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τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ νοεῖν ἐστίν τε καὶ εἶναι

AMMON
BOOKS



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(Parmenides, Fr. B. 3 DK)

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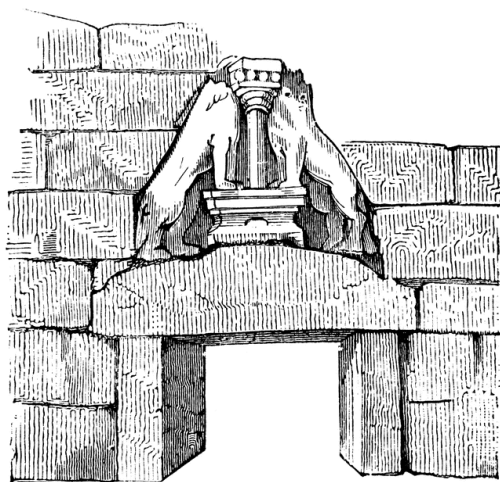
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Articles



Forrest Bess and the Hermaphroditic Fulfilment

Abstract: The present contribution examines the intellectual sources, theoretical assumptions and originality of US-American visionary artist and fisherman Forrest Bess (1911-1977). His visual art and art of living were determined by an hermaphroditic conception of the Ideal Man emerging from the unconscious and presiding over the origin of culture. Since the hermaphroditic ideal cannot be realized within the empirical world, cultures seek to imitate the unattainable state of human ambisexuality by performing mutilations on the male genitals that are meant to evoke the missing vulval opening. Against this backdrop, Bess attempted to approach the hermaphroditic ideal by undergoing a series of surgical interventions. These were designed to transform him into a pseudo-hermaphrodite capable of engaging in an unprecedented type of homosexual coital activity that circumvented the traditional stigmatization of inter-human same-sex sodomy. According to Bess, the cultural mimesis of the hermaphroditic ideal absent from nature grants a this-worldly access to timelessness through ambisexual coital ecstasy and the ensuing enhancement of creativity. Notwithstanding the originality of his epistemic and existential demarche, Bess shared with the culture prevalent in the West the assumption that sexual difference is organized according to a dichotomous pattern. Bess never confronted the Midrashic anthropological teaching that the Holy One created the First Adam as an androgynous, nor the evolution-based universalized conception of human hermaphroditism upheld by Charles Darwin (1809-1882) and Magnus Hirschfeld (1868-1935).

Keywords: Androgyny / gynandry; binary sexuality; creationism; Darwinian evolution; eschatology; eternity and the Eternal; genital mutilations; hermaphroditism; historicity and art history; homosexuality; immortality; Jungian depth psychology; naturalism; origin of culture; pseudo-hermaphroditism; rejuvenation; symbolism; the unconscious; universalization of sexual intermediariness.

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"Androgyny [...] may be the one road to freedom open to women, men, and that emerging majority, the rest of us."

Andrea Dworkin: *Last Days at Hot Slit*

(Dworkin, 2019, p. 60).

1. One of the most singular figures in the history of Western art lived and worked virtually unknown to the trendsetters of twentieth century cultural tastes. US-American painter, visionary and fisherman Forrest Bess (1911-1977) is generally considered by art historians as a "unique," "unusual," "enigmatic" artist (Helfenstein, 2013, pp. 8, 9). One of Bess's most fervent admirers, his much younger artistic colleague Andrew Masullo characterized him as "*the quintessential painter's painter*" (quoted in Elliott, 2013b, p. 21; emphasis in original). Notwithstanding that Bess's New York gallerist, the legendary Betty Parsons (1900-1982), also represented celebrated artists like Barnett Newman, Mark Rothko and Jackson Pollock, broader audiences remained unfamiliar with Bess's relatively small corpus of paintings. Their art historical significance began to be more accurately appraised as the Bess exhibition of 1981 at the Whitney Museum of American Art drew attention to the self-interpretative aspect of his writings and correspondence. Reflecting an early awareness of his latent creativity, the high school student Bess prided himself of not being "a regular guy," a personality trait which he humorously associated with "the mark of genius" (quoted in Ennis, 1982, June, p. 2). More than expressing youthful casualness, these words appear to announce the disquieting embracement of difference that will define Bess's worldview and art.

2. Bess's published writings allow to reconstruct the foundations of his aesthetic stance. His correspondence, manifestos, as well as his "Primer of Basic Primordial Symbolism" (Elliott, 2013a, pp. 100-101) reflect the variety of sources Bess drew from, ranging from the ritual heritage of Australian aborigines, Taoism, and Tantric Buddhism to

European alchemy, the poetry of William Blake (1757-1827), and the depth psychology of Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961). Against this backdrop, it is not surprising that his paintings have at times been dismissed on account of their hermeticism. Furthermore, the basic premises of his worldview have been time and again rejected for necessitating the deployment of surgical means in pursuit of man's hermaphroditic ideal. In Bess's eyes, the merely metaphorical hermaphroditization of the individual propounded by some Oriental religious traditions, Jungian devotees and advocates of gay/lesbian pansexual spirituality was insufficient. Consequently, Bess stressed the import of becoming what he termed a pseudo-hermaphrodite in the radical concreteness of the flesh. As the once Whitney Museum curator Barbara Haskell pertinently wrote in 1981, Bess viewed the universal images of symbolism in spiritual as well as in physical terms. "Androgyny, the conjunction of male and female," thus became for Bess a goal attainable "through actual physical transformation" (Haskell, 1981, p. 1).

3. Bess's relatively reduced corpus of around one hundred small formatted canvases (see Johnson, 1981, p. 1; Brenson, 1988, p. 1; Mann, 2005, p. 3) is scattered in mostly American institutional and private collections. Despite the hurdles to experience the paintings directly, the exhibition catalogues issued since the late 1980s have contributed to establishing Bess's oeuvre as an incontrovertible presence in the modern canon of Western art (see *Forrest Bess*, 1988; *Forrest Bess*, 1989; Elliot, 2013a; Smith, 2013). Although the artistic significance of Bess is generally recognized, the present-day state of research on his oeuvre does not allow to envisage the publication of a much-needed catalogue raisonné in the near future. Given the import of Bess's writings for any serious study of his aesthetic assumptions, it is surprising that, to date, no critical edition of his programmatic texts and letters has been published. The only selection of Bess's writings is included in Chuck Smith's *Forrest Bess: Key to the Riddle* (2013), from which the present research essay has gratefully benefited. Photographic

reproductions of Bess's letters or of single surviving pages from his irretrievable manuscripts have become de rigueur in most exhibition catalogues (see, for instance, Gober, 2013, pp. 90, 93; Smith, 2013, pp. 51, 57, 81, 109), but they are a poor substitute for a text-critical and annotated edition of his writings.

4. Bess discussed the issue of pseudo/hermaphroditism throughout the "voluminous correspondence" he wrote "over the course of decades" (Gober, 2013, p. 91; see Elliott, 2013b, p. 11). Especially relevant in this connection is an identifiable group of lengthy letters addressed to art historian Meyer Schapiro (1904-1996) in 1953, which is generally known as "The Ballet Black & White (or, the individuation of a fisherman)" (Smith, 2013, p. 73). These letters are indebted to the pre-1954 English translations of the works by Swiss psychiatrist and psychoanalyst Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961), as well as to a volume by British pseudonymic author John Custance published under the title *Wisdom, Madness and Folly. The Philosophy of a Lunatic* (Custance, 1951). The original edition of the book was followed in 1954 by its German translation introduced by Jung (Custance, 1954). There is furthermore a significant text to which Bess refers as his "thesis" (see, for instance, Smith, 2013, pp. 85, 87) and deals with a subject matter he considered "not only delicate, but highly provocative" (quoted in Gober, 2013, p. 94). Bess finished the first version of the "Thesis" in 1954 and then rewrote it in 1958 (see Gober, 2013, p. 94). In the main, the text contained anthropological and aesthetic reflections by the artist, along with supporting quotes and illustrations. Summing up the available knowledge about the genesis of the manuscript, Chuck Smith pointed out that "Bess may have created more than one copy of his thesis and its contents may have changed over the years." In a sobering conclusion, Smith remarks: "no complete copies are know[n] to still be in existence" (Smith, 2013, p. 83).

5. In a newspaper article published four years after Bess's passing, its author refers to "the notebook [the artist] kept by

him starting in 1958 (lost ten years later)," and briefly depicts the nature of its contents (Johnson, 1981, p. 1).¹ The entry on Bess included in the *lgbtq Encyclopedia* details the circumstances of the loss: "Bess is supposed to have recorded full information on the surgery [he had undergone] in a notebook that was lost in 1968 by the medical editor of the *Washington Star* to whom Bess had entrusted it in the hope of securing its publication" (Mann, 2005, p. 4).² Negligence in dealing with Bess's written materials is still widespread. While Chuck Smith in a brief contribution published in *ForrestBess.org* maintains that "a full copy of Bess' infamous thesis has yet to surface" (Smith, no date, pp. 1-2), the chapter on "The Thesis (1954)" included in Smith's *Forrest Bess: The Key to the Riddle* offers no information about the known or estimated number of copies Bess produced over the years or about their presumed original holders. Even if details on the issue are admittedly hard to retrieve, it would have been of help to at least reference the exact source of the Preface to Bess's "Thesis" reproduced in Smith's volume (Smith, 2013, p. 83). It is noteworthy in this connection, that Tibetan Buddhologist Robert Thurman, who visited the painter as a nineteen-year-old at his by-boat-only reachable home and studio in Chinquapin (near Bay City, Texas), remarked in the foreword he wrote to *The Key to the Riddle* that Bess gave him "his 'Thesis' which was like a big book with one of those black binder covers" (Thurman, 2013, p. 4). Although Thurman goes on to specify the kind of

¹ In his often-cited essay of 1988 titled "Forrest Bess," art critic and poet John Yau mentions in the eighth chapter: "Bess kept a notebook, now lost, in which he kept extensive notes about the meanings of his symbols" (Yau, 1988, no pagination). For the corresponding passage in the version of the essay published under the title "On the Art and Life of Forrest Bess" in the German exhibition catalogue issued one year later, see Yau, 1989, p. 30.

² Five years after Bess's passing, renown novelist and non-fiction writer Michael Ennis pointed out in connection with what was presumably a late version of the "Thesis": "Two years later [i.e. in 1968], the medical editor of the *Washington Star* lost the notebook that Bess had been compiling for ten years, although Bess suspected that it had been destroyed because it was too dangerous to publish" (Ennis, 1982, June, p. 9).

materials included in Bess's unpublished manuscript, he skips the crucial issue concerning the possible or unknown whereabouts of the copy he once possessed. Regrettably, Smith does not indicate whether he had been able to discuss the matter with the author who had written the foreword of his own book.

6. The slipshoddiness prevalent in the treatment of Bess's written legacy resonates with the tendency to dispense with referencing quotations in exhibition catalogues devoted to his work.³ Thus, despite its abundance of citations and photographic reproductions from Bess's writings and letters of Bess, the 160-page volume issued by Chuck Smith offers not a single bibliographical reference that would allow the interested reader to locate the book's original textual sources. Therewith, Smith appears to follow the standards set by art critic John Yau in an influential essay that contributed to initiating the art historical research on Bess. Indeed, in his introduction to the *Forrest Bess* exhibition catalogue of 1988, Yau abstained from referencing the sources of the many citations he adduces. However, while Yau's English text was reissued practically unchanged in the 1989 bilingual catalogue published by *Museum Ludwig Köln*, the German translation of Yau's study was supplemented by ten footnotes presented as "Redaktionelle Anmerkungen" (editorial notes), very few of which were appended to the parallel English version in the catalogue. Contrasting with most publications on Bess at the time, the essay by Alfred M. Fischer titled "Forrest Bess. Outsider Against his Will," which was issued only in the German version of the catalogue (Elliott, 2013, pp. 21, 23n34), clearly met the scholarly criteria that can be expected from this kind of research work. With his study, the American-born Fischer, at the time Curator of the Department of Drawings and Prints at the *Ludwig Museum* in Cologne and organizer of the exhibition, made a significant art-historical and literary contribution, whose methodic

³ There is an exception in this regard: Elliott, 2013a.

source referencing has not always been followed by later Bess scholars.

7. The general reception of Bess's writings and letters after his passing was at best lukewarm. It in no way compensated for the neglect or outright rejection of the worldview Bess began to articulate in the late 1940s. As Chuck Smith reports, Bess sent his "Thesis" or information about its contents to a score of people, including Jungian psychologist and writer Frances G. Wickes (1875-1967), President Dwight D. Eisenhower (1890-1969), and psychoanalyst and child psychologist Bruno Bettelheim (1903-1990) (Smith, 2013, p. 92), most of whom plainly ignored Bess's attempts to garner attention for his unusual ideas. Having failed to obtain public recognition for his theoretical claims, Bess turned in 1958 to his influential New York gallerist Betty Parsons, who, from the beginning, had staunchly supported the artist by giving him solo shows in 1949, 1954, 1957, 1959, 1962 and 1967 (see Haskell, 1981, p. 2). Bess asked Parsons if she would agree to display his "Thesis" together with his paintings in the planned exhibition of 1959.⁴ In her reply, Parsons wrote:

"Concerning the hanging of your thesis in your next show, I do not feel I want to. No matter what the relationship is between art and medicine, I would rather keep it purely on the aesthetic plain. Why don't you show your paintings and the thesis in a medical hospital?"

⁴ The year Bess discussed with Parsons his idea of exhibiting the "Thesis", the André Emmerich Gallery organized a Bess show in Houston, Texas. Also in Houston, the Contemporary Arts Museum presented a further exhibition on the painter in 1962. In this connection, Clare Elliott details: "Although the [Betty Parsons] gallery remained open until 1982 and Bess kept painting until 1970, he was not in any exhibitions in New York or in Houston during the 1970s. The only evidence of Bess's career in that decade was an exhibition at the Everson Museum of Art in Syracuse, New York, in 1974 and a retrospective in his hometown at the Art League of Bay City in 1977, in the last months of his life" (Elliott, 2013b, p. 18).

I hope you will get the thesis published and look forward to reading it again. I hope you understand this" (Parsons, 1958, October 22).⁵

Parsons could have mentioned several plausible reasons for her refusal, but she chose to adduce the need to maintain the purity of the aesthetic gaze against the infringements of views that are better dealt with in a "medical hospital" or "in a small hospital lobby."⁶

8. Had the partially French-educated Parsons been more familiar with the growing interest in Europe for the correspondences and parallels between the writings and the paintings of artists like Vincent Van Gogh,⁷ the chances are

⁵ In the version of the passage cited by Smith, Parsons's original letter has been shortened without marking the place of the elision (see Smith, 2013, p. 87). The sentence that is missing in Smith's quote from Parsons's letter reads: "I hope you will get the thesis published and look forward to reading it again." In the original letter, this sentence precedes the clause: "I hope you understand this" (Parsons, 1958, October 22).

⁶ In a letter to Meyer Schapiro of September 1959, Bess quotes Parsons as having written: "No, I cannot hang your thesis. Better hang it in a small hospital lobby" (quoted in Smith, 2013, p. 94).

⁷ Betty Parsons decision not to hang Bess's "Thesis" in his coming exhibition and the reason she adduced for not doing so are a good example of how ill-informed her judgement was about the art-theoretical perspectives of the European avant-garde. The once student in Paris seems to have ignored or disregarded the centrality surrealism accorded to so-called psychiatric disorders in the realm of artistic creativity. In his 1938 *Dictionnaire abrégé du surréalisme*, André Breton (1896-1966) cites in the entry on "folie" Paul Éluard's (1895-1952) hard-hitting phrase: "Des fous en odeur de pensée" (Breton, 1992, p. 811), whereby the last four words are meant to parody the common Christian locution "en odeur de sainteté." In "La Médecine mentale devant le surréalisme" (1930), Breton praised the "autistes," that is, "tous ceux qui s'obstinent à ne pas acclamer les mots d'ordre derrière lesquels cette société se cache pour tenter de nous faire participer sans exception possible à ses méfaits" (Breton, 1982b, p. 325). In the unpublished contribution "Surréalisme et folie" (Breton, ca. 1932), Breton offers a brief anthology of his views on the issue, beginning with the 1924 *Manifeste du surréalisme* (Breton, 1988). Against this backdrop, it is apposite to remind that German-born (later Swiss citizen) psychiatrist and philosopher Karl Jaspers (1883-1969) developed a philosophy of existence that he strictly differentiated from

that a complete copy of Bess's "Thesis" would still be available today. Parsons's strategy of disengagement from the worldview in which Bess had embedded his artistic praxis is comparable to the pattern of avoidance ascertainable in the way C. G. Jung reacted to the missives he received from Bess. Jung was among the personalities who received a copy of Bess's "Thesis" in the mid-1950s. Bess also sent him an early version of his untitled canvas "No. 11A" (see Smith, 2013, p. 59), and a series of clarifications concerning his mytho-historical stance. To judge by the available published materials, Jung had no interest in scrutinizing the complex theoretical claims, which Bess could only express in an insufficiently academic vocabulary and style. Apparently, Jung had no scruples in misrepresenting Bess's endeavors when responding to a letter from the artist dated February 6, 1954:

"What you have found is not unique. It has been found possibly once a century from the beginning of time. It invariably leaves the individual with the feeling that he has made The Great Discovery. Let us return to the safe basis of fact" (quoted in Smith, 2013, p. 93).

In his poorly argued letter, Jung appears to miss what Bess had been propounding all along concerning the forerunners of his own views. Moreover, Jung seems to assume that Bess's contentions could be reduced to the specific "discovery" of a correspondence between symbolism and male genital physiology which, in Jung's view, was neither original nor supported by scientific factuality. While

Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialism. In 1922, Jaspers published a path-breaking study focusing on the work of Strindberg, van Gogh, Swedenborg and Hölderlin (Jaspers, 1922; Jaspers, 1926). Half a century after this book was published in German, an English translation was issued under the title: *Strindberg and Van Gogh: An Attempt of a Pathographic Analysis with Reference to Parallel Cases of Swedenborg and Holderlin* (Jaspers, 1977). The developments in intellectual history initiated by Jaspers in Germany, and Breton in France apparently had no incidence on Parsons's depthless Apollonian gaze.

incomparably less educated than the founder of the foremost de-sexualized —and thus anti-Freudian— version of psychoanalysis, Bess appears to have sensed the ill-reasoning behind Jung's polite dismissal, as is reflected in a passage of a letter he wrote to, of all people, Dwight Eisenhower, the President of the United States.

9. In his one-page letter to Eisenhower (Bess, 1955), Bess focused on the relevancy of his overarching theoretical positions to the field of peace research. To underpin his claims, he remits to his correspondence with Jung, citing a slightly different version of the passage in which the psychiatrist admonishes Bess to return to "the safe basis of facts." At first, Bess appears to agree with Jung's advice, highlighting his own "great effort to bring to full consciousness the facts" he had "rediscovered" and which, being universal, will contribute to ending "the tensions of the collective versus the individual" (Bess, 1955). In a further step, Bess seeks to relativize possible dissensions with the renown student of the unconscious, remarking that, while "Jung has gone to literature for illustrations," he has "gone to art, the art of all cultures and ages, and [has] substantiated the same point somewhat independent to Dr. Jung" (Bess, 1955). After declaring his basic accord with Jung, however, Bess went on to stress that, as an ex-captain in the Corps of Engineers during World War Two, he had conducted his "research as it would be conducted in an Engineer sense, avoiding philosophy, metaphysics and what not" (Bess, 1955). Rather unexpectedly, Bess then turns Jung's advocacy of factuality against his understanding of psychoanalysis, asserting that

"Jung's word 'psyche' is of course unacceptable to an Engineer who demands a 'physical' viewpoint and must of necessity place the spiritual within the human

body rather than as a future projection, a hereafter, etc." (Bess, 1955).⁸

At its core, Bess's critique of Jung's spiritualized conception of the psyche targeted his attempt to bring about an hermaphroditic conciliation of the sexual polarity without duly considering the *factual* corporeality of the human condition. The dissent, which Bess lastly considered to be unbridgeable, hinged on his postulate about the this-worldly realization of the hermaphroditic ideal. Well aware of the principled challenges posed in this connection by his radical sense of immanence, Bess underscored in a letter of September 1959 to art historian Meyer Shapiro (1904-1996) dealing with the this-worldly attainment of the hermaphroditic condition: "when [Jung] states that it is impossible, I say it is Possible" (quoted in Smith, 2013, p. 93).

10. While gallerist Betty Parsons invoked a form of artistic purism to dispense herself from promoting the ideas Bess forwarded in the "thesis," Jung challenged the empirical basis of Bess's claims without considering the overarching anthropological premises of his "step-by-step manifesto" (Ennis, 1982, June, p. 7). Although Bess had approached Meyer Schapiro back in 1948 and kept him informed about his artistic and intellectual concerns over the years, when Schapiro eventually took a stance on Bess's aesthetic summa, he wrote down what he rightly assumed would be for Bess a "disappointing judgement" (quoted in Smith, 2013, p. 95). However, contrasting with Parsons's and Jung's indiscriminate disengagement from discussing in-depth Bess's propositions, Schapiro was careful to differentiate between two aspects of the artist's stance. As regards Bess's physiological contentions, Schapiro declared being an "ignorant layman" with no opinion on the matter. Concerning Bess's elaborations on "the ancient beliefs" he adduced in

⁸ For texts by C. G. Jung in English translation that include discussions on what Bess castigates as a "future projection, a hereafter," see Jung, 1999, especially pp. 118-120.

support of his claims, however, Schapiro critiqued Bess for "forc[ing] the evidence and depend[ing] too largely on analogies or vague resemblances" (quoted in Smith, 2013, p. 95). In particular, Schapiro pointed out that "[n]othing that you cite from the alchemists and none of their diagrams in your rich body of illustrations shows that they identified the vas hermetica with the bulbous section of the urethra or regarded the latter's dilation as a means of regenerating the individual" (quoted in Smith, 2013, p. 95). By declaring his medical incompetence, while maintaining that the historical sources adduced by Bess did not prove his premises, Schapiro was effectively conveying his unwillingness to underwrite the artist's claims. The question remains, however, as to why he waited so many years to utter this "sincere statement from a friend who is devoted to you" (quoted in Smith, 2013, p. 95). Furthermore, given his encounters and epistolary exchanges with Bess for a decade, it is hard to understand why Schapiro in his critique did not address the overarching line argument announced in the Preface of the manifesto and developed in detail throughout its now lost parts.

11. In the first of the "Ballet" letters addressed to Schapiro and his wife Lillian, Bess wrote:

"quite recently I opened the book by Graves and there taken from the work of Clement of Alexander [sic] and the Gospel according to the Egyptians was the statement, 'when the two become one'" (quoted in Smith, 2013, pp. 73-74).

Bess's reference is to the first of the two epigraphs in Robert Graves's semi-historical novel *King Jesus* (1900-1982) (Graves, 1946, p. 6). The epigraph at stake consists in a citation from the apocryphal *Gospel according to the Egyptians* included in Clement of Alexandria's *Stromata*, which reads in part:

"And when she [Shelom] enquired at what time the things concerning which she had questioned Him [Jesus] should be known, He answered: 'When you women have trampled on the garment of shame and when the two become one, and when the male with the female is neither male nor female'" (quoted in Graves, 1946, p. 6).⁹

In this clearly apocalyptic/eschatological passage, a Gnostic Jesus announces the surpassing of sexual difference in the Kingdom of Heaven. Signally, this passage had also been deployed in Otto Weininger's (1880-1903) philosophical classic *Geschlecht und Charakter* (literally: Sexuality and Character) at the beginning of the twentieth century. Drawing on his reading of Clement of Alexandria, Weininger posits that the overcoming of the male/female gap within *Geschlecht* constitutes a post-historical act of fulfilment that results from the ethical effort to renounce matter-related femininity for the sake of attaining the pure masculinity of *Charakter*. While the aim of man in Weininger's ethical soteriology is—in accordance with Clement—to become "ein drittes Selbes" (a third Self) (Weininger, 1980, p. 457) beyond the sexual chasm and with the attributes of an eschatological hermaphrodite,¹⁰ Bess envisages a this-worldly supersedure

⁹ The pregnant words of Jesus included in the passage Graves quotes from Clement of Alexandria in the first epigraph are also cited in German translation and in Greek by Otto Weininger, as indicated in the following endnote.

¹⁰ The context of Weininger's core contention reads: "Darum wird die Frauenfrage bestehen, so lang es zwei Geschlechter gibt, und nicht eher verstummen denn die Menschheitsfrage. In diesem Sinne hat Christus, nach dem Zeugnis des Kirchenvaters Klemens, zur Salome gesprochen, ohne die optimistische Beschönigung, die Paulus und Luther für das Geschlecht späterhin fanden: so lang werde der Tod währen, als die Weiber gebären, und nicht eher die Wahrheit geschaut werden, als bis aus zweien eins, aus Mann und Weib *ein drittes Selbes*, *weder Mann noch Weib*, werde geworden sein" (Weininger, 1980, p. 457; emphasis added). See also the corresponding annotation to the passage, where the dictum attributed to Jesus is quoted in Greek:

πυνθανομένης τῆς Σαλώμης πότε γνωσθήσεται τὰ περι ὧν ἤρετο, ἔφη ὁ Κύριος, ὅταν τὸ αἰσχύνῃς ἐνδυμα πατήσητε, καὶ ὅταν γένηται τὰ δύο ἓν,

of the sexual binary not by means of a moral commitment, but with the aid of a surgical intervention designed to transform a man not into an hermaphrodite, but into a pseudo-hermaphrodite. In Bess's line of thought, the price to be paid for immanentizing the Gnostic trans-sexual eschaton is to make do with an inherently deficient means of overcoming the sexual chasm: the *pseudo*-prefixed hermaphroditism.

12. Bess opens the fully preserved preface of his "Thesis" by setting his contentions in a world-historical perspective. Indeed, Bess claims from the start that the recourse to the chirurgical corrective of the sexual gap he envisaged can be traced back to the ancestral mores of the Australian aborigines, and, within the Mediterranean landscape, to Ancient Egypt. As Bess further posits, the "basic act of mutilation of the male phallus" at stake is dictated by the ambisexuality of mankind's unconscious. Bess adduces in this connection the authority of Viennese child psychiatrist and Freudian-oriented psychologist Bruno Bettelheim (1900-1990) and his elaborations on the child who "desires the possession of both male and female genitals" (quoted in Smith, 2013, p. 83). Although Bess does not name the specific bibliographical source he had in mind, it seems safe to assume that he was referring to Bettelheim's treatise *Symbolic Wounds. Puberty Rites and the Envious Male*, which was published in 1954, the same year in which Bess concluded and distributed the first version of his "Thesis" (see, especially, Bettelheim, 1962, pp. 100-108). In Bess's view, the attempt to resolve the sexual conundrum posed by the unconscious is the actual reason why man strives to concretize through cultural means the unreachable hermaphroditic ideal. In this context, the soteriological telos

καὶ τὸ ἄρρεν μετὰ τῆς θηλείας οὔτε ἄρρενοῦτε θῆλυ (Weininger, 1980, p. 595; see Clemens of Alexandria, 1832, pp. 265-266 [Liber Tertius, Cap. XIII, § 92]). ("When Salome 'asked when she would know the answer to her questions, the Lord said, When you trample on the robe of shame, and when the two shall be one, and the male with the female, and there is neither male nor female.")

of history serves as corrective to the *proton pseudos* of Nature's male/female gap. Since Bess never questioned the defining premises of the problem he aspired to resolve, he was compelled to regard human sexuality as an inbuilt failure that is supposed to be partially mended within the *ouk-topos* of culture. Although in his letter to Eisenhower Bess upheld against Jung that the task of hermaphroditic conciliation is realizable in the immediate present, he nevertheless adhered throughout to the Gnostic-Jungian inspired notion of Nature's inherent shortcoming as evinced by the binomial separation of the sexes. In his grand scheme of things, Bess operates with a basically eschatological conception of the present time, which he inherited from the Christian claim to fulfil what the biblical prophets of the past had only promised. Consequently, Bess sought to de-emphasize the creational design of man for the sake of focusing on his post-redemptive realization. Since Jung, unlike Bess, never reckoned with an intra-historical overcoming of what he regarded as the natural condition of human sexuality, it is all the more significant that, despite his "prejudice against Jung" on account of his anti-Semitic proclivities (quoted in Smith, 2013, p. 120),¹¹ Marxian Schapiro remained silent about Jung's disincarnate conception of hermaphroditic conciliation.

13. By the time Schapiro wrote his assessment of Bess's manifesto, he was already on his way to becoming one of the most influential art historians in the twentieth century. Given the scope of his scholarship, it seems safe to assume that Bess's reference to the "pseudohermaphrodite" reminded him that Carl Gustav Jung had attempted in his 1935 *Terry Lectures* at Yale to make accessible the Kabbalistic and alchemical conception of the hermaphrodite to a wider readership (see Jung, 1995b, pp. 46–47, 72, 81, 110, 121).

¹¹ Bess was keenly aware of Schapiro's dislike of Jung. In a letter of mid-January 1962, Bess wrote to Betty Parsons: "He [Schapiro] has refused to take the Jungian view of my work possibly because of his prejudice against Jung and the Nazi tie-in" (quoted in Smith, 2013, p. 120).

More importantly though, as a knowledgeable Jew of Latvik descent, Schapiro was certainly aware that the double sexuality of the Adam Kadmon (the First Adam) in the Kabbalistic sapiential tradition was not meant to index a nosological or monstrous status. Rather, Adam's ambisexuality reflected his pristine creatural condition, in accordance with a teaching that could be traced back to the *Mishna*, one of the sources of Jewish revelation.¹² Indeed, in the ancient collection of authoritative rabbinical commentaries called *B'reshith Rabba*, Rabbi Yirmiyah ben Eleazar is cited as having taught: "In the hour when the Holy One, blessed be He, created the first human, He created him as an androgynous, as it is said, 'male and female He created them'" (*B'reshith Rabba*, 8, 1). While Rabbi Yirmiyah's doctrinal claim has remained a legitimate, albeit minority view within traditional Judaism, it eventually attained an unexpected epistemic ratification in the nineteenth century by non less than atheistic Charles Darwin (1809-1882) (1809-1882). Indeed, the father of evolution theory not only ascertained in general that "[e]very animal surely is hermaphrodite [...]" (Darwin, 1987, p. 380 [Notebook D (1838), No. 154]), but that "[e]very man & woman is hermaphrodite [...]" (Darwin, 1987, p. 384 [Notebook D (1838), No. 162]). Not by chance, the double sexuality of the animal ascendancy of humans and of the human species itself eventually became one of the key concepts in the evolutionary understanding of the higher vertebrates.¹³

¹² On the iconography of the Adam Kadmon and the Hermaphrodite in the alchemical tradition, see Aurnhammer, 1986; Jung, Franz, Henderson, Jacobi, and Jaffé, 1988, pp. 30–31, 71, 82, 200, 203; Roob, 1996, pp. 165–166, 168, 315, 457, 460, 462, 550, 672–673.

¹³ In a letter written to Scottish geologist Charles Lyell (1797-1845) on January 10, 1860, Darwin stressed: "*Our* ancestor was an animal which [...] undoubtedly was an hermaphrodite! Here is a pleasant genealogy for mankind.—" (Darwin, 1993, p. 28 / Letter 2647; emphasis in original). An editorial footnote appended to Darwin's letter in the *Correspondence* indicates that Lyell made annotations related to the letter on the cover. Among other things, Lyell remarked: "Man originally an hermaphrodite" (Darwin, 1993, p. 29 / Letter 2647). Drawing on his early insights, Darwin eventually concluded in *The Descent of Man* (1871) that, in their being, human individuals replicate their lineage from "some extremely

Needless to say, it could hardly be expected that a non-Jew like Jung would have been inclined to dwell upon the actual scope of Rabbi Yirmiyah ben Eleazar's creational (i.e., non-eschatological) grasp of the First Man's carnal (i.e., not merely "spiritual") hermaphroditism and its modern convergence with Darwin's bio-materialistic evolution theory.

14. As an art historian with an intimate knowledge of the work of Piet Mondrian (1872-1944), Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968), and Marc Chagall (1887-1985), the quintessentially Jewish modern artist of Belarussian descent, Meyer Schapiro was aware of the centrality of hermaphroditism in modern and contemporary art before he encountered Forrest Bess. Being a Latvian-born Jew, whose grand-parents had still adhered to Jewish Orthodoxy, and an American citizen, who advocated a form of non-dogmatic Marxism as a method of art-historical analysis (see *Meyer Schapiro* [obituary], 1996, March 4), Schapiro was better positioned than most of his contemporaries to assess the continuities and ruptures between the traditionally religious and the science-informed conception of culture (see Andrijauskas, 2012). Understandably, Schapiro remained skeptical about Bess's invocation of the authority of the alchemists in support of his own physiological contentions. Although Schapiro's copy of the manifesto is irretrievable, related texts written by Bess permit to establish that there was no misunderstanding on the part of Schapiro as regards the artist's anatomical interpretation of the alchemists. Thus, in a letter, Bess clearly formulates the equiparation that Schapiro calls to question on account of the absence of textual proof: "The dilated bulbous section of the male urethra is and was the *vas hermetica* of the Alchemists" (quoted in Smith, 2013, p. 85). Aside from objecting to Bess's anatomical contentions, Schapiro made no effort to assess the consequence-laden, historical and philosophical premises that frame Bess's corporeal localization of the key alchemical concept. As regards Bess's grasp of hermaphroditism as the ideal human condition or

remote progenitor of the whole vertebrate kingdom [that] appears to have been hermaphrodite or androgynous" (Darwin, 1981, Part I, p. 207).

his conception of symbolic forms as evocations of the mutilation ur-myth, Schapiro appeared to have nothing to say. His silence in this regard is all the more noteworthy, as his Jewish textual knowledge and art historical expertise would allow to expect from him at least an informed opinion on matters so critical to Bess's endeavors. In line with his avoidance of discussions on matters beyond the domain of his scholarly expertise, Schapiro seemed to have opted for strict discretion about his stance on the regnant dichotomization of the sexes and its possible overcoming by the cultural emulation of the hermaphroditic ideal of the unconscious.

15. Schapiro, whom Bess on one occasion called "the teacher" (quoted in Smith, 2013, p. 49), could have easily suggested a broader intellectual framework that would have allowed Bess to set in critical perspective his own epistemic and soteriological premises concerning pseudo-hermaphroditism as an aim to be attained in this-worldly concretion. Given his cultural heritage, Schapiro was surely aware of the ancient rabbinical teaching, according to which the flawless creational condition of Adam was that of an hermaphrodite. As an art historian that had focused on the work of Marc Chagall, Schapiro was cognizant of the fact that the interpretive tradition of Adam as אַנְדְּרוֹגִיטוּס had crucially informed Chagall's 1913 painting titled *Homage to Apollinaire*, the French poet and playwright (1880-1918) who was soon to publish a piece with the title *Les Mamelles de Tirésias* (literally: The Mammaries of Tiresias) (1917) (Apollinaire, 1965).¹⁴ While *Homage* features a

¹⁴ For his part, Guillaume Apollinaire mentions Chagall's painting "Adam et Ève" in two 1913 reports on the *Salon des Indépendants*. In the first, he underscored: "Chagall: *Adam et Ève*, composition décorative qui révèle de grandes qualités de coloris" (Apollinaire, 1991, p. 539). In the second report, Apollinaire depicted Chagall as "un hardi talent et un esprit curieux et tourmenté" (Apollinaire, 1991, pp. 547-548). As regards the title of the painting, an editorial note details: "*Couple sous l'arbre* d'après le catalogue" (Apollinaire, 1991, p. 1603). In a report on "Le 30^e Salon des Indépendants" of 1914, Apollinaire pointed out: "Chagall est un coloriste bien doué qui se laisse aller à tout ce que son imagination

hermaphroditic human being with two heads and two sets of differing genitalia in a cubistic-secular landscape, a 1910 preparatory design of the canvas denotes the biblical origin of the motif in its subtitle: "Adam et Ève." In two further paintings from 1911-1912 with the title *Study for Adam and Eve*, the hermaphrodite appears in an unequivocally paradisiac setting. The interchangeability of the Edenic and contemporary contexts in which the hermaphroditic figure is portrayed appears to indicate that for Chagall—a painterly exegete of Mishnaic and Kabbalistic sources—the carnal double sexuality of human beings is not lost in the process of history but remains throughout their creational mark. Although figurative representations of the hermaphrodite clearly differ from the current bodily appearance of human beings, this divergence is more the result of the insufficiencies intrinsic to visual images, than of the anthropological truth they are deemed to convey. This counterintuitive insight is corroborated—perhaps somewhat unexpectedly—by Darwin’s biology-based universalization of human hermaphroditism. While the the concept of hermaphroditism is generally associated with an unnatural or pathological condition, evolution theory uncovers every sexed individual as a uniquely nuanced combination of the male/female poles that contravenes on principle the disjunctive scheme of sexual distribution. German-Jewish physician and sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld (1868-1935), who was acquainted with the rabbinical teachings mentioned above, was the first to deploy Darwin’s evolutionary insights within an encompassing sexological framework. Accordingly, he declared in *Sappho und Sokrates*, his very first publication on sexual matters issued in 1896, that "in their primary disposition all human beings are with respect to their bodies and souls hermaphrodites" (Ramien, 1896, pp. 9-10).¹⁵

mystique et païenne lui suggère. Son art est très sensuel" (Apollinaire, 1991, p. 653).

¹⁵ "In der Uranlage sind alle Menschen körperlich und seelisch Zwitter."

16. Arguably, Schapiro penned the finest art-critical piece on Bess to date. The twenty-line text was first published as introduction to the catalogue of the 1962 Bess retrospective at the Parsons Gallery. More than two decades later, it was reissued in the catalogues of the Bess exhibitions organized by the *Hirschl & Adler Modern* in New York (1988) and the *Museum Ludwig Köln* (1989). While the art historical expertise displayed in Shapiro's introduction was at first sight impressive, the published letters he wrote to Bess over a period of a quarter of a century reflect his uneasiness in dealing with sexuality as the central issue in Bess's life and worldview. As could be expected, Bess was keenly interested in the publications of authors like British sexuality expert and eugenicist Havelock Ellis (1859-1939), Austrian physiologist and endocrinologist Eugen Steinach (1861-1944), and Freud's Viennese renegade disciple Herbert Silberer (1882-1923). With his 1914 study titled *Probleme der Mystik und ihrer Symbolik* (literally: Problems of Mysticism and its Symbolism) (Silberer, 1961), Silberer became the first scholar to apply psychoanalysis to the mystical thought processes of alchemists and hermetical authors. More recent developments in sexuality studies also attracted Bess's attention, as is suggested by his reference to an article on male genital mutilations among Australian Aborigines published in the American journal *Sexology* (Smith, 2013, p. 66). Indicatively, Bess also cited an article from the same journal penned by Dr. David Cauldwell, where the artist was associated with a "new form of homosexuality" (quoted in Smith, 2013, p. 94). The pioneering New York based, but internationally scoped journal was founded by Dr. Maxwell Vidaver in 1933, three years after Magnus Hirschfeld's visit in New York, where he was acclaimed by the print media as "Dr. Einstein of Sex" (Hirschfeld, 1931, p. 1). Recalling this event is of import, since the journal published from the start contributions that read like popularizing versions or illustrations of Hirschfeld's deconstructive approach of close distributive blueprints of sexuality and race.¹⁶ In a pre-

¹⁶ For understandable reasons, Hirschfeld's critical thought on race does not belong to the preferred subject matters of contemporary

Kinseyan America, *Sexology* issued noteworthy articles whose very titles pointed to the questioning and dissolution of the chasm between the binomial sexes in correspondence to Hirschfeld's Darwinian inspired universalization of sexual intermediariness.¹⁷

17. Since the archival holdings of Meyer Schapiro have not been made available on-line, it is not possible for scholars around the world to properly assess the role sexuality and sexual research played in his overall conception of art history and aesthetics. Despite his brilliantly analytical mind and astounding command of European culture and history, Schapiro appeared to be at a loss when it came to tackling the paradigm shift initiated by Walt Whitman (1819-1892), Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), and Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) concerning the understanding of the individual's sexual complexities. Although only seven years apart from Bess, Schapiro seemed to lack the theoretical means for dealing with Bess's deranging insights into the connection

Hirschfeld scholarship in Germany. On the issue, see: Bauer, 2006; Bauer, 2019.

¹⁷ Some contributions published in the journal *Sexology* (Vidaver, et al., 1933-1977) clearly reflect the critical stance on the issue of binary sexual distribution upheld by its successive editors:

Anonymus: "A Man Becomes a Woman" (November 1933, I, 3, pp. 250-254);

Benton, Francies: "Both Man and Woman in One Body" (July 1934, I, 11, pp. 684-688);

Hubler, Jacob: "Science Turns Girl into Boy" (November 1934, II, 3; pp. 156-158);

Vidaver, Maxwell: "Similarity of Male and Female Sex Organs" (February 1935, II, 6, pp. 377-379);

Siebold, Carl Theodor von [1804-1995] [excerpt from "*Die Koralle*, Berlin"]: "Males That Bear Young" (July 1935, II, 11, pp. 714-715);

Anonymus [possibly David H. Keller, the then editor of the journal]: "Sex Individuality" (January 1937, IX, 5, front page);

Downey, Elba L.: "Are We All Double-Sexed?" Part I. (August 1937, IV, 12, pp. 752-755);

Downey, Elba L.: "Are We All Double-Sexed?" Part II. (September 1937, V, 1, pp. 44-47);

Cauldwell, David: "What Is An Hermaphrodite" (April 1946, XII, 9, pp. 532-535).

between art and sexuality.¹⁸ The challenges that Bess's visual art and writings posed in this respect called for the multidisciplinary, "post-modern" methodologies and close readings that began to be deployed by the emerging gender and sexuality studies of the late 1980s. Contrasting with the spirit of this new approach, Schapiro was reticent to even consider issues such as non-binary sexuality, sexual fluidity, and homosexuality as decisive factors in human evolution. Topics of this kind were at the core of Bess's attempt to overcome the paralyzing effects of Jung's counter-Freudian de-potentialization of corporeal sexuality on his own existential and esthetic quest. Regardless of the fact that Schapiro defined the conceptual tools of his memorable art historical contributions decades before the late-modern advent of queer studies, nothing would have hindered him from recurring to the analytical instrumentalities Hirschfeld laid out in the context of his critical sexology, which announced the epistemic developments that came to fruition toward the end of the past century. As a Jewish New Yorker, Schapiro was certainly aware of the path-breaking significance of Hirschfeld's Darwin-based sexology, and perhaps even of his explicit reference to the ancient Jewish conception of the Creational Man's pristine hermaphroditism. Indeed, in the first of his five-volume magnum opus titled *Geschlechtskunde auf Grund dreißigjähriger Forschung und Erfahrung bearbeitet* (literally: Sexology on the base of thirty years of research and experience), which was published between 1926 and 1930, Hirschfeld—supported by the Midrashic teachings of Rabbi Yirmiyah ben Elazar and the ensuing Kabbalistic tradition—contended with regard to the *Book of Genesis* that the biblical Creator as well as his Adamic creature were hermaphroditic (see Hirschfeld, 1926, p. 485; Bauer, 2020a, pp. 31-32 footnote 4).

¹⁸ Perhaps for similar reasons, Schapiro does not even mention the disruptive issue of hermaphroditism in his text on Chagall and the Bible (Schapiro, 2003).

18. In his twenties, Bess was already acquainted with the work of Charles Darwin and Sigmund Freud, and had read more than once a book by Havelock Ellis (1859-1939) titled *Psychology of Sex: A Manual for Students* (Ellis, 1933) (Elliott, 2013b, p. 21; Smith, 2013, p. 162), a "concise introduction" to his seven-volume *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* (Ellis, 1930). Despite his extensive readings, however, Bess apparently never came across texts that would reflect either the epistemic shift signaled by Hirschfeld's sexological reception of Darwinian evolution or the Midrashic-Kabbalistic conception of the *Androgynos*. Thus, while viewing hermaphroditism in nature as a pathological condition shared by relatively few individuals, Bess attributed a soteriological valence to the hermaphroditic ideal of the unconscious. To compensate for what he assumed to be his lack of the desired condition, Bess decided to become a pseudo-hermaphrodite. Unaware that hermaphroditism is the ineradicable corporeal condition of every sexed individual, Bess deemed necessary to make do with its surgically produced pseudo-forms. Moreover, Bess appears not to have realized that the modern post-Darwinian reconceptualization of hermaphroditism directed its critical potentials against the ideological or plainly irreflective finitization of sexual-distributional schemes, which distracts from the endless variability of human sexuality. Against this backdrop, it would have been of crucial import, if Meyer Schapiro had drawn the artist's attention to the view of human sexuality as inherently hermaphroditic, in accordance with the textual sources that had inspired Marc Chagall's ambisexual figurations. The implied reconfiguration of sexual difference would have hardly convinced Bess of the futility of undergoing the surgical interventions he deemed desirable, but it would have at least undone the soteriological claims he associated with them. Unlike Jung, from whose disincarnate grasp of the hermaphroditic ideal Bess eventually distanced himself, Schapiro had a direct linguistic and cultural access to the Jewish textual sources, which underpinned Chagall's pictural hermaphrodites.

