



**dia-noesis**

*A Journal of Philosophy*

τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ νοεῖν ἐστίν τε καὶ εἶναι  
(Parmenides, Fr. B. 3 DK)

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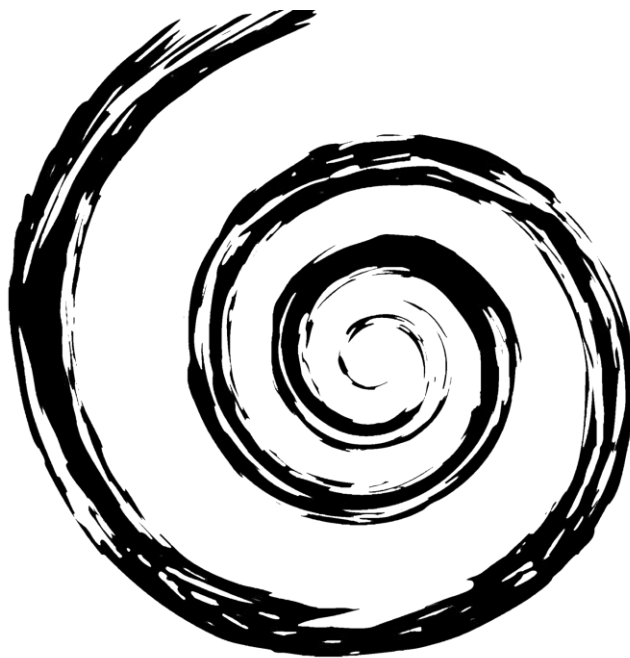
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# *Articles*







Imitation and learning  
Learning and pleasure  
Aristotle, *Poetics* 4

Vassilios Betsakos,  
Doctor of Philosophy,  
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

Why do we take delight in the artistic representation of people, things and acts which -when encountered in reality- cause us sorrow and horror?

Aristotle, *Poetics* I.4, 1448<sup>b</sup>4-19: Ἐοίκασι δὲ γεννηῆσαι μὲν ὅλως τὴν ποιητικὴν αἰτία διὰ δύο τινὲς καὶ αὗται φυσικαί. τό τε γὰρ μιμεῖσθαι σύμφυτον τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἐκ παίδων ἐστὶ καὶ τούτῳ διαφέρουσι τῶν ἄλλων ζώων ὅτι μιμητικώτατόν ἐστι καὶ τὰς μαθήσεις ποιεῖται διὰ μιμήσεως τὰς πρώτας, καὶ τὸ χαίρειν τοῖς μιμήμασι πάντας. σημεῖον δὲ τούτου τὸ συμβαῖνον ἐπὶ τῶν ἔργων: ἃ γὰρ αὐτὰ λυπηρῶς ὁρῶμεν, τούτων τὰς εἰκόνας τὰς μάλιστα ἡκριβωμένας χαίρομεν θεωροῦντες, οἷον θηρίων τε μορφὰς τῶν ἀτιμοτάτων καὶ νεκρῶν. αἴτιον δὲ καὶ τούτου, ὅτι μαρθάνειν οὐ μόνον τοῖς φιλοσόφοις ἥδιστον ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ὁμοίως, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ βραχὺ κοινωνοῦσιν αὐτοῦ. διὰ γὰρ τοῦτο χαίρουσι τὰς εἰκόνας ὁρῶντες, ὅτι συμβαίνει θεωροῦντας μαρθάνειν καὶ συλλογίζεσθαι τί ἕκαστον, οἷον ὅτι οὗτος ἐκεῖνος.

## 1. IMITATION

### 1.1. Introductory

The 4<sup>th</sup> chapter of Aristotle's *Poetics* refers to *μίμησις* (imitation), which for Aristotle is the essence of poetry. In the first three chapters the differences among the forms of imitation regarding the media, the objects and the modes of imitation have been developed<sup>1</sup>. In the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter Aristotle talks about the origin of poetry; it is his firm position that the origins of a thing reveal its deeper content; the nature of beings, as a process of their production, development and completion, is prescribed and revealed through their origins<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, the discussion about the origin of poetry completes and unifies the three previous chapters, as, having been clarified in them how mimesis is differentiated in genres, the need to highlight itself, per se, as the essence of every poetic genre<sup>3</sup> is derived. The adverb *ὅλως* in the topic sentence of the chapter (*εἰκόλασι δὲ γεννῆσαι μὲν ὅλως τὴν ποιητικὴν αἰτίαι δύο τινὲς καὶ αὗται φυσικαί*) makes clear that the description of mimesis that will follow concerns all poetic genres.

The use of the verb *εἰκόλασι* and its prioritization in the chapter highlight from the beginning the nature of the whole discussion: it is not going to be a historical description of

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<sup>1</sup> Aristotle, *Poetics*, I.1, 1447<sup>a</sup>13-18: *ἐποποιία δὴ καὶ ἡ τῆς τραγωδίας ποίησις ἔτι δὲ κωμῳδία καὶ ἡ διθυραμβοποιητικὴ καὶ τῆς αὐλητικῆς ἡ πλείστη καὶ κιθαριστικῆς πᾶσαι τυγχάνουσιν οὖσαι μιμήσεις τὸ σύνολον· διαφέρουσι δὲ ἀλλήλων τρισίν, ἥ γὰρ τῷ ἐν ἑτέροις μιμεῖσθαι ἢ τῷ ἑτέρα ἢ τῷ ἑτέρως καὶ μὴ τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον. See Iakov (2004), p. 65: "According to Aristotle, imitation (mimesis) is not the faithful, slavish copying and representation of reality, but the fictional construction (hence the word *poiesis*) of a project composed according to the rules of *εἰκότος* or *ἀναγκαίου* (Ch. 9)".*

<sup>2</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Z.8, 1033<sup>a</sup> 24-<sup>b</sup>19.

<sup>3</sup> This methodological preference of his, that is to start his research from the things *which are more knowable and obvious to us* (*γνωριμώτερα καὶ σαφέστερα ἡμῖν*) and proceed towards those *which are clearer and more knowable by nature* (*γνωριμώτερα καὶ σαφέστερα τῇ φύσει*) is stated by Aristotle in the preamble of his *Physics*

poetry's origin; the verb *ἔοικα* states that there will be an investigation of the phenomenon using logical criteria<sup>4</sup>, timelessly, in order for a plausible and reasonable description to emerge, which will have a theoretical nature (without by any means being disproved by the already existing objective facts and empirical material that Aristotle has gathered). Thus the philosopher is not, and could not possibly be, interested in the historical representation of poetry's origins.

### 1.2. Anthropological origin of poetry

The origin of poetry is grounded on two causes, which are both emphatically said to be natural. This may be an explicit differentiation from the belief that traces the poetic phenomenon to the beyond-human factor of divine rage, which is of course a view supported by Plato<sup>5</sup>. For Aristotle the origin of poetry is anthropological.

The emphasis given to the inherent nature of these causes creates a slight gap in the flow of the text: we would expect the philosopher to continue by naming explicitly each cause; instead the justification of the inborn nature of each cause is selected (a justification that, of course, functions indirectly as a juxtaposition of the two causes). The use of the conjunction *γὰρ* serves the double need for justification and clarification.

Imitation is inherent firstly as it is revealed by the fact that it is a human trait from childhood (*τό τε γὰρ μιμεῖσθαι σύμφυτον τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἐκ παίδων ἐστί*). This is a

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<sup>4</sup> Paul Feyerabend (1978) investigates and supports these forms of Aristotelian methodological choices, which he calls "Aristotelian common sense".

<sup>5</sup> An indicative formulation of this view is contained in Plato's *Ion*, 534<sup>a</sup>7-<sup>b</sup>7: *λέγουσι γὰρ δήπουθεν πρὸς ἡμᾶς οἱ ποιηταὶ ὅτι ἀπὸ κρηνῶν μελιρρύτων ἐκ Μουσῶν κήπων τινῶν καὶ ναπῶν δρεπόμενοι τὰ μέλη ἡμῖν φέρουσιν ὥσπερ αἱ μέλιτται, καὶ αὐτοὶ οὕτω πετόμενοι· καὶ ἀληθῆ λέγουσι. κοῦφον γὰρ χρῆμα ποιητῆς ἐστὶν καὶ πτηνὸν καὶ ἱερὸν, καὶ οὐ πρότερον οἷός τε ποιεῖν πρὶν ἢ ἐνθεὸς τε γένηται καὶ ἔκφρων καὶ ὁ νοῦς μηκέτι ἐν αὐτῷ ἐνῆ· ἕως δ' ἢ τοῦτ' ἔχῃ τὸ κτῆμα, ἀδύνατος πᾶς ποιεῖν ἀνθρώπος ἐστὶν καὶ χρησμοδεῖν.*

phenomenological argument that verifies the theoretical nature of the whole study. The demonstrativeness of the phrase seems to have been completed, but the expression *καὶ τούτῳ διαφέρουσι τῶν ἄλλων ζώων ὅτι μιμητικώτατόν ἐστι καὶ τὰς μαθήσεις ποιεῖται διὰ μιμήσεως τὰς πρώτας* is added. This addition will become fully understood only if its association with the inborn nature of imitation is shown.

First of all, we are obliged to see in the verb *διαφέρουσι* the strong nature of a technical term; and it is not about any difference, but rather about a structural difference. Besides, the emphatic placement of the pronoun *τούτῳ* in front of the verb *διαφέρουσι* stresses the uniqueness of this particular difference: what differentiates man from other living beings is the fact that the human imitates and, simultaneously, through imitation he is learning, he is acquiring his first knowledge. In other words, we have to face the phrase as a whole; it is not imitation on its own that distinguishes the human species (the philosopher does not say that anywhere else), but the connection of imitation with knowledge<sup>6</sup>.

How are all these connected, though, with the inherent nature of imitation? If the phrase *ἐκ παίδων* means that imitation ‘goes with’ the human, we can accept that *ἐκ παίδων* explains the prefix *σύν* in the word *σύμφυτον*; and that the phrase *καὶ τούτῳ διαφέρουσι...* explains the second part of the word, the *-φυτον*, as well. Imitation is a natural human characteristic, as its differentiation for the human species reveals. The phrase *ἐκ παίδων* would not be adequate on its own to raise imitation to nature; it would be possible for the imitation to be just an incident from an external source and not an element of human’s nature.

The second cause of the inborn capacity of mimesis is that the mimetic products give delight to everyone (*καὶ τὸ χαίρειν τοῖς μιμήμασι πάντας*). The emphasis falls on *πάντας* which is placed last in the ancient Greek sentence and not in its ‘normal’ position, since the delight offered by imitation has a

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<sup>6</sup> See also Aristotle, *Problems* 956<sup>a</sup>14: *ὅτι μιμητικώτατον* (mean. *ὁ ἄνθρωπος*): *μανθάνειν γὰρ δύναται διὰ τοῦτο*.

universal character among people; it is an element of their nature.

Certainly this second argument of imitation's naturalness is not as firmly supported on self-implied assumptions, at least compared to the first one. Therefore, in order to reinforce it, Aristotle adds some evidence [σημεῖον]<sup>7</sup>: even when people are in front of images or representations of sad things, they feel delight to the extent that these images or representations are well-made and realistic (μάλιστα ἡκριβωμέναι<sup>8</sup>).

Before we study the σημεῖον and its explanation in detail (this will be the main part of this article), let us see how the forenamed problem of the inherent nature of imitation<sup>9</sup> comes to an end.

Firstly, the word πάντα is indirectly justified with the use of the first person plural (ὁρῶμεν, χαίρομεν). Then, the delight that poetry offers is raised to human nature with the insertion of μανθάνειν. As the imitation itself has been connected with learning in order to be an undeniable human characteristic, the same applies to the delight that imitation offers, it is connected to learning in order to be attributed in turn to human nature.

There is indirect reference during the explanation of the σημεῖον to the underlying assumption that man is the living being that is able to learn; αἷτιον δὲ καὶ τούτου, ὅτι μανθάνειν οὐ μόνον τοῖς φιλοσόφοις ἡδιστον ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς

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<sup>7</sup> Aristotle, *Prior Analytics*, II.9 70<sup>a</sup>7-10: σημεῖον δὲ βούλεται εἶναι πρότασις ἀποδεικτικὴ ἀναγκαία ἢ ἔνδοξος· οὐ γὰρ ὄντος ἔστιν ἢ οὐ γενομένου πρότερον ἢ ὕστερον γέγονε τὸ πρᾶγμα, τοῦτο σημεῖόν ἐστι τοῦ γεγονέναι ἢ εἶναι.

<sup>8</sup> Detailed analysis of the phrase: Kyrkos (1972), p. 98, footnote. 1: "Mit Genauigkeit (ἀκρίβεια) und Exaktheit gearbeitet. Der Wortsinn bei Herodot (2, 78): μεμιμημένον ἐς τὰ μάλιστα bringt uns ganz auf den Sinn dieser Stelle τὰς μάλιστα ἡκριβωμένας". See also, Kurz (1973): 475-479.

<sup>9</sup> On this subject the commentary of Ramfos (1992) is interesting, p. 113: "The fourth chapter introduces as a final cause a natural cause, playing the role of a poetic cause as well; which means that Aristotle understands the mimetic product (*mimema*) as a biological organization which is born, developed and matured and not as an artificial structure, constantly dependent on its physical creator".

ἄλλοις ὁμοίως. The additive καὶ in the above sentence stresses that we have reached a second level of justification.

Summarizing the data up to now, we can say that in the first part of the fourth chapter (1448b4-19) there is a bilateral justification of the inherent nature of imitation. On the one hand the production of poetry is indirectly justified: all humans imitate and are potential poets; on the other hand, the reception of poetry is justified: everyone is happy with imitation and is a potential audience of poetry. None of these two causes would be adequate on its own in order for poetry to be born and to exist.

In line 19 the first part of the chapter is completed. It has become clear that poetry is imitation; however the reverse does not apply, as imitation does not become necessarily poetry, unless there are grounds for it. Thus, in the second part, primary reference is given to ῥυθμὸν and ἁρμονίαν and to the talented people who, through improvisation, ἐγέννησαν poetry<sup>10</sup>.

We saw how the σημεῖον functions in the broader adhesion of the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter. Now we can move on to its detailed examination and to the interpretative problems that arise.

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<sup>10</sup> Some scholars detect specifically in the following part of the text (1448<sup>b</sup>19-24) the second natural cause of the origin of poetry, considering that the whole reference to imitation and to the pleasure it causes is the first cause. This view, on the one hand, has the advantage of keeping closer to the meaning of the introductory phrase of the chapter (γεννησάμεν ὅλως την ποιητικὴν), namely that there is indeed reference to the creation of poetry and not to the naturalness of imitation. On the other hand, though, there are disadvantages which have to do with the structure of the text, as, with the above interpretation, the second cause is considerably moving away from the first one and it is not sufficiently connected to it either grammatically-syntactically or conceptually. Kyrkos (1972), p. 66: "Im 4. Kapitel der Poetik versucht Aristoteles, die Poesie auf den natürlichen Mimesistrieb zurückzuführen und zugleich den Ursprung der Kunst zu bestimmen. Es führt sie auf zwei notwendig miteinander verbundene Ursachen zurück: Erstens auf den von der Natur angebotenen Mimesistrieb des Menschen und die daran anknüpfende Freude am μιμεῖσθαι, und zweitens auf den ebenso natürlichen Harmonie-und Rhythmustrieb des Menschen". Also, Else (1957), p.127.

### 1.3 The *σημεῖον* (1448b9-12) and its explanation (b12-17)

ἃ γὰρ αὐτὰ λυπηρῶς ὁρῶμεν, τούτων τὰς εἰκόνας τὰς μάλιστα ἡκριβωμένας χαίρομεν θεωροῦντες, οἷον θηρίων τε μορφὰς τῶν ἀτιμοτάτων καὶ νεκρῶν. While the sight of certain things is accompanied by sorrow, the vision of their images (the most life-like/realistic, the better) causes delight, as, for example, the representations of the most repulsive beasts and of the deceased.

The phrase *λυπηρῶς ὁρῶμεν* is used for people's attitude towards reality; the phrase *χαίρομεν θεωροῦντες* for their attitude towards images. The different perspective<sup>11</sup> of the two cases is obvious: while we approach reality with sight, we perceive the images with contemplation, which is, of course, a wider concept, as it includes both the sense (sight) and its logical processing. The verb *ὁρῶμεν* places the human within reality, whereas *θεωροῦμεν*<sup>12</sup> across its representation.

There is yet another difference between the two sentences; in the phrase *ὁρῶμεν λυπηρῶς* the fact and the act of the sense (of sight) is expressed with a verb and is accompanied with the modal adverb of the emotion (sorrow); in the phrase *χαίρομεν θεωροῦντες*, the fact and the act of the sense (contemplation) is expressed with a participle, whilst with the verb the emotion (delight) is expressed. The above differentiation allows the necessary emphasis to be given to the desideratum, *τὸ χαίρειν τοῖς μιμήμασι πάντας*. Definitely, though, with the participial phrase the more active attitude of the subject of observation becomes obvious as well; if, in other words, the induction of the emotion of sorrow towards reality is almost automatic, it can also be accepted that the

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<sup>11</sup> On the different ways in which the spectator watches a tragedy, there is an interesting view by Belfiore (1985) where the following is stated a well: "we can view tragedy: 1. *qua* artifact that does not represent anything (*qua* clothes and not costumes), 2. *qua* people weeping, doing certain actions, etc., 3. *qua* likeness, as actors representing people weeping, etc.". Also, Halliwell (1992), p. 244.

<sup>12</sup> On the instructive role of poetry see Croally (1994), especially the chapter "The didactic production" of the first part of the study.

induction of the feeling of delight towards the images is mediated by the active participation of the subject<sup>13</sup>.

The infinitive *μανθάνειν* comes to reveal the form of this action. We would expect perhaps, if the discourse were less dense, for it to be said definitively that what is mediated is learning; this does not happen, due to the fact that the verb *θεωρῶ* on its own includes the cognitive function.

As the text progresses, the connection between learning and pleasure is justified in turn (this is the meaning of the additive *καί*); *αἴτιον δὲ καὶ τούτου, ὅτι μανθάνειν οὐ μόνον τοῖς φιλοσόφοις ἡδιστον ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ὁμοίως, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ βραχὺ κοινωνοῦσιν αὐτοῦ*. Since with the *ἐπὶ βραχὺ*<sup>14</sup> a distinction between the philosophers and the rest of the people is added, we should probably accept that the adverb *ὁμοίως* here introduces comparison and not identification; if

<sup>13</sup> We are led to this interpretation by the following: Aristotle's *Protrepticus*, 88, 1-8: *Ἔτι τοίνυν ἕτερόν ἐστιν τὸ ἡδόμενον πίνειν καὶ τὸ ἡδέως πίνειν· οὐδὲν γὰρ κωλύει μὴ διψῶντά τινα μηδ' οἷω χαίρει πόματι προσφερόμενον πίνοντα χαίρειν, μὴ τῷ πίνειν ἀλλὰ τῷ συμβαίνειν ἅμα θεωρεῖν ἢ θεωρεῖσθαι καθήμενον. οὐκοῦν τοῦτον ἡδεσθαι μὲν καὶ ἡδόμενον πίνειν φήσομεν, ἀλλ' οὐ τῷ πίνειν οὐδ' ἡδέως πίνειν. οὐκοῦν οὕτως καὶ βάδισιν καὶ καθεῖδραν καὶ μάθησιν καὶ πᾶσαν κίνησιν ἐροῦμεν ἡδεῖαν ἢ λυπηράν, οὐχ ὅσων συμβαίνει λυπεῖσθαι παρούσων ἡμᾶς ἢ χαίρειν, ἀλλ' ὧν τῇ παρουσίᾳ καὶ λυπούμεθα πάντες καὶ χαίρομεν.*

<sup>14</sup> For the phrase *ἐπὶ βραχὺ* several interpretations have been proposed; it can be understood either as a quantitative or a qualitative or even as a time qualifier. The same phrase is twice met in the Aristotelian corpus: *History of Animals*, II.11 503<sup>a</sup>25-29: *Ἐπὶ βραχὺ δὲ καὶ τούτων τῶν μερῶν ἕκαστον διήρηται εἰς τινὰς δακτύλους, τῶν μὲν ἔμπροσθεν ποδῶν τὰ μὲν πρὸς αὐτὸν τρίχα, τὰ δ' ἐκτὸς δίχα, τῶν δ' ὀπισθίων τὰ μὲν πρὸς αὐτὸν δίχα, τὰ δ' ἐκτὸς τρίχα. Also: *Movement of Animals*, 711<sup>b</sup>22-27: *τῶν δ' ὀπισθεν σκελῶν εἰ μὲν ἦν εἰς τὸ ἔμπροσθεν ἡ κάμψις, τῶν ποδῶν ὁ μετεωρισμός ὁμοίως ἂν αὐτοῖς εἶχε τοῖς προσθίοις ἐπὶ βραχὺ γὰρ ἂν ἐγίγνετο καὶ τούτοις κατὰ τὴν ἄρσιν τῶν σκελῶν, τοῦ τε μηροῦ καὶ τῆς καμπῆς ἀμφοτέρων ὑπὸ τὸν τῆς γαστρὸς τόπον ὑποπιπτόντων.* It is obvious that in both these extracts the phrase has a time content; if the same applies to the *Poetics*, the phrase means that simple men differ from philosophers in the fact that they do not always and constantly turn to learning, although, whenever this happens, it causes pleasure to them.*



for the philosophers *μανθάνειν* is *ἡδιστον*<sup>15</sup>, for the rest of the people the pleasure would be at least *ἡδύ*.

The directly following sentence (*διὰ γὰρ τοῦτο χαίρουσι τὰς εἰκόνας ὁρῶντες, ὅτι συμβαίνει θεωροῦντας μανθάνειν καὶ συλλογίζεσθαι τί ἕκαστον, οἷον ὅτι οὗτος ἐκεῖνος*) is connected with *γάρ*; it does not form, however, a subsequent level of justification, as it just repeats illustratively the already given connection between learning and pleasure; it is an effort to clarify the meaning of *μανθάνειν*. This clarification has caused many interpretative problems and many opinions concerning its meaning have been proposed. In the next chapter these very problems will be presented as well as these aspects: What does *μανθάνειν* mean, what type of learning is it about? What does *συλλογίζεσθαι* mean, is it used as a technical term? What is the relation between *μανθάνειν* and *συλλογίζεσθαι*? How intensely does the typical question *τί ἕκαστον (ἐστίν)* maintain its technical philosophical nature? Lastly, how does the phrase *οὗτος ἐκεῖνος* function by example, to what do *οὗτος* and *ἐκεῖνος* correspond and how are they related?

