Team. Temple University*. <https://cis.temple.edu/tagit/publications/TAGIT-TR-17.pdf>

Lucrări prezentate la Colocviul Național FILOSOFIE ȘI EDUCAȚIE,
Ediția I, 29 mai 2024,
Organizat de UNIVERSITATEA DIN CRAIOVA, FACULTATEA DE
ȘTIINȚE SOCIALE

FILOSOFIA CA SUPREMĂ CONSOLARE LA BOETHIUS

Adriana NEACȘU¹

Abstract: *From Boethius's point of view, philosophy manages to console us in the face of death because it removes the veil of ignorance regarding human nature, offering us an authentic knowledge of our being, as persons in close connection with the divine, that is, with Good. This means that it reveals to us what good is in general and, implicitly, our good as humans, which presupposes the possession of spiritual goods, which we obtain exclusively through the exercise of virtue. From this perspective, no loss of our material goods, including our body, is not an evil for us. To the same extent, no injustice inflicted on us by others can affect us, as long as we preserve our virtue, that is, human dignity, and do not deviate from the line of good. According to his conception, the reward of a virtuous life is offered on the spot, and it consists precisely in the exercise of virtue. Therefore, man must be virtuous not because he expects to be rewarded in earthly life or after death, but because only in this way does he fully manifest his human nature, can he affirm himself as a man at the highest level, and this represents for him the greatest good and offers him true happiness.*

Keywords: *Boethius, God, Good, evil, virtue, death, philosophy, happiness, soul, intellect, fate, destiny, providence, free will, divine foreknowledge.*

Introducere

În primul sfert al veacului al VI-lea d.Hr., într-o perioadă extrem de tulbură, de tranziție de la antichitate la epoca medievală, când Imperiul Roman de Apus căzuse deja în mâinile triburilor germanice, iar în Italia domnea, de câteva decenii, un rege ostrogot, filosofia era chemată să își exercite unul dintre cele mai dificile roluri pe care putea să i-l confere statutul său de „iubire de înțelepciune”: acela de a liniști sufletul complet răvășit al unui om condamnat pe nedrept, care se vedea, înainte de vreme, în fața morții brutale.

Este vorba despre Anicius Manlius Torquatus Severinus Boethius, celebru filosof al vremii sale, care, născut la Roma într-o familie aristocratică, studiasă ani buni la Atena și avea ambiția de a-i traduce în

¹ University of Craiova, Romania.

latină pe Platon și Aristotel, argumentând, în același timp, în favoarea compatibilității dintre doctrinele lor. Ca urmare deopotrivă a originii și a meritelor sale intelectuale de excepție, Boethius a urcat rapid în ierarhia politico-administrativă a curții regale a lui Theodoric cel Mare, instituită la Ravenna, ajungând să ocupe funcția de consul, iar, în final, demnitatea cea mai înaltă, aceea de *Magister officiorum*, adică un fel de prim-ministru.

Numai că, tocmai în momentul în care atinsese culmea măririi pentru sine și familia sa – căci ambii lui fii, deși foarte tineri, deveniseră și ei consuli –, în urma unei intrigi de palat, în condițiile fricțiunilor dintre Theodoric, adept al arianismului, și Justin, împăratul Imperiului Roman de Răsărit, care-i persecuta pe arieni, Albinus, unul dintre senatori, este învinuit pe nedrept că i-ar fi scris lui Justin, solicitându-i înlăturarea lui Theodoric de la domnie. Deoarece Boethius îi ia apărarea lui Albinus, intrigantii fabrică același tip de scrisori incriminatoare, semnate, chipurile, de Boethius. Fără să-i lase posibilitatea să se apere, Theodoric îl condamnă pe filosof la moarte, aruncându-l în temniță până la executarea sentinței.

Ajuns într-o situație atât de dramatică, fără nicio ieșire, Boethius își adună forțele pentru a scrie ultima sa lucrare, în care meditează deopotrivă la propria soartă și la condiția omului în genere, exprimându-și cele mai intime convingeri despre viață și moarte, despre ordinea lumii și finalitatea tuturor lucrurilor din univers, acordându-i, totodată, filosofiei un rol central în smulgerea sa din disperare și în recâștigarea seninătății. Iar cum acesta este scopul principal al demersului său creator, lucrarea poartă numele: *Consolarea filosofiei*.

Deznădejdea prizonierului și descinderea în temniță a Filosofiei

Ceea ce îi conferă din start originalitate lucrării este faptul că nu avem de-a face cu o simplă scriere savantă, care să încerce să ne convingă, recurgând la argumente exclusiv abstracte, despre cum ar trebui să ne raportăm, în general, la existența noastră și la vicisitudinile ei. Dimpotrivă, pentru a-i imprima întreaga încărcătură emoțională cuprinsă în propria, tragică, experiență, filosoful nostru alege stilul confesiunii directe, derulată la timpul prezent, atrăgându-ne astfel într-o poveste concretă, și pe deasupra reală, cu al cărui erou empatizăm din plin, în calitate de cititori. De aceea autorul îmbină în expunerea sa proza cu poezia, făcând apel deopotrivă la rațiune și sensibilitate.

Așadar, iată-l pe Boethius însuși aflat în închisoare, stând în fața noastră plin de lacrimi, asemenea unui om zdrobit, pe care nenorocirea l-a

îmbătrânit înainte de vreme, și care privește cu spaimă la viitorul imediat, fiindcă este pe deplin conștient că se găsește în anticamera morții. Boethius se simte părăsit de toată lumea; doar muzele poeziei îi țin tovărășie, căci sunt singurele care rezonază cu durerea lui și nu se tem să își arate compătimirea.

„Eu, care odinioară, cântece-am așternut plin de avânt,
Sunt, vai, înlăcrimat, constrâns de versuri triste să mă apuc.
Iată, îndurerate Camenele-mi dictează cele ce trebuie scrise
Și elegiile îmi udă fața de lacrimi sincere.
Cel puțin nicio teamă pe ele nu le-a putut opri
Să mă însoțească pe drumul meu.
Odată erau gloria tinereții fericite și înfloritoare:
Ele consolează acum soarta mea de bătrân îndurerat.”²

În rest, niciunul dintre semenii săi, deși știau că este nevinovat, nu se implică în situația sa, de frică; pe de o parte, este vorba aici de lășitatea oamenilor, pe de alta, de puterea discreționară a unui rege care putea osândi, oricând, pe oricine. Fiindcă, deși prin politica sa de păstrare a modului de viață și a instituțiilor romane tradiționale, Theodoric părea a fi un principe luminat, în realitate el era, totuși, un dictator. Asta arată fragilitatea poziției oricărui om din regat, oricât de înalte funcții ar fi avut.

Temându-se pentru propria lor viață, colegii din Senat ai lui Boethius n-au îndrăznit să îi ia apărarea, cu atât mai mult cu cât au înțeles că regele l-a întemnițat fără să țină cont de caracterul lui integru și fără să asculte de glasul rațiunii, dând crezare unor martori mincinoși, unii corupți, cu un nivel moral extrem de scăzut, iar alții chiar delicvenți, interesați să își ușureze, prin delațiune, pedeapsa deja primită.³ Să fi fost vorba și de paranoia regelui, care, îmbătrânit și bolnav, nu mai gândea deloc limpede? Să fi fost vorba de niște plastrografii incriminatorii foarte reușite? Este posibil ca ambele variante să fie valabile, căci ele nu se exclud câtuși de puțin.

Aflat într-o stare atât de nenorocită, Boethius acuză soarta care, după ce i-a acordat cele mai înalte onoruri, ca răsplată pentru calitățile sale intelectuale și morale, a existenței sale dedicate studiului, dar puse totodată în slujba binelui și a dreptății, îl doboară în urma unor acuzații mincinoase.

² Boethius, *Consolarea filosofiei*, Ediție bilingvă, Traducere de Otonel Vereș, Iași, Polirom, 2011, p. 43.

³ Ibidem, pp. 59-61.

Din perspectiva acestui deznodământ tragic, Boethius își dă seama că, pe când mergea prin lume încrezător, senin și fericit, acest lucru era doar o iluzie, și că, de fapt, el pășea neștiutor pe niște nisipuri mișcătoare – ceea ce înseamnă că soarta este schimbătoare și că trebuie fii circumspect în privința ei:

„Când soarta necredincioasă mă copleșea cu bunuri deșarte
 Clipa funestă aproape că-mi acoperise capul;
 Acum că, întunecată, și-a schimbat fața înșelătoare
 Viața nelegiuită își dă la iveală neplăcutile amânări.
 De ce m-ați lăudat, prieteni, de atâtea ori că sunt fericit?
 Cel care a căzut, acela nu a fost statornic în propria stare.”⁴

Dar în timp ce Boethius își plângea neconsolat soarta nefericită, lăsându-se pradă celei mai mari deznădejdi, lamentația sa este întreruptă brusc de apariția cu totul neobișnuită a unei figuri feminine mature și impunătoare, pe care prizonierul, afectat de starea sa mizerabilă, nu o recunoaște la început, dar care nu era alta decât însăși Filosofia, care îl crescuse și apoi îl hrănise întreaga lui viață. Boethius ne-o descrie ca pe o femeie mândră, puternică, maiestuoasă, care depășește condiția temporalității; ea dăinuie din vechime și transgresează nu numai timpul, ci și spațiul, parcurgând în mod firesc distanța dintre pământ și cer străpungându-i bolta, pătrunzând deci adânc, în tainele lui ascunse.

Pentru a sugera faptul că se autoedifică, deci se constituie fără niciun ajutor din afară, Boethius ne spune că ea își țese singură veșmintele, fiind dublu orientată, deopotrivă către practică și teorie. Din perspectiva lui Boethius, care exprimă punctul de vedere al epocii, dar care era o constantă a tuturor veacurilor de manifestare a filosofiei, latura ei teoretică o reprezintă „cunoașterea lucrurilor divine și umane”⁵, capabilă să dezvăluie toate „tainele naturii”⁶. În același timp, latura practică a filosofiei formează caracterul omului și îi conferă acestuia sensul (rațiunea) vieții, pe care o modelează în conformitate cu ordinea cerească.

„Era de o statură incertă, căci acum se mărginea la măsura obișnuită a oamenilor, acum părea să lovească cerul cu creștetul capului; iar când își

⁴ Ibidem, pp. 43-45.

⁵ Ibidem, p. 57.

⁶ Idem.

înălța mai sus capul, străpungea cerul însuși și scăpa privirii oamenilor.⁷ Veșmintele ei erau făcute dintr-o indestructibilă materie desăvârșită, cusute (...) cu mâinile ei. (...) În partea cea mai de jos a lor era brodat un Π⁸ iar în partea cea mai de sus un Θ⁹ și între cele două litere se distingeau trepte, asemenea unei scări, prin care se urca de la litera de jos la cea de sus. (...) În mâna dreaptă ținea niște cărți mici, iar în stânga un sceptru.”¹⁰

Cărțile sunt un simbol al înțelepciunii, iar sceptrul arată că domnește ca o regină peste regatul acesteia. De aceea, descinzând în acest loc al deznădejdiei, Filosofia nu se lasă intimidată nicio clipă, dimpotrivă, se arată sigură pe sine și autoritară. În acest sens, ea alungă fără să ezite muzele poeziei, care încercau să îi aline lui Boethius suferința, adresându-le cuvinte foarte aspre, acuzându-le că ele, exaltând pasiunile și întunecând rațiunea, nu pot vindeca un suflet bolnav ci, dimpotrivă, îl afundă și mai mult în durere. În schimb, ea își asumă vindecarea completă a bolnavului, considerând că are mijloacele cele mai eficiente pentru a face acest lucru.¹¹

Trebuie însă spus că, eși Filosofia discreditează pasiunile, ea nu este, totuși, doar o minte strict rațională, impasibilă, lipsită de sentimente, ci dimpotrivă. De aceea se manifestă cu înflăcărare atunci când își apără propria poziție, aruncându-le „priviri crunte”¹² muzelor poeziei, pe care le califică, în mod disprețuitor, drept niște „mărunte curtezane de teatru”¹³; pe de altă parte, ea arată o totală empatie pentru situația nefericită în care se află Boethius. Numai că toate aceste atitudini care implică dimensiunea evident emoțională a Filosofiei sunt subordonate rațiunii, care le imprimă luciditate și măsură.

Supărarea acesteia se îndreaptă și către Boethius, pe care îl muștră că s-a lăsat pradă disperării, ceea ce ea consideră că nu ar fi normal pentru un

⁷ Nu putem să nu ne amintim de *Phaidros*-ul lui Platon, în care sufletele, sub forma de vizitii ale unor atelaje trase de cai, sunt descrise cum își înălța capul în sfera Ființei.

⁸ Este litera greacă „pi”, scrisă cu majusculă, și care este începutul cuvintelor Πρακτική (praktike) și Πράξις (praxis).

⁹ Este litera greacă majusculă „teta”, scrisă cu majusculă, și care este începutul cuvântului Θεωρία (theoria).

¹⁰ Boethius, *Consolarea filosofiei*, ed.cit., p. 45.

¹¹ Ibidem, p. 47.

¹² Ibidem, p. 45.

¹³ Idem.

discipol al său, ci doar pentru profanii neinstuiți în învățătura oferită de marii filosofi și neexersați în înțelepciune. Or, Boethius se afirmase ca o minte strălucită, de o extraordinară forță și capacitate de cuprindere, care ajunsese să cunoască temeinic mersul lucrurilor în univers și să înțeleagă rațiunea lor conducătoare, oferind explicații pentru toate. Dar în fața condamnării și a spectrului morții iminente, mintea i s-a întunecat și rățacit, ca și cum ar fi căzut într-o prăpastie, iar el a uitat că deține în sine însuși mijloacele de a ieși din starea de disperare, așa încât plânge și se vaită ca un neputincios. În acest caz, cel puțin pentru moment, „pământul cel nătâng”¹⁴ sau „adierile terestre”¹⁵ i-au tulburat liniștea spiritului, inoculându-i neliniștea și, astfel, biruindu-l.

Dar disperarea lui Boethius nu este un motiv pentru Filosofie să îl disprețuiască. Deși la început îl apostrofează, încercând să îl readucă la normalitate prin administrarea unor cuvinte dure, asemenea unor șocuri, ea înțelege cât îi este de greu în împrejurările date, îl compătimentește și vrea să îl vindece. Filosofia nu îi poate schimba soarta, dar îl poate scoate din starea de „letargie”, adică de paralizie a spiritului, schimbându-i modul de raportare la situația în care se află și readucându-i liniștea în suflet. De fapt, Filosofia vrea să îl determine pe Boethius să rămână el însuși, adică un spirit liber și înțelept, o minte puternică și echilibrată, un suflet liniștit și senin, în ciuda nenorocirii sale și a iminenței morții. Oricum, privind din perspectivă universală, ea decretează că boala lui nu este gravă, că vindecarea se va realiza negreșit dacă bolnavul este un discipol autentic al său, ceea ce, desigur, era cazul lui Boethius.

„«Nu ești tu», m-a întreat, «cel care, hrănit odinioară cu laptele meu, crescut cu hrana mea, ai ajuns la vigoarea bărbătească a sufletului? Și totuși îți oferisem asemenea arme încât, dacă nu ai fi renunțat la ele înainte, te-ar fi păstrat într-o neînvinsă tărie. (...)» Și când m-a văzut nu doar tăcut, ci fără grai și cu totul mut, și-a pus mâna cu bândețe pe pieptul meu și a spus: «Nu e niciun pericol, suferă de letargie, o boală comună minților căzute în iluzii. A uitat de sine pentru un moment. Își va reaminti cu ușurință, dacă într-adevăr m-a cunoscut înainte;»”¹⁶

Iată cât de sigură este Filosofia că are capacitatea să îl vindece pe Boethius! Ne-am putea pune întrebarea dacă această idee ar mai fi valabilă astăzi. Cu

¹⁴ Ibidem, p. 49.

¹⁵ Ibidem, p. 47.

¹⁶ Ibidem, pp. 49-51.

alte cuvinte, este capabilă filosofia să ne vindece de teama de moarte și, mai ales, de frica în fața morții iminente? În cazul lui Socrate ea a acționat în acest mod – ca și în cel al lui Boethius, sau al stoicilor, printre care Seneca. În câte alte cazuri, oare, pe care nu le știm? Sau, poate, acești filosofi sunt doar niște excepții? Oricum, aici intră în joc dimensiunea practică a filosofiei, prin care ea te învață cum să trăiești: demn, fericit, netulburat de niciun accident al vieții. În această chestiune punctuală filosofia concurează cu religia, care și ea, printre altele, urmărește să ne înlăture teama în fața morții. Desigur, perspectivele lor sunt diferite: religia făcând apel la divinitate și adresându-se mai ales laturii afective a omului, filosofia luându-și drept principal aliat rațiunea, urmărind să convingă printr-o argumentație oferită de întreaga cunoaștere realizată de partea ei teoretică, speculativă, dar și prin apelul la valorile umaniste.

Dacă vorbim în continuare de concurență între cele două, s-ar putea ca religia să apară astăzi, în chestiunea punctuală a consolării, drept câștigătoare, pentru că ea este accesibilă unui număr mult mai mare de oameni, cărora li se adresează acum, ca și altădată, în același mod, sau, cel puțin, cu schimbări neesențiale, punând accent pe modul concret de desfășurare a vieții lor. Prin contrast, filosofia și-a dezvoltat de-a lungul timpului mai ales latura teoretică, lăsând dimensiunea practică pe seama eticii, o zonă de exercițiu care îi aparține de drept, dar care, în urma unei mișcări centrifuge, fie s-a autonomizat, evadând, în forme din ce în ce mai particulare, către alte domenii, fie a fost tratată și ea tot într-o manieră preponderent teoretică, speculativă. Abia de relativ puțin timp, prin intermediul eticii aplicate, filosofia se străduiește să își exploateze mult mai mult latura practică, diversificând-și preocupările și îndreptându-și atenția către aspecte ale existenței și activității oamenilor până acum neglijate sau chiar ignorate de către ea, dar este clar că nu mai are, ca un obiectiv explicit, să îi vindece pe aceștia de frica de moarte.