19. Bess's long demarche toward becoming a pseudo-hermaphrodite was embedded within the matrix of sexual dissidence that marked his self-understanding from early on. Indeed, in a late autobiographical sketch titled *Snooky*—the artist's childhood nickname—, Bess relates in some detail that, as a thirteen-year-old, he was taught "how to masturbate" by a younger cousin (quoted in Smith, 2013, p. 136). Thereafter, his same-sex orientation appears to have remained unchanged throughout his life. While being generally cautious about divulging his sexual interests among his Southern acquaintances, Bess eventually felt free to discuss the issue of homosexuality with his intellectually more sophisticated New York friends and colleagues. In a letter to lesbian gallerist Betty Parsons (see Gober, 2013, p. 96) of November 1949, Bess confided to her "the secret I held in my heart – which I had hidden from everyone and most of the time even from myself – I had slowly but surely come to realize that I was homosexual..." (quoted in Smith, 2013, p. 17). To Rosalie and Sidney Berkowitz—"my best friends and as it seems – my only friends"— Bess wrote the following: "There is no reason to declare to the whole world that I am 'queer,' however should I be asked there would be no reason to lie or hide anything" (quoted in Smith, 2013, p. 28). Since Bess had discussed with Meyer Schapiro issues related to hermaphroditism and his assumption that "[t]he male is potentially both male and female" (quoted in Smith, 2013, p. 86), he possibly had no need to make further confessional declarations. In the already cited letter to Schapiro of September 1959, Bess sufficed himself with providing, without comment, a brief quote concerning "'a new form of homosexuality'" (quoted in Smith, 2013, p. 94). While in the letter to the Berkowitz couple Bess avows in general that "I am a peculiar type of homosexual" (quoted in Smith, 2013, p. 28), in a letter of September 20, 1963 addressed to sexologist and arts cognoscente John Money (1921-2006) (see Gober, 2013, p. 98), Bess offered extensive details regarding the peculiarity of his sexual orientation. Soon to become a world authority on hermaphroditism and gender identity (see Money & Ehrhardt, 1972, especially pp.

1-33), Money had asked Bess whether he ejaculated when having an orgasm. In his response, Bess described his intimate practices with his many sexual partners, while underscoring his notion of masculinity in homosexual relationships. As he pointed out in all desirable clarity,

"I am not particularly interested in foreplay – men kissing and all that. I am still a mutilated male and not a woman. Kissing, when it occurs is brought about by the partner during coitus only. I don't mind it but don't need it" (quoted in Smith, 2013, p. 111).

Besides stressing that he had "no characteristics of a transvestite," Bess went on to detail that "as a fisherman I do not put forth any feminine qualities" (quoted in Smith, 2013, pp. 111, 112). Years earlier, in the letter to the Berkowitzs cited above, he had already acknowledged that he "wasn't effeminate enough" (quoted in Smith, 2013, p. 28).

20. Establishing the timeline of Bess's attempt to become a pseudo-hermaphrodite is more challenging than determining the nature of his dissident sexual orientation. Art historian John Yau maintains in his 1988 study on Bess that "[i]n 1960, he ha[d] the first of a series of surgical operations, which he believed would prove his theories" (Yau, 1988, no pagination). The date remained unchanged in the reissue of Yau's text included in the 1989 Bess exhibit catalogue (Yau, 1989, p. 29) and in the accompanying summary of Bess's life (*Forrest Bess*, 1989, p. 12). Chuck Smith's 2013 volume, however, offers a quite different take on the chronology of Bess's surgical interventions, which eventually enabled the artist to declare that he had attained his goal of becoming a pseudo-hermaphrodite. The letters included in Smith's book make it apparent that Bess informed Schapiro in 1952 that he had mutilated himself in two steps: he first performed an incision in the glans penis, and then another in the perineum (Smith, 2013, p. 67; see picture on p. 69). The two surgical cuts marked the beginning and end of the subincision Bess had initially intended to perform. Years later, in a letter to

John Money from 1962, Bess mentions that in 1960 he had convinced a surgeon to carry out two further operations. The first one consisted in making an "opening," which, to judge by the pictures Bess took of himself, was located at the peno-scrotal angle (Smith, 2013, p. 105; see pictures on p. 104). In a letter to Schapiro of April 16, 1960, Bess refers to this opening as a "fistula" (quoted in Smith, 2013, p. 108), which, as Smith surmises, was an enlargement of the "tiny incision" of 1952 (Smith, 2013, p. 102). As regards the second surgical intervention by the physician, Bess mentions that it consisted in opening "the urethra on the underside back until [the surgeon] reached the muscle fiber of the bulbocavernosis." As Bess further specifies, the surgeon then "took the edges of the urethra and sewed them back so that they would not grow back together" (quoted in Smith, 2013, p. 105).¹⁹

¹⁹ The same year Chuck Smith's volume was published, Claire Elliott issued an exhibit catalogue that included her own essay "Forrest Bess: Seeing Things Invisible" (Elliott, 2013b) and Robert Gober's contribution titled "The Man That Got Away" (Gober, 2013). Given the chronological coincidence, it seems improbable that Elliott and Gober could have benefited from the rich materials presented in Smith's volume. This is possibly the reason why Elliott refers to Bess's self-surgery of 1952, as having occurred in the mid-1950s (Elliott, 2013b, p. 19), and then leaves unmentioned that the results of the first medically performed operation of 1960 led Bess to declare himself a pseudo-hermaphrodite. As regards Gober, he seems to conflate the different surgical events when he writes: "With the fortification of alcohol, Bess performed at least two operations on his genitals that turned him into a self-described pseudo-hermaphrodite. He seems to have performed the operations himself" (Gober, 2013, p. 91). Gober then goes on to contend: "To perform this transformation, Bess created an incision in the underside of his penis just above the scrotum. He believed that this new opening would allow the bulbous section of the urethra to accept another penis and that this would be a transcendental experience" (Gober, 2013, p. 93). In view of Gober's elaborations, it is apposite to remind that Bess did not consider that the initial self-mutilations of his glans and at the base of his penis had made him a pseudo-hermaphrodite. This he declared to be the case only after the first medically assisted intervention of 1960 established a "fistula", as he clearly indicated in a letter of the same year addressed to Betty Parsons (see Smith, 2013, p. 110). This precision is of import, since the initial, self-created incision at the peno-scrotal angle was "tiny" (Smith, 2013, p. 102), and would not have allowed "to accept another penis."

21. After the first surgical intervention of 1960, Bess sent letters to Meyer Schapiro and Betty Parsons describing the event in some detail (Smith, 2013, pp. 108, 110). In his message to Parsons, Bess wrote that he had at last attained his goal: "Recently, I underwent a minor operation in which a fistula was established at the peno-scrotal angle. This makes your boy Bess a pseudo-hermaphrodite" (quoted in Smith, 2013, p. 110). Although Bess never overstated the originality of the principles behind the surgical success, they amounted to an unheard-of break with the pervasive sexual assumptions of Western intellectual history. Bess readily acknowledged that his genital mutilations were inspired by the subincisions practiced in the context of rites de passage by Australian Aborigines and Sub-Saharan African tribes. Contrasting with the ritual embedment of the procedure in non-Western cultures, however, Bess inscribed the surgical modifications of his own genitalia in a context of spiritual experimentation and self-discovery, which, despite being without precedents in occidental culture, echoed ontological and epistemic premises specific to Western modernity. Accordingly, Bess emphasized his matter-of-fact approach of reality suitable to the professional activities of the "Engineer" he had once been. Thus, aside from the salvational valence he assigned to his endeavors to become a pseudo-hermaphrodite, Bess considered his "opening" between penis base and scrotum as a means that would eventually allow him to experience passive coital penetration independently of the anus. Bess's recourse to surgery was meant to facilitate the practice of homosexual coitus free from the traditional stigmatization of inter-human same-sex sodomy. While Bess did not underestimate the practical

Such a possibility could only be envisaged after the "fistula" of 1960 was enlarged by the same medical doctor that had created it. Gober does not refer to this second intervention of 1960. As conveyed in a detailed letter to John Money, the stage of "enlargement" Bess had attained does not seem to have allowed him to easily utilize his "opening" as a pseudo-vulva in sexual intercourse with a partner having a "large" penis (quoted in Smith, 2013, p. 111), but it did convince him of the worthiness of pursuing that goal.

difficulties related to the implementation of his unprecedented conception of homosexual intercourse (see Smith, 2013, p. 112), his original enthusiasm remained unabated, as is suggested by the post-coital conversations he had with some of his partners. The following passage reflects the crux of these exchanges:

"This is a strange statement from many - 'you are hotter than any woman I have ever been with.' The art collector from New York says this is a brand new dimension and I reply Yes – it's the fourth dimension" (quoted in Smith, 2013, p. 111).²⁰

22. Among the books most quoted or referred to by Bess is the four-volume pandect titled *The Science of Life*, published in 1931. With an eye to the ideas Bess developed in his "Thesis," it is well to briefly convey the areas of expertise of the work's three co-authors: H. G. Wells (1866-1946) was a prolific writer, novelist and historian, who is generally considered the founder of science fiction as a literary genre; Julian S. Huxley (1887-1975), an evolutionary biologist, coined the term *transhumanism* and penned the humanistic-naturalistic treatise *Religion without Revelation* (1927); and finally G. P. Wells (1901-1985), a zoologist, who

²⁰ As regards the reception of Bess's potentiated form of sexual dissidence in GLBTQ circles, Claire Elliott has written the following insightful lines: "it is curious that Bess's homosexuality and his complicated response to it would not have been examined in the course of the rapid development and consolidation of gay and lesbian studies that occurred in the nineties. It's possible that Bess's convoluted and disturbing reaction to his sexuality was too extreme for groups seeking to gain acceptance for formerly ostracized behavior. More convincingly maybe, painterly abstraction itself was too firmly associated with hetero-normative positions occupied by the artists of the 1980s, and, of course, in Bess's art his references are always coded, rendering them almost invisible in the absence of his thesis" (Elliott, 2013, p. 21). This last remark, however, clearly does not apply to two of his most renowned paintings: "Tree of Life / Sign of the Hermaphrodite" (1953) (see Elliott, 2013a, p. 53) and "The Hermaphrodite" (1957) (see Elliott, 2013a, p. 72), where the titles name the core issue of Bess's life and art.

issued in 1971 the definitive edition of his father's classic study *The Outline of History* (1920) (Wells, 1971). As could be expected, *The Science of Life* had a direct incidence on the ontological framework in which Bess inscribed his sexual and aesthetic quest. While Bess avoided proffering general statements on metaphysical or theological matters, he came close to making one when he empathetically describes his late father's personal beliefs:

"Underneath his rough exterior and mannerisms I found a philosopher who had inherited from his father a theory of God in Nature, rather than God in a church – a theory that I could accept" (quoted in Smith, 2013, p. 100)

This pregnant expression of what appears to be a quite rudimentary, but deeply felt pantheistic sentiment converges with Huxley's revelationless religiosity, whose traces can be detected throughout the pages of *The Science*. Its theoretical groundwork can be described as a scientific, evolutionary humanism that supersedes, but does not ignore the epistemes resulting from the study of ontic fields such as matter, the soul or the divine. Accordingly, *The Science* provided Bess with a wealth of information concerning authors, theories and publications directly relevant to his endeavors. As Chuck Smith points out in this regard, "Bess first learned of [Eugen] Steinach's research through H. G. Wells' *The Science of Life*" (Smith, 2013, p. 88), which contains detailed references to the Austrian endocrinologist in its second volume (Wells, Huxley, Wells, 1931, vol. II, pp. 547-551, 566). What Smith does not mention, however, is that the four-volume work also furnished Bess with an overview of C. G. Jung's critical revision of Freudian psychoanalysis and theory of symbolism.

23. As an attentive reader, Bess certainly realized that *The Science of Life* in its first volume states that Steinach had "indubitably produced some remarkable rejuvenescences" (Wells, Huxley & Wells, 1931, vol. I, p. 142) on the general

assumption that gland secretions are responsible for the configuration of the individual's sexuality. Warning against unrealistic expectations, however, the volume also mentions that "it seems inconceivable that any individual human body will ever evade its final goal of death" (Wells, Huxley & Wells, 1931, vol. I, p. 144). In its second volume, *The Science* resumes the basic stance of its co-authors on Steinach's achievements: "Even if the work of rejuvenation has not opened up any rosy vista of perpetual youth, it holds forth promises of a reasonable extension of a healthy middle-age" (Wells, Huxley & Wells, 1931, vol. II, p. 549). As regards Steinach's *Verjüngung* (rejuvenation) method, Bess wrote in a letter to Betty Parsons, which is thematically related to the extant Preface of the "Thesis," that one of the consequences of his premises was "a possible regenerative quality based upon the Steinach experiments" (quoted in Smith, 2013, p. 86). Bess thus developed a keen interest in the empirical proof that animal and human life can be prolonged with the aid of Steinach's "homoplastische" (homoplastic) and "autoplastische" (autoplastic) method for fighting against old age (see Steinach, 1920, pp. 42, 53-60; Steinach & Loebel, 1951, pp. 96-107; 207-231). In this connection, *The Science* maintains: "The most obvious methods of renewing the supply of sex-hormone is to graft in bits of reproductive organ from young animals. There is also a second method—to tie a ligature round the *vas deferens* (the narrow tube along which spermatozoa leave the testis)" (Wells, Huxley & Wells, 1931, vol. II, p. 547). In support of the second method, the illustration page facing the cited passage features pictures of a Chinese convict before and after he "was operated on by the Steinach method by Dr. Schmidt on 8th April, 1924." Following a similar argumentative strategy to prove the effectiveness of the surgical method, Bess planned to provide photographic evidence for his own rejuvenation after undergoing a "Steinach vasoligature." As he wrote to Meyer Schapiro on April 16, 1960: "I need photographs showing my bald head, gray hair, pot belly, and then a few months after to see if I am on the right path, or if this is sexual perversion only" (quoted in Smith, 2013, p. 108). Bess was therewith

hinting at the results he was expecting from the second surgical intervention he underwent in 1960, following the creation of a "fistula" earlier that year (Smith, 2013, p. 105).

24. Bess differentiated between the creation of the "opening" that transformed him into a pseudo-hermaphrodite capable of passive-homosexual coital activity, and the operation that would potentially initiate his rejuvenation process. This distinction echoes the contrast Bess articulates between mere "sexual perversion" and the confirmation of Steinach's method of "Altersbekämpfung". Since the establishment of a genital fistula and its dilation were meant to enable the practice of "pervert" coitus, the results were ascertainable within a relatively short term. As regards the "Steinach vasoligature" or "vasoligation" (see Steinach & Loebel, 1952, p. 208) performed during the second operation of 1960, however, the "regenerative quality" it was supposed to bring about could only be determined over a period of several months. Signally, the report on his sexual life Bess wrote for John Money abounds in details concerning the "pervert" aspect of his demarche, but has hardly anything to say about the rejuvenation process. To judge by the available pictures of Bess from the years following the operation, his physical condition does not seem to have improved in the long run. Some of the "hundreds of letters" to Schapiro (Smith, 2013, p. 43) that still await publication may or may not contain relevant information in this connection. The post-surgery published letters reflect Bess's enthusiasm about his new sexual status as a pseudo-hermaphrodite, while signaling a marked decrease in his initial expectancy of rejuvenation. In connection with the sexual consequences of Bess's surgery, it is of interest to note that *The Science of Life* offered elaborations on sex hormones in the chapter "What determines sex," which immediately follows the discussion on Steinach's work. Since a passage included in the chapter allows to set Steinach's experimental claims in a broader zoological framework relevant to Bess's pursuits, it bears being quoted *in extenso*:

"So far as structure goes, we vertebrates begin our embryonic lives not as males, nor as females (nor even as neutrals), but as both. Our chromosome constitution is determined, it is true; the double X or single X has already decided for female or male. Nevertheless, the sexual organs themselves remain still male-female—hermaphrodite. When the sexual apparatus first develops it consists of a single pair of gonads (which will become either ovaries or testes), but for the rest, in the ducts, for example, between gonads and exterior, it has rudiments of both sexes. It has a foot in both camps" (Wells, Huxley, Wells, 1931, vol. II, p. 565).

25. Eugen Steinach's aim was to bring about human rejuvenation, not to create pseudo-hermaphrodites. It was Bess, who, linking humanity's immemorial history of genital incisions and mutilations with the hermaphroditic ideal of the Jungian unconscious, came up with the idea of establishing a pseudo-vulval opening at his peno-scrotal angle before proceeding with the actual Steinach vasoligation. Furthermore, Bess was the one who related the concrete implementation of the hermaphroditic ideal to the attainment of rejuvenation, and "his theory of immortality" (Haskell, 1981, p. 1).²¹ Considering Bess's conception of pseudo-

²¹ Michael Brenson has pointed out that Bess regarded hermaphroditism as "the road to *immortality*" (Brenson, 1988, May 1, p. 2; emphasis added). Furthermore, in his contribution to the *LGBTQ Encyclopedia* article, Richard G. Mann underscored that Bess "believed that the physical fusion of genders within his own body would [...] reveal the secrets of *immortality* to the human race as a whole" (Mann, 2005, p. 3; emphasis added). Both authors however have failed to note that, for Bess, the concept immortality does not imply an afterlife survival, but a this-worldly access to timelessness through same-sex coital ecstasy and the ensuing enhancement of creativity. Thus, writer Michael Ennis aptly pointed to Bess's conception that painting constitutes "the Great Means through Therapy in which the individual may become keyed to the Eternal" (quoted in Ennis, 1982, June, p. 6). Aside from their Jungian aura, Ennis's precisions seem to evoke the work of William Blake, a poet and artist from whom Bess never deemed necessary to distance himself, as in the case of Jung. Blake's presence in Bess's writerly and painterly output can hardly be overlooked. Here it suffices to mention a line from

hermaphroditism, it is noteworthy that *The Science of Life* provided him with an abundance of information concerning the post-Darwinian epistemic trend toward relativizing the compartmentations of sexual taxologies. Reflecting the stand of sexology in the late 1920s, the four-volume work included detailed discussions on issues like natural gynanders, sexual variability, sex reversal and intersexuality, which were still pertinent as Bess began, twenty years later, his personal research on these matters. Against this backdrop, it is apposite to call to mind that Magnus Hirschfeld, who had closely worked with Steinach, furnished his 1896 formulated premise concerning the universalization of hermaphroditism with a thorough epistemic foundation in the already mentioned *Geschlechtskunde* (1926-1930). Although *The Science* seems at times to evoke the "sexuelle Zwischenstufenlehre" (doctrine of sexual intermediary degrees) propounded by Hirschfeld, it nowhere comes close to his thorough deconstruction of sexual taxologies. In principle, Hirschfeld's Darwinian-based sexology would have allowed Bess to grasp his own sexual constitution as just one of the potentially infinite sexual variations that ensue from the individual's unique blendings of the male/female polarity (see Bauer, 2002, December). Perhaps more importantly though, Hirschfeld's critical approach of traditional sexologies might have encouraged Bess to revise his hypostatization of the hermaphrodite, which, being unattainable in the empirical world, led him to opt for its merely fake emulation. For Hirschfeld, hermaphroditism was not an eschatological, but a thoroughly natural condition that voids the need for purportedly non-hermaphrodites to settle for an imitation of the real thing. At the antipodes of Hirschfeld's universalization of sexual intermediariness, Bess sought to validate his path toward the emulation of the hermaphroditic ideal by reinterpreting Judeo-Christian, alchemical-Cabbalistic

Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* that could stand as epigraph to Bess's artistic self-interpretation: "Eternity is in love with the productions of time" (Blake, 1988, p. 36).

sources and their modern Jungian exegesis.²² Despite the scope of his historical research, Bess remained, in the last resort, unaware of Rabbi Yirmiyah ben Eleazar's unsettling teaching: הַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא אֶת אָדָם הָרִאשׁוֹן, אֲנִדְרוּגִינוּם בְּרָאוּ (*B'reshith Rabba*, 8, 1).

26. Although Magnus Hirschfeld does not mention Rabbi Yirmiyah by name in *Geschlechtskunde*, he does refer to rabbinical teachings that encompass his minority position on the First Man—אָדָם הָרִאשׁוֹן—. Thus, against the backdrop of the Mishnaic and Kabbalistic interpretations of Genesis 1, 27, Hirschfeld concluded that Adam as well as the Holy One himself are to be conceived of as androgynous: "Es ist ja auch klar, daß wenn Gott den Menschen, also Mann und Weib, nach seinem Ebenbild schuf, er selbst auch zugleich männlich und weiblich aufgefaßt werden muß" (Hirschfeld, 1926, p. 485).²³ While Hirschfeld obviously did not ground his sexology on Jewish sacred texts, but on the Darwinian science of evolution, he was distinctly aware of the convergence between the Kabbalistic *Wirkungsgeschichte* of Rabbi Yirmiyah's *androgynos*-teaching and his own sexological premise concerning the sexual intermediariness of all human beings. Thus viewed, what the ancient rabbinical doctrine of androgyny considered to be the pristine, creational condition of Adam's sexuality, converges with Hirschfeld's science-based contention regarding the *Zwittertum* (hermaphroditism) of all humans.²⁴ This

²² C. G. Jung's tendency to deemphasize the differences between Jewish and Christian alchemy certainly influenced the way Bess articulated the premises of his weltanschauung. As a corrective to Jung's partiality in this regard, see the chapters "Kabbalah and Alchemy: A Reconsideration" and "A Profile of Jewish Alchemy" in Raphael Patai's classic volume *The Jewish Alchemists. A History and Source Book* (Patai, 1994, pp. 152-169; 517-523).

²³ For a recent treatment of the Holy One's androgyny, see Sameth, 2020.

²⁴ Hirschfeld's core stance on the issue is of special interest given that the Talmud refers to forms of sexes/genders that suggest the inherent inadequacy of categorizing all sexed individuals according to the male/female disjunction. See in this connection: אַנְדְרוּגִינוּם ('Androgynos) /

accordance is less surprising than it at first seems to be, if one considers that there is nothing in traditional Judaism that would correspond to what Christians call "original sin," the ur-fault successively transmitted as an integral part of the very humanity of every individual. There being no initial lapsus with collective consequences that would tarnish the inheritance of the First Adam's pristine hermaphroditic nature, no reason can be invoked for assuming that historic humanity ceased at some point to be hermaphroditic. These mytho-historical considerations are meant to put in perspective Bess's assumption that, not being a born hermaphrodite, he could only aspire to become a *modus deficiens* of the original preserved in the unconscious. Since, on Bess's premises, the creational purity of the first human being was lost in post-lapsarian times, corporeal hermaphroditism eventually became a matter of mere teratology or nosology. Incapable of returning to the ante-lapsarian condition, Bess could only opt for the second-best alternative of hermaphroditic mimesis by means of surgery. On Bess's Christian-anchored assumptions, the once lost creationist design of humanity is recuperated in form of a post-Cristian soteriology, which, going against Jungian strategies of redemptive utopization or indefinite procrastination, seeks to realize the *eschaton* in the immediacy of the present.

27. *The Science of Life* seems to have either awoken or reinforced Bess's interest in C. G. Jung's psychoanalytical approach of symbolism. Premising in general that "Sigmund Freud's name is as cardinal in the history of human thought as Charles Darwin's" (Wells, Huxley, Wells, 1931, vol. IV, p. 1368), the fourth volume of the work discusses under the heading "Psycho-analysis" the contributions of Freud and his two renegade disciples, Alfred Adler (1870-1937) and C. G. Jung. Despite its tribute to Freud, the chapter praises Jung's

Hermaphrodite, (5734 / 1974); Dzmura, 2010a; Dzmura, 2010b; Fonrobert, 2007; Ladin, 2019.

theoretical approach for "go[ing] further" than his teacher. As a characteristic passage maintains,

"He [Jung] has enlarged our notion of the Unconscious. He finds in it not merely our conflicts and repressed desires, but also the source of our inspirations and higher impulses, to make it, in the coarse, regrettable, but illuminating words of an anti-Freudian critic, a well-spring, not merely a cess-pool" (Wells, Huxley & Wells, 1931, vol. IV, p. 1365).

Expanding on the same basic idea, the co-authors point out:

"Jung has attempted to do fuller justice to the complexity of the mind than either of his rivals. For him, it is a general urge of life, rather than the particular urge of sex [in the Freudian sense] or mere self-assertion [as contended by Adler], which drives us on towards finer adaptation and fuller satisfactions" (Wells, Huxley & Wells, 1931, vol. IV, p. 1366).²⁵

Since by 1954 Bess had finished both the "Ballet" letters and the "Thesis" manuscript, the books by Jung published in English and relevant to Bess's concerns were basically two: *The Psychology of the Unconscious* (Jung, 1916) and *Psychology of Religion* (Jung, 1938). It is thus rather puzzling that Chuck Smith mentions "*The Collected Works of C. G. Jung, Vol. 1-20*" in his list of books which Bess "referred to

²⁵ In view of the assessment of Jung in *The Study*, it is apposite to remind that the enlargement of the notion of the Unconscious by C. G. Jung went *pari passu* with his depotentiation of human sexuality. Reflecting Jung's position in this regard, the book by Jolande Jacobi, which was considered for decades the standard introduction to Jung's oeuvre, includes in its index only two subordinate entries related to sexuality: "complementarity of sexes" and "sexual energy" (Jacobi, 1973, pp. 194 and 195), each one remitting to a single passage in the book. The same is true of the entry on "hermaphrodite" (Jacobi, 1973, p. 196). For Bess, Jacobi's book was especially relevant, as it offered a systematic overview on Jung's corpus at a time when several of his most important treatises had not been translated into English.

most frequently" (Smith, 2013, p. 162). Although Smith does not mention the date of their publication, the twenty volumes at stake were ascertainably issued between 1954 and 1990 (Jung, 1954-1990). On this account, Bess could not have referred to the version of Jung's texts on alchemy and religion published in the *Collected Works*, since the volumes containing them (vol. 5, 11, and 12) were issued between 1967 and 1970, more than a decade after Bess had mentioned Jung in his seminal writings.

28. Since by 1954 only volume 17 ("Development of Personality") of the twenty-volume set of Jung's *Collected Works* had been published, Bess had to rely on the already mentioned separate editions of Jung's translated writings when preparing the original manuscript of the "Thesis." Texts by Jung that would have been relevant to Bess's concerns began to be published in the *Collected Works* more than a decade after he had concluded the manifesto: *Symbols of Transformation* (volume 5) was published in 1967; *Psychology and Alchemy* (volume 12) in 1968; and *Psychology of Religion* (volume 11) in 1970 (Jung, 1954-1990). The translations Bess read and quoted were at times at variance with the terminologically unified translations in the *Collected Works* that resulted from the efforts of R. F. C. Hull (1913-1974), an engaged Jungian scholar. These and other bibliographic limitations certainly had a negative impact on the way Bess configured his reception and critique of Jungian psychoanalysis. In this context it is well to remind that Bess was not, as often alleged, an unconditional adept of Jung's premises and theories. Despite his restricted conceptual vocabulary, Bess was very well able to formulate critical objections to Jung's fundamental positions, as becomes apparent in the letter he wrote to President Eisenhower in 1955. For a presumed follower of Jung, it is astounding that Bess rejected outright his concept of psyche in the name of the immanentization of the spiritual within the horizon of the body's temporality (see Bess, 1955).

29. Bess's core dissent with Jung was most convincingly conveyed not in written form, but by his decision to become a pseudo-hermaphrodite.²⁶ The reflective process that underpinned his demarche was nurtured by his intense perusal of the three works already mentioned: the co-authored *The Science of Life* (1931), the popularizing English summary of Eugen Steinach's research published with the editorial assistance of Josef Loebel under the title *Sex and Life* (1951), and the separate English editions of C. G. Jung's treatises which were published from 1916 on. As regards the psychiatrist's compendious oeuvre, Bess benefited from Jolande Jacobi's *The Psychology of C. G. Jung* (Jacobi, 1973), the 1942 English translation of her *Die Psychologie von C. G. Jung. Eine Einführung in das Gesamtwerk* (Jacobi, 1940). For Bess, Jacobi's volume became an indispensable reference work, as it covered areas of Jung's thought that were at the time inaccessible for English-only readers. Drawing on these authors, Bess provided in the extant Preface of his 1954 "Thesis" an overview of his core contentions (see Smith, 2013, p. 83). In important respects, the Preface was supplemented by two programmatic letters Bess addressed to his benefactor and art collector Earle Ludgin (1898-1981) (see Smith, 2013, p. 85), and to his gallerist Betty Parsons (see Smith, 2013, p. 86). In the first paragraph of the Preface, Bess sought to set the issue concerning genital sub-incisions in a world historical perspective, underscoring that the "basic act of mutilation of the male phallus" had already been practiced

²⁶ In *Die Psychologie der Übertragung* (literally: The Psychology of Transference), Jung details:

"Das Selbst als der umfänglichere und ins Zeitlose ragende Mensch entspricht der Idee des Urmenschen, der vollkommen rund und zweigeschlechtlich ist, vermöge der Tatsache, daß er eine wechselseitige Integration vom Bewußtem und Unbewußtem darstellt" (Jung, 1995a, p. 310).

Since Jung, evoking the mytheme of the androgyne in Platon's *Symposion*, declares that it is the idea of the original human being that is totally spherical and ambisexual, Bess will eventually target Jung's hypostatization of the hermaphrodite in a meta-psychological *topos uranios* in the name of the concrete realizability of the pseudo-hermaphrodite in the *hic et nunc*.

by Australian Aborigines and Ancient Egyptians (quoted in Smith, 2013, p. 83). In Bess's line of argument, the long history of phallic woundings furnished the empirical basis for his universal anthropological premise that the maiming act is "projected directly from the unconscious mind of all mankind" (quoted in Smith, 2013, p. 83). As a corresponding passage in the letter to Parsons highlights, "[t]he Australian aborigine responds to the unconscious in this respect" (quoted in Smith, 2013, p. 86). On this kern assumption, Bess will eventually contend that the unconscious-dictated incisions on the male genitals opened up the cultural ambit of symbolic meanings. It is perhaps no coincidence that Bess's male commentators tend to overlook that his psychoanalysis-predicated reconstruction of human history stands and falls with the axiologically asymmetric configuration of sexual difference.

30. Oblivious of the fact that he was writing to a queer woman, Bess begins the "simpl[e]" statement of his theory included in his letter to Betty Parsons by asserting that "[t]he *male* is potentially both male and female – that is he can become a pseudo-hermaphrodite should he so desire – having a vagina – no ovaries" (quoted in Smith, 2013, p. 86; emphasis added).²⁷ Disregarding Parsons's female status and

²⁷ Considering Bess's own words, it is clear that the performed chiralurgical interventions were not intended to transform him into a transgender or transsexual female. Notwithstanding his interest in the research and experimentation conducted by Austrian endocrinologist Eugen Steinach (1861-1944) regarding testicular transplantations on female animals, Bess considered neither castration nor the replacement of the male gonad by ovarian tissue as a means to bring about the sexual transformation he sought after. On principle, the aim of Bess's endeavors excluded the mere substitution of one term of the sexual dichotomy by another. Bess strove, rather, after the lived deployment of the tensional polarity suggested by the Greek etymologies of *hermaphroditism* and *androgyny* in his own corporeal individuality. In view of the radicality of Bess's fundamental sexual aspiration, it is apposite to remark, however, that in the written materials made accessible to date, Bess gives no sign of being concerned with the then purely speculative or, at the most, science-fictional possibility that a human male could become a mother. Signally, the epistemic horizon of Bess's quest and questioning was eventually

budding feminist propensities, Bess declared that the hermaphrodite has always been presented in art as "the perfect state of *man* – the ideal" (quoted in Smith, 2013, p. 86; emphasis added). The term *man* as utilized by Bess in this context is not a designation for the collective human species. Rather, it is meant to denote the non-female human being capable of approaching the hermaphroditic ideal by undergoing a surgical intervention designed to create a quasi-vaginal opening that transforms him into an hermaphrodite with failing ovaries. In the second point of the "condensed form or outline" of Bess's "Thesis," which is included in his letter to Earle Ludgin, the artist insists that "the state of the pseudo-hermaphrodite [is] the desirable and intended state of man" (quoted in Smith, 2013, p. 85). Since the ideal of the male hermaphrodite dictated by the unconscious remains forever unattainable, a partial conciliation of idea and reality can only be envisaged if the male suffices himself with the imitative, derivative and lastly unnatural mark that establishes his new sexual condition. As an heir and continuator of the age-old scheme of sexual binarity, Bess was unable to find in nature the conjunction of the sexual opposites that haunts the human psyche as the nemesis of the distorting dichotomization of the sexes in history. The hermaphrodite is thus banned from nature only to return as the mandate to overcome nature by creating culture. The repressed hermaphroditic condition comes back with the aid

transformed as Robert Winston, a renown British gynecologist and researcher, elaborated on the issue of male pregnancies in a prognostic chapter about "Challenging techniques" in his book *The IVF Revolution* (Winston, 1999, pp. 186-207). After depicting the medical technologies necessary to bring about such pregnancies, Winston concluded in all desirable clarity: "There is no doubt that men could get pregnant" (Winston, 1999, p. 207). At the same time, Winston underscored: "Effectively, our man could suffer all the risks of an advanced and most dangerous form of ectopic pregnancy" (Winston, 1999, p. 207). The first to benefit from this kind of medical breakthrough will probably be women who, despite their female status from an external-anatomical and legal point of view, are genetic males and were therefore born without a womb.

of proto-historical techniques of male genital mutilations that allow the masculine human being to at least resemble the *de facto* unachievable ideal. At this stage of Bess's elaborations, the advantages of Darwin's and Hirschfeld's conception of hermaphroditism become apparent, inasmuch as it uncovers the sheer pointlessness of looking for the hermaphrodite in a eschatological or psychoanalytical *topos ouranios*, when all it takes is a sufficiently empirical-oriented mindset to perceive what was there to be seen all along: the ineradicable hermaphroditism of male and female human beings as the progeny of androgynes and gynanders. Against this backdrop, the critique of Bess's patriarchal (or more precisely: phallo-centric) contention that art has ever depicted the theme of male genital mutilation as a requirement emerging from the human unconscious becomes undeferrable.

31. Bess focuses in the second paragraph of the Preface on his "belief" that art "depicts" and the artist "illustrates" the male mutilation myth marking the origin of culture. In Bess's summary of the mythic narrative, "the hero descends to the underworld, finds the sleeping princess, awakens her, and they live forever in happiness" (quoted in Smith, 2013, p. 83). What appears to be an encounter with the hero's sexual other is, in truth, the exploration of the hero's own Self as an inflection of the mythical Cosmic Man containing in himself everything that exists and can be known. The "princess" is thus not an embodiment of feminine alterity, but the recondite part of the hero's male Self, whose mutilation allows the feminine to emerge as a mask of his wounded and bleeding genitals. As a figuration of the maimed phallus, the "princess" evinces itself as the paroxysm of masculinity parading as its obverse in the unconscious of the hero's otherwise self-transparent Self. The hero's descent *ad inferos* becomes a journey into the abyss of his Self that hides the fake-alterity of the "princess" ready for embracement as soon as the hero's maleness reconciles itself with the need to perform the effeminizing cut. Accordingly, in Bess's frame of mind, the masculine genital physiology becomes the

substratum of a vulval fistula that enables male/male coital intercourse between the pseudo-hermaphrodite and a penetrating male. Although Bess does not mention in the Preface his own self-mutilation attempts of 1952, his parsing of what he considered humanity's ur-myth conveys the reasoning behind his surgical deeds. Bess's unswerving longing to become a pseudo-hermaphrodite as "the state desirable to the unconscious mind of man" (quoted in Smith, 2013, p. 85) substantiates what Hungarian psychoanalyst and anthropologist Geza Róheim (1891-1953) regarded as the human core paradox of becoming one's own sexual alterity. As his 1943 treatise *The Origin and Function of Culture* declares in this regard, "[m]an is constitutionally attempting the constitutionally impossible" (Róheim, 1943, p. 99).

32. Before turning to the third paragraph of the Preface, which focuses on the correlation between the cultural articulations of the hermaphroditic ideal and the physiology of the "urogenital system of the male," it is apposite to underline that attempts to cope with the unattainable ambisexual ideal surfaced in the mid-twentieth century not only within psychoanalysis-prone types of discourse, but also as part of a theological strategy to recuperate the rich heterodox Christian tradition concerning hermaphroditism and its intimate connection with Christology. Indeed, in 1955, Lutheran theologian and Jacob Boehme scholar Ernst Benz (1907-1978) published in German a text compilation under the title: *Adam. Der Mythos vom Urmenschen* (literally: Adam. The Myth of the First Man). Signally, the anthology draws on a variety of Christian/Christological speculations concerning the pristine hermaphroditic Adam as a prolepsis of the equally hermaphroditic embodiments of Christian soteriology, including Jesus Christ as the salvific mediator par excellence. Essential to Benz's basic line of argument is that the Adamic-Christological tradition bears the traces of a theological ur-protest against the cleavage of the sexes as a consequence of the prevalent interpretation of the Adamic Man in the Book of Genesis. With an eye on Bess's understanding of pseudo/hermaphroditism, it is noteworthy

that Benz in his anthology refers to theological authors that had discussed the concept of soteriological androgyny in conjunction, for instance, with the inherent femininity of the First Man (Benz, 1955, p. 285), or with the figure of the "holy male virgin" in Christian Sophiology (Benz, 1955, p. 247). Despite having been systematically silenced and suppressed by the Christian churches' official theologies, transgressive views on human androgyny and its soteriological repercussions were examined and debated by authors ranging from Leone Ebreo (ca. 1460-ca. 1525), Jacob Boehme (1575-1624), and Emanuel Swedenborg (1689-1772) to Louis Claude de Saint-Martin (1743-1803) and Nikolaj Berdyaev (1874-1948), the lonely Russian-Orthodox "Rebellious Prophet" (Lowrie, 1960, title page). Converging with psychoanalytical authors that deal with hermaphroditism as an exclusively meta-psychological, non-biological matter, the Christian writers in Benz's anthology deployed creational-eschatological approaches of hermaphroditism with no critical consequences for the conception of sexual difference during the "interregnum" of history or for the present-day normativity of the heterosexual model generally inferred from the Western canons of Revelation.²⁸

33. Since Benz's anthology was not translated into English, Bess remained to a large extent unacquainted with the theological tradition of heterodox Christians concerned with the issue of hermaphroditism from the beginnings of

²⁸ For a brief, more recent treatment of the *Wirkungsgeschichte* of Adamic androgyny since the turn to the nineteenth century, see the chapter "Androgynie d'Adam-Ève dans la Genèse et exégèses" in: Le Mens, 2019, pp. 236-243. As regards Magali Le Mens's analytical standpoint, it is worth noting that her encompassing volume includes a chapter on "Darwin et les Mamelons" (Le Mens, 2019, pp. 154-156) and occasionally remits to Magnus Hirschfeld's work, but fails to relate Darwin's universalization of hermaphroditism among the higher vertebrates to Hirschfeld's general doctrine concerning the sexual intermediary degrees, according to which all human beings are, as he hinted in his very first sexological treatise of 1896, without exception "Zwitter" (hermaphrodites) (see Bauer, 1998; Bauer, 2012).

Modernity to the twentieth century. In a way, the spirit of this tradition was unwittingly prolonged by Bess's own post-Christian speculations. While certainly not having benefited from Benz's book directly, Bess possibly came across references to it in the work of Norman O. Brown (1913-2002), one of the very few twentieth-century thinkers with the intellectual intrepidity to set the problem of androgyny or hermaphroditism at the core of his philosophical anthropology. Brown penned two treatises, which eventually became cult books of the 1968 cultural revolution: *Life Against Death. The Psychoanalytical Meaning of History* (1959) and *Love's Body* (1966). Aside from the unmistakable traces that the compilation of Christian-heterodox texts left in his thought, Brown explicitly referred in *Life Against Death* to Benz's *Adam* as a "first-rate book" (Brown, 1985, p. 310). Although Brown's two main treatises appeared after Bess had concluded in 1954 the first version of his "Thesis," it may well be that the artist—a devouring reader—had Brown's elaborations in mind when addressing his correspondents during the 1960s. Brown's psychoanalytically based version of post-Christianity and his speculations on the Christic figure of the Eschatological Hermaphrodite (see Bauer, 2020b) were (or could have been) very appealing to Bess, who, apart from acknowledging his general religious inclinations, interwove elements of the Gospel's narrative with crucial events in his life. Signally, Bess reported having had the first of the many visions that punctuated his life "on Eastern morning" of 1915, at age four (quoted in Yau, 1989, p. 24; see *Forrest Bess*, 1988, n/p, ["Chronology"]; *Forrest Bess*, 1989, p. 12). Much later, in a letter written in the Winter of 1952 to Meyer Schapiro, Bess described the circumstances of the genital mutilation that he performed on himself without anesthesia but having gotten himself "good and drunk" (quoted in Smith, 2013, p. 67). After mentioning that the procedure was at first not too painful, Bess went on to report,

"The great fear was cutting the upper part of the urethra [...]. I hacked away, scared as hell. A terrific cramp came

in my side, the razor blade slipped from my hand and I was knocked on the floor. What had happened I don't know, except I then knew these words - 'This is the way that Christ died -' The unconscious energies then flooded in and I went to the doctor [...]" (quoted in Smith, 2013, p. 67).

At the nadir of physical pain, the cultural Christian Bess adopted the Neoplatonic-Christological sequence of kenosis and apotheosis to articulate his passage from the experience of agony to the irruption of bliss.

34. As an assiduous reader of poetry, Bess knew about the functional interchangeability of God, Jesus, and Man in the work of William Blake.²⁹ On this assumption, Bess eventually dispensed with God and Jesus in order to assign to the Ideal Hermaphroditic Man arising from the unconscious the protagonist role in his universal mytheme of self-wounding. As a proponent of the ideality of hermaphroditic maleness that sustains the emulative deeds of self-mutilating pseudo-hermaphrodites, Bess took over and transformed the Christian regime of patriarchal sexuality, inasmuch as the mimesis of the unconscious ideal can only be performed by males, whose mutilated or wounded phalluses mark the locus of an ersatz vulval opening. Of necessity, women are excluded from playing the role of active subjectivities in Bess's cultural soteriology, since the desired hermaphroditic state presupposes the "anatomical structures of the urogenital system of the *male*" (quoted in Smith, 2013, p. 83; emphasis added). Thus, from the perspective of Bess's patriarchal gaze,

²⁹ In "The Laocoön" (ca. 1826), William Blake remarked:

"The Eternal Body of Man is THE IMAGINATION,

God himself ¶

that is

|| יע[ר]ש [Yeshua] JESUS: we are his Members.

the Divine Body ¶

It manifests itself in his Works of Art (In Eternity All is Vision)" (Blake, 1988, p. 273).

biology is destiny preventing women from becoming pseudo-hermaphroditic heroes in humanity's cultural saga. It goes without saying that Bess never coped with the cultural asymmetry resulting from his conception of the female's penile absence. On the contrary, Bess persisted in his efforts to trace down throughout the ambits of cultural creativity cases pointing to the envisioned Male Hermaphrodite. Accordant with his stance on the male's physiological privilege, Bess's Hermaphrodite is an androgyne, by no means a gynander. Consequently, there is nothing in Bess's mytho-empirical horizon of thought that would correspond to what American sexual researcher Alfred Kinsey (1894-1956) termed the *female phallus* (see Bauer, 2007; Bauer, 2008).

35. In the Preface and in the letters to Earle Ludgin and Betty Parsons, Bess took a stance on the epistemic postulation correlating the ideal hermaphroditic state with the male genital system. As to Bess's involvement in the genesis of the idea, the third paragraph of the Preface asserts in all desirable clarity: "I do not in any way feel that I have made a great discovery" (quoted in Smith, 2013, p. 83). Further on, Bess maintains that medicine is the scientific discipline called to make the discovery at stake in the future. However, since Bess contends in the same context that "the human body belonged to the artist long before medicine was in its infancy" (quoted in Smith, 2013, p. 83), he appears to suggest that artists had an intuitive sense of what medical science will eventually transform into an epistemic certainty. Being an artist lacking any kind of medical training or expertise, Bess could only adumbrate the progression from the immemorial artistic intuition of the correlation to its proper scientific articulation. In the letter to Ludgin, Bess follows a similar line of thought when he posits that "Alchemy was a study of primitive endocrinology," and that "Art, itself, is a symbolic representation of endocrinology" (quoted in Smith, 2013, p. 85). With regard to the science of medicine proper, Bess was keen to distinguish between what he considers an accomplished medical discovery from its

practical consequences. As Bess further contends in this regard, "[t]he Jungian-Steinach theory will come into the state of being a fact, if not through American medicine then perhaps someone else" (quoted in Smith, 2013, p. 85). Contrasting with the hope for a solid epistemic framework Bess expresses in the Preface, his personal letter to Ludgin acknowledges that the combination of Jung's psychoanalytical take on the androgyne with Steinach's experimental rejuvenation through androgynization is the actual theoretical groundwork he had been expecting. The practical implementation of the new episteme, however, was still missing. In this regard, Bess mentions two possible agents capable of undertaking the application of the theory: "American medicine" and "someone else." In his programmatic letter to Parsons, Bess comes close to identifying this *someone else* when he details: "the artist once he becomes a fanatic in his field may have the strength to go beyond theory alone and bring such a thing [i.e., the carnal pseudo-hermaphrodite] into being" (quoted in Smith, 2013, p. 86). This subtly self-referential passage written about two years after his initial two-step self-mutilation sheds light on Bess's assessment of the role he played regarding the application of the so-called "great discovery." Belying Jung's understated complaints, Bess was not prone to raise claims of theoretical originality (see Smith, 2013, p. 93). Despite being realistic in his personal self-assessment, Bess outrageously apotheosized masculinity as the quintessentially human.