## 2. LEARNING

In Plato's *Euthydemus*, there is a broad reference to the meaning of the verb *μανθάνω*; according to it, the verb *μανθάνω* can in cases be used *ἐπειδὴν ἔχων ἤδη τὴν ἐπιστήμην ταύτη τῇ ἐπιστήμῃ ταυτὸν τοῦτο πράγμα ἐπισκοπῇ ἢ πραττόμενον ἢ λεγόμενον. μᾶλλον μὲν αὐτὸ ξυνιέναι καλοῦ-*

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<sup>15</sup> See also Aristotle, *Parts of Animals*, I.5 645<sup>a</sup>7-15: *καὶ γὰρ ἐν τοῖς μὴ κεχαρισμένοις αὐτῶν πρὸς τὴν αἴσθησιν κατὰ τὴν θεωρίαν ὅμως ἡ δημιουργήσασα φύσις ἀμηχάνους ἡδονὰς παρέχει τοῖς δυναμένοις τὰς αἰτίας γνωρίζειν καὶ φύσει φιλοσόφους. καὶ γὰρ ἂν εἴη παράλογον καὶ ἄτοπον, εἰ τὰς μὲν εἰκόνας αὐτῶν θεωροῦντες χαίρομεν ὅτι τὴν δημιουργήσασαν τέχνην συνθεωροῦμεν, οἷον τὴν γραφικὴν ἢ πλαστικὴν, αὐτῶν δὲ τῶν φύσει συνεστώτων μὴ μᾶλλον ἀγαπῶμεν τὴν θεωρίαν, δυνάμενοί γε τὰς αἰτίας καθορᾶν. Interesting comments on the above section relating to the *Poetics* in Sifakis (1986), p. 214-215.*

σιν ἢ μανθάνειν, ἔστιν δ' ὅτε καὶ μανθάνειν.<sup>16</sup> The verb *μανθάνω*, in other words, reveals that the cognitive process is inductive, that a single case is recognised as what it is and it is integrated into its established-in-advance category.

This function of induction and recognition that is stated with the verb *μανθάνω* is presented clearly in two extracts from the (pseudo)-Aristotelian *Problems*: *ῥᾶον δὲ διὰ τῶν παραδειγμάτων καὶ τῶν λόγων μανθάνουσιν· ἃ γὰρ ἴσασι εἴστι ταῦτα καὶ ἐπὶ μέρους, τὰ δὲ ἐνθυμήματα ἀπόδειξις ἐστὶν ἐκ τῶν καθόλου, ἃ ἥττον ἴσμεν ἢ τὰ μέρη*<sup>17</sup>.

Based on the polarity *καθ' ἕκαστον/καθόλου* a learning process established on pre-existing knowledge is described. In the second extract there is explicit use of the verb *ἀναγνωρίζω*, which in fact coincides with *χρησθαι τήν ἐπιστήμην*: *διὰ τί ἥδιον ἀκούουσιν ἀδόντων ὅσα ἂν προεπιστάμενοι τυγχάνουσιν τῶν μελῶν, ἢ ὧν μὴ ἐπίστανται; πότερον ὅτι μᾶλλον δῆλος ὁ τυγχάνων ὥσπερ σκοποῦ, ὅταν γνωρίζωσι τὸ ἀδόμενον; τοῦτο δὲ ἡδὺ θεωρεῖν, ἢ ὅτι {τὸ θεωρεῖν μᾶλλον} ἡδὺ {ἢ} τὸ μανθάνειν; τοῦτο δ' αἴτιον ὅτι τὸ μὲν λαμβάνειν τὴν ἐπιστήμην, τὸ δὲ χρησθαι καὶ ἀναγνωρίζειν ἐστίν.*<sup>18</sup> For Aristotle, the cognitive approach of *καθ' ἕκαστον* is not possible, except for using some given knowledge as a tool.

Summarizing, then, we are saying that the use of the verb *μανθάνω* requires recognition of the general on the partial as well as pre-existing knowledge. However, before seeing and evaluating more broadly, based on the above opinion, the meaning of learning<sup>19</sup> as a bridge between imitation and pleasure, we should also investigate the use of the verb *συλλογίζομαι*.

<sup>16</sup> Plato, *Euthydemus*, 278<sup>a</sup>1-5.

<sup>17</sup> Aristotle, *Problems*, 916<sup>b</sup>30-34.

<sup>18</sup> Aristotle, *Problems*, 918<sup>a</sup>3-8.

<sup>19</sup> Aristotle examines, at least in the 4th chapter, the phenomenon of poetry as a cognitive-theoretical problem and not as an aesthetic problem. See Kyrkos (1972), p.101: "Im Rahmen der Wissensfrage, ... ist bei Plato wie auch bei Aristoteles eine Diskussion über die Dichtung und generell die Kunst möglich, und nicht im Zusammenhang einer Ästhetik".

Many opinions have been expressed about which sense this verb is used with; some scholars believe that in this verb we should see the whole carriage of the technical term *συλλογισμός*, while others that it is just a judgement verb<sup>20</sup>.

Possibly, the verb *συλλογίζομαι* extends the specialized meaning of the verb *μανθάνω*. In this way its use as a technical term also becomes tenable, with the meaning being clarified in the Aristotelian definition of *συλλογισμός*: *συλλογισμός δέ ἐστι λόγος ἐνῷ τεθέντων τινῶν ἕτερόν τι τῶν κειμένων ἐξ ἀνάγκης συμβαίνει τῷ ταῦτα εἶναι. λέγω δὲ τῷ ταῦτα εἶναι τὸ διὰ ταῦτα συμβαίνειν, τὸ δὲ διὰ ταῦτα συμβαίνειν τὸ μηδενὸς ἕξωθεν ὅρου προσδεῖν πρὸς τὸ γενέσθαι τὸ ἀναγκαῖον*<sup>21</sup>. The initiation of *συλλογισμός* from some data, some pre-existing knowledge, is obvious; what does *συλλογίζεσθαι* add to *μανθάνειν* though? According to the above definition, in order to have a *συλλογισμός*, an assertion (*ταῦτα εἶναι*) should precede. However, as we saw, this exact function of equation is put through the verb *μανθάνω*. *Μανθάνειν* raises the part to the whole, whilst *συλλογίζεσθαι*, in the form of a conclusion, adds to this part the characteristics of the whole in which it has been integrated.

Based on the above, we can move on to the interpretation of the phrase *τί ἕκαστον*<sup>22</sup>. Syntactically, *τί ἕκαστον* can be an object either to *συλλογίζεσθαι* or to the whole *μανθάνειν*

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<sup>20</sup> For example, Montmollin (1951), p. 204, fn. 35, believes that the verb means “infer by syllogistic reasoning”. Also, Sifakis (1986), p. 215: “I suggest, therefore, that *syllogizesthai* does not simply mean «consider» or «reflect» but «draw a logical conclusion from certain premises”. The opposite view is supported in the statements of Lucas (1968), p. 72 and Else (1957), p. 130. On the meaning of *συλλογίζεσθαι* see also: Lear (1988), p. 307, fn. 43.

<sup>21</sup> Aristotle, *Prior Analytics*, I.1 24<sup>b</sup>19-23.

<sup>22</sup> Sifakis (1986, p. 217) makes an insightful analysis in order to specify the meaning of the two pronouns: “Aristotle uses the noun *μίμημα* in the sense “the imitating (art)”, the transitive participle *μεμιμημένον* (at *Rhet.* 1371<sup>b</sup>6) to mean two different things: the image or likeness of the thing imitated or depicted by the work of art and the imitating thing itself, the model of representation, which has an independent existence in reality”.

καί συλλογίζεσθαι. In both cases, ἕκαστον expresses whatever is in front of, or whatever is contemplated by the observer of the representational products (τὰς εἰκόνας); the pronoun τί, on the contrary, as a predicate to ἕκαστον, would express all the characteristics that can be given to ἕκαστον.

Some scholars, considering τί ἕκαστον as an exclusive syntactic supplement of συλλογίζεσθαι, and given the technical meaning of the typical question τί (ἐστι) ἕκαστον, assume that τί points to the gender of the subject. In this way, they connect the essential cognitive process described in the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter, with everything said in the 9<sup>th</sup> chapter on the ability of the poetic art to approach the whole (καθόλου) (as opposed to the science of history, which is attached to the καθ' ἕκαστον)<sup>23</sup>. This linking, though, of the pronoun τί with καθόλου barely coincides with the example that follows in the text (οἶον ὅτι οὗτος ἐκεῖνος). For this reason some of the above scholars are obliged to give to the demonstrative pronoun οὗτος the meaning of τοιούτος, which at this point seems to infringe the text's data.

In the event that we accept, though, that the phrase τί ἕκαστον is a common object to the whole μανθάνειν καί συλλογίζεσθαι, we interpret it broadly in relation to the use of the pronoun τί; the predicate τί could in this way function as a pronoun for both nouns and adjectives; for nouns due to the identifying and matching function of μανθάνειν; for adjectives (ergo for καθόλου) due to the logical function of συλλογίζεσθαι.

The above interpretation of τί ἕκαστον includes on the one hand the technical understanding of the typical question τί ἐστίν (and consequently refers to the function of poetry in relation to καθόλου), and on the other, it simplifies the understanding of οὗτος ἐκεῖνος as an example of the identifying function of μανθάνω, indicative for only one

<sup>23</sup> Aristotle, *Poetics*, I.7 1451<sup>b</sup>5-11: διὸ καὶ φιλοσοφώτερον καὶ σπουδαιότερον ποίησις ἱστορίας ἐστίν· ἡ μὲν γὰρ ποίησις μᾶλλον τὰ καθόλου, ἡ δ' ἱστορία τὰ καθ' ἕκαστον λέγει. ἔστιν δὲ καθόλου μὲν, τῷ ποίῳ τὰ ποῖα ἅττα συμβαίνει λέγειν ἢ πράττειν κατὰ τὸ εἶκος ἢ τὸ ἀναγκαῖον, οὗ στοχάζεται ἡ ποίησις ὀνόματα ἐπιτιθεμένη· τὸ δὲ καθ' ἕκαστον, τί Ἀλκιβιάδης ἔπραξεν ἢ τί ἔπαθεν.

function (out of many others) of *μανθάνειν καὶ συλλογίζεσθαι τί ἕκαστον*. Understanding, therefore, *οὗτος ἐκεῖνος* in its limited indicative exemplary function, we can accept that Aristotle reserves to the poetic imitation not only the ability of representation, but also a broad instructional function. In this way, the problem of many scholars who consider the process of recognition as inconsiderable learning is overcome as well<sup>24</sup>. The fact that the phrase *οὗτος ἐκεῖνος* follows the syntactic form of *τί ἕκαστον* (*οὗτος* corresponds to *ἕκαστον* whilst *ἐκεῖνος* to *τί*) does not mean that it functions as an example for the whole range of categoric correspondences between *ἕκαστον* and *τί*.

However, in order to be able to have a more complete opinion about the example *οὗτος ἐκεῖνος*, we should take into consideration the passage from the *Rhetoric* as well: *ἐπεὶ δὲ τὸ μανθάνειν τε ἡδὺ καὶ τὸ θαυμάζειν, καὶ τὰ τοιάδε ἀνάγκη ἡδέα εἶναι, οἷον τό τε μιμούμενον, ὥσπερ γραφικὴ καὶ ἀνδριαντοποιία καὶ ποιητικὴ, καὶ πᾶν ὃ ἂν εὖ μεμιμημένον ᾗ, καὶ ἢ μὴ ἡδὺ αὐτὸ τὸ μεμιμημένον· οὐ γὰρ ἐπὶ τούτῳ χαίρει, ἀλλὰ συλλογισμὸς ἔστιν ὅτι τοῦτο ἐκεῖνο, ὥστε μανθάνειν τι συμβαίνει*<sup>25</sup>.

In this passage there is an elaboration (similar to the instruction of the *Poetics*) on the ability of poetry to reverse the feelings of reality. Here, we will stress only the following: the above passage is the ending of a proof that *μανθάνειν* (in the broad sense of the word) is *ἡδὺ*, and functions with this exact prerequisite. Hence, we should not consider that *συλλογισμὸς* in this passage runs out in *τοῦτο ἐκεῖνο*; on the contrary, this is the assertion (*τῷ ταῦτα εἶναι*) from which *συλλογισμὸς* is induced,<sup>26</sup> the essential context of which is introduced with the deductive *ὥστε*.

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<sup>24</sup> E.g., Lucas (1968), p. 72: “when we have learnt what already familiar thing a picture represents we have not learnt much”. On the contrary, the escalation of the poetic learning is accepted by Kannicht (1986), p. 74.

<sup>25</sup> Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, I.11 1371<sup>b</sup>4-10.

<sup>26</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, M.4 1078<sup>b</sup>24: *ἀρχὴ τῶν συλλογισμῶν τὸ τί ἐστίν*.

From the concluding sentence of the first part of chapter 4, we would comment only on the phrase *ἐπεὶ ἐὰν μὴ τύχη προεωρακώς*. The verb *προορῶ* obviously refers to the given knowledge that *μανθάνειν καὶ συλλογίζεσθαι* require. The necessity of this pre-existing knowledge is so obvious that it is not even stated clearly on its own, but with the slightly blunt *ἐπεὶ ἐὰν μὴ τύχη προεωρακώς* it is directly discussed what happens when such knowledge is absent.

As we saw, in the first part of the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter Aristotle insists on supporting the anthropological origins of poetry using as a main argument the attribution of imitation to human nature. The key to this attribution is the mediation of learning; imitation itself offers humans their first knowledge, while the pleasure caused by imitation is the pleasure of a cognitive process.

What knowledge does this process offer, though? What does the *θεωρῶν τὰς εἰκόνας*, learn?

It is known that the ancient spectator of tragedy has a grasp of the mythological substances; he is aware of characters and deeds, of the gods and the heroes, of the cities and the locations, of the primogenitors and the family members that play a leading role in the great mythological circles and, lastly, he knows the important facts determining the characters' fate, but he is also informed about a large number of, often mutually contradictory, non-essential details. Thus, as a spectator of a particular tragedy which redevelops the entire or part of this material, he retrieves in his memory this given knowledge and information, he recognizes on stage primarily the people he has certainly heard about several times since childhood (or seen in other tragedies and performances) acting in this particular mythical narrative.

Certainly, this recognition is almost automatic and it does not constitute learning on its own. However the *θεωρῶν* does not linger on *μανθάνειν*; in front of him he no longer has a static, easily recognizable material, but he has *πράττοντας*, acting people; in front of him a process is being unfolded, the myth and the *systasis* of the events as they have been structured by the particular poet. Each of the characters and

deeds, the facts and the misfortunes, falls into place during the flow of the myth. The *θεωρῶν* now speculates on *τί ἕκαστον*, which is the role of each element within the probable development of the story.

We saw in the definition of *συλλογισμός* that *τί* means *διὰ τί*. This is exactly what is realized by the particular myth of the particular poet, that is the causative connection of the events. The identifying function, therefore, is not exhausted in the identification of what is happening on stage with the pre-given information; the spectator recognizes also in what is happening on stage the universal causative associations that govern his own everyday life (of course insofar as it is about *τάς εἰκόνας τὰς μάλιστα ἡκριβωμένας*). In this regard, he resembles at times (as, by recognizing *καθόλου*, he experiences admiration and *ἐκπληξιν*) the philosophers who are permanent owners of this universality.

Poetry makes its spectator a participant to *καθόλου*, by isolating and revealing, in the various and contradictory *καθ' ἕκαστα* of the story and of the mythological material, the thread that connects them, recasting them into a well-made myth according to *εἰκὸς καὶ ἀναγκαῖον*. It would be completely unnatural to confine the meaning of *τί ἕκαστον*, namely what the spectator is learning, in the recognition of the genus of some concepts. The spectator stands in front of a reality which he wants to be clearer than the incoherent everyday life. We are not in position to pettily limit his surprise in the discovery of this transparency only to the technical philosophical division of the genus species<sup>27</sup>.

What is still remarkable, though, in the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter, is the almost total absence of particular opinions regarding what the spectator of the tragedy is learning concerning the very object of the knowledge he is acquiring. The explanations

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<sup>27</sup> Aristotle always functions at first empirically, records what he sees and his record is complex only to the extent of complexity that the clarity of his sight causes; he views the simple in its simplicity. We cannot accept that his views on the poetic phenomenon should be sophisticated. We should understand whatever he says in their greatest as well as insightful simplicity. Thus, any complex interpretations by most of the *Poetics*' scholars seem unsubstantiated.

that I can give are the following: first of all, in the following chapters some hints are not to be missed, especially in the chapter where poetry is compared to history; secondly, the transparent experience of the tragedy itself by Aristotle and his contemporaries, make the hints of *μανθάνειν καὶ συλλογίζεσθαι τί ἕκαστον*, which to us are incomplete, so adequate, that obvious clarifications are superfluous; thirdly, what is of importance for the philosopher here may not be so much what the spectator is learning but the very fact of learning.

### 3. LEARNING AND PLEASURE

As we saw, the second cause of poetry's origin is the delight that the mimetic products offer to all people. What is the nature of this delight (the Aristotelian term is *ἡδονή*) that poetry offers? Certainly it is not an aesthetic pleasure<sup>28</sup> in the sense that we attribute today to the enjoyment of the works of art, as something different from experiencing reality; the spectator of the tragedy experiences feelings of the same nature as the feelings he experiences facing reality as well<sup>29</sup>.

As it is clearly said in the *Poetics*: *διὰ γὰρ τοῦτο χαίρουσι τὰς εἰκόνας ὁρῶντες, ὅτι συμβαίνει θεωροῦντας μανθάνειν*, the pleasure that the mimetic product offers is the pleasure that learning offers to humans. The starting point of this cognitive pleasure is probably the joy of the senses, especially of vision: *σημεῖον δ' ἡ τῶν αἰσθήσεων ἀγάπησις: καὶ γὰρ*

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<sup>28</sup> See Kyrkos (1972), p. 100: "Aber die davon abgeleitete Freude ist hier nun secundaer als aesthetischer Genuß zu verstehen, vielmehr als die unverkennbare Freude am Wissen bzw. Wiederkennen". Also Belfiore (1985) p. 349: The pity and fear we experience while watching Oedipus the King are painful, just as they are in real life, and not different, pleasurable, aesthetic emotions".

<sup>29</sup> Aristotle, *Politics*, VIII.5 1340<sup>a</sup>23-28: *ὁ δ' ἐν τοῖς ὁμοίοις ἐθισμὸς τοῦ λυπεῖσθαι καὶ χαίρειν ἐγγύς ἐστι τῷ πρὸς τὴν ἀλήθειαν τὸν αὐτὸν ἔχειν τρόπον (οἷον εἴ τις χαίρει τὴν εἰκόνα τινὸς θεώμενος μὴ δι' ἄλλην αἰτίαν ἀλλὰ διὰ τὴν μορφὴν αὐτήν, ἀναγκαῖον τούτῳ καὶ αὐτοῦ ἐκείνου τὴν θεωρίαν, οὗ τὴν εἰκόνα θεωρεῖ, ἡδεῖαν εἶναι).*



χωρίς τῆς χρείας ἀγαπῶνται δι' αὐτάς, καὶ μάλιστα τῶν ἄλλων ἢ διὰ τῶν ὁμμάτων. οὐ γὰρ μόνον ἵνα πράττωμεν ἀλλὰ καὶ μηθὲν μέλλοντες πράττειν τὸ ὁρᾶν αἰρούμεθα ἀντὶ πάντων ὡς εἰπεῖν τῶν ἄλλων. αἷτιον δ' ὅτι μάλιστα ποιεῖ γνωρίζειν ἡμᾶς αὕτη τῶν αἰσθήσεων<sup>30</sup>. Consequently, since it originates from the senses, the delight of knowledge is traced to human nature itself.

The fact that the aforementioned position is common ground does not prevent Aristotle from investigating more deeply the nature of ἡδονή offered by knowledge. He considers that pleasure accompanies τὸ θαυμαστόν, as is shown in the following distinctive advice of *the Rhetoric*: διὸ δεῖ ποιεῖν ξένην τὴν διάλεκτον· θαυμάσται γὰρ τῶν ἀπόντων εἰσὶν· ἡδὺ δὲ τὸ θαυμαστόν ἐστίν<sup>31</sup>.

Certainly, the delight that admiration causes is an extension of the sensory starting point: ἐνία δὲ τέρπει καινὰ ὄντα, ὕστερον δὲ οὐχ ὁμοίως διὰ ταυτό· τὸ μὲν γὰρ πρῶτον παρακέκληται ἢ διάνοια καὶ διατεταμένως περὶ αὐτὰ ἐνεργεῖ, ὥσπερ κατὰ τὴν ὄψιν οἱ ἐμβλέποντες, μετέπειτα δ' οὐ τοιαύτη ἢ ἐνέργεια ἀλλὰ παρημελημένη· διὸ καὶ ἡ ἡδονὴ ἀμαυροῦται<sup>32</sup>. The wondering admiration becomes the first step for theory<sup>33</sup> and for knowledge: διὰ γὰρ τό θαυμάζειν οἱ ἄνθρωποι...ἤρξαντο φιλοσοφεῖν, ἐξ ἀρχῆς μὲν τὰ πρόχειρα τῶν ἀτόπων θαυμάσαντες, εἶτα κατὰ μικρὸν οὕτω προϊόντες καὶ περὶ τῶν μειζόνων διαπορήσαντες<sup>34</sup>.

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<sup>30</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, I.1 980<sup>a</sup>21-27.

<sup>31</sup> Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, III.10 1410<sup>b</sup>10-12.

<sup>32</sup> Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, X.4 1175<sup>a</sup>6-10.