Asta nu înseamnă neapărat că filosofia a pierdut lupta cu religia, ci doar că, poate, și-a precizat mai bine propria sferă de competență. În plus, în ciuda rivalității manifestată în diverse momente istorice pe anumite teme, în realitate religia și filosofia nu se exclud reciproc. Vom vedea că Boethius însuși, chiar dacă este filosof și se supune în primul rând rațiunii, nu face abstracție de religie, dimpotrivă. Ideea unei raționalități universale, care îi apare ca evidentă îl conduce, inevitabil, din punctul său de vedere, către divinitate. Iar Filosofia va reuși să îl vindece pe Boethius pornind

tocmai de la credința lui fermă în această raționalitate universală, pe care amândoi o identifică Zeului (*deus*) creator a toate.

Demersuri pregătitoare ale Filosofiei în vederea vindecării prizonierului

Pentru început, Filosofia îi șterge cu blândețe ochii de lacrimi „cu o cută din veșmântul ei”¹⁷. Asta înseamnă că procesul de vindecare începe prin înlăturarea vălului apăsător reprezentat de lucrurile pământești, care i-a întunecat rațiunea. Acest simplu gest îl liniștește pe nefericit, îi înlătură disperarea și-i luminează iar mintea. El recunoaște, în sfârșit, Filosofia, ca „maestră a tuturor virtuților”, cea care l-a format în prima tinerețe, și își manifestă temerea că și aceasta a fost pusă sub acuzare, alături de el. Este un prilej pentru Filosofie de a sublinia înălțimea morală care o definește, afirmând că în acest loc neprielnic ea a venit de bună voie, fiindcă nu ar fi putut părăsi un nevinovat, năpăstuit tocmai fiindcă este un reprezentant al ei, ci este chiar datoare să-i fie alături și să îl ajute, ceea ce, de altfel, i s-a întâmplat de multe ori în istorie.

„«Oare», a spus ea, «te-aș părăsi, fiule, și n-aș împărți cu tine, prin suferință comună, povara pe care ai îndurat-o din cauza urii <ce a provocat-o> numele meu? Bineînțeles că nu i se cădea Filosofiei să îl lase pe cel nevinovat neînsoțit pe drumul său. M-aș teme eu, vezi, bine, de calomnie sau m-aș îngrozi, ca și cum s-ar întâmpla ceva nou? Crezi tu că este prima dată când, la cei de o moralitate nelegiuită, înțelepciunea e hărțuită de pericole? Nu am adus adesea în fața celor din vechime, înainte de vremea lui Platon al meu, o luptă aprigă cu îndrăzneala prostiei? (...) nu a dobândit maestrul său, Socrate, victoria unei morți nedrepte cu mine alături?”¹⁸

Așadar, Filosofia îl consolează pe Boethius spunându-i că situația lui nu este singulară, dimpotrivă, caracteristică pentru o societate în care prostia, aflată la putere, atacă și pune continuu în pericol înțelepciunea. Iar în acest sens, pe lângă exemplul lui Socrate, îi reamintește de condamnările pe care le-au suferit destui filosofi romani, printre care Seneca. Dar ea evidențiază și un alt tip de atac, la fel de grav, sau poate chiar mai grav: încercarea de uzurpare a demnității Filosofiei, înlocuirea ei cu o pseudo-Filosofie, care se dă drept autentică și îi păcălește pe neștiutori. Pericolul este că uzurpatorii filosofiei, identificați de Boethius cu epicurienii și o parte a stoicilor, au mai multă putere decât cei mulți și proști. Căci în vreme ce răii și proștii nu

¹⁷ Ibidem, p. 51.

¹⁸ Ibidem, pp. 51-53.

reușesc nici măcar să o atingă, iar ea râde de ei și îi disprețuiește, epicurienii și stoicii au reușit să îi rupă veșmântul și să îi smulgă din el fâșii.¹⁹

În comparație cu mulțimea celor răi, necinstiți și proști, filosofii sunt foarte puțini. Ca reprezentanți ai Filosofiei, ei se deosebesc net de ceilalți prin valorile autentice pe care le promovează. Tocmai pentru că sunt raționali, demni și cinstiți, ei sunt mereu atacați de ceilalți, care, total ignoranți, urmăresc non-valorile și, de multe ori, reușesc să îi distrugă pe filosofi. Totuși, Filosofia susține că ea însăși, apărată de Rațiune, conducătorul ei suprem, este și va fi întotdeauna la adăpost, neatinsă de către aceștia. Chiar și oamenii reușesc să rămână netulburați deasupra sortii, neafecțați de amenințările ei, dar este vorba numai de cei care nu doresc nimic, nu speră nimic și nu se tem de nimic.²⁰

Dar ea îl încurajează pe Boethius să își dezvăluie cauza durerii și a lacrimilor, ca să îi vadă mai bine rana și să îl poată vindeca. Dând curs îndemnului său, Boethius compară situația jalnică în care se află cum, în închisoare, cu aceea fericită de altădată, în care studia în bibliotecă tainele universului, sub îndrumarea Filosofiei, care îi și forma caracterul. Mărturisește că și-a însușit virtuțile promovate de Filosofie și că a intrat în administrație urmând sfatul lui Platon, conform căruia filosofii ar trebui să conducă statul. Subliniază că întotdeauna a înfăptuit doar binele și dreptatea, oferind suficiente exemple pentru felul în care s-a împotrivit, cu succes, celor puternici, stârnindu-le ura, atunci când ei doreau să facă rău și să-i împileze pe cei nevinovați.

„De câte ori l-am înfruntat pe Conigastus, stându-i împotriva în atacurile lui asupra bogățiilor vreunor oameni lipsiți de putere, de câte ori l-am oprit pe Triguilla, mai-marele casei regale, de la o nedreptate începută sau deja făcută, de câte ori, punându-mi autoritatea în pericol, i-am apărat pe acei nenorociți pe care lăcomia niciodată pedepsită a barbarilor îi lovea prin nenumărate calomnii! Niciodată nu m-a împins cineva de la dreptate la nedreptate. Atunci când averile provincialilor erau distruse fie prin jafuri personale, fie prin taxe publice, mă durea la fel de mult ca pe cei care sufereau <acestea>. (...) Nu se pare că am stârnit asupra mea destule și mari dușmăanii?”²¹

¹⁹ Ibidem, pp. 53-55.

²⁰ Ibidem, p. 55.

²¹ Ibidem, pp. 57-59.

Boethius subliniază că și în situația de față a luat apărarea unui nevinovat și chiar a întregului Senat, bănuț de rege pe nedrept de trădare, ceea ce le-a oferit prilejul dușmanilor săi, lezați de acțiunile lui trecute împotriva fărădelegilor lor, să îl acuze și pe el de trădare. Se plânge că a fost condamnat în lipsă, fără să aibă posibilitatea să se apere, ceea ce nu li se întâmplă nici celor mai mari criminali, dovediți ca atare. Deși se arată dezamăgit că Senatul nu i-a luat apărarea, susține că ar proceda la fel încă o dată, adică le-ar lua iar apărarea celor nevinovați, cu orice risc, fiindcă întotdeauna a urmărit adevărul și dreptatea, luptând neobosit pentru ele, fără să încerce niciodată să facă altfel doar cu scopul de a se proteja pe el însuși.²²

Un alt argument adus de Boethius în sprijinul său este acela că în calitate de discipol al Filosofiei, care îl îndemna mereu spre cinste, onoare și o viață cât mai asemănătoare cu divinul, departe de lucrurile pământești, el nu putea fi capabil de trădare ori „sacrilegiu”, iar familia și tot anturajul său, formate doar din oameni fără pată, erau o garanție în plus în acest sens. Stupoarea apare pentru că el este bănuț de trădare tocmai pentru că este filosof. Să înțelegem, oare, din asta că Boethius, deoarece scrisese tratate teologice în care combătea arianismul, credința împăratului Theodoric, a făcut astfel plauzibilă acuzația de trădare, adică de aliere cu împăratul bizantin Justin, care apăra tezele ortodoxismului creștin stabilite la Conciliul de la Calcedon din anul 451? În orice caz, faptul că, prin acuzația adusă lui, însăși Filosofia este atacată, îl doare și mai mult pe Boethius.²³

Pentru mulțimea ignorantă, condamnarea sa este un semn clar că el ar fi vinovat; de altfel, filosoful se așteaptă ca și alții, profitând de vulnerabilitatea lui, să îl atace prin noi denunțuri mincinoase, ca să obțină tot felul de avantaje pentru ei. În felul acesta cei răi sunt încurajați să facă fărădelegi, în vreme ce oamenii cinstiți se dovedesc a fi „lipsiți nu numai de liniștea sufletească, ci și de însuși mijlocul de apărare”²⁴. Din punctul său de vedere, asta arată că, în comparație cu ordinea universală a lucrurilor, unde totul este în armonie și nimic nu se defășoară altfel decât după voia Creatorului, în societate, aflată în voia sorții, toate merg la întâmplare și pe dos, fiindcă răii, mișei, mincinoșii, excrocii triumfă, atingând cele mai

²² Ibidem, pp. 59-65.

²³ Ibidem, pp. 65-67.

²⁴ Ibidem, p. 67.

înalte demnități, în vreme ce oamenii buni, onești și virtuoși sunt adeseori zdrobiți. Îndurerat de acest adevăr evident, Boethius îl roagă pe Creator să aducă ordinea și dreptatea și pe pământ, printre oameni.

„O, creator al cerului înstelat
Care, așezat pe veșnic tron,
Învârți cerul în cercuri repezi
Și silești stelele să se supună legii tale (...)
Cârmuind toate lucrurile spre un țel sigur,
Numai faptele oamenilor refuzi
Să le ții în frâu, ca un stăpân pe bună dreptate.
De ce soarta nestatornică lasă să se întâmple
Asemenea schimbări? Pedepsa dureroasă
Datorată crimei apasă asupra celor nevinovați
Iar ticăloșii stau pe tronuri înalte
Și cei stricați calcă în picioare pe cei nepătați. (...)
O, tu, cel care urzești legile lumii,
Privește la acest pământ nenorocit!
Parte nu neînsemnată a măreței tale lucrări
Noi, oamenii, suntem loviți pe marea sorții!
Oprește, stăpâne, valul iute
Și întărește pământul
Prin legea cu care domnești peste cerul imens.”²⁵

În replică, Filosofia îl asigură pe Boethius că ordinea lăsată de Zeu este neclintită atât în ceruri cât și pe pământ, unde toate se petrec după voința lui, iar a încerca să o nesocotești sau să o grăbești nu are niciun sort de izbândă. Ea declară că discursul lui Boethius îi demonstrează că starea lui de spirit este cu mult mai rea decât credea, că el este excesiv de afectat de nenorocire, și susține că această slăbiciune i se datorează chiar lui, în bună măsură. Asta pentru că, în calitate de filosof, el nu ar fi trebuit să se lase pradă emoțiilor negative și deznădejdii, căci lucrul acesta l-a îndepărtat de sfera filosofiei, care îi este patria autentică, aflată sub conducerea unică a rațiunii, în care el ar fi fost la adăpost de orice tulburare, dacă ar fi decis să rămână ferm între granițele ei. Verdictul este că pentru a fi adus înapoi trebuie să i se aplice anumite leacuri.²⁶

Dar ca să-și dea mai bine seama de ce leacuri are nevoie, Filosofia îl interoghează pe Boethius și află că el încă mai crede că lumea, în ansamblu,

²⁵ Ibidem, pp. 69-71.

²⁶ Ibidem, pp. 71-73.

este creată și condusă de către Zeu conform rațiunii, ceea ce Filosofia declară că este punctul de spijin de unde va porni însănătoșirea lui. Totuși, subliniază că opinia lui potrivit căreia în viața oamenilor domnește întâmplarea oarbă este periculoasă și denotă că a uitat cum Zeul conduce lumea și care este finalitatea tuturor lucrurilor. În plus, el a uitat chiar și ce este omul, de vreme ce crede că acesta ar fi doar un animal muritor rațional, o definiție pe ea care nu o consideră defel mulțumitoare.²⁷

De altfel, Filosofia susține că tocmai această ignoranță cu privire la natura omului, adică această uitare de sine este adevărata cauză a bolii sale, fiind capabilă să-l ducă la pieire chiar. Tocmai ea este cea care îl face să creadă „că oamenii nelegiuți și blestemați sunt puternici și fericiți <și> că schimbările sorții plutesc încolo și încoace fără nicio mână călăuzitoare”²⁸. Cu toate acestea, neclintită în optimismul ei, Filosofia îi promite că îl va face bine, aplicându-i remediile ei specifice. Însă pentru că cele puternice nu ar fi avut efect în starea lui prezentă de extremă debusolare, în care domină „durerea, mânia și supărarea”²⁹, ea decide să înceapă cu leacuri mai ușoare, menite să înlătore pasiunile și să-i liniștească sufletul, luminându-l. Filosofia îi spune că dacă vrea să cunoască adevărul mintea trebuie să îi fie mereu limpede, iar pentru asta trebuie să înlătore teama, să nu simtă durerea, dar și să renunțe la bucurii și la speranțe, căci toate aceste emoții înlănțuie mintea, o tulbură și o întunecă.³⁰

Tratamentul cu „leacuri” ușoare

Leacurile ușoare pe care Filosofia i le aplică mai întâi lui Boethius sunt, de fapt, discursuri cu rolul preponderent persuasiv, care se sprijină pe arta retoricii, pe care ea o subordonează, însă, adevărului și înțelepciunii, pentru a-l convinge pe năpăstuit de lipsa de consistență a tuturor bunurilor pe care oamenii obișnuiți le apreciază în viață, precum și de inevitabila lor efemeritate, în condițiile fireștii nestatornicii a sorții.

Capriciile sorții. Așadar, Filosofia îl asigură că greșește dacă suferă în urma loviturilor acesteia, așa cum greșea atunci când se bucura de favorurile ei. Căci soarta este, prin definiție, inconsecventă și instabilă, darurile ei fiind

²⁷ Ibidem, pp. 75-77.

²⁸ Ibidem, p. 77.

²⁹ Ibidem, p. 73.

³⁰ Ibidem, pp. 79-81.

întotdeauna înșelătoare, și de aceea nu trebuie să ne mire atunci când și le retrage. Ea subliniază că Boethius, în calitate de filosof, știa, de altfel, foarte bine lucrul acesta dinainte de a-i fi căzut în dizgrație, ba chiar că el și-a arătat adesea disprețul pentru felul ei de a fi. Dar singura atitudine corectă, demnă de un filosof, ar fi fost aceea să nu aprecieze nici binefacerile ei, pentru că ele sunt inevitabil trecătoare, nici să cadă în deznădejde atunci când ea l-a lovit. Căci un om care cunoaște adevărul, un autentic filosof, trebuie să rămână impasibil deopotrivă în fața norocului și a ghinionului. Doar în acest fel va înceta să mai fie o jucărie a sorții, ajungând, dimpotrivă, să o domine.

„Căci nu este de ajuns să privești doar la ceea ce se află înaintea ochilor; înțelepciunea cântărește sfârșitul lucrurilor; și aceeași nestatornicie în bine sau rău face ca amenințările sorții să nu fie de temut, nici dezmiertările ei de dorit. În cele din urmă, trebuie să suporti cu sufletul împăcat orice se petrece pe tărâmul sorții, odată ce ți-ai plecat capul sub jugul ei. Dacă ai dori să impui o lege prin care cea pe care, din proprie voință, ți-ai ales-o ca stăpână trebuie să rămână sau să plece, nu ai fi prin aceasta nedrept și nu ți-ai înăspri, prin nerăbdarea ta, un destin pe care nu îl poți schimba?”³¹

Pentru a fi și mai convingătoare, Filosofia joacă pentru câteva clipe rolul sorții, care îi spune foarte tranșant că el nu are temeii să o învinuiască pentru că i-a răpit tot ce-i dăruise mai înainte, deoarece niciunul dintre acele lucruri nu-i aparțin lui, ci sunt ale ei, având dreptul să le ia oricând înapoi. În același timp, îi atrage atenția că nimic din ceea ce-i aparține cu adevărat lui Boethius nu i-ar putea fi luat de nimeni. Așadar, el ar trebui să-i mulțumească pentru faptul că ea l-a ocrotit și i-a oferit deja destule până în momentul de față. Însă ea remarcă ingratitudea oamenilor, faptul că oricât noroc și bogăție le-ar oferi, ei vor mereu mai mult, fiind nefericiți dacă nu primesc iar și iar. Oricum, ea îl încurajează, spunându-i că nu trebuie să dispere, căci tocmai faptul că acum se află în nenorocire este un semn că ulterior lucrurile se vor ameliora, așa după cum, atunci când era fericit, ar fi trebuit să prevadă că va întâmpina, la un moment dat, și necazuri.³²

Întărindu-i vorbele, Filosofia susține că el nu poate pretinde mereu un tratament preferențial, mai ales că, până la urmă, în calitate de om, va trebui să moară, iar atunci soarta, oricum, îl va părăsi. De aceea îi sugerează

³¹ Ibidem, pp. 85-87.

³² Ibidem, pp. 87-91.

că, dacă nu poate ignora situația prezentă, să se simtă măcar fericit pentru privilegiile trecute. În plus, Filosofia îi arată lui Boethius că el, chiar în nenorocire, are alături întreaga sa familie, care suferă alături de el și i se dedică. Deci el are mari realizări în trecut, consolare în prezent și speranță pentru viitor. Acestea sunt cu adevărat bunurile sale, „mai de preț decât viața”³³, pe care nimeni nu i le poate răpi și care îi sunt fundamente ferme de stabilitate sufletească. Prin urmare, nu are sens să plângă, de vreme ce și în lume totul se află în continuă devenire, nimic nu rămâne mereu neschimbat, iar cine speră în statornicia bunurilor trecătoare, precum averea și renumele, este lipsit de înțelepciune.