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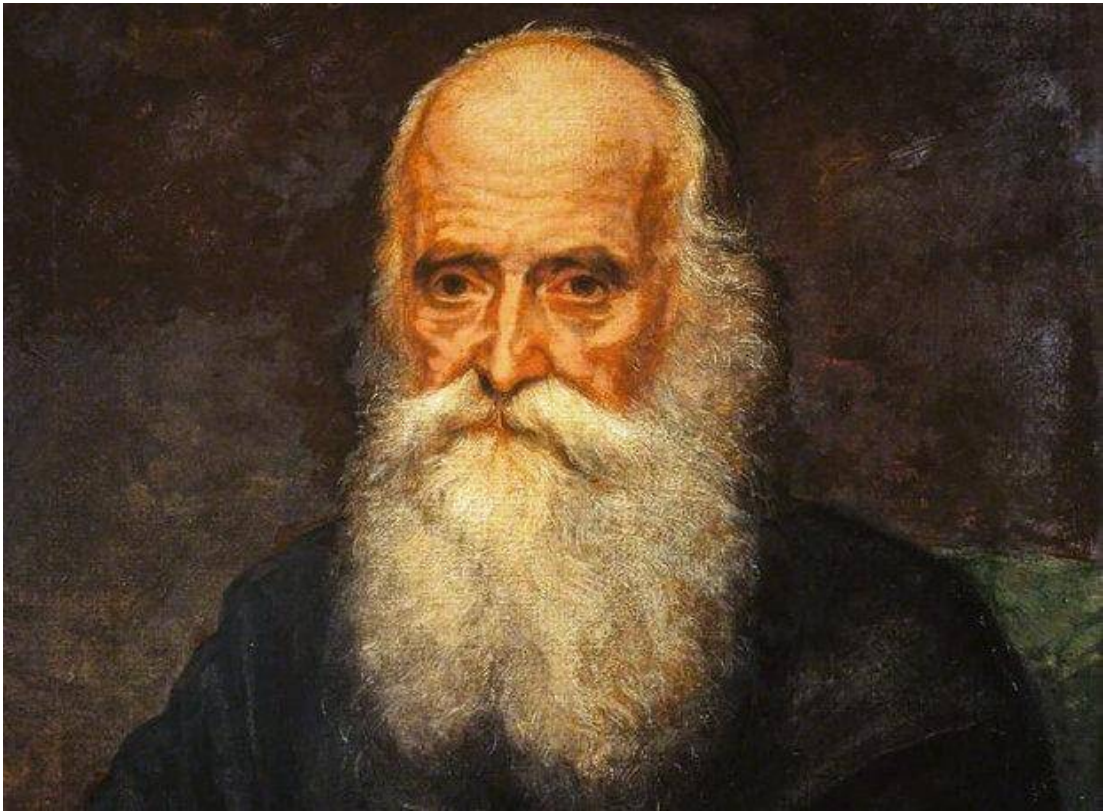
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Forrest Bess: *The Hermaphrodite.*
Oil on canvas. Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA.



Impact of the Platonic work *Definitiones* on the work of Kairis *Θεοσοφικαὶ Γνώμαι καὶ Ὑποθῆκαι ἢ Θεοσεβικὰ Ἀναγνώσματα*

Abstract

We present in this article the structure and content similarity between the work of Kairis *Θεοσοφικαὶ γνώμαι καὶ Ὑποθῆκαι ἢ Θεοσεβικὰ Ἀναγνώσματα* and the Platonic (or pseudo-Platonic) work *Definitiones* [*Ὅροι*]. The work of Kairis follows an explicit lexicographical structure, where he sets a series of heading terms, such as *θεοσεβίος*, *σοφάρετος*, *δίκαιος*, *ἅγιος*, *ἀγάθιος*, *σθένιος*, *ἀγάπιος* etc., analyzed subsequently through a number of exemplary cases. Taking into account the thorough and deep study of the Platonic texts by Kairis and the specific terminological form of the work *Definitiones*, it is reasonable to juxtapose the descriptions of the similar terms in order to shed light to a probable impact of the Platonic ideas to the conceptual scheme of the Kairis' system of Theosebism. In any way, such an analysis can show possible interrelations of Platonic and Theosebic terms, which could be meant and conveyed by a man of the knowledge level of Kairis.

Keywords: Theophilos Kairis, Platonic *Definitiones*, Theosebism, *Θεοσοφικαὶ γνώμαι καὶ Ὑποθῆκαι ἢ Θεοσεβικὰ Ἀναγνώσματα*

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1. Introduction

The dominant view about the turn of the 19th century Greek society to its ‘glorious past’ is characterized as utopian, artificial and culturally forced by the European Enlightenment revival of the Greek spirit of pure reason. This turn, though abrupt, was a key attitude for the homogenization of the chaotic perceptions that circulated in the pre-revolutionary and post-revolutionary Greece, as the ancient Greek civilization had a tremendous power penetrating any intellectual or practical field and also was akin to the Greek people through the language continuity.

There was a number of scholars, usually educated in the spirit of European Enlightenment, who believed deeply in the ‘renaissance’ of the nation based on the fertility of the ancient Greek spirit, not in a naïve way, but enriched by the new ideas of math and physics emerged in the West. In this category belong men such as Adamantios Korais, Benjamin of Lesvos and Iosipos Moisioudax but the most distinctive personality holding extended knowledge of both ancient wisdom and modern science was Theophilos Kairis.

Kairis was a holistic person, who was not restricted to the theoretical study, but he also tried to apply his ideas for the revival of the Greek nation, whose people had been exhausted after centuries of the monolithic Christian perspective and the subsequent Ottoman occupation. As Pletho, he was inspired by the philosophical and scientific achievements and practices of ancient Greeks in order to establish a new educational system named *Theosebism*. Following also the strategy of Iosipos Moisioudax he combined the classical studies with the recent discoveries of natural sciences, presenting a complete system, which had a short lifespan due to its blockage by the authority of the Orthodox Church.

In this article we try to shed light on his key ideas of *Theosebism*, as they are presented in the form of a catalogue of terms, in his work *Θεοσεβικαὶ γνώμαι καὶ Ὑποθήκαι ἢ Θεοσεβικὰ Ἀναγνώσματα* (to be mentioned further shortly as

Υποθήκαι) relating them to the corresponding terms of the Platonic catalogue of *Definitiones*.

We will be based on Code Marc. Gr. Z. 189 Bessarionis, possessed by Biblioteca Marciana of Venice, which includes the whole corpus of the Platonic texts and among them *Definitiones* (Coll.704, foli 392-94 Platonis). We have already presented¹ analytically the content of the terms of this manuscript as opposed to the widely used publication of Immanuel Bekker (*Platonis Dialogi ex recensione Immanuelis Bekker*, Berolini, 1816-1823). We will mention also the Bekker version, wherever there is a significant difference, which can enlighten our comparison between Kairis and Plato.

2. About Kairis, his work *Θεοσοφικαὶ γνῶμαι καὶ ὑποθήκαι* and Platonic *Definitiones*

Kairis (1784-1853) was a Greek scholar and philosopher, born in Andros, Cyclades, Ottoman Greece. He was a polymath, knowing ancient Greek and Latin and speaking English, French, Italian and German. He studied many works of the Age of Enlightenment, especially in the fields of mathematics, natural sciences and philosophy. He founded a mystical system, known as Theosebism, based on rationalistic views about God, influenced by the Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy, intertwined with the ideas of Enlightenment. He has been said to be a deist. This cannot be fully accepted, since a central issue in his system is the communication of human and God, a situation alien to the deists. The great influence of Enlightenment upon Kairis concerns his radical rationalism and his great interest on the study and teaching of mathematics, natural sciences and astronomy. We should also refer to his orientation to practical scientific applications, such as navigation, agriculture and accounting. Kairis

¹ Griva A., Dendrinou M., “The Definitions of Plato in Bessarion Codex: another version of the Platonic work through the manuscript of Bessarion”, 46th Conference of Panhellenic Union of Philologists (PEF): Byzantium: History and Civilization, 7 - 9 of Nov. 2019, Corinth, Greece.

established an orphanage in Andros, aiming at the education of the children from the beginning with the modern European ideas, where he and his disciples offered an advanced curriculum enriched with mathematics, physics and practical branches, along with elements of comparative religion, a thing that enraged the conservative Orthodox Church. The Church, in front of prospective dangers for its status, persecuted Kairis, managed to imprison him, leading to his death in the prison in Hermoupolis, Syros.

Among the works that present his philosophical theory of Theosebism is *Υποθήκαι*. In this work the author describes specific terms which refer to moral human properties, such as *θεοσέβιος*, *ἀγάπιος*, *σοφάρετος* etc. Each of the terms is followed by a number of maxims, which enlighten their importance as well as some other concepts connected to them. These maxims show remarkable similarities of the concepts to be described with the moral terms in *Definitiones*. Therefore, though *Υποθήκαι* does not contain explicit definitions, as in the case of *Definitiones*, its maxims is based in a series of terms, which can be examined in contradistinction to the relative terms of *Definitiones*.

Definitiones is a work of the Platonic corpus, generally considered as spurious and written by Speusippus, the successor of Plato in the Academy. This fact –if it is really so– does not decrease its great value, since it impresses the dominant perception of the Platonic School concerning the crucial concepts of its worldview. It contains 183 definitions of moral or ontological terms.

The Kairis' maxims, though they are not definitions per se, they are constructed in a strict rationalistic form, as Kairis considered that the moral precepts would be ineffective if they were not understood by the disciples and a deep understanding could not be achieved but through a rigorous structure. Thus, it is not unreasonable to suggest that Kairis, as a profound Platonist, had studied *Definitiones*, the most relative work of the wider Platonic corpus –comprising either authentic or plausible dialogues– focused on the definition of the moral terms. We have chosen for mutual analysis between *Υποθήκαι* and *Definitiones* mainly a certain version

of *Definitiones* (Code Marc. Gr. Z. 189 Bessarionis/ Coll.704, foli 392-94 Platonis) and for some terms (*Σώσιος - Σώζειν*)². Our recent comparative study of the two versions showed that the Bessarionis version offers an approach of the states and the operations of the human being closer to the traditional Socratic/ Platonic view, while Bekker version had been published in that period, becoming later widely known. Thus, Bessarionis version was selected as our main point of reference for issues as the nature of human, its virtuous core, the right way of education, the necessity of parallelization between individual virtue and social harmony and the ontological role of the fortune.

Υποθήκαι, along with other works of Kairis (*Θεοσεβῶν προσευχαὶ καὶ ἱερά ἄσματα, Λόγος ἐκφωνηθεὶς παρὰ τοῦ διδασκάλου Θ. Καΐρου εἰς τὴν ἔναρξιν τῶν μαθημάτων τῆς Β' Τριετίας, Γνωστικὴ ἢ τῶν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου γνώσεων σύντομος ἔκθεσις*) are related to his attempt to form an educational system based on the principles of his theory. Through the rationalistic purity of the expression of *Υποθήκαι* the disciples could understand the interrelation of the moral properties in order to both construct a character compatible with the principles of Theosebism and realize the mystical but existent relation between human and the eternal divine, which is governed by the same principles and properties.

3. Comparative search of the terms in *Definitiones* and *Θεοσοφικαὶ γνῶμαι καὶ ὑποθήκαι ἢ θεοσοφικὰ ἀναγνώσματα*.

In the beginning of the Kairis' work, he shows the way his text was used in groups of reading or ceremonies, where the disciple should select two or three of the theosebic readings (*θεοσοφικὰ ἀναγνώσματα*) included in the collection, in order to meditate upon them. Each theosebic reading

² We have located important conceptual differences between them, either in the content itself or in their different punctuation and paragraph division (Anna Griva, Markos Dendrinis, *ibid*).

concerns one term, such as *θεοσέβιος*, *σοφάρετος* etc. and it includes various philosophical or metaphysical propositions related to the meaning of the term to be described.

Next an extended table is given with two columns, the first one with the Kairis' terms and the relative phrases and the second one with the corresponding term of the Platonic *Definitiones* and the relative definition.

Kairis' <i>Theosebic readings</i> (<i>Υποθήκαι</i>)	Platonic <i>Definitiones</i>
<p><i>Θεοσέβιος</i> (someone who respects God)</p> <p>...ὁ θεοσεβῆς... προσκομίζει τῷ θεῷ δικαιοσύναν</p> <p>θεοῦ ἄγνοια θάνατος ἐστὶ ψυχᾶς</p>	<p><i>Εὐσέβεια</i> (piety)</p> <p>δικαιοσύνη περὶ θεοῦς</p> <p>ὀρθὴ ἐπιστήμη τῆς περὶ θεοῦ τιμῆς</p>
<p><i>Σοφάρετος</i> (someone with the virtue of wisdom)</p> <p>αἰτία δὲ πάντων τῶν κακῶν... ἅ τοῦ θεοῦ ἄγνοια</p> <p>πᾶσα ἐπιστήμη χωριζομένα ἀρετᾶς πανουργία</p> <p>κακόν μέγιστον τὰ περὶ τὸν θεὸν ἀγνοεῖν</p> <p>ὁ θεός ἐστὶν ὁ διδάσκων τὸ λυσιτελές</p> <p>ἅ ἀλήθεια ἐλευθερώσει σε</p> <p>μόνος ὁ θεοσεβῆς ἐλεύθερος ὑπάρχει</p>	<p><i>Σοφία</i> (wisdom)</p> <p>ἐπιστήμη τῶν ἀεὶ ὄντων</p> <p>ἐπιστήμη θεωρητικὴ τῆς τῶν ὄντων αἰτίας</p> <p><i>Ἀρετή</i> (virtue)</p> <p>ἕξις καθ' ἣν τὸ ἔχον ἀγαθὸν λύεται</p>

<p><i>Δίκαιος</i> (the just man)</p> <p>ἀνὴρ δίκαιος οὐχ ὁ μὴ ἀδικῶν, ἀλλ' ὃς ἀδικεῖν δυνάμενος, οὐ βούλεται</p>	<p><i>Δικαιοσύνη</i> (justice)</p> <p>ἕξις καθ' ἣν ὁ ἔχων, προαιρετικὸς ἐστὶ τῶν φαινομένων αὐτῷ δικαίων</p>
<p><i>Ἅγιος</i> (the holy man)</p>	<p><i>Ἄγνεια</i> (innocence)</p>
<p><i>Ἀγαθὸς</i> (the good man)</p> <p>Παντὶ τῷ προαιρουμένῳ τὸ ἀγαθὸν συνεργεῖ ὁ θεὸς ἐς ἀγαθὸν</p>	<p><i>Ἀγαθόν</i> (what is good)</p> <p>ἀφ' οὗ συμβαίνει ἅ χρῆ αἰρεῖσθαι</p> <p><i>Καλοκαγαθία</i> (good and beautiful)</p> <p>ἕξις προαιρετικῆ τῶν βελτίστων</p>
<p><i>Σθένιος</i> (powerful)</p>	<p><i>Δύναμις</i> (force)</p> <p><i>Ἴσχυς</i> (power)</p>
<p><i>Ἀγάπιος</i> (one who loves)</p> <p>ὁ τὸν θεὸν ἀγαπῶν, πάντως καὶ μιμεῖται αὐτὸν τὸ κατὰ δύναμιν</p> <p>ὁ τὸν θεὸν ἀγαπῶν ἐν παντὶ αὐτὸν καθορᾷ</p>	<p><i>Ἀγάπησις</i> (love)</p> <p>Ἀπόδειξις παντελῆς</p>
<p><i>Χαρίσιος</i> (graceful)</p> <p>ἅ τοῦ θεοῦ χάρις ἀεὶ δᾷ προαιρέσει ἁμῶν παρακολουθεῖ</p>	<p><i>Χάρις</i> (grace)</p> <p>Εὐεργεσία ἐκούσιος</p>
<p><i>Αἰώνιος</i> (one who is eternal)</p>	<p><i>Αἰδίων</i> (what is eternal)</p>

Ἄθάνατοι πᾶσαι αἰ ψυχαὶ...αἷς ἄμεινον ἦν μὴ ἀφθάρτους εἶναι	μὴ διεφθαρμένον
Ἐνθεος (possessed or inspired by a god) ἄθλον ἀρετᾶς μετὰ θεοῦ εἶναι ἅ ἐν θεῷ μακαριότης	Θεός (god) ζῶον ἀθάνατον αὐτάρκες πρὸς εὐδαιμονίαν οὐσία αἰδῖος τῆς τάγαθοῦ φύσεως αἰτία
Σώσιος (savior)	Σώζειν ³ (the act of saving)
Κόλασις (condemnation)	Κόλασις
Αἰώνιος μακαριότης (eternal bliss) Δόξα καὶ τιμὰ καὶ εἰρὰνα παντὶ τῷ ἐργαζομένῳ τὸ ἀγαθόν.	Εὐδαιμονία (bliss) ἀγαθὸν ἐκ πάντων ἀγαθῶν συγκείμενον

The similarity of a great number of terms between the two works can be considered as a reasonable evidence that Kairis had indeed studied the *Definitiones*, extracting all of those terms, that would be useful towards his goal. Especially the terms *σώσιος* (savior) and *σώζειν* (the act of saving) reinforce this view since they are terms not frequently met.

Apart from the importance of the same or nearly same terms exposed and defined in the two works, next we give a description of the relative views of the content of the terms, as they appear in the aforementioned phrases and definitions in the above table. The similarity of the concepts described is

³ The term *σώζειν* is given as one of the terms to be defined not in case of the *Code Marc. Gr. Z. 189 Bessarionis/ Coll.704, foli 392-94 Platonis*, but in the case of the publication of Bekker

one more factor in the support of our opinion of the influence of *Definitiones* upon the thought of Kairis.

Θεοσέβιος-Εὐσέβεια

In both works the *εὐσέβεια* (or *θεοσέβεια*) –the abstract concept resulting from the term *θεοσέβιος*– is defined as the justice addressed to God, in other words, to offer what is pertinent to the godly. Also, the *εὐσέβεια* (*θεοσέβεια*) requires the knowledge of the right attitude against the divine; this is said directly in *Definitiones* and implied in *Υποθήκαι* through the reference to the ignorance of God which is equivalent to the death of the soul.

Σοφάρετος-Σοφία/Αρετή

The compound term *σοφάρετος* implies the necessary combination of wisdom and virtue in a concrete form. In *Definitiones* wisdom is the knowledge of the eternal beings and also the theoretical knowledge of the cause of the beings, where eternal beings and the cause of beings constitute in sum the divine. Similarly, in *Υποθήκαι* the ignorance of the divine is the cause of the evils, while wisdom is the knowledge which exists united with the virtue. In *Definitiones* virtue is what frees anyone who possesses the good; the same liberating power of the virtue upon the being who possesses it, is also declared in *Υποθήκαι* with relevant etymological terms, such as *ἐλευθερώσει*, *ἐλεύθερος* and indirectly in the term *λυσιτελής*.

Δίκαιος-Δικαιοσύνη

In both works the justice requests the intention (*προαίρεσις*), the selection of the just as a result of the free will.

Ἀγάθιος-Ἀγαθόν

In *Υποθήκαι* *ἀγάθιος* is one who has the intention for the good, as it is also in *Definitiones*, where both *ἀγαθόν* and *καλοκαγαθία* constitute the habit resulting from the free selection of the right things.

Ἀγάπιος-Ἀγάπησις

The words *πάντως*, *παντὶ* in *Υποθήκαι* declare the absolute dominion of the love leading to the approach of human to the divine; similarly, in *Definitiones* this is reflected in the full proof (*παντελής ἀπόδειξις*) as the

description of the Platonic love (*ἀγάπησις*), which does not need any other action for the emergence of its absolute value and its ontological superiority.

Χαρίσιος-Χάρις

In both works the concept of intent and free will is decisive for an action, which leads to the attribution of the benefit.

Αιώνιος-Αΐδιος

In both works the terms used are derived from the verb φθείρω (corrupt): *ἄφθαρτος* (incorruptible), *μὴ διεφθαρμένον* (not corrupted), which declare an ontological and moral situation not subject to decay and death.

Ἐνθεος-Θεός

The situation of *ἐνθεος* (one who is possessed or inspired by a god) results from the participation in the divine and is described by the same characteristics as in the *Definitiones*: bliss, beatitude and dependence on the possession of virtue.

Σώσιος-Σώζειν

The term *σώσιος* met in *Ἵποθῆκαι* and *σώζειν* met in *Definitiones* constitutes in our opinion a special evidence of the influence of *Definitiones* on Kairis, due to the particularity of the term. The term *σώζειν* is met as an autonomous term to be defined in the Bekker version of the Platonic work, which could be studied by Kairis. We must keep in mind that in the Bessarionis manuscript version the term *σώζειν* is also met but not as an autonomous term but as a descriptive term within the definition of power (*ἰσχύς*).

Αιώνιος μακαριότης-Εὐδαιμονία

In both works this situation is described as the state of perfectness of a being resulting from the possession of both the virtue and the actions tending to the good.

4. Conclusion

After the parallel study of Kairis' *Ἵποθῆκαι* and Platonic *Definitiones* we have given in this article many clues for the influence of the Platonic terms on the moral characteristics of human personalities, which Kairis tries to define. It is

important to know that the moral characteristics to be defined by Kairis are crucially intertwined with the knowledge, the virtue and the intent, issues directly mentioned in the Platonic ontology.

We hope that the present study will be the stimulus for a wider survey of Kairis' corpus under the light of the Platonic philosophy, as many researchers are interested in the gradual emergence of the various aspects of the thought of that great man of the Greek Enlightenment.

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Other's Caress and God's Passing By. Levinas Encountering Heidegger

Abstract: Based on the differences between Heidegger's immanent ontology and Levinas' transcendent ethics, the paper submits that there is a structural contradistinction also between the Levinasian notion of caress and the Heideggerian notion of God's passage. Whereas for Levinas caress signifies the ethical difference within the subject, the inner dehiscence of the ego, it is not clear that Heidegger's ontological difference can properly account for desire or an ethically deep encounter between persons via the notion of 'co-belonging'. Only the 'God's passage' might come closer to the infinity of caress qua the fundamental ambiguity of the divinity's simultaneous flight and advent. But what is the farthest away cannot be caressed. There is no agape in the divinity's passage. However, there is something the two notions both share: that salvation is not achievable

Keywords: Levinas, Heidegger, ontology, ethics, theology

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1. Setting the scene: Being; Evil; Law

The controversy between Heidegger and Levinas is well known: primacy of ethics for Levinas versus ontological paganism for Heidegger, condemnation of radical Evil for Levinas versus moral agnosticism as to the Evil for Heidegger.¹ On the other hand, there is a peculiar ('moral') law in Heidegger in the form of its absence. As Lyotard has put it, Heidegger's silence as to the Holocaust stems from his own forgetfulness of this Law prior to Being, the law of difference which metaphysics forecloses and silences. Heidegger cannot think this Law, thus he overcomes metaphysics only by forgetting it.² Speaking about Heidegger in contradistinction to Celan on this issue, Lyotard notes:

“Celan’ is neither the beginning nor the end of Heidegger; it is his lack: what is missing in him, what he misses, and whose lack he is lacking”.³

The sole alternative to rationalism Heidegger offers is the proposal to listen to the sonority, the sounding out ('Anklang') of the truth of Being ('hörendes Vernehmen'), beyond platonism and contemplation.⁴ Listening is though

¹ On the controversy between the ethical philosophy of Levinas and the –according to the latter- ‘ontological paganism’ Heidegger’s, see Peperzak, *Beyond*, 212-5. On the ‘lack’ of moral thinking in Heidegger and therefore his ‘incapacity’ of locating and condemning radical Evil, in contrast to Levinas και Jonas, see also Bernstein, *Radical Evil*, 174-87. On the said difference between Levinas and Heidegger, see as well Papacharalambous, ‘Retaliatory punishment’, *passim* and especially at p. 199 and footnote 71.

² Lyotard, *Heidegger and “the jews”*, *passim*. On Heidegger’s ‘unthought’ captivity by the Law, see too Rockmore, ‘Heidegger’s Nazism’, 57; see also Wiehl, ‘Heidegger, hermeneutics and ontology’, *passim* (and especially at pp. 276-8).

³ Lyotard, *Heidegger and “the jews”*, 94. See the respective reference to this phrase by Nancy, *The Banality of Heidegger*, 73.

⁴ Welsch, *Vernunft*, 161. A minimum of theory (*lato sensu*) remains however always in man’s relation to the objects of his/her action, irrespective of any primacy Heidegger ever attaches to non-contemplative

too sublime compared to the Levinasian deconstruction of contemplative regard. Levinas founders more radically into ethical experience through a recourse to unmediated corporeality. Instead of recurring to Dasein which “never feels hungry”, ethical transcendence means skin, caress and eloquent silence.⁵ As Critchley notes:

“Language is originally wordless approach and tactile contact. It is the nudity and aphonia of skin, the taciturn eloquence of the stammer”.⁶

Law is indeed for Heidegger the gift of Being/Nothing like the work of art, the self-presencing of enownings. Law, ontologically perceived, sends signs and only thereof is legal communication possible. Authentic Law is not correct interpretation of texts but signaling.⁷ Contrary to Levinas, Heidegger’s Law is letting alterity come close while maintaining its primordial distance. We are encountered here with ‘eventuations’ prior to any notion of ‘difference’. In Law too, strangeness and the uncanny are presupposed for perceiving the familiar.⁸

Dasein’s dispositions: *ibid*, 883 footnote 90. And of course: nowhere favors Heidegger a ‘sound’ in terms of sensualism; he speaks instead about a ‘resounding’ of Being beyond every ontic echoing, a mute sound, discreet and not deafening, like the sound of Hölderlin’s snowy bell. See respectively, Klaus Neugebauer, ‘Lesen, Hören, Streiten über Kunst. Briefwechsel Heidegger-Bauch, Phänomenologie des Hörens, Heidegger und Nationalsozialismus’, *Heidegger Studies/Heidegger Studien/Études Heideggeriennes* 27 (2011): 228-32, Tzavaras, *Heidegger’s ‘Contributions to Philosophy’*, 161 (and footnote 514), 163 footnote 519.

⁵ Critchley, *The Ethics of Deconstruction*, 179-80.

⁶ *Ibid*, 180.

⁷ Alexander Carnera Ljungström, ‘The Silent Voice of Law: Legal Philosophy as Legal Thinking’, *Law and Critique* VIII (1) (1997): 82-3, 85-8.

⁸ *Ibid*, 89-91. See also Heidegger, *Brief über den Humanismus*, 88, 90, 92. Authentically close remains the unconcealment, Being’s mystery; the language is this coming close, this nearness (*ibid*, 92). For the primordially of the strange in Heidegger, see M. Heidegger, *Aus einem Gespräch von der Sprache*, 74; see also Gemenetzis, ‘Comment’, 233.

2. Two aspects concerning immanence: care vs. caress

Immanence is in both philosophers a field which is not closed up. Nevertheless, they accentuate different dimensions of immanence's openness. Seen inner-worldly, Dasein is for Heidegger a bearer of care. For him the Cartesian 'cogito ergo sum' becomes 'I care then I exist'.⁹ In Levinas, the subject is a sensing subject, a subject of the desire and enjoyment, thus also a non-Cartesian subject, though also a non-caring one in the Heideggerian sense of the term.¹⁰ Hence, whereas, as Dastur points out, Heidegger focuses on finitude as enclosing the ontological difference and thus also alterity, Levinas overcomes finitude through alterity, which is now clearly transcendent. Whereas finitude and facticity of the Dasein are based on mortality according to Heidegger, mortality is for Levinas an accident of the Immortal (as well as sacrifice for Being's sake is murder and death is omission to prevent murder). Thus Levinas upgrades the human, whereas Heidegger downplays 'humanism' in the name of Dasein's attunement to Being.¹¹ Could one say that whereas in Levinas even the 'elements' melt into something ethereal, it is undoubtedly the case with Heidegger that beings and Being are different aspects of the same ontology?

As Heidegger thinks about Being holistically and excludes infinity, he disregards human material needs as an ethical issue.¹² As for Heidegger the 'They' ('das Man') is leveling mediocrity, helping man to get rid of the burden of Being's nothingness, the Other is for Heidegger, contrary to Levinas,

⁹ Steiner, *Heidegger*, 165-7. On the caring nature of intraworldly existence, see Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit (A')*, 100-11 (§12).

¹⁰ Critchley, 'The Original Traumatism. Levinas and psychoanalysis', 235.

¹¹ Maggini, 'Françoise Dastur: A Phenomenology of Finitude', 26 footnote 16, 30-4; Dastur, *Heidegger and the Question of Time*, 40-1. On human existence as finite and historically imbued in contrast to the universalizing reason of Enlightenment, see also Heidegger, 'Vom Wesen der Wahrheit', 166.

¹² Peperzak, *Beyond*, 9-10.

without interest or even annoying.¹³ According to Levinas, Heidegger underestimates language as a face-to-face encounter with the Other, since he considers it either as simple communication of messages or as ontological invariant beyond human subjects (“Language speaks”).¹⁴

According to the late Levinas (of *Otherwise than Being*), caress is sporadically and rather indirectly touched upon through the primacy of the Other. There, sensibility is the diachrony of same and other in psyche, on which any process of ‘thematization’ is parasitic. Psyche is based on the signifyingness of every signification, on the ‘for-the-other’, where the body is extirpated from its conatus, where nudity is passivity and exposure, a giving the very bread one eats.¹⁵ Caress is primordial, as it is dormant in all contact, and contact in all experience, which is from the start incarnate and maternal. Caress turns thematization to the immediacy of proximity.¹⁶ Caress is languor, a seeking of a present absence, a non-coincidence, utmost nakedness, tenderness of skin felt as disparity. Caress is non-intentional, it lies beyond teleology, is disorder, pleasure and pain, pity. Caress is the inordinateness of infinity, a saying undoing thematization. *Caress is beyond being.*¹⁷ Already in *Time and the Other*, Levinas has shown that the very sign of diachrony and alterity is the *feminine* seen as mystery and modesty, as the non-complementary, the incommensurable, origin of the erotic, meant as eventful traumatization which the ego survives. Cuddle, says Levinas already there, is a promise of the future without content, a seeking for the non-appropriable.¹⁸ This impossibility of appropriation is central in *Totality and Infinity* regarding caress. Levinas stresses the

¹³ Papagiorgis, *Martin Heidegger’s Ontology*, 135-6; the author comments in a humoristic manner as to the fact that Heidegger does not thematize ‘psyche’: “Generally, Dasein does not go to the analyst for the very simple reason that it has no ‘psyche’” (*ibid.*, 132-3).

¹⁴ Greisch, ‘Looking metaphysics in the face’, *passim* (and especially at pp. 345-51).

¹⁵ Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 68-72.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 75-81, 191, note 10.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 90, 94.

¹⁸ Levinas, *Die Zeit und der Andere*, 56-61.

fact that the pleasure out of the sexual act does not lead to a disclosure, a solution of a puzzle. What has been concealed before the act remains so. The mystery is not resolved, nothing comes to light. Caress and tenderness are not reducible to numbers and ontic beings.¹⁹

Levinas connotes with caress in *Otherwise than Being* an *inner dehiscence* of the ego, whereby the Other is in me. Contrary to prior analyses in *Time and the Other* and in *Totality and Infinity* where caress meant a desire unappeased, an experience of the ‘ungraspable’, in order to invoke the vulnerability of the Other, in *Otherwise Than Being*, the caress signalizes the vulnerability of the ego, which devoted as it is, is being traumatized by the Beloved, who tears the I apart: the I has the Other in the skin, gets perforated by the Other. *Truth of caress becomes the wound*. Now, Levinas is not willing to diminish the hyperbolic manner of his thinking by trying to thematize caress according to Husserl and Merleau-Ponty, i.e. by recurring through topics like tactile interlace and chiasm back to auto-affection, to self-apperception (‘touching my own flesh’) for grasping the essence of caress. Levinas prioritizes the hetero-affection instead. He wants to show us that before one is tied to his/her own body, one finds oneself already tied to the Other. Hence for Levinas, caress and wound are implied in all contact. One may recur further than Levinas to some notion of archi-alterity and a chasm in me prior to all experience of contact. The flesh of the Other may be seen as part of my flesh because my flesh is already something strange I have to tie myself up with (in order to, then, be myself and contact others).²⁰

Is there a subject of desire in Heidegger as it exists for Levinas, namely as within the ontic field in the form of a spiritual presence appearing through the face? The answer is a clear ‘no’. For Heidegger Being ‘gives’ the man and calls upon him/her, whereas the spiritual presence of the face in

¹⁹ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 333-8.

²⁰ Jacob, Rogozinski, ‘From the caress to the wound’: Levinas’s outrageousness, *Sofia Philosophical Review* III.2 (2009): passim, especially at pp. 46-8.

Levinas never vanishes beyond the world. Man is for Heidegger what Being desires. Man does not desire, he/she only takes care of something.²¹ Contrary to this, for Levinas the face of the Other is a self-giving of the spirit, not of Being.²² Therefore, concepts are for Levinas still acceptable as spiritual gifts, whereas for Heidegger they are violent metaphysical gestures on the presencing of Being.²³

3. What of the Heideggerian ‘Co-belonging’?

Can the notion of ‘co-belonging’ in Heidegger give another answer?

Regarding ‘co-belonging’, the Levinasian constitution of the subject through the Other counters fully Heideggerian ‘Mitdasein’. For Levinas this constitution is prior to any thrownness or decay of the Dasein.²⁴ Even if also for Heidegger ‘co-belonging’ is co-primordial with inner-worldliness and something more than present-at or ready-to-handness, sociality comes out of man’s contact to Being, not from the Other.²⁵ Levinas substitutes the pseudo-mystery of the ‘face of the Other’ for Being’s mystery, arbitrary punctuation for ontological differential continuity. Levinasian ethics is thus parasitical to ontological difference.²⁶ Now, ‘co-belonging’ is for Heidegger the connectedness of primarily singular Dasein(s) in a kind of friendship totally different

²¹ Juranville, *Lacan und die Philosophie*, 175-9.

²² *Ibid*, 527-32.

²³ *Ibid*, 572-4, 596-7. Of course, psychoanalytical truth, which is thus emerging through dialogue and conceptualization does not cease to be a ‘symptom’, a ‘good’ one however, i.e. one that leaves the lack, the hole of the Thing, to be through the naming of them. As Juranville notes: “Denn was ist das *gute Symptom*? Das Symptom, dessen Wahrheit nicht das Loch des Realen zustopft, sondern es benennend sein läßt” (*ibid*, 613, the emphasis in the original).

²⁴ See respectively Wall, *Radical Passivity*, 44, 49.

²⁵ Cf. on this Heinemann, *Die Relevanz der Philosophie Martin Heideggers für das Rechtsdenken*, 70-2, 96, 102-5. Heidegger notes: “Nie aber ist die Selbstheit auf Du bezogen”. See Heidegger, *Vom Wesen des Grundes*, 38.

²⁶ So thinks Ben-Dor. See Ben-Dor, *Thinking about Law*, 171-215.

from what a value-based discourse would imply. Far from implying even a trace of contractarian assumptions, Heideggerian ‘ethos’ is caringly re-assuming thrownness while insisting in tension over the abyss of Being’s nothingness (‘Inständigkeit’). This insistence takes place in the mood of reservedness (‘Verhaltenheit’) accompanied with dismay and awe. Reserved and hesitated as it insists, Dasein is reticent in order to hear the gathered sounding of silence (‘das Geläut der Stille’) of Being.²⁷ ‘Relation’ means thus in Heidegger mysterious attunement of singularities, and it is only out of this that intersubjectivity or juridical relations surface.²⁸ Taking also into consideration the works of Heidegger after the *Contributions*, co-belonging is co-dwelling on the fissure of the ontological difference, topologically speaking on the center of the Fourfold, within the thingness of things. Therefore, the authentic Law is ‘sigetic’, anything but normative, dismantling the dichotomy between ‘Is’ and ‘Ought’.²⁹

Heidegger can thus, contrary to what Levinas believes, conceive of an open community of singularities; he neither pleads for the Levinasian ‘Same’ nor conceives of the Event as ontological. Levinas mistakes Heideggerian ‘Same’ (‘das Selbe’) for the ‘Identical/Equivalent’ (‘das Gleiche’). In Heidegger identity and difference are intertwined, the notion of ‘mineness/my-ownness’ (‘Jemeinigkeit’) does not mean an unencumbered self or a possessive individuality.³⁰ Through

²⁷ Vallega-Neu, ‘Poietic Saying’, 73-5.

²⁸ Ben-Dor, *Thinking about Law*, 309-51. On coming to ‘being-there-with’ (‘Mitdasein’) through ‘being-with’ (‘Mitsein’) as a mode of ‘in-being’ (in the world, that is) (‘Insein’), see also Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit (A)*, 201 (§26). For an excellent analysis of the Ethical in Heidegger from existential analytics to the thinking of ‘Enowning’ concerning Being’s truth, whereby the Ethical focuses on existence’s solitary endurance above the ontological abyss without any normative or political support, see Aurenque, *Ethosdenken*, passim.

²⁹ Ben-Dor, *Thinking about Law*, 353-97.

³⁰ Hadrien France-Lanord, ‘Martin Heidegger et la question de l’autre. III. Être soi ensemble. IV. Le souci mutuel’, *Heidegger Studies/Heidegger Studien/Etudes Heideggeriennes* 27 (2011): 77-80. As it is eloquently put: “Der existentielle Solipsismus ist intersubjektiv”: Rentsch, *Heidegger und Wittgenstein*, 280. Rentsch sees things in an analogous manner

the Heideggerian openness of the community is constituted an inter-existential reciprocity.³¹ ‘Co-belonging’ is thus primordial to solitude. Dasein is in and of itself always ‘out of itself’.³²

For Oren Ben-Dor, is Levinas the one who generally misinterprets Heidegger using a decadent and ontic notion of alterity, of essence and of ‘beyond’. Fundamental ontology is primordial and cannot be reduced to the Ontic as traditional ontology could. Through this reduction the transcendence is possibly conceivable, but then not beyond the Ontic. According to Ben-Dor Heideggerian abyss overflows as alterity the Levinasian Other’s caress. Levinasian otherness cannot replace ontological difference. Instead it covers up a latent arrogance, in that it discards the humbleness of anxiety in favor of the supremacy of the vulnerability as imperative within a discourse of humanism, which disdains the very ethics of fundamental ontology, namely the nearness to Being. Levinas’s exteriority is a radicalization of ontic correctness and so capable of punctuating Being to the expense of its mysteriously narrowing silence. Levinas is a hyper-legalist but not ontologically ethical.³³ Ben-Dor accepts the possibility that also what morals denote as ‘atrocities’ might be ontologically ethical. Human rights discourse and positive law are injustice, whereas harm is not done to humans but may be done to Being. Analogously, the ethico-political bond is according to Ben-Dor’s Levinas inclusiveness of differences and not Event. Diachrony and transcendence remain thus within feasibility. Levinas “smothers the

concerning the notion of ‘solitude in common’ (‘gemeinsame Einsamkeit’), a notion which connects Heidegger and Wittgenstein: *ibid.*, 399. The two thinkers recuperate, even if not exhausting the richness of this notion, which one could label ‘inter-solitariness’, what Leibniz had called ‘multitude of monads without windows’ (*ibid.*, 400).

³¹ France-Lanord, ‘Martin Heidegger et la question de l’autre. III. Être soi ensemble. IV. Le souci mutuel’, *Heidegger Studies/Heidegger Studien/Etudes Heideggeriennes* 27 (2011): 83.

³² Wahl, *Introduction into the philosophies of existentialism*, 75-7. Cf. though Peperzak, *Beyond*, 209, for whom Heidegger does not deepens thoroughly into the phenomenon of ‘community’, his thinking is solipsistic-ontological.

³³ Ben-Dor, *Thinking about Law*, 217-62.

mystery”, as Ben-Dor says.³⁴ Even critical legal studies fall into the ambush of legal reasoning and its negative values. Positive values, if there is such thing, are to be gained only through attunement to Being, even to the expense of irritations like the Holocaust, says again Ben-Dor. Violence is not such irritation, but instead what inheres in legalism.³⁵

Where do we really stand here? On the one hand, as Cornell shows, Derrida interprets Heidegger correctly, when, criticizing Levinas, stresses that in Heidegger ‘co-belonging’ underlines more the difference in encounter rather than homogeneity.³⁶ On the other hand, this interpretation ignores that this try to equate Heidegger and Levinas transforms the Levinasian asymmetry in the interpersonal ethical relation into symmetry and thus a transcendent philosophy into an immanent one.³⁷ It could be argued namely that it is not Levinas misinterpreting Heidegger, but rather Ben-Dor misinterpreting Levinas!

I think therefore that it is not Heideggerian ‘co-belongingness’ the decisive notion vis-à-vis Levinasian caress. A genuine contradistinction to the latter is rather Heidegger’s ‘God’s Passage’, ‘God’s Passing By’.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 305; see in sum on the above, *ibid*: 263-305; see also Louis Wolcher, ‘Review of Oren Ben-Dor, *Thinking about Law in Silence with Heidegger*’, *Modern Law Review* 72(6) (2009): 1039-41.

³⁵ Ben-Dor, *Thinking about Law*, 21-2, 29, 31-5; cf. critically on these theses, Papacharalambous, ‘Retaliatory Punishment’, 199 footnote 71.

³⁶ Cornell, *The Philosophy of the Limit*, 45, 55.

³⁷ Cf. also *ibid*, 85. Critchley tries in incorporating into his own thought Derrida’s critique to Levinas (itself inspired by Heidegger and Nietzsche) to read Levinas on the basis of a productive-creative ambiguity between ontology of the Said and ethics of Saying, the two main axes of Levinasian theorizing on ethical language: Critchley, *The Ethics of Deconstruction*, 15-20.

4. (The) Touching (of) the gods

Heidegger's approach to God is a-theistic, meaning a non-theistic as well as non-materialist approach, but one totally different from any form of *onto-theo-logy*, which, in incorporating speculative metaphysics cannot speak about faith as quintessential in thinking about God. This metaphysical God is a Being merely in the sense of the highest of beings. Heidegger's God transcends any form of representation of God within the subject-object relation, thus going beyond the Christian tradition. God is radically non-representable, transcends any judgment and can be only a point of reference for thinking. Opposite to this, every magnification or enlargement of God is a betrayal of God, since such magnification turns out to become making God available to man, something man can manipulate.³⁸ Therefore speaks Heidegger also about God or Gods: enumeration is not an issue, because otherwise God would become a mere present-at-hand, an ontic entity, which could be calculated, offset. For the same reason, the word 'last' in the phrase 'last God' means no endpoint in a linear continuum. In the *Contributions to Philosophy* connects Heidegger the essence, the coming-passing, the essential swaying ('Wesung') of Being (in the sense of 'Seyn'), with the sign of the last God. This 'Wesung' means the self-withdrawal of 'Seyn'; this 'Seyn' is thus always concealed. Being always concealed, 'Seyn' shows up in its truth as a refusal, denial ('Verweigerung'). The sign becomes thus the 'passing by of God', whereby God is something 'refuting', 'withholding'. It is this eluding ('Sich-Entziehen') of God, in which 'passing by' is signaled.³⁹

This passing by is now the very eventful side of the 'Wesung'. As to man this side means the encounter between God and man; this encounter is named by Heidegger 'fissure' ('Zerklüftung'), within which man is turned to a 'Guardian

³⁸ Makito Shigeru, 'Die Theologie des "verborgenen Gottes" bei Heidegger', *Interdisziplinäre Phänomenologie* 3 (2006): 1-3, 6, 8.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 7-8; Heidegger, *Beiträge zur Philosophie*, 244, 406-7, 410-12, 437.

of the Silence of God's passing by'. God is thus only in his passing by understandable to man as fundamentally incomprehensible, as a mystery and an enigma. Incomprehensibility does not mean here a lack or a failure but the presence of the non-representable. Man can only take consciousness of God in the sense of a meditative awareness ('Besinnung'), whereby God shows up as holiness, sacredness. It is this God who can be sensed in his godly character without any reference to the usual religions, which conceive of God as a Creator in the sense of first cause, of a 'causa prima' and this is so because God cannot be grasped through concepts. Heidegger often connects concept with grasping, intending to underline that metaphysics is based on violence and occupation. *Sensing God beyond metaphysics reveals God as the Transcendent without sovereignty*. The fissure, as well as other thought formations of the philosopher, like the center of the Fourfold, the Abyss or the crossed Being, are very important in showing a crucial displacement of the ontological difference. Whereas in *Being and Time* this difference is still a transcendentalist one referring to the inner-worldly existence, the mentioned formations refer to the Being as 'Seyn' itself, hence their inherent 'poietic' nature.⁴⁰

Mystery inspires late Heidegger's 'topological' thinking. Place is in this thinking counter to Levinasian space, especially to the latter's connotations of manipulation and exploitation. Levinas is indeed favoring technology as vehicle of disenchantment or demystification, whereas Heidegger disregards technology as 'machination' and sanctifies place, as his well-known example of the bridge shows.⁴¹

A very powerful interpretation of Heideggerian topology is carried out by Dugin. Innerworldliness, dwelling and the corporeal element in perceiving and mood are linked to

⁴⁰ Makito Shigeru, 'Die Theologie des "verborgenen Gottes" bei Heidegger', *Interdisziplinäre Phänomenologie* 3 (2006): 8-9, 11; Heidegger, *Beiträge zur Philosophie*, 280, 294.

⁴¹ Schlitte et al., 'Einleitung: Philosophie des Ortes', 14, 22-3; Günzel, 'Vom Raum zum Ort – und zurück', 26-43; cf. Heidegger, *Bauen, Wohnen, Denken*, 70. See respectively also Papacharalambous, 'Heideggers Geviert und Dugins Eurasien', 145-6.

topology. Even the ontological difference is topological. Coming close to Being is not, says Dugin, teleological maturation but an advent through a leap. The passage of Gods and the clearing of Being take place (literally!) there where the prominent Few guard Being as its shepherds. This place is, immanently-geopolitically translated by Dugin, 'Russianness' conceived of as a collective existential mode combating Americanism, which is deemed the culmination of enframing ('Gestell').⁴²

The God's passage signalizes for Heidegger the historical essence of Being, the linkage with the inceptual character of the thinking of Being after the Turn, the other beginning of thought towards the basic question and away from the metaphysical leading question about Being.⁴³

The last God is simultaneous flight and advent of divinity, it comes to pass. There, it is undecidable whether divinity finally departs or comes back.⁴⁴ In Figal's words:

"Arrival occurs, but as the nearness of those who are fleeing, and flight occurs, in that what flees has the proximity of what is arriving".⁴⁵

Theophany is thus the eventfulness, the eventuation cast 'pure'. It is an open issue whether the 'hesychasm' of Heidegger after the *Contributions*, the replacement, that is, of an agonistic Dasein with the dwelling in the Fourfold deconstructs monotheism simply further or revises the notion

⁴² Dugin, *Martin Heidegger. The Philosophy of Another Beginning*, 54-64, 68-72, 86, 104-25, 141-57, 161-5, 326-7, 331-2, 334-43, 366, 390. See in details also Papacharalambous, 'Heideggers Geviert und Dugins Eurasien', 158-9.