<sup>33</sup> Mette (1961) has shown the etymological relation among the roots θεα- (θεῶμαι), θεωρ- (θεωρῶ), θαυμ- (θαυμάζω).

<sup>34</sup> Noteworthy commentary on the excerpt by M. Heidegger: "Es wäre sehr oberflächlich und vor allem ungrüchisch gedacht, wollten wir meinen, Platon und Aristoteles stellten hier nur fest, das Erstaunen sei die Ursache des Philosophierens. Wären sie dieser Meinung, dann hieße das: irgendeinmal erstaunten die Menschen, nämlich über das Seiende, darüber, daß es ist und was es ist. Von diesem Erstaunen angetrieben, begannen sie zu philosophieren. Sobald die Philosophie in Gang gekommen war, wurde das Erstaunen als Anstoß überflüssig, so daß es verschwand. Es konnte verschwinden, da es nur ein Antrieb war. Aber:

The link between admiration and cognitive pleasure is *ἐπιθυμία*: καὶ τὸ μανθάνειν καὶ τὸ θαυμάζειν ἡδὺ ὥς ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ· ἐν μὲν γὰρ τῷ θαυμάζειν τὸ ἐπιθυμεῖν μαθεῖν ἔστιν, ὥστε τὸ θαυμαστὸν ἐπιθυμητόν, as well as: ἐν ταῖς πλείσταις ἐπιθυμίαις ἀκολουθεῖ τις ἡδονή<sup>35</sup>. It is a conscious, rational *ἐπιθυμία*.

Therefore, the cognitive pleasure is attributed, at least at the beginning, to admiration. At this point it is not so much the pleasure from owning the knowledge nor from the future use of this knowledge, but the pleasure offered by the transition from conscious ignorance to knowledge itself: ὁ δ' ἀπορῶν καὶ θαυμάζων οἶεται ἀγνοεῖν... διὰ τὸ φεύγειν τὴν ἄγνοιαν ἐφιλοσόφησαν... διὰ τὸ εἰδέναι τὸ ἐπίστασθαι ἐδίωκον καὶ οὐ χρήσεώς τινος ἔνεκεν<sup>36</sup>. Wise is the man who can be raised from the part to the whole, because he is aware not merely of the *ὅτι* but also the *διότι*. Transitioning from ignorance to knowledge means discovering the causes.

Thus, a course has been created which starts from the joy of the senses and by means of delight and admiration reaches the pleasure of learning. This in turn functions as the final

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das Erstaunen ist ἀρχή es durchherrscht jeden Schritt der Philosophie. Das Erstaunen ist πάθος. Wir übersetzen πάθος Leidenschaft, Gefühlswallung. Aber πάθος hängt zusammen mit πάσχειν, leiden, erdulden, ertragen, austragen, sich tragen lassen von, sich be-stimmen lassen durch. Es ist gewagt, wie immer in solchen Fällen, wenn wir πάθος durch Stimmung übersetzen, womit wir die Gestimmtheit und Bestimmtheit meinen. Doch wir müssen diese Übersetzung wagen, weil sie allein uns davor bewahrt, πάθος in einem neuzeitlich-modernen Sinne psychologisch vorzustellen. Nur wenn wir πάθος als Stimmung (disposition) verstehen, können wir auch das θαυμάζειν, das Erstaunen näher kennzeichnen. Im Erstaunen halten wir an uns (être en arrêt). Wir treten gleichsam zurück vor dem Seienden - davor, daß es ist und so und nicht anders ist. Auch erschöpft sich das Erstaunen nicht in diesem Zurücktreteten vor dem Sein des Seienden, sondern es ist, als dieses Zurücktreteten und Ansichhalten, zugleich hingerissen zu dem und gleichsam gefesselt durch das, wovor es zurücktritt. So ist das Erstaunen die Dis-position, in der und für die das Sein des Seienden sich öffnet. Das Erstaunen ist die Stimmung, innerhalb derer den griechischen Philosophen das Entsprechen zum Sein des Seienden gewährt war".

<sup>35</sup> Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, I.11 1371<sup>a</sup>31-33 and I.11 370<sup>b</sup>15 respectively.

<sup>36</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, A.2 982<sup>b</sup> 17-21.

cause, about which new knowledge is constantly looked for: αἱ ἀπὸ τοῦ θεωρεῖν καὶ μανθάνειν (ἡδοναί) μᾶλλον ποιήσουσι θεωρεῖν καὶ μανθάνειν<sup>37</sup>. In this way, μανθάνειν becomes a constant act: καὶ ἕκαστος περὶ ταῦτα καὶ τούτοις ἐνεργεῖ ἃ καὶ μάλιστα ἄγαπᾷ, οἷον ὁ μὲν μουσικὸς τῇ ἀκοῇ περὶ τὰ μέλη, ὁ δὲ φιλομαθὴς τῇ διανοίᾳ περὶ τὰ θεωρήματα<sup>38</sup>. Finally, the constant act of μανθάνειν is accompanied by its own type of pleasure, its οἰκεία ἡδονή.

#### 4. THE PLEASURE OF LEARNING IN THE *POETICS*

The sensory arousal of passions caused by dramatic poetry is obvious. As we have seen, though, Aristotle insists on the cognitive nature of the delight that the mimetic product offers, which is an idea that cannot but seem alien to our modern minds<sup>39</sup>.

In *the Poetics* the principle τὸ δε θαυμαστὸν ἡδύ<sup>40</sup> becomes accepted as well. In the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter the concept of admiration is latent and its function is presumed. The admiration must be connected, at least partly, with the identifying action of μανθάνειν. This on its own does not constitute knowledge; it is just the correspondence of the imitated with its original, the solution of a riddle. The admiration in this case results from the accuracy with which the mimetic product is constructed and from the contemplation of the art that created it: θεωροῦντες χαίρομεν ὅτι τὴν δημιουργήσασαν τέχνην συνθεωροῦμεν<sup>41</sup>.

It is almost certain that the above learning process through admiring recognition is almost automatic, yet this enhances

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<sup>37</sup> Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, VII.12 1153<sup>a</sup>22-23.

<sup>38</sup> Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, X.4 1175<sup>a</sup>12-15.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. the valid comment of Sifakis (1986), p. 212: "That art is instructive by being pleasurable is also a proposition that would presumably raise no objection. But that art is pleasurable *because* it is instructive is a proposition that few people would find easy to accept".

<sup>40</sup> Aristotle, *Poetics*, I.24 1460<sup>a</sup>17.

<sup>41</sup> Aristotle, *On the Parts of Animals*, I.5 645<sup>a</sup>12-13.

the delight produced, exactly because it is an easy learning: τὸ γὰρ μανθάνειν ῥαδίως ἥδὲ φύσει πᾶσιν ἐστὶ<sup>42</sup>. Thus, poetry takes advantage firstly of the capacity, innate to all human beings, to take delight in easy learning.

Of course, it does not settle for this alone. We saw that admiration is the first step of the cognitive process, but also that this certainly moves further: it becomes a constant action accompanied by its familiar pleasure. In the same way, in the *Poetics*, the recognition and the automatic pleasure of μανθάνειν are accompanied by συλλογίζεσθαι τί ἕκαστον. The cognitive process, in other words, is completed with the full knowledge, which is the discovery of the causes. This also offers the special pleasure which is primarily referred to in the *Poetics*, the ἀπὸ τραγωδίας ἡδονήν, the one created by the σύστασιν τῶν πραγμάτων and relates to the πιθανόν and the δυνατόν κατὰ τὸ εἶκός καὶ τὸ ἀναγκαῖον, exactly because it investigates and reveals to necessarily active spectators the causative connections between deeds and facts.

We have already stressed that cognitive pleasure is grounded on human nature. For Aristotle (and for the whole of ancient Greek philosophy) φύσις is not static, it is a movement and a constant ἐνέργεια and verification. The constant action of μανθάνειν is exactly this verification of human nature. With the mediation of pleasure, which functions as the final cause of this action and which supports and broadens the learning process, the spectators of the tragedy reconfirm their sentient quality as beings that live and learn.

The above view results from what the *Rhetoric* says about ἡδονή in its 11<sup>th</sup> chapter. There Aristotle defines ἡδονή as κίνησιν τινα τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ κατάστασιν ἀθρόαν καὶ αἰσθητὴν εἰς τὴν ὑπάρχουσαν φύσιν... ἀνάγκη οὖν ἡδὲ εἶναι τό τε εἰς τὸ κατὰ φύσιν ἰέναι ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ, καὶ μάλιστα ὅταν ἀπειληφότα ᾗ τὴν ἑαυτῶν φύσιν τὰ κατ' αὐτὴν γιγνόμενα... . Learning is also said to cause pleasure for the same reason; ἐν δέ τῳ μανθάνειν <τό> εἰς κατὰ φύσιν καθίσταται<sup>43</sup>.

<sup>42</sup> Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, III.10 1410<sup>b</sup>10.

<sup>43</sup> Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, I.11 1369<sup>b</sup>33.

Therefore, poetry is pleasing because, by offering humans the scope to learn, it gives them the ability to verify their human quality through self-activity. An active life means sensing and learning: *δῆλον δὲ λαβοῦσι τί τὸ ζῆν τὸ κατ' ἐνέργειαν, καὶ ὡς τέλος. φανερόν οὖν ὅτι τὸ αἰσθάνεσθαι καὶ τὸ γνωρίζειν.* Life is indissolubly connected with learning: *ὥστε διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ζῆν ἀεὶ βούλεται, ὅτι βούλεται ἀεὶ γνωρίζειν*<sup>44</sup>.

If *the Poetics* is, at least to a certain extent, Aristotle's answer to the platonic exile of the poets, the function of reconfirmation of the human nature, which the Stagirite reserves for poetry, is his central argument against the moral disdain of *ἡδονή* by Plato. For Aristotle, the *ἡδονή* which imitation offers is considered worthy at a pre-moral level, it becomes the sincere and harmless joy of learning, the final cause to the activation of essential human functions.

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<sup>44</sup> Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics*, 1244b 23-24 καὶ 1245a 9 respectively.

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## On Rule Consciousness and Thought Reform

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Till now, the issue about the relationship between Rule Consciousness and Thought Reform has not come into the attention of scholars. However, it is of enormous value and significance to handle properly the relationship between Rule Consciousness and Thought Reform, for the development of people, society or nation. To handle properly such a relationship, it is first of all paramount to understand it. So, this paper tries to discuss Rule Consciousness, Thought Reform and their mutual relation in a philosophical perspective.

### 1. Rule Consciousness

What is Rule Consciousness? In order to illustrate this concept, we need to understand two relevant conceptions: rule and consciousness. What is rule? It is a form of rational or legal existence, and its main contents are summarized as follows: Firstly, it is a boundary or bottom line which can not only stipulate an action path, content, width and thickness for

subjective thinking, but also the scope, path, content and range for subjective action. Secondly, it is a yardstick which can standardize activities of subjective thinking and regulate a subject's actions. Thirdly, it is a kind of group ideology, which is a kind of prescriptiveness acknowledged by a specific community or group and thus it's a universality to standardize activities of subjective thinking and to regulate a subject's actions. Fourthly, it is a kind of local knowledge, which is a common ideological premise of association within members of a specific community or group. Lastly, it is an intermediary which establishes various organic connections among specific communities/groups, among members within a specific community/group, between specific a community/group and its members. Therefore, it must be the subjective one, and rule without any subjectivity is worthless and meaningless.

As thus, a particular rule must be a particular form that a particular subject needs. And a subjective rule is of subjectivity which can reflect the subjective need of the subject and also a kind of "Priori Overview". How can rule be established? Or, what is a complex process in establishing rule? The process itself is not important, yet the obtained results in establishing rule are extremely important, for many subjects. The obtained results are directly related to the process of people's existence and people's understanding of their existence, and so often become various expressions of a kind of "Priori Overview", or a kind of Kant's "thing- in -itself". In this case, either the existence of rule or rule in the existence may be influenced by the subject's subjective will more than by others. Like the relation within time and human being, "only in the original time consciousness can the connection between a present rebuilt and a past be established. A present river is the one that can experience its phase and has the same structure as any other river that is building its time, or is the one that is building its time. The total mapping and variation that are building the form of time can be found here"<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Husserl, Edmund. *Zur Phänomenologie Des Innren Zeitbwusstseins*. Tranlated by Niliangkang. Beijing: Commercial Press, 2009, pp. 84-85.



Likewise, while a specific society or nation needs rule, the existence of rule or rule in existence may be ripe. Once being built, rule will have its objectivity. If a particular society or nation has established its rule or a particular subject has understood the existence of rule, the established rule or the understood rule may become a regulation with an external compulsion or an inherent restriction to some extent and even a part of subject's existence. To make the established rule more universal or authoritative, it is necessary for a particular society or nation to strengthen the identification of understanding about rule in the light of law of para-position. It is this content that some natural phenomena can become counterparts or even signs of rule. The existence of various counterparts can make rule more universal, authoritative and objective.

Rule has various forms of expression: it is manifested as a law in the relationship between human and nature; it is manifested as a system, an institution, a mechanism, a disciplinary measure, a legal requirement, a moral ethics and so on, in the relationship between human and nation; it is manifested as a regulation, a convention, a disciplinary measure, an order and so on, in the relationship between human and a particular community; it is manifested as an inherent free will, or an inherent thought and action regulation, discipline restriction, moral constrain, ethical restraint, institutional restriction, system restraint, order restraint and so on, in the relationship among different people. It is the ontology of *order*, while order is its praxis. So it is of vital importance to the existence of people, society, nation and even the world.

What is consciousness? Marx thought: it only means "conscious of being" at any time, "and man's existence is his process of real lives"<sup>2</sup>. In this case, we can define the connotation of Rule Consciousness. Rule Consciousness is rule realized by the subject, or the consciousness of the subject on rationality or legality. Rule is the ontology and the cornerstone

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<sup>2</sup> Marx, K., and F. Engels. *Collected works of K.Marx and F.Engels*. Beijing: People's Publishing House, 2009, p. 525.

of Rule Consciousness while Rule Consciousness is the epistemology and a possible result of rule. Therefore, Rule Consciousness surely will not be produced without rule. Rule Consciousness will not be produced only in the appearance of rule. Therefore, the awakening of consciousness or rationality is an essential condition that can produce rule consciousness. So, the process from rule to Rule Consciousness is not a simple process rather than a process of improving continually subjective thoughts.

And then, what are the characteristics of Rule Consciousness? In the author's opinion, there are such four characteristics as follows: Firstly, subjectivity. Rule can only exist as an external existence while not being understood by subjects. Rule will exist as a self-consciousness while being understood and taken as an existence of self-negativity by subjects. The self-consciousness is not a self-consciousness that is different from someone's self and a unique consciousness owned by subject called as target rather than a kind of knowledge, "an intuition from self about self and a double absolute watching about self"<sup>3</sup>. Its certainties are universal subjects, and something being understood by it is the essence of rule. It is a universal self which includes both self's self and object's self. So, rule consciousness must show its subjectivity.

Secondly, stability. Rule Consciousness is a kind of knowledge that consciousness has been conscious of rule. The knowledge can be conscious of the existence of rule itself and some spiritual concrete in rule, and cognition about rule is spiritual. Rule consciousness and its world built by rule consciousness can only be subjective will, and the will must show a kind of stability. That is to say, the consciousness, as a kind of knowledge, must reflect a particular group or community. Once being established, it will produce a kind of sustainability to subject on its time. Thirdly, normativity. Once Rule Consciousness becomes the subject's existence itself as a kind of existence, the significance and value of rule will be

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<sup>3</sup> Hegel, G.W.F. *The phenomenology of mind* (Volume 2). Translated by Helin and Wangjiuxing. Beijing: Commercial Press, 1979, p. 130.

shown in the subject's cognition through the subject's self-consciousness. While being regarded as the subject's existence, Rule Consciousness will become the normativity of the subject's thought and action. Once becoming the subject's normativity, Rule Consciousness will be unrivaled. "Consciousness" "is the unique element by which spiritual essence or force can get its entities"<sup>4</sup>. Therefore, Rule Consciousness must have normativity.

Lastly, heritage. Rule Consciousness itself is a kind of knowledge which has its heritage. Though some partial contents may be updated or changed in the inheriting process, at least some others may be reserved because of human pragmatism.

## 2. Thought Reform

What is Thought Reform? In the author's opinion, it is a process in which the progressive thought can be realized through reforming irrational, ill-timed, illegal and unethical ways of thinking, and its results. The impetus or goal of Thought Reform is the progressive thought. A subjects' thoughts need get with the times. If the times and other various exterior conditions have changed, yet the subjects' thoughts have remained as before, in such circumstance, this state of mind will find it very difficult to grasp the pulse of the times and the tempo of society tightly, and this way of thinking will make it very difficult to realize the expectation in the process of guiding subjects' practical activities. Therefore, the progressive thought is essential and inevitable. Only when people's minds are advancing, can people's thoughts develop. Therefore, the progressive thought must be the impetus of Thought Reform. Meanwhile, only when people's minds are advancing, can people's minds show their vigor and vitality. Only in that case can people's minds grasp assorted effective information. Only

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<sup>4</sup> Hegel, G.W.F. *The phenomenology of mind* (Volume 2). Translated by Helin and Wangjiuxing. Beijing: Commercial Press, 1979, p. 130.

by this effective information can people's minds advance with the times. So the progressive thought must be the goal of Thought Reform.

The process of Thought Reform is a kind of process in which irrational, ill-timed, illegal and unethical ways of thinking need to be changed. Irrational ways of thinking mainly include various ways of thinking which are often in conflict with species-consciousness or universal consciousness. The rationality mentioned here is the one not as particularity but as universality. Ill-timed ways of thinking mainly include various ways of thinking which are in conflict with time. Illegal ways of thinking mainly include various ways of thinking which are in conflict with various existing laws. Unethical ways of thinking mainly include various ways of thinking which are in conflict with various morals and ethics. Thought Reform is to eliminate various contractions, antagonisms, conflicts or clashes produced in the relations between thought and rationality, reality, law, morals, ethics and so on. Thought Reform is to change irrational, ill-timed, illegal and unethical ways and contents of thinking.

Thought Reform is to realize the organic combination of thought and reality through changing traditional thinking and to provide a rational or scientific guide to action for a subjects' practical activities. Ontologically, material existence, including social life, is the prerequisite of *Gedankenwesen*, and a subjects' thinking is the product of material existence in developing to a certain stage. So material existence, including social life, decides subjects' thinking. Epistemologically, of course, while reflecting material existence, a subjects' thinking is not mechanical, passive or a mirror-image but active or selective. If being totally out of material existence, including social life, ontologically and epistemologically, then a subjects' thinking could become a purely abstract thing or get into a cavity or a visional position, and would be meaningless and valueless and have no effect on a subjects' practical activities. Therefore, subjects' thinking that is totally out of material existence must be irrational, ill-timed, illegal and unethical. Thought Reform is to constantly promote

the organic unity of subjects' thinking and reality, and to continuously propel subjects' thinking to move in the direction of rationality, reality, law, morals and ethics. The destiny of subjects' thinking could be between the beetle and the block unless something in Thought Reform is done. This status must threaten the destiny of thinking subjects and of the world formed by thinking subjects. Therefore, Thought Reform must relate to the destiny of subjects' thinking and thinking subjects and the world formed by thinking subjects. It is in this sense that Thought Reform is not only the ideological premise of subjects' innovation but also the epistemological premise of social development and the spiritual premise of human progress.

So, what are the characteristics of Thought Reform? In the author's opinion, there are such four characteristics as follows: Firstly, externality in the foundation. Though the total process or result of Thought Reform must relate to subjects' thinking, and subjects' thinking has been a *centre word* in reforming the traditional thoughts, the foundation of thinking is not in but out of subjects' thinking themselves. The claims of reforming the traditional thoughts have been made not in light of subjects' thinking itself, but in light of material existence, including social life, or, material existence, including social life, which is the foundation of reforming subjects' thinking. If material existence, including social life, has changed, subjects' thinking must reflect the changed state of material existence, including social life. While being reflected rationally in subjects' thinking, the changed state of material existence, including social life, will inevitably promote subjects' thinking to advance with the times.

Secondly, initiative of reforming. Thought Reform is a kind of reforming that belongs to a particular subject, and subjects' thinking is a kind of active thinking, therefore, Thought Reform must be a kind of active thought reform. Active thought reform must reflect subjects' activities or such abilities as innovation, renovation, choice, transformation and so on, of the active subjects in changing material existence, including

social life. Because different subjects have different standpoints, perspectives, theoretical points, practical trends and so on, they must have different reflections to the same thing. The status decides that different Thought Reform must be different in both content and form, at the same time, in thinking between before and after the reform, and the process of Thought Reform must be a process of subjects' internal constraints.

Thirdly, mutability in content. The most fundamental aspect of Thought Reform is to reform the existing contents of thought. The existing contents of thought are the existence realized by thought, and subjects' existence is subjects' processes of existence, as subjects' processes of existence are constantly changing. The contents of subjects' thinking must also be continuously developing. At the same time, the objective situation requires subjects' Thought Reforms to advance with the times in their contents. Fourthly, stability in the form. Any kind of Thought Reform is developing in a certain form. The form mainly includes ways and means, logical paradigm, concept system and so on. Generally speaking, Thought Reform mainly shows subject's activities of thinking. It is necessary for subject's activities of thinking to follow their rules. Their rules are defined in light of their ways and means, logical paradigms, concept systems and so on. Once being defined, their rules will show their relative stability. So, the effects of their rules on subjects must have their relative stability.