Inconsistența bogăției. Bunurile materiale nu pot face fericit omul, căci au o natură străină de ceea ce este el cu adevărat, adică suflet. Banii și pietrele prețioase nu sunt bogății autentice, deoarece acumularea lor de către unii duce la sărăcirea altora. Frumusețile naturii te pot încânta, dar tu nu ai niciun merit pentru ele, nu sunt ale tale, nu îți aparțin și deci nu te pot face fericit. La fel, roadele pământului, deși folositoare, nu trebuie folosite peste nevoile naturale, care nu sunt deloc mari, altfel vei avea neplăceri – deci nici ele nu îți aparțin de drept. Nici hainele frumoase sau mulțimea de servitori nu te pot face fericit, căci sunt doar expresia ambițiilor tale, nu a ființei tale autentice, care face din tine „un viețuitor divin prin rațiunea sa”³⁴. Pe aceasta trebuie să o păstrezi dacă vrei să fii fericit, nu tot felul de lucruri străine.

Bogăția exterioară, de orice fel, nu poate aduce fericirea, căci de multe ori face rău celor care o dețin, așa încât doar cel care nu posedă bunuri exterioare nu are de ce se teme și este cu adevărat liber. De altfel, pe vremea când nu cunoșteau bogăția și luxul, oamenii se mulțumeau cu puțin, își potoleau nevoile esențiale într-un mod simplu, natural, nici nu se războiau între ei, și astfel erau mult mai fericiți. Dar bogăția, odată creată, i-a adus omului numai neazuri, căci el aleargă după ea și este mereu îngrijorat să o păstreze și să și-o mărească.

„Preafericită vremea de odinioară,
Când oamenii, mulțumiți cu ogoarele lor statornice
Și neruinați de un lux amețitor,
Obişnuiau să-și astâmpere foamea

³³ Ibidem, p. 99.

³⁴ Ibidem, p. 109.

Cu ghinda ușor de găsit.
Nu știau darul lui Bacchus
S-amestece cu mierea curgătoare
Nici să unească mătasea luminoasă din ținutul Indiei
Cu culoarea din Tyr. (...)
Atunci tăceau trâmbițele de luptă
Și sângele groaznic vărsat
Cu ură crudă nu scâldea pământul. (...)
Vai, cine-a fost cel care primul
A dezgropat grămezi de aur ascuns
Și pietre prețioase ce doreau să rămână negăsite –
Primejdii de preț?”³⁵

Efemeritatea gloriei. Asemenea bogățiilor, funcțiile și demnitățile nu au valoare prin ele însele, altfel nu ar putea fi dobândite de cei răi, căci natura nu acceptă unirea contrariilor. Dar răii se folosesc de funcții pentru a face rău, dezvăluindu-și adevăratul caracter, în timp ce numai cei demni și buni le conferă funcțiilor demnitate și strălucire. Pe de altă parte, puterea deținută prin aceste funcții se limitează la corpurile și averile celorlalți, fiindcă spiritul omului nu poate fi înlănțuit. În schimb, cei puternici, dacă sunt stăpâniți de tot felul de vicii, sunt, în realitate, sclavii acestora. Prin urmare, ceea ce oamenii numesc în mod obișnuit bogăție, onoruri, demnități, nu își merită numele, căci demnitatea și bogăția adevărate constau în altceva.³⁶

În sfârșit, gloria și renumele celor mai mari conducători de stat sunt extrem de relative, căci în comparație cu imensitatea universului pământul este doar un punct, iar pe pământ stăpânirea romanilor cuprinde doar o parte infimă, în multe locuri nici măcar numele de „roman” nefiind cunoscut. De altfel, pentru că mentalitățile popoarelor sunt diferite, ceea ce unora li se pare demn de laudă, altele condamnă, așa încât gloria se restrânge la sfera strâmtă a propriului neam și pe o perioadă de timp nesemnificativă în comparație cu infinitatea timpului.³⁷

Pe de altă parte, dorința oamenilor de a li se perpetua numele după moarte este absurdă, căci dacă moartea distruge omul în întregime, pentru cel care nu mai este, gloria nu există. Renumele după moarte este un lucru

³⁵ Ibidem, p. 113.

³⁶ Ibidem, pp. 115-119.

³⁷ Ibidem, pp. 121-123.

fragil, un fel de „săracă glorie”³⁸, care va dăinui doar o vreme, până când, într-un final, va dispărea și el definitiv în uitare, ceea ce echivalează cu „a doua moarte”³⁹. Dar dacă, cumva, după moarte sufletul omului „conștient de sine”⁴⁰ supraviețuiește, acesta va deveni pe deplin liber și se va duce spre cer, disprețuind lucrurile pământești, care i-au fost ca o închisoare.

Asta înseamnă că, prin intelectul său, cea mai înaltă parte a sufletului, omul se aseamănă Creatorului, adică Zeului. Intelectul (adică rațiunea) este bunul său cel mai de preț, care îl face o ființă divină. Dar în loc să aprecieze asta, adică adevărata sa natură, omul apreciază lucrurile exterioare, după care aleargă înfrigurat și neobosit, situându-se astfel pe sine mai prejos de ele, ceea ce arată că nu se cunoaște pe sine și astfel îl insultă pe Creator. Căci acesta a dorit ca prin cunoașterea de sine omul să fie deasupra animalelor, deci cunoașterea este un lucru firesc, specific naturii umane. Când însă omul nu se cunoaște pe sine își denaturează propria natură și își distruge demnitatea, plasându-se undeva mai jos de animale.

„Într-adevăr, condiția naturii umane este astfel încât numai atunci se ridică deasupra celorlalte lucruri când se cunoaște pe sine; totuși, când încetează de a se cunoaște, omul se coboară mai prejos decât animalele; căci pentru celelalte animale ignoranța față de sine e naturală, pe când la oameni este un viciu.”⁴¹

În felul acesta Filosofia îi oferă ea însăși lui Boethius răspunsul la întrebarea „ce este omul”, pe care el nu fusese capabil să i-l dea ceva mai devreme. Înțelegerea adecvată asupra naturii umane va avea o însemnătate crucială în construirea discursului Filosofiei, care urmărește „vindecarea” lui Boethius de boala uitării de sine și consolarea lui pentru prigoana pe care i-a pregătit-o soarta.

Concluzii în urma aplicării „leacurilor” ușoare

Filosofia declară că o soartă potrivnică este mai bună și de preferat uneia binevoitoare, căci în ea soarta se arată așa cum este cu adevărat, în vreme ce a doua este înșelătoare. Soarta potrivnică instruieste omul, îl eliberează prin cunoaștere și îl determină să urmărească adevăratele bunuri, nu pe cele

³⁸ Ibidem, p. 127.

³⁹ Idem.

⁴⁰ Ibidem, p. 125.

⁴¹ Ibidem, p. 111.

false, dându-i șansa de a putea obține binele și fericirea autentice. În plus, datorită nenorocirilor pe care i le rezervă, soarta potrivnică îi dezvăluie care îi sunt adevărații prieteni.⁴²

Boethius acceptă acum faptul că nu este atât de nenorocit pe cât credea mai devreme, deși susține în continuare că i s-a smuls o mare parte din fericire. Replica Filosofiei este că nimeni nu poate fi pe deplin fericit, fiecăruia îi lipsește ceva, uneori un lucru mărunț, după care tânjește, și toți, într-un fel sau altul, sunt nemulțumiți de soarta lor. De altfel, cauzele exterioare ale nefericirii sunt relative, căci în aceeași situație cineva se simte fericit, altcineva nenorocit. În realitate, ceea ce contează este felul în care se raportează omul la diversele situații ale vieții, deci, practic, el însuși este sursa fericirii sau nenorocirii sale.

Fericirea nu ne-o oferă lucrurile exterioare, nestatornice, întâmplătoare, pe care le putem pierde în orice moment, ci stăpânirea de sine, care ne face echilibrați, stăpâni pe noi înșine, pe ceea ce suntem, fără să ne tulburăm în fața schimbărilor sorții. Lucrurile trecătoare nu ne pot aduce fericirea autentică fiindcă ele, chiar dacă pot dăinui destul de mult, dispar până la urmă, în momentul morții trupului. Spre deosebire însă de acesta, sufletul omului este nemuritor, astfel încât, pentru a fi fericit după moartea trupului, sufletul are nevoie de bunuri nepieritoare.

Administrarea „leacurilor” puternice

Atât de mult l-a fermecat pe Boethius cuvântarea Filosofiei încât l-a liniștit, iar acum el susține că este capabil să reziste loviturilor sorții, simțindu-se pregătit și chiar dornic să suporte leacuri puternice, despre care ea îi spune că, deși neplăcute la început, îl vor vindeca și-l vor conduce spre adevărata fericire, „pe care și sufletul tău o visează, dar pe care privirea ta, oprindu-se la imagini, nu o poate vedea”⁴³. Însă ea consideră că, mai înainte de a face acest lucru, este necesar să îl instruiască și să îl pună în gardă cu privire la *Căile nelegitime spre fericire*. Fericirea nu este altceva decât binele suprem, pe care îl râvnesc în mod natural oamenii. De aceea ea cuprinde în sine toate lucrurile bune, adică „împlinire, respect, putere, celebritate, bucurie”⁴⁴ în forma lor autentică, astfel încât cel care o deține nu mai are nevoie de nimic. Cine este cu adevărat îndestulat sau împlinit are și putere, și

⁴² Ibidem, pp. 127-129.

⁴³ Ibidem, p. 133.

⁴⁴ Ibidem, p. 141.

demnitate, și strălucire, deci celebritate, se bucură de respectul celorlalți și este pe deplin mulțumit. Toate aceste lucruri se leagă între ele, au aceeași substanță, adică sunt unul și același lucru, sau aspecte ale aceluiași lucru: binele adevărat, perfect, suprem, care îți conferă adevărata fericire.

Oamenii însă nu înțeleg asta și cred că ele sunt diferite, urmărind de obicei doar câte un aspect al fericirii, socotind că, avându-l pe acesta, le posedă în mod automat și pe celelalte. În plus, pentru a obține unul sau altul dintre aceste lucruri, ei merg de cele mai multe ori pe căi greșite. Astfel, ei urmăresc îndeostularea sau împlinirea prin acumularea de bunuri materiale, puterea – prin accesarea la funcții înalte, celebritatea – prin notorietatea în rândul mulțimii, bucuria – prin satisfacerea plăcerilor. Or, niciunul dintre aceste lucruri: avere, funcții, glorie, plăcere, nici toate la un loc nu conduc omul către scopul urmărit, adică împlinire, putere, respect și bucurie. Prin ele însele, nu îi aduc fericirea, ci doar „un chip fals al fericirii”⁴⁵.

Astfel, bogatul nu este deloc lipsit de griji, iar bogățiile nu și le poate lua cu el în mormânt. La rândul lor, funcțiile se pot devaloriza în timp și, oricum, nu poți fi fericit cu ele dacă le primești de la conducători nedemni. În plus, oricând aceștia își pot întoarce favoarea în prigoană. Pe de altă parte, chiar și cei mai puternici regi se tem că-și pot pierde poziția, deci nici lor puterea nu le asigură fericirea. Acest lucru și faptul că ea le poate fi uzurpată arată că puterea a regilor nu este una autentică.

„Așadar, ce putere e aceasta de care se tem cei ce o au, pe care atunci când dorești să o ai nu mai ești în siguranță, iar când dorești să renunți la ea nu o mai poți evita? Oare sunt de vreun ajutor prietenii pe care i-a adus soarta, și nu virtutea? Dar cel pe care fericirea l-a făcut prieten, nenorocirea îl va face dușman. Și ce pacoste poate răni mai rău decât un dușman printre cei forte apropiați?”⁴⁶

În ceea ce privește gloria – dincolo de faptul că nu se poate răspândi prea mult în spațiu și nici nu poate dăinui nelimitat în timp –, dacă este primită în mod nemeritat, în virtutea opiniilor greșite ale mulțimii, este un lucru rușinos, nedemn. Chiar și când este binemeritată, ea nu poate fi prețuită de un adevărat înțelept, „care își măsoară binele nu după părerile oamenilor,

⁴⁵ Ibidem, p. 143.

⁴⁶ Ibidem, pp. 153-155.

ci după adevărul conștiinței”⁴⁷. Nici plăcerile simțurilor nu le pot aduce oamenilor fericirea, căci ele sunt urmate adesea de remușcare și durere. În plus, dacă ele ar fi drumul autentic spre fericire, și animalele ar putea fi fericite, căci și ele își urmăresc satisfacerea nevoilor trupului.⁴⁸

Prin urmare, toate căile de mai sus, prin care oamenii caută fericirea, sunt incapabile să le ofere acele bunuri care formează conținutul fericirii; ba, dimpotrivă, le aduc prejudicii grave. Asta pentru că ele vizează bunuri materiale sau aflate în strânsă legătură cu trupul, care sunt toate efemere, lipsite de valoare prin ele însele. Corpul însuși este fragil, repede degradabil, iar splendoarea lui este doar aparentă. Urmărind bunurile materiale pentru a fi fericiți, oamenii se arată neștiutori și orbi, când ar fi cazul să știe că ele sunt bunuri false și că fericirea nu trebuie căutată pe pământ, ci în ceruri.⁴⁹ Deci, fericirea nu poate fi atinsă urmărind doar un aspect al ei și, cu atât mai puțin, încercând să îl obții prin mijloace inadecvate.

Odată lămurit acest lucru, Filosofia îl consideră pregătit pe Boethius să i se administreze lecurile puternice. Este de fapt vorba de a ridica discuția la un nivel superior de complexitate și de a-i aduce în atenție o serie de teme grele, puternic speculative, pe care abia acum, cu sufletul liniștit și cu mintea limpede, este capabil să le înțeleagă. În acest sens, Filosofia îi dezvăluie că

Adevărata fericire este totuna cu Binele suprem, care este totuna cu Zeul. Deci, omul fericit este totuna cu Zeul, deși numai prin participare, fiindcă prin esență există doar un singur zeu.⁵⁰ În cadrul adevăratei fericiri, identice cu Binele suprem și cu Zeul, împlinirea, îndestularea, puterea, respectul, strălucirea (gloria, mărirea), mulțumirea, bucuria sunt unul și același lucru, adică binele, deci formează o unitate. În schimb, în cadrul falsei fericiri ele sunt distincte unele de celălalte, deci nu formează o unitate. Însă doar dacă sunt o unitate ele sunt identice cu Binele.

Rezultă că unitatea și binele sunt identice, ceea ce este evidențiat și de faptul că toate lucrurile există doar dacă își păstrează unitatea, iar dacă se dezagregă, mor. Tendința spre unitate este una naturală pentru toate, iar ea

⁴⁷ Ibidem, p. 155.

⁴⁸ Ibidem, pp. 157-159.

⁴⁹ Ibidem, pp. 159-163.

⁵⁰ Ibidem, pp. 177-179.

se realizează în vederea menținerii integrității lucrului respectiv, a dăinuirii lui, adică în vederea binelui său, căci binele este ținta spre care se îndreaptă toate, el fiind „ceea ce toți doresc”⁵¹. Așadar, binele este „scopul final al tuturor lucrurilor”⁵².

Boethius declară că el știa acest lucru, dar că, „prin contactul cu trupul, apoi apăsător de greutatea durerii”⁵³, uitase. De asemenea, întărește ceea ce spusese deja, și anume credința lui că întreaga lume este condusă de către Zeu, fiindcă el este singurul care ar putea să formeze o unitate din toate elementele ei dispartate. „Această putere, oricine ar fi, prin care cele create rămân și se mișcă, o numesc, după cuvântul folosit de toți, Dumnezeu (*deum nomino*)”⁵⁴.

Interesant este că Boethius nu se pronunță ferm în a ceea ce privește identitatea acestui Zeu, *deum*. Să fie, oare, pentru că nu vrea să tranșeze aici între poziția filosofilor greci și cea a creștinilor? Cumva acest lucru ar fi fost periculos în condițiile luptei religioase dintre regele Theodoric, arian, cel care îl condamnase, și împăratul bizantin, Justin? Desigur, am putea spune că problema nu ar mai fi avut nicio importanță, de vreme ce Boethius fusese deja condamnat la moarte. Însă poate că dacă s-ar fi referit la Zeu în termenii specifici ortodoxiei creștine, le-ar fi oferit un argument în plus delatorilor săi mincinoși pentru a susține că Boethius este un trădător, iar filosoful a evitat să le dea apă la moară.

Filosofia consideră că în acest moment sunt create premisele ca Boethius să revină în scurt timp în patria lui (adică patria Filosofiei, condusă doar de rațiune), de care singur se rătăcise. Apoi îi argumentează că Zeul, care este „binele suprem și fericirea deplină”⁵⁵, conduce lumea conform binelui, cu blândețe și bunătate, iar toate lucrurile i se supun de bunăvoie, încât tot ceea ce se petrece în univers este conform voinței lui. De altfel, chiar dacă cineva ar încerca să se opună acestei voințe, nu ar avea sorti de izbândă. Boethius, desfătat de cele auzite, se simte rușinat de prostia și de lamentațiile lui anterioare.

⁵¹ Ibidem, p. 191.

⁵² Idem.

⁵³ Ibidem, p. 193.

⁵⁴ Ibidem, pp. 194-195.

⁵⁵ Ibidem, p. 199.