⁴³ Heidegger, *Das Ereignis*, 79-117.

⁴⁴ Figal, *For a Philosophy of Freedom and Strife*, 167-9. Figal does not any more identifies Enowning with the last God: cf. Figal, 'Forgetfulness of God', 211 footnote 13. Cf. also the notion of the nearness of the eluding Goddess's absence in: Heidegger, *Aufenthalte*, 78; see further *ibid*: 98; on gods, see also Heidegger, *Besinnung*, 229-56.

⁴⁵ Figal, *For a Philosophy of Freedom and Strife*, 167.

of God, henceforth denoting Divinity's more radical and eccentric dissemination within immanence.⁴⁶

5. 'Conclusion'

Be it as it may, one might conclude as following: there is no caress in Heidegger. What comes close is the farthest away. There is no difference to allow for ethical hierarchies, only the folding of Event qua uncanny familiarity of the strange: Gods' passage, haunting and incorporeal. There is a living spirituality of the flesh in Levinas, where touching is offering and holiness (not sacredness), vital impossibility of agape. Both thinkers converge coming from opposite directions in the very impossibility of salvation: in Levinas, salvation appears as a trace of an Absent in caress; in Heidegger, Absent is appearing as an unreachable ghost in the primordial Event. *May one day the austere coldness of Athens turned ontological meet in a gesture of caress the fleshed spirituality of Jerusalem...*



⁴⁶ Crownfield, 'The Last God', 226.

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Jean Baudrillard's philosophy about revolution as finality

Abstract: Jean Baudrillard's controversial thought can become an excellent tool for understanding our complex and multidimensional society. Being a major figure and symbol of May 68 uprising, in his work Baudrillard poses the critical and thorny question of revolution as an end of history and then the similar question of utopia. In his book "*The mirror of production*" he provides us with an excellent theoretical material so that to reflect further and deeper on how exactly the eminent French thinker approaches the onto-theology of finality/end with regard to politics and society.

Keywords: Jean Baudrillard, simulation, revolution, political ontotheology.

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Jean Baudrillard as a political thinker

"It makes no sense to die," Jean Baudrillard once wrote. "You have to know how to disappear." The New Yorker quoted French sociologist when he spoke at a New York gallery in 2005. An audience member, bearing in mind the recent death of Jacques Derrida, spoke of obituaries and asked Baudrillard: what would you like them to say about you? In other words, who are you? " Baudrillard replied: "I do not know what I am. I am the reflection of myself " (Poster, 2001. Baudrillard, 1994).

Baudrillard, who left this vain world at the age of 77, had predicted that the first Gulf War of 1991 would not take place. During the war, he said that this war was not a real fact. After the end of the war, he insisted unperturbed that the war had not taken place. This has led some to describe him as yet another of those European philosophers who live enjoying their horrible contempt for truth and reality (Baudrillard, 1994).

However, what Baudrillard wanted to point out was that the war was being waged as a spectacle for the media. After being portrayed as a digital war game or simulation, it was then implemented for the general public: as news material, with war correspondents' paraphernalia and video cameras watching the missiles, it looked like a video game. The real violence was completely removed from the electronic narrative, from the simulation.

This was the name given by Baudrillard to the defining problem of the time, when, as early as the 1970s, he wrote that the Marxist problem of the class struggle had been replaced, in the "post-industrial" age, by the problem of simulation. It had thus preceded, a couple of decades, the reflection on the nature of "virtual reality." Pop culture has paid tribute to Baudrillard's predictive acumen in Andy and Larry Wattsowski's *The Matrix* (1999), where in the near future human society is a simulation designed by malicious machines to keep us enslaved. The hacker protagonist Nio (Keanu Reeves) hides his secret software in a book of the

philosopher, and the guerrilla Morpheus utters at one point the most famous saying of Baudrillard: "Welcome to the desert of the real" (Poster, 2001. Baudrillard & Nouvel, 2002. Baudrillard, 2001).

Baudrillard was born in the city of Rennes in northeastern France. His grandparents were farmers and his parents became civil servants. He was the first in his family to go to university - he studied German Philology at the Sorbonne - and later said that this led to a rift with his family and its cultural environment. In 1956, he began teaching German in a French high school and in the early 1960s published essays on literature in the review *Temps Modernes*, while translating into French the works of Bertold Brecht and Peter Weiss (Baudrillard, 1986).

In 1966, he began teaching at the University of Nanterre, a small and highly radical educational institution that was to become known for its leading role in the events of May '68 (Baudrillard later said that he was directly involved in the student uprising). In the same year he published his first book, *"The System of Objects"*. Having as his mental mentors the sociologist Henri Lefebvre and the semiotician Roland Barthes, he gave sharp, ironic characterizations to objects of modern daily life, from electrical appliances to washing powders.

In his later works - including "The Consumer Society", "The Mirror of Production", "The Extent of Communication" - Baudrillard argued for the growing power of the "object" over the "subject" in modern society and for a way in which protest and resistance are increasingly absorbed and turned into fuel by the symbolic "system" of capitalism. During this time, he also published articles on art and architecture in *Utopie* magazine (Kellner, 1989).

In 1981, his book *Simulacra et Simulation* (the book appearing in *The Matrix*) gained the interest of the international reading public, and Baudrillard soon became a star of the intellect traveling the world to discuss his ideas - such as "surrealism" (the realm of simulation that is "more real than real"). A trip to the USA inspired him to write, in 1986, "America", an insightful text in which he says, among

other things: "America is the authentic version of modernity, we are a subtitle version. "America is a realized utopia." She described the 1990s, with her delusions about the "end of history", as a stagnant period during which "events went on strike" (Baudrillard, 1986, p. 87). Eventually, the strike broke with the 9/11 attacks 2001, which Baudrillard called the "mother of all events". "It is the terrorist model," he wrote, "to produce an excess of reality and cause the system to collapse under that excess." (Poster, 2001, p. 170)

For Baudrillard, therefore, there was no longer a need for virtual events to change into the media, as was the case in the first Gulf War, since the warlords had fully internalized the rules of simulation. In his 2004 essay, *The Pornography of War*, he observes how the photographs by Abu Ghraib were imitated in scenes of fetish pornography, and concludes: "It was America that actually caused the electric shock to itself." (Baudrillard, 1994, p. 76)

Once upon a time, Baudrillard wore a lame suit with mirrors when he went to read his poems at a Las Vegas bar. He did not take himself too seriously, but some critics claimed that he did not take anything else too seriously. He was often criticized as politically and morally irresponsible, especially when he described modern warfare as "unreal", thus ignoring the reality of killings and suffering. Baudrillard's answer, in his book *The Transparency of Evil*, was succinct: "Fundamentalists of reality are equipped with a kind of magical thinking that confuses the message with the messenger: if you talk about simulation, then you are the simulator." If you talk about the virtuality of war, then you are its ally and you do not care about the hundreds of thousands of dead... It is not us, the messengers of simulation, who have plunged things into unreliability - the system itself has fueled this uncertainty that permeates everything today" (Baudrillard, 1990, p. 32).

A skeptical British journalist who interviewed him called Baudrillard a "clown philosopher", a description he may not have objected to but considered a challenge to reflect on the clown's social functioning. As he once argued: "It is the duty of radical thought, since the world has been given to us to be

completely incomprehensible, to make it even more incomprehensible, more enigmatic, more mythical." He loved aphorisms. "Contemporary art is modern only with itself," he said, or "Our sentiment towards animals is the surest sign of our contempt for them." (Kellner, 1989, p. 9).

Jean Baudrillard once wrote a playful description of his personal development: from "pataphysician" (scientist inventing imaginary solutions) in his 20s, to "viral" (a word that "mixes" the virus -virus- and the manly -viril -) in his 60s. When I met him in 2000, he was 70 years old. "What are you now?" I asked him. "Hmmm, let's see... At 70, I would say I... transfini. Beyond the end. "It was my fatal strategy to go further, to see what happens next." Now, perhaps, he will know (Kellner, 1989, p. 23).

Baudrillard' critique of Marxist theory

The Mirror of Production is a 1973 book by Jean Baudrillard. It is a systematic critique of Marxist theory. Baudrillard's thesis is that Marx's theory of historic materialism is too rooted in assumptions and values of political economy to provide a framework for radical action. The fault of Marxism is in prioritizing the very concepts that founded capital, e.g. necessity, value, and labor.

For Baudrillard, Marx did not transcend political economy but merely saw its reverse or its "mirror" side. Marxism merely strengthens political economy's basic propositions, in particular the idea that self-creation is performed through productive, non-alienated labor. In Baudrillard's words, "[Marxism] convinces men that they are alienated by the sale of their labor power, thus censoring the much more radical hypothesis that they might be alienated as labor power." Baudrillard proposes to liberate workers from their "labor value" and think in terms other than production.

While Marx carried out a valuable endeavor in exposing and deconstructing the naturalization of *homo economicus* and the web of market relation in which it is implicated, the critical standpoint from which this

denaturalization was conducted was that of labor itself. By subverting production to a radical position vis-à-vis society and subordinating it to a dialectical picture of upheaval, Marx endowed production and labor with a “revolutionary title of nobility” that has paralyzed subsequent attempts to formulate a political program derived from Marx’s concepts. Thus, one naturalization was substituted for another (Baudrillard, 1975, pp. 18–19).

According to Poster, Baudrillard sees production and labor as the “forms” that Marx used as a foundation for the critique of political economy. However, in so using these forms, a part of Marx’s critique was left incomplete, carrying over entirely uncritically two key concepts of political economy itself (Poster, 2001). By basing his critique of political economy around production and labor, Marx retained the theoretical and ideological core of the object of that critique, which inhibited his ability to complete his critique and escape the constraints of classical political economy. This leads Baudrillard to assert that Marx’s critique only served to “interiorize” and to “complete” its object. As such, for Baudrillard, Marx’s incomplete critique of political economy must be both surpassed and completed. Baudrillard attempts this through a critical analysis of production conducted by means of the critique of the political economy *of the sign*.

Thus, Baudrillard goes further than merely associating Marx with an inability to overcome the status of labor in political economy. Marx’s productivism is not merely a humanistic fetishization of labor and those who perform it, but a means by which every aspect of life is seen through the prism of production; thereby constituting the titular “mirror of production.” In defining this “mirror,” Baudrillard perceives “man” as having “*posit[ed] himself* according to the scheme of production which is assigned to him.” Hence, Baudrillard uses the Lacanian analogy of the mirror whereby one is reflected and “comes to consciousness... *in the imaginary*” (Baudrillard, 1975, pp. 19).

In a more general, traditional philosophical sense, history is often thought of as the “production” of those involved in it

(Baudrillard, 1975, pp. 34). Baudrillard suggests that radical critiques of capitalism only end up repeating its logic when they render “[s]ocial wealth or language, meaning or value, sign or phantasm” to some kind of “production” at the hands of one or another type of “labour.” Baudrillard attributes to what he labels “productivism” (in both its classical and Marxist variants) a tendency to ascribe to production the status of the “active moment” and to consumption a relative and absolute passivity. This productive logic subordinates everything, “all human material and every contingency of desire and exchange,” to the ends of “value, finality, and production” (Baudrillard, 1975, pp. 17–19).

The productivism of social theory creates a blind spot that cannot account for the “complexity of symbolic exchange in consumption,” which, Baudrillard suggests, plays just as active a role as production. The consequence of this is that what Baudrillard calls “symbolic exchange” is squeezed out of frame. A portrayal of laboring subjects as motivated only by productive “natural necessity” includes no possibility of the “reciprocal play of meanings and acts” that characterizes the richness of symbolic expenditure and exchange found in consumption. From a critique of the standpoint of production, Baudrillard derives his own standpoint. This standpoint is that of consumption. In the second blog, appearing next week, we will seek to ascertain the political program implied in Baudrillard’s positioning.

Revolution as finality: The suspension of history

According to Marx, next to the mode of production stands the concept of history in a dialectical relationship. The purpose is an impending revolution dating back to many of Marx’s works. After the failure of 1848, a revisionist view prevailed according to which a period should be mediated which would have created the necessary historical conditions: the maturation of capitalism, the approach of a self-denial resulting in a logical and historical necessity, the perception

from part of the proletariat itself as a negative term and object of history.

Marxism now focuses on the study of historical laws. The proletariat grows in the shadow of capital. The laws of history will now force man to be liberated as a social creature. The radical claim becomes a constantly deferred deadline. In essence, this is how an ascetic communism of hope is sealed, which is beyond history, the dictatorship of the proletariat, capitalism and socialism. It is an ascetic because he does not consider his desires as reality.

The revolution becomes an end, which does not refer to a radical claim inspired by the belief that man is here in his revolt. The revolution as a goal is equivalent to the autonomy of the means of production, which degrades the current situation, weakens the explosive reaction to a long-term dissolution.

In the words of Gregor Kalivoda: man cannot simply be content with the prospect of his liberation...the uprising will continue until the Marxist perspective ceases to be a perspective. But how can the laws of history and dialectic be combined with the prospect of rebellion? Baudrillard reports that in Marx's time workers began to break machines. This persistent revolt of the here and now was left forever without explanation. Utopia is not written in the future; it is what is always here. History, that is, the objective end, is incapable of capturing the particularity of the social voice which is not subject to the finality of a future dimension.

Radicalism of utopia

Marx, Baudrillard argues, is right. But the price to approach this objectivity is the ignorance of the radical utopia of the Manifesto era. Indeed, Marx objectified all social processes - the disruption of a social system, its immediate overthrow, the voice of life and death, into a finality that is nothing more than political economy.

Other forms of reaction such as poetry, informal art and utopian writing that give content to what is current and

direct to human liberation are not the voice of communism. They are born from a symbolic state of rupture in the mirror of a fictional objective story. For this reason, poetry was associated with the utopian movements, those of a "revolutionary romanticism" and never with Marxism itself. At this point Baudrillard mentions the small importance of a liberated man in relation to showing that this separation of present and future is valid. Such an abolition runs counter to the prevailing view that revolution must be refined into history, it must come to an end. Poetry is a radical topicality, a self-denial and the utopian rebellion it provokes realizes desire here and now without referring to the future. As Baudrillard says, "This is pleasure, this is revolution".

Contrary to the theory of historical materialism that wants Man to be deprived and alienated, utopia does not know the meaning of alienation. She wants him here with his society in every social moment. Marxism, on the other hand, considers that society is constantly on a path of maturation. This move to a vague end-purpose, Baudrillard calls "racism of perfection", a "philosophy" without achieving "scientificity". Baudrillard does not reject the metaphysics of wholeness or completeness but places it in the same system as existing reality. The subject is not destined to become a complete human being again or to find himself again. What needs to be abolished is the reduction of all events to political economy. That's essentially what needs to be done. Everything else - the ghost of a lost identity and the future autonomy of man - are just causes for the subjects to be bullied.

Baudrillard points out how absurd it is to claim that people are not "themselves" but "others" and that their desire is to become themselves again in an indefinite future. Every human being is whole here at all times. Revolution is not an entity that speaks back from ordinary people, these are the revolution. The utopia for Baudrillard is here and it stands up to political economy. The book ends with the view that the theory of historical materialism about those who are victims of exploitation and are trapped in their historical obligation to seize power, is the worst diversion of the

revolution that has ever taken place. The political economy that has undermined the revolutionary perspective is responsible for this diversion. What utopia needs is just a voice here and now.

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Yoga as psychotherapy: An Alternative and complimentary Solution

Abstract: Yoga was developed up to 5000 years ago in India as a comprehensive system for well being of all levels: physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. Yoga helps to raise the quality of life in diverse manner such as fitness, stress relief, wellness, vitality, mental clarity healing, peace of mind and spiritual growth. Yoga is associated with strange contortion of the body but the major focus of the yoga is actually the modification of one's self awareness of relationship to the world. It is a complete system of therapy which includes developing awareness and control of the physical body, emotions, mind and interpersonal relations. Working properly with the body in this way cultivates and objectivity and detachment which permits the natural observation of the body can affect the mind as it assume each position and gradually leads to increased control.

This paper will try to focus on the relationship between physical and mental states and how the working with the body can affect the mind and thereby we can use yoga as one of the alternative technique to solve our physical and mental problems. With the help of yoga therapy we can turn our attention to how body awareness can be extended and how this can lead to the ability to control bodily functions by controlling mind.

Keywords: Yoga therapy, Psychotherapy, *Ashtanga Yoga, Pranayama, Asanas, Klesas, Insvarapranidhana, Maiti, Mudita, Karuna, Upesksha,*

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Yoga was developed up to 5000 years ago in India as a comprehensive system for well being of all levels: physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. Yoga helps to raise the quality of life in diverse manner such as fitness, stress relief, wellness, vitality, mental clarity healing, peace of mind and spiritual growth. Yoga is associated with strange contortion of the body but the major focus of the yoga is actually the modification of one's self awareness of relationship to the world. It is a complete system of therapy which includes developing awareness and control of the physical body, emotions, mind and interpersonal relations.

There are many forms of yoga Hatha yoga, Karma Yoga, Bhakti yoga and Jnana yoga. The most comprehensive and scientific yogic system for developing awareness is 'Raja Yoga' mean 'royal path'. This system was codified by sage Patanjali in his book 'Yoga Sutra' thousand years ago. In it Patanjali speaks of eight fold path which is known as 'Ashtanga yoga'. It helps to gain mastery over all aspects of our functioning as well as work on our subtle object of our being, beginning with habits and behavior then move to body, breath and mental functioning.

The physical position or posture is important, though as one of the early phase of yoga training. By learning to do discipline the body, one can become physically healthy and relaxed, so that the main aspects of yoga which involve mental work and introspection can be pursued. But this is more than mere physical preparation; it also focuses on mental preparation. Although body is work with intensively, the actual goal is to become less bound up in the body and to gain some distance from it and prospective of its functioning. Working properly with the body in this way cultivates and objectivity and detachment which permits the natural observation of the body can affect the mind as it assume each position and gradually leads to increased control.

This paper will try to focus on the relationship between physical and mental states and how the working with the body can affect the mind and thereby we can use yoga as one

of the alternative technique to solve our physical and mental problems. With the help of yoga therapy we can turn our attention to how body awareness can be extended and how this can lead to the ability to control bodily functions by controlling mind. The posture a person takes is a reflection of his state of mind. In this sense, the physical state is an ‘embodiment’ of a mental state takes physical form. Posture is a stance from which we face the world both physically and mentally

Yoga therapy is the application of yogic practices to improve physical and mental health conditions with the view of promoting self-care and encouraging overall well-being because most of the diseases are psycho-somatic disorders. But the practice of yoga in general aims to cultivate the peace and harmony in body and mind and help to improve mental and physical ailments.

The modern term, ‘Yoga therapy’ was coined by Swami Kuvalyananda in the 1920s who believed that the changes would be possible in mind and body to measure the physical and physiological changes that occurred through yoga practice. According to one of the great masters of yoga therapy from the 1900s, TVK Desikachar “Yoga therapy is a self-empowering process, where the care-seeker, with the help of the Yoga therapist, implements a personalized and evolving Yoga practice, that not only addresses the illness in a multi-dimensional manner, but also aims to alleviate his/her suffering in a progressive, non-invasive and complementary manner. Depending upon the nature of the illness, Yoga therapy can not only be preventative or curative, but also serve a means to manage the illness, or facilitate healing in the person at all levels.”¹

Yoga therapy is defined as the application of Yogic principles to a particular person with the objective of achieving a particular spiritual, psychological, or physiological goal. The means employed in yogic therapy are comprised of steps that include the components of Ashtānga Yoga, which includes the educational teachings of *yama*, *niyama*, *āsana*,

¹ <https://themindedinstitute.com/interested-in-yoga-therapy/what-is-yoga-therapy-2/>

prānāyāma, *pratyāhāra*, *dhāranā*, *dhyāna*, and *samādhi*. It also includes the application of meditation, textual study, spiritual or psychological counseling, chanting, imagery, prayer, and ritual to meet the needs of the individual. The focus of yoga therapy is holistic in nature which encourages the integration of mind, body, and spirit. Yoga therapy do not discriminates individuals on the basis of culture, religion, philosophy, occupation, and mental and physical health. The knowledgeable and competent teachers' applies Yoga Therapy according to the period, the place, and the practitioner's age, strength, and activities. The application of Yoga therapy has different perspectives:

The practice of Yoga help us to gain a sense of power i.e., to develop muscular power, the power to concentrate, the power to do difficult postures, the ability to work over the extended period of time, etc. This is known as the application of *shakti-krama*. The practice of Yoga heals specific problems, such as eliminating impurities in the organs (*doshas*) or energy centers (*cakras*) and channels (*nādis*) of the body. This is *chikitsā-krama*. If the sickness is present, it needs to be cured (*chikitsā*). If sickness is not present then precaution is necessary (*rakshana*). If person is not sick and one has learned how to protect oneself then training is necessary (*shikshana*). The practice of Yoga helps go beyond the physical world to understand what is beyond the limited sense of self; to know one's true self which is unchanging witness (*Purusha*) and that is changing (*prakriti*). This is called the application of *ādhyātmika-krama*.

The core element of yoga therapy is: Yoga helps to teach and learn what is appropriate to the individual (*yukta-shikshana*). It emphasizes on the differences in different people must be respected (*bheda*). The yogic teachings must be based on the condition, situation, place, or country from which the student comes (*desha*). Each person needs to be taught according to his or her individual mental constitution, age, disposition, etc. (*deha*) and the method of instruction depends on the time and the seasons, etc. (*kāla*). As per the occupation of the student, he or she will need to be taught different things (e.g., a runner would be taught differently

than a philosopher) (*vritti*). One must understand the capability of the student, how much fortitude he or she has, how much memory, how much time to study or practice (*shakti*). The teaching must be confined to the direction of the mind (i.e., it must take a person's interests into account, such as exercise, devotion, chanting, etc.) (*mārga*).

Yoga is a science of health management and it is a tool for continuous improvement of the health. Yoga therapy is the application of yoga and meditation for treating the chronic physical and psychological conditions. Yoga therapy is often combined with other healing practices to increase its effectiveness.

Psychotherapy teaches strategies and provides various tools to deal with stress and unhealthy patterns of thought, emotion and behaviour. It promotes self-awareness, close relationships, and the development of a healthy body and mind. Yoga Psychotherapy is the application of yoga psychology for healing, strengthening and awakening ourselves by establishing the coordination between mind, body and consciousness.

The primary aim of psychotherapy is the cultivation of self-awareness, which is considered as the first step towards self-realization and self-mastery. Self-awareness enables spontaneity, which occurs when one is free from oneself from conditioning and tries to reunite with authentic self. This enables to respond to each moment from an intuitive and in a wise manner. The third aim is intimacy, the ability to connect with people and all forms of life with an open compassionate way. This requires self-awareness and spontaneity. People come to yoga psychotherapy when they feel that their life is out of balance and they have mental and physical problems. They want their life to be healthy, balanced, clear state of mind, to reduce overwhelm and confusion, and to gain meaning and purpose through connection to their deeper self.

The effects of yoga of relaxation response and stress relief are well known yoga technique cultivates activities that help to calm and focus. In *Yoga chikitsā*, Dr. Bhavanani states, "Yoga is science and art of quieting the subconscious mind, a

way of life, skill in action, union of thought-word- deed, integration at all levels, the science of conscious evolution and the method to attain as well as the state of emotional mental equanimity.”² Yoga chikitsā is an individualized approach to personal health, which might include yoga poses, mudrās and compliances with other yogic practices.

Yoga has traditionally involved the notion that bodily position and physical postures are intimately and basically linked to personality and emotion. Hatha yoga is the branch of yoga which includes the series of postures to stretch and strengthen each of the muscles and tendons that may have become shortened and contracted due to mental tensions and faulty postures. Simultaneously, muscle groups which have become weak from disuse are also gradually strengthened.

Yoga therapy is a growing field and scientific evidence has begun to emphasize its efficacy. It is used to treat existing mental and physical health issues, but can also be used as a self-care strategy for prevention and maintenance.

Yoga therapy is used for treating depression and anxiety. Yoga therapy shows a promising treatment for posttraumatic stress (PTSD) and schizophrenia. The yoga therapists have begun to develop treatment modalities which will suit the children with autism. According to a 2012 article in Social Work Today magazine, yoga therapy is emerging as an effective treatment for substance abuse issues. Mental health professionals point out the way yoga positively impacts the parts of the mind and body susceptible to addiction. Studies have shown that yoga boosts the neurotransmitter GABA (gamma-aminobutyric acid), which is important because GABA levels are statistically low in people who experience substance abuse, anxiety, and depression. Its concentration on mind and body integration, yoga therapy is also used to address many physical health issues like back pain, heart

² Yogacharya Dr. Bhavanani Ananda Balyogi, *Yoga Chikitsa Application of yoga as a therapy*, p. 210, Divyananda Creations, Puducherry-13. First Edition 2013.

conditions, asthma, chronic fatigue, hypertension, multiple sclerosis, and side effects of chemotherapy.

Yoga is all about becoming "one" with an integrated state of being and that the modern tendency of Yogopathy in contrast is more about "doing" than "being". The *Bhagavad Gita* defines Yoga as *samatvam* meaning thereby a 'state of being' where equanimity manifests through physiological and biochemical homeostasis, psychological equanimity and intra-inter-trans-personal spiritual awareness, all integrated in a healthy and harmonious holistic balance. If we are to achieve this, it is imperative that we take into consideration the all encompassing multi-dimensional aspects of yoga that include the following: a healthy life nourishing diet which is also known as *mitāhara*, a healthy and natural external-internal environment, a holistic lifestyle, adequate bodywork through *asana*, *mudra* and *kriya*, invigorating breath work through the use of *prānāyāma* and the cultivation of a healthy thought process through the higher practices of *Jñāna Yoga* and *Rāja Yoga*.

The "Core Concept" in accepting Yoga as a way of life is embedded in the word "responsibility". One must be prepared to accept total responsibility for one's own life, total responsibility for one's thoughts, words and deeds, total responsibility for one's own health and happiness. This is, in essence, obedience to the eternal law which states, 'All karma or all action has its reaction and that re-action will always rebound on the one who committed the action.' So every action need to be performed in a skillful manner that which is explain in *Bhagvad Gita* 'Yogah Karmasu *Kaushalam*' Yoga is the science of consciousness, becoming aware of universal laws and obeying those laws in thought, word and deed. Obedience to the law produces health and happiness. Disobedience produces disease and suffering.

Yoga is the original mind body medicine being an art and science it has a lot to offer humankind in terms of an understanding of both the human mind as well as all aspects of our multilayered existence. Modern man is the victim of stress and stress related disorders that threaten to disrupt his life totally. Yoga offers a way out of this 'whirlpool of

stresses' Yogic lifestyle, diet, attitudes and various practices help man to strengthen himself and develop positive health thus enabling him to withstand stress better. The Yogic concept of health and disease enables us to understand that the cause of physical disorder sprouts from the higher levels of the mind and beyond. *Adhi* – the disturbed mind is the cause and *vyādhi* - the disease is the effect manifested in the physical body. Patanjali mentions 'vyādhi' as a hindrance to the complete integration of the individual personality.

Yogic 'way of life' lays emphasis on right thought, right action, right reaction and right attitude. Yogic living is rightly using body, emotions and mind. The five *Yamas* and five *Niyama* provide a moral and ethical foundation for one's personal and social life. The *Yama-Niyama* provides a strong moral and ethical foundation for our personal and social life. These are the negative and positive rules of behaviour. These are Do's and Don'ts stated in *Āstangayoga*. The restraints or the negative rules state the five injunctions-Don't kill (*Ahimsa*), Don't tell lies(*Satya*), Don't steal (*Asteya*), Celibacy (*Brahmacarya*) and Don't be greedy (*Aparigraha*). Similarly, we find five positive rules insisting on Internal as well as External Purity (*Sauca*), Contentment (*Santosha*), Austerity (*Tapas*), Self-study (*Swādhyāya*) and Surrender to God (*Ishvarapranidhāna*). *Ishvarapranidhāna* refers to the attitude of surrendering egoism or the feeling of doership and dedicating all actions to 'Divine Will'. These ten rules serve as Ten Commandments of Yoga useful in yoga therapy. Patanjali has also expounded specific criteria of perfect observance of these rules of conduct. They guide our attitudes with regard to the right and wrong in our life and in relation to our self, our family unit and the entire social system. These changes in one's attitude and behaviour will go a long way in helping to prevent the very causes of stress in our life.

In yoga it is assumed that the inside of the body can be polluted by metabolic wastes, chemicals, or other toxins these pollutants are viewed as major obstacles to health and mental clarity. In yoga there are several important cleansing techniques or washes to promote or accelerate these natural

functions. Yogic practices should be performed consciously and with awareness. Asanas help to develop strength, flexibility, will power, good health, and stability and thus when practiced as a whole give a person a 'stable and unified strong personality'. *Prānāyama* helps to control our emotions which are linked to breathing and the *prānamaya kosha* (the vital energy sheath or body). Slow, deep and rhythmic breathing helps to control stress and overcome emotional instability. '*Kapalbhāti*' is an exercise consists of rapid inhalation and exhalation which washes out the lungs by removing waste material from it. The rhythm of breath is one of the most obvious physical indications of person's emotional and mental state. When relaxed, the breathing reflects an emotional calm and indicates the state where attention can be focused. Disruption of breathe are associated with emotional or mental disturbances. The breathe becomes 'agitated in anger', 'stopped momentarily in fear', 'gasping with amazement', 'choking with sadness', 'sighing with relief', The emotional and mental states are difficult to control, they are intimately connected to irregularities in breathing and the breath can be control with the help of one of the stage of *asthānga yoga* i.e. *prānāyāma*. The act of breathing unites us with the larger energy pool and integrates us into the greater context of nature. The breathe s the result of a current which runs not only through the body, but also through all the planes of man's existence, the current of the whole of the nature is the real breath.

A klesha is a hindrance, an obstacle to spiritual growth. Basically, *klesha* is the root cause of all human problems. There are *pancha klesha* or five hindrances. *Klesha* prevents the human being from further spiritual advancement and drags the human into the mire of misery. The other four *kleshas* are: *asmita* (egoism), the sense of separation, the sense of I, *raga* (attraction due to pleasure), *dvesha* (aversion due to pain) and *abinivesha* (clinging to life, the survival instinct). These are the obstacles which stand between man and his desire to claim his birthright of health and happiness. These are the stressors which are analyzed

systematically by Patanjali and all the worldly problems are due to these five causes. The situation is perceived as problematic because of one or more than one reason operates simultaneously. So yoga therapy comes to our rescue with the help of which we can overcome these stressors and can lead peaceful and blissful life.

The inner aspects of Yoga such as *dhāranā* and *dhyāna* help us to focus our mind and dwell in it and thus help us to channel our creative energy in a holistic manner towards the right type of evolutionary activities. They help us to understand our self better and in the process become better humans in this social world. Health and happiness is our birth right and we are born to be happy and healthy. It is said that healthy mind reside in healthy body, thus yogic practices help us keep our body healthy and there by mind too because aim of yoga is '*Chitta Vritti Nirodha*'³ means 'cessation of mental modification'. Human mind, when trapped in situations, is disturbed due to several reasons. For such a perturbed mind, Yoga therapy may not offer any specific solution but suggests a paradigm-shift in thought-structure in different ways so that mind can function peacefully. The situation may be irreversible or inevitable but it can be viewed, interpreted, evaluated differently and mind can be freed from gnawing worries, stress, and anxiety. For controlling fluctuations of mental thought we need to replace every negative thought with positive thought which is known as '*Pratipakasha Bhāvana*' (contrary meditation). For the blissful and peaceful tranquil state of mind or *citta*; *Maitri*, *Karuna*, *Mudita* and *Upeksha* are suggested there by one can gain state of health and wellbeing through life transforming art and science of yoga.

³ Patanjali and Bhojaraja, *The Yoga Philosophy*, p.2, Prabhat Books, 2008.

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Freedom of Consciousness in Sartre

Abstract

According to Sartre, self-consciousness is the basic principle of existentialism. Human beings develop their Ego through their actions. As a result, their freedom exists within a constant and momentary present. Therefore, Sartre insists that freedom is largely identified with the anguish that human beings experience in everyday life; as a consequence, they are responsible for their freedom. On the other hand, necessity is an integral part of everyday practice, grounded in the transience of the subject. The self-worth of life lies in the fact that human beings choose to live because they exist and they exist because they are free.

Key words: self-consciousness, freedom, necessity, responsibility, existence

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Introduction

How is freedom defined in the consciousness of human existence? Human life lies in a continuous process of will and conscious decisions. All the philosophies that examined ethics and formulated definitions and interpretations up to the beginning of the 20th century, aimed to help people make the decisions that would help them shape their choices. They emphasized the criteria as well as the goals and the moral values and defined the framework. Trust was the fundamental basis of these efforts, regarding the existence of a stable human being, more or less concrete, as well as the existence of causes and causal relations between events, emphasizing evidential knowledge. The fundamental principle that governs Sartre's freedom is ontological; we are free not because we are ourselves, but we are the presence in ourselves. This last sentence clearly implies that we are "others" for ourselves; we are the characteristics ascribed to us by others. Therefore, we exist in a way that we are not, that is, according to the person that others to attribute to us. This inner distance reflects the non-identity of the self and the different temporality it creates; this thought leads to Sartre's statement that "freedom is the definition of human." Actually, this freedom is tightly connected to a great responsibility; we are responsible for our "world" which sets the limit of meaning and within which we operate. Therefore, everything that exists in human orients their life, to the extent that human understands this meaning and value. It is at this point that ontology overlaps with psychology in Sartre, while in phenomenology these two fields usually remain distinct.

Self-consciousness

Existentialism, however, in the 19th century came to negate these beliefs largely and to place the concept of radical

freedom as imperative¹. By interpreting radical freedom, Sartre lays the first principle of existentialism, which is self-consciousness. Sartre will prioritize energies over the Being, by contrast to the Cartesian tradition, continued by Husserl's phenomenology, which gave priority to the identification of a transcendental Ego. The Being is constantly activated and keeps on acting, identifying, at the same time, with his actions². In another words the subject who has consciousness, exists for his Ego and is determined by his actions. Owing to the fact that in nihilistic French existentialism there is no God pre-conceiving and creating a human being, human appears by chance in a pre-existing world³ and creates and develops his Ego through his actions⁴. The only fact that human is actually conscious of are the causes which are a prerequisite for the action of the subject; these causes, which constitute the motives of the action of the being, are transcendental elements of the consciousness of the Being that are not connected with the outer reality. The human's attempt to conceive these motives purely mentally is nothing but futile; this happens because these motives constantly escape from the whole existence. Sartre argues that human is doomed to exist forever beyond their essence, beyond motives and particularly the motives of their action; human is doomed to be free. This means that human freedom could have no limits other than the freedom itself, or, in other words, human never ceases to be free. Human freedom is absolute and unlimited, since its limits are determined themselves in each case. Freedom exists only where there is an instantaneous present. By no means is there any stability in the human essence. Sartre's philosophy focuses on the fact that human has the ability to be freed from a present state

¹ Sartre Jean-Paul, *Existentialism is a Humanism*, tr. Carol Macomber, p. 323, New Haven: Yale, [1946] 2007.

² Sartre Jean-Paul, *Being and Nothingness*, tr. Hazel E. Barnes, p. 94 New York: Philosophical Library, [1943] 1948.

³ This notion has its roots in Heideggerian Dasein.

⁴ This notion is summed up in Sartre's well-known saying that existence precedes essence, see Sartre Jean-Paul, *Existentialism is a Humanism*, tr. Carol Macomber, p. 297, New Haven: Yale, [1946] 2007.

and move to a future one, through their consciousness. As a matter of fact, human perpetuates their freedom through the energy of consciousness. This concept is so essential to Sartre's thought, that it will appear in his later works as a means of reintroducing human freedom. The opposition freedom-necessity is presented as an act of consciousness; the moment human recognizes their freedom, they submit to the determinism of nature. For nihilistic existentialism, essence is defined by what the subject⁵ understands as well as by the fact existence precedes⁶. The path to the future that human is directed to, goes along with the possibilities that appear in his way⁷.

Therefore, the concept of freedom, as an attribute identified with existence, does not focus on a specific set of arguments against evidential knowledge, nor is it considered, as in Kantian epistemology, that there is a state of rational self-consciousness. Instead, it is placed on basis of immediate energy and is associated with the feeling of anxiety that a person experiences from the moment he is confronted with a specific situation. The words of Kierkegaard, the proponent of existentialism, are characteristic: "*anguish is the reality of freedom*"⁸. To interpret this feeling, Sartre cites the example of vertigo. When a person is on a path next to a cliff, he experiences fear and anxiety. The feeling of fear stems from the realization of what may happen as result general causality (such as slipping and falling off a cliff). At this point, could argue that there is an emotion evoked by the conception of a state being metaphysical in nature, beyond the external materiality of the apparent world. To overcome this fear, a reflexive reaction is adopted, such as the mechanism of attention, in order for someone to stay away from the edge of the cliff. However, neither fear nor any

⁵ Sartre Jean-Paul, *Being and Nothingness*, tr. Hazel E. Barnes, p. 89, New York: Philosophical Library, [1943] 1948.

⁶ Sartre Jean-Paul, *Existentialism is a Humanism*, tr. Carol Macomber, p. 297, New Haven: Yale, [1946] 2007.

⁷ As Kierkegaard put it: "*The potential for freedom is the future, and the future is the potential for time.*", Kierkegaard S., *The Concept of Anxiety*, tr. Alastair Hannay, p. 111, Oslo 2015.

⁸ Also, see p. 53.

other cause can accurately determine the possible behavior and this fact ultimately breeds anxiety. Alternatively, one could argue that the anxiety is created by the realization of the potential and the possibilities presented as options; anxiety consists largely in the human's fear not of falling off the cliff but of allowing himself to fall off the cliff⁹. Within this existential conception, the subject always feels the same agony concerning either the future or the past. In other words, time has the same form for both the future and the past. Sartre shows this kind of agony by giving examples from everyday life. According to the principles of existentialism, this is done because there is no taken decision that binds human to his future actions. Every time a person finds himself in a new situation, he starts by dealing with the inexperience of the possibilities that will arise. After all, this act of passion cannot be considered decisive for the existence of the decision. The first step to freedom, according to existentialism, is the denial of the feeling of desire, for freedom to be fulfilled immediately and without any deviation.

Sartre seems to be seeking absolute freedom, which is a core issue for human; a type of freedom that is not subjected to material restrictions. Naturalist determinism cannot affect the freedom that lies in the core of human existence, namely in consciousness. In the book *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre will attempt to prove that the only adventure that human can experience is to constantly discover their self-consciousness; the degree of discovery of consciousness depends directly on the degree to which human sets themselves free to penetrate their Being. It is a dialectic of freedom and consciousness. This parallel world of consciousness is by no means confused with material reality, with the exception of the level of particularization of existence. This fundamental ontological relationship of human is particularized in the form of knowledge and action in the outer world. In other words, the world is outside human and, at the same time, human is

⁹ Sartre Jean-Paul, *Being and Nothingness*, tr. Hazel E. Barnes, pp. 82-83, New York: Philosophical Library, [1943] 1948.

related to the outer world due to the externalization of consciousness in the form of knowledge and action. At the same time, consciousness is revealed to human as a void without content, having no life; it is humans themselves that animate consciousness and make it meaningful through their actions. Consciousness is always beyond itself. Within consciousness, there is a constant movement of escape from itself. Consciousness is nothing but a peculiar externality and, as result, it has no specific form; this is a fact that constitutes consciousness. Freedom of consciousness is beyond itself. While it is composed in the inner world of human, however, it cannot be fully perceived as an object; it is elusive in essence and there is no such substance that would constitute the true, the authentic or the deep self. The self that is particularized in the world, namely this mystery that appears in the light, is not the center of human consciousness; consciousness is radical freedom but it does not completely coincide with it; consciousness freely chooses the radical freedom and can even be separated from it. Consciousness cannot be imprisoned in an objective substance.

Freedom is a source of self-determination

Therefore, according to the above analysis, human is solely responsible for his passions¹⁰. The emerging fact, however, is that any voluntary action which results in deterring social organization can be negated at any time. What is the impact on human relationships? What could be the resultant issues? Can social relations exist without the concept of security, which clearly emerges from the construction of a moral and legal framework? Sartre attempts to solve this problem by putting forward two arguments. First, he argues that one can rely on given behaviors, based on in possibilities. This means that a person's previous life, despite not being a series of certain behaviors, it can, however, be a sign of probability. One can trust the words of others in a similar way that one

¹⁰ Sartre Jean-Paul, *Existentialism is a Humanism*, tr. Carol Macomber, p. 305, New Haven: Yale, [1946] 2007.

can trust that his friend will not be late for their meeting, given the probability that the train he is on will not be derailed¹¹. Secondly, within the context of everyday culture, in the world of immediacy, as Sartre calls it, what kind of criteria shape the human action? Does he put his mind first and then act based on the choices that exist? A person's volitional actions are activated, without any kind of direct thought; therefore, they are more likely to be influenced by well-established ethical principles or other eternal moral values¹².

If, however, one tries to justify decisions based on given and long established values, which do not derive from a particular subject, then he is considered to be acting in bad faith, because he is voluntarily relinquishing his freedom. This happens because no value exists in advance, owing to the fact that we create the values ourselves. As Wahl characteristically states, Sartre insists mainly on the fact that the foundation of values is human himself¹³. Self-determined behavior as an act of freedom is indisputably associated with human. In other words, only human can determine his own behavior at a decisive moment in present as well as in future time; there is no alternative. Human cannot give up his freedom, because it is the source of his self-determination. In addition, the consequence of this given coexistence of human with his freedom does not only constitute his human greatness but also his existential drama¹⁴. The responsibility of human, however, cannot be defined within the frames of

¹¹ Also, see, p.314.

¹² Sartre Jean-Paul, *Being and Nothingness*, tr. Hazel E. Barnes, pp. 93-94, New York: Philosophical Library, [1943] 1948.

¹³ Wahl J., *Introduction to the Philosophies of Existentialism*, p. 110, tr. Chr. Malevitsis, published by Dodoni, Athens 1988: "My rule is only myself, and I must make my own rules", and also, "that through my election I create values, I am the unfounded foundation of values because I am the foundation of everything, I am without foundation, I am the being through whom value comes into the world and that is exactly why I am unjust ". Sartre insists, like Kierkegaard, that there is no external point that could orient.

¹⁴ Sartre Jean-Paul, *Existentialism is a Humanism*, tr. Carol Macomber, p. 306, New Haven: Yale, [1946] 2007.

his subjectivity. Since human creates actions, due to the fact that voluntarily makes choices for himself, he also chooses an image for the world in general. Human contains the whole world. In other words, the responsibility now lies in the whole humanity and not just in one being. In the light of this action, Sartre and Camus consider going beyond the principle that introduces the self-commitment of the practical subject as the only possible commitment. Camus will attempt to analyze and introduce a categorical command drawn from Kant's theory. Based on these data Sartre will attempt to investigate Marx's theory from the 19th century. Regardless of his attempts at a theoretical level, Sartre tries to explain why radical freedom cannot be easily conquered due to a number of causes. On the one hand, there is a denial of freedom itself, because an existential movement taking place in external matter, escapes now from itself and it becomes an independent self. As Wahl explains, freedom exists in human nature¹⁵. On the other hand, necessity is inevitable, as there is the fact of the transient existence of the subject. Transcending the existence beyond its narrow limits and attempting to identify with the cosmic Being is an act of the subject. For Heidegger, the limits of absolute freedom will always be defined in the context of this thought¹⁶.

¹⁵ Wahl J., *Introduction to the Philosophies of Existentialism*, p. 110, tr. Chr. Malevitsis, published by Dodoni, Athens 1988, "*This is our condition to be the freedom that coagulates and at the same time the freedom that triumphs or at least has to triumph over this gel; to be what it is, while its deepest tendency is to be what it is not. Freedom exists thanks to nature, because it is our nature to be free but it is against nature, because it must always fight against what tends to thicken it, which tends to transform it into what Sartre calls en-soi. "Again, freedom always ends in failure, and indeed, we could talk about liberation rather than freedom."*

¹⁶ In Kierkegaard, necessity takes on a special meaning, as necessity, which is the opposite of freedom, is not identified with historical reality, as Hegel argues. Noesis and Being are targeted as identical in Hegel, thus shaping external reality as a necessity. For Kierkegaard, however, this is the definition of being and not of the real being. Reality here takes on a different dimension and does not reflect its historical dimension, its intersubjective thoughtfulness, but necessity as reality is inherent in the subject outside of any kind of permeability. Here it is emphatically noted that the necessary is identified with eternity, as the necessary is always

On the one hand, the bipolarity of a transient life and the absolute freedom of human to choose without having any criteria or an ultimate purpose, and, on the other hand, the subject coming to terms with irrationality, are all factors that clearly indicate the contradiction of nihilistic existentialism. The latter allows human to realize that he lives a meaningless life. As a result, human finds himself considering the possibility of self-abstraction of the existence. Camus firmly believes in having a positive attitude towards life, trying to adopt a life stance that despises the negative¹⁷. Nagel will suggest his own position on negative attitude and will adopt irony. All these proposals, however, come to the same conclusion. These positions do not go hand in hand with the demand for radical freedom. Each person makes their choices based on freedom and the various options offered. The self-worth of life lies in the fact that one chooses to live because he exists. The nihilistic existentialism, advocated by Sartre, moves along these rails¹⁸.