### **3. Rule Consciousness and Thought Reform**

What is the relationship between Rule Consciousness and Thought Reform? First of all, Rule Consciousness is the premise of Thought Reform. The requirements that Rule Consciousness will refer to Thought Reform are that Thought Reform is not a kind of unprincipled innovation, boundless revery without bottom line or excursive fancy without standard, but a kind of fundamental reform which can eliminate various irrational, ill-timed, illegal and unethical ways of thinking in light of the

boundary consciousness, principle consciousness, bottom-line consciousness, and standard consciousness, to promote the progress of thought, notion and consciousness, and spiritual emancipation. Therefore, it is necessary to make clear the answers to the following questions: what is rational; what is irrational; what is ill-timed or inappropriate, what is timely or appropriate; what is legal, what is illegal; what is moral or ethical, what is immoral or unethical; and etc. Only after knowing such answers can Rule Consciousness be built. Only with Rule Consciousness being built in this way, can Thought Reform be pursued smoothly. Otherwise, Thought Reform could only become a consciousness of daydream. In this way, the organic relationship between consciousness and reality would not be established; the progress of thought itself would not be gained. Thought Reform could only produce purely idealism and *conscious crankiness* and megalomania. And then, how to solve these problems? In the author's opinion, the key is to explore unceasingly and grasp clearly various rules of nature, society and people; to know well systems, institutions, mechanisms, laws, disciplines, morals and ethics etc. in a particular nation; to know well rules, conventions, disciplines, orders etc in a particular society; and to know well standards of thought and behavior, constraints of disciplines, morals, ethics, system, institutions, mechanisms, orders etc. of subjects in the particular context. Besides, it is also key to carry through "the grasped from the above mentioned cases" into the whole process of Thought Reform without any discount.

As thus Rule Consciousness must provide the theoretical premise or thought premise for Thought Reform, since Thought Reform is not a kind of reform without any theoretical or thought premise but a kind of innovation on the basis of theoretical or thought premises. Rule Consciousness must provide the active boundary for Thought Reform, since how to reform traditional ideas is not decided by other consciousness themselves at random but by Rule Consciousness. The boundary only defined by Rule Consciousness can be a legal or rational area, otherwise, consciousness will be in irrational or

illegal area.

Rule Consciousness must provide some active principles for Thought Reform, since Thought Reform is not a kind of reform without any principle but a kind of innovation on the basis of some certain principles. Only Rule Consciousness can constitute the active principles of Thought Reform. Rule Consciousness must provide a kind of value measure for Thought Reform, since Thought Reform is not a kind of reform without any value measure but a kind of creation on the basis of value measure. Only Rule Consciousness can be the value measure for Thought Reform. Moreover, Rule Consciousness must provide a kind of behavior criterion for Thought Reform, since Thought Reform is not a kind of reform without any behavior criterion but a kind of reform on the basis of some behavior criterions. Only Rule Consciousness can be a kind of behavior criterion for Thought Reform.

Therefore, to establish Rule Consciousness is to establish the theoretical or thought premise, the active boundary and the active principles, the value measure and the behavior criterion for Thought Reform. Only when the theoretical premise or thought premise, the active boundary, the active principles, the value measure and the behavior criterion have been established can Thought Reform go with a swing.

Next, Thought Reform is the epistemological or practical result of Rule Consciousness. The requirements that Thought Reform will refer to Rule Consciousness are that: the establishment of Rule Consciousness is not for consciousness itself but for reforming consciousness preferably, and the establishment of Rule Consciousness doesn't defend the complacent, cocooned, conservative persons, and doesn't provide an explanation of immobilism and conservatism, but does supply Thought Reform with standard, boundary, measure and regulation, in a word, to carry out Thought Reform more effectively. Thought Reform only on the basis of Rule Consciousness is a kind of legal and rational reform. Only such reform can be not only of natural purposiveness but also of human purposiveness.



Thus, Rule Consciousness constitutes the ontology of Thought Reform, and Thought Reform constitutes the epistemology or praxis of Rule Consciousness. In this way, Rule Consciousness and Thought Reform must be in a unity in which there are ties with some differences between them.

Lastly, we must oppose such two kinds of trends clearly in the process of Thought Reform as follows: One is one-sided emphasis on the importance of Thought Reform ignoring rules or without forming Rules Consciousness, ignoring various rules, or lacking of Rule Consciousness, which is an expression of ignoring the existence of various rules. In this way, Thought Reform produced on the basis of ignoring the existence of various rules is either terrible or absurd. If ignoring the existence of various rules or lacking of Rule Consciousness, a person will act recklessly and will care for nobody. If there is not any rule in a particular society, anything can happen. For example, how dared someone to sell some rotten foods! How dared someone to bury some patients without death! How dared someone to drive while being in drink! How dared someone to pull down houses in which some persons live! How dared some enterprises to play tricks! How dared some scholars to call a stag a horse! How dared some referees to often blow black whistle! How dared some policemen to extort confessions by torture! How dared some judges to look upon human lives as if they were grass! How dared some doctors to prescribe fake medicines for patients! How dared some bookkeepers to cook the books! Therefore, we must oppose this trend clearly, most importantly, we must oppose the ideas and actions which try to deconstruct various legal and rational Rule Consciousness in the name of *thought liberation*.

The other is one-sided emphasis on the importance of Rule Consciousness ignoring Thought Reform. Only emphasis on the importance of Rule Consciousness without any attempt and accomplishment in Thought Reform is a kind of typical approach of conservatism, and a kind of typical expression of cocooned, complacent and conservative persons. Now, the latter trend is not as typical as the former, however shall also be

highly valued.

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## The nietzschean friendship as the closeness of distance

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*We do not feel hatred as long as we esteem lightly,  
but only when we estimate equally or highly.*  
Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*

### 1. The basic question

Asking Nietzsche about friendship it seems as if we expected from a vegetarian to eat meat. The reason for this is that he embodies a thinker who presents our world as a bloody scene or a boundless slaughterhouse observing: “I walk among human beings as among the fragments and limbs of human beings ... as if on a battle field or a butcher field” (Z I 20)<sup>1</sup>. In other words, it is a horrible and

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<sup>1</sup> References to Nietzsche’s writings are cited according to the following abbreviations (with Roman numerals referring to major division of a work and Arabic numerals to its sections):

A = The Antichrist

AOM = Assorted Opinions and Maxims

sickening environment of decomposition where all that can be heard is the “buzzing of poisonous flies” (Z I 12). An environment where an unbearable smell dominates, from which Nietzsche tries to be relieved; namely to be raised “above the steam and filth of human lowlands” (WP 993) denying to “drink out of everybody’s cistern” (D 491). This is because its content is by definition “uncleaned” and contaminates us; it makes us “common” (BGE 284). So raising the banner of purity he chooses the solution of an extreme solipsism concluding that every “great man” is “incommunicable”: “he finds it tasteless to be familiar” (WP 962). In this context, the only way of coexistence is when he seeks for “servants” or “tools” inasmuch as “in his intercourse with men he is always intent on making something out of them” (WP 962). As expected, the above claims led to the assertion that the nietzschean higher man is a misanthropist<sup>2</sup>, a cynical<sup>3</sup> and solitary<sup>4</sup> creature dealing with others only instrumentally. On the contrary, a second interpretation maintains that – while he was surely a “difficult” person – “few philosophers have written more

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BGE = Beyond Good and Evil

D = Daybreak/Dawn

EH = Ecce Homo (sections abbreviated “Wise,” “Clever,” “Books,” “Destiny”; abbreviations for titles discussed in “Books” are indicated instead of “Books” where relevant)

GM = On the Genealogy of Morals

GS = The Gay Science

HH = Human, All Too Human, Vol. I.

SL = Selected Letters

TI = Twilight of the Idols (sections abbreviated “Maxims,” “Socrates,” “Reason,” “World,” “Morality,” “Errors,” “Improvers,” “Germans,” “Skirmishes,” “Ancients,” “Hammer”)

TL = On Truth and Lies in an Extra-Moral Sense

WP = The Will to Power

WS = The Wanderer and His Shadow

Z = Thus Spoke Zarathustra

<sup>2</sup> Shklar, *Ordinary Vices*, chapter 5 “Misanthropy”.

<sup>3</sup> Tongeren, *Politics, Friendship and Solitude in Nietzsche*, pp. 210-222.

<sup>4</sup> Leiter, *Nietzsche on Morality*, p. 93.

eloquently in praise of friendship”<sup>5</sup> than him. An analogous defending approach states that Nietzsche’s friendship is overlooked<sup>6</sup> because it is most evident in the works of his middle period being neglected in commentaries on the German philosopher. Subsequently, a broader analysis aims at drawing upon both “middle – period” text and *Beyond Good and Evil*, “the letter to show that a concern for friendship pervades Nietzsche’s oeuvre”<sup>7</sup>. Taking into account the above disagreement the following questions arise: is it in fact his human model a lonely being fully isolated from the rest of the people? And if we accept such a thing how then can we justify the impatient calling: “I look for friends, expectant day and night, for my new friends. Oh come! It’s time, it’s time” (BGE “From High Mountains”). Could that mean that loneliness comprises in essence a feature of the authentic comradeship leading to the real friendship? A friendship indicating the proximity of distance or the deeper relationship connecting brotherhood, equality and freedom with enmity, distress and death?

## 2. The communicational benefits of solitude

Seeking a convincing answer we will start from the nietzschean man who resembles someone revolving around himself and warning: “He who cannot posit *himself* as a goal ... bestows honor upon *selflessness*” (WP 358). It concerns a particularly haughty individual placed among the “artists of contempt” (GS 379); namely among those who believe that “every association with human beings makes us shudder slightly; that for all our mildness, patience, congeniality, and politeness, we cannot persuade our nose to give up their prejudices against the proximity of a human being” GS 379). Rejecting, however, coexistence and at the same time considering as the “greatest” the one who can be “most

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<sup>5</sup> Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, p. 36.

<sup>6</sup> Abbey, *Circles, Ladders and Stars*, p. 50.

<sup>7</sup> Miner, *Nietzsche on Friendship*, p. 47

lonely, most hidden, most deviant” (BGE 212) it means that we exclude the transition from the basement of alienation to the balcony of human relationships and friendship. It’s about an exclusion that Nietzsche himself seems to confirm by claiming in his autobiography: “I am *solitude* become man” [EH “Appendix” 3 (d)]. In other words he seems to incarnate an existential hermit who does not however play a leading role in every scene of nietzschean life. This is so because for a long period of time he was closely connected to a small group of people aiming at the revival and transfiguration of the German spirit. A group whose members enjoyed the “gift” (SL 45) – or the “divine nectar” (SL 13) – of friendship which in Nietzsche’s eyes seemed as a “sacred necessity” (SL 39) since its lack was creating a sense of uncertainty depicted in the question: «if one had no friends! Could one endure it, have endured it? *Dubito*» (SL 55). However this doubt started gradually receding and was finally replaced by solitude: “Among the living as among the dead, I have nobody with whom I have any affinity” (SL 143) ... “A friendly voice seldom reaches me nowadays. I am alone now, absurdly alone” (SL 163) ... “life has proposed my duty to me with the terrible condition that I should fulfill that duty in solitude” (SL 141). But this solitude is considered as “happiness, as privilege” (WP 993) and not as a curse. So, it does not concern an existential swamp but a place “among clouds and lightning ... among rays of sunlight, drops of dew, flakes of snow” (WP 993); a forest where “raw, strong air blows” (Z I 12). In others words it brings to mind an exceptionally refreshing environment or otherwise a nostalgic and caring native land:

- “Oh solitude! Oh you my *home* solitude! I lived wild too long in wild foreign lands to not return to you with tears!” (Z III 9).

- “Oh solitude! Oh you my home solitude! How blissfully and tenderly your voice speaks to me!” (Z III 9).

This is because it does not describe the homeland of outcasts but that of “free spirits”; namely all of us who “are the born, sworn jealous friends of *solitude*, our own, deepest, most midnight, midday solitude” (BGE 44). More specifically,

it is related to a situation of greatness – and not of decay – that it must be an issue for our education system for which Nietzsche ascertains: “I have gradually seen the light as to the most universal deficiency in our kind of cultivation and education: no one learns, no one strives after, no one teaches – the *endurance of solitude*” (D 443). This ascertainment includes in itself the need for a pedagogical exploitation of solitude in order to enhance: Firstly, the function of memory as far as “One forgets about human beings when one lives among human beings” (Z III 9). Secondly, the psychological relevance and vicinity which leads Nietzsche to admit that: “It is not in how one soul approaches another but in how it distances itself from it that I recognize their affinity and relatedness” (AOM 251). Thirdly, the better view and knowledge of things since: “From that which you want to know and assess you must depart, at least for a time. Only when you have left the town you see how high its towers rise above the houses” (WS 307). Fourthly, the preservation of human credit and dignity resulting from the following warning: “*To the solitary* – If we are not as considerable of the honour of other people in our private soliloquies as we are in public, we are not behaving decently” (D 569). Fifthly, the capacity for a higher form of care because the “hearts which are capable of *noble* hospitality ... have curtained windows and closed shutters: They keep their best rooms empty... Because they await guests with whom one does not have to ‘put up’ ...” (TI “Skirmishes” 25). Sixthly, the most clear and exquisite image of friendship derived from the ascertainment: “But when I am alone I seem to see my friends in a clearer and fairer light than when I am with them” (D 485). But above all solitude help us to think of and express our deep love and appreciation for as Nietzsche admits: “When I loved and appreciated music the most, I lived far from it” (D 485). Exactly the same applies to the field of human relationships therefore answering to the question “Why ... did I go into the woods and the wilderness?” Zarathustra confesses: “Was it not because I loved mankind all too much?” (Z I “prologue” 2).

### 3. The indictment against Christianity

Starting from the latest confession we note that it is referred to a special relationship going far beyond the Christian love of neighbor – or else the relief of “sufferer’s existence” (BGE 260) – where they prevail: “pity, a kind, helpful hand, a warm heart, patience, diligence, humility, friendliness” (BGE 260). That is because such an approach is accompanied by the following accusations: Firstly, it is characterized as superficial since the ultimate pain remains strictly personal and thus unapproachable from the others: “What we most deeply and most personally suffer from is incomprehensible and inaccessible to nearly everyone else; here we are hidden from our nearest, even if we eat from the same pot” (GS 338). Secondly, all those who intervene in other people’s life in that fashion, ignore the “personal necessity of misfortune” (GS 338) or in other words they cannot understand that – in “mystical” terms: “the path to one’s own heaven always leads through the voluptuousness of one’s own hell” (GS 338). Thirdly, those who experience suffering and displeasure as “evil, hateful ... as defect of existence” (GS 338) are at heart hypocrites because behind the “religion of pity” they hide another one: “the religion of smug coziness” (GS 338). Fourthly, in the context of the above mentioned hypocrisy neighbor’s love constitutes a kind of evasion – or a “bad love” (Z I 16) that allows us to “depersonalize” (WP 388) ourselves by approaching the others: “... your love of the neighbor is your bad love of yourselves. You flee to your neighbor to escape yourself and you want to make a virtue of it ... You cannot stand yourselves and do not love yourselves enough: now you want to seduce your neighbor to love and gild yourselves with his error” (Z I 16). Fifthly, abandoning ourselves we interfere with other people’s lives in a manner that the underestimation wears the mask of appreciation making the benefactor seem even worse than an enemy: “our ‘benefactors’ diminish our worth and our will more than our enemies do” (GS 338). This is because they basically try to



determine our being or even play the “role of fate” (GS 338). Sixthly, this very practice is connected with an egoistic desire aiming in the name of love at conquering its subject: “Our love of neighbours – is it not a craving for new *property*? ... When we see someone suffering, we like to use this opportunity to take possession of him” (GS 14). In order to achieve it we must simply utilize the benefactor’s sense of “superiority” (HH 321) against the sufferer; namely the fact that “there is something degrading in suffering and something elevating and productive of superiority in pitying” (D 138). Seventhly, scheming against our fellow-beings, we revive an old – as well as dishonest – practice which accepts and transforms what exactly has to be rejected. Specifically, several centuries ago and as long as the ancient communities were struggling to maintain and expand their borders – as for example “in the heyday of Rome” (BGE 201) – they used to respect and foster certain strong and dangerous instincts such as: “adventurousness, recklessness, vengefulness, slyness, rapacity, lust for power” (BGE 201). Nonetheless, when this situation was smoothed out and defeated the external enemy, these destructive instincts of the warriors who had already returned home started to threaten the civilian populations. So in order to protect themselves from the conquering intentions of their neighbors, the weak masses tried to transform their “weakness into *accomplishment*” (GM I, 14) or their fear into love revealing that: “Ultimately, “neighbourly love” is always something secondary ... in relation to fear of one’s neighbor ... here again, fear is the mother of morality” (BGE 201)<sup>8</sup>. Eighthly, being trapped in the bonds of Christianity – or isolated in an environment of superficiality, ignorance, hypocrisy, evasion, underestimation, embezzlement, jealousy and fear – this specific kind of love loses definitely the token of superiority and eternity remaining to express a kind of human morality “next to which, before which, after which many others, and especially *higher* moralities, are or should be possible” (BGE 202).

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<sup>8</sup> See also D 174.

#### 4. The three prerequisites of nietzschean friendship

Based on the above indictment and at the same time seeking for an alternative possibility – or otherwise a different kind of friendship – the nietzschean Zarathustra clarifies to his followers: “I do not teach you the neighbor, but the friend” (Z I 16). It’s about a teaching that does not, however, concern everybody but a small group of people with common characteristics for the reason that: “every company is bad company except that of one’s equals” (BGE 26). A company struggling to strengthen what the Christian love tried to alleviate in order to disguise – or to purify – its hate for the fellow-man; the pain. That is because this particular feeling is no longer deemed as the price humans paid when expelled from paradise but as a sign of superiority and self – knowledge: “The discipline of suffering, *great* suffering – don’t you know that this discipline *alone* has created all human greatness to date? (BGE 225) ... Only great pain, that long, slow pain ... forces us ... to descend into our ultimate depths” (GS “Preface” 3). In other words it forces us to follow an extremely dangerous path that leads us in return to our real friends; namely to all those who “do not like to live without danger” (Z III 2). This means that the nietzschean friendship presupposes a combative atmosphere – or otherwise a “powder smoke” (GS “Prelude” 41) - because people only become friends when they are: “brothers in distress, equals facing rivals, free men – facing death” (GS “Prelude” 41).

##### A/ The brotherhood of extravagance

Starting from the first prerequisite we notice that it concerns a particular relationship in which respect has priority over the love for the others: “A good friendship originates when one party has a great respect for the other, more indeed than for himself, when one party likewise loves the other, though not much as he does himself” (AOM 241). But how is it possible to respect more those we love less?

The answer lies in the nietzschean attack against the Christian morality mentioned above. An attack revealing that we approach the others in order to avoid ourselves. That is to say that we are unable to confirm and love our self by our own means. In other words it's about a ploy allowing us to regain our lost value through sadness, compassion and charity; namely through the disdain of sufferers. But if we accept that deep down we underestimate the others since our love starts from them then we must also accept the opposite that clarifies the nietzschean claim: we appreciate the others to the extent that first and foremost we love our own selves. Acting in this way we corroborate the primacy of our desires; namely that: "Ultimately, it is the desire, not the desired, that we love (BGE 175) ... Our faith in others betrays the areas in which we would like to have faith in ourselves. Our longing for a friend is our betrayer (Z I 14)". A betrayer who in the case of Christianity reveals the real face of a weak, envious and extremely avaricious creature depositing his self in the existential bank of neighbor in order to receive back a huge reward.

In contrast to this usurious practice emerges a rare kind of genius who handles his being with excess and extravagance: "Genius – in works, in deeds – is necessarily wasteful and extravagant: its greatness is in *giving itself away* ..." (TI "Skirmishes" 44). This means that he is characterized by a spiritual surplus or an excessive internal abundance and completeness which is really required for true love proving that: "Only the most complete persons can love" (WP 296). That is because only these are able to behave in a very generous as well as selfless way bursting the fetters of give and take: "True graciousness, nobility, greatness of soul proceed from abundance; do not give in order to receive – do not try to exalt themselves by being gracious; prodigality as the type of true graciousness, abundance of personality as its presupposition" (WP 935). But this behavior is not linked to a "higher type of morality" (TI "Skirmishes" 44) as most people believe in order to praise genius's contribution. That is because such a belief expresses nothing but the wrong way of repaying human gratitude; it "misunderstands its

benefactors” (TI “Skirmishes” 44). More specifically, it misinterprets – or otherwise it hallows - their motives ignoring that: “the noble person will also help the unfortunate, but not, or not entirely, out of pity, but rather from the urgency created by an excess of power” (BGE 260). A power likens great man to a “dynamite” (TI “Skirmishes” 44), a power in which an enormous force is stored seeking for a way out. And on the altar of this very need for manifestation he is obligated to sacrifice - or to “disconnect” (TI “Skirmishes” 44) - his instinct of self-preservation resigned from any sort of “oversight or caution” (TI “Skirmishes” 44). So wasting his huge psychical reserves he does not reveal some form of moral superiority but his incompetence to act differently. An incompetence lending finally to his actions the feature of a predetermined, inevitable and often self-destructive natural event: “A hero pours out, pours over, consumes himself, does not spare himself, - fatalistically, disastrously, involuntarily, as a river is involuntary when it overflows its banks” (TI “Skirmishes” 44).

### **B/ The equality of friends and the importance of enemies**

Apart from the psychical extravagance the nietzschean friendship requires persons who are “equal facing rivals”; it demands the elements of both equality and rivalry. The first one is necessary in order to defend themselves from the attack of Christian love which – as we already know – tries to establish a relation of dependency and subordination between the sufferer and his benefactor. The significance of the second feature results from the advice that Zarathustra gives to his fellows: “You should be the kind of men whose eyes always seek an enemy – your *enemy* ... I do not recommend work to you, but struggle instead. I do not recommend peace to you, but victory instead” (Z I 10). More specifically, he urges us to take part in a kind of spiritual war – namely to become “warriors” (Z I 10) of knowledge – in order to serve: Firstly, the outlet of our negative instincts or

the reinforcement of our friendly relations since enemies serve usually as a safety valve or a “drainage channel” for the emotions of “envy”, “combateness” and “arrogance” (BGE 260). Secondly, the need for our personal development that makes adversaries seems “indispensable” for all those who want to “rise *their own* kind of virtue, manliness, and cheerfulness” (GS 169). Thirdly, the desire to confirm our Being – to say “yes” to ourselves even more “thankfully” and “exultantly” (GM I 10) – that is satisfied by seeking out our very opposite. Fourthly, the strengthening of our character by realizing that the ability for enmity – namely “to be *able* to be an enemy, to be an enemy” (EH “wise” 7) - presupposes a “strong nature” (EH “wise” 7) for which “life’s school of war” teaches us: “What doesn’t kill me makes me stronger” (TI “Maxims” 8).