Inexistența răului și neputința celor răi. Urmează însă un raționament al Filosofiei care îl descumpănește pe Boethius: dacă Zeul este binele și fericirea, iar el este atotputernic, înseamnă că răul nu există, pentru că Zeul nu vrea să facă rău; răul deci nu are nicio natură. Or, lui Boethius i se pare evident că, dimpotrivă, peste tot în jurul nostru, „în timp ce domnește și este în floare ticăloșia, virtutea nu doar că este lipsită de răsplată, dar este călcată în picioare de nelegiuiți și ispășește pedeapsa în locul crimelor”⁵⁶. El nu poate însă explica cum este posibil acest lucru, de vreme ce Zeul este atotputernic. Totuși, Filosofia îl asigură că el nu judecă bine, promițându-i că, înlăturându-i tulburarea și ridicându-l către cer, îl va face să înțeleagă adevărul, ceea ce va însemna că el s-a întors acasă, de unde va privi cu dispreț către pământ.

Pentru a-și realiza demonstrația, ea pornește de la evidența că oricine dorește binele, iar atunci când îl obține, devine bun; or, cei răi nu își ating acest țel, ceea ce înseamnă că sunt neputincioși. Ei se dedau viciului fie din ignoranță, necunoscând ce este binele, fie din neputința de a face ceea ce ar dori, deoarece sunt incapabili să se stăpânească pe ei înșiși, lăsându-se pradă pasiunilor. Cât despre cei care urmăresc răul cu bună știință, Filosofia spune că, procedând în felul acesta, ei „încetează să mai existe”⁵⁷, de vreme ce „renunță la scopul comun al tuturor lucrurilor care există”⁵⁸, adică la bine. Ei sunt asemenea cadavrelor, care nu mai pot fi socotite cu adevărat oameni, pentru că și-au pierdut natura umană.

Observăm că nu este vorba de o inexistență fizică a celor răi, ci de una care se opune, din punct de vedere axiologic, existenței autentice, care este valoarea pozitivă, identică binelui. Inexistența aceasta exprimă denaturarea sensului existenței, cu alte cuvinte este vorba de o trădare a scopului firesc a tot ceea ce există. Și fiindcă aici vorbim despre oameni și despre binele specific, pe care, prin natura sa, îl urmărește orice om, cei răi încetează de a mai fi oameni, pentru că își corup natura umană.

Ei sunt doar aparent puternici, fiindcă puterea lor nu este autentică, de vreme ce provine din slăbiciune. Ei săvârșesc răul pentru că nu sunt în stare să facă binele. Dar cum răul nu este nimic, căci nu se integrează în sfera ființei, înseamnă că ei, care nu pot face decât rău, nu pot, de fapt,

⁵⁶ Ibidem, p. 205.

⁵⁷ Ibidem, p. 223.

⁵⁸ Ibidem, p. 215.

nimic. În schimb, „aceia care nu poate face decât binele este omnipotent”⁵⁹, fiindcă „nu există nimic mai puternic decât binele suprem”⁶⁰. Așadar, numai cei buni sunt puternici, iar cei răi, care se opun acestora, sunt lipsiți de orice putere.

Practic, raționamentul Filosofiei poate fi prezentat, pe scurt, în felul următor:

Puterea adevărată este ceva de dorit.

Toate cele de dorit tind spre bine.

Putința de a săvârși o crimă nu tinde spre bine.

Deci: ea nu este de dorit.

Concluzia finală: putința de a face răul nu este putere.

Răsplată și pedeapsă. Continuând aplicarea lecurilor tari, Filosofia afirmă că cel care face binele va fi negreșit răsplătit, iar răsplata este chiar binele pe care îl săvârșește, pentru că, în fond, el chiar asta urmărește: doar binele, care este totuna cu fericirea. Prin urmare, oricât de lovit va fi din afară de către cei răi, binele lui și fericirea, ca răsplată a înfăptuirii binelui, nu-i pot fi smulse. Iar cel fericit este, indubitabil, un zeu. Doar atunci când nu va mai face el însuși binele, el nu va mai putea să-l primească drept răsplată. În mod similar, cel rău va primi tot răsplata răului, care este chiar răul pe care el îl săvârșește.⁶¹

Pe de altă parte, încetând de a face binele, cei răi nu mai există, în sensul că își pierd condiția umană. Chiar dacă, prin corpul lor natural, mai au încă aparența de oameni, în realitate ei se identifică, în virtutea modului de manifestare a viciilor lor, cu tot felul de animale. Astfel,

„Când violentul tâlhar arde de lăcomie după bunurile altuia, vei spune că seamănă cu un lup. Un om orgolios și neliniștit își pune limba în mișcare tot timpul la curțile de judecată: îl vei compara cu un câine. Cel care uneltește în secret se bucură pentru că a furat, prin înșelăciunile sale, pe altul: este ca o vulpe. Omul nestăpânit urlă de mânie: s-ar putea crede că are inimă de leu. Cel fricos și iute la fugă se teme de ceea ce nu ar trebui: poate fi asemănat cu cerbii. Omul leneș și prost trăiește încremenit: duce o viață de măgar. Cel ușuratic și nestatornic își schimbă mereu dorințele: nu se deosebește cu

⁵⁹ Ibidem, p. 217.

⁶⁰ Idem.

⁶¹ Ibidem, pp. 219-221.

nimic de pășări. Unul se cufundă în poftă rușinoasă și murdare: este stăpânit de plăcerea unui porc murdar.”⁶²

Filosofia observă că aici lucrurile stau exact pe dos decât în legenda vrăjitoarei Circe, care le dădea oamenilor pe care-i înroba corpuri de animale, lăsându-le mintea intactă, căci răutatea le păstrează indivizilor corpul uman, dar le danaturează mintea și sufletul, determinându-i să simtă și să se comporte asemenea animalelor. Prin urmare, răutatea, ca otravă a sufletului, este mai periculoasă decât otrava corpului.

Boethius își exprimă dezamăgirea că cei răi îi pot distruge pe cei buni, dar Filosofia îl contrazice spunându-i că a face răul este o nenorocire mai mare decât a-l suporta⁶³, deci cei răi sunt mult mai nefericiți decât cei buni și trebuie să ne fie milă de ei. Atunci când Boethius își exprimă dorința ca ei să nu rămână prea mult timp nenorociți, Filosofia îi spune că acest lucru se va întâmpla fie în timpul vieții, fie cel mai târziu odată cu moartea, ceea ce, din perspectiva nemuririi sufletului, nu este un timp prea lung. Oricum, atunci când sunt pedepsiți celor răi li se face un bine (căci ceea ce este drept este și bine), deci vor fi mai fericiți. Dar dacă nu sunt pedepsiți, ceea ce este un rău, ei își măresc răutatea și, deci, nefericirea, iar dacă ar fi conștienți de nefericirea lor, bucuroși ar accepta pedeapsa.⁶⁴

Boethius admite necesitatea acestei concluzii, dar susține că oamenii obișnuiți gândesc tocmai pe dos, ceea ce Filosofia justifică prin faptul că ei nu pot ajunge la adevăr, de vreme ce „se uită nu la ordinea universului, ci la propriile stări sufletești”⁶⁵. Totuși, Boethius continuă să fie nedumerit de ce în viață, cel mai adesea, cei buni sunt loviți de tot felul de nenorociri, pe când cei răi sunt, dimpotrivă, răsplătiți, de vreme ce Zeul este cel care conduce totul cu înțelepciune. Filosofia îl asigură însă că universul este o vastă armonie, că tot ce se întâmplă în cadrul lui este drept, și că doar neștiința lui îl determină să nu înțeleagă acest lucru.⁶⁶

Destin și providență. Dar pentru a înțelege funcționarea universului, Boethius trebuie să aibă cunoștințe „despre problema simplității

⁶² Ibidem, p. 223.

⁶³ Conform poziției lui Platon.

⁶⁴ Boethius, *Consolarea filosofiei*, ed.cit., pp. 227-237.

⁶⁵ Ibidem, p. 233.

⁶⁶ Ibidem, pp. 239-241.

providenței, despre cursul destinului, despre întâmplările neprevăzute, despre cunoașterea și predestinarea divină, despre liberul arbitru”⁶⁷, pe care Filosofia i le va oferi, susținând că ele sunt incluse în tratamentul medical pe care i-l promisese. Astfel, ordinea multiformă conform căreia funcționează întregul univers, care exprimă stabilitatea și uniformitatea inteligenței divine, se numește providență. Aceeași ordine, raportată la fenomenele particulare pe care le guvernează, se numește destin.

Cele două sunt diferite: destinul conduce toate lucrurile în amănut și în diversitatea lor, dar ține întotdeauna cont de providență, care le conferă unitate și le orientează către bine. Până și cei răi sunt integrați în această ordine, chiar dacă noi nu ne dăm seama, mai ales că judecata oamenilor nu este unitară, ci contradictorie referitor la cine este bun și demn de răsplată, și cine este rău și merită pedeapsa.⁶⁸ Pentru a-și susține poziția, Filosofia oferă exemple numeroase despre cum toate relele care se întâmplă în lume conduc spre bine, deși susține că nici ea și niciun om nu pot cunoaște în detaliu toate aceste aspecte, ci numai Zeul, cel care guvernează lumea.

Astfel, relele suferite pot întări caracterul, pot oferi prilejul pentru a demonstra superioritatea virtuții, pot atrage gloria și renumele în spațiu și timp pentru cei care le-au suportat cu demnitate, pot declanșa cunoașterea de sine, pot speria pe cei înclinați spre viciu, împiedicându-i să facă rău, îi pot îndrepta pe cei răi sau, dacă ele îi lovesc pe nedrept, îi pot determina să se revolte împotriva lor și să treacă, urmând această cale, de partea binelui. În același timp, bunurile pământești oferite de destin celor răi îi pot împiedica pe aceștia să facă rele și mai mari, sau îi pot motiva să renunțe la rele, de frică să nu le piardă. În aceeași măsură însă pot fi un argument pentru faptul că ele nu au valoare, că sunt bunuri neautentice, îndreptându-i pe cei lucizi către adevăratele bunuri, adică cele spirituale.

„Fiindcă numai pentru puterea divină chiar și lucrurile rele sunt bune, când, folosindu-le în mod corespunzător, reușește să scoată un bine din acestea. Deoarece o anumită ordine le cuprinde pe toate, astfel încât ceea ce și-a părăsit locul atribuit în acea ordine recade, cu toate acestea, într-o <altă> ordine, chiar dacă într-una diferită, pentru ca în stăpânirea providenței nimic să nu fie lăsat la voia întâmplării. (...) Dumnezeu, creatorul tuturor naturilor, orânduiește toate lucrurile îndreptându-le spre bine și, în timp ce se străduiește să păstreze în asemănarea sa tot ce a creat, alungă tot răul din

⁶⁷ Ibidem, p. 241.

⁶⁸ Ibidem, pp. 243-247.

hotarele stăpânirii sale prin cursul necesar al destinului. De aici rezultă că, dacă privești la providența care le orânduiește pe toate, îți vei da seama că nu există nicăieri vreun rău dintre cele despre care se crede că abundă pe pământ.”⁶⁹

Prin urmare, Zeul conduce toate lucrurile din univers, fiind izvorul lor infinit și cel la care ele se reîntorc cu iubire ca spre binele lor, el însuși fiind iubire. În aceste condiții, trebuie să admitem că orice soartă, indiferent de conținutul ei concret, este dreaptă și bună. Însă, deși recunoaște că raționamentul de mai sus este corect, concluzia i se pare de neînțeles lui Boethius, el fiind de acord mai degrabă cu „o opinie comună printre oameni, și <chiar> una foarte des întâlnită, că soarta unora este rea”⁷⁰. Filosofia îi răspunde însă că mulțimea nu are dreptate când crede că cei răi care sunt pedepsiți au o soartă rea. În realitate, „orice <soartă> care pare aspră, dacă nu pune la încercare sau îndreaptă, pedepsește”⁷¹, iar „soarta celor care sunt în posesia virtuții, înaintează în căutarea ei sau sunt pe cale să o dobândească este întotdeauna bună, oricare ar fi ea, în timp ce pentru cei care persistă în răutăți soarta este cu totul rea”⁷². Indiferent însă care este destinul fiecăruia, el nu i se aplică nimănui ca o fatalitate, ci dimpotrivă, omul este în bună măsură responsabil de configurarea lui, căci „în mâna voastră rămâne ce fel de soartă preferați să vă formați”⁷³.

Întâmplare, liber arbitru și preștiința divină. La întrebarea lui Boethius dacă întâmplarea, în sensul de fenomen fără cauză, are vreun rol în univers, Filosofia îi răspunde că ea nu există, „căci opinia conform căreia «nimic nu se naște din nimic» este adevărată și nimeni dintre cei din vechime nu a contestat-o, deși nu a folosit-o cu privire la principiul creator, ci la subiectul material”⁷⁴. Dar întâmplarea, sau hazardul se mai poate defini și în alt fel, acceptând punctul de vedere al lui Aristotel, și anume „ca efect neprevăzut provenit dintr-o întâlnire de cauze, în lucruri care sunt

⁶⁹ Ibidem, p. 255.

⁷⁰ Ibidem, p. 259.

⁷¹ Ibidem, p. 263.

⁷² Ibidem, p. 261.

⁷³ Ibidem, pp. 261-263.

⁷⁴ Ibidem, p. 269.

îndeplinite într-un anumit scop⁷⁵, deci ca un rezultat al întretăierii sau combinării unor cauze diverse – iar atunci trebuie să îi admitem existența.

Ca urmare a faptului că în univers lucrurile se manifestă conform raportului precis dintre cauză și efect, universul funcționează asemenea unui mecanism. Cu toate acestea, ființele raționale sunt dotate cu liber arbitru, în sensul că au capacitatea de a voi și de a-și pune în aplicare voința, iar această capacitate este proporțională cu locul lor în ierarhia ființei, deci cu distanța și interesul manifestat față de divinitate. Dar, indiferent de modul în care ele acționează, „această privire a providenței, care le prevede pe toate din eternitate, le zărește și orânduiește fiecareia ceea ce îi este predestinat conform meritelor sale⁷⁶.

Boethius întreabă Filosofia dacă nu cumva preștiința Zeului și predestinarea pe care ea o implică sunt în contradicție cu libertatea voinței omului. Fiindcă dacă tot ce se întâmplă trebuie să urmeze preștiința divină, pe care el o posedă dintotdeauna, faptele oamenilor ar fi determinate de voința Zeului, iar atunci ei nu ar mai fi responsabili pentru ele, deci pedeapa și răsplata divine ar fi fără sens.⁷⁷

Răspunsul Filosofiei este acela că Zeul este veșnic, ceea ce înseamnă că el este o prezență eternă, care cuprinde, în același timp, ca un tot unitar, deopotrivă trecutul, prezentul și viitorul. Prin urmare, el cunoaște tot ceea ce a fost, este și va fi dintr-o dată, în mod direct și permanent, chiar dacă cele cunoscute de el nu sunt toate necesare, iar, de exemplu, dintr-o mulțime de posibilități pe care le are la un moment dat, omul respectiv va realiza numai una, fie și oscilând în privința ei, gândindu-se și răzgândindu-se de mai multe ori. Dar cunoașterea Zeului nu urmează, asemenea unui seismograf, sinuozitățile deliberării individului, căci Zeul vede, în cadrul prezentului său etern, dintr-o dată, care este opțiunea făcută, deci el știe dintotdeauna, pentru fiecare caz în parte, ce posibilitate, dintre toate, se va realiza. În felul acesta se salvează deopotrivă preștiința Zeului și libertatea umană.

„Deci, fiindcă orice judecată înțelege lucrurile supuse ei conform naturii sale, iar Dumnezeu se găsește într-o stare de etern prezent, știința sa, care trece peste orice mișcare a timpului, rămâne în simplitatea prezentului său și, îmbrățișând întinderile infinite ale trecutului și viitorului, înțelege toate în

⁷⁵ Ibidem, p. 271.

⁷⁶ Ibidem, p. 273.

⁷⁷ Ibidem, pp. 275-283.

cunoașterea sa simplă ca și cum <acestea> s-ar desfășura în prezent. Prin urmare, dacă vrei să judeci *pre-vederea* sa, prin care deosebește toate lucrurile, o vei considera mai corect ca fiind nu preștiința viitorului, ci cunoașterea unui moment prezent care nu încetează niciodată. De aceea, nu este numită *pre-vedere*, ci mai degrabă *pro-vidență*, deoarece, aflată departe de lucrurile inferioare, privește toate ca de pe o culme a lumii.”⁷⁸

Tocmai în virtutea acestei cunoașteri absolute în legătură cu toate actele noastre poate Zeul să stabilească, dintotdeauna, răsplata sau pedeapsa pentru ele, înainte deci ca noi să le fi realizat, de fapt, din perspectiva segmentului nostru infim de timp de care dispunem și în care ne desfășurăm existența, inevitabil limitată. Iar lucrul acesta echivalează, practic, cu o predestinare, chiar dacă Zeul nu face altceva decât să ne acorde exact ceea ce noi înșine merităm. Asta nu înseamnă că, aflați în momente de mare cumpănă, precum era Boethius, ar trebui să ne pierdem orice speranță, să ne resemnăm cu ceea ce ni se întâmplă și să rămânem pasivi în fața sorții, căci nouă propriul viitor ne este ascuns, iar rugămințile curate îndreptate către Zeu pot să dea roade. Dar cel mai mult contează în fața Zeului faptele întregii noastre vieți. Ajuns în acest punct, tratamentul Filosofiei, deși aplicat în principiu lui Boethius, capătă o deschidere universală, culminând cu un îndemn la virtute adresat tuturor oamenilor:

„Întoarceți-vă deci de la vicii, cultivați virtutea, înălțați-vă sufletul spre speranțe drepte, îndreptați spre cer rugăciuni smerite. Mare este necesitatea cinstei pusă în voi, dacă nu vreți să vă prefaceți, atunci când întreaga voastră viață se desfășoară înaintea unui judecător care vede toate lucrurile.”⁷⁹

În aceste condiții, ce ar mai rămâne, oare, de spus? Boethius, ca personaj, nu mai intervine ca să ne spună dacă „leacurile tari” și-au făcut în întregime efectul asupra lui, așa încât am putea să considerăm că autorul și-a lăsat neterminată lucrarea. Este, într-adevăr, posibil ca filosoful nostru, la final, să nu mai fi avut suficientă seninătate interioară pentru a consemna o confesiune sinceră în această direcție, iar mica încheiere precipitată de mai sus să fie mai mult un strigăt în care el își clamează sfârșitul, știind precis că nu mai era nimic de făcut și că singura sa nădejde este să se agațe cu toate puterile de mila divină.