Consequently, human freedom consists in the ability of consciousness to transcend its material state. People are free only if their basic needs are fulfilled. Sartre considers freedom synonymous with human consciousness. Consciousness ("being-for itself") is characterized by its non-coincidence with itself. Consciousness constantly escapes, because it serves an ultimate purpose (consciousness always points to an object other than itself) and because it is momentary (consciousness is necessarily future-oriented). Human freedom consists in the ability of consciousness, in the sense that no normal human being can stop being free. Consciousness is always freedom; volition can always be re-examined or rejected and that is how the anguish or threat of

necessary and it is impossible to submit to any change in the finite world. Therefore, the necessary does not belong to the material conventional time, but to another dimension of space-time, which, as already noted above, according to Bergson is duration or real time.

¹⁷ Camus A., *The Myth of Sisyphus*, tr. Justin O'Brien, p. 145, ed. Penguin Books Ltd, London 2000, "*We must imagine Sisyphus happy*".

¹⁸ The only consistent answer is the one that Sartre would probably give: "Choose!"

the moment is always explained. As paradoxical as it may seem, freedom can only be self-restricted. The external event and freedom cannot be easily separated, making it impossible for the external event to be attributed to objectivity and for freedom to be attributed to subjective volition. Overcoming this distinction is what lies at the heart of Sartre's conception; it is this issue that undoubtedly makes a moral re-examination possible, regarding the level of reflection of this primordial and original freedom.

Conclusion

The moral gap that has been created by the existential philosophy seems to be in conflict with the basic principles of the system itself. Anyone trying to associate this system with any kind of individual or collective commitment, weakens the very foundations of this system. It is certain, in my opinion, that people who want to join the existing social and moral system voluntarily and commit themselves to the undertakings involved, will negate the fundamental pillars of their freedom. Inevitably, the system we always prevent people from acting out of their own volition. Therefore, only by negotiating the freedom of the being in relation to the social system, will the concept of radical freedom make sense. Sartre's emphasis on a moral responsibility through the ontological analysis of freedom, as opposed to the hitherto rules, principles and values in recent years, has led to a widespread interest in Levinas's work as a necessary complement to the so-called "postmodern" ethics. Sartre's existential philosophy significantly influenced the existence of a modern revival of the understanding of philosophy as a "way of life". At international level, his philosophy is a distinct academic brunch no longer focusing only on epistemology or, more recently, on the philosophy of language but, at the same time, renewing the interest in Hellenistic ethics as well as in various forms of spirituality. Finally, in Sartre's philosophy one can discover his existentialist forms of "self-care" that invite modern ethics,

aesthetics and politics to a fruitful discussion without signs of ethicism or fanaticism.

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**Modern Societies:
Politics & Communication
In the Critical Thinking
of Jurgen Habermas**

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Abstract

The subject dealt in this article, is substantially to review the stance and behavior of the theoretician of the second generation thinkers of the *Critical Theory* J. Habermas and his academic contribution to the social and political thought for the modern world. That is, to trace the beginning and manner of how the Frankfurt School's thinker took the directorship of the *critical theory* and then to attempt to review the theoretical direction taken by him. It means to reveal if this new director follows similar path as the previous theoreticians of the school, or, if he differentiates himself from them. If he doesn't follow similar direction, what is the new element he is adding to and in which field? Emphasis is given to the comparative critical analysis which is done by himself on the societies during the after math period either those that belong to the

western democratic model of capitalist formation or those of the eastern social pattern of the socialist formation. Through that critique Habermas infiltrates to a problematic so as to evaluate with the knowledge of today the social reality in two main directions. In the first field, he expands his criticism upon the above societies in pointing out the negative evolution which they are indicating. In the second field, he considers, with the knowledge provided to us from the new theoretical tools of the contemporary period, the Marxist theory and the communication. Finally, our aim is to show with this critical analysis that if with his differentiation from the previous theoreticians has reinforced in reality the *critical theory* or the political philosophical thought and to what degree?

Key Words: Cognition, Communicative theory, Objectification, Emancipation, Consciousness, Life World.

1, Introduction

The main purpose of research in this article is to conduct one critical study of the work of Jurgen Habermas in order to mark out at first the theoretical stand of the thinker but also his theoretical contributions on crucial subjects of our times. Themes which refer to fields such as politics, communication and knowledge as they have being conformed in the advanced industrial society indicating simultaneously what is the new element this society teaches us, or impregnates to future? Indeed, to imprint with an apparent manner raising the question for him how he himself as a thinker of the second generation of the school differentiates from the previous generation of theoreticians of the critical theory? It is well known by now that he is one of the most celebrated and internationally esteemed theorists who, not only maintained the continuation of Critical Theory, but he structured its course into a different direction.

This philosopher himself understands his work as an “effort to develop a theory of society with a practical aim which it will lead to the emancipation of human beings from any form of domination”.¹ Thus, Critical Theory must aim at

¹ Held D. *Introduction to Critical Theory*, University California Press, 1980, p. 250.

broadening people's self-knowledge which through that they could be able to acquire their emancipation. That is, towards to the acquisition and accumulation of knowledge and to the development of the consciousness of social groups, so that to render them capable of transforming society. Such thing for him appears quite imperative due to prominent weakness of the transformation of society. From the one hand, without the imperative broad knowledge of reality and an effective communicative relation of people from the other that enables them for changing social and practical structures the transformation of society is impossible.

This radical perspective can be paralleled with the ideas and visions of all those who visualising the social transformation under a steady and durable, democratic manner. Specifically, with an utmost respect on citizens' participation, with freedom and equality, in performing production and executing decisions, as well as in the thinking of making those decisions, so as to structure the achievement of that kind of socialism with a human face.² The work of the philosopher, particularly that of the communicative theory of society, in essence treats social, political and economical structures as essentially communicative structures. That is to say, the relations of power and production do not transmit exclusively information, but formulate communication with key-terms in politics and morality. For example, those concepts of new communication are supported by consensus, trust, sacrifice etc. The content of critical theory, consequently, for the thinker, focuses on the analysis of the systematic and not necessarily of the distorted communications that form the multifaceted stage of evolution or stagnation of the life of citizens in the advanced industrial societies. For this reason, the *basic aim of the article is* to investigate, at a reasonable extent, those dimensions that the Habermasian thought introduces both in the communicative function on language and democracy with also the empirical analysis, as well as in Marxism, positivism, and in the

² Reference: Socialism with the human face as an expression belongs to the Leader of Tcheschoslovakia Dubcek 1968, when the military forces of the Soviet Union invaded in his country.

analytical philosophy.

2. Critique of Modern Social Systems

The stance of the intellectual of the Critical Theory, towards the emerging social, economical and political conditions of the bourgeois society, during the second part of the twentieth century, was quite critical in all directions. He observes that the rationalism of the western world developed within the context of the bourgeois formation, for that he examines the primal conditions of modernisation in relation to the type of societies which defined the tension of the capitalist development. By following the thoughts and the analyses of Marx and Weber, Habermas thinks that the societies of late capitalism in the advanced liberal world, find themselves in front of a crossroad. More concretely, their modernisation is propelled into one direction through endogenous problems produced by economic accumulation.

While the societies of the countries of Eastern Europe, as they formed a domain of orthodox communism or state socialism till the last decade of the twentieth century, are surrounded by various problems that arise from the efforts of the state itself. In the thought of the intellectual of the Frankfurt School therefore, the state as a political power is found under the guidance of the strict central administration and planning as well as under the structure of a rationalisation of one party's elite. The mode of the administration and governing of those countries seems to be more centralised since it is exercised from the core pivot rather than by a multiplicity of powers which they would lead in the their democratization during the post-war era. However, following similar analysis with the developmental track that the organised capitalism exhibits the political function of welfare state and the mass democracy have taken a parallel evolution. Under the pressure of the economic crises in certain countries, the mode of production has been threatened by a social disintegration. For this reason in Habermas's thinking, the system could maintain itself only for a certain period of time under the form of authoritarian

or a fascist regime.

In considering the Eastern European countries on the same track of development, the state bureaucratic socialism formulates a similar political authority in the form of a dictatorship of the state-controlled political parties until the collapse of this system in 1990. The Stalinist domination through force, gives in to more moderate post-Stalinist regimes in recent times. The start of both, the workers' democratic movement and the democratic decision-making processes within the party, appeared to be plausible and visible only in Poland in the end of the decade of 1970s. Both the two deviations the authoritarian, as well as the democratic, as they derived from the two dominant models established during our period, according to Habermas, depending rather from the national particularities, especially upon the politics and culture of the countries in question.

In any case, these ramifications render those historical particularities necessary even at the most general level of the modes of social integration and the relevant social pathologies.³ Thus, the philosopher of the Frankfurt School concludes that, "if we permit ourselves to simplify our thinking with some ideal characteristic in order to limit ourselves into two major variations of the late liberal societies, and if we depart from the hypothesis that phenomena of alienation or "reification" are raised as deformations of the world we live in which were in fact caused by a systematic manner, then, we could take some steps towards the direction of a comparative analysis over the principles of social organisation, the types of crises, and the forms of social pathology".⁴

One significantly rational world that we are experiencing today, according to the above view, is regarded to be the one of the primal conditions in the processes of modernization. In this way, such a rationalisation necessarily seems to render possible for someone to accumulate power and money as

³ Habermas J. "The Tasks of a Critical Theory of Society", in: *Modern German Sociology*, Ed. V. Meja, D. Misgeld and N. Stehr, Columbia University Press, New York, 1987, p.188

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 189.

some mean to be institutionalized both of them, power as well as money through a positive law that legitimises them. If these conditions are achieved through administrative and economic systems that have a complementary relation to each other and come into internal interchanges with their environments through the direction of media, they can eventually differentiate themselves according to the same conception. At this level of the system of differentiation modern societies appear. At the beginning the bourgeois societies appear and later on the bureaucratic socialist ones. Both societies, the capitalist countries in the West, as well as, the socialist ones of the East, he argues, there exist social classes, where the state and the economy take distinctive forms.⁵

In the latter, the bureaucratic elites that they had control over the means of production formed in essence one extremely complicated system, which was undoubtedly authoritarian because it excluded mainly the democratic processes in decision-making, which were concerned with the priorities of society in general. While in the western bourgeois societies, following the Habermas' line of thought, both periods, as in the beginning of the century, as well as, in the present times, things are even more obscured because the structures of power are inflexibly hierarchical and any functions of the system lack operation without transparency. The democracy therefore, cannot be but injured or castrated in various ways. The control which the political elites seem to have about the means of production at the one hand and the private economically privileged groups on the other, constitute, according to this view, different forms of class relations in the stage of development that modern bourgeois societies have reached.⁶

The tendency of modernisation in capitalist countries, in this way, opens up widely and rapidly the path while the economic system develops the internal dynamics of

⁵ Habermas J. *Autonomy and Solidarity, Conservatism, Crisis of Capitalism, The Dialectic Rationalization*, Publications of Epsilon, Athens 1987, page 12.

⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 12-13.

development. That is, with the endogenously already produced problems of the system and the endeavour to reach their solution it (the modernization) manages to take the leadership over society as a whole. While in socialist societies such an opening, or modernization, headed towards a different direction since on the basis of the state ownership of the majority of the means of production and the established single-party authority, the administrative action of the system gained autonomy in relation to the economic system.⁷

With such organizational principles that are established, for the intellectual of critical theory, there occur alternating relations between the two functionally correlated subsystems of the political and the economic sphere, and the social components of the living world upon which the media have being established. The living world therefore, from this point of view, as the domain of people's social lives, can differentiate even further in its symbolic structures and can set freely the logic of development of the cultural modernity. At the same moment, the public and the private spheres have been structured as environments of the system. To what extent, though, the economic system or the state mechanism achieve an evolutionary supremacy or not, makes no difference as long as they both are consequences of crises that have been transposed from the subsystems of the living world. In the modernized societies, Habermas observes, the disorders which are noticed in the material reproduction of the living world take the form of a systemic dysfunction drastically influences the living world itself as a form of pathology⁸.

While in capitalism, on the other hand, this happens through endogenous crises under the form of continuous disruptions in the processes of capital accumulation. That is, with the same crises as identical to the paradoxes of exchange in rationalism that can be interpreted by the fact that the rational orientations of action become in self-contradiction through purposeless effects of the system. The crisis'

⁷ Ibid, 14-16.

⁸ *Modern German Sociology*, op. cit. p.189.

tendencies have been elaborated not only within the framework where they arise, but also through complementary actions that can be transposed. Therefore, Habermas reckons that, as the capitalist economy is based upon the organisationally functional accomplishments of the state, in the same way the socialist bureaucratic planning had to be based upon the self-managing functional achievements of the economy.

The elites of bureaucracy in societies of state socialism whereas, by controlling the means of production throughout the whole post-war period formed a dark authoritarian system since they have thoroughly excluded democracy in all sectors of economic, social and political life. For that, the crises of the system were endogenous and lasting. While, the advanced capitalist system, the theoretician of the critical thinking perceives it as it is moving between two major opposed political positions generally between the market forces and the state interventionism. The dilemma is of structural nature and more apparent in the countries of bureaucratic socialism, where the political action wavers without hop between increasing central planning and the decentralisation. That is mostly apparent amongst the economically orientated programmes for investment or consumption. That is, in Habermas' thought, capitalism draws a course towards the unsettling of the system balances. "The fundamental contradiction of capitalism is expressed in the thought of Habermas", according to Held, "as a contradiction between social production and private appropriation which is so called social production for non-generalised interests"⁹

What he bethinks or reflects therefore, is the fact that this distorted systemic balance turns into a crisis *only* when the function of state economy is preserved apparently under an established demand-orientated status quo which damages in parallel with conflicts and reactions, to the symbolic reproduction of the micro living world. While, without distorted balances, inflict may be accomplished in the social

⁹ Held D. *Introduction to Critical Theory*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1980, p.286.

components of the living world which are directly affected. But before even such conflicts substantially threaten the centre of social integration those components have already been repelled to the periphery and as a result, crisis is avoided. However, the critical thinker asserts that only in capitalist societies the distortions of living world take the form of a reification-alienation about their communicative relations, that is, in the direction where the individual as a private citizen is a point of invasion for the shifting of the crises within that domain. There is no issue of a further expansion of the communicative medium, as a result, but of an extension of the marketisation and bureaucratisation of the domains of action, of employees and consumers, of the citizens and the customers in the bureaucracies of the state. In similar conception as the neo-liberal state evolves bureaucratic it becomes stronger.

But, as the state becomes more powerful with more authority, the more its citizens strip off their fundamental power. The citizen remains in other words, very weak, without power at all since his basic strength has been subtracted from him. This experience of misery, according to the marxist critique, finally leads those who are deprived of goods and suffer exploitation, to tend towards some sort of solidarity that turns, in essence, that exploitation into an educative process. The state thus, for the thinker of critical theory, undermines in multiple ways the possibility of participation of citizens in public affairs under the already acceptable ways, such as “elections, parties, collective organisations, in general the ‘democratic’ process”.¹⁰

Another social researcher asserts, that “the character and the ideology of each governing party cease to have importance in a world essentially indifferent from the political point of view, technocratic and grey. In this rationale, some of the modern social movements (i.e. the student’s movement of the 1960’s, the feminist movement, the peace movement or the ecological movement) can be seen precisely as symptoms of the ‘motivational crisis’ in modern

¹⁰ Craib I. *Modern Social Theory*, Publications of Hellenic Letters, Athens 1998, p. 496.

society”.¹¹ If, though, we carry out a brief historical retrospection we will find that the brutal exploitation of workers, which was the result of the capitalist factory system in the 19th century, and the increase of working hours without guarantees for satisfying basic life needs, have revealed this picture of misery, but also made an alternative social model necessary as the only solution.¹² This alternative system was the system of socialism that would arise out of the proletarian revolution which could carry the great hope that the workers could satisfy their basic needs and live humanly without injustices, since they would control the means of production.

‘The modern condition’, according to Habermas, “is not only the outcome of different developments, but also reveals that conflicts and class struggle are controlled. The undesirable labour is connected to something more than a mere satisfaction of basic needs, the consumerism attracts with the form of a multitude of goods that can combine the happiness and the satisfaction for every need. Today we have, therefore, the threat of another development that offends the foundation of the capability for socialism. The labour becomes quite rarer and as rarer it becomes and superfluous and thus dissolves the model of the oppressed worker that is pushed towards educational solidarity. An unemployment that is attributed to the increases of productivity and automation, one stabilised international division of labour with more and more inequalities to export – those developments compel us to take a closer look at what socialism means across the background of an increased spare time and of the implications of industrialisation, the forms of economy whose necessary development was never seriously doubted by orthodox Marxist theorists”.¹³

¹¹ Ibid, pp. 496-497.

¹² *Autonomy and Solidarity*, op. cit. p. 92.

¹³ Ibid, p. 93.

3. Critique of Marxism & the Essence of Communication

To begin our analysis here with the stance and thought of Habermas about Marxism and the communication it would be interesting to refer to his speech in an interview which has been publicised.¹⁴ So, it is shown there, that the close relation of the Frankfurt school theorist with Marxism and the democratic socialist Marxist tradition in general, springs from the interest he developed while studying two major works during different periods of time. One was Lukacs' *"History and Class Consciousness"* and the other was Horkheimer and Adorno's *"Dialectic of Enlightenment"*. In a revealing confession to Honneth in 1981, Habermas states his admiration and sorrow to what belonged to the past, referring to the first work. While the second work, since he studied it thoroughly and mainly after the post-war publications of Adorno, it was given a great courage to me towards dealing with Marx systematically.¹⁵ As he underlines, "that gave me enough courage to read Marx systematically and not just historically... That later reading gave me the strength to deal systematically with that which Lukacs and Korsh represented historically: the theory of reification as a theory of rationalisation in the sense of Max Weber. Since that time, my problem was already a theory of modernity in the sense of a distorted realisation of Reason in history"¹⁶.

His interest lay originally on Marx's economic-philosophical manuscripts, on the anthropological meaning of *alienation* and later on delved into the mature work of the great philosopher, such as the critique of political economy and historical materialism. In his own work *Knowledge and Human Interest* the approach to marxist theory becomes understood. Habermas observed that in the empirical marxist research and historical materialism, Marx counted both the practical activity of the worker as well as the productive work

¹⁴ Habermas J *Autonomy & Solidarity, Conservatism, Crisis of Capitalism, The Dialectic of Rationalism*, Publications

Ypsilon / Books, Athens 1987.

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 45.

¹⁶ Ibid, pp. 45-46.

as labour and counteraction. Marx brings together, according to Habermas, an analysis of the mode through which people reproduce the material conditions of their lives that form eventually the material world, with an analysis of the mode through which they interpret and transform their institutions throughout historical struggles.¹⁷ Therefore, the material basis of society as well as the institutional context, the structure of symbolic counteraction and the role of cultural tradition is incorporated in the basic Marxist investigations. For that, the analytical distinctions made, are among those very two dimensions of the reproductive process of society that are dialectically interrelated.¹⁸

More precisely, on the one side, stands the area of scientific and technological progress, which is characterised by periodical changes, that is the forces of production. Whereas, on the other side, stands the institutional contexts of the relations of production that distribute mutual rewards or wages and obligations or duties. According to the thinker of critical theory, the last one which is the obligations composes modes of social integration with domination as well as social conflict with class struggle. The marxist theory of capitalism, therefore, develops within this context of reference. That is, it attempts to calculate both the technical as well as the practical activity. It is an analysis of the crisis of the dynamics of the bourgeois system and a critique of ideology.¹⁹ In other words, it is an analysis of political economy as far as the political and economic activity is concerned, and also a critique of political economy for its wrong theoretical view on the existing economic activity.

The replacement or the transition from a critique of political economy by Marx, into a critique of politics didn't take place without consequences for Habermas. Classical political economy, in other words, was not just an "expression of the unification of liberal capitalism through its self-regulating market, but one central ideology concealing the class hierarchy through modes of reciprocal exchange,

¹⁷ See, *Introduction to Critical Theory*, op. cit. p. 267.

¹⁸ Ibid, pp. 267-268.

¹⁹ See Ibid, p. 268

where independently created rules of freedom and equality were interpreted in reality as freedom and equality of the owners of capital”.²⁰ The critique of political economy, consequently, can be a critique of the democratic rules of bourgeois society in context of their bourgeois distortion, on one hand, and on the other, a critique of an alienation or anti-fetishist polemic against the necessary social illusions of stability and balance of capitalist economy, which is constituted in the market. Thus, it is ascertained in Habermasian thought that this theory is both *science and critique*, since it constitutes a theory of exploitation that perceives itself as a critical conscience of the revolutionary practice.²¹

But, the Habermasian analysis that unfolds his book, *Theory and Practice*, upholds that marxist theory tends to reduce practical activity into technical activity. What Marxism marks out, according to Habermas, “is not the interpretation of the reciprocal relation of counteraction and labour, but under an undefined title of social practice, the reduction of one to the other”.²² That means that communicative action is reduced to instrumental action. In other words, “the productive activity, which regulates material exchange between people and their natural environment, becomes an example of the totality of categories, where everything is analysed within the movement of production. For this reason, the brilliant Marxist insight into the dialectic relation between production forces and production relations can be misinterpreted in a mechanical way”.²³ Commenting on the critical thinking of Habermas, Held regards that for him, “the brilliant Marxist insight into the level of philosophic and anthropological epistemology would require a distinction, or even better, a separation between people that become instruments and language that uses animals. In a contrast to

²⁰ Arato A. Eike G., *The essential Frankfurt School Reader*, Continuum, New York, 2000, p.23

²¹ *Introduction to Critical Theory*, op. cit. p.268

²² See Ibid, p. 268.

²³ Habermas J. "*Labour and Interaction: Remarks on Hegel's Philosophy of Mind in Theory and Practice*, pp. 168-69. Reference to the *Introduction to Critical Theory*, p. 268.

both levels, thus, according to Habermas, Marx has a strong tendency to incorporate the latter to the former”.²⁴ Therefore, the Habermasian argument lies upon the early marxist texts, but examines them in juxtaposition to mature marxist work in order to lay a foundation for his critique in general. He regards that it is not only labour that allows man to alter his nature and as a result differ from animals, but such a function is served by the language as well. Language, as we will argue in later on, is the ability of humans to communicate with each other.

In conclusion, the Habermasian conception of Marxist theory is that, its orthodox aspect mainly reduces the communicative into the instrumental action. The instrumental action, though, is the productive activity that regulates, as we mentioned earlier, the material exchange of people within their natural environment. That reinforces, undoubtedly, the erroneous interpretation of marxism in terms of the mechanical relation between production forces and production relations, which it influences both the interpretive theory as well as the theory of liberation and emancipation. The relation of Habermas with marxism, therefore, as Outhwaite mentions, can be characterised in general as a positive critique.²⁵ That is, its very dynamic lies on the fact that it incorporates one capable acceptance of historical materialism and the marxist programme for human liberation.²⁶ Because by liberating the technical forces of production does not mean it is identical to the development of rules that would fulfil the dialectic of ethical relation in a counteraction without domination. The ‘liberation from hunger and misery does not necessarily mean convergence with the emancipation from slavery and misery’, as he mentions, precisely because ‘there exists no immediate developmental relation between the worker and counteraction in the life world’.²⁷

²⁴ *Introduction to Critical Theory*, op. cit. pp. 268-269.

²⁵ Outhwaite W. *Habermas: a Critical Introduction*, Polity Prerss, Oxford, 1994, p. 17.

²⁶ See *Ibid*, p. 17.

²⁷ See *Ibid*, pp. 16-17. See also, McCarthy C., *The Critical Theory of*

Therefore, through the linguistic understanding brought by communication inside the life world, the oppressive domination of Instrumental Reason and of instrumental action over the workers becomes milder since it is regulated by an adjusted method of ethical-practical discourse, that is, the communicative one. What is taking place now is the pathology of the phenomenon of reification that is treated through rational rules, demanded by communicative discourse. As he points out, “the theory of communicative action establishes an internal relation between action and rationality. It traces the presumed rationality of the communicative action daily and allows the normative content of the orientated person to come under agreement of action in the concept of communicative rationality”.²⁸ He concludes that the change of the example is provoked by the fact that neither the one nor the other tradition nor even marxism or the critical theory of the first generation had the capacity to indicate the social foundations of one critical theory of society.

In reality for Habermas, Marx failed to produce a satisfactory meta-theory, which would correlate labour and counteraction. In the succeeding work of Lenin, Bukharin and Stalin, according to him, this tendency that remained unresolved was finally given a solution, unfortunately in favour of positivism and reductionism or determinism. But dialectic thought revealed the unity of people and nature and strengthened the scientific analysis. The knowledge of the laws of history attained therefore to be possible the control of social processes in a way analogous to the control exercised by natural sciences.²⁹ Thus, he contemplates that using the knowledge available on the outcomes of social processes, gives us the opportunity to take the right course of action in every given situation. In other words, predictability allows for a control in accordance to the facts. Therefore, as Held assumes thinking his theoretical notions, “science evolved in

Jurgen Habermas, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1978, pp.36-38.

²⁸ Habermas J. *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, Publications Alexandria, Athens 1993, p. 103.

²⁹ Introduction to Critical Theory, op. cit. p. 269.

the same way as dialectic materialism, and thus it legitimises technocratic activity and administration is concentrated in specialists. That thing that could be introduced in this manner as new and useful by the reflections and generally the thought of the subject in its every activity over the practice of the party and state it belongs to, is obliterated or extinguished”.³⁰

In Habermasian thought, the approach of historical materialism is distinguished not as a method but as a theory of the social evolution that, while it owns its existence in its reflective condition, it is in parallel informative in the goals of political activity.³¹ Despite all this, he feels that the impulsion forward offered by historical materialism has not been exhausted but that revision is required in many aspects. There are difficulties, though, many of which derive, for Habermas, from the Marxist emphasis on the forces of production as the moving engine of history. Therefore, he argues that “while Marx limited learning processes for evolution in the dimension of forces of production, there exist, simultaneously, powerful reasons for us to assume that learning processes take place in the dimension of ethical perception, practical knowledge, communicative action and of consensual regulation and action of conflicts. When the learning processes are marked upon more mature modes of social integration, the introduction of new forces of production becomes possible”.³²

What Habermas focuses on is two categories, each with a pair of main concepts. The first category refers to concepts such as social work and history of species. The second is constituted by the theory of base and superstructure as well as by the theory of development, where the dialectic of the forces of production and relations of production is

³⁰ Ibid, p. 269.

³¹ Habermas J. *Towards a Reconstruction of Historical Materialism*, Frankfurt Suhrkamp, 1976, tr. as *Communication and the Evolution of Society*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1991. Note: Habermas rejects the fact that only Marx and Engels and not the later Marxists advocate this theory that directly relates to evolution.

³² Ibid, pp. 97-98. See also Introduction to Critical Theory, op. cit. pp. 270-71.

included.³³ The theorist's critical thought moves towards analysing the base and superstructure that Marx examined, aiming to reveal the social forces playing a leading role in social evolution. The basic Marxist concept meant that the essential terrain of society was formed from two categories: a) the forces of production and b) the relations of production. Both of these categories constitute the economic structure within which a context of friction and social problems is delimited. The Habermasian critique goes, therefore, that the identification taking place to Marxist thought for the base of society with economic structures is inadequate or insufficient and impedes the understanding of many different forms of society. That is because it cannot necessarily be regarded that the base of society is the kingdom of economy.

Only by the fact that, if the relations of production are being understood as mechanisms that regulate the access to the means of production and indirectly determine the distribution of social wealth through the state which they are part of, it can then be assumed exclusively from this that they had been founded on non-economic social institutions, in the past.³⁴ Here, an empirical and analytical objection is raised against marxist positions, and in particular, against that one that views social crises or even revolutions as emanating from the dialectic of forces of production and relations of production. That is to say, the latter (relations of production) hamper the healthy evolution of the former (forces of production) as forces that should unfold through an endogenous development. On this, the philosopher of the Frankfurt School states that the institutional context that constitutes the relations of production determines also one form of social integration. If problems cannot be solved through the dominant context of integration of society its identity appears to be threatened or found in danger or otherwise is in crisis.³⁵

As for the events that led to the early civilisations and the rise of European capitalism, they had not been

³³ Ibid, p. 270.

³⁴ *Introduction to Critical Theory*, op. cit p. 274.

³⁵ Ibid, p. 274.

predetermined but they were followed by important developments in forces of production.³⁶ In this way, Habermas attempts to salvage the critique as a method of social theory since the above mentioned pairs such as base-superstructure, system and life world, structure and action are not connected deterministically any more, through connections of consequence or dependence, but they are treated as two parts of a dynamic connection. Consequently, the critique exercised, focuses on the method of functional discourse of the social system, which is understood as a progress of society and establishes the subject's life world, thus undermining the foundations of communication. It focuses, in essence, on the burden of expenses for social progress achieved through means of power and money.

Moreover, he strictly criticises the Marxist analysis on the theory of value of labour and on the legitimation crises of the capitalism system. The first represents bourgeois society as a fetishist entity deriving from living labour, where human abilities are interpreted in the form of merchandise and class struggle in market relations.³⁷ Although he thinks that this is a correct analysis of early capitalism he insists that, for current reality, empirical analyses cannot lay upon the theory of value or any similar instruments. In other words, he thinks that Marxist analyses lack a dynamic empirical analysis and that unfortunately creates a big gap. As for the second critique it concerns the economic crises of bourgeois system that gradually lead to the ultimate legitimation crisis. Here he criticises the orthodox marxist position, for the fact that the tendency crisis continues to be determined by the law of value, as Held suggests. That is, "this necessary structural asymmetry in the exchange of hired labour for capital".³⁸ The state in this case cannot compensate for the continuous fall of profit.

His objections, mainly towards orthodox marxist thought,

³⁶ Ibid, p. 275.

³⁷ White Stephen, *The Companion to Habermas*, ed. Cambridge University Press, New York, 1995, See chapter by Love Nancy, "what's Left of Marx", p. 52.

³⁸ See *Introduction to Critical Theory*, op. cit. 287-288.

can be summarised as it follows: First, that by following a conceptual strategy on the theory of value without exercising a required critique, the economic theory of crisis lacks, undoubtedly, a possible empirical research. In other words, an empirical scientific analysis is absent, which would undoubtedly be the result of the critique of the economic theory. Nor it can be dogmatically supported that the law of value, according to which merchandises-goods continue to be exchanged in their value, is correct. In his perception thus, the governmental-political props of the material-technical structures indirectly contribute to the production of surplus-value, by raising the productivity of human labour. Something like that clearly refers to the reduction of stable capital and the augmentation of surplus-value. What is left pending for Habermas and here he shows a certain doubt, is whether that work which is coming from research and generally from management and planning can be regarded as productive. His question therefore is, to what extent “such a work contributes to the production of further surplus-value by altering the course of conditions under which the surplus-value can be appropriated the moment which such work is indirectly productive”. Thus, he concludes that “the classical marxist conceptions of the theory of value are not sufficient for the analysis of the government policy in education, in technology and in science”.³⁹

Generally, Habermasian thinking with this critique, gives a powerful blow on historical materialism. Societies for Habermas, “are not entities whose parts are determined by the level of development of the forces of production. Within themselves can be discerned different life worlds and systems of life worlds, or environments each of which is subdivided into private and public spheres”.⁴⁰ Therefore, for him, “life world is the domain of ethical and practical knowledge or the different relations of meaning shared by humans in families and workplaces in private, and in political opinions and

³⁹ Ibid, pp. 288-289.

⁴⁰ *The Cambridge Companion to Habermas*, “What’s Left of Marx”, op. cit. p. 50.

actions in public”.⁴¹ This is constituted, he suggests, throughout one communicative action which is an action directed mainly towards touching people through a mutual understanding. On the contrary, the states as political power with mechanisms and the economy as systems of market are coordinated under the direction of the means of money and power, as it was mentioned above.

The attack of the thinker of critical school on marxism is intensified, thinking that orthodox marxism has failed to predict both the stability of the capitalist system as well as the collapse of socialism, as it already happened in 1989. That is because this orthodox Marxist thought simply lacked the ability of distinction.⁴² Nevertheless what Habermasian analysis clearly distinguished were the problems that arising from the systems of politics and economy, from those that arise from motives and meaning inside the life worlds. The dynamic of such a distinction lies in essence, at the fact that it facilitates the evaluation of different tactics in problem-solving. The reason for it is because such a solution is achieved by the knowledge conveyed from both the systems of the instruments of money and of power, as well as, from the life world via the medium of communication. The differentiation of modern societies therefore, for Habermas, is extremely negative due to the fact that it supplies the possibility of a legitimation crisis of the state, in late capitalism till recently, as well as, in the existing bureaucratic socialism.

From another point of view, if marxism perceives the humans as producers, the societies as entities and the history as progress, Habermas concludes, that Marx returns to Hegel’s theory of religion and anthropology that had initially influenced him.⁴³ Therefore, in his work, *Knowledge and Human Interest*, he attempts a comparative analysis of Marx and Freud concerning normative structures and social psychology. In this work, the first is considered very weak to successfully elaborate the concept of ideology and that of

⁴¹ Ibid, p. 50.

⁴² See Ibid, p. 50.

⁴³ See Ibid, p. 51.

power as distorted communication. Thus, Habermasian thought imperatively aims to make a completion to the historical materialism with a theory of ideology which is understood in terms of distorted communication.⁴⁴ For this reason the thinker of the Frankfurt School attempted to investigate, according to Held, the possibilities if the obstacles that were raised in the reflection of the Self and in the communication, are in a position to be obliterated by studying carefully the linguistic, the ethical side and the development of interaction of the person. As he mentions characteristically that the relation between the person's reflection and emancipation, creates problems, where the perception of the achievement of self-consciousness is often an important matter in the process of the latter.⁴⁵ His reasons in reconstructing historical materialism is partly to broadcast this peculiar imbalance between Marx's practical research and his philosophical understanding of the Self.

The question that arises is, to what extent the thinker of the Frankfurt School has a sufficient reflection on the origin of his theory for the communicative rationality of this own life world.⁴⁶ The answer comes from him when he argues that, "the origin of my theory of communication belongs to the acceptance of the hermeneutic and analytical tendency of linguistic theory".⁴⁷ "The aim of such a reciprocal understanding" he mentions, "lies on the linguistic communication which is the path for someone to reach communicative rationality".⁴⁸ That is, as Nancy Love points out, "the communication is rational when the communicating individuals support their answers and only under particularly restricted terms, on the free power for a better and more substantial discourse".⁴⁹ Under these circumstances therefore, the ideal speech is defined as "inter-communicative symmetry in the distribution of claims and disputes, of

⁴⁴ *Introduction to Critical Theory*, op. cit. p. 277.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p. 326.

⁴⁶ See *The Cambridge Companion to Habermas*, op. cit. p. 51.

⁴⁷ See *Autonomy and Solidarity*, op. cit. p. 48.

⁴⁸ See *Ibid*, p. 48.

⁴⁹ See *What's Left of Marx*, op. cit. p. 53.

revealing and concealing, the order of the compliance between the associates of communication as communicating subjects.”⁵⁰ Habermas presents those symmetries in our times as linguistic concepts of truth, freedom and justice respectively, because when they exist in reality, the communication is not impeded by restrictions which they derive from its own structure, and for that the communication is rational.⁵¹

That linguistic turn of the theorist, had as a result the elaboration and interpretation of the moral discourse that included in his most recent efforts. The thinker demonstrated an excessive interest in relation to the legitimacy of the state, where the public role of language, that is the unrestrained usage of speech, clearly interprets his mistrust on post-modernity. Such a reasoning and practice, reveals a deep knowledge by reinforcing the positive founding for normative claims of critical theory. Something like that, presupposes a powerful sense of equality by someone towards the others as well as the ability of himself to introduce common sense, so that it becomes the common ground for the ordinary human being. The public sphere, in Habermasian thinking, is the domain where the civil liberties act practically and the vitality of this sphere is the real evidence of the democratic system. In his book, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*,⁵² he regards the public sphere as the mediator between the state and the economic forces of civil society. The elements of this sphere stretch from free press to the city, from the education system to liberal affairs that support an open exchange of opinions. The public sphere in effect, resulted from humanistic tendencies of the Renaissance and became part of the bourgeois antithesis to feudalism and its hierarchy. With the emphasis that he places on the free speech and the universal values, this public sphere evolves into a sociological starting point, for whatever kind of

⁵⁰ Habermas J. *Toward a Theory of Communicative Competence*, Inquiry 13, 1970, σ. 371.

⁵¹ See *The Cambridge Companion to Habermas*, op. cit. p. 54.

⁵² Habermas J. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Neuwied, Luchterhand, 1962.

development that it can finally take a philosophical occupation on speech in an advanced industrial society.

The decline of public life, recorded by the rising identification between the public sphere and publicity, exhibits a certain weakness of liberalism to question the essential effect of the commercial mode. As it has already been mentioned, the critical thinkers of the early generation were incredulous to this ambition of the public sphere from the beginning and in essence they withheld that only a world mode by commerce could be proven known to the masses of the population. The meaning of communication, as a result, has been thoroughly interwoven with what is produced by the commercial mode. Habermasian thought though differs, simply because it recognises the risks that communication runs in the commercial process, and while it questions the alienation-reification in which the previous theorists have been ensnared, in their immense melancholy, it completes the theory of communication by reinforcing empirical analysis. Likewise, it brings into light a new possibility for one to develop a 'theory of modernity' using "theoretical concepts of communication that possess the analytical precision necessary for socio-pathological phenomena, what Marxist tradition calls reification".⁵³ Thus, he places the unrealised promise of liberalism against the dark consequences of an increasing centrally culturalistic mechanism that surfaces out of nazism and extends itself with neo fascist urges.

4. Conclusion

What we recognise here as a conclusion, is the fact that thinker of the second generation of the critical theory raised the measure of the theory regarding democracy, communication, emancipation and democratic socialism at quite higher level. The struggle in this perspective of the critical theorist is multifaceted because it lies within different modes of rationalisation and different forms of reason. It is a struggle between liberation or emancipation and reification; it

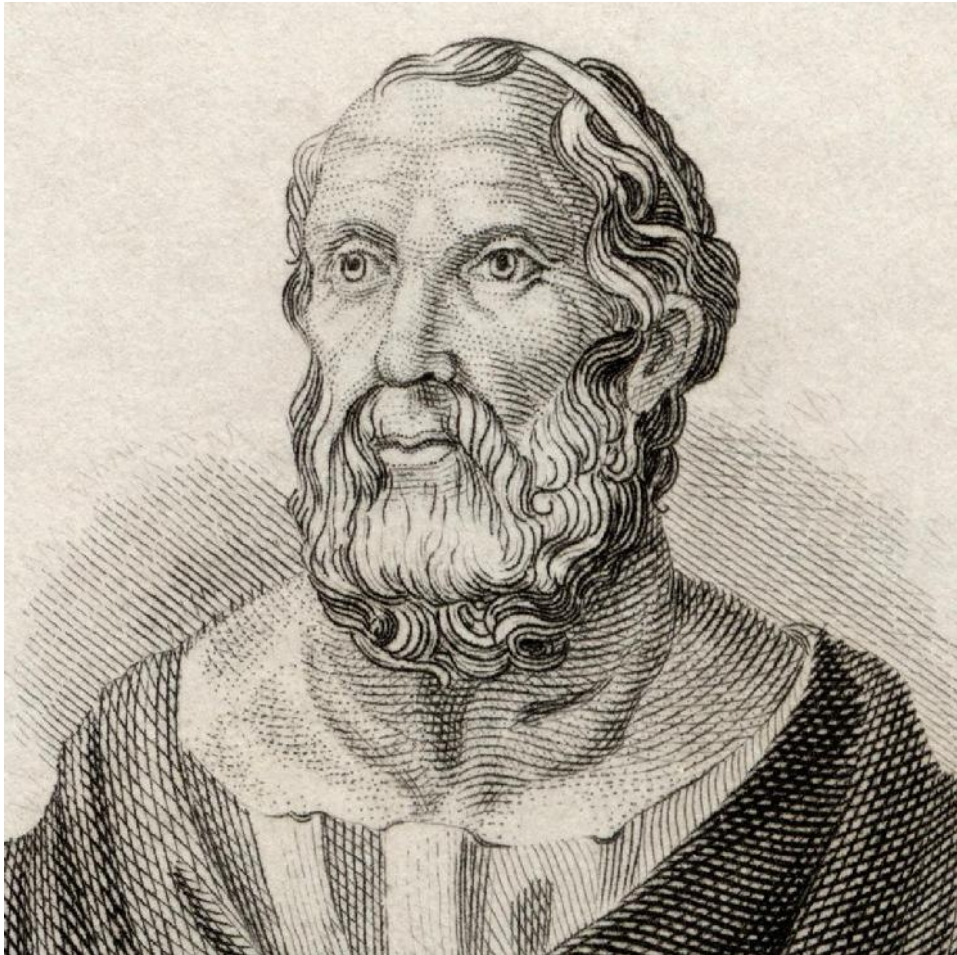
⁵³ Habermas J. *Autonomy and Solidarity*, op. cit. p. 54.

is between life world and the system. It is a struggle between communicative and instrumental reason, having communicative rationality, which is interwoven with democracy, as an ultimate goal. That is democracy, which should not exclude ideology but on the contrary it should encourage the plurality of the ideas and the preservation of their free expressions. The struggle that Habermas starts exists simultaneously on many levels, both in language and communication as well as in reason with its distortions to end in rational communication of the public sphere and in politics with democracy. In this way, he cannot but provoke a certain incredulity accompanied by many reactions and criticisms.

He is although right and quite perspicacious when he recognises, as a Marxist, his duty to interpret the experiences of everyday life and those expressed within the various movements of our days, so that such interpretation would be ratified by the totality of individuals participating in these struggles. In other words, he very reasonably regards as imperative, this need for achieving the aforementioned ratification of movements and for the mobilised strata to believe that the phenomena of domination, ethical degradation, violence and injustice are caused by the current uncontrollable development of capitalism. If such ratification is achieved through the activity of the left nowadays, and intends to tame and civilise capitalism by voting against the European Constitution, which has been succeeded by the French referendum, then it sets a wrong target at the wrong moment. That activity of the left, according to Habermas, as rational stance and thought that is in position to resist the neo-liberal economic regime, is needed to transcend the domain of Europe. In particular, it must extend its visual horizons beyond Europe, to the world community, so that this will render it able to counterpose to the dominant - nowadays- USA-led consent, a socialist, essentially democratic alternative solution.

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**From definition to the prefiguration (?)
of the ontological theory of “Ideas”
in the Platonic dialogue *Laches*:
Case study (189e-192d)**

Abstract

In this study we attempt to investigate whether in Plato’s dialogue *Laches* one can find the preparations for the formulation of the theory of the archetypal “Ideas”. Based on the extensive passage 189e-192d –which we believe it is epistemologically extremely important– we see how Plato (as a systematic exponent of Socrates’ positions) attempts to investigate the feasibility to form the definition of a moral concept-value. This is the virtue of fortitude which is approached in the sense of whether it constitutes an integrity that goes beyond any occasional presence, in the light of the epistemological and formal-logical question “what it is”. However, this question leads to discussions that have to do with the ontological foundations. The conclusion that we draw is that Plato has already begun to form the theory of “Ideas”, but he is still at an initial level and focuses mostly on discussing fortitude as a “universal” from a formal-logical, epistemological and applied point of view. He still attempts to connect Ethics with Epistemology, even though metaphysical aspects have not yet been decisively introduced in his analyses. But he is intensively concerned with their presences.

Key-words: Plato, *Laches*, theory of “Ideas”, virtue, fortitude, definition, power.

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Introduction

To scientifically approach Plato's first dialogues requires the following two general principles, which we could characterize generally epistemological. Specifically: i) It should be first of all mentioned that the moral issues in these dialogues are closely related with ontological, epistemological and dialectic questions, which means that they cannot be theoretically isolated and they cannot be dealt with independently regarding their fundamental justifications and reductions. So, every time they are investigated they receive meaning not only by themselves but also through the constant reductions to extra-ethical theoretical fields, which is typical of the holistic model which in a number of cases the founder of the Academy adopts and thoroughly supports –or, more precisely establishes. In fact, no philosophical branch is isolated from the rest in his system, a detail which obviously also defines the content of the concepts in use, which apparently will not have just one meaning.¹ In other words, they will not exclusively refer to the process of action but also to those of knowledge, participation, being –which is often metaphysically founded– and aesthetic beauty, states which in his view reveal what can be characterized as Reason and they are challenged to be related. But all these in the following sense: without their encosmic (social and historical) relevance to be excluded, they gain their complete meaning if they function as integrities –in the somehow transcendental sense– or even as archetypes.

ii) When exactly Plato begins to form his theory on the archetypal “Ideas” is a philosophical question that cannot be easily defined, since, apart from his own original contribution, one also needs to detect the relevant –if there is any– influence that he received and utilized. Undoubtedly, however, this is a theory which shows his transition from a

¹ For a general approach of the topic, cf. Goldschmidt Vict., *Les dialogues de Platon*, P.U.F., Paris 1971, 32-90, where there are references to the dialogues *Euthyphro*, *Hippias Major*, *Charmides*, *Laches*, *Lysis*. Cf. also, Brès Yv., *La psychologie de Platon*, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris 1973, 31-68.

pure and functioning under integral terms epistemological research to its ontological foundations. He has explicitly projected his intention to shed light on the firm and unchangeable schemata of living and thought since the period at which he composes the *Euthyphro*, *Laches* and *Charmides*. He attempts to investigate if these schemata, through a variety of dialectical tests and reconstructions, can be reduced in ontological steady positions, from where they will derive their regulatory principles. In the concise study which follows we will attempt to investigate one of those efforts of his in the *Laches*, one of the most emblematic texts which refer to the philosophical field of Ethics. The general question which we will raise is the following: is the foundation of a moral virtue –in this case fortitude– knowable in terms of integrity? If the answer is positive, can we move on to a next theoretical step? That is to say, is the reduction of the research possible to a field that could be characterized as archetypical, without necessarily having to face the question of a metaphysical establishment?