However, in order to obtain the above rewards we ought to comply with the following rules: Firstly, we must avoid the weak opponents bearing in mind that the question is not to “conquer all obstacles in general” (EH “wise” 7) but to respect the inviolable principle: “You *cannot* wage war against things you hold in contempt; and there is no war to be waged against things you can order around, things you see as *beneath* you” (EH “wise” 7). Secondly, the aforementioned order forces us to seek the most worthy and powerful enemies who make us apply our “whole strength, suppleness, and skill with weapons” (EH “wise” 7). Thirdly, having already chosen great rivals we need to confront them in a way that is not focused on persons but on the views they represent: “I never attack people, - I treat people as if they were high-intensity magnifying glasses that can illuminate a general, though insidious and barely noticeable, predicament” (EH “wise” 7). Fourthly, avoiding personal disputes we are gradually starting to aim against particular spiritual targets. But this targeting has nothing to do with a kind of retaliation attempting to punish –to treat in the same fashion – some mental enemy for the suffering that he caused to us. On the contrary it is a sign of respect, appreciation and thankfulness because as Nietzsche clarifies: “I only attack ... where there has not been a history of bad experiences. On the contrary,

for me an attack is proof of good will or even gratitude under some circumstances ... I have the right to wage war on Christianity because I have never been put out or harmed by it" (EH "wise" 7). Fifthly, having decided on great opponents who have always been "well disposed" (EH "wise" 7) towards us we owe to treat them with no disdain but with respect and pride: "You must be proud of your enemy (Z I 10) ... How much reverence has a noble man for his enemies! ... For he desires his enemy for himself, as his mark of distinction; he can endure no other enemy than one in whom there is nothing to despise and *very much* to honor!" (GM I 10). Sixthly, behaving in this way we discover a hidden passage that brings the warring parties closer; a "bridge to love" (GM I 10). It's about the "genuine" love of enemies (GM I 10) arising from the increasing psychical attraction we feel when our passion are no longer "merely" (TI "Morality" 1) fatalities; when they are subject to a procedure of evolution and ennoblement allowing them to "wed" the spirit or to "spiritualize" (TI "Morality" 1) themselves. So spiritualizing enmity means that we start to appreciate – or more precisely to "beautify" even to "deify" (TI "Morality" 1) – the value of "having enemies" (TI "Morality" 3). And in order to find them we must firstly delve into our own selves since "the worst enemy whom you can encounter will always be yourself" (Z I 17). That is because being immersed in the laziness of our personal serenity we seem unwilling to pay the price for creativity; namely to step up and enrich the conflicts that smoulder within us, ignoring that: "One is fruitful only at the coast of being rich in contradictions; one remains young only on condition that soul does not relax, does not long for peace" (TI "Morality" 3). Except for the elixir of our psychical youth, rivalry offers us an extra gift arising from our confrontation with others; the proof of our personal necessity since only in opposition we "feel" and finally "become" (TI "Morality" 3) necessary. So realizing the importance of the internal and external enemies the nietzschean Zarathustra chooses to follow an existential path where love is crossed with hate confessing: "At bottom I love only life – and verily, most when I hate it! (Z II 10) ...

whatever I may create and however I may love it – soon I must oppose it and my love, thus my will wants it” (Z II 12). Seventhly, taking the same route we are asked to regard enmity as an equivalent and beneficial relationship of mutual respect among people who haven’t got any personal differences; a relationship that is characterized by deep appreciation and love. In other words we must consider it as a peculiar form of coexistence crushing the dividing wall of opposition in a way that transforms friends into enemies and vice versa. And in the context of this very transformation the nietzschean Zarathustra discloses to his brotherly friends shortly before the battle: “My brothers in war! I love you thoroughly, I am and I was like you. And I am also your best enemy” (Z I 10). In the same exactly pattern he adds “In one’s friend one should have one’s best enemy” (Z I 14) in order finally to infer: “The person of knowledge must not only be able to love his enemies, but to hate his friend too” (Z I 22).

Having already analyzed the first two conditions of the nietzschean friendship we will now try to approach the third one; the freedom facing death.

### **C/ Freedom as the power of dealing with chaos**

Focusing on this particular condition we firstly notice that it prefixes a concept that has nothing to do with the ability of choosing. An ability that – in Nietzsche’s mind - was invented by Christianity in order to establish its indictment against human kind: “People were considered ‘free’ so that they could be judged and punished – so that they could be *guilty*” (TI “Errors” 7). At the other end of this incriminating practice there are some persons determined to pay in full the price of their own existence in a way that the question “what is freedom?” is answered as follows: “Having the will to be responsible for yourself ... Becoming indifferent to hardship, cruelty, deprivation, even to life. Being ready to sacrifice people for your cause, yourself included” (TI “Skirmishes” 38). And in order to achieve that, we must adopt a fighting

as well as risky way of life that disdains comforts – namely it spurns the “miserable” (TI “Skirmishes” 38) type of well-being – and evaluates the world on the basis of the price we pay and not the profit we make because: “sometimes the value of a thing is not what you get with it but what you pay for it – what it *costs*” (TI “Skirmishes” 38). In other words we must follow the example of a “warrior” whose degree of freedom depends on the efforts he makes; “it is measured by the resistance that needs to be overcome, by the effort that it costs to stay on *top*” (TI “Skirmishes” 38). More specifically, we must work hard for a kind of spiritual omnipotence since freedom is “*part of strength*” (A 54) and it comes from the “strength and super-strength of spirit” (A 54). But where does this spiritual superiority of free man lie? The answer is given by the second component of the condition we examine: in his ability to confront death. But this confrontation is not related with the biological end of a mortal but with the death of God (GS 343). This means that it concerns a spiritual – and not a natural – event “starting to cast its first shadow over Europe” (GS 343). It’s about the herald of the “monstrous logic of horror” or the prophet of “deep darkness and an eclipse of the sun the like of which has probably never before existed on earth” (GS 343). An eclipse bearing an unprecedented catastrophe that we are unable to conceive yet for “this tremendous event is still on its way, wandering; it has not yet reached the ears of men” (GS 125). That is because apart from religion it concerns also its “most unconscious, involuntary, hidden and subterranean ally” (GM III 25); namely the modern science. An ally which strengthened the Christian ideal by making it seem “more elusive, more spiritual, more captious” (GM III 25). But how can the men of scientific knowledge – i.e. these relentless persecutors of metaphysics – be considered as the most “captious”, “tender” and “intangible form of seduction” (GM III 24) of this particular ideal? To this reasonable question Nietzsche answers as follows: “they are far from being *free spirit*: *for they still have faith in truth* ... it is precisely in their faith in truth that they are more rigid and unconditional than anyone ... that which *constrains* these



men, however, this unconditional will to truth, is *faith in the ascetical ideal itself* ... the faith in a *metaphysical* value, the absolute value of *truth*" (GM III 24). So despite the objections, both modern science and all of us still "take *our* fire, too, from the flame lit by the thousand-year old faith, the Christian faith which was also Plato's faith" (GS 344). That is because although we no longer believe that "God is truth" we still believe in its holy, absolute and non-negotiable character; that "truth is divine" (GS 344). A truth our mind seeks through a process of arbitrary (TL 1) generalizations and simplifications, in the belief that we will find out the deepest essence and cause of everything. Believing however in such a way we inwardly believe in the Essence of all essences and the Cause of all causes, behind which our heavenly Father lurks so that: "we have not got rid of God because we still have faith in grammar" (TI "Reason" 5). But to keep faith alive we must put it at the service of a new, popular and unbiased ideal. An ideal associated nowadays with the rational and systematic analysis of the world that modern science promises. However, behind this promise an attempt to "humanize things" (GS 112) or to turn everything "into a *picture* – our picture" (GS 112) is hidden. And in the context of this picturing the irresistible will for knowledge does not concern the knowledge itself but a desperate attempt to familiarize ourselves with the non-familiar; to be relieved from our fears in a way that makes Nietzsche to wonder: "... isn't our need for knowledge precisely this need for the familiar, the will to uncover, among everything strange, unusual, and doubtful, something which no longer unsettles us? Is it not the *instinct of fear* that bids us to know? (GS 355). Answering positively to the last question we uncover the real face of scientific knowledge that resembles a "bed to rest on" (GS 324) all of those who seek "rejoicing" and "security" (GS 355). In other words it looks like an existential retreat that man hankers for in order to regain what he had once but finally forfeited; the warmth of the lost paradise. But worshipping security as the "supreme divinity" (D 173) – i.e. reviving the heavenly certainty in the field of earthly uncertainty – we demonstrate an unfounded

optimism deriving from the weakness and not the power of mankind. An optimism connected with the anguished effort to justify our life or to exist in an ordered, comprehensible and above all attractive world revealing that: “We have arranged for ourselves a world in which we are able to live – by positing bodies, lines, planes, causes and effects, motion and rest, form and content; without these articles of faith no one could endure living!” (GS 121). But this very world died for good along with the God we made to protect it giving way to contradiction, absurdity and chaos: “there is only *one* world, and this is false, cruel, contradictory, seductive, without meaning (WP 853) ... (where) ... no one has given man his qualities, neither God, nor society, nor his parents and ancestors, nor he himself” (WP 765); a world whose character is “for all eternity chaos” (GS 109). Being aware of this cosmic character the free man must find the spiritual power – since “the will to power *interprets*” (WP 643)<sup>9</sup> – to balance on the existential abyss created by the death of God; to deal with chaos: “It is a measure of the degree of strength of will to what extent one can do without meaning in things, to what extent one can endure to live in a meaningless world *because one organizes a small portion of it oneself* (WP 585) ... To become master of the chaos one is; to compel one’s chaos to become form: to become logical, simple, unambiguous, mathematics, *law* – that is the grand ambition here” (WP 842). An ambition – a “*shared* higher thirst” (GS 14) – that unifies the free spirits around an ultimate goal – i.e. “an ideal above them” (GS 14) – in a mode that leads them to the real love. And with regard to this very love Nietzsche finally asks and answers as follows: “But who knows such love? Who has experienced it? Its true name is *friendship*” (GS 14).

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<sup>9</sup> For a detailed analysis of the will to power as “interpretation” see Cox, *Nietzsche – Naturalism and Interpretation*, pp. 239 – 245.

## **Conclusion**

The nietzschean friendship constitutes the supreme form of love that connects free people in their common struggle to overcome the existential chaos created by the death of God. More particularly it's about an extremely rare kind of human care that is not due to the lack but to the surplus of soul; namely to the ability of giving away without expecting some kind of earthly or heavenly reward. And for the purposes of such giving they use a code of communication where the distance indicates the closeness and the solitude preserves coexistence. A kind of coexistence that grasps enmity as a relationship of mutual respect and appreciation among persons who haven't got any personal differences; a relationship that finally transforms friends into enemies and vice versa.

## **Abstract**

Approaching the issue of Nietzsche's concept of friendship we have to deal with the following dilemma that reflects the controversy aroused among interpreters: isolation or communication? In others words does he symbolize an antisocial or a "difficult" but deeply social being, an aloof, or on the contrary an affable character? In order to find a convincing answer we must overcome the above dualism raising a new question: Could it be possible that loneliness constitutes deep down a component of the authentic comradeship leading to real friendship? A friendship that indicates the proximity of distance or the deeper relationship that connects brotherhood, equality and freedom with hostility, distress and death?

Keywords: Nietzsche, friendship, closeness, distance

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## Contemporary Relevance of Descartes' Nine Virtues

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The aim and objective of the present research paper is to understand the moral significance of Nine Virtues as explained by Descartes. The present paper is designed to deal with the issue into a threefold manner. Firstly, we shall try to deal with Descartes' understanding of Virtue in terms of its definitions, conditions and practice leading towards a virtuous life. Secondly, we shall make an attempt to explain and analyze the psycho-philosophical implications of the nine positive virtues based upon self-reflexive techniques as described by Descartes. Thirdly, in the present paper we shall be focusing upon the dual objectives of understanding the interconnections among the nine virtues and elaborating upon their relevance to resolve the contemporary dilemmas of human beings like intolerance, imbalance, insecurity and alienation.

Descartes' epistemological and ontological views are not only widely acknowledged but also have long-lasting impact throughout the modern and post-modern era. Yet, the moral

aspects of Descartes' philosophy have not been well explored and his contributions in the field of moral thinking are hardly discussed and are never given enough importance in the ethical discourses. However, as a matter of fact the moral views of Descartes could be explored on the basis of his deliberations in the *Discourse*, *Meditations* and *the Passions of the Soul*. As he himself has stated that ... "Those writings that deal with morals contain much that is instructive, and many exhortations to virtue which are most useful..."<sup>1</sup>. The above statement reflects a strong appeal for the need of moral discourse in terms of 'virtues' and one cannot ignore or overlook the moral discourses in his philosophy. Thus, there is a need to elaborate upon his moral thinking.

But before we move to discuss the major theme of the paper, let us first reflect upon the three presuppositions used for the structuring and formulating the entire theme of this research paper. The first presupposition is that ontology, epistemology and moral thinking are the integral part of any philosophical discourse. Secondly, it is presupposed that every ontological discourse inevitably reflects upon the epistemological assertions and is directed towards moral objectives. Related with the above two presuppositions, the third is that the moral position of any philosopher is consistent only and only if it is supported by ontological and epistemological assertions. After these three presuppositions, let us first discuss Descartes' views on virtue.

### Descartes' Conception of Virtues

Descartes made an attempt to define Virtue by underlining the necessary philosophical conditions and preparing mechanism to lead a virtuous life. He defines virtue in terms of goodness when he states that virtue is the supreme good

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<sup>1</sup> Descartes, Rene.( *Discourses on the Method of Rightly Conducting the Reason*) in *The Philosophical Works of Descartes*. 2 Vol. trans. by E.S. Haldane and G.R.T. Ross. Vol. I. London: Cambridge University Press, 1978, Vol. I, p. 84.



because it is "...the only good, among all those we can possess, which depends entirely on our free will".<sup>2</sup> Descartes identifies the supreme good with Virtue, which he defines as "...a firm and constant will to bring about everything we judge to be the best and to employ all the force of our intellect in judging well".<sup>3</sup>

The above definition of virtue involves three conditions which need to be further elaborated i.e. 'firm and constant will', 'the judgment about the best decision' and 'employment of intellect and reason'. For Descartes, the foundation of Virtue lies in an essential aspect of human nature that is freedom of the will which is in the perfection of the soul that "...renders us in a certain way like God by making us masters of ourselves".<sup>4</sup> It is worth drawing to one's attention that being a rationalist Descartes made reason as the determining factor of what could be taken as Virtue. Thus, Virtue for Descartes is never associated and referred to the determining conditions formulated by experience or emotions. It is the supreme Good but it has never been taken as 'Good for the sake of Good', rather it results into the Happiness which everyone naturally aspires for and tries to achieve. Thus, epistemological superiority of reason has been maintained here. Ontologically though, Descartes advocated for dualism while accepting the independent existence of Mind and Body as two different substances but in his ultimate analysis of 'Cogito ergo sum' he establishes the supremacy of the thinking mind. It seems that his acceptance of supremacy of Reason and Mind were the fundamentals for accepting Virtue as the firm and constant will to judge the best and having determination to opt for the best.

For a clearer understanding of Descartes' concept of virtue we shall try to compare and contrast it with the Aristotelian

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<sup>2</sup> Descartes, Rene. *Mediations of the First Philosophy in The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*. 3 vols., translated by John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch, volume 3. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, volume 3, p. 261.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, vol. I, p. 262.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 384.

view. Comparing Descartes' definition of Virtue with that of Aristotle we find that the former's conception of Virtue is deeply rooted in what Aristotle elaborates as Virtue which is in terms of "...excellence, goodness, activities inviting honorable and continence" which he also clarifies as "...virtue lies in our power, ... because it is in our power to act..."<sup>5</sup> While expressing Aristotle's view on Virtue, Piers Benn writes: "Virtue is a state of character. It is not a passion, like anger or fear, or a faculty."<sup>6</sup> On further analyzing the notion of Virtue as given by Aristotle and Descartes we find that while the former relates it with action and power of action the latter keeps the references of psychological factors like satisfaction and happiness as primary.

It is to be further noted here that with reference to Descartes having firm and constant will to do something presupposes the judgment about the best thing to do. This is so because one cannot have a "firm and constant will" to do something without having examined whether it is the right thing to do. And, one cannot have a firm and constant will to do what is judged to be the best, unless one is capable of judging what best is. Thus, virtue presupposes knowledge of the relative goodness of ends, and this knowledge Descartes assigns to reason: "The true function of reason... is to examine and consider without passion the value of all the perfections, both of the body and of the soul, which can be acquired by our conduct, so that... we shall always choose the better".<sup>7</sup> While dealing with the function and importance of reason, Descartes recommended the regulation of passions directed towards immediate and temporary good in order to pursue a higher goal of deciding the wider good in terms of

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<sup>5</sup> Aristotle. *Ethics*. Trans. Thompson, J.A.K. New York: Penguin Books, 1976, p. 122.

<sup>6</sup> Benn, Piers. *Ethics*. London: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2003, p. 161.

<sup>7</sup> Descartes, Rene. *Mediations of the First Philosophy* in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*. 3 vols., translated by John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch, volume 3. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, volume 3, p.265

long-term impact. It may also be noted down here that being an empiricist Aristotle considers Virtue to be the state of character which is factually a reflection of habits to act, but being a rationalist Descartes considers it as firm judgment about the best. At the same time when it comes into practice Descartes considers it to be a part of conduct and character also. Here it is necessary to clarify that virtues are different from passions as it has been explained with reference to Aristotle: "According to Aristotle the human soul consists of three major qualities-passions, faculties and states of characters- and virtue is necessarily associated with one of these qualities. Faculty means capabilities of feeling. Since passion lacks moral significance, virtue is in favor of states of character over passions. We feel anger and fear without choice, but the virtues are modes of choice. Mental or Psychological dispositions are of moral consequences, because they lie within the sphere of choice. Thus virtues are neither passion nor faculties, they are states of characters."<sup>8</sup>

Descartes' analysis of Virtue, puts forward the question: how to assess the value of the other goods? The supreme Good or Virtue consists in a firm resolution to bring about whatever reason judges to be the best. But on what basis does reason make this determination? What knowledge allows reason to form a well-founded judgment about the goodness and badness of ends, in the pursuit of which we shall act virtuously? Descartes relies on the principals of truth for this purpose when he states: "...all the principal truths whose knowledge is necessary to facilitate the practice of virtue and to regulate our desires and passions, and thus to enjoy natural happiness."<sup>9</sup> Descartes summarizes this knowledge, as he believes that we can rely on directing our will towards virtuous ends. It consists of a surprisingly small set of "the truths most useful to us." It is to be made clear

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<sup>8</sup> Satyanarayana, Y. V. *Ethics: Theory and Practice*. New Delhi: Pearson Publication, 2010.p. 47

<sup>9</sup> Descartes, Rene. *Mediations of the First Philosophy* in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*. 3 vols., translated by John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch, volume 3. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, volume 3, p. 258

here that the measures presented in *Meditations* are basically focused on dealing with the controversial philosophical questions and clarifying the dogmatic trends persisting at that time. But these measures could be well used and interpreted for the set moral objectives, provided these are viewed with relevant prescriptions. The measures which are useful for our purpose are as follows:

1. The existence of an omnipotent, supremely perfect God, whose decrees are infallible. "This teaches us to accept calmly all the things which happen to us as expressly sent by God."<sup>10</sup>

2. The immortality of the soul and its independence from the body. "This prevents us from fearing death, and so detaches our affections from the things of this world that we look upon whatever is in the power of fortune with nothing but scorn."<sup>11</sup>

3. The indefinite extent of the universe. In recognizing this we overcome our inclination to place ourselves at the center of the cosmos, as though everything ought to happen for our sake, which is the source of "countless vain anxieties and troubles."<sup>12</sup>

4. That we are part of a larger community of beings, whose interest takes precedence over our own. "Though each of us is a person distinct from others, whose interests are accordingly in some way different from those of the rest of the world, we ought still to think that none of us could subsist alone and that each one of us is really one of the many parts of the universe.... And the interests of the whole, of which each of us is a part, must always be preferred to those of our particular person."<sup>13</sup>

5. That our passions represent goods as being much greater than they really are, and that the pleasures of the

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<sup>10</sup> Descartes, Rene. *Mediations of the First Philosophy* in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*. 3 vols., translated by John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch, volume 3. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, volume 3,p.266

<sup>11</sup> Ibid

<sup>12</sup> Ibid

<sup>13</sup> Ibid

body are never as lasting as those of the soul or as great in possession as they are in anticipation. "We must pay careful attention to this, so that when we feel ourselves moved by some passion we suspend our judgment until it is calmed, and do not let ourselves be deceived by the false appearances of the goods of this world."<sup>14</sup>

6. Whenever we lack certain knowledge of how to act, we should defer to the laws and customs of the land. "[O]ne must also minutely examine all the customs of one's place of abode to see how far they should be followed. Though we cannot have certain demonstrations of everything, still we must take sides, and in matters of custom embrace the opinions that seem the most probable, so they we may never be irresolute when we need to act. For nothing causes regret and remorse except irresolution."<sup>15</sup>

One can easily see that out of six measures presented in the *Meditations*, the first two are basic principles of Cartesian metaphysics; the next three from the basic premises of natural philosophy and different from these two categories is the last one which is based upon the acceptance of law and customs on the basis of scrutiny. In the above account of Virtue explanation mechanism, we may say that Descartes firmly rejects the idea that Virtue has only an instrumental value as a means to happiness; rather it is grounded in the very nature of human will to have freedom in order to achieve perfection. Yet, in the process, the attainment of happiness becomes natural and inevitable. Secondly, truths that Descartes takes to be "most useful to us" not only consist of discoveries original to his philosophy but they also reflect a general outlook of the world that could be embraced by anyone without having Cartesian sympathies. After explaining the above account, let us see what the virtues are which Descartes thinks one should strive to have for virtuous life.