⁷⁸ Ibidem, p. 305.

⁷⁹ Ibidem, p. 311.

Dar, în fond, așa după cum s-a punctat pe tot parcursul lucrării, Zeul nu este altul decât Binele suprem, în care, ca om de bine, crezi din toate puterile, și în lumina căruia te străduiești să îți modelezi toate gândurile și faptele. Binele – care, prin el însuși, îți oferă răsplata râvnită, indiferent în ce moment al vieții te-ai afla, chiar și atunci când ești gata să pășești dincolo de granițele acesteia. A te lăsa cu speranță în seama judecătorului suprem atunci când știi că altcineva deține controlul asupra propriei tale existențe și că i-a hotărât deja sfârșitul, înseamnă a fi împăcat cu tine însuși, mulțumit de ceea ce ai făcut în viață, ușurat că nu ai ce să îți reproșezi și că poți privi în ochi pe oricine. În rest, nu mai este înțelept să îți faci griji.

Prin urmare, ar fi fost total de prisos ca Boethius să ne mai spună în finalul lucrării faptul că se simte pe deplin îmbărbătat și cum își așteaptă el, de data asta liniștit, moartea. Ar fi coborât, în felul acesta, de la nivelul de anvergură universală la care se înălțase puternic îndemnul Filosofiei, introducând în discurs un element particular, deci o undă de slăbiciune umană. Oricum, finalul poveștii sale îl cunoaștem: el a fost scris ulterior, pe larg, de succesul răsunător și constant pe care *Consolarea filosofiei* l-a înregistrat de-a lungul veacurilor.

Concluzii

În cadrul pleiadei de filosofi care au meditat în Antichitate asupra rosturilor filosofiei, Boethius ocupă un loc aparte. Cu toții au pus în evidență atât latura teoretică, cât și pe cea practică a filosofiei, subliniindu-i capacitatea superioară de cunoaștere și înțelepciunea de a ne ghida de-a lungul vieții, iar unii dintre ei nu au uitat să sublinieze că oferă un refugiu plăcut, reconfortant în momente de retragere din tumultul vieții publice, mai ales atunci când aceasta este total dezamăgitoare sau prea periculoasă. Boethius însuși este total de acord cu ei. Dar, spre deosebire de toți ceilalți, la el miza luării de poziție este infinit mai importantă, căci în cazul său este vorba de o situație-limită reală, de viață și de moarte, în care deja balanța s-a înclinat implacabil spre moarte, iar singura salvare de la deznădejdea sufletului pe care el o întrevede nu este alta decât însăși filosofia.

Din punctul lui Boethius de vedere, filosofia reușește să ne consoleze eficient în fața morții fiindcă ne înlătură vălul ignoranței în ceea ce privește natura umană, oferindu-ne o cunoaștere autentică a ființei noastre, ca persoane aflate în strânsă conexiune cu divinul, cu alte cuvinte, cu Binele. Acest lucru înseamnă că ea ne dezvăluie ceea ce este binele în general și, implicit, binele nostru în calitate de oameni, insistând pe faptul că el

presupune posesia bunurilor spirituale, pe care le obținem exclusiv prin exercitarea virtuții. Din această perspectivă, nicio pierdere a bunurilor noastre materiale, inclusiv a corpului, nu este pentru noi, cu adevărat, un rău. În aceeași măsură, nicio nedreptate sau umilință suferită din partea celorlați nu ne poate afecta, atâta vreme cât noi înșine ne păstrăm virtutea, adică demnitatea umană, și nu deviem de la linia binelui.

Prin promovarea unei asemenea viziuni, Boethius nu ne îndeamnă să primim cu resemnare loviturile sorții, argumentând că, oricum, suntem neputincioși în fața ei. Aici nu este vorba de pesimism ci, dimpotrivă, de luciditate și realism, care admit drama și suferința omului, dar nu exclud nici speranța și nici lupta, căci el susține că suntem responsabili de destinul propriu. În orice caz, intenția lui clară este aceea de a ne ajuta să depășim durerea, astfel încât să rămânem calmi, liniștiți și senini în fața evenimentelor neplăcute ale vieții, oricât de multe și de teribile ar fi ele. Mesajul său este că nu trebuie să cedezi psihic în nicio împrejurare, ci să analizezi la rece, rațional, tot ceea ce ți se întâmplă, apreciind fiecare lucru la adevărata lui valoare, din perspectiva singurului criteriu care contează: Binele real, autentic. Dar prin accentul pus pe rațiune Boethius nu pledează pentru un model al omului din care sensibilitatea și pasiunile sunt eliminate, sau cel puțin reduse la un nivel minim, ci pentru canalizarea acestora către adevăratele noastre bunuri, adică valorile spirituale, care să ne înflăcăreze inima.

Deși Boethius, creștin se pare, își fundamentează poziția pe credința în divinitate, considerată creatoarea și conducătoarea universului atât în ansamblu cât și în cele mai mici amănunte ale sale, deosebirea acesteia față de viziunea religioasă creștină este că ea nu pune accent pe o răsplătă în ceruri, după moarte, deci nu aduce în discuție mântuirea și viața veșnică. Potrivit acestei concepții, recompensa unei vieți virtuoză este oferită pe loc, și ea constă în însuși exercițiul virtuții, ceea ce poate fi dezamăgitor la prima vedere. Numai că Boethius a înțeles foarte limpede că acesta este singurul mod prin care se poate manifesta autonomia morală a omului, înlăturând dependența sa de orice factor extern. Rolul divinității aici este cel de garant că această logică este corectă și chiar funcționează. Prin urmare, omul trebuie să fie virtuos nu pentru că se așteaptă să fie răsplătit, într-un fel sau altul, fie de către societate, fie de către divinitate, în viața terestră sau după moarte, iar în caz contrar, pedepsit, ci pentru că numai în felul acesta el își manifestă plenar natura umană, se poate afirma ca om la

cel mai înalt nivel, iar acest lucru reprezintă pentru el cel mai mare bine și îi oferă adevărata fericire.

BIBLIOGRAFIE

BOETHIUS, *Consolarea filosofiei*, Ediție bilingvă, Traducere de Otonel Vereș, Iași, Polirom, 2011.

BOETHIUS, *De consolatione Philosophiae/Mângâierile filosofiei*, Ediție bilingvă română-latină, Traducere de David Popescu, București, Fundația Gândirea, 2003.

GÂNDIREA CRITICĂ CA ȘTIINȚĂ, CA DISCIPLINĂ DE STUDIU ȘI CA EXPERIENȚĂ SPIRITUALĂ

Cătălin STĂNCIULESCU¹

Abstract: *One way of integrating the metacognitive approach to avoiding cognitive and emotional biases suggested by Maynes (2015) and Schraw (1998) into critical thinking teaching and learning activities is illustrated in which the types of biases exemplified are considered specific to domains, such as political thinking and the assessment of global phenomena, rather than general.*

Keywords: *teaching critical thinking, debiasing, metacognitive heuristics, Schraw, Maynes.*

În tradiția „gândirii critice” ca „ideal educațional” (care constă în formarea unei mentalități științifice în abordarea aspectelor variate ale vieții individuale și sociale), dezvoltarea abilităților (având mai ales un caracter tehnic, aplicativ) și dispozițiilor (sau atitudinilor, având în special un caracter moral și psihologic) și cunoașterea (atât a noțiunilor și principiilor specifice gândirii critice cât și a noțiunilor și principiilor ce țin de specificul domeniului particular în care se urmărește dezvoltarea gândirii critice) sunt considerate la fel de importante². Pe lângă noțiunile de logică formală și informală, retorică și comunicare, printre cunoștințele invocate sunt considerate importante și cunoștințele privind modurile posibile în care gândirea este influențată de anumite tendințe spre eroare în activitățile și procesele de luare a deciziilor în privința a ceea ce credem sau facem³. „Gândirea critică”, se afirmă, ar trebui să contribuie la diminuarea sau controlul unor astfel de tendințe.⁴ Sursele acestor cunoștințe privind tendințele spre eroare și modul în care ele funcționează, provin cel mai adesea din psihologie, științele cogniției sau neuroștiințe. Dar provin, de asemenea, din filosofie, antropologie sau alte domenii, cum ar fi studiile privind percepția fenomenelor globale (educație, sărăcie, energie, mediu etc.). Ceea ce par să aibă în comun aceste surse este că explicarea tendințelor spre eroare face apel la anumite predispoziții de gândire

¹ University of Craiova, Romania.

² Hitchcock, 2022.

³ Idem.

⁴ Thagard, 2011.

influențate de emoții și de stări de spirit (mai curând decât doar din lipsa informațiilor), limitarea sau controlul acestora presupunând un fel de terapie sau experiență spirituală care își propune să conducă la dobândirea unor dispoziții, cum ar fi modestia intelectuală⁵ (opusă încrederii excesive în propria evaluare, care este o sursă de erori), optimismul moderat⁶ (opus „pesimismului distopic”) sau pesimismul moderat⁷ (opus „optimismului fără scrupule”). O astfel de perspectivă folosește așa-numitele euristici metacognitive, formule reprezentative pentru diversele strategii de evitare a prejudecăților cognitive - formule succinte, ușor de reținut, cum sunt: „atunci când te confrunți cu posibilitatea de a opta între două alternative, caută o a treia posibilitate”, „încearcă să îți suspenzi judecata”, „o doză sănătoasă de modestie n-ar strica atunci când trebuie să iei decizii importante”.

Din punct de vedere al învățării gândirii critice, familiarizarea elevilor cu prejudecățile cognitive sau tendințele spre eroare, cu modul în care funcționează și chiar cu strategiile de limitare a lor, se spune, nu pare să fie eficientă, în mod special din cauza faptului că nu este luat în considerare contextul în care se pot manifesta prejudecățile și în care ar trebui aplicate strategiile de limitare a lor.⁸ De aceea unele propuneri de integrare, în practica pedagogică destinată dezvoltării gândirii critice, a cunoștințelor referitoare la aceste tendințe au constat în elaborarea unor modalități practice prin care cunoștințele despre prejudecăți, tendințe spre eroare sau moduri înșelătoare de gândire ar putea fi mai bine corelate cu contextul în care sunt folosite.

Acest material își propune să ilustreze materializarea unei astfel de modalități, propusă recent de J. Maynes⁹, pentru unele tendințe sau prejudecăți cognitive care, deși sunt înrudite cu cele prezentate în lucrările de psihologie și științe comportamentale, sunt în același timp specifice unor subiecte, teme și contexte relativ distincte.

Propunerea lui Maynes urmărește dezvoltarea conștientizării de către elevi atât a tendințelor spre eroare studiate și a modului în care acestea funcționează (în particular a strategiilor folosite pentru ca tendințele să fie

⁵ Ballantyne, 2015.

⁶ Rosling, 2018; Duffy, 2019.

⁷ Scruton, 2022.

⁸ Hitchcock, 2022; Maynes, 2015.

⁹ Maynes, 2015; modelul propus de Maynes este adaptat după Schraw, 1998.

evitate), cât și a situației sau contextului în care strategiile asociate euristiciilor metacognitive ar trebui aplicate. Concret, modalitatea conține trei categorii de sugestii sau instrucțiuni asociate următoarelor întrebări referitoare la o strategie: *Cum* este aplicată? *De ce?* și *Când?*. Spre exemplu, în cazul strategiei „ia în considerare varianta [opinie, valoare, decizie etc.] opusă celei propuse”, care poate fi folosită pentru evitarea mai multor prejudecăți cognitive (gândirea retrospectivă sau tendința de a considera că evenimentele din trecut nu s-ar fi petrecut altfel decât s-au petrecut, tendința încrederii excesive în propriile evaluări și prejudecata ancorării sau tendința de formare a unor judecăți și opinii influențate de o informație specifică), răspunsul la prima întrebare ar trebui să fie „o indicație a faptului că elevii ar trebui să se pună în situația cuiva care are o părere opusă sau diferită și să încerce să ofere cele mai bune motive în favoarea ei și să ofere un răspuns satisfăcător pentru interlocutor la întrebarea «de ce crede acea persoană ceea ce crede?»”; răspunsul la a doua întrebare, pe de altă parte, ar putea să fie că „a ține seama de ideea opusă este o dovadă a unei virtuți intelectuale și a încercării de a comunica cu persoanele cu idei și opinii diferite”; în fine, răspunsul la a treia întrebare (când?) ar fi: „când este vorba de probleme importante care implică valori sau consecințe importante pentru cei implicați și/sau când este vorba de probleme în legătură cu care există un dezacord semnificativ”¹⁰.

Lista de mai jos prezintă, ilustrativ, câteva euristici metacognitive și strategiile corespunzătoare în forma modelului propus de Maynes:

1. „evaluează cazul cel mai rău!”; „calculează costul eșecului!” ;

Tendința: de a lua în considerare și a opta pentru cazul cel mai favorabil într-o situație dată; *Cum?* Prin identificarea cazului cel mai rău pentru problema dată pentru a cărei soluție a fost prezentat un „cel mai bun caz”, oferire de motive și dovezi pentru care cazul identificat este cel mai rău caz în situația dată; identificarea și evaluarea consecințelor negative în cazul eșecului; *De ce?* Pentru a fi o persoană responsabilă, care își „asumă riscuri cu conștiința deplină a ceea ce urmează să se întâmple dacă riscurile nu sunt recompensate”¹¹; *Când?* Atunci când, „în condiții de incertitudine”, este imaginată o soluție ideală, „cel mai bun caz” sau „rezultat”, și se presupune că nu „trebuie luate în considerare și alte rezultate” sau cazuri.

¹⁰ Maynes, 2015, p. 196.

¹¹ Scruton, 2022, p. 27.

2. „adoptă o soluție pentru o problemă numai atunci când ea este rezultatul unui dialog și al unei negocieri”;

Tendință: de a imagina o soluție imposibilă pentru o problemă dată; *Cum?* Prin încercarea de a arăta că soluția este practic „imună la infirmare”, că nu pot fi imaginate situații pentru care soluția nu este viabilă; *De ce?* Cu scopul adoptării unei atitudini mai realiste; *Când?* Atunci când problema este importantă, există atitudini conflictuale iar soluția pare să fie irealizabilă.

3. „fii rezervat față de ideea că libertatea este o stare naturală”;

Tendința: (în gândirea politică, cel mai frecvent) de a crede că „libertatea este un dar natural”¹² (că „oamenii se nasc liberi”); *Cum?* Prin încercarea de a formula argumente care să susțină ideea că „instituțiile, legile, cumpătarea și disciplina morală sunt o parte a libertății, și nu dușmanul ei, iar debarasarea de ele conduce rapid la anularea ei”¹³; că „legile, obiceiurile, instituțiile și constrângerile convenționale fac parte din natura libertății”¹⁴; *De ce?* Pentru a limita încercarea de a-i învinovăți pe ceilalți în cazul unui eșec, și deci cu scopul cultivării responsabilității: „Întrucât *trebuie* să fie adevărat că toți...” ne naștem liberi, „orice semn că libertatea și autonomia lipsesc indică vina celorlalți”¹⁵; *Când?* Atunci când este în discuție opoziția dintre libertate „ca stare naturală, care nu are nevoie decât de eliminarea instituțiilor, a structurilor și a ierarhiilor pentru a se înfăptui” și libertate ca rezultat al socializării;

4. fii rezervat în privința oricărei propuneri privind un plan comun și o autoritate unică;

Tendință: (în special în gândirea politică) de a crede că pentru realizarea scopurilor comune este nevoie de „un plan comun și sub conducerea unei autorități unice”¹⁶; *Cum?* verifică, atunci când este propus un astfel de plan, dacă „există apeluri la consultare populară și la dezbatere publică”, dacă există mijloace de revizuire a deciziilor; *De ce?* Pentru că orice decizie în privința adoptării unui plan care privește mai multe persoane trebuie luată în urma unei analize și evaluări detaliate și trebuie să fie rezultatul un

¹² Sau „sofismul că ne naștem liberi”; *ibidem*, p. 57.

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 48.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 57.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 64.

¹⁶ Sau „sofismul planificării”, *ibidem*, p. 99.

acord bazat pe consens liber din partea celor implicați; *Când?* Atunci când sunt în joc scopuri comune importante.

5. nu fii cu orice preț loial prezentului („spiritului vremii”);

Tendință: de a considera că „acțiunile libere ale indivizilor sunt consecințe necesare ale timpului în care trăiesc”¹⁷; *Cum?* Acordând și trecutului, ca sursă de soluții posibile în cazul unei probleme, o importanță la fel de mare ca și prezentului sau viitorului; *De ce?* Pentru că este posibil ca, în situația contrară, subiecte importante din trecut sau soluții care au fost adoptate în trecut tind să nu fie luate în considerare; iar a lua în considerare astfel de soluții este o posibilitate care nu ar trebui evitată pentru o gândire eficientă; *Când?* Atunci când există și se manifestă intens o intenție de respingere sau cel puțin un fel de indiferență față de valori sau soluții din trecut în numele exclusiv al valorilor sau soluțiilor curente.