So, in the extensive passage 189e-192b of *Laches* –which in our view it defines Plato’s main epistemological directions at this point– he expresses the following questions, which, after a particular rearrangement of the position which they hold –for the validations of the former estimation about the multifactorial or multi-foundation and before of course the systematic expectations defined by research–, could be defined as follows. And this order is defined provided actually that this division will not violate the principles of the founder of the Academy, or at least in the way in which they are presented in the context of the *Laches*, which has been composed during the Socratic period of Plato.

I. *The common as an objective presence and its epistemological-pedagogical function*: The question which is raised in this section –which research faces to the present time–, is the following: is it possible, based on the text, to discuss on the objective existence of the “Ideas” as metaphysical realities or, in an epistemological point of view or a view related with formal Logic, on the general concepts,

which arise through the abstractive method, which include the common properties of the individual similar ontic presences of the sensible world? In other words, the second option can be expressed as follows: does the issue end with the systematic categorical inclusion of the external representations? This is the broader question that has to do with the controversy between realism and nominalism, the historical sources of which as well as the systematic approaches of it are found for the first time in Plato. This realism actually can include both these aspects, with the individual confirming the universal.

In the context of this philosophical discussion, two questions of particular anthropological interest are raised, which however cannot be easily placed in conceptual categorizations due to the distinctiveness of every human person as thinking and acting. On the one hand, the epistemological, since a thing to be investigated is the possibility of a man to know the essence per se of the "Ideas" or the general concepts, with the concept "universal" being able to be used in both cases, or even in their composition or common consideration. In this case the starting point is almost the same with the former one. Or, else, whether human consciousness can exceed the horizon of the direct sensible experience, which captures the information which comes from the renewable and able to be enriched representations, and to reach further detections, which lead to modes that do not appertain to chance and, thus, they are able to be seen in a somehow transcendent perspective. Or, in a broader sense: in this discussion the question is whether there is a common element between "being" and "knowing", but without the whole case becoming, under the rules which Plato has set in this period, idealistic. And unavoidably, this question will lead to another in a next research phase: what are the means which make possible the reduction to the metaphysical archetypes? Furthermore, what degree of objectivity can it ensure and from what source? These are questions to which Socrates' student will soon give answers in his following dialogues, introducing propositions that in the evolution of philosophy will be expressed through

intuition, which is independent from the representations derived from sensible experience.

On the other hand, the way of the practical application based on the awareness of the “Ideas” or general concepts on behalf of the thinking subject is detected, an extension which is not independent from the formation of the integral ethos, while at the same time it can be placed in the perspective of its consulting function or, else, to become a goal with a clear regulatory orientation. «Εἰ γὰρ τυγχάνομεν ἐπιστάμενοι ὅτουοῦν πέρι, ὅτι παραγενόμενόν τῷ βέλτιον ποιεῖ ἐκεῖνο ᾧ παρεγένετο, καὶ προσέτι οἷοί τέ ἐσμεν αὐτὸ ποιεῖν παραγίγνεσθαι ἐκείνῳ, δῆλον ὅτι αὐτὸ γε ἴσμεν τοῦτο, οὗ πέρι σύμβουλοι ἂν γενοίμεθα ὡς ἂν τις αὐτὸ ῥᾶστα καὶ ἄριστ' ἂν κτήσαιτο» (189e).² “If we happen to know of anything whatever that, being present to something, makes that to which it is present better, and if in addition we are able

² In this passage we see a clear case of the cognitive use of the Socratic definition. Cf. Santas G.X., *Socrates: The Arguments of the Philosophers*, Routledge, London-New York 1983, 122-126. The expressive variety of this passage reflects not only Plato’s narrative ability but also the gradual way in which he follows the development of a man who accepts the interventions of a counsellor with a scientific substrate. Specifically, a) the «βέλτιον» stresses, even as an ambition, the transition to a better state than the existing one; b) the «ῥάστα» shows the variety and flexibility of the qualities which are provided and gained; c) the «ἄριστα» reveals the synthetic greatest point of possessing the general qualities, which now constitute a responsibility of a broader perspective. Generalizing, we could contend that there is an evolutionary model of pedagogical intervention extremely realistic which goes together with two potential optative moods, with the first one referring to the responsibility of counselling of a teacher and the second one to the possession and utilization of it by the recipient of the advice. But, we could raise a sociological question, which comes from the givens of the fourth century BC: before the current social and political pathogenesis does Plato think that this sort of consultative intervention is a utopia? Perhaps there is a point here, since potential moods are used. In addition, the expression «οἷοί τέ ἐσμεν», which depends on the immediately previous ones, extends skepticism with respect to the counsellor’s responsibility. That is to say, are there any real counsellors back then? Do circumstances produce them? Cf. Vlastos Gr., *Platonic Studies*, Princeton University Press 1973, 394-396, who stresses that, even if we accept that fortitude is a psychological state, as some scholars suggested, this does not stop us from seeking to know what as a universal concept is.

to make it come to be present to that thing, it is clear that we know the thing about which we might become advisors as to how one might best and most easily possess it”.³ The terms which are chosen have clear directions, which are regulatory. With the participle «ἐπιστάμενοι» and the verb «ἴσμεν» what is stressed is that anyone who undertakes the responsibility of being a counsellor is asked to have a specialized scientific knowledge, considering both the virtue to which the reference is made per se and the fields in which it appears. So, the whole topic becomes generally ethical and constantly leads to applied rationality. This is a detail which will be systematically elaborated in the dialogue *Alcibiades I*, in an actually extremely person-centered way.⁴

In a synthetic consideration of the two issues, it appears that knowing a subject is defined as a requirement for understanding its precise and appropriate position in the space around it as well as effectively applying it or using it when there is a need or a goal. So, simplistic or even mechanistic empiricism and moral intervention regarding the axiological order which rational penetration defines in daily events are excluded. A different approach is then expected: any experience that has to do with perception should be always associated when being interpreted and evaluated with that field which, under exactly the terms of the scientific quality of its bodies, will ensure that it will be approached under the terms and conditions of theoretical validity. Or, else, what is examined is whether someone who elaborates it, regarding also its practical presence, is able to include it into categorical

³ Allen R. E., *The dialogues of Plato*, v. 3, Yale University Press, New Haven-London 1996, 72.

⁴ The platonic dialogue *Alcibiades I* is one of Plato's greatest works, which attempts to connect topics of Moral Philosophy, Political Philosophy, Epistemology, Metaphysics and Psychology. It is perhaps the first text in History of Philosophy which forms, actually quite systematically, philosophy of subject or person. Pedagogical process holds a key role, since it is related with the qualifications which a political counsellor should have. This dialogue has been broadly elaborated by the representatives of Middle Platonism and Neoplatonism, and especially Proclus, who composed a commentary on it (cf. *Proclus. Sur le Premier Alcibiade de Platon*, v.I-II, Segonds A. Ph., (ed.), Les Belles Lettres, Paris 1985-1986).

schemata. In all these we could also add that there is an implicit attempt to detect the possibility and the degree of inclusion, as well as the terms, of the metaphysical as a regulating principle in the natural or historical and social, anything that in a way is part of the world of becoming and as such gains the course of integrity. So, among all these mentioned before one can also place the degree of transformation of the empirical from the hyper-empirical –the most successful term for the context here is metaphysical–, of the unordered from that which moves in order. Thus, any choice will be considered in the field of Moral Philosophy receives is complete meaning only after it is founded on integrities and is constantly reduced in their content, taking into account if it is able to be or to become a body of what is thought as an archetype. One should not, however, ignore the dominant question about what exists or takes places within human personhood: «Ἄρ’ οὖν ἡμῖν τοῦτό γ’ ὑπάρχειν δεῖ, τὸ εἰδέναι ὅτι ποτ’ ἔστιν ἀρετή; Εἰ γὰρ που μηδ’ ἀρετὴν εἰδείμεν τὸ παράπαν ὅτι ποτε τυγχάνει ὄν, τίν’ ὄν τρόπον τούτου σύμβουλοι γενοίμεθα ὄψοῦν, ὅπως ἂν αὐτὸ κάλλιστα κτήσαιτο; – Οὐδένα, ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ, ὦ Σώκρατες. – Φαμὲν ἄρα, ὦ Λάχης, εἰδέναι αὐτὸ ὅτι ἔστιν» (190b-c).⁵

⁵ Cf. Kahn Ch., «La priorité de la définition: du Lachès au Ménon», *Platon*, Ellipses, Paris 2013, 18-19: «Dans le Lachès, la demande de définition est avancée pour mettre à l’épreuve la compétence en matière d’éducation morale, et c’est bien ainsi qu’elle est reçue par Lachès: “nous prétendons connaître ce qu’est la vertu [...] et si cela est vrai, alors nous pouvons également dire ce qu’elle est” (190c). Par conséquent, la demande d’une définition de la vertu, ou de la partie qui nous intéresse ici, à savoir le courage, n’est pas présentée comme critère de l’usage correct d’un mot ou de la reconnaissance correcte d’exemples. Il s’agit de mettre à l’épreuve une compétence, une *tekhnè* au sens platonicien de maîtrise d’un domaine donné. Le but est de vérifier si, dans le domaine de la vertu, un individu possède bien le savoir spécialisé lui donnant le droit d’enseigner, ou de donner des conseils faisant autorité». In the above Platonic passage we need to pay attention in the following detail, which is not only due to the narrativeness of the expressive variety. Obviously, the expressions «ὅτι ποτέ ἔστιν» and «ὅτι ποτέ τυγχάνει ὄν» do not have the same meaning, with the second one not referring to the firm position which the first one declares. We will attempt to apply the following translation on the second: the verb «τυγχάνω» adds a dynamic perspective to the verb «ἔστιν» and refers to how «ἔστιν» is presented,

“Does this then first require knowing what virtue is? For surely if we didn’t at all know what virtue happens to be, how could we become counselors for anyone as to how he might best possess it? –In no way at all, it seems to me, Socrates. –So we claim, Laches, to know what it is”.⁶

II. *General virtue and individual virtues.* Virtue is defined as a whole or genus, while fortitude as a part or species, with an internal order of relations. Thus, fortitude possesses the general virtuous property as well –which exceeds it as to the range of meanings and applications– and therefore it must contain in its own terms –as individuals as well– all of the somehow essential characteristics of virtue. In fact, from an epistemological and methodological point of view, it logically arises that it is scientifically possible to reach a general by investigating the individual, mostly through the analytical method. So, what constitutes an individual function term for fortitude is repeated or presupposed in universal terms for virtue. This either ascending or descending correspondence becomes accessible by a researcher’s perception by means of an expansive application of the inductive or respectively productive method. Parenthetically, however, we need to mention that when we speak about descending course, we necessarily cannot avoid the ontological solution, with is the basis of a realistic approach, with the transcendental factor starting to make his presence obvious. Through obviously an elaboration on the strict for the case of an individual virtue form criteria a generalization is attempted, a process which can also work vice versa according to the former comment. In

regardless of any current moment, as integral in continuum. The first expression with the articular infinitive «τὸ εἰδέναι» is more stereotypical, while the second one with the hypothetical sentence expressed with optative shows openness to the “sea” of investigations. And this openness goes on with the two optative moods of the next two subordinate clauses, the second of which is actually potential –a detail quite important for Socrates-Plato’s belief with respect to the position of those discussed. So, in this case we see what can be characterized as transcendental, as a term of absolute possibility regardless of any randomness and with the expectation on the renewable validations being preserved. The Socratic model of thought is explicit.

⁶ Allen R. E., *The dialogues of Plato*, 72.

other words, we could contend that, since here what arises is the relationship of the species with their genus, one cannot exclude that in some researches the method is reversed and becomes either productive-descending or inductive-ascending. In both procedures it is analytical, either as specializing or generalizing.

The entire syllogistic process, however, which Plato follows, excludes the possibility that the sum of the individual virtues is the universal virtue; it is neither a without internal connections relevance of them nor a field in which they are found. The sum would mean, more or less, that the individual virtues were at first distinguished from each other by vertical cross-sections –at least in the field of how they are approached and experienced–, while at the same time there would be only a superficial combination but not a circumincession under the terms set by the dominant principle which both possess. This relationship is reflected in the *Protagoras*.⁷ Besides, a cumulative function often takes place mechanistically, with typical reproductions. The universal is a general property which is manifested in particular ways –which are defined by external challenges–, a specialization which is due to a posteriori conclusions, that is to say, it is due to the additional reason that human personality and the collective body are characterized not by the unambiguity but the diversity of the references and actions. So, by extension, a universal will function analogously with respect to its individualizations or applications, in more general cases. The only question that could be raised is whether individual virtues are equal to each other with the additional referential, either ascending or descending, question: as to what? This, then, can only be something superior or, at least, the field of their application and critical and axiological evaluations, which arise as a possibility or reconstruction. «Μὴ τοίνυν, ὦ ἄριστε, περὶ ὅλης ἀρετῆς εὐθέως σκοπώμεθα: πλέον γὰρ ἴσως ἔργον· ἀλλὰ

⁷ The dialogue *Protagoras* could be characterized as conclusively systematic of all the dialogues of the Socratic period of Plato, presenting, by following mature dialectical paths together with critical skepticism, strict epistemological models of investigation. Cf. Vlastos Gr., *Platonic Studies*, 221-269.

μέρους τινὸς πέρι πρῶτον ἴδωμεν, εἰ ἱκανῶς ἔχομεν πρὸς τὸ εἰδέναι· καὶ ἡμῖν, ὡς τὸ εἰκός, μόνον ἢ σκέψις ἔσται» (190c-d).⁸ “Then let’s not inquire straightaway about the whole of virtue, dear friend, for perhaps it’s too big a job. Let’s first look at some part to see if we have adequate knowledge. The inquiry will likely be easier for us”.⁹

III. *Fortitude as an individual virtue and as a general presence.* Although fortitude is an individual virtue, it is able when it is per se to be considered as a substance (or, more modestly, as an integral state) and, therefore, as a “universal” or as the common which is found in the individual things. The immanence of fortitude in special virtuous cases means that it preserves its identity and that there are no differences in the way in which it is received, or more correctly it is manifested-applied, by a man or a collective body. The diversity of individual states causes a varied tropicity of the presence –but not the essence– of fortitude, which is from every respect equivalent, regardless of the conditions of its manifestation, that is to say with the advantage of its universal function, with the –infinite or indefinite– number either of those who receive it or those who carry it. Nevertheless, we generally draw the conclusion that there is no application of a rigid mechanism or a formal repetition when virtues appear.

⁸ This passage sets two more issues: a) an investigation should start from the individuals as obviously more approachable in a society which now cultivates the multidimensionality of choices and behaviors. Practical empiricism –which however is accordingly subject to mental procedures– is considered as methodologically easier. At this point what dominates is the measure of the objective givens. b) The reference to “universal” constitutes a second level of investigation, as the exclusive responsibility of human thought. So, human thought does not make forced and independent from the pragmatological givens movements, without however accepting with non-critical axioms the existence of the universal realities. Considering how virtue is approached in the *Laches* and *Meno*, cf. the Greek edition of Gr. Vlastos’ study *Platonic Studies* (Πλατωνικές Μελέτες), transl. into Greek Iord. Arzoglou, MIET, Athens 1994, 584-586, who stresses that in the *Laches* investigation is limited to a part of virtue, while in the *Meno* the distinction of the parts from the whole is used to direct investigation to the whole. So, we could contend that Plato gradually tests methodological modes for approaching virtue, with the reconstruction being unavoidable.

⁹ Allen R. E, *The dialogues of Plato*, 72-73.

The uniqueness or even unrepeatability of every human person plays a key role in the formation of the moral question (which in such states of integral value is based on intention and leads to either a positive evaluation or a negative charge). Provided of course that, regarding the positive perspective, the existential or spiritual substrate of that person corresponds, through its behavior, to what fortitude is per se. «Ἄνδρῆοι μὲν πάντες οὗτοί εἰσιν, ἀλλ' οἱ μὲν ἐν ἡδοναῖς, οἱ δ' ἐν λύπαις, οἱ δ' ἐν ἐπιθυμίαις, οἱ δ' ἐν φόβοις τὴν ἀνδρείαν κέκτηνται... πειρῶ εἰπεῖν ἀνδρείαν πρῶτον, τί ἂν ἐν πᾶσι τούτοις ταύτῳ ἔστιν» (191e).¹⁰ “Then they’re all courageous, but some are possessed of courage in the midst of pleasures, others in the midst of pains or desires or fears... try again, then, to say, first, of courage: what is it which is the same in all these?”¹¹

IV. *The definition of fortitude as a premise for its precise teaching.* Generalizing all these and provided that the question is whether we can add to fortitude –and generally virtue– an ontological content, we would contend that in this case there is an attempt to consider “Ideas” –as common elements or “universals”– not so much as general concepts but as substances with universal properties, that can be appended to the individual phenomena or events or beings. Or as substances which develop, during their assimilation, into qualities-properties of the individual personal hypostases. According to this established position, they can be considered as regulatory archetypes that can be adjusted case-by-case or applied when it is necessary. Extending the hypothesis: do virtues as a whole constitute inherent but not acquired elements in what would be characterized as moral consciousness? So, man would not then be considered that he gains virtues but that he activates them and by this reversion to himself that he reaches his end, exactly because he discovers some of his ontological cores? However, a basic parameter

¹⁰ Particularly important is the fact that this syllogism is not axiomatically definite, but it shows an attempt, given that it is not possible to ignore the presence even of opposite states that fortitude has to face and obviously, under the light of an ascent to the value archetypes, to refute them, not only regarding the content but also regarding the structure.

¹¹ Allen R. E., *The dialogues of Plato*, 74.

seems that it is ignored, which Plato will elaborate in his next dialogues: can we have a discussion on the metaphysical world as the basis of virtues? In any case and having in mind the “important” relation, the question is not approached, at least primarily, with respect to the individual and this removes the possibility of nominalism, namely the position that the “Ideas” are just creations of the human mind or simple verbal sounds, with no objective foundation. «Οὐκοῦν ὃ γε ἴσμεν, κἄν εἴποιμεν δῆπου τί ἐστίν» (190c) [“Then we could tell, presumably, what it is that we know?” (Allen R. E., *The dialogues of Plato*, 72)] and «Τοῦτο τοίνυν πρῶτον ἐπιχειρήσωμεν εἰπεῖν ἀνδρεία τί ποτ’ ἐστίν· ἔπειτα μετὰ τοῦτο σκεψόμεθα καὶ ὅτω ἂν τρόπῳ τοῖς νεανίσκοις παραγένοιτο, καθ’ ὅσον οἷόν τε ἐξ ἐπιτηδευμάτων τε καὶ μαθημάτων παραγενέσθαι. Ἄλλὰ πειρῶ εἰπεῖν ὃ λέγω, τί ἐστίν ἀνδρεία» (190 d-e).¹² “Then let us first try to say what

¹² Two things here need attention. First of all, the development from a semantic understanding to the attribution of a name, which leads in that a name is not considered in functional or conventional terms. A reference here in the *Cratylus* is very important since it confirms the scientific content which a name should have. Secondly, once again we see the attempt to form a concept and to apply it, which excludes dogmatism. But, we need to consider this: while in the first passage (190c) there is a clear pre-ontological somehow basis of morality, in the second (190d-e) there is a transition from a state per se to action, which is connected with duty, since we see a sort of Anthropology that could be characterized as orientated in practice. In fact, morality does not come from experience but it arises as possibly already given in the sense that it can be applied in the current circumstances. We could contend that any sort of metaphysical foundation tends to receive responsibilities. The principles-orders of Practical Reason are presented, if not explicitly, at least as a priori and define moral law. With the support of the following dialogues *Meno* and *Phaedo* we would not easily exclude the common places between the Platonic and Kantian Ethics, although their methodologies are in some cases different. In addition, we need to mention that the founder of the Academy is strongly influenced by the anxiety of how a priori is applied in various ways. He deals with the question in purely political terms, explicitly aiming at a transformation of the social body. So, he follows a targeted regularity. Do note also that in the first passage there is an example of a logical definition, while in the second one we see an example of a logical and at the same time epistemological. Ch. Kahn, «La priorité de la définition: du Lachès au Ménon», 20-25, has systematically elaborated the topic.

courage is, Laches. After that, we'll consider how it might come to be present in these young men, insofar as it can come to be present from practice and study. But try to tell what I ask: What is courage?"¹³ It is also important to keep in mind that in this case the pedagogical perspective also arises, since another thing that is examined is how fortitude will be placed in the inner world of young people. The means defined for this are professions and lessons. So, is it possible that it has been acquired through the conceptual utilization and synthesis of experience and it is then attempted to be taught to young people, who in this sense it becomes clear that they do not possess it ontologically but they have a tendency to acquire it? These points logically lead to the next observation, which is basically a synthetic one.

V. *Fortitude as an intervention power.* So, considering the somehow temporal priority, we would contend that first of all there is an "Idea" or the common in the individual things and then there is an attempt to define its content. A definition requires the existent per se and the immanent presence of a "universal" in the similar which arise by its intervention or those which belong to the same ontological and logical category. That which is ante res and that which is in rebus precede those which are post rem. Therefore, the theoretical model formed is that which we could call "conceptual realism" as a theoretical representation of being, which both preserves the ontological position of things and makes possible their inclusion into precise conceptual frames, which however come from empirical conditions-representations. And this is where the regulatory responsibilities of human consciousness arise, which is asked to observe what exists or is performed and does not act in an unapproved way pushed by an extreme idealism, which would only seek its own self-validations or the enforcement of its a priori positions. A thinking subject needs to look for its precise correspondences with the object as the only term of truth. That is to say, it needs to include it in conceptual-categorical modes that will keep it as an extra-subjective or even super-subjective reality. We need to mention

¹³ Allen R. E., *The dialogues of Plato*, 73.

that this goal is also found in the theory of recollection, which will be discussed in the following dialogues.

Regarding the goal of truth, we need to stress that one needs to consider both the somehow state of the “Idea” itself, the common or “universal” and its immanent presence in a particular thing: «Πειρῶ δὴ καὶ σύ, ὦ Λάχης, τὴν ἀνδρείαν οὕτως εἶπεῖν, τίς οὕσα δύναμις ἢ αὐτὴ ἐν ἡδονῇ καὶ ἐν λύπῃ καὶ ἐν ἅπασιν οἷς νῦν δὴ ἐλέγομεν αὐτὴν εἶναι, ἔπειτα ἀνδρεία κέκληται» (192b).¹⁴ “Try then also to speak this way about courage, Laches. What power is it which, being the same in pleasure and pain and all the things we just now were mentioning, is then called courage?”¹⁵ But in this part we see another more specific view of the question, since what is investigated is how it is possible to identify fortitude not generally in persons but in psychological-emotional states, which actually present a diversity often defined by external conditions. But this objection cannot be confirmed, since in any case the bodies of these conditions are persons, who

¹⁴ Attention is required in that “power” is part of definition, which is supported by the definite expression «ἡ αὐτή», which means “constantly the same”, without any exception; so, we could talk about a transcendental priority, which is considered that it includes the possibility terms for its presence in any case, provided that man will accept it and express it as such. Do note, finally, that the style of the text explicitly refers to the philosopher’s attempt and not to a certainty of his. As we actually mentioned in the main text, the content of power is not defined by Plato. The expression of the passage «τίς δύναμις» leads us to contend that it refers to a specific ability –or even intention– with properties different from any other, with the definite pronoun «ἡ αὐτή» holding here as well an important pragmatological and semantic role. On the general questions which are raised in these passages, cf. once again the Greek edition of Gr. Vlastos’ study *Platonic Studies* and the chapter under the title «Τι ἐννοοῦσε ὁ Σωκράτης μετὰ τὴν ἐρώτησιν τοῦ: τί εἶναι F», 568-578, where there is a quite interesting discussion on the content of “power”. We agree with the position of this eminent Platonist that when Socrates asks what fortitude is, he means that he must know what fortitude consists of. Ch. Kahn to the passage 190d-192d mentions the following: «Le bref échange avec Lachès contient une introduction brillante au principe de co-extensivité du *definiens* et du *definiendum*: ce principe veut que toute définition précise à la fois les conditions nécessaires et les conditions suffisantes de la chose à définir» («La priorité de la définition: du Lachès au Ménon», 32).

¹⁵ Allen R. E., *The dialogues of Plato*, 74.

however experience them in their own way, which is defined even from the stereotypes adopted.

So, the former passage completes the question which was raised in the third section. The new fact that emerges here is that fortitude –and obviously any other virtue– is characterized as “power”. The fact that the content is not clarified in this term does not stop us from making a thorough elaboration of fortitude. So, fortitude actually works first and foremost as such and then receives its name. It is clearly considered as a high-class mode of being which confirms with its presence what should be understood as fortitude, that is to say, as a complete by courage applied virtue. We need to pay attention, however, in this: the name, although it is attributed in fortitude a posteriori, does not mean that it does not exist a priori in human selfhood nor does it mean the opposite. Plato here acts as a consistent empiricist as well, at least regarding the starting points. He says that we find it as a state in human actions and, subsequently, obviously via abstractive method, we name it according to the properties through which it is manifested. But, it is necessary the ascent from the psychological conditions to the content of virtue to be valid. The question, however, is this: where does the knowledge about it as such come? The structure of this passage, although it shows an attempt, actually reveals abstractive method, which relies on the dialectical relationship between the terms «ἄπασιν» and «ἢ αὐτῇ», which refers to a common presence in many cases, in fact different in quality one another.

Epilogue

According to our elaboration, we believe that the issue which Plato will systematically analyze in his next dialogues (such as *Phaedo*, *Phaedrus* and *Respublica*) has been already raised: the way in which *Thence* and *Hence* are related as well as the tension of this relationship, and not only in terms of causality. Of course, there is no intentional systematic discussion on the theory about “Ideas” in the *Laches*, but the attempt for identifying the united character of different states

regardless of their diversity, incline us towards a clear relevant introduction or the formulation of preparatory hypotheses. In this direction, Epistemology holds a key role.¹⁶ The investigation subject seeks support in itself, in the demands and the validations of its inner world. A parameter that at least ensures a foundation has to do with the fact that human mind is able to perform abstract processes. The question is what are the ontological depth and the regulatory intervention of those that fall in these procedures. Obviously, such detections presuppose not only intention but also ability to free oneself from conventional or addictive situations, both epistemological and moral. Plato in the *Laches* shows the new direction which investigation and broadly spirituality is asked to follow, which in a constant pure state works as an enlightening transformative power. The superficiality of public opinion is gradually set aside, while the dogmatism is excluded by the tendency to make attempts. In fact, we need to mention that in the *Laches* and the dialogues of this period the interlocutors draw finally the conclusion that the definition of a particular virtue that is under elaboration is not possible.¹⁷ According to all these, our view is that what we examined is also interesting for the cultural development.

Finally, for History of Philosophy, it would be interesting to investigate whether it would be possible to find the common places between Plato and Kant regarding how Practical Reason is structured. This co-examination would insist on two fields: a) the pre-empirical origin of moral virtues and their a priori regulatory nature and b) the fact that human will is asked to be directed by this origin and not to have a subjective character. We believe that in the *Laches* we find these two topics, but for more objective foundations regarding their conscious expression by Plato the texts of the following dialogues *Meno*, *Phaedo* and *Faedrus* with the theory of recollection are a requirement, which, regardless of its objective validation, supports rationality but not sacramentality.

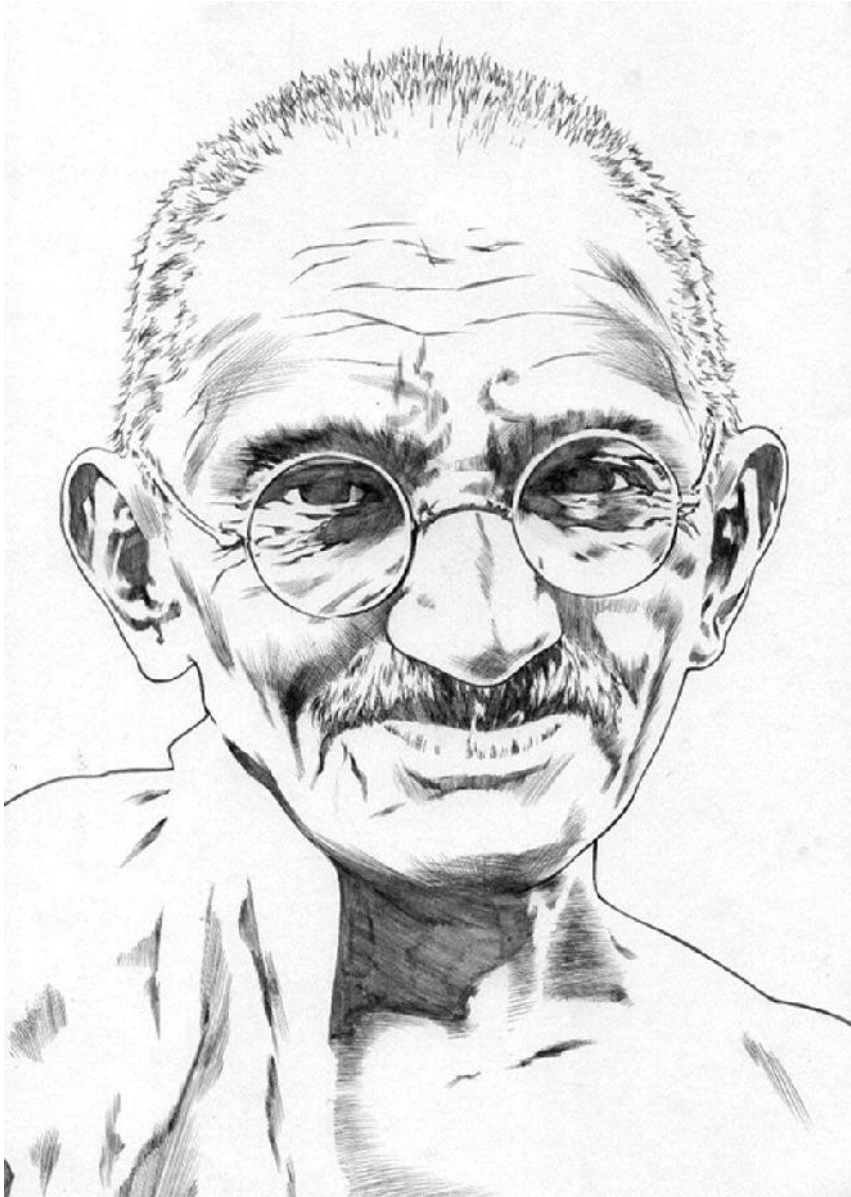
¹⁶ Cf. for instance, Yv. Brès, *La psychologie de Platon*, 148-155 and 243-259.

¹⁷ Cf. for instance, Yv. Brès, *La psychologie de Platon*, Paris 1973, 35-39.

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Resuscitate Gandhi's Approach Towards the Marginalized

Abstract:

M. K. Gandhi, well known as Mahatma Gandhi, one of the leading figures in history of India was a leader, thinker, social reformer and philosopher par excellence. He is venerated not only in India but all over the globe. Gandhi is also revered as a 'Modern Saint'. Gandhi had an elaborate philosophy to empower the marginalized in India (and even in his struggle in South Africa). In South Africa Gandhi fought for the rights of the coloured people and in India especially the rights of the Dalits, women and the religious minority groups. The article concentrates on Gandhian approach to the marginalized in India and to revitalize his philosophy as it is most needed in the contemporary India and all over the world. Though his philosophy is shrouded in controversies, Gandhian approach in empowering the marginalized needs to be resuscitate as Gandhi's philosophy has transcended spatiotemporal boundaries. Though Gandhi was highly influenced by ethics of world religions, he was spell-bound by Buddha's philosophy of compassion (*karuna*) and Jaina philosophy of non-violence (*ahimsa*). Gandhi's philosophy for the marginalized was to empower the oppressed, the subalterns and put them on equal pedestal with others.

Keywords: Mahatma Gandhi, philosophy, ethics, world religions, leader

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“In the matters of truth and justice, there is no difference between large and small problems, for issues concerning the treatment of people are all the same.”
- Albert Einstein¹

“Christ gave us the goals and Mahatma Gandhi provided the tactics.”
- Martin Luther King, Jr.²

“My fight against untouchability is a fight against the impure in humanity.”
- M. K. Gandhi³

“Marginalization describes the position of individuals, groups or populations outside of ‘mainstream society’, living at the margins of those in the centre of power, of cultural dominance and economical and social welfare.”⁴

As such the problem of marginalization affects millions of people all over the world. These marginalized groups have little control over their own lives and the resources available to them. In India the vulnerable marginalized groups comprise mainly of women, aged, physically and mentally differently-abled, religious minority, scheduled caste and tribes, and sexual minorities; these marginalized groups are those facing stigma and discrimination. They are handicapped in delving contribution to society. A vicious circle is set up whereby their lack of positive and supportive relationships means that they are prevented from participating in social, economic and political life, which in turn leads to further isolation.

¹ Cropanzano, Russell S. and Ambrose, Maureen L., *The Oxford Handbook of Justice in the Workplace*, Oxford University Press, NY, 2015, pp. 89.

² King, Jr. Martin Luther, [Forward by King, Coretta Scott], *Strength of Love*, Beacon Press, Boston, 1981, pp. ix

³ Bhartiya, Santosh, *Dalit and Minority Empowerment*, Rajkamal Prakashan, New Delhi, 2008, pp. 29.

⁴ Schiffer, Katrin and Schatz, Eberhard, *Marginalization, Social Inclusion and Health*, Foundation RegenboogAMOC, NL, 2008, pp. 06.

In India many thinkers and philosophers have tried to address the issues of marginalized. Two names that prominently strike the chord are Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869-1948) and Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar (1891-1956).

M. K. Gandhi, well known as Mahatma Gandhi, one of the leading figures in the history of India was a leader, thinker, social reformer and philosopher par excellence of the twentieth century. He is venerated not only in India but all over the globe. Gandhi is also revered as a 'Modern Saint'. Gandhi had an elaborate philosophy to empower the marginalized in India (and even in his struggle in South Africa). In South Africa Gandhi fought for the rights of the coloured people and in India especially the rights of the Dalits, women and the religious minority groups. The article concentrates on Gandhian approach to the marginalized in India and to revitalize his philosophy as it is most needed in the contemporary India. How far was Gandhi successful, how controversial his solution was and how far the thinkers of the world agree to his philosophy of empowering the marginalized is a debatable issue! But Gandhian approach to empowering the marginalized requires resuscitate because Gandhi's philosophy has transcended spatiotemporal boundaries. His life and philosophy were his 'experiments with truth'. The late nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century Gandhi's philosophy provided a life-line to millions of marginalized all over the world. Gandhi's reliance on 'truth' (satya) and non-violence (ahimsa) made him stand out distinctly among the thinkers to solve the issues of the marginalized. The reason for this is Gandhi never took recourse to violence to bring about 'revolution', that which happened in the Western and other parts of the world where for initiating revolution, the reformers often took to violence to restore equality and justice in society. Gandhi would never compromise with his two basic axioms – truth and non-violence.

Gandhi was influenced by Jesus' *Sermon on the Mount*; the moral teachings of Christ had great impact on Gandhi that taught him the principles of 'forgive and forget' and

‘love’. But it was the heterodox schools of Indian philosophy that rendered tremendous influence on him. Though Gandhi was avert to conversion and was proud of being a Hindu; he was spell-bound by Buddha’s philosophy of compassion (*karuna*) and Jaina philosophy of non-violence (*ahimsa*). No doubt he was well-read and revered religious scriptures, and that he was very much impressed by the *Bhagavad Gita* concept of *Nishkamakarma* (philosophy of ‘detached action’); but Jaina philosophy of ‘non-violence’ was a highlight of Gandhi’s philosophy of life. The weapon of non-violence (the phrase sounds paradoxical) was used by Gandhi not only in his struggle for independence but also other social, political and economic issues in India; one such being empowering the marginalized groups, namely the Dalits, women and religious minorities.

Among the post-modern philosophers, the post-structuralist Jacques Derrida (1930-2004) and Michel Foucault (1926-1984), both resorted to the ‘method of critiquing’ and ‘method of deconstruction’. But both the methods, though enchanting and incorporating the issues of the marginalized are not without faults. Both the methods have tremendous potentialities to solve the intricate social and political issues in relation to the marginalized but the tools used to work out the methods of critiquing and deconstruction may turn out violent (violence in any which ways). Gandhi precisely avoided this by restoring to Jaina ethics of non-violence. As mentioned in the book *Decolonizing Enlightenment: Transnational Justice, Human Rights and Democracy in a Post-Colonial World*, “One such historical experiment with the weapon of criticism was made by the *nastikas*, namely, the heterodox schools of classical Indian philosophy. Their theory and practice of *ahimsa* (non-violence) carefully engages with how power is exercised in the practice of critique. Thus, they attempt to develop a non-violent ethics of political intervention (Dhawan 2007: 301-305). One of the most important and well-known interpretations and implementations of the tool of non-violent critique has been by Gandhi in the context of the Indian independence movement, who combined the Marxist of the

general strike with heterodox ethics.” (Article by Nikita Dhawan)⁵ For Gandhi the development of the society is possible only if there is ‘individual development’. To solve the problem of the marginalized, especially the earlier mentioned groups of Dalits, women and religious minorities, Gandhi took recourse to the philosophical concept of ‘sarvodaya’ (the development of all in all walks of life). Sarvodaya incorporates the *Bhagavad Gita* concept of *Loksamgraha* (World Solidarity and Social Welfare). This leads to justice in society and for justice, to have pragmatic value one must succor to the concept of ‘equality’ and to further the concept of equality – that is both ways, inward and outward – it has to move towards ‘egalitarianism’; and for Gandhi the ‘egalitarian social order’ presupposes implementation of truth, non-violence and purity of means. This is central to Gandhian philosophy for the marginalized. Gandhi’s principle of non-violence was not devoid of practical implication, not just philosophical ideology, but full of pragmatic value. Gandhi never compromised with the principle of individual freedom, equality and justice. The point that can be reiterated that truth, non-violence, social welfare, world solidarity, individual freedom, equality and justice; these virtues fulfill Gandhi’s dream to have ‘egalitarian society’.

Gandhi’s philosophy of religion was unique. Though controversial, Gandhi believed that ‘a man without religion is life without principles and life without principles is like a ship without a rudder.’⁶ For Gandhi religion is inevitably related to morality. Religion encompasses all the realms of his philosophy of life – be it social, economic, political or spiritual. For him truth and non-violence are central to ethics; and ethics is intrinsically embedded in religion. “For Gandhi truth is the relative truth of truthfulness in word and

⁵ Dhawan, Nikita, ed., *Decolonizing Enlightenment: Transnational Justice, Human Rights and Democracy in a Post-Colonial World*, Barbara Budrich Publishers, Germany, 2014, pp. 63.

⁶ Mahapatra, Debidatta A. and Pathak, Yashwant, eds., *Gandhi and the World*, Lexington Books, Maryland, USA, 2018, pp. 118.

deed, and the absolute truth is God (as God is also Truth) and morality – the moral laws and code – its basis.”⁷

Therefore, the religious philosophy to Gandhi axiomatically leads to ‘unity in diversity’ in matter of diversified religions and indeed of ‘religious pluralism’ as essence of Indian culture. Again, this attitude of Gandhi can be a potent solution to incorporate religious minorities that is the need of the hour. As noted by Margaret Chatterjee, “The spirit of gentleness, allowing a man to pursue his *swadharma*, his own faith, respecting the faiths of others, was ingrained in young Gandhi.....”⁸ Reverence and respect for other faiths, practicing one’s own faith is one’s *swadharma* (one’s duty) and that incorporates a quick-fix to the marginalized religious minorities. Here Gandhi can be compared to Ambedkar; where both these indomitable personalities had at least one commonality and that is ‘religion is not segregated realm from human social life and that would become all-inclusive with human endeavors – be it social, political or economic. This is well connected to Gandhi’s holistic view about the ‘untouchables’ (as the Dalits were called in his time) where he preferred to call them ‘*Harijans*’ (Children of God) and Ambedkar consecrated himself and others of his community, the marginalized untouchables/Dalits into Buddhism that was metamorphosized into Neo-Buddhism. [The term ‘*Harijan*’ is no more in use because of its derogatory connotation to a particular community; therefore, the word ‘Dalit’ is in use].⁹

⁷ Murphy, Stephen, Article: *Brief Outline of Gandhi’s Philosophy*. [Adapted from: *Why Gandhi is Relevant in Modern India: A Western Gandhians Personal Discovery*, Gandhi Peace Foundation, New Delhi; Academy of Gandhian Studies, Hyderabad, India, 1991.]

⁸ Chatterjee, Margaret, *Gandhi’s Religious Thought*, The Macmillan Press Ltd., London, 1983, pp. 16.

⁹ As mentioned in the book *Resisting Racism and Xenophobia*, “As long as the people suffer from discrimination, any word used for them will carry the same derogatory meaning, no matter the literal meaning of the term is. Thus, Mahatma Gandhi had used the term *harijan* instead of *achut* for the untouchables. Although *harijan* means literally “children of God”, after being used for the untouchables, it became a synonym for “untouchable” and was used as such until the untouchables themselves

Gandhi respected 'other religions' as his 'own Hinduism'. [This again is quite controversial as the term 'His own' is debatable.] Gandhi said, "I came to the conclusion long ago.....that all religions were true and also all had some error in them, and whilst I hold by my own, I should hold others as dear as Hinduism, not that a Christian should become a Hindu..... But our innermost prayer should be a Hindu should be a better Hindu, a Muslim a better Muslim, a Christian a better Christian. (*Young India*)"¹⁰ In connection to the above quote, Gandhi's concept of 'Religious Pluralism' is justified and the paradox is answered. Compared to Ambedkar's approach towards the marginalized, Gandhi need not be taken antagonistic to Ambedkar. Both intended to restore dignity to the oppressed and marginalized community (or communities) and bring forth moral/ethical religious philosophy that is not just ideally perfect but simultaneously practically workable. They provided some solace to the two major marginalized communities, the Dalits and Religious Minority groups.

According to Bhikhu Parekh there are three important aspects in relation to religion that need to be addressed in the contemporary times:

- i. The need for intra-religious dialogue.
- ii. The need for inter-religious dialogue. And
- iii. The need for dialogue on conflicts between religious groups having complex causes – say political or economic interest.

Gandhi addressed all these issues (though often debatable and criticized). Gandhi took it to task to confront these

rejected it, preferring instead the politically charged term *Dalit* (Fernandes 1996), which means 'downtrodden'." [Harrison, Faye V., ed., *Resisting Racism and Xenophobia: Global Perspectives on Race, Gender, and Human Rights*, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., UK, 2005, pp. 58]

¹⁰ Rowell, James L., *Gandhi and Bin Laden: Religion at the Extremes*, University Press of America, 2009, pp. 51

highly intricate and intriguing issues.¹¹ But Ambedkar would critique this. For him, “It is kinship which generates generosity and invokes its moral indignation which is necessary to redress a wrong.....Kinship with another community is the best assurance which the Untouchable can effect against Hindu tyranny and Hindu oppression.”¹²

Gandhi’s philosophy of education too spoke of ‘self-sufficiency’ and ‘self-supporting’ education system; something like the ‘earn and learn scheme’ that is implemented in many educational institutions today. This was Gandhi’s ideology of *Nai Talim* that is ‘basic education for all’. This form of education built ‘moral character’ of the students, that is not in exclusion to building ‘social character’ and the whole process will turn out ‘holistic’. According to K. S. Bharathi, “*Nai Talim* is a philosophy of living, it is an attitude towards life that we have to bring to all our work.....*Nai Talim* is not a system, it is a far-reaching educational idea.....There are several purposes of imparting education through crafts. The greatest of them is to remove the vanity of the educated and to link action to knowledge.”¹³ Gandhi emphasized on the fact that education should not remain a provision for the few elite groups but should be made accessible to all; and if they are taught specific skills, they can earn while studying and sponsor their own education. In this - boys and girls – both groups are included. This would also enhance the cottage industries and the handicraft industries in days to come. This education system will empower the women and other oppressed marginalized groups. All are qualified enough to earn their basic livelihood if they know the craft of producing things. This need not have too much of financial investment and big

¹¹ Allen, Douglas ed., *The Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi for Twenty-first Century* [Article: *Gandhi and Inter-religious Dialogue*], Lexington Books, UK, 2008.

¹² Ambedkar, B. R., *Writings and Speeches*, Vol. 5, Bombay Government of Maharashtra, India, 1989, pp. 415

¹³ Bharathi, K. S., *Thoughts of Gandhi and Vinoba: A Comparative Study*, Gandhian Studies and Peace Research Series – 9, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1995, pp. 135

spaces. But in their dwelling, from their homes people can work and earn their livelihood.

To conclude, Gandhi's philosophy for the marginalized needs to be revitalized in present scenario; especially the present world sees in the name of religion where groups of particular religion are marginalized, and atrocities inflicted on them. So also, caste system has not been uprooted till date in India; Gandhi's philosophy for the marginalized hopes to empower the oppressed and put them on equal pedestal with others. Other major group that is to be empowered is 'women'. Gandhi wanted women to be educated and are empowered to be given equal treatment. The following quote can sum up Gandhi's philosophy for the marginalized, "In addition, Gandhi developed a 'constructive programme', the aim of which was the healing and mending of society. This included co-operation between Hindu and Muslim, social work to help the untouchables, temperance, village industry, particularly the spinning and clothing industry, hygiene and medical care, the renewal of the school system, adult education, the improvement of the position of women, the promotion of a national language (Hindustani rather than Hindi), increasing economic equality and so on."¹⁴

Gandhi, a visionary, who was not called in vain the MAHATMA (Great Soul)!



¹⁴ Tahtinen, Unto, *The Core of Gandhi's Philosophy*, Abhinav Publications, 1979, New Delhi, pp. 87.