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p. 267.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

## Descartes' Elaboration of Nine Virtues

Descartes adheres to the view that positive virtues could be inculcated and the process of self-experience has been considered the best guide of human beings. It is on the basis of self-experience and self-verification, that a process of judgment has been suggested to inculcate certain human values which will enhance the condition of happiness and reduce the conditions of mental suffering. These human qualities as narrated by Descartes are self-esteem, generosity, veneration, hope, courage and bravery, self-satisfaction, gratitude and glory. Descartes, in the third part of the *Passions of the Soul* has described the nature, inculcation and impact of the above virtues and values. We must clarify that for Descartes these virtues, though he calls them as particular passion, are different from primitive passions as the virtues based on particular and positive passions. He recommends the inculcation of these passions for dual purpose, first to address mental suffering and second, to avail and feel happiness.

Let us first take up 'self-esteem', while explaining what Descartes writes: ".....And esteem, in so far as it is a passion, is an inclination, which the soul possesses to represent to itself the value of the thing esteemed, which inclination is caused by a particular movement of the animal spirits conducted into the brain in such a way that they there fortify the impression which serve for this end."<sup>16</sup>

While analyzing the impact of self-esteem it is generally assumed that self-esteem expressed by any worthy person or thing would lead towards better surroundings in a more effective way. Self-esteem is directed towards ourselves for our own merit. Descartes finds that "...the movement of the spirit which causes them is then so manifest, that it even changes the mien, the gestures, the gait and generally speaking all the actions of those who have a better.....

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<sup>16</sup> Descartes, Rene. *The Passions of the Soul*. From the Philosophical works of Descartes, rendered in English by E. S. Halden and G. R. T. Ross, volume I. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967. Vol. p.401

opinion of themselves than usual.”<sup>17</sup> He, further, states, “I only remark in us one thing which might give us good reason to esteem ourselves, to wit, the use of our free will, and the empire which we possess over our wishes. Because it is for those actions alone which depend on this free will that we may with reason be praised or blamed; and this in a certain measure renders us like god in making us masters of ourselves, provided that we do not through remissness lose the rights which He gives us.”<sup>18</sup>

The above description of Descartes’ view with reference to self-esteem has three important implications. First of all, self-esteem being vital reflexion and constituent of human merit is not the result of self-ego boosting, since the latter leads towards undue and unfair judgment. Secondly, since ‘self-esteem’ is related with wit pre-supposing the use of free will and possession of judicious wishes, it reduces a person’s anarchist desires and puts his aspirations into moral bracketing. In other words self-esteem cannot be for immoral or bad act which one may apprehend for being grounded in subjective judgment. Thirdly, the use of free will by wisdom based action has to be moral which is then able to generate happiness and eliminate mental agony. In order to inflict a high level of spiritual sense to the freedom of will, Descartes brings in the glory of God in human decision. Thus, it is on the basis of rational wisdom, moral sense, and spiritual heights that Descartes recommends ‘self-esteem’ as the first step of strategy to inculcate positive virtues.

While dealing with ‘self-esteem’ we have indicated the fear of taking subjective decision, but it is *generosity* in Descartes’ opinion which prevents us from committing mistakes. The generosity of an individual functions in a dual manner—firstly, Descartes considers that it is “.....true generosity which causes a man to esteem himself as highly as he legitimately can, consists partly in the fact that he knows that there is nothing that truly pertains to him but this free disposition of

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid

his will.”<sup>19</sup> Not only this, but generosity also involves the firm and constant resolution, as he writes, “...partly in the fact that he is sensible in himself of a firm and constant resolution to use it well, that is to say, never to fail of his own will to undertake and execute all the things which he judges to be the best which is to follow perfectly after virtue.”<sup>20</sup>

The generosity of an individual helps not only in using free will properly and have a firm and constant resolution; rather it also prevents the tendency to despise others for two reasons. Firstly, for believing that every man can also have virtues and esteem; and secondly that committing blunders are not due to lack of good will but lack of knowledge. While elaborating this spirit, Descartes writes: “Those who have this knowledge and feeling about themselves easily persuade themselves that every other man can also have them in his own case, because there is nothing in this that depends on another. That is why they never despise anyone, and although they often see that others commit faults which make their feebleness apparent, they are at the same time more inclined to excuse than to blame them, and to believe that it is rather by lack of knowledge than by lack of good will that they commit them.”<sup>21</sup>

In other words generosity motivates an individual to judge the actions of self and others on equal parameters as it has been said: “ ... Virtue such as justice, charity, generosity are dispositions to act in ways that benefit both person possessing these traits and the surrounding society. Virtue means moral worth of excellence- the excellence of inner character or disposition as manifested in out ward conduct or activity. We speak of virtuous character is expressed in overt virtuous act or deeds in conscientious discharge of the duty of life.”<sup>22</sup> It has been further said: “The virtue and faults may

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. p. 402

<sup>21</sup> Ibid

<sup>22</sup> Chatterjee, P. *Principles of Ethics*. New Delhi: New Bhartiya Book Corporation, 2001. p. 309



be practiced and committed respectively by anyone having free will to use and having generosity, the highest-minded are thus usually the most humble.”<sup>23</sup>

Descartes advocated that generosity could be a strategy to address mental suffering as it serves as a remedy against the disorders of the passions. And the objective is served mainly due to three factors involved into it. First, for having objective decision on the basis of wisdom, a generous person will naturally get attracted to do great things. Secondly, the generous persons, by assessing his own capacity and interest will not aspire and do things for which he does not find himself to be fit. Thirdly, a generous person having free-will to use wisdom will be attracted to do only good, because he is capable of leaving his own individual interest and respect the need of others. It has been described by Descartes in the following words “And, because they do not hold anything more important than to do good to other men and to disdain their individual interests, they are for this reason always perfectly courteous, affable and obliging towards everyone.”<sup>24</sup>

And, on the basis of the above factors the generous person would be, Descartes believes, able to control his negative passions, that might lead towards creating conditions for mental suffering as he says, “...they are entirely masters of their passion, particularly of the desires, of jealousy and envy, because there is nothing the acquisition of which does not depend on them which they think of sufficient worth to merit being much sought after, they are likewise free of hatred to other means because they hold all in esteem, and of fear, because the confidence which they have in their virtue assures them, and finally of anger, because esteeming very little all those things that depend on others, they never give so much advantage to their enemies as to recognize that they are hurt by them.”<sup>25</sup>

Descartes considers that virtues like self-esteem and generosity are habitudes in the soul and produced by the

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<sup>23</sup> , Descartes, Rene; *The Passions of the Soul*, 1967 p. 402

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. p.403

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p. 406

soul but it often happens that some movement of the spirits fortifies them. In this way, they are actions of the virtues and at the same time, the souls put in bodies by God may not be equally noble and strong. It means generosity, if not an inborn virtue, could be acquired through a specific kind of thinking as he writes, "...It is yet certain that good instructions serve much in correcting the faults of birth and that, if we frequently occupy ourselves in the considerations of what free-will is, and how great are advantages which proceed from a firm resolution to make a good use of it, as also on the other hand see, how vain and useless are all the cares which exercise the ambitions, we may excite in ourselves the passion, and then acquire the virtue of generosity, which being so to speak the key of all other virtues, and a general remedy for all the disorder of the passions, it appears to me that this consideration is well worth of notice."<sup>26</sup> The above paragraph fundamentally indicates the need of self-counseling on the basis of introspection of what is good and what is bad and follow the good for its several benefits. It indicates the utilitarian spirit of accepting the practice of virtue.

Apart from esteem and generosity, Descartes talks about veneration and hope. "Veneration, or respect, is an inclination of the soul not only to esteem the object which it reveres, but also to submit itself there to with some fear, in order to try to render it favorably inclined. In this way we possess veneration only for free causes which we judge to be capable of doing good... for we have love and devotion rather than a simple veneration for those from whom we expect nothing but good..."<sup>27</sup>

Descartes believes that veneration is based on the hope that free will leads towards goodness and it is on the basis of this belief, we pursue certain goodness. Thus, it requires hope and he finds that just like esteem, generosity and veneration, hope is also a disposition of the soul, as he writes "Hope is a disposition of the soul persuade itself that what it desires will

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.* p. 408

come to pass and this caused by a particular movement of the spirit i.e. by that joy mingled together.”<sup>28</sup>

For Descartes, hope as the disposition of the soul, is one of the vital feeling that generates confidence and reduces fear and anxiety, as he writes “When hope is so strong and it entirely drives away fear, it changes its nature and is called security or confidence, and when we are assured that what we desire will come to pass, though, we continue to desire that it shall come to pass, we never ceases to be agitated by the passion of desire, which made it accomplishment be regarded with anxiety.”<sup>29</sup>

Hope, according to Descartes is the central disposition of the soul in the sense it molds an individual psychologically to take up the task, reduce, rather nullify the fear and generates courage and bravery, as he says “We employ most *bravery or courage* it is yet essential that we should hope, or even that we should be assured, that the end which is proposed will succeed, in order to oppose with vigor the difficulty that we meet with.”<sup>30</sup> While differentiating between courage and bravery, Descartes writes “Courage, when it is a passion and not a custom or natural inclination, is a certain heat or agitation which disposes the soul forcibly to bend itself powerfully to the soul execution of the things which it desires to do, of whatever of nature they may be, and bravery is a species of courage which disposes the soul to the execution of the things that are the most dangerous.”<sup>31</sup>

Those who have *self-esteem, generosity, veneration, hope and courage as well as bravery* to choose the actions with constant persuasion, after accomplishment of the task, have the feeling of *self-satisfaction*. Descartes relates this feeling to ‘tranquility’ and ‘response of conscience’. He explains the genesis and impact of self-satisfaction in the following words “The satisfaction which those who pursue virtue constantly have, is a habitude of their soul which is called tranquility

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. p. 411.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.,p.410

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p.418

and response of conscience, but that which newly acquired, when we have just done some action which we think good, is a passion, i.e. a species of joy which I consider to be the sweetest of joys, because its causes depends only on ourselves.”<sup>32</sup> The subjective conditions of self-satisfaction may also be possible due to dogmatic beliefs and superstitions but Descartes never approved of them.

In the opinion of Descartes, the activities under the influence of superstitions cannot be considered as the practice of virtue, for practice of virtue never yields negative disposition or result, but dogmatic superstition most of the time provides negative disposition. However if the practice of virtue is based on wisdom, it will generate positive feeling of *gratitude and glory*. Descartes explains gratitude in the following words “Gratitude is also a species of love excited in us by some action on the part of him for whom we have it, by which also we believe that he has done us some good.... It has thus the same content as favour and so much the more in that it is founded on an action which affects us, and of which we have the desire to make a return. That is why it has much more strength, especially in the minds of those who are, too however small a degree noble and generous.”<sup>33</sup>

While dealing with the strategies to develop the sense of satisfaction differently from momentary joy and the sense of gratitude, he brings in another positive connotation namely glory. Glory, as Descartes thinks, is different from the feeling of joy. In this reference, he writes “What I here call by the name glory is a species of joy founded on self-love, which proceeds from the belief or hope we have of being praised by certain others, it is thus different from internal satisfaction that comes from our belief that we have performed some good action for we are sometimes praised for things which we do not believe to be good, and blamed for those we believe; to be better. But both are species of self-esteem as

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid. p. 418

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p.423

well as species of joy, for seeing that we are esteemed by others is a reason for esteeming ourselves.”<sup>34</sup>

For Descartes “glory” is peculiar in the sense that sharing of glory intensifies and increases the joy and happiness. It is attached to virtue, knowledge and health as it has been said “But, Virtue, knowledge, health and in general all other goods considered in themselves without regard to glory are no way lessened in us though being found in many others and so we have no grounds for being distressed because they are shared by others.”<sup>35</sup>

Gratitude and glory are two related dispositions of the soul and it relates to others and self-love respectively. But both lead to a cheerful situation of person. If the efforts are leading towards cheerfulness, it reduces the conditions of suffering, mental or physical. Descartes finds that cheerfulness cannot be explained in isolation, rather it has to take into account the hurdles resolving of which will generate cheerfulness. He explains cheerfulness in the following manner “Finally, I call cheerfulness is a species of joy in which there is this peculiarity, that its sweetness is increased by the recollection of the evils which we have suffered, and of which we relived, in the same way as we feel freed of some heavy burden which we have for a long borne on our shoulders. And I observe nothing very remarkable in these three passions, nor have I placed them here but in order to follow the enumeration which I made above, yet it seems to me that this enumeration has been useful in order to show that we have omitted none which were worthy of particular consideration.”<sup>36</sup>

Descartes enlisted the above nine passions and dispositions, which could be inculcated through practice and introspection. This is because these dispositions and passions taken as actions, lead towards a soothing environment for

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p.425

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Descartes, Rene. *The Philosophical Letters of Descartes*. Translated and edited by Anthony Kenny. Oxford: Basil Blackwell Publishers, 1981., p. 220.

joy, happiness and satisfaction and thus becomes the remedial therapy for reducing mental suffering. Apart from this, these virtues are relevant for addressing many more contemporary problems which we shall be discussing in the next pages.

### **Contemporary Relevance of Descartes' Nine Virtues**

The contemporary world is facing serious problems of cut-throat competition, alienation, imbalance and greed ridden self-interests, generating unrest in the mind of human beings. In such a scenario mere religious preaching may not be helpful since it primarily contains dogmatic instructions, rituals, and restrictions; and has limited scope for free rationality. Thus, the search and craving for humanitarian spirit and human virtues are needed intensively. It is in this reference that Descartes' description of virtues becomes relevant for addressing the contemporary problems of intolerance, imbalance, insecurity and alienation. But before we deal with the relevance of Descartes' Nine virtues in terms of changing mind-set towards positive disposition, thinking and action, it is required to understand the impact and interconnections of all virtues. This is so because of two reasons: firstly, the inculcation and practice of one virtue many times automatically leads towards the inculcation of another virtue and secondly, the order of virtues put forward by Descartes is systematic and teleological.

The general experience of a common person presents the reality that if a person is having self-esteem, then only can he relate himself to others in terms of having generosity. If one does not have self-esteem, he would be engrossed in restoring his self-esteem and is diverted towards self-centeredness. The moment he opts to be generous towards others, he develops the vision of objectivity, impartiality and contemplation. "The mind which has become accustomed to the freedom and impartiality of philosophic contemplation will preserve something of the same freedom and impartiality in the world of action and emotion... And, impartiality which, in

contemplation, is an alloyed desire for truth, is the very same quality of mind which, in action, is justice, and in emotion is that universal love which can be given to all, not only to those who are judged useful or admirable.”<sup>37</sup>

The objective vision prepares a person to get rid from his subjective attachments; impartiality makes him follow equal parameters in judging the need of self and others; and consequently striving and contemplating for a higher approach towards truth of requirements and needs. Once generosity of the person becomes part of his action and habit, he develops veneration for others. Through the practice of veneration, he starts getting positive vibrations from the surroundings and it generates the feeling of hope. Once the positive passion of hope is restored, he is mentally prepared to have courage to handle even adverse situations and becomes brave enough to cross the hurdles in his way. This gives a sense of self-satisfaction. Once the person is self-satisfied he becomes humble enough to express his gratitude towards the one he is related with and in reciprocation he receives glory. In brief, if one starts having self-esteem and practices generosity, the other virtues will follow in most of the situations and conditions. Thus, Descartes asserts self-esteem and generosity to be the vital and central virtues and considers them capable of creating conducive grounds for the inculcation of other virtues. Although Descartes did not show any casual connection between them yet, in human behavior it is seen that one positive virtue attracts several others in a natural way. After seeing the visible connections among nine positive virtues let us see how the inculcation and practice of above nine virtues could be relevant in resolving several contemporary problems.

The present day world of multi-cultural existence and global connectivity is suffering from the problem of intolerance in the fields of religious beliefs, linguistic boundaries, regional identity and racism. All this leads to communal violence, linguistic conflicts, regional unrest and

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<sup>37</sup> Russell, Bertrand. *The Problems of Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1912..p. 93.

racial struggle resulting into the serious problem of apartheid. These problems not only adversely affect the development in terms of economic growth of a nation but they also deteriorate the human psyche in terms of facing struggles, strife's and insecurities. The positive virtues of generosity and gratitude if inculcated and practiced can solve the problem of intolerance. Any individual becomes intolerant when his identity, territory or belief is either challenged or encroached upon by the others. As a matter of fact if generosity is opted in the attitude of an individual he would be impartial having an objective attitude. He may judiciously compromise on his identity, territory and belief in the process of accommodating others. In a way, the generous individual opts to contemplate upon addressing the broader objective of accommodating, accepting and respecting the needs and desires of the others. Once the generosity is practiced, the feeling of gratitude is generated in the so called others and a kind of mutual understanding, acceptance as well as respect is developed leading to over-all harmony. Despite the fact that the self and others have to somehow compromise upon their identity, territory and belief they become tolerant to each other. They start adjusting and existing together without any feeling of complaints and unrest.

The other problem which is being faced by the human being is a kind of imbalance between self-interest and the interest of others, imbalance between need and greed, imbalance between imaginative aspirations and capacity to fulfill them. These imbalances are responsible for diverted and distorted thinking, non-recognition of persisting reality and striving towards undue directions. The unsuccessful attempts further create a vicious circle of dejection and distrust. In such a scenario the possibilities of focused attempts are reduced, the vision is clouded and planning becomes ineffective. In the process he starts doubting his own capability and consequently loses self-worth and esteem. Henceforth, any individual first of all needs to accept his worth and restore self-esteem as well as veneration. Initially through acceptance of self-esteem an individual would be in



a position to think positively and relate to others. Once he starts relating himself to others, he develops veneration. Once the self-esteem and veneration becomes accepted in the thought process, it inculcates the idea of being out of self – centered mode. He thus, initiates a generous vision. The starting of a generous attitude while incorporating impartiality inculcates contemplation as well as gratitude on both the sides and this leads to a kind of self- satisfaction. The moment self -satisfaction is felt the balance of attitude, intention and action is restored. In this way the positive virtue may be said to be helpful in restoring a kind of balance.

The serious problem of insecurity disturbs the human being mentally which is reflected in his psyche as well as in action. The changing scenario of global culture, unlimited exposure and unbridled desires puts human beings into deep insecurity as it has been narrated: “I am afraid of thieves, of economic changes, of revolutions, of sickness, of death, and I afraid of love, of freedom, of growth, of change, of the unknown. Thus I am continuously worried, suffering from a chronic hypochondriasis, with regard not only to loss of health but to any other loss of what I have; I become defensive, hard, suspicious, lonely, driven by the need to have more in order to better protected.”<sup>38</sup> One can see in the above elaboration the fear of encountering either undesirable or unknown changes on the one hand and losing the desirable one on the other. But any insecurity is based on the natural disposition of incapability and fear of the individual. It is in this reference that Descartes’ virtues of self-esteem become vital in recognizing self- worth and ability, and from there developing hope, and from hope to the courage to change un-desirableness towards the desired one. If once the individual has courage, he then has it enough to face the adversities and after taking command over the situation he may be perfectly able to come out of his insecurity and may have the glory of managing the situation in his favor. Thus,

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<sup>38</sup> Fromm, Erich; 1982 Fromm, Erich. *To have or To be*. New York: Bantam Books, 1982., p.97.

positive virtues change the psyche and prepare one to fight out any difficult situation.

Suffering from the problem of intolerance, mental imbalance and insecurity in the present day world people lack connectivity and, consequently, are left alienated. Being a social animal no one can survive and be happy if he is put into an alienated mode of living for a very long period. This is so because his existence always requires to be connected with the existence of others in terms of sharing joys and sorrow, laughter and tears etc. Alienated existence even in the name of freedom is an uncomfortable situation for a normal human being. In the contemporary scenario, human beings are under the passions of unlimited cravings for material acquisitions. This craving increases the competition and greed which separates a person not only from the competitors but from his surroundings as well. In such a scenario most of the human beings are left alienated. With reference to alienation any kind of activity becomes mere business as it has been said "Alienated activity in the sense of mere busyness, is actually 'passivity', in the sense of productivity, in terms of non-busyness may be non-alienated activity. This is so difficult to understand today because most activity is 'alienated passivity'. While, productive passivity is rarely experienced".<sup>39</sup> In the above quotation the dilemma of activity and passivity with reference to alienation has been given. An active person even seems to be active on the front of productivity but he is withdrawn and disconnected from the others at the level of consciousness. Due to unlimited greed for material acquisition he turns out to be mere instrument for acquiring the things and items which are meaningless in the process of self-realization. It has been observed that the moment he fulfills his desire another desire encroaches him and thus, a vicious circle of desires constitutes the component of his own greed and he becomes a captive of his own cravings. Once he realizes his captivity he is separated and alienated and suffers from despair, dejection and disconnectedness. In such a case the positive

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid. p. 79

virtue of generosity remains the only ray of hope. Through the practice of generosity, the alienated person is perhaps able to judge the need of the others and share his material acquisitions. In the process of sharing and caring he gets connected and his alienation is reduced for the time being. Once he comes down to the level of his surroundings, he becomes one with his surroundings and is related to each one of them. This situation automatically generates the feeling of gratitude in the mind of both the provider and the receiver.

### **Concluding remarks**

On the basis of the above analysis and elaboration we may draw the following conclusions; Firstly, Descartes repeatedly designates virtue as a disposition of the soul and rationally regulated positive passion but in the process of further elaboration it has been found that he relates and sometimes considers virtue to be the part of conduct and character of an individual. Secondly, though Descartes enumerates nine prominent positive virtues, one can see that self-esteem and generosity are the most important and central virtues. This is so because other seven virtues are based and are the natural outcome of self-esteem and generosity being practiced. Thirdly, the nine virtues described by Descartes are very important and relevant in the contemporary period. The problems of modern day are rooted in negative dispositions of human psyche and any attempt to address the symptoms of the problem would be merely an attempt to address the problem at the periphery. Since the roots of the problem lies in the human psyche the appropriate solution could be only to change the negative dispositions and tendencies to the positive ones. As elaborated above we see that the modern day problems of intolerance, imbalance, insecurity and alienation could be addressed through the practice of nine virtues as described by Descartes. Though we have taken only four dilemmas of human mind, many more such dilemmas could be resolved through the practice of these

nine virtues. Thus, Descartes' views and thinking becomes the most relevant today.