6. „nu toate lucrurile bune se agregă”¹⁸;

Tendință: de a crede că mai multe scopuri dezirabile urmărite împreună vor avea un rezultat cel puțin la fel de bun ca fiecare dintre scopurile urmărite¹⁹; *Cum?* Prin încercarea de a analiza și a înțelege relațiile dintre lucrurile dorite, a modului „în care un scop se răsfrânge asupra celuilalt”²⁰; de a analiza fiecare lucru în contextul în care este definit și de a nu-l „transfera într-o lume imaginară”²¹; *De ce?* Pentru a evita situații în care „rezultatul va include... scopuri ce un pot fi atinse împreună”; *Când?* Când sunt propuse și par sau sunt prezentate ca realizabile mai multe scopuri ușor de acceptat și de urmărit.

7. „lumea nu este împărțită în două”²²;

Tendință: de „a împărți lucrurile în două categorii distincte și de cele mai multe ori în contradicție, cu un decalaj imaginar... între ele”²³; *Cum?* Prin încercarea de a găsi o majoritate de cazuri între extreme, după ce a fost

¹⁷ Sau „sofismul spiritului în mișcare”, Scruton, 2022, p. 12.

¹⁸ Ibidem, p. 157.

¹⁹ Sau „sofismul agregării”, ibidem, pp. 152-153.

²⁰ Ibidem, p. 157.

²¹ Ibidem, p. 153.

²² Rosling, 2018, p. 33.

²³ Ibidem, p. 27; sau „instinctul decalajului”.

recunoscută o descriere care prezintă un decalaj; prin încercarea de a înlocui o diviziune printr-o succesiune, o diferență prin convergența, un conflict prin înțelegere²⁴; *De ce?* Cu scopul evitării sau cel puțin al diminuării posibilității de ne confrunța cu „date fundamental distorsionate”²⁵; *Când?* Atunci când o situație importantă, a cărei importanță poate fi justificată, este descrisă într-o formă dihotomică.

8. „așteaptă-te la vești proaste!”;

Tendință: de a „observa mai mult răul decât binele”²⁶; *Cum?* Prin „exersarea distincției dintre o stare (de ex. rea) și o direcție de schimbare (ex. mai bine)”; încercarea de identifica, în cadrul schimbărilor, aspectele negative împreună cu aspectele care indică o evoluție pozitivă; conștientizarea faptului că informațiile negative depășesc cu mult informațiile pozitive referitoare la un eveniment; limitarea sensibilității față de informațiile negative; evitarea poveștilor pozitive despre trecut; *De ce?* Pentru a evalua cât mai realist (pornind de la date), și eficient (eliminând aspectele deformatoare) informațiile; *Când?* Atunci când este importantă evaluarea informațiilor, de exemplu în cazul luării unor decizii, și când există motive pentru a crede că informațiile negative pot avea o influență considerabilă asupra acestora.

9. „lucrurile nu evoluează doar în linie dreaptă!”;

Tendință: de a considera că evoluția fenomenelor este una de creștere constantă²⁷; *Cum?* Căutând dovezi și date care să scadă credibilitatea ideii că schimbarea unui fenomen are loc în linie dreaptă, mai curând decât altfel („în formă de S, de topogan, de curbă, de cocoasă sau de linii dublate”); *De ce?* Pentru că este importantă înțelegerea formei prin care poate fi reprezentată evoluția unui fenomen pentru a înțelege fenomenul și a evalua informațiile despre el; *Când?* Când evoluția unui fenomen este prezentată astfel încât ea poate fi asociată, implicit sau explicit, cu o reprezentare în forma unei linii drepte; și când stabilirea formei evoluției fenomenului este importantă.

²⁴ Ibidem, p. 53.

²⁵ Ibidem, p. 53.

²⁶ Sau „instinctul negativității”; ibidem, p. 64.

²⁷ Sau „instinctul liniei drepte”; ibidem, p. 122.

10. „lucrurile înfricoșătoare nu sunt cele mai riscante”;

Tendință: de a „acorda atenție pericolelor puțin probabile de care ne este cel mai mult frică și de a neglija pericolele cu adevărat riscante”²⁸; *Cum?* Prin evaluarea ratelor evenimentelor care par înfricoșătoare; de exemplu, prin luare în considerare a faptului că „riscul pe care îl presupune un pericol nu depinde de cât de mult ne înfricoșează, ci de combinația dintre cât de periculos este și de cât de mult suntem expuși la acest pericol”; mai general, prin a face distincția între „înfricoșător”, care „implică o percepție a riscului”, pe de o parte, și „periculos”, care „implică un risc real”; *De ce?* Pentru că este importantă evaluarea cu acuratețe a informațiilor și limitarea influenței emoțiilor asupra percepției informațiilor; în particular, este importantă evaluarea riscului de producere a unor evenimente nedorite; *Când?* Când există pericolul de a acorda mai multă atenție lucrurilor înfricoșătoare decât celor care periculoase.

În această formă, euristicele metacognitive și strategiile corespunzătoare oferă un cadru practic sistematic, ușor de reținut și de aplicat, care orientează activitățile elevilor și poate contribui la consolidarea abilităților corespunzătoare fiecărei strategii, iar în cadrul fiecărei strategii, a abilităților corespunzătoare fiecărei secțiuni (aplicării strategiei, explicării modului în care funcționează și recunoașterii sau stabilirii contextului în care este necesară aplicarea ei). Activitățile se poate desfășura inițial folosind exemple din literatura din care au fost extrase prejudecățile și strategiile, în special activitățile prin care se urmărește dezvoltarea abilităților implicate în identificarea sau stabilirea contextului în care este aplicată o strategie, iar apoi prin selectarea de către elevi a unor exemple fie dintr-o listă predefinită, fie din surse alese de ei.

De asemenea, poate fi utilă cunoașterea de către elevi a cadrului teoretic sau narativ din care sunt extrase strategiile, care oferă justificări ale modurilor potențial eronate de gândire și percepție. Unele descrieri, rezumative, sintetice ale acestui cadru pot fi generale, privind natura abordării prejudecăților cognitive în psihologie și științele comportamentale²⁹. Altele pot avea un caracter mai specific, tematic, așa

²⁸ Sau „instinctul fricii”; Rosling, 2018, p. 147.

²⁹ Următorul poate fi un exemplu de descriere generală (numită de autor „imaginea psihologică”, pe fondul căreia sunt înțelese mai bine tendințele spre eroare în general): „Știm că oamenii sunt motivați să caute plăcerea și să evite durerea. Ei dau o mare importanță propriilor dorințe și nevoi. Se adăpostesc de

cum este cazul pentru euristicile 1-6 din lista de mai sus (care se referă la tendințe de gândire ce pot fi reprezentative pentru gândirea socială și politică)³⁰ și 7-10 (care sunt caracteristice unor tendințe ce caracterizează percepția unor fenomene globale sau a „imaginii lumii”)³¹. Utilitatea acestor prezentări rezumative constă în obținerea unei relații mai coerente

realitate prin diverse mecanisme de apărare psihologică. Oamenii văd uneori problemele prin lentila ideologiei și poziției lor sociale. Și sunt capabili de (auto)amăgire în ceea ce privește influența factorilor neraționali asupra judecăților lor. Aceste tipuri de gânduri fac obiectul teoriilor noastre abstracte. Teoriile noastre ne spun când motivele, nevoile, așteptările și contextul invită la părtinire, permițându-ne să considerăm comportamentul altora ca indicând prezența sau riscul de părtinire. Aceste teorii sunt linii directoare aproximative. De fapt, ei sunt ghizi imperfecti” (Ballantyne, 2015, p. 152).

³⁰ Următorul paragraf oferă o astfel de justificare: „Contrastul... între două tipuri de raționament – unul pregătit pentru neprevăzut, celălalt căutând acordul și compromisul – reflectă o dualitate fundamentală a condiției umane. Oamenii se pot uni sub un lider pentru a urmări un țel, mizând pe o împărțire corectă a prăzii; sau pot coopera, pot negocia și pot face compromisuri, conturând un spațiu public în care țelurile se diversifică, se produc bunuri și apar relații libere. Într-o lume a poruncilor și a planurilor, viața nu are cine știe ce valoare, ca în vreme de război sau în acea căutare primitivă de noi teritorii. Într-o lume a cooperării și a compromisurilor, viața este prețioasă: este totul pentru fiecare dintre noi, așa că negociem pentru a proteja. Ambele stări de spirit ne sunt necesare.” Tendința de alege cazul care pare cel mai bun, de a adopta o soluție în lipsa dialogului și negocierii, de a crede că ne naștem liberi, de a fi de acord cu un plan comun și o autoritate unică, de a crede că mai multe scopuri bune pot fi urmărite și realizate împreună doar pentru că sunt bune „se produc nu pentru că gândirea pe care o exemplifică este absurdă, ci că pentru că presupun punerea în practică, pe timp de pace și de cooperare socială, a unei atitudini specifice războiului” (Scruton, 2018, pp. 220-221).

³¹ Cum este, spre exemplu, paragraful: „Creierul uman este produsul unei evoluții de milioane de ani și suntem înzestrați cu instincte care ne-au ajutat strămoșii să supraviețuiască în grupuri mici de vânători și culegători. Creierul nostru trage repede concluzii, fără să se gândească prea mult, pentru că odinioară asta ne ajuta să evităm pericole imediate. Suntem interesați de bârfe și de povești cu suspans, pentru că acum mulți ani ele erau singurele surse de informații utile și de noutate... Avem multe instincte care obișnuiau să fie utile acum mii de ani. Dar acum trăim într-o lume foarte diferită... tendința de a trage rapid concluzii și înclinația noastră spre dramă – instinctele noastre dramatice – cauzează interpretări greșite și o viziune catastrofică asupra lumii” (Rosling, 2018, p. 27).

între obiectivul general al „terapii” în fiecare caz - de evitare a unui optimism exagerat când este vorba de opțiunile politice, respectiv de evitare a unui atitudini dramatice în cazul evaluării fenomenelor globale - și obiectivele specifice exprimate de euristicile metacognitive și la care ar trebui să conducă aplicarea strategiilor.

BIBLIOGRAFIE

- BALLANTYNE, N., *Knowing our limits*, Oxford University Press, 2019.
- BALLANTYNE, N., "Debunking biased thinkers (including ourselves)", *Journal of the American Philosophical Association*, 2015, pp. 141-162.
- DUFFY, B., *Pricolele percepției. De ce ne înșelăm în aproape toate privințele*, traducere din engleză de Cosmin Maricari, București, Publica, 2019.
- ENNIS, R.H., "Critical Thinking: A Streamlined Conception", Davies, M., & Barnett, R., *The Palgrave Handbook of Critical Thinking in Higher Education*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, pp. 31-46.
- GRANT, A., *Think Again. The Power of Knowing What You Don't Know*, New York: Viking, 2021.
- HITCHCOCK, David, "Critical Thinking", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2024 Edition), Edward N. Zalta & Uri Nodelman (eds.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2024/entries/critical-thinking/>.
- MCINTYRE, L., *Cum să discuți cu un negaționist al științei: de ce cred unii că Pământul e plat și alte teorii ale conspirației*, trad. din engleză și note de Iulian Comănescu, București: Humanitas, 2021.
- MAYNES, J., "Critical Thinking and Cognitive Bias", *Informal Logic*, Vol. 35, No. 2 (2015), pp. 183-203.
- ROSLING, H., Ola Rosling, Anna Rosling Rönnlund, *Factfulness. Zece motive pentru care interpretăm greșit lumea și de ce lucrurile stau mai bine decât crezi*, trducere din engleză de Dana Gheorghe, București, Publica, 2018.
- SCHRAW, G., "Promoting general metacognitive awareness", *Instructional Science*, 26, pp. 113-125.
- SCRUTON, R., *Foloasele pesimismului și pericolul falsei speranțe*, traducere din engleză de Andreea Eșanu, București, Humanitas, 2010.
- SIBONY, O., *Ești pe punctul de a face o greșeală teribilă. Cum ne deformează deciziile iluziile cognitive și ce putem face pentru a le combate*, trad. Dan Crăciun, București: Vellant, 2021.
- SIEGEL, H., "Critical Thinking," *International Encyclopedia of Education*, 2010, vol. 6, pp. 141-145.
- THAGARD, P., "Critical Thinking and Informal Logic: Neuropsychological Perspectives", *Informal Logic*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (2011), pp. 152-170.

EMPIRISCHE ADÄQUATHEIT STATT OBJEKTIVER BESCHREIBUNG? EIN KURZER KOMMENTAR ÜBER DIE RELEVANZ DES EPISTEMISCHEN RELATIVISMUS ZUM VERSTEHEN DER WISSENSCHAFT AM BEISPIEL DES KONSTRUKTIVEN EMPIRISMUS BAAS VAN FRAASSENS

Darius PERSU¹

Abstract: *This analysis is intended as a brief commentary on the relevance of scientific relativism to the understanding of science. This topic is discussed here using the example of Baas van Fraassen's theory, which he developed under the name of "constructive empiricism". The first part of the text deals with drawing the conceptual framework of what scientific relativism means. Since B. van Fraassen did not explicitly describe his position as relativism, it must be further argued to what extent his theory can be understood in the sense of the definition criteria given in the first point. The concluding considerations are dedicated to presenting some comments on the relevance of epistemic relativism and constructive empiricism for understanding scientific knowledge.*

Keywords: *scientific relativism, constructive empiricism, Baas van Fraassen, scientific knowledge.*

Einleitung:

Man muss von Anfang an zugeben, dass es, wie so oft in der Philosophie, keine einheitliche und unstrittige Definition des Relativismus gibt. Je nach theoretischem Rahmen wird die Bezeichnung „Relativismus“ im Sinne eines ontologischen, semantischen, moralischen, epistemischen oder eines kulturellen Relativismus gedeutet. Nebenbei gesagt lohnt es sich hier, eine interessante begriffliche Unterscheidung zwischen verschiedenen Arten von Relativismus kurz zu erwähnen, die man in dem Aufsatz B. Barnes' „Realism, Relativism and Finitism“ findet, in dessen Rahmen der Autor wichtige Ansatzpunkte über die Rolle der sozialen Faktoren zum Abbauen der wissenschaftlichen Theorien ausführlich diskutiert. Einen wichtigen Punkt zum Ausführen der Argumentation Barnes' stellt die Unterscheidung zwischen einem Relativismus „with a realist flavour“ und einem Relativismus „with a idealist flavour“ dar. (Vgl. Barnes 1992,

¹ West University of Timișoara, Romania.

besonders S. 133-37). Also, wie das obige Beispiel klar macht, kann Relativismus entlang einer sehr großen begrifflichen Skala definiert werden, die vom Idealismus bis in der Nähe vom Realismus reicht.

Als Ausgangspunkt zum Vorschlag einer Arbeitsdefinition des epistemischen Relativismus wird hier der Aufsatz von M. Kusch² „Epistemic Relativism: Criteria and Options“ zitiert. Martin Kusch ist einer der Philosophen, die sich in den letzten Jahren mit dem Thema des Relativismus in der Wissenschaftsphilosophie sehr intensiv auseinandergesetzt haben. In seinem hier zitierten Aufsatz wird der epistemische Relativismus als eigenständige philosophische Position in Bezug auf eine Reihe von neun Bedingungen definiert. Im Folgenden werden diese Kriterien in aller Kürze dargestellt bzw. als Argumentationsgrundlage zum Verstehen des empirischen Konstruktivismus B. van Fraassens im Sinne des Relativismus verwendet.

1. Relativismus. Definitionskriterien

Allgemein gesagt ist epistemischer Relativismus die Auffassung, die besagt, dass das menschliche Wissen *per se* kontingent und begrenzt ist. In diesem Sinne ist das Erreichen von absolutem, unfehlbarem, unkorrigierbarem Wissen laut Relativisten *prinzipiell* nicht möglich, sodass der epistemische Relativist sich selbst üblicherweise als Kritiker des epistemischen Absolutismus versteht. Mit den Worten D. Bloor ist Relativismus „[...] just epistemological atheism, while anti-relativism is theology in disguise.“ (Bloor 2007:279). Diese Auffassung, die zwischen Relativismus und Absolutismus keine andere Position erlaubt, scheint allerdings fragwürdig zu sein: Wenn man den Relativismus exklusiv einem extremen Absolutismus (e.g. der Theologie oder dem Idealismus) gegenüberstellt, besteht die Gefahr, dass die Relativisten damit nur einen „Strohmann“ kritisieren. Um diesem Einwand nicht ausgesetzt zu sein,

² Martin Kusch ist derzeit Professor für Philosophie an der Universität von Wien. Im Jahr 2014 wurde ihm von European Research Council (ERC) eine Förderung in Höhe von 2,5 Mio. € für ein fünfjähriges Forschungsprojekt mit dem Titel „The Emergence of Relativism: Historische, philosophische und soziologische Perspektiven“ bewilligt, in dessen Rahmen mehrere Konferenzen und Publikationen über die Relevanz des wissenschaftlichen Relativismus zum Verstehen der Wissenschaft organisiert bzw. herausgegeben wurden.

sollte man versuchen, den epistemischen Relativismus in Bezug auf punktuelle Kriterien darzustellen. Zu diesem Zweck bietet sich der oben erwähnte Aufsatz M. Kusch als exzellenten Ausgangspunkt. Im Rahmen seiner Arbeit werden neun solche Definitionskriterien vorgeschlagen: „dependence“, „pluralism“, „exclusivness“, „notional confrontation“, „contingency“, „groundlessness“, „underdetermination“, „symmetry“ und „tolerance“. Zum Zweck der hier angeführten Analyse werden aus dieser Reihe aber nur diejenigen Kriterien betrachtet, die als solche auf bestimmte Ideen der Auffassung van Fraassens bezogen werden können.