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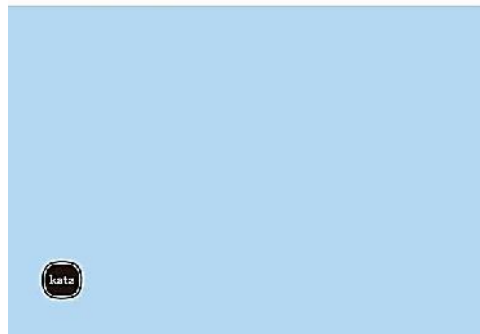
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Philosophical Notes

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Interview about the book
Maquiavelo en Argentina.
Usos y lecturas, 1830-1940
by Leandro Losada
(2019)



Questions' proposal

1) **Eugenia Mattei (EM):** *Dear professor, in your last book Maquiavelo en la Argentina. Usos y lecturas, 1830-1940, you show great erudition and systematicity in diverse and unknown appropriations of Machiavelli during a foundational time of Argentine history. In Pocock's words,*

you reconstruct the “Machiavellian moment” in Argentina during the 1830-1940 period, something completely unknown in the monumental book by the New Zealand author and the studies specialized in Niccolo Machiavelli’s work. Before addressing directly some points developed in your book, I would like to start our conversation with two more general questions: on one hand, how is this book inserted among the other ones you have written about this period?; on the other hand, how did your curiosity about Machiavelli’s presence in Argentine history appear?

The starting point of the book was an inquiry on how Argentine elites understood liberalism in 19th century and early 20th century. In previous researches, those social actors were my subject of study, and one of the problems I was most interested in exploring was the relation between their public performance as ruling class, their identification with a liberal project (the construction of the State-Nation) and their social identities, among which the certainty of being a “republican aristocracy” prevailed. This identity notion, as the expression indicates in itself, makes reference to republicanism. From this point of view, which kind of public performance could promote an identity with republican roots and, from that, which ideas about democracy and liberalism could they justify or encourage became a subject of inquiry. In other words, the history of elites led me to wander about the relation between republicanism and liberalism in politics and in Argentine political thought.

Within this framework, the study of Machiavelli’s readings or reception seemed to me a suggestive way to address that problem. First, because Argentine historiography had not studied the subject. Second, because it offers an original way to look for the intersections and/or oppositions between republicanism and liberalism. Finally, because Machiavelli, understood by almost all his readers as the founder of an autonomous or immanent concept of politics, as well as for the controversy and scandal aroused in his name, allowed us to study less visible debates and problems of politics through the reading of other classical authors (like the relation between morals and politics, between conflict and freedom,

between agency and Fortune, etc.). For all these reasons, I understand that my book is not only a history of Machiavelli's readings in Argentina, but a history of Argentine political thought (with a focus on the relation between liberalism and republicanism) as it can be reconstructed through the reception of the Florentine Secretary's work.

2) EM: *Why do you think Machiavelli was a very controversial figure for both Domingo Sarmiento and Juan Bautista Alberdi?*

I think the main reason is that they had an imperfect knowledge of his texts. It is difficult to conclude if they did indeed read Machiavelli's work or if, instead, they had access to a certain reading tradition on his work, generally known as "Machiavellism", according to which Machiavelli summarized the worst political vices and phenomena, from despotism to violence. Secondly, they don't seem to have had an intellectual interest on Machiavelli, rather they used him for political controversy and, fundamentally, to contest their main rival, the then governor of the Province of Buenos Aires, Juan Manuel de Rosas, whom they considered a Machiavelli from the Río de la Plata, precisely because of the arbitrary and authoritarian traits of his administration. Thirdly, Sarmiento and Alberdi had a particular idea of the Renaissance: roughly, they considered it a pre-modern historical moment, which along with a notion of history as progress, led them to understand Machiavelli as a symbol of a past historical period, politically violent and corrupt, from which few lessons could be extracted for the 19th century. Besides that, it is curious that these Argentine intellectuals, interested in the construction of a nation (and influenced by Romanticism), ignored the stature Machiavelli acquired as a symbol of national unity in the 19th century, especially in countries like Italy, whose intellectual and political weight in Sarmiento or Alberdi was important.

3) EM: *Unlike the reading Alberdi does of Machiavelli, in Miguel Ángel Rizzi's reading, an author who published an*

article on the Italian author in the journal Nosotros in 1916, we can observe an interesting point about the relation between the institutional development of the republic and personal leadership. This subject keeps generating controversy both in the literature specialized on Machiavelli and contemporary political debate. In this sense, what is your opinion about Rizzi's work in relation to that tension?

Rizzi's intervention in Argentine readings of Machiavelli is an anomaly, precisely because it has understood that the Florentine proposed a series of considerations and principles to the exercise of power in times of emergency, whose goal was not the accumulation of personal power in the hands of a ruler (a usual reading among those who had linked Machiavelli to the reason of state), but to institutional preservation. Rizzi identified a Machiavelli worried about the institutions and the law in his passages about the exercise of power by the prince, more than in his texts on the Roman republic. Both elements (conceiving a Machiavelli worried about institutionality and, therefore, not understood as an apologue of tyranny, and justifying that reading in *The Prince* more than in the *Discourses* or other texts by Machiavelli) are the features that turn Rizzi's text into something original, taking into account the prevailing readings of Machiavelli in Argentina up to the moment of the publishing of his work, in the mid-1910s.

4) EM: *Unlike the previous one, in the second chapter of your book, you address the period that goes from 1920 to 1940, where the texts focused on Machiavelli are multiplied, and the appropriation of his work is diversified. There is a point you note about the controversy Machiavelli originated in relation to liberalism, both in a positive and a negative sense. What's the reason of this conceptual dispute? Which was the hegemonic position of the period?*

In fact, in those two decades, the interest raised by Machiavelli in Argentina was incomparably greater than in the past. Regarding the prevailing readings, of course there were people who linked Machiavelli to anti-liberalism, and specifically to fascism. In some ways, they were

interpretations that kept the portrait of the Florentine that had been coined in the 19th century: Machiavelli as a synonym for arbitrariness and authoritarianism, exemplified in those years by fascism. However, and looking in perspective, the prevailing reading was another one, opposed to the abovementioned: Machiavelli was linked to liberalism, understood as a liberal or, in any case, as an unavoidable author to understand the origins of liberalism.

It is important to emphasize that this was a conclusion in which liberal and anti-liberal authors coincided, and that the reasons to justify that characterization were diverse. In some cases, Machiavelli's "liberalism" was observed in his doctrinaire considerations, that is, in his republicanism, a reading that, it's worth highlighting, entails two things. On one hand, that Machiavelli stopped being read like an author of authoritarianism and came to be understood as synonymous of republicanism (a change in which the knowledge of the *Discourses*—during a great part of the 19th century, the most read and quoted text when talking about Machiavelli was *The Prince*— had a decisive influence). And, on the other hand, that Machiavellian republicanism was understood as converging to, not opposed to, liberalism.

There was a second group of readings that portrayed a "liberal" Machiavelli, not because of his doctrinaire considerations, but because of his conception of politics. According to this interpretation (extended among Catholic authors), the fact that Machiavelli had separated politics from Christian morality gave shape to an immanent notion of politics, without which liberalism would have been impossible. Machiavelli, breaking the relation between politics and Christianity, had offered the conditions of possibility for liberalism.

5) EM: *In the last chapter of the book, you analyze the relation between political realism and Machiavelli. This realism of Machiavelli was an axis of dispute especially around the notions of power, force and authoritarianism.*

Could you explicit which role was played by Juan Agustín García in this debate?

There were many ways of understanding what the “*verita effettuale*” in Machiavelli was. For some authors, it was power; for others, violence; for some more, the need of the State; in some cases, freedom. In this context, the intervention of Juan Agustín García, one of the main Argentine intellectuals at the turn of the century, was suggestive because he held that Machiavelli’s political realism consisted mainly in having highlighted that politics, due to its strictly human and historical nature (that is a nature deprived of transcendence) was defined by uncertainty. According to García, politics as uncertainty, even though it could be a reason for bewilderment (since it implied that there were no perfect rules or orders), at the same time, made human beings and their agency capacity (their *virtú*) responsible for their circumstances. All this, in other respects, led to García’s portrait of a “humanist” Machiavelli.

6) EM: *In some part of Maquiavelo en Argentina, you emphasize the work of Mariano De Vedia y Mitre on Machiavelli in 1927 and that is extremely interesting. In the analysis, Machiavelli is seen as a great champion of freedom. Is this the result of a greater protagonism obtained by the Discourses on the First Ten of Titus Livy detrimental to The Prince? In this sense, is it possible to say that, in De Vedia y Mitre reading, there is a quest for alchemizing the three political traditions (republican, liberal and democratic)?*

Regarding the first question, the answer is yes. As I pointed out before, the density and even the greater accuracy observed in Machiavelli’s readings during the first decades of the 20th century comparing to the usual ones during the 19th century have to do with a better knowledge of his texts, and among them the *Discourses* outstands. In the case of De Vedia y Mitre, for this author, this last book, and not *The Prince*, had been the main work by Machiavelli. It is from this consideration of the relative importance of both books that De Vedia y Mitre concluded that Machiavelli’s substantial principle is freedom not power.

Regarding the second part of the question, the answer is also affirmative. From De Vedia y Mitre's perspective, Machiavelli's republicanism was an overcoming synthesis of liberal democracy. That was so because it consisted in a republicanism committed with the internal and external freedom of the city (that is, with self-determination and individual liberties) without adhering to an individualistic or atomistic conception of the social, and, at the same time, it was a republicanism that put the guarantee of freedom in democratic participation. From this perspective, Machiavelli, according to De Vedia y Mitre, did not oppose republic and democracy (a usual affirmation in that period —the 1920's and 1930's— in Argentina, to state the benefits of the republic and the dangers of democracy), since he showed, on the contrary, that the existence of a republic without democratic ingredients was impossible and, at the same time, he praised democracy not conceiving it from the notion of people's sovereignty, but from the idea of a mixed form of government.

7) EM: *In the research process, which findings were the most surprising? Which challenges do you have to face to carry out a research on Machiavelli in the Argentine history of early modernity? Or in other words, which kind of link is there between history and political theory?*

The greatest finding was to realize that it was possible to carry out a history of political thought in Argentina during more than a century (1830-1940) taking as the object of research the readings and the reception of Machiavelli. I say that this was a finding in itself because, frequently, the historiographic gaps indicate that what has not been done cannot be done (because of lack of sources, archive problems, etc.). Fortunately, this was not the case: this was a gap that could be "filled", so to speak, and for which I found enough material to write a book.

Regarding the challenges, maybe, the greatest tension in this kind of works, and about which the researcher has to take a stand from the start, is the well-known relation between textualism and contextualism. That is, if we choose a

reading of the text that is closed in itself (or, in any case, open to other texts) from which it is possible to identify which reading was closer to find out the “truth” of Machiavelli; or if, facing that alternative, we understand that the readings of a text are influenced by the context (in a broad sense, from the political and social to the intellectual and linguistic context), and that, therefore, these readings inform us not only about the author or the work they refer (Machiavelli in this case), but also about the problems or concerns that transcend them. The “relativism” of this option has a back side: the detection of the historicity of the whole intellectual operation or intervention. As I am a historian, this option is the one that has mainly guided my research.

In this sense, regarding to the possible relation or link between history and political theory, I understand that history must be nourished by political theory in researches with these characteristics (because it offers the frameworks or the unavoidable references to understand Machiavelli’s reception), and history, in turn, can make contributions that, I think, should be contemplated by political theory. Because, for example, it allows us to know which traditions and which ways of reading there have been about an author, which concrete historical forms have existed when the work was studied, and from there, which specific modulations there have been about debates and concepts. I understand that the evidence provided by history can make two important contributions to political theory. First, to show that contemporary debates or controversies have preexisting versions, which allows us to specify their degree of novelty or originality. Second, to offer frameworks that, when showing historical singularities and specificities of the political thought of a country (Argentina in this case), give political theory tools for its elaborations or conceptual proposals not to rotate in the void, so to speak, or to ignore precedents.

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The Philosophy of Bhagavad Gītā

Abstract: The Bhagavad Gītā is one of the greatest religious Scriptures in the Hindu religion. It inspires our younger generations to understand the religion of our ancestors. The story of the Bhagavad Gītā comes from the great epic named the Mahābhārata. In Sanskrit, Bhagavad means God and Gītā means song. So the Bhagavad Gītā means the song of God. And it is found in the Bhīṣma Parva of the Mahābhārata. The Mahābhārata describes the great war which occurred between the two groups-Pandavas and the Kauravas. This Hindu Scripture contains 220,000 Slokas and is divided into eighteen chapters. The present paper highlights the different aspects of Bhagavad Gītā briefly.

Keywords: Philosophy, Gītā, God, Bhagavān, religion, Mahābhārata, Sanskrit, religious texts.

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Introduction

The Bhagavad Gītā is one of the celestial songs in this World. It is the one part of the Mahābhārata, Bhīṣma Parva. There are eighteen chapters in this holy Scripture and which are called Parva. In the Gītā, Lord Krishna said to Arjuna on the battlefield, and those teachings of Lord Krishna are described in this Scripture very beautifully.

Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā is called as Apauruṣeya which is not written by a human being but on the other hand, it was spoken by Lord Krishna himself. In Hindu Dharma, Gītā is one of the main religious texts, and the other two scriptures are named the Upanishads, and the Brahma Sūtras. And these three scriptures are called Prastaltrayī. There are eighteen chapters in the Bhagavad Gītā.

Gītā contains 700 slokas. This holy Scripture, Gītā was the incident of Dvāpara Yuga. And as per the Hindu Calendar, this present era is the Kali Era. All the eighteen chapters of the Bhagavad Gītā were called yogas, and these are reduced to four types of yogas like the Karma yoga, the Bhakti yoga, the Rāja yoga, and the Jñāna yoga.

Bhagavān is the Master of all living entities

Bhagavān (God) says to Arjuna you and I have passed many births but you have no reminder about it but I have good knowledge. The Gītā says:

Bahūni me vyatitāni janmāni tava cārjuna/
Tānyahaṁ veda sarvāṇi na tvaṁ vettha parantapa//¹

Further, Bhagavān says He is unborn and He possesses the transcendental body which cannot be deteriorated and also He is the lord of all living bodies, and He appears all times in His own transcendental form, the description of Gītā is like this.

Ajo'pi sannvyātmā bhūtāmīśvaro'pi san/

Prakṛtiṁ svāmadhiṣṭhāya sambhavāmyātmanāyayā//²

Bhagavān is not directly initiated to any works in this World

God says, O son of pṛthuvī, there is no work of fixation for me in this Loka (world or creation). I have worked regularly, and there is no scarcity of things and also the necessity of any things for me but still, I do every work.

Na me parthāsti kartavyam triṣu lokeṣu kiñcana/
Nānāvāptamavāptavyam varta eva ca karmaṇi//³

Bhagavān says man should perform his duty regularly because work is fixed for every human being and without karma (work), the life of a man is meaningless. So the man should do work (karma) perfectly. Gītā says:

Niyataṁ kuru karma tvam karma nyāyo hyakarmanah/
Śarīra-yātrāpi ca te na prasidhayedakarmani//⁴

The man should perform his duty perfectly without wanting any result of the work (fruits). In this regard, Gītā says ‘**Karmaṇye vādhikāraṣṭe mā Phaleṣu Kadācana**’.⁵ But on the other hand, He should do the work after thinking as his duty. After completing his duties he may get the Supreme Place of Param Brahma.

Tasmādsaktaḥ satataṁ kāryam karma samācara/
Asakto hvācarankarma paramāpnoti puruṣaḥ//⁶

Further, Bhagavān says the best person follows which path, the other general person also follows that same path. And the ideal person works which ideal works, the entire world also follows that works after thinking it as ideality. Gītā says:

Yadyadācarati śreṣṭhas tat tad evetaro janah/
Sa yat pramāṇam kurute lokas- tad- anuvartate//⁷

There is no work that affects me nor any result of the works, and who knows such type of truth and he does not bind in any fruit of the works. God says:

Nam mām karmaṇi limpati na me karmaphale sprhā/
Eti mām yo'bhijānati karmabhirna sa badhyate//⁸

The soul (Ātmā) has no changes

In Bhagavadgītā, the God Krishna says to Arjuna that the soul has no changes at all. That soul has spread in all human beings and you should think it indestructible and nobody cannot destroy the soul. The description of the Gītā is as follows:

Avināśi tu tadbidhi yena sarvamidaṁ tatam/
Vināśamavyasyāsyā na kaścit-kartumharati//⁹

The soul has no birth and death, and that soul has not taken birth in the present, nor the soul will be taken birth in the future, and also he was not taken birth in the past. So the soul (Ātmā) is unborn, permanent, eternal, and primeval. He is not killed when the body is killed. Gītā says:

Na jāyate mriyate vā kadācinnāyam bhutvā bhavitā vā na
bhūyah/
Ajo nityaḥ śāśvato'yam purāṇo na hanyate hanyamāne
śarīre//¹⁰

The soul is unbreakable, individual, and insoluble. So it cannot be burned nor dried. The soul is always everlasting, unchangeable, all-pervading, immovable, and it looks the same at every time. The description of Gītā is like this.

Acchedyo'yamādāhyo'yamakledyo'soṣya eva ca/
Nityaḥ sarvagataḥ sthāṇuracalo'yam sanātanah//¹¹

Some people look at him as amazing and someone hears the soul as amazing and some describe him as amazing and although the people are able to hear him still they cannot understand him perfectly. Lord Krishna says:

Āścaryavatpaśyati kaścidenamāścaryavadvadati tathaiva
cānyaḥ/
Āścaryavaccainamanyaḥ śṛṇoti śrutvāpyenam veda na caiva
kaścit//¹²

The matter and the souls are two and they without the beginning and all the material forms, qualities, and phenomena come out of the matter. ¹³

The soul exists in the matter and enjoys the born qualities of that matter, relation to that attachment of enjoyment is the cause of birth in a good womb or evil. Gītā says:

Puruṣaḥ prakṛti-stho hi bhūṅkte prakṛti-jān guṇān/
Kāraṇaṁ guṇa-saṅgo'sya sad-asad-yoni-janmasu//¹⁴

Bhakti is the best way to get the bliss of God

Bhagavān says to Arjuna that a man should get the bliss of God after obeying the rules and regulations of Bhakti Yoga. If a man is not able to concentrate his mind on God. Gītā says:

Atha cittam samādhātuṁ na śaknoṣi mayi sthiram/
Abhyāsa-yogena tato māmichāptuṁ dhanañjaya//¹⁵

But God says this is very hard to pass my daivīśakti but who surrender unto me they can cross it very easily. The description of Gita is like this.

Daivī hyeṣā guṇamayī mama māyā duratyayā/

Māmeva ye prapadyantate māyām etām taranti te//¹⁶

Further, God says, there are four persons in this world who can render services unto me by his own religious attitude or who are pious. They are distressed by the inquisitive, the desirer of material gain, and who searches the knowledge. The description of the Gītā is as follows:

Caturvidhā bhajante mām janāḥ sukṛtino'rjuna/
Ārto jñāsur arthārthī jñānī ca bharatarṣabha//¹⁷

Bhagavān says who reminds me at the time of death he is able to attain my nature, and there is no doubt. Gītā says:

Antakāle ca māmeva smaranmuktvā kalevaram/
Yaḥ prayāti sa madbhāvaṁ yāti nāstyatra saṁśayaḥ//¹⁸

God says who are free from the false establishments, bad habits, illusion, and who are also free from the happiness and distress and who want to surrender unto me, they are able to attain that eternal place of the God. The description of the Gītā is like this.

Nirmān-mohā jita-sanga-doṣā
Adhyātma-nityā vinivṛta-kāmāḥ/
Dvandairvimuktāḥ sukha-dukha-sañjai-
Rgachantyamūḍhāḥ padamavyaṁ tat//¹⁹

The person who always existed in spiritual attitudes and he contributed towards the supreme, spiritual consummation in the fire, and who performed all the spiritual activities that person was able to get the spiritual kingdom.

Brahmārpaṇaṁ brahma havir brahmāgnau brahmaṇā
hutam

Brahmaiva tena gantavyaṁ brahma-karma-samādhinā//²⁰

God is powerful and all the things have existed in God

All the things and beings which are seen in nature depend on the supreme soul. God says He is the taste in water, He is the radiance in the Sun and the Moon. He is the Om̐ in all four Vedas. And He is the sound in the sky, and He is the virility in men.

Raso'hamapsu kaunteya prabhāsmi śāśisūryayoḥ/
Praṇavaḥ sarvavedeṣu śabdaḥ khe pauraṣaṁ nṛṣu//²¹

Further Lord Krishna says in Bhagavad-gītā that, I am the sweet fragrance of this earth, and I am the heat of the fire, and the life of all beings, and also I am the austerity in ascetics. The description of the Gītā is like this.

Punyo gandhaḥ pṛthivyām ca tejaścāsmi vibhāvasau/
Jīvanam sarvabhūteṣu tapaścāsmi tapasviṣu//²²

Bhagavān says to Arjuna, I am the strength which exists in all beings untainted by desire and passion. I am the love which moves in all beings, and when it is not against the Dharma. Gītā says:

Balam balavatāmasmi kāmarāgavivarjitam/
Dharmāvirudho bhūteṣu kāmo'smi bhāratarābha//²³

There are two elements in this world, the first one is changeable, and the other is unchangeable. All the animate forms are seen called Kṣhara and Akṣhara, and which is the presiding spirit.

Dvāvimaou puruṣau loke kṣharaścākṣhara eva ca/
Kṣharaḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni kūṭastho'kṣhara ucyate//²⁴

Conclusion

From the above discussions, it is concluded that Bhagavad-gītā is the finest creation of all over the World, and there is no other creation like Gītā which can give the solution of every answer for human lives. Lord Krishna plays a vital role in this religious text and he gives every answer of Arjuna. Every person of this World should read at least once this text in their lifetime. Bhagavad-gītā will worship as a religious scripture in the inner heart of all human beings till the end of this creation, there is no doubt at all.

Notes

1. Bhagavat Gītā. Chapter. IV. Sloka. 5.
2. Bhagavad Gītā. Chapter. IV. Sloka. 6.
3. Bhagavad Gītā. Chapter. III. Sloka. 22.
4. Bhagavad Gītā. Chapter. III. Sloka. 8.
5. Bhagavad Gītā. Chapter. II. Sloka. 47.
6. Bhagavad Gītā. Chapter. III. Sloka. 19.
7. Bhagavad Gītā. Chapter. III. Sloka. 21.
8. Bhagavad Gītā. Chapter. II. Sloka. 17.
9. Bhagavad Gītā. Chapter. II. Sloka. 20.
10. Bhagavad Gītā. Chapter. II. Sloka. 24.
11. Bhagavad Gītā. Chapter. II. Sloka. 29.
12. Bhagavad Gītā. Chapter. XII. Sloka. 29.
13. Bhagavad Gītā. Chapter. XII. Sloka. 19.
14. Bhagavad Gītā. Chapter. XIII. Sloka. 22.
15. Bhagavad Gītā. Chapter. XII. Sloka. 9.
16. Bhagavad Gītā. Chapter. VII. Sloka. 14.
17. Bhagavad Gītā. Chapter. VII. Sloka. 16.
18. Bhagavad Gītā. Chapter. VIII. Sloka. 5.
19. Bhagavad Gītā. Chapter. XV. Sloka. 5.
20. Bhagavad Gītā. Chapter. IV. Sloka. 24.
21. Bhagavad Gītā. Chapter. VII. Sloka. 8.
22. Bhagavad Gītā. Chapter. VII. Sloka. 9.
23. Bhagavad Gītā. Chapter. VII. Sloka. 11.
24. Bhagavad Gītā. Chapter. XV. Sloka. 16.

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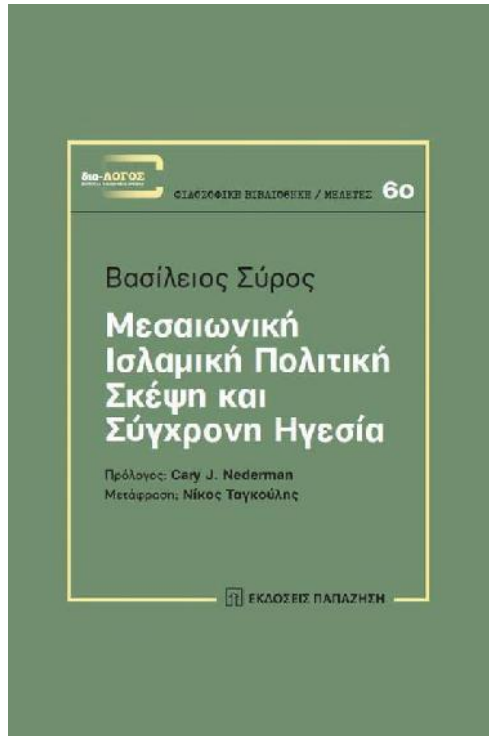
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Book review

Medieval Islamic Political Thought and Modern Leadership

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In this book review we shall present the book *Medieval Islamic Political Thought and Modern Leadership* by Dr. Vassileios Syros. The book, as the title suggests, discusses the Islamic political thought of the past in an attempt to bring to the surface the similarities, as well as the differences, between the Islamic political way of thinking and modern leadership. The book is 137 pages long including a five-page long Prologue by Carl J. Nederman, a short introduction by the author himself, contents and bibliography, which reduce the main part of the book to around 92 pages. With the exception of the Prologue and the Introduction, mentioned above, the book consists of two sections, both of which will be dealt with in this article.

In an era in which quantity seems to have overshadowed quality, the length of such a monograph may sound rather small with this being taken for a drawback. On the contrary, the length of the book is an advantage as Vassileios Syros manages to talk about the themes he has chosen in a profound, yet simple manner covering the expectations of both the scientist with prior knowledge and experience on these matters as well as the expectations of someone who wishes to understand and to learn.

In his prologue Nederman refers to the development of Comparative Political Thought (CPT) within the last twenty years and the urgent need for further development. Indeed, the academic comparison between or among mentalities which are or seem to be entirely different is at its early stage and the effort by Syros in this monograph is to be highly praised. According to Nederman the main problem of comparison is the carrying of personal beliefs from which one may not be able to escape. Moreover, Nederman claims that every attempt is potentially fake, culturally arrogant or (potentially) imperialistic. In my opinion, Syros does avoid this obstacle thanks to his academic and objective way of presenting his arguments based on strictly historical sources leaving aside any personal opinions that could jeopardise his attempt.

As far as the introduction is concerned, Syros catches the eye of the reader by focusing on the modern and diachronic character of the subject he has undertaken pointing out the fast changing situation in the Middle East. The themes presented in the introduction to be further analysed are the comparison between harsh power (violence) and mild power and the comparison between the power of the powerful leader in medieval India and in Florence of the Renaissance.

As a last word before moving on to the analysis of the two chapters of the book, we could highlight the positive image given by Nederman in his prologue about Syros' book and the academic manner in which Syros informs the reader about what he is about to read¹.

Vassileios Syros begins the journey to the Islamic political thought with Ibn al-Tiqtaqa's *al-Fakhri*. Syros grasps the opportunity to discuss the harsh and the mild version of power and its diachronicity referring to the present day. He claims that the theory of harsh-and-mild power can be found in Joseph S. Nye Jr.², but its origin can be traced to Ibn al-Tiqtaqa, as well as to the *Kitab al-Adab al-Karib*³. With plenty of examples from Ibn al-Tiqtaqa and Ibn al-Muqaffa, Syros reaches the very core of comparative political theory in relation to Machiavelli indicating a common mentality in western and oriental political thought.

The journey continues with the comparison between Florence and the Sultanate of Delhi. Syros compares Bruni and Barani on their views on the strict leadership (*Historiae Florentini populi* and *Tārīkh-i Fīrūz Shāhī* respectively). What both authors claim (and what the connection is to nowadays) is that the inability of a leader to comprehend the need of the society will, sooner or later, end in his fall, often in a tragic and bloody manner.

¹ When referred to the personal or possessive of the third person (e.g. "the reader"), the third masculine pronoun is used in order to avoid the obnoxious repetition of "he or she". This does not imply any superiority of the masculine gender over the feminine whatsoever and is therefore not to be taken as a form of sexism.

² Syros V., *Medieval Islamic Political Thought and Modern Leadership*, p. 28.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 32.

The book is written in a simple way, easily accessible to both the academic and the non-academic public. In spite of the simplicity, the text is full of details which indicate two things: the correct academic research conducted and the easiness the reader can follow the line of argumentation thanks to the richness of the stories. Although the text leaves the reader to be carried away by the examples given so as to reach his own conclusions, Syros does not neglect to give his personal point of view on the matters he discusses. For instance, he begins the first chapter with the assumption that *the medieval Islamic political tradition has not come up with a specific or fully developed theory on disobedience, resistance or revolution, let alone in comparison to the western theories of such kind, such as the one by John of Salisbury or the Monarchy-fighters of France in the 16th century*⁴. In addition, the image given by Ibn al-Tiqtaqa in *al-Fakhri* is possibly, Syros warns, an enhanced one of the Mongolian Dynasty and thus it may not be entirely true⁵. Moreover, there are several elements in the book that demonstrate the extent to which the author has a strong degree of familiarity with the academic discipline of comparative analysis. One of these elements is the mention of Sun – Zi⁶, the author of the *Art of War*, who lived in China during the 6th century B. C. Given the above, one may suggest that Syros manages to keep the balance between the objective (information, historical facts, names and dates) and the subjective (personal opinion).

Vassileios Syros often jumps from the antiquity to modern times, though not in a confusing way. On the contrary, he does so in a simple way, always followed by examples that help the reader's transition and therefore the latter is capable

⁴ Ibidem, p. 24.

⁵ Ibidem, p. 27.

⁶ In the book, page 18, the name is spelled Sun-Tzu. Here we prefer the standard pin-yin spelling, Sun-Zi. The difference derives from different systems of transliteration of the Chinese words into Latin, but they are both equally accepted.

of understanding the connection between the two better⁷. Likewise, Syros connects the Arabs with Machiavelli allowing us to presume that he has conducted his research in an academic manner and also that he has acquired a high level of in-depth familiarity with the themes he talks about.

Another point I would like to highlight is how Syros offers further information in his footnotes. Although not absolutely necessary, the piece of information given acts as a short break for the reader, who can learn more things about some details mentioned in the main corpus of the book. For example, see the footnote 42 on page 47 about the etymological analysis of the Islamic idea of the *charismatic charm* or the footnote 108 on page 91 where he offers a range of secondary bibliography for the reader who would be interested in further reading. Furthermore, using the example of Barani, Syros grasps the opportunity to underline the value of historiography, despite the fact that he avoids expressing a specific and definite opinion⁸.

At the end of each chapter a short, but concise, review is given in order for the main points of the chapter to be established. By and large, the book follows a specific and simple stratification keeping the reader's interest high.

Another important advantage of the book is the avoidance of the (sadly, common) mistake of reaching a definite conclusion. Given the frequency under which the alliances were changing in the past – and still are – on the international chessboard, any attempt for an established ultimate acceptance would be nothing more than a fallacious truth deriving from a meretricious and egoistic sense of superiority, which is definitely not the case here. Understanding that the profile of the powerful leader is not to be analysed in a few lines, the author leaves a margin for further study of the topic in the future, though not without making one last association to the contemporary era. The last

⁷ Let us observe how he guides the reader from the discussion on Ibn al-Tiqtaqa to Nye's *inspired leadership* (p. 44) or the ideal image of the leader in what Nye calls *charismatic charm* (p. 47).

⁸ Syros V., *Medieval Islamic Political Thought and Modern Leadership*, p. 92-93.

paragraph of the book is to be taken as a political comment for the political situation and the social displeasure of our time; “*the recent reappearance of the model of the powerful leader in a number of western republics and the worship of the leader, so far a characteristic feature of the American elections, can be explained as the general dissatisfaction of the people for the transformation of the politicians into businessmen who, unlike their claims, they hardly work for the common good*”⁹.

In conclusion, it may be claimed that the monograph by Vassileios Syros is a very interesting and satisfying book. Not only it provides a useful piece of information about the medieval Islamic politics, but it also makes a compelling connection to modern day politics. Rich in ideas, well structured and well written, easy to follow and with plenty of examples that support the arguments of the author, *Medieval Islamic Political Thought and Modern Leadership* is definitely worth a read.

For the above, I warmly recommend it.

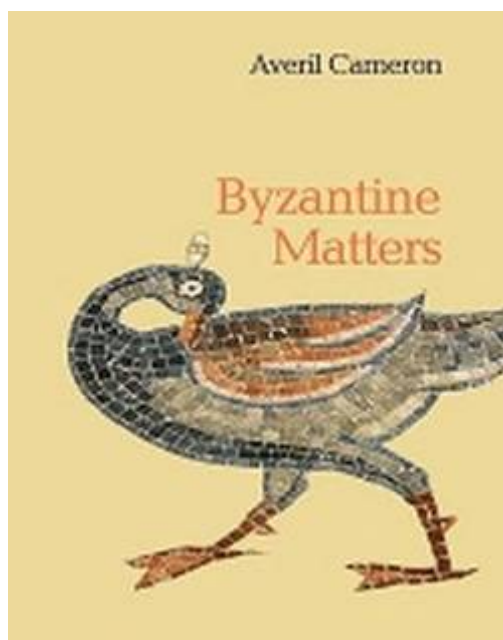


⁹ Ibidem, p. 108-109.

Book review

Byzantine Matters by Averil Cameron

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Averil Cameron's *Byzantine Matters* (2014) is centered around the 'absence' of Byzantium from the wider historical perspective. Byzantium, claims Cameron, 'has been relegated to the sphere of negativity' (10). The name Byzantium is used as a 'derogatory coinage', associated with '[a]utocracy, bureaucracy, deviousness, and a stultifying lack of originality' (ibid). According to the 'standard western narrative of the formation of Europe ... [o]ne looks in vain for civil society in Byzantium, let alone democracy or the hallmarks of western liberalism' (1). Cameron brings to our attention some of the faulty presumptions and hasty conclusions upon which such negative views on Byzantium have been settled into place. She mentions, for example, the Russian medievalist Aaron Gurevich (1992), for whom the absence of a Magna Carta (in Byzantium) indicates extreme illiberalism (95-6). Cameron (2014) in order to refute this officially established narrative (concerning the 'authoritarian' character of the Byzantine state) makes references to a 'traditional strategy' adopted by several Byzantinists who differentiate Byzantium itself 'from the medieval west' (40). In fact, 'Byzantium was characterized by reliance on a service aristocracy rather than aristocracy of birth' (33). The *archontes* (an elite of landowners) had not much in common with the Western feudal aristocracies, who relied exclusively on their hereditary privileges (34). 'Families could not preserve status by heredity alone, though they did their best to do so ... At the higher urban level, possession of a superior level of literary culture was the essential key to social mobility' (ibid). Eventually, such claims call into question the validity of commonly accepted views deriving from interpretations that (often unintentionally) conflate the Byzantine world with the despotic feudal world of medieval Europe and, subsequently, lead to biased conclusions that Byzantium is another example of feudal absolutism. In addition, consider the following passage: '[t]o describe Byzantium as totalitarian, with Alexander Kazhdan, is to ... fail to recognize that emperor and church (especially emperor and patriarch) were often diametrically opposed to each other' or the hostility of the Byzantines towards 'the concept

of papal primacy' (44). Of course, most Byzantine emperors 'liked to see themselves as guardians of religious correctness' (96). However, a Byzantine emperor was not the head of the church and the 'patriarchs of Constantinople might oppose [him], but might also be deposed by him' (95). Patriarchs could also condemn emperors; such has been the case of Heraclius (610-41), of Leo VI (866-912) and, finally, of Michael Palaeologus (1259-82,) who was excommunicated by the patriarch Arsenius (101). As it is also confirmed by Sir Steven Runciman (1965), the 'most fundamental disagreement' between the Western Romans and the Byzantines rests on the fierce opposition of the latter against the 'honorary primacy' of Pope as the supreme judge in religious matters and state affairs (8). The Byzantines 'clung to the old belief in the charismatic quality of bishops' (ibid). None of these bishops, 'not even the heir of Saint Peter, had the right to impose doctrine, however great the respect that his views might command' (ibid). In Byzantium, writes Cameron (2014), [r]eligious authority ... remained contested and open to challenge, as did the imperial throne, and the Byzantines themselves did not speak with one voice' (89).

Eventually, Cameron (2014) by mentioning the apparent rejection of caesaropapism and religious absolutism (on behalf of the Byzantines) and, simultaneously, by emphasizing the absence of feudal aristocracy in the Byzantine world, prompts us to interpret Byzantium from a standpoint that calls into question the officially established view concerning the (ostensibly) absolutist character of Byzantine society, instituted according to principles that legitimize religious and royal despotism, as was the case of the Western medieval model of feudalism. One could, however, mention that since the day Cameron's *Byzantine Matters* (2014) was published, a great deal of new studies have seen the light of the day. These studies question the dominant view regarding the 'oppressive' and 'authoritarian' character of the Byzantine state from a significantly more radical position than that adopted by Cameron herself. I am, of course, referring to Anthony Kaldellis' *Byzantine Republic*

(2015) and Georges Contogeorgis' *Hellenic Cosmosystem* (which is consisted of five volumes).

For Keldellis (2015), Byzantium was not a top-down bureaucratic apparatus but a *politeia* (a *res publica*) build according to the Western Roman paradigm of mixed government. It had preserved its Roman identity, which encompasses elements of classical republicanism, that is, of bottom-up democracy, centered around the notion of popular rule (38; 49). Most new laws ratified by Emperors in *Novels* were, in fact, new customs that had begun to spread across the populace (12-3; 39). The 'imperial ideology' (Cameron 2014: 30) of Byzantium was not centered around the ideology of Orthodox Christianity exclusively, claims Kaldellis (2015). For the same author, the commonly accepted assumptions that Byzantium was nothing but a religious fundamentalist state, an imperial apparatus in the hands of a few Christian zealots, are not grounded on historical evidence (40). One could regard the profoundly Christian character of a high proportion of surviving Byzantine art (Cameron 2014: 71) and the deep-seated assumption that Byzantine philosophy was as all about theology (93) as valid credentials that support the view of Byzantium as a society entirely consumed by rigid religious morals. However, not all the Byzantines 'were all religious themselves' (71). The religious character of Byzantine art simply 'tells us about patronage and how art was commissioned' (*ibid*). In addition, 'philosophers look again at Byzantine philosophy and make case for its autonomy as against theology' (93). Consider, for example, Theodore Metochites' *Byzantios: A Praise of Constantinople* (Βυζάντιος: Ἐπαινος Κωνσταντινουπόλεως), which is entirely preoccupied with the secular aspects of the public life of the capital city of Byzantium. Clearly, theological issues do not seem to be among the main interests of the humanist philosopher. The satirical story *Timarion* (Τιμαρίων) is, perhaps, another good example of non-religious Byzantine literature. The (currently unknown) author of this work makes references to Homer, Euripides and other philosophers or dramatists of classical Greece in order to criticize social injustices and inequalities in

Byzantine society. Even a mystic and theologian (currently a Saint by the Eastern Orthodox Church), Niketas Stethatos ([Στηθάτος] 2006), who urges against the desires of the flesh (that undermine the purity of the soul), against the excesses of secular life (47), against the «ὄρμαῖς τοῦ σώματος» ('furious bodily motives'), against the selfishness of «φιλαργυρία» ('greed' or 'avarice') (131), acknowledges the importance of moderation, of an «ἰσότητι μέσον», that is, of a 'balance' between the desires of the body and needs of the soul, between the affairs of God and the (secular) human affairs (104). More importantly, Stethatos' speaks of the «αὐτεξούσιον» of the human mind (90), that is, of the freedom of human beings to think and act independently (91). Human beings cannot be force into chastity, living a prudent life according to the Christian teachings; the admirable, according to Stethatos (80), virtues of love and compassion and the ability of men and women to tell right from wrong rests on their «αὐτεξούσιον», that is, on their free choices (104). The notion of free will in Christianity, stands in opposition to theocracy, claims Siobhan Nash-Marshall (2003) (from a different angle). Enforcement cannot produce love or compassion; it contradicts the whole point of Christianity, which considers salvation as the ultimate consequence of the freedom of each individual to either follow the path of love and wisdom or to live according to the excesses of the flesh (47). In this respect, Stethatos' philosophy, with its emphasis on the «αὐτεξούσιον», offers no justification for theocracy and/or religious absolutism. Of course, Stethatos is not the only Byzantine theologian who invokes the principle of free will. For Georgios-Gennadius Scholarius ([Σχολάριος] 2020) human beings have been created «κατ' εἰκόνα Θεοῦ ... καὶ ὁμοίωσιν» ('in the image of God') and, hence, they should be praised for their individual autonomy («αὐτεξουσιότητα τιμηθησόμενος») (356). In simple terms, human beings hold the «αὐτεξούσιον» ('the autonomy', the 'freedom') to judge, to choose whether they will partake in the «θεία ἐνότητα» ('dvine unity') or not (ibid).

As Cameron (2014) argues, ‘philosophers look again at Byzantine philosophy and make the case for its autonomy against theology’ (93). Should the author have brought to our attention Byzantine philosophical texts that could sufficiently prove the validity of this assertion (as the previous paragraph did, which not only spoke of the existence of secular literature in Byzantium but also highlighted the anti-absolutist foundations of influential Byzantine theological schools of thought) it would be, indeed, a great advantage. In the same way, her *Byzantine Matters* (2014) could pursue a more profound analysis concerning the power-structures and the political institutions of the so-called Byzantine ‘Empire’, a term considered inaccurate (if not inappropriate) by many political theorists and historians (including Kaldellis and Contogeorgis). More to the point: among the main characteristics of empires is the ‘[c]entralization of the means of exploitation’ (Cameron 2014: 30) and ‘the ability to bring disparate and “foreign” elements under central control’ (ibid). ‘The adaptability of elites and governing structures in Byzantium was one of the empire’s greatest strengths’ (32). However, according to Contogeorgis’ (2020), Byzantium was not as centralized as it is commonly assumed. In this respect, Byzantium cannot be called an ‘empire’. For Kaldellis (2015) it was certainly a ‘monarchical republic’ rather than an empire ‘of declining liberty ... apparently strengthened by Orthodoxy’ (26). Contogeorgis ([Κοντογεωργής] 2020a; 2020b) calls Byzantium a cosmopolis (or an oecumene). For the same author, a cosmopolis is consisted of a complex of cities, united under a common superstructure. Thus, the King was a symbol of unity of the entire cosmopolis. Each Byzantine city was (politically speaking) autonomous (119-23; 126; 160). On the other hand, cities were obliged to abide with a set of regulations without which the unity of the cosmopolis would be at peril. Meanwhile, the King was not an absolute ruler. In addition, state officials (including the King) could not visit each city without a special permit (143).

From a different angle, ‘[c]onsideration of Byzantium as an empire has been complicated by the model of a

“Byzantine commonwealth,” put forward by Dimitri Obolensky’ who believed that Byzantium in much of its history ‘exercised a kind of “soft power”’ (Cameron 2014: 38). Apparently, a decentralized state grounded upon the principles of popular consent, a cosmopolis that respects the autonomy of each individual city, whose ‘real authority remained dispersed’ and was constantly ‘challenged’ (89) have not much in common with illiberal and authoritarian empires, which are top-down superstructures that subordinate every city and village under the rule of the central government (of the Emperor and his consultants), as was the case of Western Rome during the age of Hegemony (Contogeorgis [Κοντογιώργης] 2020b: 459). The reason most Byzantine Kings were called ‘emperors’, claims Contogeorgis, rests on their intentions to preserve the Roman ancestry of Byzantium itself (467; ff.548). But the Byzantine King was not an *Imperator* or a Caesar (463). He/she was electable and his/her authority was limited by the power of the senate or the *demos* (466). To make a long story short, to speak of a Byzantine cosmopolis, of a ‘soft-power’ state, is to speak of a de-centralized state, of a complex of semi-autonomous cities within which democratic institutions, like the institution of the *commons*, could thrive.

The commons, according to Contogeorgis ([Κοντογιώργης] 2020a), were political organizations that resembled the democratic institution of the Athenian *polis*. The existence of such institutions, claims Contogeorgis, conflicts with the so called ‘Byzantine exceptionalism’, a term used by Cameron (2014: 115) in order to describe the views of historians who consider Byzantium an illiberal, monolithic and imperial theocracy *tout court*. For Contogeorgis, Byzantium had incarnated the so called ‘anthropocentric’ *acquis* of classical Greece. In other words, the Byzantine cosmopolis is the legitimate offspring of the evolution of the small-scale anthropocentric cosmosystem (whose foundations were built up during the Greek antiquity) into a large-scale anthropocentric oecumene. In this respect, the identity of Byzantium was Greek/Hellenic. In contrast, Kandellis (2015) argues that the republican ideology of the Byzantine *politeia*

is owned to its *par excellence* Roman identity (3; 32). Cameron (2014) invokes Romilly James Heald Jenkins, for whom the Byzantine identity was a fusion of Greek, Roman, oriental and native elements (49). ‘Byzantium cannot be taken in isolation either from its roots in the Roman imperial period or from late antiquity’ (81). Cameron mentions Kaldellis’ early works, which assume that Greek identity is a discursive construct (60), and Siniosoglou’s assertions concerning the fierce opposition between Hellenism and Christianity (62). Of course, ‘[i]n the earlier Christian centuries the term ‘Hellene’ or ‘Hellenic’ had been appropriated in Greek by Christian writers to refer to pagans, and thus acquired a very negative connotation’ (52). For the same author, the ‘Byzantines did not self-identify as Hellenes; again, it could be argued, in contrast, that one of the very strengths of Byzantium was its flexibility and the capacity of its people to look in several directions’ (65). Their language was Greek and ‘their educational system was based on Greek models, Greek rhetorical handbooks, and, for some, the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, but this too was a direct inheritance from the eastern Roman empire, where Greek language and culture already flourished under the framework of Roman rule long before the foundation of Constantinople’ (66). First, as Contogorgis ([Κοντογιώργης] 2020a) points out, Christianity was adjusted to the spirit of Greek *paideia*. Second, ‘the word *Romaioi* [Romans] by which the Byzantines had always described themselves in the past, was abandoned by educated circles’ was gradually abandoned, in favor of the word ‘Hellenes’ (Greeks) (Runciman 1965: 15). By the end of iconoclasm, writes Contogorgis ([Κοντογιώργης] 2020a), the true *Romaioi* were the Greeks exclusively rather than the inhabitants of western Rome, who were simply called Latins (98). The end of iconoclasm signaled the revival of mathematics, philosophy and classical art, which ‘pervaded all the arts ... In literature it had the effects of stunting the development of a living literary language. Men of letters sought to reproduce the style and even the vocabulary and syntax of the writers of Classical Greece’ (Runciman 1975: 94).