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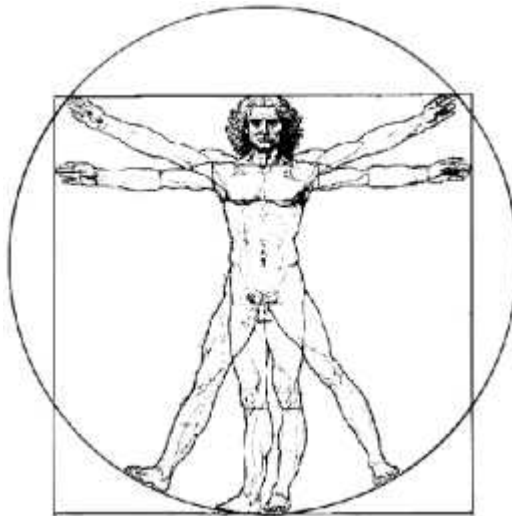
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Conceptual alternations  
of the notion of hegemony:  
from Gramsci's interpretation  
to post-hegemony

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**Introduction**

The notion of post-hegemony defines a period or a situation in which the notion of hegemony does not function as the organizational principle of national or post-national social order, or of the relations among the nations – states in the world system (Williams, 2002). This notion has different meanings in the scientific fields of political theory, of cultural studies and of international affairs. In cultural studies, post – hegemony has been developed as a critical response to the use of theory of political hegemony in the study of Ernesto Laclau.

The concept of post – hegemony is related with the rise of “multitude” as a social power, which, in contrast with the “people”, cannot be captured by hegemony, together with the role of affection and habitus as mechanisms of social control and infliction (Hardt & Negri, 2000· Beasley-Murray, 2010). The notion of post hegemony is influenced by thinkers as Giles Deleuze and Felix Guatari, Pierre Bourdieu, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri and by their points of view about supra - state and intra - state powers that have rendered obsolete the powers of oppression and convention with which the Gramscian notion constructed the society.

The characteristics of post hegemony are strongly related with the features of post modernism. Thus, the theory of post hegemony is based on the idea that ideology is not a directive any more that creates mechanisms of social control and that the modernistic theory of hegemony, which depends on ideology, is not reflected on social order (Beasley-Murray, 2003).

### **Theoretical evolution of the Gramscian notion**

The idea of hegemony as a “third party of power” or of an “invisible power” has its roots partly in Marxist idea of pervasive power of the ideology, of the principles and of the faith in the reproduction of class relations, as well as in the camouflage of contrasts (Heywood, 1994: 100). Marx recognized that the economic exploitation is not the unique power behind capitalism, but that the system was reinforced by the dominance of the ideas of ruling class – a point of view that leads to the renowned statement of Engels that false consciousness would prevent the workers from recognizing the oppression and struggling against it (Heywood, 1994: 85).

The false consciousness, in relation with the invisible power, is a theory of power in Marxist tradition. It is particularly evident in Lenin’s thought, who argued that the power of urban ideology was structured in such a way that the proletariat could succeed only trade union consciousness,



that is the desire to improve life conditions within the capitalist system (Heywood 1994: 85). A famous analogy is represented with the workers accepting to eat the crumb that fall from the table of the rich instead of trying to get the proper position at the table.

The Italian communist Antonio Gramsci, who was imprisoned for a great part of his life by dictator Mussolini, elaborated these ideas in his “Prison Notebooks” with the famous notions of hegemony and the construction of consciousness (Gramsci, 1971). Gramsci believed that the capitalist system consisted of two overlapping spheres: a political society that governs with the power and a civil society, e.g. the sector of voluntary and nonprofit organizations, that governs with consent. Gramsci considered the civil society as the public sphere where unions and political parties won concessions from bourgeois state, and the sphere in which ideas and points of view are formed, with the bourgeois hegemony to be reproduced in cultural life through mass media, universities and religious organizations aiming at the construction of consent and legitimacy (Heywood 1994: 100-101).

The political and practical repercussions of Gramsci’s ideas were important, because he warned for the limited potentials of direct revolutionary struggle which aimed at the control of the means of production. This aggressive war could succeed only with the condition of the existence of a new form of fight for the consolidation of ideas aiming at the creation of a new hegemony (Gramsci 1971). This idea of “anti-hegemonic” struggle – promoting alternative solutions to the dominant ideas of what is normal and legal – had a huge impact on the social and political movements. It has also contributed to the idea that knowledge is a social construction which has as a purpose the legalization of existent social structures (Heywood 1994: 101).

In practical terms, Gramsci’s points of view about the way with which power is formed on the level of ideas and knowledge – expressed through consent rather than power – have inspired the use of strategies aiming at the question of hegemonic norms of legitimacy. The idea of power as

hegemony has influenced also the discussion about civil society. Critics have used Gramsci's definition to remind us that civil society can be also part of the public sphere of political struggle and controversy of ideas and norms. The strengthening of civil society can be achieved either by the liberal point view, that is by constructing institutions aiming at maximizing state structures and markets, or by Gramscian notion of constructing ways of "different" thoughts, of challenging the existent theories and norms, articulating in this way new ideas and visions.

Thus, hegemony is the success of the dominant class in presenting its own definition of reality, its own point of view about the world so as to have this point of view accepted by the other social classes as common sense. This general consensus presents the definition of the reality from the dominant class as the only way of visualizing the world. Every other group that exhibits an alternative point of view is marginalized:

*the supremacy of a social group manifests itself in two ways, as 'domination' and as 'intellectual and moral leadership'" and "The 'normal' exercise of hegemony on the now classical terrain of the parliamentary regime is characterized by the combination of force and consent, which balance each other reciprocally, without force predominating excessively over consent (Storey, 1997).*

According to Gramsci, there is no dominant class, but an unstable alliance of different social classes. The initial conceptualization of the dominant ideology is replaced by the idea of a field of dominant Reasons (Logos), unstable and temporary. From this point of view mass media are considered as the place of competition between the social forces and not simply as the channel of the dominant ideology. On the one side there are the social classes that seek the integration of the thought and behavior within the limits they pose in relation with their interest. On the other side there are subordinate and dominated classes that pursue the maintenance and the consolidation of efficiency of their own definition of reality. Therefore, there is a constant struggle between the definitions of reality (or of ideologies),

which serve the interests of dominant power and the interests of the other groups of society. The dominance emerges through a complicated game of negotiations within society:

*...the fact of hegemony presupposes that account be taken of the interests and the tendencies of the groups over which hegemony is to be exercised, and that a certain compromise equilibrium should be formed. (Storey 1997:216).*

The dominance is not imposed from above, but it has to be “won” by the spontaneous consent of the subordinate groups on what they consider that will serve their interests because it is for the time being “common sense”. Eagleton adds:

*Culture for both [Gramsci and Freud] is an amalgam of coercive and consensual mechanisms for reconciling human subjects to their unwelcome fate as laboring animals in oppressive conditions. (Eagleton, 1991: 179-180).*

Ien Ang also, referring to Gramsci concludes that:

*The Gramscian concept of hegemony is mostly used to indicate the cultural leadership of the dominant classes in the production of generalized meanings, of 'spontaneous' consent to the prevailing arrangement of social relations - a process, however, that is never finished because hegemony can never be complete. (Ang, 1996:32)*

Finally, Fiske focuses on the uncompleted form of hegemony, stating that hegemony is a constant battle against a number of ideological dominances, and that every balance of power that is achieved, is insecure. The “victories” of hegemony are never final, and every society will find countless points where subordinate groups have resisted to the total dominance which is the final purpose of hegemony (Fiske, 1987: 41). The dominant classes use mass culture as a response to this battle, converting these groups to target markets groups and to consumers who become targets of advertising according to their demographic characteristics, their social class, their available income, their age, their sex etc.

With the introduction of the notion of hegemony (in the form of class infliction), power was not a compulsion any more but a combination of “compulsion and consent, dominance and hegemony, violence and civilization”

(Anderson, 1985: 180). On the other side, the axiom of revolutionary violence and of proletariat dictatorship, as the unique way for the conquest of power towards socialism, was strongly questioned. The request of hegemony was creating new demands for analysis, which extended to cultural dominance, to ideas, to persuasion, to consent, to ideology, to the mechanisms of intellect and to human consciousness: in other words, a closer relation between society and politics. Due to this, “philosophy of action” was created, founded not on the great historical narrations but “*on the sensitivity towards the concrete experience of the oppressed*” (Edgar & Sedgwick, 2002: 88).

A new discussion was inaugurated with important theoretical and political consequences which was about: a) the cultural superstructure as an autonomous field, capable of condensing sufficiently the political problem regarding the maintenance or the subversion of social order, without the compulsory reduction to the “*primal role of economic structure*” (Anderson, 1976:76), b) the complicated mechanisms of dominance, spiritual and moral guidance, ideological control of dominant class in capitalism, c) the importance of the subjective agency, the human intellect and the role of intellectuals, who were distinguished radically from the bourgeois tradition of scholars, d) the potential of democratic reformation of society contra revolutionary violence.

On this basis policies were constructed which dealt with the subversion of capitalism with peaceful means, the so-called “socialism with democracy”, the class consciousness and the ideology in combination with a reformative political apprehension: what social democratic and euro - communistic post war policy was about in western Europe in Cold War era. In 70s and 80s, the notion of hegemony was a basic theoretical axis in the core of cultural studies analysis, “*a notion that crystalized cultural studies as a scientific field*” (Lash, 2007: 55). This concept was the leader of the superstructure that was the core of Gramsci’s studies (Anderson, 1976); a superstructure that ceased to be the reflection of the basis, as we know it from the official

Marxist-Leninist approach and the Academy of USSR Sciences; in other words ceased to be the fatal watching of the economy. By obtaining entity and autonomy, it was considered not a secondary result or the reduction of processes that were taking place in the basis but the operative cause of social transformations. In one word, a “superstructure” that was not a superstructure, since its coordinates changed in such a degree within this new approach, that it lost over time its name and it was renamed as the cultural field, obtaining some years later a more decisive role in Cultural Studies with the so-called cultural turn. Hegemony was called to articulate all the individual elements of social and cultural life, transforming them into national life. It undertook the task to explain the mechanisms of “*dominant class control in capitalist world*” (Andrew & Sedgwick, 2005: 164). It described the way with which the dominance of a class over the others was succeeded with the combination of political and ideological means. The role of ideology over compulsion was emerged, as well as the role of consent, of compromise and of reformation over rupture and revolution. The state, the means of infliction of power par excellence, ceased to gather the monopoly of interest for power because now the institutions of society were emerged. Civil society came into sight, which the more developed was, the more it ousted the mechanisms of violence. Hegemony suggested “*symbolic dominance, legitimized power and sustainable institutions*” (Lash, 2007: 55). The double consciousness of working class, partly defined by the ideology of capitalism and partly revolutionary, ought to act in this framework. In post war, bipolar Europe, the theoretical and political realization of the need to conquer the ideological supremacy in the conditions of Cold War, was the reason that lead finally the left-wing parties to the alienation from Marxism-Leninism and to the adoption of the refreshed ideological frame of Euro - communism and of the transition to socialism with democracy.

## From hegemony to post hegemony

Richard Day will question, before he dies, Laclau & Mouffe' s theory regarding hegemony, putting forward the notion of post hegemony. Two are the dominant axes of the theory: first, that, even though the concept of hegemony is important to the understanding of cultural and political struggles for a specific time period, it is concluded that it is not enough anymore (Lash, 2007); second, we have a total rejection of the concept of hegemony (Beasley-Murray 2010).

In the paper that Scott Lash wrote in 2007 in the journal "Theory, Culture and Society", he considered that the world had entered an era of "post hegemony" (Lash 2007). In other words, discourse theory is rejected, as it was put forward by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, in a world in which new relations of power are supposed to have been introduced:

*From the beginnings of cultural studies in the 1970s, 'hegemony' has been perhaps the pivotal concept in this still emerging discipline. ... In what follows I do not want to argue that hegemony is a flawed concept. I do not want indeed to argue at all against the concept of hegemony... What I want to argue instead is that it has had great truth-value for a particular epoch. I want to argue that that epoch is now beginning to draw to a close. I want to suggest that power now, instead, is largely post hegemonic (Lash 2007: 55).*

With the words above Scott Lash put an end to the theory of hegemony, a theory that was focused on dominance through consent, which was created with ideological means (Lash 2007: 55). He rejected the theory of hegemony but in a different way, compared to the violent rejection of discourse theory by scholars such as Norman Geras in 1980 and in the beginning of 1990. In fact, Lash claims that the concept of hegemony can be proved to be useful to the explanation of many social phenomena. Also, an important spot of his analysis is the hegemonic paradigm of Laclau & Mouffe, who study the power "*largely as operating semiotically, through discourse*" (Lash 2007: 58, 68). This approach has a different

beginning; the essential argument remains the same though, as the one that Geras stated. In both cases the central idea is that by focusing on the level of representation, discourse theory loses the foundational idea of real (Stavrakakis, 2013). In discourse theory, the concept of real that was rejected, was the one of social class and of the primal role of economy. According to Lash the situation is different: the real, in contrast with the symbolic or with the fantastic, escapes from the logic of representation:

*We – i.e. those who think that power is largely post-hegemonic – agree with Zizek (see Butler, Laclau and Zizek, 2000). We agree part way. We think that both domination and resistance in the post-hegemonic order takes place through the real. ... The real ... is the unutterable. It is ontological. Power in the post-hegemonic order is becoming ontological. ... Post-hegemonic power and cultural studies is less a question of cognitive judgements and more a question of being (Lash 2007: 56).*

In order to define real Lash leaves the idiolect of Lacan which was used in the beginning and turns to Agamben and then to the elaboration of Spinoza's theory by Hardt and Negri (Stavrakakis, 2013). As a result, real in its post hegemonic form of power, is identified with Spinozian potential: "*power, energy, potential*" (Lash 2007:

59). The post hegemonic policy turns around the primal neo vitalistic concept of real:

*"the motive force, the unfolding, the becoming of the thing-itself"* (Lash 2007: 59). What is at stake is not the construction of consent or the assurance of unanimity, neither normalization. Now "*power enters into us and constitutes us from the inside*" (Lash 2007: 61), "*it grasps us in our very being*" (Lash 2007: 75). We are located in a "*virtual, generative force*" (Lash 2007: 71).

Three years after Lash had published the paper about post hegemony, Jon Beasley-Murray published his work about the same topic. Beasley-Murray acknowledges the connections of his work with Lash, giving emphasis simultaneously on Lashes' conception about post hegemony. His aim is a more profound criticism of the idea of hegemony (Beasley-Murray

2010: xi). His criticism of hegemony and discourse theory has common characteristics with Day's idea that hegemony theory, as well as the fields on which it is based (cultural studies and civil society) are politically suspicious, because basically imitate the structures of power which they try to understand (Beasley-Murray 2010: xvi). At the same time, he agrees with Lashes' idea for the repercussions of power on bodies (Beasley-Murray 2010: xiii). Beasley-Murray attacked Laclau's hegemony theory stating that:

*There is no hegemony and never has been. ... we have always lived in posthegemonic times: social order was never in fact secured through ideology. ... Social order is secured through habit and affect, ... Social change, too, is achieved through habit and affect. (Beasley-Murray 2010: ix-x)*

From the introduction of the book we understand that the aim is not the abolishment of hegemony in total, but its replacement with something else, something that is located beyond representation and discourse (Stavrakakis, 2013). This theory of post hegemony is articulated around three central axes – concepts: habit, affection, and the multitude. Thus, by giving emphasis on the role of habit instead of opinion Beasley-Murray outlines a field beyond consent and oppression. His emphasis is on habitus: “*a collective embodied feeling for the rules of the social game that is activated and reproduced beneath consciousness*” (Beasley-Murray 2010: x). By focusing on the affection, he refers to an impersonal flow of tensions beyond reason and consent. He concludes that the conceptual trinity that supports the theory of post hegemony replaces ‘the people’ with ‘the multitude’. The most important is that these three concepts refer to innate procedures and are placed beyond representation (Beasley-Murray 2010: xi). Laclau's theory is the primary target because his opinion about hegemony is more developed and more important about cultural studies (Beasley-Murray 2010: 15). According to Beasley-Murray, the main problem consists in Laclau's opinions about representation:



*the stakes of the political game become representational legitimacy rather than the satisfaction of demands* (Beasley-Murray 2010: 56).

This is particularly problematic because it marks an indirect acceptance of power structures: Laclau takes “*the state for granted, and never interrogates its power*” (Beasley-Murray 2010: 55). At an abstract level the conclusion is crystal: “*Ultimately, Laclau’s project is undermined by his portrayal of society as an all-encompassing discursive web, the meaning of whose terms (because they are always meaningful, representational) is dependent upon the various struggles and articulations that constitute it*” (Beasley-Murray 2010: 54).

## Epilogue

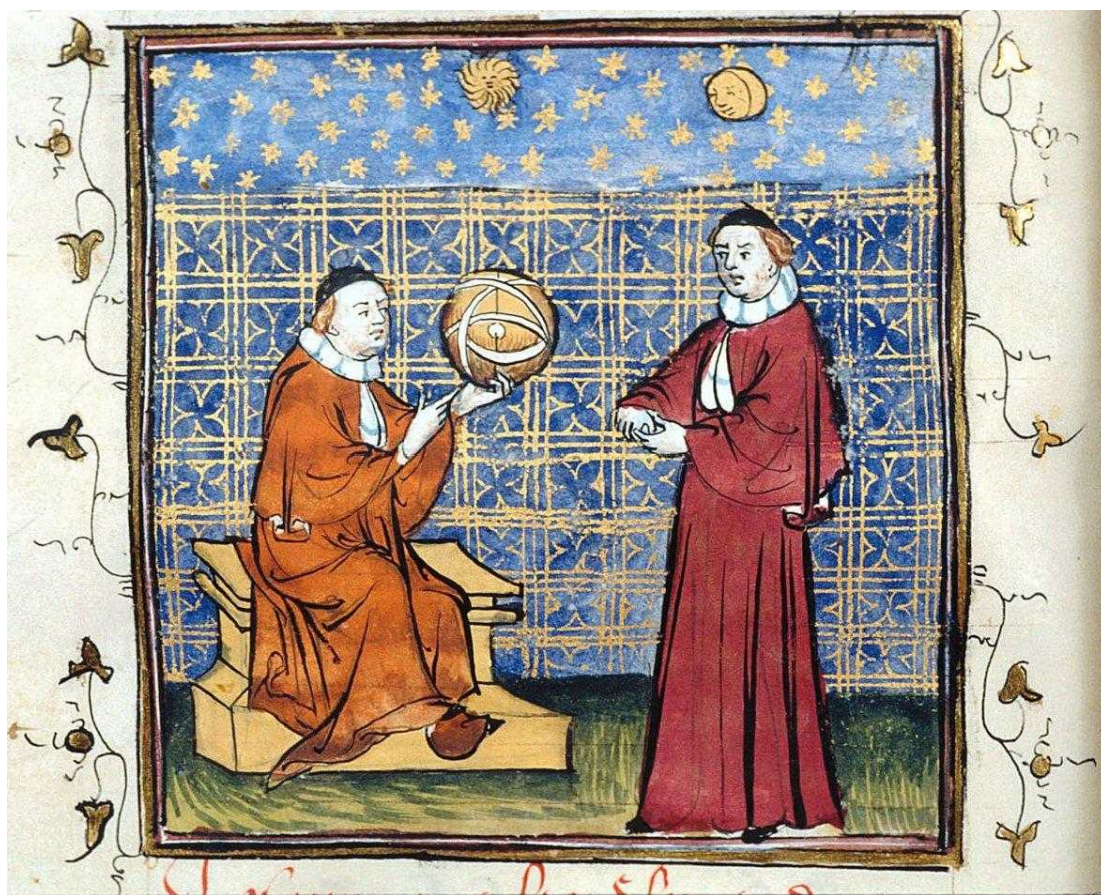
In post hegemonic era, the symbolic or the hegemonic collapses in favor of communication which is lighter and intangible. The dominance through communication is not above us but among us and for this reason democracy have to be reconsidered. Dominance, even though it comes via mass media, was never so direct as it is now. In capitalistic cultures, based on image, there is a movement of moving away from “the meaning” to “the communication and the feeling”. In these new conditions there is also “fluidity, open identities and indeterminacy, new articulations are produced, sub and inter personal in relation with populations, markets and data” (Zorba, 2010). What is stated above is an example of what is called post hegemonic trend of Cultural studies and it is one of the many different paths of modern questioning that deserves more research.

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## Feministic Approach in Phule's Philosophy of Education

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The root cause of all kind of gender disparity lies in Indian society in the system of patriarchy. Patriarchy is a system of social structure and practices which dominate oppress and exploit women. The system of patriarchy is an age old tradition of Indian society which finds its roots in our religious beliefs. As per Manu a famous Hindu Law giver, women are supposed to be in the custody of their father when they are children, of their husband when they are married and of their son in old age or as widows. Women under any circumstances had no freedom. The *Manusmriti*<sup>1</sup> being known as *Manav Dharma Shashtra* unambiguously pronounces on the position of the women at home as well as

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<sup>1</sup> *Manusmriti* is a text in the Hindu religion believed to be written by Manu (is a author of *Manusmriti* which lays down the Hindu code of conduct and is believed to be drafted around 1,500 B.C.) which lays down extremely rigorous and discriminatory social norms and dictates for the untouchables and for women.

in society. While defending *Manusmruti*<sup>2</sup> as a divine code of conduct shows dignity to women in general by quoting it as ‘*Yatra naryasto pujiyante, ramyanta tara devata*’<sup>3</sup> (where women are provided place of honour, god are satisfied and live there in that household). But quite strange, that the champion of *Manusmruti*<sup>4</sup> seems to keep absolutely quite on all the verses of *shashtra* showing bigotry, intolerance and detriment against women. Some of the utterances as follow:

- It is the nature of women to seduce the men in the world; hence the wise men are unguarded in the company of the women.
- Wise people should avoid alone with one’s mother, sister or daughter. Since carnal desire is always strong leads to temptation.
- One should not marry to women who have reddish hair, redundant parts of the body (such as six fingers or toe). One who is often sick, one without hair or with excessive hair and one who has red eyes.
- Wise men should not marry women who should not have and brother and whose parents are not socially well known.
- *Brahmin* men can marry a women belonging to all four *varnas* but *shudra* men can marry only *shudra* women.
- Although *Brahmin*, *Kshtriya* and *Vaishya* men have been allowed inter-caste marriage, even in distress they should not marry *shudra* women.
- Women have no divine rights to neither perform any religious rituals, nor make vows or observed the fast. Her only duty is to obey and please her husband and only for that she is exalted in heaven.
- Males between the age of 24 and 30 should marry to females between the age of 8 and 12 and so on.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Hari Ponnammma Rani, Madhavi Kesari *Women in Higher Education in India: Perspectives and Challenges*, Cambridge publication, U K, 2018, ISBN 1-5275-0854-4.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

From all the above mentioned verdicts of *Manusmriti*<sup>5</sup> on women, it is evident that traditionally oppressed in patriarchal society and no mention of education of women was made by Manu. Jyotiba Phule (1827-1890) was one of the most important makers of modern India. Education for women and untouchables was nothing more than day dream in this era. In this situation he struggled a lot for the education of women and low caste despite of threats to his life. He was the pioneer of revolutionary thinking and known as 'Father of Indian Social Revolution' in the modern age as rightly mentioned in his autobiography written by Dhananjay Keer, Thus, he was one of the '*Mahatmas*' (Great Soul) of India, occupies a unique position.