Ein erstes Kriterium zum Definieren des Relativismus ist die sogenannte „Dependence“-These: „A belief has an epistemic status (as epistemically justified or unjustified) *only relative* to an epistemic system or practice.“ [meine Kursivierung]. Auf den Fall des wissenschaftlichen Wissens übertragen, besagt diese These nämlich, dass die Richtigkeit oder Unrichtigkeit einer jeden wissenschaftlichen Theorie sich immer nur relativ zu bestimmten Kriterien überprüfen lässt, die wir im Voraus annehmen müssen, um überhaupt vom Wissen sprechen zu können. Von einer relativistischen Perspektive gibt es also keine Möglichkeit, die Wissenschaft „aus der Perspektive Gottes“ zu evaluieren, weil die Überprüfung des Wissens wesentlich von unseren epistemischen „commitments“ abhängig ist. Dementsprechend gibt es keine Möglichkeit, den Anspruch zu einem absoluten, unfehlbaren Wissen zu rechtfertigen, was weiter bedeutet, dass es keine Rechtfertigung für den Versuch gibt, eine „literally true story of what the world is like“ zu geben, so wie die wissenschaftlichen Realisten im Sinne der Korrespondenztheorie üblicherweise beanspruchen würden.

Die Tatsache, dass es keine Rechtfertigung für wissenschaftliche Wahrheit im Sinne der klassischen Korrespondenztheorie gibt, fassen die Relativisten aber nicht als Mangel des Wissensvermögens im Sinne des Skeptizismus auf, sondern vielmehr als Hinweis, wie das Wissen eigentlich zu verstehen ist: Unsere Wahrnehmungen sind von der materiellen Umwelt verursacht und sie sind im Allgemeinen zuverlässig. Wie aber diese Wahrnehmungen begrifflich dargestellt werden, hängt von mehreren Faktoren wie Kontext, begrifflichen Vermögen, Klassifikationsentscheidungen usw. ab. Unter diesem Gesichtspunkt würden die Relativisten die Idee des Wissens der Wirklichkeit an sich als Missverständnis darüber beurteilen, wie unser Wissen eigentlich funktioniert. (Vgl. z.B. Barnes 1992 und Bloor 1991).

Eng verbunden mit dem oben dargestellten Kriterium stehen zwei weitere Ideen, nämlich die "Groundlessness"-These und die These der "Underdetermination". Mit dem Begriff "Groundlessness" wird hier darauf hingewiesen, dass "[t]here can be no epistemic justification of one's own epistemic system or practice." Diese These besagt, dass der Begriff der Rechtfertigung für Relativisten nur innerhalb eines bestimmten epistemischen Systems Sinn hat. Die epistemische Rechtfertigung bezieht sich nur auf die begrifflichen Beziehungen innerhalb des Systems. Deshalb ist unter einem relativistischen Gesichtspunkt keine Rechtfertigung eines epistemischen Systems als Ganzes möglich. In enger Beziehung mit der obigen Idee steht, wie gesagt, die These der "Underdetermination". Diese lautet: "[e]pistemic systems and practices are not determined by facts of nature." Es wird also behauptet, dass die Auswahl zwischen verschiedenen epistemischen Systemen nicht bloß von der Natur her bedingt wird. Das heißt aber noch nicht, dass die Natur für Relativisten keine Rolle beim Annehmen eines bestimmten epistemischen Systems spielt, sondern nur, dass diese Auswahl auf wirklich freiwilliger Basis erfolgt. Anders gesagt, wird die Auffassung einer bestimmten Theorie oder die Variation zwischen verschiedenen theoretischen Systemen, die die gleichen Tatsachen erklären, nicht durch die kausale Wirkung der jeweiligen Tatsachen bestimmt. Vielmehr spielen diesbezüglich noch bestimmte soziale Faktoren eine sehr wichtige Rolle. (Vgl. dazu Bloor 1999:101-103). Auf eine ähnliche Idee wird die Kritik van Fraassens des „Schlusses auf die beste Erklärung“ hinweisen, so wie es weiter deutlicher dargestellt wird.

Ein weiteres Kriterium zum Definieren des Relativismus stellt die "Exclusivness"-These dar: "SPs [epistemic systems and practices – m.A.] are exclusive one to another." Diese These besagt, dass die verschiedenen epistemischen Systeme völlig andere begriffliche Ausrüstungen benutzen, sodass es zwischen den verschiedenen epistemischen Systemen keine vergleichbaren Begriffe gibt.

Die oben erwähnte "Exklusivness"-These lässt sich weiter mithilfe der sogenannten „Notional Confrontation“-These verdeutlichen: „It is not possible for a group G, that holds an epistemic system or practice SP_1 , to go over to an epistemic system or practice SP_2 on the basis of a rational comparison between SP_1 und SP_2 . But G might be converted to SP_2 without losing its hold on reality.“ Damit ist einerseits gemeint, dass es unter einem relativistischen Gesichtspunkt keine Möglichkeit gibt, ein epistemisches System einem anderen nur aufgrund diskursiver Argumente

zu bevorzugen. Ob man das eine oder das andere epistemische System einnimmt, hängt nicht so viel von irgendwelchen epistemischen Werten, sondern vielmehr von bestimmten Haltungen, Emotionen und Interessen ab. So betrachtet ist die Wendung von einem epistemischen System zu einem anderen als eine Art von „Bekehrung“, d.h. als Zustimmung zu bestimmten „commitments“ zu verstehen.

Eine andere wichtige These zum Definieren des Relativismus stellt das sogenannte „Symmetry“-Prinzip dar, das sich im gewissen Sinne als eine Zusammenfassung der oben erwähnten Thesen darstellen lässt. In der Formulierung Kuschs: „[e]pistemic systems and practices must not be ranked.“ Es gibt also für die Relativisten keine universal gültigen Kriterien, nach denen die verschiedenen epistemischen Systeme gereiht werden können. Auf den Fall der Wissenschaft als Ganzes angewendet besagt dieses Prinzip, dass die epistemischen Eigenschaften einer bestimmten Theorie nur relativ zum Zweck, für den sie konzipiert wurde, d.h. nur relativ zu den im Voraus angenommenen „commitments“ bewertet werden sollten, was meiner Meinung nach dem Verstehen von Fraassens der wissenschaftlichen Repräsentation gleichbedeutend ist.

2. Der Empirismus von Fraassens:

Im Lichte der oben angeführten Kriterien zum Vorschlagen einer Definition des epistemischen Relativismus wird des weiteren versucht, zu zeigen, dass sich der sogenannte „*constructive*“ oder der „*stance*“- Empirismus von Fraassens als einen relativistischen Standpunkt bezüglich des wissenschaftlichen Wissens darstellen lässt.³ Überdies wird im Folgenden

³ Beide Begriffe, „*constructive*“ und „*stance*“- Empirismus wurden von van Fraassen selbst in verschiedenen Büchern zur Bezeichnung seiner theoretischen Position im Rahmen der Wissenschaftstheorie verwendet. Technisch gesprochen beziehen sie sich auf zwei verschiedene Probleme, nämlich auf den Status der postulierten Entitäten in der Wissenschaft (konstruktiver Empirismus) bzw. auf die Besonderheit der wissenschaftlichen Repräsentation oder Modellierung (der strukturelle oder „*stance*“ Empirismus). Die Lösungen auf die hier erwähnten Probleme, die van Fraassen entwickelte, lassen sich meiner Meinung nach doch als verschiedene Aspekte einer unitären Theorie erfassen, die im Rahmen dieses Aufsatzes mit dem Namen „der Empirismus von Fraassens“ bezeichnet wird. Im Gegensatz dazu meinte R. Giere, dass der strukturelle Empirismus von Fraassens eigentlich eine Entfernung von seinem früheren konstruktiven Empirismus ist: „*Empiricist structuralism is closer to skepticism than agnosticism*“, welcher besser

argumentiert, dass Relativismus nicht nur der passende theoretische Rahmen zum Verstehen des Empirismus van Fraassens ist, sondern dass er vielmehr so etwas wie eine Möglichkeitsbedingung für die unter dem Begriff des konstruktiven Empirismus entwickelte Argumentation bedeutet.

Der konstruktive Empirismus van Fraassens entwickelt sich in Bezug auf folgende zwei Fragen: „[...] what aim scientific activity has, and how much we shall believe when we accept a theory“ (van Fraassen 1980:1074). Es wird damit festgestellt, dass die Aufgabe der Wissenschaft nach van Fraassen nicht darin besteht, uns Vermittlungen über den ontologischen Status der im Rahmen verschiedenen wissenschaftlichen Theorien postulierten Entitäten und, darauffolgend, eine „literally true story of what the world is like“ zu geben, weil keine Rechtfertigung dieses Anspruchs möglich ist. Es ist einerseits wegen pessimistischer Induktion so: weil es in der Vergangenheit viele erfolgreiche Theorien gab, deren theoretische Begriffe scheinbar auf wirkliche Entitäten verwiesen haben, die aber zu einem späteren Zeitpunkt als falsch verworfen wurden, ist es zumindest prinzipiell möglich, dass sich auch unsere heutigen besten Theorien in Zukunft als falsch erweisen werden⁴. Andererseits ist der obige Anspruch auch wegen des Schlusses auf die beste Erklärung⁵ problematisch: Warum sollte man den Erfolg der Wissenschaft als Beweis für die Existenz der theoretischen Entitäten und nicht z.B. als Beweis für die empirische Adäquatheit von Theorien oder vielleicht als Beweis für etwas Anderes betrachten? Wenn aber keine solche induktive Argumentation zwischen zwei oder mehreren inkompatiblen Hypothesen entscheiden kann, die auf unbeobachtbare Entitäten verweisen, wäre es vielleicht vernünftiger, die Wissenschaftlichkeit nur auf das Beobachtbare zu beschränken, in dessen Rahmen der Schluss auf die beste Erklärung immerhin als ein nützliches Instrument gelten kann. Dementsprechend würde van Fraassen folgenden Vorschlag machen: Wenn die Äußerungen von Wissenschaftlern über den ontologischen Status der postulierten Entitäten prinzipiell nichts anderes als „inflationäre Metaphysik“ sein können, dann sollten wir die

dem konstruktiven Empirismus entspreche [m.A.]. Zur Verdeutlichung dieser Idee siehe z.B. Giere 2008:107-108.

⁴ Zu einer ausführlichen Darstellung dieses Arguments siehe Laudan 1981.

⁵ Zu einer kritischen Darstellung dieser Art vom Argumentieren siehe z.B. van Fraassen 1980:1075-82.

wissenschaftlichen Theorien nur aufgrund ihrer empirischen Adäquatheit akzeptieren, d.h. aufgrund der Richtigkeit ihrer Behauptungen über das Beobachtbare. Das bedeutet weiter, dass alles was von unserem Wissensvermögen (die wissenschaftlichen Theorien inbegriffen) erfasst werden kann, sich nur zwischen Grenzen unserer Erkenntnisfähigkeiten, d.h. nur relativ zu unserem „accessible range of evidence“ erkennen lässt. (Vgl. van Fraassen 1980:1074).

Mit anderen Worten besagt der konstruktive Empirismus, dass alle (wissenschaftlichen) Vermutungen über die Welt von einer bestimmten epistemischen Gemeinschaft unentwirrbar abhängig sind, wobei man unter „epistemischer Gemeinschaft“ die menschliche Gesellschaft im Allgemeinen verstehen kann. Diese Idee besagt nämlich, dass kein (wissenschaftliches) Wissen aus einer „Nirgendwo-Perspektive“ möglich ist, sodass jedes Wissen nur mittels bestimmten „commitments“ zu bestimmten epistemischen Kriterien erreichbar ist. Diese „commitments“ sind nicht als „wahr“ oder „falsch“ zu bewerten und können von Theorie zu Theorie, so van Fraassen, andere sein; Sie sind aber diejenigen Kriterien, die bestimmen, inwiefern wir mit der einen oder mit der anderen wissenschaftlichen Erklärung zufrieden sind oder nicht. Das Akzeptieren des einen oder anderen Set von „commitments“ in der Wissenschaft ähnelt dem Akzeptieren einer Ideologie (der spätere van Fraassen wird diesbezüglich über „Bekehrung“ sprechen; siehe dazu die obige These der „Notional Confrontation“) und lässt sich also nur unter einem pragmatischen Gesichtspunkt bestimmen, d.h. nur relativ zu unseren Wünschen und Zielen. Im Lichte dieser Überlegungen lässt sich der konstruktive Empirismus van Fraassens als eine relativistische Auffassung der Wissenschaft im Sinne der oben angeführten Kriterien (insbesondere im Sinne der „Dependence-“, „Groundlessness-“ und der „Underdetermination-“ Thesen) auffassen.

Die obige Idee wird van Fraassen in einem späteren Buch weiterentwickeln, in dessen Rahmen er argumentiert, dass der Empirismus als wissenschaftliche Position nur als „stance“, d.h. als eigenständige Einstellung oder als Summe von bestimmten „commitments“, „attitudes“ und „beliefs“ definierbar ist, d.h. als eine Position, die wieder auf die oben erwähnten relativistischen Thesen bezogen werden kann. (Vgl. van Fraassen 2004:45-46). Die entsprechende Argumentation läuft folgendermaßen: Traditionellerweise verstand sich der Empirismus im Gegensatz zur Metaphysik, die zur Rechtfertigung ihrer Erklärungen öfters

nichtbeobachtbare Entitäten zu postulieren nötig hatte. Stattdessen war der Empirismus klassischerweise mehr am Experimentieren und an der Entwicklung einer kritischen Untersuchungsmethodologie orientiert. Wenn der Empirismus also konsequent mit seiner reflexiven Tradition sein will, darf er sich nicht in Bezug auf ein bestimmtes Dogma definieren, weil er sich damit selbst widerlegen würde, indem er per Definition nichts Unkritisches, Unüberprüfbares annehmen darf. Andererseits, wenn der Empirist seine Position im Sinne einer wissenschaftlichen Hypothese darstellen würde, dann müsste er zulassen, dass sich seine theoretische Position als falsch erweisen kann, was aber weiter seine Kritik an der Metaphysik wesentlich schwächen würde. Es lässt sich weiter daraus schließen, dass die begriffliche Unterscheidung zwischen dem Stance-Empirismus und der Metaphysik im Sinne der obigen "Exclusiveness"-These aufgefasst wird. Daraus folgend darf der Empirist seine theoretische Position nicht im Sinne einer These, sondern vielmehr, wie schon gesagt, als eine Vorgehensweise, d.h. als eine Summe von Einstellungen und Selbstverpflichtungen zu bestimmten Werten und Zielen verstehen. Wenn alles Wissen wesentlich mit bestimmten Interessen und Willensakten verbunden ist, dann kann es auch keine endgültige Wissenschaft geben: Wissenschaft ist nicht mehr und nicht weniger als „[...] what teaches us how to give up our beliefs“ (van Fraassen 2004:63). Das heißt, dass Wissenschaft als „stance“ verstanden so etwas wie eine Strategie oder eine Kombination von Strategien zum Gewinnen vom empirischen Wissen, eine Art von „epistemic policy“ ist, die nur perspektivistisches Wissen feststellen kann. (Vgl. Chakravartty 2004:175). So gesehe ist Rechtfertigung für die empirische Wissenschaft nichts anders als eine Entscheidung auf der Ebene von „meta-stances“ zwischen Empirismus und Metaphysik. (Vgl. Chakravartty 2004:176). Dies ist die Idee, die im Kern des sogenannten Voluntarismus van Fraassens steht, und die ein anderes relativistisches Thema im Sinne der angedeuteten Groundlessness-These darstellt.

So wie mit oben am Beispiel des Stance-Empirismus gezeigt wurde, sind die wissenschaftlichen Theorien laut van Fraassen keine „Anschauungen“ in eine unsichtbare Welt oder Widerspiegelungen der Realität, sondern mehr Artefakte, die uns zum Planen und zum Verstehen helfen sollen. (Vgl. van Fraassen 2008:238). All die entwickelten theoretischen Modelle (Theorien) dienen zum Erreichen dieser Ziele. In diesem Sinne sind die wissenschaftlichen Theorien abstrakte

Repräsentationen von beobachtbaren Phänomenen, wobei daran zu erinnern ist, dass „beobachtbar“ als „beobachtbar-für uns Menschen“ zu verstehen ist. Was bedeutet aber, dass die wissenschaftlichen Theorien abstrakte Repräsentation von beobachtbaren Phänomenen sind? Zur Beantwortung dieser Frage gibt van Fraassen folgende Argumentation: Erstens darf der Empirist nicht die Repräsentation von Phänomenen im Sinne einer Korrespondenz zwischen den beobachteten Phänomenen und ihren entsprechenden theoretischen Modellierungen darstellen, weil diese Einstellung zurück zum metaphysischen Problem der Koordination zwischen physischen Phänomenen und der Theorie führt, d.h. zur Frage, wie die beiden (die Modellierung und das Modellerte) zusammenkommen können. Im Gegensatz dazu schlägt van Fraassen vor, die wissenschaftliche Repräsentation als „matching“, als eine Praxis zu verstehen. Diese Idee besagt nämlich, dass es keine 1-1-Relation zwischen dem gefertigten Modell und den repräsentierten Dingen gibt. Die wissenschaftliche Modellierung ist mehr eine relevante, selektive Darstellung. Das Wort „relevant“ verweist hier auf die folgende Idee van Fraassens: „A particular data model is *relevant* because it was constructed on the basis of results gathered in a certain way, selected by specific criteria of relevance, on certain occasions, in a practical or observational setting, designed for that purpose.“ (van Fraassen 2008:253). [meine Kursivierung]. Es gibt also nach van Fraassen keine „user-independent“-Beziehung zwischen wissenschaftlichen Modellen und den damit dargestellten Dingen im Sinne der Korrespondenztheorie. Anstatt einer Widerspiegelung der „Realität zu sein“, ist das Aufbauen von wissenschaftlichen Modellierungen mehr eine Art von selektiver Darstellung, die auf Grund von (praktischen und theoretischen) Interessen und Zielen des Wissenschaftlers erfolgt: die wissenschaftliche Repräsentation ist eine „ [...] *3-place relation of use of something by someone to represent something as thus or so.*“ (van Fraassen 2008:258).