Of course, classicists have been always looking down on Byzantium (Cameron 2014: 4). However, several Byzantinists ‘point out that classical tradition had never been lost in Byzantium’ (21) (this could be true, if we acknowledge the case of *Timarion* and the references the unknown author makes to classical Greek poets, dramatists and philosophers) and that ‘while the period from 1204 to 1261 certainly represented a “setback,” cultural and intellectual life was maintained or even strengthened during this period, and high-level education reestablished in Constantinople after 1261’ (ibid). As it seems, Cameron (2014) contradicts herself quite often when she discusses the identity of Byzantium. In another passage she speaks of the Greek Byzantine identity. However, Byzantium was not all about Hellenism (67). According to Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, ‘Byzantium was surrounded by peoples with evolving identities’ (ibid). Thanks to the influences of the Second Sophistic movement (of the second and third centuries) Hellenism was deeply ‘inscribed in Byzantine elite culture itself’ (54). Nonetheless, other sources claim that Hellenism was inscribed (to some degree) to all social classes. The Byzantine schools had never been Christian schools, claims Gouguenheim (2017: 34). In most educational programs the works of Homer, ‘who was considered the foundation of education’, was included (ibid). In addition, ancient Greek customs never ceased to seduce the ‘common people’ of Byzantium. Despite the predominance of Christianity, pagan festivals such as Kronia, in which Alexios I Komnenos had many times participated, carried on (Choniatis 1975: 275-6). During the 6th and 7th centuries, in Athens and elsewhere, public ceremonies of the Olympian religion were regularly held (Contogeorgis [Κοντογιώργης] 2020a: 305).

‘If Byzantium can hardly be described without anachronism as a tolerant society, the totalitarian Byzantium of some scholars is equally anachronistic (Cameron 2013: 109). Bishops could be deposed and exiled and there was rhetoric of condemnation at all levels of society (103). Although capital punishment was rare, mutilation was allowed (ibid). But on the other hand, Byzantium did not

develop anything like an Inquisition (ibid). We could, certainly, agree with Cameron's assertions, given the high levels of religious liberty we enjoy today in most liberal Western countries, within which the *Byzantine Mattes* 'is inevitably written' (2). It should be, however, mentioned that even during the Greek antiquity persecution under the accusation of religious blasphemy was allowed. Could we, therefore, reckon the ancient Greek world 'absolutist' and 'intolerant'? Of course, the existence of intolerant laws in ancient Greece has never intrigued modern liberal philosophers and revolutionaries, who sentimentalized and idealized ancient Greece (particularly the Athenian society) as a beacon of enlightenment against oppression and absolutism. Consider, for example, the case of 'English Philhellenism', which Cameron (2014) identifies with George Gordon Lord Byron, who (among others) participated in the Greek Revolution against the Ottomans and drew inspiration from classical Greece exclusively (13). As Runciman (1965) points out, 'Western Europe' had never forgotten 'its debt that it owned to the Greeks; but it saw the debt as being owned only to the Classical age. The Philhellenes who came to take part in the War of Independence spoke of Themistocles and Pericles but never of Constantine. Many intellectual Greeks copied their example of, led astray by the evil genius of Korais, the pupil of Voltaire and Gibbon, to whom Byzantium was an ugly interlude of superstition, best ignored' (190). But while younger Byzantines know this, 'negative views can still be found within Byzantine scholarship' (ibid).

To make a long story short, Cameron's *Byzantine Matters* (2014) should be commended for clear and genuine efforts to address several concerns in regards to the problem of 'Byzantine exceptionalism'. In the spirit of constructive critique to this work of such a prolific and genuine scholar I have argued for a more explicit engagement with philosophical works published by influential Byzantine thinkers. In general terms the author has clearly invested considerable effort in addressing the reasons Byzantium matters for us today. It matters, first and foremost, because

the fall of Constantinople (1453) ‘did indeed mean that the collections and libraries of Italy were filled with classical manuscripts, and some of the last Byzantines were themselves great collectors’ (20). If, as Contogeorgis ([Κοντογιώργης] 2020b) pointed out, the Italian Renaissance was a Byzantine achievement (53), this could be partially attributed to the plethora of classical texts and literary works that Byzantine scholars brought to Italy during the fifteenth century, contributing to the revival of democratic thinking in Western Europe.



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Discussion with Boethius's
De consolazione philosophiae
(*The Consolation of Philosophy*)

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In History of Philosophy there are few examples of Imaginary dialogues between philosophers and Wisdom (Sophia) or Philo-Sophia (philosophy) personified as a woman. For instance we have the *Dialoghi d'amore*, which was written by Leone Ebreo (or Judah Abrabanel) (ca.1465-after 1521) who wrote about two kinds of wisdom: wisdom in (the beginning of God's way, which is the creation of the world –time) and wisdom with (the principle by means of which God created the world – instrument).¹ It has been argued that this dialogue supplied with terminology and arguments Tullia d'Aragona (1501/1505- 1556), a celebrated courtesan and poet, to write the *Dialogue on the Infinity of*

¹ It is quite uncertain whether Soloviev knew these texts since there is no evidence or reference in his writings about these authors.

Love (1547).² The remarkable fact in case of Tullia is that it is the first time that a woman authored a work in which she casts herself as the main disputant on the ethics of love, a field exclusively operated by men philosophers. In this dialogue, Tullia elaborates, through the dialogue with her friend Benedetto Varchi, her own concept about love which is not based on its sublimation. Instead, it is based on the real nature of humankind. In this realm, sexual drives are blameless and women are not identified with physicality and sin. These radical ideas by Tullia seemed to open a new morality on love.³

Another example of a dialogue between Philosophy and philosopher by himself comes from the Dutch philosopher Frans Hemsterhuis (1721-1790) and his dialogue on the relation between the soul and the body, named *Sophyle ou de la philosophie* (1778). Although here Philosophy is personified as man (person *Sophylus* in this dialogue), not as woman, it has been said that Hemsterhuis inspired this dialogue from his own ‘Diotima’ as he called Amalia von Schmettau, Princess von Gallitzin. Both, after Princess’s divorce with the Russian diplomat to the stadholder’s court, started a friendship which was preserved by them with frequent visits and correspondence.⁴ In this dialogue *Sophylus* argues that the world is made up of matter and that experience shows us the essence of matter. Hemsterhuis answers him through the philosopher *Euthyphron*.

Here I examine the case of Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius (477-524), who, as a pagan Neoplatonist author, formulated answers to some of life’s most difficult and enduring questions by combining several philosophical and theological resources, just like Soloviev did.⁵ Boethius, fallen as he was from social and political office, composed *De*

² Tullia d’Aragona, *Dialogue on the Infinity of Love*, ed. and trans. Rinaldina Russell and Bruce Merry (Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), 30.

³ *Ibid.* 21.

⁴ Émile Grucker, *Frans Hemsterhuis: De Nederlandsche Wijsgeer* (Utrecht: Elibron Classics, 2006), 4.

⁵ His name is derived from the Greek word *boētos* [βοηθός], which means “assistant”.

consolatione philosophiae (*On The Consolation of Philosophy*) (520), while imprisoned in Italy (probably in Pavia) and awaiting the death sentence for treason.⁶ It is quite remarkable that although this pagan Neoplatonist faced death as a Christian martyr, his work did not contain a single explicit or an implicit reference to the Christian Scriptures.⁷ His personal and intellectual crisis, which in the end of *De consolatione* seems to be cured by *Lady of Philosophy* (as he

⁶ For general discussions of the Consolation in the context of Boethius's life and works, see Edmund Reiss, *Boethius* (Boston MA: Twayne, 1982), especially pp. 80–161, and Henry Chadwick, *Boethius: The Consolations of Music, Logic, Theology, and Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981).

⁷ Concerning Boethius's religious position, most of the modern scholars argue that he was a professing Christian based on the fact that aristocracy since the fourth century had accepted Christianity as religious practice, Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, trans. David R. Slavitt (Cambridge : Harvard University Press, 2008), xi-xiii. However, the salient position of historians in the past was that Boethius was a philosopher of the Roman Empire who was standing at the dividing line between paganism and Christianity, Noel Harold Kaylor and Philip Edward Phillips, *A Companion to Boethius in the Middle Ages*, (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 14-18. Dante Alighieri in his *Divina Commedia* (Paradiso, X, prose 121-129), expresses this view quite vividly by presenting Boethius as a martyr who is excelled in wisdom. Taking into consideration his few and incomplete *Commentaries on Aristotle* (thus following the practice of Neoplatonists) and the passage from Book III, Met. IX (“And if the Muse of Plato sends through those depths the voice of truth, each man has not forgotten and is but reminding himself of what he learns”), I think that he was closer to his pagan side. I discern three points in *De consolatione philosophiae* which may imply indirect references to Christian martyrs and to Christianity in general: a) Book II, 4 (“those who looked for the reward of blessedness not just by their deaths but by sorrow and suffering”), b) the reference to the highest Good that rules all things (Book III, 12) which echoes Wisdom 8:1 (“She reacheth therefore from end to end mightily, and ordereth all things sweetly”), and c) the prayer to the “Father of earth and heaven” (Book III, 6, metrum 9). Even his four *Theological Tractates*, where he analyzes carefully the questions about Christ's nature, I think that should be examined rather as a practice of intellectual debate between the Church of Constantinople and the Catholic Church than as a proof of his Christian beliefs.

calls Philosophy), occurred after losing the favor by Roman Emperor Theodoric (493-526).⁸

De consolatione philosophiae is divided into five books containing part prose, part poetry which rather are representative elements of a genre of literature than of a systematic philosophical treatise.⁹ In total, this work offers a conspectus of Stoic and Neoplatonic thoughts through which the cosmology and ethics of the late Roman period emerge.¹⁰ Here, I will start with a short overview of each book and then I focus on specific topics of this dialogue (especially human reason), which I think display a kind of affinity with *La Sophia*.

From the very beginning (Book I), Boethius attributes to Lady of Philosophy all the courses that he learned from her during his life: the wisdom of God and man alike, the meaning of life by seeing the heavens as patterns of reality, nature's secrets, and how to live.¹¹ Then a dialogue between Lady of Philosophy and Boethius starts, with three main questions about the validity of divine reason, the prior principle of creation and the essence of man as a rational and

⁸ All the references to Boethius's *De consolatione philosophiae* are taken from the Ignatius Critical Editions, Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, translated and edited by Scott Goins and Barbara H. Wyman (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2012). First, I am referring to the number of the Book (in total there are five books) and then I give the section of the chapter and the page of the particular edition.

⁹ Boethius succeeds to create a pedagogical dialogue by using the literary form of Menippian satire (poetry and prose). In order to enrich this form, Boethius employs several literary devices, mainly from Homer, Virgil and Seneca, such as allegory, personification, juxtaposition, metaphor/simile, symbolism, alliteration, anaphora, anthropomorphism, asyndeton, epistrophe, metonym. Apart from the importance of poetry in the *De consolatione philosophiae* as a literary form, it should be added here that Boethius's verses are not inspired as Proclus'. They are not connected to a ritual but to the raise of human to reason and intellect. Thus, Boethius here implies a superiority of philosophy, as a way of salvation, against religious teaching and practice (theurgy).

¹⁰ Undoubtedly Boethius had read Neoplatonists and especially Proclus, Gerard J.P. O'Daly, *The Poetry of Boethius* (Chapel Hill & London: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 66.

¹¹ *Cons. Phil.*, Book I, 4, 16.

mortal creature.¹² Book II presents one of the best-known images of the ancient world, the wheel of Fortune. Lady Philosophy with an extensive monologue deconstructs the role of Fortune as the ruler of human life in order to press Boethius to liberate himself from his sick state of unawareness of the true good of wisdom. The questions of the first Book are answered plainly here by the Lady of Philosophy: God presides over the work he has created, the World-Creator is beyond creation, and man is defined in terms of divinity.¹³ The book closes with a poem dedicated to universal harmony which is preserved through love's unified power.¹⁴

Book III illustrates, on the first pages, how wisdom has its source in the Divine and that such Stoic and Epicurean virtues as goodness and happiness are linked with the divinely ordered cosmos and with man's intimate need to seek the highest Good.¹⁵ The rest of this book refers to fundamental Neoplatonic principles: the triple nature of the cosmos (Matter – Soul – Mind), the One, which here echoes the Christian God since it is identified with the Father, the World-Soul and its intermediate role for the unity of cosmos,¹⁶ and the notion of participation in the Good (or Oneness).¹⁷ In Book IV, Boethius examines the nature of evil

¹² Ibid., Book I, 6, 27-28.

¹³ "Other things are content with their own nature, but you, like God in having an intellect, want to adorn your superior nature with the beauty of inferior things, and you do not understand what a great injury you do to your Creator", *ibid.*, Book II, 5, 49.

¹⁴ Ibid., Book II, 8, metrum 8, 61.

¹⁵ Ibid., Book III, 1-2, 63-67.

¹⁶ In *De consolazione philosophiae* the concept of World Soul refers mostly to Plato's *Philebus* 30A, *Laws* 10.897C and *Timaeus* 30D and 34B.

¹⁷ *Cons. Phil.*, Book, III, 9, 86-88 & 11, 96-97. Boethius states clearly for Good that is God: "It would be beyond price", I said, "if indeed I will come to recognize God, too, who is the Good". As for the notion of participation which apart from Good also refers to the seeking of happiness on the divine beautitude, according to Wayne J. Hankey: "Participation is the language of the tradition's solution because it can leave open the question as to the sense in which humans possess intellect", Wayne J. Hankey, "Ad intellectum ratiocinatio"¹: Three Procline logics, *The Divine Names* of Pseudo-Dionysius, Eriugena's *Periphyseon*

by relying mostly on Stoicism, while the central position is occupied by God's Providence,¹⁸ which opens the discussion about divine knowledge, human free will, causality and contingency in Book V.¹⁹

All the above topics are examined by Boethius in view of human reasoning and its restoration. Firstly, Boethius chooses the word *consolatio* to be in the title of this work. In the ancient world, 'consolation' meant not just showing sympathy or condolence to someone's grief or sorrow, but providing reasoning argumentation against excessive grieving.²⁰ Instead of verses, Lady of Philosophy presents a series of consolatory arguments by means of which Boethius will be able to more adequately understand his condition, and thus to face his looming death.²¹ It seems, therefore, that the main topic of *De consolatioe philosophiae* is not the consolation per se of a prisoner who is facing death, but of the means (reason-ratio) which will be restored through divine intellect.²² Besides, as it is affirmed by the title, the

and Boethius's *Consolatio philosophiae*," in *Studia Patristica* 29, ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone (Leuven: Peeters, 1997), 244-51.

¹⁸ Boethius repeats Platonic and Neoplatonic positions (especially those after Plotinus) when he speaks of providence which concerns the higher realm, and of fate which is another name for the connection between cause and effect in the inferior world, Henry Chadwick, *Boethius: The Consolations of Music, Logic, Theology, and Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 242.

¹⁹ *Cons. Phil.*, Book IV, 110-117, 132-138.

²⁰ In Ancient Greek literature there are a lot of examples where consolation means reasonable argumentation. For instance, Pericles says in his speech (*epitaphios*): "I do not lament; rather, I shall console" [οὐκ ὀλοφύρομαι μᾶλλον ἢ παραμυθήσομαι] (Thucydides, 2, 44). The same meaning has in Epicurus (Sent. Vat. 66): "We should show sympathy to our friends not by lamenting with them but by caring for them in their time of need" [συμπαθῶμεν τοῖς φίλοις οὐ θρηνοῦντες ἀλλὰ φροντίζοντες], Paul Holloway, *Consolation in Philippians. Philosophical Sources and Rhetorical Strategy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 45.

²¹ The scene where the Lady of Philosophy banishes the Muses of Poetry may be interpreted as an introduction by Boethius to show how he understands the true consolation, *Cons. Phil.*, Book I, metrum 1, 3-5.

²² Wayne, J. Hankey, "Placing the Human: Establishing Reason by its Participation in Divine Intellect for Boethius and Aquinas," *Res Philosophica* 95, no. 4 (2018): 13.

consolation is of *philosophia* (*philosophiae* in Latin) and not by *philosophia* (which would be in ablativus form *philosophiā*).

Secondly, Boethius knows (or will know through the dialogue with Lady of Philosophy) what he is by remembering his life. Lady of Philosophy pushes him to reach further within himself to what is his own, independently of all externality and of the unpredictable motion of Fortune. Boethius indicates that the choice of a man is either the recognition of his own nature, thus raising to his divine nature, or the neglect of it and the sinking among the lower beings.²³

Thirdly, the quest for true happiness which is a quest for self-sufficiency forces Boethius in a way to move to the simple undivided good, which actually belongs only to the simple undivided self, and so reason seems to raise itself toward the intellection it requires. In this respect, Boethius puts Lady of Philosophy in a position to command him, in a Platonic way,²⁴ to turn his human mind to his undivided self, the true unity, the true happiness.²⁵

This crucial turning, which is expressed by Boethius with a prayer to the ‘father of earth and heaven’, is quite important for the relation between reason and intellect, human and divine.²⁶ Here, Boethius heeded the Neoplatonic

²³ “Indeed, human nature is such that a man surpasses other things only when he is aware that he does so. But that same human nature is reduced to being lower than the beasts if it ceases to know itself” *ibid.*, Book II, 5, 49. This process of choice is accomplished through remembering, the known Platonic *anamnēsis* [ἀνάμνησις].

²⁴ Here, the Lady of Philosophy invokes the authority of Plato in the *Timaeus* where the prayer for divine aid is integrated in universe’s creation as a necessity, Plato, *Timaeus*, 27c.

²⁵ “You have, then, both the form and the causes of false happiness. Now turn your mind’s gaze in the other direction, for there you will see immediately the true happiness that I promised you”, *ibid.*, Book III, 9, 84.

²⁶ Apart from the invocations “O Governor of the universe”, “Father of earth and heaven” and “You are the Leader and the Way”, this prayer, sounds much more as pagan Neoplatonic rather than as Christian. Neoplatonic principles, such as the eternal Forms in the mind of God, the central role of World Soul in the cosmic unity, the unity of thought and being and most importantly the benefit of elevation from lower to higher,

teachings by addressing the necessity of prayer as a prerequisite for the connection between human intellect and divine unity, while he underlines the importance of grace from the Deity toward the praying person.²⁷ In this respect, and taking into consideration the parts of *De consolazione philosophiae* about the notion of ‘participation’, it seems that this work tends to identify philosophy with religion. Apparently, I would say, Boethius provides a kind of Neoplatonic prayer which does not aim at the reassurance of the eternal character of the relationship between God and man, but at the perpetual aspect of this relationship. This perpetuality reassures the transition from downwards to upwards, and essentially highlights the rise of human spirit.

In the last two books (Book IV, Book V), Boethius frames reason with divine Providence, while he connects it to human freedom.²⁸ Divine Providence depends on a kind of determinism (God foreknows all events, thus his knowledge causes these events) which seems to abolish human freedom.²⁹ However, if there wasn’t human free will, then all

from outer to inner, undoubtedly reveal Boethius’s sources, *ibid.*, Book III, 6, metrum 9, 86-88.

²⁷ Boethius here differentiates from Proclus and Dionysius the Areopagite who regard ritual acts and in general religion as philosophy’s way to restore soul through unity with its principle. For Boethius philosophy does the work of religion, Wayne J. Hankey, “Ad intellectum ratiocinatio”1: Three Procline logics, *The Divine Names* of Pseudo-Dionysius, Eriugena’s *Periphyseon* and Boethius’s *Consolatio philosophiae*,” in *Studia Patristica* 29, ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone (Leuven: Peeters, 1997), 244-251.

²⁸ With this concept of divine foresight, Boethius might debate with the monk Pelagius (360-425) who spoke of the perfect ability of humans to perform good works without the divine aid. It is noteworthy to mention that Vladimir Soloviev probably had read Pelagius’ doctrine since he wrote an article for his life and his work in the *Brockhaus and Ephron Encyclopedia*.

²⁹ In Neoplatonism, and especially in Proclus, the divine knowledge necessitates what is known: “The gods themselves know what is generated without generation, and what is extended without extension, and what is divided without division, and what is in time eternally, and what is contingent necessarily. For by the very act of thinking (noein) they produce all things and what they produce they produce from the undivided and eternal and immaterial forms; so that they also think them in this way. For let us not suppose that knowings are characterised by

mistakes would have to be attributed to God. In this respect, Boethius says, by employing the Christian interaction between God and human, that hope and prayer would be insensible.³⁰ Nevertheless, Boethius puts Lady of Philosophy to explain that God is eternal and with His knowledge He sees above and beyond time, outside the time-space, by holding together the universal and the temporal, i.e., the form of human reason.³¹ God gazes downwards, while the human being gazes upwards with his knowledge, hope and prayer. In this way, the dialogue between the Lady of Philosophy and Boethius closes by joining the conjunction of God's knowledge and human reasoning.

Lady of Philosophy (Boethius) - Sophia in poetry and in *La Sophia* (Soloviev)

In this part I compare the Lady of Philosophy with Sophia as poetic symbols and as concepts. Through this comparison my aim is to stress that both philosophers are using a feminine figure in order to express themselves more

the natures of the things known, nor yet that what is not fixed is fixed among the gods, as the philosopher Porphyry says,[...]but the manner of knowing becomes different through the differences in the knowers”, Richard Sorabij, *The Philosophy of the Commentators 200-600 AD*, vol. 2: Physics (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2005), 73. However, this position should not be attributed genuinely to Proclus, but to Iamblichus who claimed that the nature of knowledge is determined by the nature of the knower rather than of the thing known, Robert Sharples, “Fate, prescience and free will,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Boethius*, ed. John Marenbon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 216.

³⁰ For more about the relation between divine foreknowledge and contingency, see John Marenbon, “Divine Prescience and Contingency in Boethius’s *Consolation of Philosophy*,” *Rivista di storia della filosofia* 1, (2013): 9-20. C.S.Lewis comments quite insightfully this Christian influence regarding the interaction between God and man: “in contradiction to the Platonic view that the Divine and the human cannot meet except through a *tertium quid* (third party)”, C.S.Lewis, *The Discarded Image: An Introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), 79.

³¹ *Cons. Phil.*, Book V, 6, 166-173.

intuitively in prose (by adding specific adjectives to her) and more philosophically when they intend to connect her with their main philosophical concepts, i.e., in Boethius's case with the restoration of human reasoning, while in Soloviev's case with the notion of universality in cosmic unity and in humanity.

Boethius's Lady of Philosophy and Soloviev's Sophia (or Sophie) are feminine, visionary figures which seem to share some affinities firstly as poetic symbols that establish a more personal relationship with their 'creators' and secondly as concepts whose aim is to elevate human reasoning. I will start with the symbolic side, because I think that this served as the first inspiration for both philosophers. Boethius describes Lady's epiphany as follows: "Her height was hard to tell; at one moment it was that of any ordinary human, but at another she seemed to strike the clouds with the crown of her head. Indeed, when she lifted her head higher, she could no longer be seen by mortal eyes". Her dress, where "on its bottom hem was woven Greek letter *pi*, with a series of steps ascending to a *theta*," represents the main division of Philosophy, Practical and Theoretical as distinguished by Aristotle and his successors.³² In particular, Greek letter *pi* [π] on her dress stands for the practical (*praktikê*) philosophy and the Greek letter *theta* [θ] stands for the theoretical (*thêorêtikê*) philosophy.³³ Also, it has been argued that the Greek letter *theta* [θ] on Lady's robe might refer to the Greek word *thanatos* (death), which starts with *theta* as well. This position is based on the hypothesis that *theta* was a mark, that period of time, of a condemned criminal awaiting execution. If this is the case, then Boethius might use the letter *theta* as a symbol in order to show that it is Philosophy herself who is going to be executed.³⁴

However, I think that it is most probably here the Greek letters *pi* and *theta* to refer to the division of Practical and Theoretical Philosophy rather than to the word *thanatos*.

³² Aristotle, *Metaphysics* I 993b, 19-21.

³³ *Cons. Phil.*, Book I, 1, 6.; Henry Chadwick, "Theta on Philosophy's Dress in Boethius," *Medium Aevum* 49 (1980): 175-176.

³⁴ Chadwick, "Theta on Philosophy's Dress in Boethius," 177.

Taking into consideration Boethius's Neoplatonic sources, the above description of Lady's dress, both in its content and in its way of expression, seems to refer to Neoplatonic philosophy.³⁵ For Neoplatonists, practical (physical sciences) and theoretical philosophy (metaphysics with the sense of divine harmony) symbolize the ascent from lower to higher, from human to divine. In general, Neoplatonists liked to interpret allegorically fragments of poetry, especially from Homer, by seeing descriptions of a god or goddess (including a dress or garment's description) as a symbol of transcendent activity by the god/goddess.³⁶ It seems that this applies to Boethius as well.³⁷ However, Boethius uses not only Neoplatonic sources but also Stoic symbolisms referring to this mysterious woman, who appears to him in prison, not as *Philosophia* but as his "healer" or "physician".³⁸ From now on, the Lady of Philosophy encourages him to share his pain with her, so that she can start with the diagnosis of his sickness. Following her orders, Boethius uncovers gradually his wound by remembering all the injustices he has suffered. In this respect, the Greek letter *theta* on Lady's dress could be also meant 'therapy' [θεραπεία] which also starts with *theta*. However, I think that the Greek letter *theta* should be

³⁵ Boethius seemed to follow in his life both philosophical and scientific knowledge that might be eerie for some in that period of time. However, he defends himself by saying that: he followed God according to Pythagorean teachings, he was endowed by the Lady of Philosophy with virtue to make him become like God, and his companionship consisted of honourable men, *ibid.*, Book I, 4, 22.

³⁶ See for instance Proclus' interpretation of Athena's garment (peplos and chiton) in the essay 5 and 6 in his *Commentary on Republic* and in the *Commentary on Timaeus*, as well as Numenius' alegoresis of the garments of Naiad nymphs in Homer's *Odyssey*, Robert Lamberton, *Homer the Theologian: Neoplatonist Allegorical Reading and the Growth of the Epic Tradition*, ed. Peter Brown (Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1986), 199; Adam Mickiewicz, "Of Nymphs and Sea: Numenius on Souls and Matter in Homer's *Odyssey*," *Greece and Rome* 67, no. 2 (2020): 141.

³⁷ Chadwick, "Theta on Philosophy's Dress in Boethius," 175.

³⁸ From the Stoic perspective of philosophy as 'healer' see Mathew D. Walz, "Stoicism as Anesthesia: Philosophy's "Gentler Remedies" in Boethius's *Consolation*," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 51, 4 (204) (2011): 510-513.

examined here as a pair with the Greek letter *pi*, since in the description of Lady's dress Boethius indicates a link between them by referring to "a series of steps" between the two letters.

Philosophy, after listening to his narrative, becomes in a way more demanding by interrogating him about several philosophical topics (the nature of man, God, and the purpose of things), and concludes with her final diagnosis: "I now know the other, in fact the greatest, cause of your disease: you no longer know what you are. Now I understand why you're sick and how I can find a remedy to restore your health".³⁹ This role of the Lady of Philosophy as a healer remains till the end of *De consolazione philosophiae*, passing through the paths of several philosophies (Pythagoreanism, Stoicism, Neoplatonism), leading Boethius to see what he really is, namely, a being who is potentially divine through participation.⁴⁰

Regarding Soloviev's Sophia as a symbol, I think that it should be approached via her role in his poetry.⁴¹ Poetry was the only genre that Soloviev served faithfully and consistently: he never stopped writing verses, even one month before he died.⁴² By contrast, as I argue in chapter 1,

³⁹ *Cons. Phil.*, Book I, 6, 28.

⁴⁰ "The Consolation provides a paradigm for this healing search for meaning. For Boethius suggests that healing comes with insight, and that insight is attained by progressing through a series of perspectives. Hence two key issues in the Consolation's quest for meaning are therapy and perspective", Donald, F. Duclow, "Perspective and Therapy in Boethius's Consolation of Philosophy," *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* 4 (1979): 335.

⁴¹ My analysis of his poetry is based on the collected poems (short, dated and undated) in Vladimir Solovyov, *The Religious Poetry of Vladimir Solovyov*, 1-153.

⁴² Poetry for Soloviev seemed to be the vehicle through which the whole meaning of universe is transferred to the poetic soul: "The general meaning of the universe is revealed in the soul of the poet in a two-fold fashion: from its external side as the beauty of nature, and from the internal side as love, and namely in its most intensive and concentrated expression – as sexual love. These two themes: the eternal beauty of nature and the infinite power of love together make up the essential content of pure lyricism", Vladimir Solov'yev, "O liricheskoy poezii (po povodu poslednikh stikhotvorenii Feta i Polonskogo)," [On lyrical poetry

in the realm of the integral creativity in his philosophical writings he alternates theosophy with theocracy and/or theurgy. However, behind this facile antithesis, Sophia remains stable thematically even in the last poem that he wrote.⁴³ While his philosophical and theological approach of Sophia are expressed rationally, poetry allows him to break this barrier and speak of her mystically, without limits and definitions.⁴⁴

In particular, his lyrical poetry based on the actual themes of the 'beauty of nature' (as a reflection of Eternity) and 'love', is a prelude of what Evert van der Zweerde has labelled as *sophiurgy*.⁴⁵ His inspiration by nature does not follow any of the pessimism, melancholy, resort to the past, or even inherent despair that characterize romantic poetry of the West in the late 18th century.⁴⁶ As a religious philosopher, Soloviev seems to abstain from this movement, since the aim of his poetry is to speak of the embodiment of Sophia (Eternal Feminine) and to introduce once more his

(about the last poems of Fet and Polonsky)] in *Filosofiya Iskusstva i Literaturnaya Kritika*, ed. A.A. Nosov (Moskva: Iskusstva, 1991), 412. However, it seems that Soloviev himself did not consider his poetry the most important part of his work, A.B. Muratov, "Smysl cheloveka est' on sam (vstup. st.)," ["The Meaning of a Person is Himself"] in *Solov'yev V.S. Izbrannoye* (SPb.: Khudozhestvennaya literatura, 1994), 20.

⁴³ The title of this poem is *Again the White Bellflowers* (1900). In this poem Soloviev seems to experience infernal visions which have few parallels with Sophia. However, he refers to "white angels" which are "just the same" and to "the sun of love" which might be interpreted as a vision of Sophia, who prevails over evil, Vladimir Solovyov, *The Religious Poetry of Vladimir Solovyov*, 94.

⁴⁴ About the conjunction between his philosophy and poetry, see Samuel D. Cioran, *Vladimir Solov'ev and the Knighthood of the Divine Sophia* (Canada: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1977), 45.

⁴⁵ *Sophiurgy* is a neologism created by Evert van der Zweerde in Evert van der Zweerde, review of *Solovyov's Sophia as a Nineteenth-Century Russian Appropriation of Dante's Beatrice*, by Helleman E. Wendy, *Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* 66 (3-4) (2014): 213.

⁴⁶ However, he did inspire romanticism in the movement of Russian symbolism as expressed by Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Blok (1880-1921) in his *Stikhi o prekrasnoi Dame* [1904] (*Verses About the Beautiful Lady*) and Andrey Belyy (1880-1934) in his *Svyashchennyye tsveta* [1903] (*Sacred colors*), Cioran, *Vladimir Solov'ev and the Knighthood of the Divine Sophia*, 141, 164.

sophiurgy: the World Soul (or nature) which represents the earthly matter of Sophia, seeking for union with the divine world.⁴⁷

In this respect, his peculiar interpretation of ‘love’ (he speaks of it as the opposite of evil life) i.e., as ‘sexual love’, should be viewed in connection with his concept of Sophia. There are three poems (‘All in azure did my empress’, ‘My empress has a lofty place’ and ‘Near, far off, not here, not there’) which together with the poem *Three Meetings* consist the so-called ‘sophianic circle’ of his poetry since they refer to the three encounters that he had with Sophia during 1860-1870, in three different places: Moscow-London-Egypt. In particular, in the *Three Meetings* (26-29 September 1898), the most impressive thing is not the vivid description of Sophia’s ‘presence’ through symbols (light) but rather the way that he chose to describe her. As he says at the end of this poem: “the autumn evening and the dense woods inspired me to reproduce in comic verse the most significant thing that had ever happened in my life”.⁴⁸ It seems that

⁴⁷ In the introduction of the third edition of *Stikhotvoreniya Vladimira Solov'yeva* his nephew, Sergei Soloviev, cites Soloviev by exposing the principles of his poetry where Vladimir Soloviev clarifies that the worship of the eternal feminine (i.e., Sophia) is not related to God Himself: “[...] the worship of feminine nature in itself, that is, the principle of ambiguity and lack of differentiation is susceptible to falsehood and evil no less than to truth and goodness [...] there is nothing in common with the former stupidity and the latter abomination in the true worship of the eternal feminine which has genuinely received the power of God for all eternity and which has genuinely imbibed the plenitude of goodness and truth, and through them the incorruptible radiance of beauty”, *Stikhotvoreniya Vladimira Solov'yeva* (SPb.: Tip. M.M. Stasyulevicha, 1900), XIV-XV.

⁴⁸ It is unknown to which kind of comic (Russian) verse Soloviev refers to. However, it is quite remarkable that both philosophers, Boethius and Soloviev, prefer genres (comic or satiric) which are full of allegories and satirical commentaries when describe Philosophy’s (and Sophia’s) epiphany. According to another interpretation of this extract, Soloviev might imply here that philosophical language is insufficient to describe some realities, Nataliya A. Podzolkova, “Popytka strukturnogo analiza poeticheskikh obrazov Vl. Solov'yëva v kontekste postneklassicheskoy ratsional'nosti Kena Uilbera ”[An attempt on a structural analysis of the poetic images of Vl. Soloviev in the context of Ken Wilber’s post-nonclassical rationality] *Solov'yëvskiye issledovaniya* 36, no.4 (2012): 85.

mystic poetry, or maybe mysticism by itself, allowed Soloviev to be more free and playful when he is talking about Sophia as a vision. In front of us, there is no longer a philosophical theory, but a mystical fact of consciousness.⁴⁹

However, I think that this sophianic circle is wider than has been argued. I discern at least twenty six poems where Soloviev repeats or implies the same poetic motives that can be traced to the sophianic circle.⁵⁰ The repeated motives are expressed through specific titles ('Eternal Feminine', 'The Radiant Friend', 'Virgin of the Rainbow Gates'⁵¹) and vague

⁴⁹ "What is, what was, and what will be were here/Embraced within that one fixed gaze...The seas/And rivers all turned blue beneath me, as did/The distant forest and the snow-capped mountain heights./I saw it all, and all of it was one./One image there of beauty feminine.../The immeasurable was confined within that image./Before me, in me, you alone were there." (*Three Meetings*), Vladimir Solovyov, *The Religious Poetry of Vladimir Solovyov*, 105.

⁵⁰ I refer here to the following poems: '*Vis Ejus integra si versa fuerit in terram*', 'Shapelier and more beautiful', '*Fragment*', 'O, how much of pure azure there is', 'Having forgotten visions of a former time', 'Mistress-Earth! To thee I bent my brow', 'Oh heavy dream! In a mob of speechless visions', 'Not by fate's will, not by the thought of people', 'Let early autumn have its laugh at me', 'The way was hard and long. At least our gazes thrilled', 'Something out of a fairy tale wafts in once more...', 'Strange whisper of unearthly words', '*On the Occasion of the Two of Us Falling from a Sleigh*', '*What Do People Live By?*', 'Three days I have not seen you, dearest angel', 'I was magnificent. The earthly crowd', 'I am not afraid of death. There is no need for life now', 'Long have there been no questions, and no need of speech', 'You and I were brought together', 'The day has been one of merciless busyness', 'O, what do all the words and speeches mean', 'I've come to love you, gentle beauty', '*Dreaming while awake*', 'I am illuminated by the smile of autumn', '*Das Ewig-Weibliche- Word of Admonishment to the Sea Demons*', '*Returning to the Same Place*'. It should be clarified that only the poems with italics were titled. For those which were untitled I use the first verse as a title. Vladimir Solovyov, *The Religious Poetry of Vladimir Solovyov*, ed. and trans. Boris Jakim and Laury Magnus (USA: Semantron Press, 2014), 16, 18, 20-21, 23, 30-31, 33-34, 40-43, 47, 49, 51-52, 64, 68, 77-78, 81-83, 86-87.

⁵¹ This verse belongs to the poem *The Nile Delta* (14 April 1898), which is full of Gnostic connotations, *ibid.*, 83-84. In this poem, Soloviev speaks of the resurrection of man by the power of Eternal Feminine, Valeriy Yakovlevich Bryusov, "Vladimir Solov'yev. Smysl ego poezii" ["Vladimir Soloviev. The Meaning of his Poetry"], in *Stat'i i retsenzii*.

nouns ('goddess', 'eternal beloved', 'mistress-earth', 'dearest angel', 'gentle beauty') which could be interpreted as an organic part of his erotic poems to his unrequited love affairs with Sofiya Khitrovo, Elizaveta Polivanova and Sofiya Mikhaylovno Martynova. It seems in these cases that Soloviev merges earthly images with the unearthly ideal, i.e., Eternal Feminine (or Sophia), in order to provide a complete vision of Her. Nevertheless, I think that it is more likely that these poems appeal to Sophia (or World Soul) since they contain a glimpse of her presence or the whole picture of her epiphany. Usually the poet associates her with 'golden azure eyes', 'mist', or 'shadow', being a part of his dreams, while in some cases he refers to her garments as a part of her divine presence.⁵² Moreover, the poet does not miss the opportunity to refer to the potential of the union with the divine world, the striving for syzygy which is Sophia's (and World Soul's) main calling in his philosophy.⁵³

In general, in his poetry Soloviev seems to find the way through the figure of Sophia to express the mysterious depths of the human spirit, those vague sensations that are experienced somewhere outside of consciousness. While in philosophy he seeks the Truth and the Good, as a poet he seeks the Beauty. Perhaps, he was trying to reach to a justification of the Beauty, which he tried to complete in *Krasota v prirode* [Beauty in Nature] (1889), *Obshchij smysl' iskusstva* [General Idea of Art] (1890), and in his unfinished work *Teoreticheskaya filosofiya* [Theoretical Philosophy] (1897-1899).⁵⁴ A valuable assistant for this goal is his philosophical lyricism, especially when he is trying to solve

Dalekiye i blizkiye [Articles and Reviews. Far and Near], vol. 6 (Moskva: Khudozhestvennaya literature, 1973), 67-69.

⁵² For instance in the poem 'My empress has a lofty palace' Soloviev speaks of her "radiant veil", Vladimir Solovyov, *The Religious Poetry of Vladimir Solovyov*, 13.

⁵³ Cioran sees even in Soloviev's 'water poems' ('Saimaa' [1894], 'Winter on the Saimaa' [1894]), which refer to the Finnish lake Saimaa during his staying in Finland, a connection to the World Soul, Cioran, *Vladimir Solov'ev and the Knighthood of the Divine Sophia*, 59.

⁵⁴ In this work Soloviev argues that human thought aims at the discovery of 'objective truth', while practical will aims at 'objective good', and feeling at 'objective beauty', *Teoreticheskaya filosofiya* SS IX: 87-169.

smoothly the antitheses between light and darkness, eternal and changeable, earth and stars, Time (evil) and Eternity (good). I think that beyond and above all these characteristics stands his own fear in front of the primordial principle of universe, chaos, which presumably could be identified with evil.⁵⁵

In regard to the second affinity, the elevation of human reasoning, Lady of Philosophy helps Boethius, with her treatment that she applies to him, to adopt a rational and responsible attitude, irrespective of the circumstances in which he is found and the unpredictable actions of Fortune. She demands from him a decent attitude to face death, entailed by the philosophical teachings with which he was educated.⁵⁶ From the second to the last book this approach by Lady of Philosophy to Boethius is translated into *consolatio* with the meaning of providing a series of rational arguments which aim to present the human being as rational mortal animal which is also immortal through and because of his intellect: “Indeed, human nature is such that a man surpasses other things only when he is aware that he does so. But that same human nature is reduced to being lower than the beasts if it ceases to know itself. Although it is the nature of other animals not to know themselves, such ignorance proves to be a vice in man.”⁵⁷ This divine or quasi-divine power of human reason is important for Boethius as a therapy of the soul or as a form of moral instruction through rational arguments. Besides, as he says: “Reason finds that what is laboured for without/can be discovered- from treasury within”.⁵⁸

A part of the restoration of human reasoning is attributed to love. For both philosophers, the reference to love’s power as a fundamental element of cosmic and human unity is a corollary of the elevation of human reasoning. In *De*

⁵⁵ Soloviev in an article addressed to Tyutchev, expresses this fear of chaos that lies in his poetry, O.V. Popova, “Kartina mira v filosofskoy lirike II poloviny XIX veka,” *Vestnik MGTU* 9, no. 1 (2006): 93.

⁵⁶ “Then you would not be damaging my work – but a man weaned on Eleatic and Academic philosophy?”, *Cons. Phil.*, Book I, 1, 7.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, Book II, 5, 49.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, Book III, metrum 11, 100.

consolatione philosophiae, love's unified power is presented twice: first, in Book II (metrum 8) where Boethius speaks of the stability of divine order and the harmony of the universe,⁵⁹ and second in Book IV (metrum 6) where love is eternally located somewhere between the evening and morning stars (Vesper and Lucifer accordingly), renewing, however, the eternal course.⁶⁰ In both cases, it is quite clear that Boethius chooses poetry instead of prose to express love's unifying power. This choice may be interpreted as a variety of his writing style (shifting from prose to poetry and vice versa) or, that his intention was to include the platonic perception of love (as a part of cosmic unity) in verses since the parts of prose refer mostly to the Stoic perception of life through moral virtues (fearlessness, justice, wisdom).⁶¹

In the case of *La Sophia*, the poetic figure in Soloviev's poetry converts into the sublimated truth, i.e., the incarnated Philosophy as Wisdom. In the first dialogue of *La Sophia*, she guides Soloviev in order to define universal religion.⁶² From the first lines of the first dialogue, Sophia characterizes Soloviev's visions of her as "childish fantasies", which could be interpreted as an attempt (or criticism) by Soloviev to

⁵⁹ "The sea's hungry waves/would devour the land-/if not for Love's bonds./Love from the sky commanding, /binds both earth and sea./If these reins are loosed,/loving falls to war-/this perfect engine running/would be wrecked./Loves weaves people, too,/knotting with sacred law./Love's worthiness dictates justice./O happy race of men!/If that Love which rules the heavens might also rule your hearts!", *ibid.*, Book II, metrum 8, 61-62.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, Book IV, metrum 6, 139-141.

⁶¹ Book IV is full of Stoic positions about life and in particular about the nature of evil, *ibid.*, Book IV, 2, especially 117-118. It is quite remarkable that Boethius and Soloviev are sharing almost the same existential denial of evil's nature. According to Boethius evil does not exist in a real and essential way (subsequently the highest Good (God) cannot do evil), and Soloviev removes from evil any metaphysical ability to transform our world because of its non-existence and its impotence to be in union with something else.

⁶² "La religion universelle est non seulement la synthèse positive de toutes les religions mais aussi la synthèse de la religion, de la philosophie et de la science, et puis après de la sphère spirituelle ou intérieure en général avec la sphère extérieure, avec la vie politique et sociale", Vladimir Soloviev, *La Sophia et les autres écrits français*, 5.

degrade not the visions per se, but mainly the ability of knowing her essence through them.⁶³ Or, maybe Soloviev implies that Sophia is not only a mystical figure which inspires him to write philosophy but a rational concept with specific principles whose role in *La Sophia* is to correct his cognitive faults. As Sophia says: “You can know me without doubt as a phenomenon [...] but only through my external manifestation,” adding that the phenomenon is not the being per se, but the specific relationship with her.⁶⁴ However, it seems that Soloviev wants to know, through the dialogue with her, not her essence, but the first principles of philosophy, i.e., the absolute principle, and the Universal Religion.⁶⁵ The impression from the first dialogue is that Soloviev holds the position of the student while Sophia holds that of the master.

In the second and third dialogues, this relationship slightly changes. The philosopher seems to grant Sophia more space to speak of deeper philosophical issues, such as the cause of the absolute principle, the spheres of Ideal, Intellect and Matter (as internal and psychic principle), and World Soul which unifies the ultimate universality with the distinctive individuality.⁶⁶ It seems that Sophia’s role in these dialogues is not to inspire Soloviev, but rather to bring the basis of his philosophy to a higher level. It is not by chance that Soloviev refers to Hegel when he speaks of the absolute principle while Sophia refers to Hegel when she speaks of the dialectic as a specific part of philosophy.⁶⁷ Although it seems that Sophia sounds more strict to him (“Your question is falsified both in its content and in its expression”), in general in these dialogues her relationship with the philosopher seems to be established on a more equal basis.⁶⁸

⁶³ Ibid., 3.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 6.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 8-9.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 12-18. In the dialogue written in Sorrento, the concession by Soloviev to Sophia turns to be absolute. The philosopher seems to keep silent in order to leave Sophia to speak of the cosmic and historic process.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 15.

⁶⁸ Several times Sophia says to the philosopher that he is right and she affirms his arguments on several philosophical issues, *ibid.*, 12, 16-17.



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τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ νοεῖν ἔστιν τε καὶ εἶναι