Schlussfolgerung:

Aufgrund der hier angeführten Analyse würde ich nicht nur sagen, dass der Empirizismus van Fraassens eindeutig von bestimmten relativistischen Themen durchkreuzt ist, sondern vielmehr, dass der Relativismus erst in Verbindung mit der van Fraassenschen Idee der empirischen Adäquatheit eine überzeugende Wissenschaftstheorie liefern kann. So wie es im Rahmen des vorliegenden Aufsatzes angedeutet wurde, verstand van Fraassen

unter diesem Begriff, dass die Wissenschaft richtige Beschreibungen des Beobachtbaren liefert und liefern muss. Dies setzt einerseits voraus, dass die Sätze der Wissenschaft assertorische Sätze sind, was van Fraassen tatsächlich glaubt. Andererseits liefert der Relativismus mit der These des Finitismus diesbezüglich einen wichtigen Hinweis, wie die Wissenschaft das Problem der zirkulierenden Referenz im Sinne der Korrespondenztheorie vermeiden und doch empirisch bleiben kann. Unter diesem Gesichtspunkt, anstatt eine Schwäche zu sein, stellt sich die Annäherung van Fraassens an den Relativismus vielmehr als die nötige Möglichkeit dar, eine kohärente und überzeugende Theoretisierung der Wissenschaft zu entwickeln. Diesbezüglich stellt der Empirismus van Fraassens ein wichtiges Muster von einem empirischen Relativismus dar, oder, so wie Barnes sagen würde, einen Relativismus „with realist flavour“, d.h. eine Auffassung, die versucht zu zeigen, wie es möglich ist „to be a realist or materialist about the nature without assuming that any particular theoretical description of it is uniquely correct.“ (Bloor 1999:94).

In diesem Sinne lässt sich behaupten, dass die Identifizierung des Relativismus mit dem Irrationalismus nicht begründbar ist. Im Gegensatz dazu ist der Relativismus vielmehr eine nuanciertere Position, die sich im Sinne des Empirismus van Fraassens als ein nützliches Instrument zum Verstehen des wissenschaftlichen Wissens vorstellt. Darauf folgend scheinen Behauptungen wie die von Husserl am Anfang des 20. Jhrds, nach denen der Relativismus so etwas wie eine Katastrophe für die Wissenschaft sei, oder die von S. Blackburn in unseren Tagen, nach denen die Relativisten Schänder der menschlichen Vernünftigkeit seien, doch übertrieben zu sein. Ein zusätzlicher Beweis dafür stellt noch die in den letzten Jahrzehnten entwickelte Soziologie des wissenschaftlichen Wissens dar, auf die hier ansatzweise hingewiesen wurde und die von Anfang an eine interessante und innovative Darstellungsweise der Wissenschaft lieferte⁶.

LITERATUR

BARNES, Bary (1992), „Realism, Relativism and Finitism“, in M. Hollis and S. Lukes (eds.), *Rationality and Relativism*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 21-47.

⁶Für eine ausführliche Einführung in die Hauptthesen der Soziologie des wissenschaftlichen Wissens (SSK) und deren Relevanz zum Verstehen der Wissenschaft siehe auch Persu (2021):59-76.

- BLOOR, David (2007), „Epistemic Grace. Antirelativism as Theology in Disguise“, Symposium: „A <Dictatorship of Relativism>?“, Duke University.
- BLOOR, David (1999), „Anti-Latour“, *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science* 30: 81-112.
- BLOOR, D. (1991), *Knowledge and Social Imagery*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 24-45.
- CHAKRAVARTTY, Anjan (2004), „Essay Review. Stance relativism: empiricism versus metaphysics“, *Stud. Hist. Sci.* 35, S. 173-184.
- COLLINS, H.M. (1992), „Detecting Gravitational Radiation: The Experimenter's Regress“, in *Changing Order: Replication and Induction in Scientific Practice*, London: Sage, S. 79-111.
- GIERE, N. Ronald (2009), „Essay Review: Scientific Representation and Empiricist Structuralism“, *Philosophy of Science* 76, S. 101-111.
- KUSCH, Martin, „Epistemic Relativism: Criteria and Options“, im Manuskript, Reader „Einführung in die Wissenschaftsphilosophie II“, Universität Wien, 2010.
- LAUDAN, Larry (1981), „A Confutation of Convergent Realism“, from *Philosophy of Science* 48, S. 19-49.
- PERSU, Darius (2021), „The Sociology of Scientific Knowledge“ (SSK) zwischen epistemischem Skeptizismus und sozialer Hermeneutik der Wissenschaft. Eine kritische Einführung in das SSK-Forschungsprogramm“, *Analele Universității din Craiova, Seria Filosofie*, Nr. 48 (2/2021), pp. 59-76.
- VAN FRAASSEN, Bas (2009), *Scientific Representation: Paradoxes of Perspective*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. S. 237-261.
- VAN FRAASSEN, Bas (2004), *The Empirical Stance*, Yale University Press, S.31-63.
- VAN FRAASSEN, Bas (1980), „Arguments Concerning Scientific Realism“, from *The Scientific Image*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press), S. 6-21, 23-25, 31-40.

Recenzie

Ștefan Vianu, *Sens interzis. Adevăr, devenire, locuire*, Iași, Editura Polirom, 2024, 253 p.

Lucrarea lui Ștefan Vianu, *Sens interzis. Adevăr, devenire, locuire*, conține zece eseuri de fenomenologie a vieții, înțeleasă ca o descriere a condițiilor în care poate deveni posibilă orice încercare de transformare în esență a vieții interioare pornind de la limbajul poetic (într-un sens oarecum generic, cuprinzând gândirea mitică, religia, arta, imaginarul, operele literare, valorile culturale), dacă nu opus cel puțin diferit de limbajul științific și cel cotidian (diferență esențială, explorată și exploatată în multiple feluri, în țesătura de idei a cărții). Primul eseu este dedicat lui Șestov și problemei adevărului, în jurul cărora autorul construiește o interpretare elaborată din care fac parte Benjamin Fondane (aici și comentator al lui Șestov și al lui Heidegger), Michel Henry, Husserl, Heidegger și care urmărește să argumenteze, printre altele, în favoarea ideii că sursa adevărului, „ca adevăr prim și ultim al vieții omului”, este „adevărul *povestit*” în anumite texte literare, în „marea literatură”, în poezie și textele religioase, mai curând decât adevărul „conceput, cu atât mai puțin definit” (p. 74). „Simțul vieții și dimensiunea profunzimii”, al doilea eseu, este o apărare a ideii că viața interioară, înțeleasă ca viață spirituală (ca deschidere către creațiile culturale din trecut, mituri și simboluri, imagini arhetipale), ar trebui considerată cel puțin în aceeași măsură o sursă veritabilă de sensuri, un mod de a simți viața, ca și viața în „formele ei sociale”. Al treilea eseu este o explorare a „relației primordiale dintre filozofia vieții și viața însăși” (aceasta din urmă fiind accesibilă printr-o „formă de gândire capabilă să cunoască viața din interior” (p. 100), mai curând decât printr-o formă de cunoaștere care presupune o relație de exterioritate între „cunoscut și cunoaștere”) pornind de la fenomenologia lui Michel Henry. Forma, sau mai curând modul, de cunoaștere a vieții ca proces aflat în continuă creștere și transformare creatoare implică arta (în particular, pentru Michel Henry, pictura), nu atât ca instrument al vieții, unul dintre altele posibile, cât ca mod de a fi și a se manifesta („de a se auto-revela”) în mod esențial al ei; nu atât în ceea ce artei îi poate fi atribuit formal și exterior, cât în ceea ce arta poate dezvălui în termeni de interioritate și invizibil, în mod special, relația „de interpătrundere” dintre subiectivitate, înțeleasă fenomenologic ca „trup viu”, și lume, și poate fi trăit, experimentat ca „simțire”. Important în acest proces este exercițiul special al „cuvântului poetic”, exercițiu ce constituie „gândirea vieții”, la rândul ei, „condiția de posibilitate a

fenomenologiei ca discurs despre viață” (p. 120). Al patrulea eseu, „Cultivarea simțirilor”, reia și dezvoltă - în cadrul unei interpretări în care sunt discutate ontologia existențială (devenită, în context, și ontologia „spațiului existenței aruncate” (p. 135)) a lui Heidegger, „noua fenomenologie” a lui Hermann Schmitz, fenomenologia spațialității a lui O.F. Bollnow și fenomenologia „reveriei poetice” sugerată de Gaston Bachelard -, alături de cea a imaginației, temele fenomenologice ale „simțirii” și „profundității” în cadrul unei schițe de estetică a arhitecturii înțelegă ca teorie a locuirii menită „să ofere un temei practicii arhitecturale ce are în vedere prezența omului în lume - a trupului ca *Sine intrupat*”, cu alte cuvinte, o „abordare fenomenologică a spațiului trăit” care „își îndreaptă atenția spre realitatea fundamentală a *trupului viu*”, acesta fiind, prin manifestarea creatoare a simțirii, percepției și imaginației (mai curând decât doar a intelectului și rațiunii), în esență omul (pp. 126, 128). Locuirea este, ca mod de a fi al omului, „fenomen primordial” și fundament al esteticii arhitecturale, o relație reciprocă și dinamică, evolutivă între om și spațiu, constituită de „simțiri”, dispoziții afective ce funcționează ca „atmosfera” trăite într-un spațiu dat, și întreținută și dezvoltată prin cultivarea acestora prin gândirea imaginativă și poetică și prin reverie, prin care sunt revelate imagini arhetipale a căror sursă este inconștientul (colectiv). „Lucrul și locul”, al cincilea eseu, abordează ideea fenomenologică de lucru, distinctă ca gen de cea de obiect (de exemplu, ca obiect ale cunoașterii teoretice, reprezentationale, sau ca obiect al utilității) raportând-o la natura „privirii”, în cuvintele lui Ștefan Vianu, a „privirii care numește”, ce constituie relația specială dintre subiectivitate și lucruri. Ca și „simțirile” și „atmosfera”, „numirea” ce caracterizează privirea are ca sursă descriptivă limbajul poetic, esențial, de altfel, pentru orice descriere fenomenologică: „În și prin această rostire, omul își află *locul* în Lumea lucrurilor - cea a rostirii și numai ea. Rostirea poetică este sensul lumii. Numai în ea lucrurile sunt «înălăuntru», *ocrotite* în esența lor. Esența lucrului nu este simplă formă (eidos), ci actul - energiea - sălășluirii în sine, din care emană prezența sau atmosfera sa” (p. 170). Al șaselea eseu, „Locuri povestite”, este un comentariu al lucrării lui Alberto Pérez Gómez, *Consonanțe. Semnificația arhitecturală după crizele științei moderne*. Fenomenologia arhitecturii, subliniază autorul, trebuie să țină seama de ceea ce înseamnă a fi în lume, dincolo de sensul heideggerian de „a fi «aruncat» în lume” sau simplu socializat, cu alte cuvinte de „a fi în *deschiderea* lumii prin trup - prin simțuri - și prin rostire, această dublă

activitate (percepția și vorbirea) fiind însoțită de fiecare dată de *imagini*" (p. 181). Mai exact, de imagini poetice. De aici și „*condiția metaforică a arhitecturii*” prin care este presupusă încercarea de menținere a creației arhitecturale aproape de scopul ei esențial, acela al „*locuirii*”, în sensul său fenomenologic discutat și în „*Lucrul și locul*”. „*Mitul fratelui*”, al șaptelea eseu, plasează în mitul Fratelui Fiului risipitor, înțeles ca „*poveste esențială, ce aruncă o lumină asupra unui aspect al condiției umane*” (p. 186), o semnificație ce completează tabloul fenomenologic de ansamblu al cărții, aceea a tipului uman Păstrător al tradiției, adică al „*creației continue pornind de la tezaurul spiritual al omenirii ca fundament*” (p. 193). Al optulea eseu, „*Rămășițele labirintului*”, este o interpretare a unora dintre semnificațiile (antice și moderne) ale mitului Labirintului ca arhetip și obiect permanent al gândirii (susceptibil de a fi resemnificat), care își propune, printre altele, să arunce o lumină asupra tendinței arhitecturii contemporane de a încerca să „*ne ajute să uităm de latura de «umbră» a vieții*” (p. 207), lăsând astfel la o parte, nereprezentată artistic, potrivit autorului, o latură esențială a „*omului întreg*” și astfel a modului său „*de a fi în lume*”. Tema umbrei (ca parte negativă constitutivă a vieții sufletești) se regăsește în al nouălea eseu al volumului, „*Urma și umbra*”. Unele dispoziții afective, cum sunt melancolia și nostalgia, actualizate de „*urmele lucrurilor dispărute*”, de „*lucrurile-urme*”, prin mecanisme dezvăluite de opere literare și artistice, cum sunt, spre exemplu, „*romanele melancoliei metafizice*” - cum sunt *Istanbul. Amintirile și orașul*, al Orhan Pamuk, sau *Solenoid*, al lui Mircea Cărtărescu – sunt considerate de autor fundamente fenomenologice ale unui gen aparte de experiență estetică și, mai ales, spirituală a trecutului. În „*Metamorfozele pietrei*”, al zecelea eseu, este tematizată, pornind de la multiplele semnificații ale pietrei – piatra ca piatră, „*piatra privită*”, „*piatra înălțată*”, „*piatra visată*”, „*piatra scrisă*” -, poate mai mult decât alte valori și atitudini asociate unei estetici, inclusiv unei estetice arhitecturale, bazate pe fenomenologia vieții, „*tăcerea*” (tăcerea „*deschizătoare de orizonturi*”, tăcerea ce precede cuvintele, tăcerea asumată și trăită, capabilă, nu în ultimul rând, să conducă la transformare spirituală). Această sumară prezentare a cărții lui Ștefan Vianu lasă la o parte miza sa probabil cea mai importantă, și anume critica culturală a (post)modernității, ce poate fi întâlnită implicit, dar mai ales explicit, aproape în fiecare eseu al cărții, dar a cărei discuție ar presupune cu siguranță un spațiu mai cuprinzător decât o simplă recenzie.

Cătălin Stănciulescu (University of Craiova)

AUTHORS/CONTRIBUTORS

J. Edgar BAUER

Scholar and researcher
j.edgarbauer@t-online.de

Ana BAZAC

Division of Logic, Methodology and Philosophy of Science, Romanian Academy
125 Calea Victoriei Street, 1 sector, 010071, Bucharest, Romania
<https://acad.ro/>; ana_bazac@hotmail.com

Kathrin BOUVOT

University of Vienna, Universitätsring 1, 1010 Vienna, Austria
<https://aka.univie.ac.at/>; kbouvot@gmail.com

Katsiaryna CHURUKANAVA

Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, Poland
Wieniawskiego 1, 61-712 Poznań
<http://amu.edu.pl/>; Soulpeople369@gmail.com

Alex-Flavius DEACONU

West University of Timisoara, Timisoara, Romania
300223 Bd. Vasile Pârvan no.4
<https://www.uvt.ro/>; deaconu.alex@gmail.com

Miguel LÓPEZ-ASTORGA

Instituto de Estudios Humanísticos,
Universidad de Talca. Av. Lircay s/n, 3460000 Talca, Chile
<https://www.otalca.cl/>; milopez@otalca.cl

Adriana NEACȘU

University of Craiova, Romania
13 A. I. Cuza Street 200585, Craiova, Romania
<http://www.ucv.ro/>; neacsuelvira2@gmail.com

Darius PERSU

West University of Timisoara, Romania
300223 Bd. Vasile Pârvan no.4
<https://www.uvt.ro/>; persu_darius@yahoo.com

Gianluigi SEGALERBA

IEF – Instituto de Estudos Filosóficos, Universidade de Coimbra
Largo Porta Férrea 6o andar, 3000-515 Coimbra, Portugal
<https://www.uc.pt/fluc/ief/>; gianluigisegalerba@gmail.com

Cătălin STĂNCIULESCU

University of Craiova, Romania
13 A. I. Cuza Street 200585, Craiova, Romania.
<http://www.ucv.ro/>; cfstanciulescu@yahoo.com

László Gergely SZÜCS

Budapest City Archives
1139 Bp., Teve u. 3–5, Budapest, Hungary
<https://bparchiv.hu/>; szucsasz2023@gmail.com

CONTENTS

J. Edgar BAUER, <i>Michel de Montaigne: Writerly Nudity and the Dissolution of the Sexual Chasm</i>	5
Ana BAZAC, <i>Our Most Important Everyday Use of Kant: the Categorical Imperative</i>	47
Katsiaryna CHURUKANAVA, <i>Wittgenstein and Progress</i>	100
Alex-Flavius DEACONU, <i>A Critical Examination of Jürgen Habermas' Conception of Labour in His Early Writings</i>	119
Kathrin BOUVOT, Gianluigi SEGALERBA, <i>The Danger of the Absolutization of Cultural Identity</i>	136
László Gergely SZÜCS, <i>Hans Joas's "Sacralization Theory" as a Normative Concept</i>	160
Miguel LÓPEZ-ASTORGA, <i>Hintikka's Theorem Does Not Hold in Non-Axiomatic Logic</i>	183
Papers presented at the National Colloquium PHILOSOPHY AND EDUCATION, Edition I, May 29, 2024, Organized by the UNIVERSITY OF CRAIOVA, FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES	
Adriana NEACȘU, <i>Philosophy as Supreme Consolation in Boethius</i>	195
Cătălin STĂNCIULESCU, <i>Critical Thinking as Science, as Subject-matter, and as Spiritual Experience</i>	225
Darius PERSU, <i>Empirical Adequacy Instead of Objective Description? A Brief Commentary on the Relevance of Epistemic Relativism to Understanding Science Using the Example of Baas van Fraassen's Constructive Empiricism</i>	234
<i>Review</i>	
Ștefan Vianu, <i>Forbidden Direction. Truth, Becoming, Inhabitation</i> Cătălin Stănciulescu	245
AUTHORS/CONTRIBUTORS	248
CONTENTS	249