He was first revolutionary and leader of downtrodden, peasants and supporter of women's education. He paved the way for the new era of social activism. He was propagator of human unity and national integrity. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar said, "Mahatma Phule is the greatest shudra of modern India who made the lower classes of Hindus conscious of their slavery to the higher classes who preached the teaching of humanity."<sup>6</sup> For, India social democracy was more important than independence from foreign rule. Jyotiba Phule's views and philosophy was based on facts, reality, experiences and observation. Thus, his philosophy was not utopian but realistic in nature. He founded many movement name the few, movements against discrimination, movement of *dalits*, movement of women's education, peasant movement and movement against blind faith. He inspired many thinkers and social reformers like, Dr. Sahu Mahraj, Maharshi Shinde, Babasaheb Ambedkar and Gadgebaba.

He was first teacher of oppressed class and critic of orthodox social system. Women were always at the centre of Phule's thought and action. His philosophical thinking on social and political issues was influenced by Christianity and American thinker Thomas Paine's ideas of "Rights of Man". Phule worked towards the abolition of untouchability and

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> Kamble, J. R., *Rise and Awakening of Depressed Classes in India*, National Publication, 1979, pp. 53.

started educational institutions for untouchables in the second half of the 19th century. When Pandita Ramabai<sup>7</sup> converted into Christianity, he defended her right to conversion. He does not seem to be in favour of conversion. In his philosophy he gives importance to equality and humanity. He wanted to develop the qualities of justice, through education, equality, freedom and fearlessness. His philosophy of education was especially for the oppressed classes and women. He felt that education should create the feeling of unity. He states that women are not independent due to the lack of education. He was of the opinion that the development in society should be judged by the extent of education made available to women. He was in favour of giving compulsory education to women. He fought for the rights of women and work for their emancipation.

Phule saw women as the victims of the oppressive, caste-based and rigid hierarchical social system. He strongly believed that socio-cultural forces construct gender relations, especially as mention earlier in this paper by *Manusmriti*<sup>8</sup> and Hindu tradition. As Simone De Beauvoir a feminist thinker observed, “Women are made, they are not born”, if we compare Phule with Simon De Beauvoir we come across that he also raised the similar question but with a different

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<sup>7</sup> Pandita Ramabai (23rd April 1858, 5th April 1922), was High caste Hindu women, was great scholar of Hinduism and also studied Christianity. She was an eminent Indian social reformer and activist. A well known scholar and humanist, the greatest woman produced by modern India & one of the greatest Indians in all history --- the one to lay the foundation for a movement for women’s liberation in India. She was a poet, a scholar, and a champion of improvement in the plight of Indian women. As a social reformer, she championed the cause of emancipation of Indian women. A widely travelled lady, she visited most parts of India, and even went to England (1883) and the U.S. (1886-88). She married to Bipin Bihari Medhavi, non-Brahmin a Bengali layer. And this created a stir in the orthodox circle of Hindu society. After a great loss of her husband’s death shortly thereafter, she found herself unable to play the role traditionally reserved for upper caste Hindu widows, and converted to Christianity an action which created a scandal even in liberal Calcutta. More liberal verdicts have also bemoaned her conversion as unnecessary.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.



context of *Hindu* tradition, “Why tradition dishonored woman? The 20th century, Black feminism can be compare to the women belonging to lower caste women in India which is quite differently from mainstream feminism. It retained historical principles but also influenced by new thinkers such as Alice Walker. Where, Walker created a whole new subject of black feminism, which she called woman-ism, and emphasizes the degree of the oppression black women faced as compared to white women same a lower women in comparison to upper caste women. Like, Phule, another contemporary thinker Kimbberlie Williams Crenshaw an American lawyer, civil rights activist and a leading scholar of critical race theory who developed the theory of inter-sectionality. In her paper on inter-sectionality she throws a light on status of black women in contemporary society and how it need to understood. She says that black women cannot be understood being a black and being women independently but need to study the interaction between the two which frequently reinforced each other.

In ancient India the position of women as earlier discussed does not appear to be very appealing. Usually women have been looked upon as inferior to men. And, at those times they were considered to be on the same level of the *shudras*, the lowest of the four castes. Their freedom was extremely restricted. Right in the earliest portions of the canon women is looked upon as something evil that enticed innocent males into a snare of misery. They are described as ‘the greatest temptation,’ ‘the cause of all sinful acts,’ ‘the slough,’ “demons” etc.

According to him ignorance is darkness and education is sun-light. He realized that for social change education is the only effective tool as a result of it he decided to open the door of education for women and oppressed caste people. He worked for the deprived classes and women and made them aware of the importance of education as a vehicle for social change. He said, “Without knowledge, intelligence was lost, without intelligence morality was lost and without morality was lost all dynamism! Without dynamism money was lost and without money the *shudras* sank. All this misery was

caused due to ignorance.”<sup>9</sup> For him Education is the only tool to free oneself from the clutches of ignorance, which is the reason of all sufferings. His philosophy is synthesis of Indian and western thought. Humanism is the essence of his philosophy. So we can say that his philosophy is not repetitive but critical, progressive, revolutionary and formative. He is regarded as the most important figure of social reform movement in India and ‘Father of Indian Social Revolution’.

In one of his writings he says, ‘*Jichya Hati Palanyachi dori tich sansare uddhari*’ (one [mother] who holds the string of baby’s cradle, maintains and emancipates the life of family as well as of society). On his opinion if woman is educated the whole family is educated because women nurtured whole family.

Jyotiba Phule opened a girl’s school in 1848 at Budhwar Peth in the residential building of Tatya Sahib Bhide. He opened two more schools in 1851 among which one school was for girls of backward class. In girl’s school there were eight girls admitted on the first day. Steadily the number of students increased. Savitribai, his wife, first women teacher in India taught in these schools and had to suffer a lot because of the hostility of the orthodox society. Women’s education was given ample stress in these schools. The ‘First wave feminism’, emphasised on that women should enjoy the same legal and social rights as men. Its expression can be traced in many feminist works. For him education was not just literacy but a tool of social change. Phule perceived education as a means of self-respect and self dependence, and social peace. He made significant efforts to lead the society on the path of liberty, equality and fraternity. He strongly believed in the strength of women and their role in the process of social change and social peace so he felt that education is compulsory for women. His initiative had influenced various spheres of life and transformed the way India today looks at socioeconomic policies, education. He was a critique of the

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<sup>9</sup> Phadke, Y.D., *Mahatma Phule Samagra Vangmaya*, Publisher Maharashtra Rajya Sahitya and Sanskruti Mandal, Navin Prakashan Bhavan, Mumbai, 1969 pp. 253.

interrelationship between women's issues and patriarchy. He visualized equality and mutual permission as the basis of the man-woman relationship.

He was aware that primary education among the masses in the Bombay Presidency was very much neglected. He blamed the British government for spending profusely a large portion of revenue on the education of the higher classes. According to him, this policy resulted in the virtual monopoly of all the higher offices under the Government by the Brahmins. He boldly attacked the stranglehold of the Brahmins, who prevented others from having access to all the avenues of knowledge and influence. To Mahatma Phule, education is the only tool for eradicating social evils. It was his firm judgement that if social reforms are to be effective and everlasting, persons at all levels should be educated. For this purpose he considered the spread of education as his life's mission. Without doubt we can say that Phule was the pioneer of revolutionary thinking and he was an educational philosopher.

Widow re-marriages were banned and child marriage was very common among Brahmins and other upper castes in the Hindu society. Many widows were young and not all of them could live in a manner in which the orthodox people expected them to live. Some of the delinquent widows resorted to abortion or left their illegitimate children to their fate by leaving them on the streets. Out of pity for the orphans, Jyotiba Phule established an orphanage, possibly the first such institution founded by an Indian. Jyotiba gave protection to pregnant widows and assured them that the orphanage would take care of their children. It was in this orphanage run by Jyotiba that a Brahmin widow gave birth to a boy in 1873 and Jyotiba adopted him as his son and he was named as Yashwant Phule. On September 24, 1873, Jyotiba convened a meeting of his followers and admirers and it was decided to form the *Satya Shodhak Samaj* (society of seekers of truth) with Jyotiba as its first president and treasurer. The main objectives of organization were to liberate the *shudras* and *atishudras* and to prevent their exploitation

by the Brahmins. The membership was open to all. In 1876 there were 316 members of the *Satya Shodhak Samaj*. Jyotiba refused to regard the Vedas as sacred. He opposed idolatry and denounced the *chaturvarnya*. In 1876, Jyotiba was nominated as a member of the Poona Municipality.

It is very clear that he had very revolutionary ideas and he expressed his ideas through his books. He had written many books namely *Tritiya Ratna* (1855), *Brahmanache Kasab* (1869), *Gulamgiri* (1873), *Shetkaryancha Asud* (1883), *Satsar Vol.1*(1885), *Satsar Vol. 2* (1885), *Ishara* (October 1,1885), *saravajanik Satyadharma Pustak* (this book was published posthumously). So in all, he worked for whole the life for achieving his motives i.e. compulsory universal education, women education and uplifting of lower caste people. Phule was fully conscious about the importance of education. He knew that education can only be the powerful instrument of social revolution. Education can only bring social equality and social justice in the society. The essence of the educational philosophy of Mahatma Phule was to be educated is a human right. Mahatma Phule emphasized on education to all. He was the sponsor of concept of universalization of education. Universalization of education means to accept and extend facilities of education to all irrespective of caste, creed, religion, sex and physical or moral disability, the article 45 of Indian constitution is the symbol of victory of the philosophy of equality of education propounded by Mahatma Phule. Through his activities and fearless efforts he tried to build foundation of woman education in particular and education for all and especially the non-established class of society. He wrote many books and through these books he expressed his revolutionary views and awakened the people about their rights. He had revolutionary ideas about different aspects of education which have been explained by him as follows:

For him, individuals being equal, it is necessary to provide facilities to more and more individuals and the monopoly in education should be stopped. While providing education to

individuals' religion, race, caste and sex should not be considered. The value of humanism can be developed through education. The Principle of universalization of education should be followed and at same extent education should be made compulsory. The education of women and other deprived groups must be given top priority for establishment of social justice. Such Education must serve as a binding force in society. Mahatma Phule expressed great concern for primary education and primary teacher, He was of the opinion that primary teacher should be a trained person and sufficient salary should be paid. A primary school teacher must be a trained person and sufficient salary should be paid to him/her. For him, curriculum should be utilitarian and practical which can cover the needs of society. Primary knowledge about agriculture and health should be included in curriculum. Values such as freedom, equality, fraternity, kindness, self-respect, devotion to one's nation and internationalism should be developed through education. The down trodden filtration theory advocated by Lord Macaulay is not philosophically sound as it ignores the common masses and their need for progress. In his opinion practical knowledge is superior to bookish knowledge hence primary knowledge in *Modi* (a special Marathi script) accounts, history, grammar, agriculture, ethics should be imparted. For Phule the quantitative growth in primary school is important but it should not be at the cost of qualitative growth. For him providing scholarships and rewards to the needy and deserving student is important.

To summaries his contribution in the field of education, I can say that the development of any nation depends upon the educational growth. Nation forms its developmental model through equal contribution of both men and women educational status. By keeping this in mind the contribution of Jyotiba Phule in the field of education is really important. He was the first Indian educationalist whose pragmatic views on education were honoured by British rule in India. He was a great critic of the system of education laid down by Lord Macaulay. He was practical person with philosophical

conviction. The Indian educationalists of his period and after his period were deeply impressed by the richness and originality of his thoughts. But it is sad that some contemporary leaders and reformers in the field of education could not appreciate him due to the grip of traditionalism. His reformatory educational ideas and principles especially in the field of women education and universal, free and compulsory primary education are most astonishing in the modern Indian society too. It is said that the history of woman education in India will be just incomplete without reference to the contribution of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule. He is rightly called Mahatma. For his subtle and substantial contribution towards women and lower caste emancipation is immense. As it is rightly regarded him as Martin Luther of Maharashtra. So for him, Lack of education leads to lack of wisdom, which in turn leads to lack of justice. This leads to lack of progress, which leads to lack of money and results in oppression of the lower castes'. Thus, the education is a tool of social justice and equality.



Plato & Socrates on Gar. L. P. Besborough.  
According to the of Parliament. F. Worledge sc.

## Abstract

### Feministic Approach in Phule's Philosophy of Education

Jyotiba Govindarao Phule was one of the most important makers of modern India. He struggled a lot for the education of women and low caste despite of threats to his life. He was the pioneer of revolutionary thinker. He was propagator of human unity and national integrity. He opened a girl's school in 1848 at Budhwar Peth, Pune in the residential building of Tatyasaheb Bhade. He opened two more schools in 1851 among which one school was for girls of backward class. For him, Principle of universalization of education is needed and education should be made compulsory. Such education should serve the nation binding. This paper is an attempt to discuss Mahatma Jyotiba Phule as feminist philosopher in colonial India. He raised the problem of women's oppression. This made him nineteenth century male feminist Philosophers of India.

**KEYWORDS:** Education, Feminism, Social Justice, Women's Oppression, Caste, Dalit, Untouchable

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## Phenomenology as a Method in Jaspers' Psychopathology

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*“What is meaningful cannot in fact be isolated.... We achieve understanding within a circular movement from particular facts to the whole that includes them and back again from the whole thus reached to the particular significant facts.”*

— Karl Jaspers, *General Psychopathology*, Vol. 1<sup>1</sup>

Karl Jaspers (1883-1969)' philosophy had to go long way from psychiatry to epistemic realm to typically known 'theistic existentialism', if the term may be permitted (that which was initiated by Kierkegaard, later taken up by Jaspers himself, Martin Buber, Paul Tillich, Gabriel Marcel

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<sup>1</sup> Kirmayer, L. J., Lemelson, R., Cummings, C. A., eds., *Revisioning Psychiatry: Cultural Phenomenology, Critical Neuroscience and Global Mental Health*, Cambridge University Press, 2015, pp. vi.

and others) and most influential being his political philosophy in mid-twentieth century.

His writings have been controversial in those days when Germany was revitalizing its potential as a super-power. After the collapse of the National Socialists in Germany, Jaspers with full vitality and enthusiasm presented philosophy based on humanitarian mould to transform education system of Federal Republic of Germany based on democratic grounds. No doubt he was an existentialist, though he denied this label; he was influenced by Kant's transcendentalism to individual subjective experience and impromptu freedom. This subjectivity is of individual's lived experience(s). Jaspers, if influenced by Kierkegaard and Kant, was also motivated by Weber, Hegel but more prominently by Nietzsche's non-absolutist approach towards truth claims where human psychology determines one's action. So the 'psycho-logistics' that was incorporated later in his psychopathology was the resultant of Nietzsche's approach to philosophy of anti-absolutism. Jaspers therefore was quite deterrent to Rational Puritanism.

Earlier to this, from 1910 to 1913 he immensely contributed in the field of psychiatry, especially psychology that created foundation for descriptive psychopathology. He brought about the metamorphosis of Husserl's phenomenology and adapted it in his psychopathology. And the former stance of dismissing the paradigm assumptions either in philosophy or psychology is very explicitly revealed in his work.

Though not in the same fashion, but Jaspers took the initials of Husserl's Phenomenology. The key to the crisis of Westerners is the progress in natural sciences. Therefore, Husserl was really impressed by the successes of natural sciences but according to him the natural sciences had/have developed a wrong attitude among the Westerners regarding the nature of the world and how best to know the world. The natural sciences believe in this prejudice that "nature is basically physical and the field of spirit; the field of knowing, judging and understanding values i.e. the field of culture is based upon corpo-reality." (Husserl notes this crisis in his

book *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy* that was published in Germany in 1936 and which was translated in English by David Carr in 1970). Therefore according to Husserl, the possibility of formulating a self content science of the spirit is rejected by the natural scientists. This rejection of the importance of spirit explains the crisis of modern man. Though Husserl is impressed by the successes of natural sciences, according to him the insistence that the field of spirit must be understood after understanding the physical nature, reflects modern or 'naïve scientific rationalism'. This basic assumption, namely, that 'physical nature includes everything', makes this scientific rationalism naïve. This means, for example, that all psychology is psycho-physical, all knowledge and truth are objective based upon a reality beyond the self.

So Husserl's basic of phenomenology is incorporated by Jaspers in *Descriptive Psychopathology* and that is "pre-proposition-less philosophy". The general diagnosis to know the root of psychological problems is basically epistemic problem. So knowledge plays a pivotal role in this matter. Before Jaspers the whole of psychopathology relied on interpretative method. But it was Jaspers who gave the descriptive psychopathology which is used as a method. This we find in his early writings on "descriptive psychopathology" called *General Psychopathology* (*Allgemeine Psychopathologie*). According to Heinz Häfner, "The first method.....for gaining information on psychopathology is phenomenology. It is characterized as an "objective description of abnormal states of the mind in a way that avoids.....preconceived theories." Clinical data are to be collected in an objective and precise manner and systematically classified.....Jaspers' *General Psychopathology*, published almost a century earlier (1913), as "a landmark in the development of clinical psychiatry",.....the book

introduced the methodological arsenal in the field of psychopathology.”<sup>2</sup>

In Jasper’s *Descriptive Psychopathology* it is avoidance of preconceived notions in the field of psychology, especially psychopathology. According to Gadamer, “The early works of Husserl (1901) [*Logical Investigation*] shows that he understood phenomenology as the descriptive psychology of phenomena present to consciousness. According to him, all phenomena should be grasped free of any prejudice in their authentic, given selfhood by means of direct perception and intuition.” [Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Die Phänomenologische Bewegung*. Philosophische Rundschau, 1963. Pp. 45] Jaspers defined phenomenology as the intuitive reproduction (*Vergegenwärtigung*), static understanding of “the individual facts of psychic life present in the consciousness” [*General Psychopathology*] and discriminated it as a cross-sectional mode of inquiry from genetic understanding as a longitudinal approach.”<sup>3</sup> [We find that Hannah Arendt and Gadamer found great affinity to Jaspers, especially ‘hermeneutic situation’ to Jaspers’ own notion of situation with regard to historically effected consciousness.]

Genetic understanding is participating in a patient’s psychological life and while trying to “empathize” the patient’s psyche, one can decipher how one mental phenomenon gives rise to other mental phenomena. Hermeneutics intended here, but not the traditional interpretative method; but interpretation by participation in the patient’s psyche.

What is ‘static understanding’ in Jaspers’ Phenomenology? As Jaspers writes in his *General Psychopathology* “.....to vividly reproduce the mental phenomena truly experienced by the patient to review their interrelatedness, delimit them as precisely as possible, differentiate them and label them with a fixed terminology.” (1913, 47) This is a clear influence of Husserl’s Phenomenology; of intentionality and bracketing;

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<sup>2</sup> Hafner. Heinz, *Descriptive Psychopathology, Phenomenology and the Legacy of Karl Jaspers*, Journal: Dialogue in Clinical Neuroscience, March, 2015.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

also when one delimits, the whole procedure of diagnosis and treatment includes presupposition-less approach. So once again Jaspers refrains from any theoretical analysis, making his psychology free of pre-conceived notions. He calls this “a tranquil immersion into the facts of psychic life without jumping to conclusions.” (1965)<sup>4</sup> Indeed this is done through practically understanding the problems of individual's psyche; not theorizing the issue as that will put boundary on one's thought procedure and will prevent one to participate in individual's psyche; also one has to train oneself to read the experiential psychological problems. Jaspers also found Husserl's concept of ‘Intentionality’ very intriguing – ‘in terms of the intentional nature of consciousness.’ He found it very ‘convincing’. [Obviously he was strongly opposed by Henrich Rickert as Rickert believed that values demand a distance from life; while Jaspers did not accept the objectivity but relied on subjectivity, even in his psychology.] Therefore Husserl's ‘intentionality’ will definitely help the psychopathologist to participate in individual's mental hygiene. Overall Jaspers syllogised that phenomenological method and discerning the genetic framework of the patient can definitely help to understand psychological problems.

Therefore it is only through phenomenological method that one can really venture into curing mental issues. The traditional methodology involved, according to Jaspers, *brain processes*. This he called ‘*brain mythology*’. A startling statement that one finds in Jaspers' Phenomenology is “*Psycho-mythology* is what he called the assumption, which he attributed to Sigmund Freud, that all disorders could be explained psychologically.”<sup>5</sup>

Earlier it was believed that human being's spirit is also considered as an objective fact founded upon physical nature. Hence all the explanations of spirit involve the physical existence. For this reason from the attitude of natural sciences, there can be no pure self-content search for the spirit and explanation of the spirit. There cannot be purely inner oriented psychology or theory of spirit beginning with

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

the ego. We should understand the spirit in the manner of physics and chemistry. Husserl concluded that there cannot be any improvement in our understanding of mankind through purposes so long as naturalistic sciences look upon spirit as something which exists in space and time relation (i.e. physical) and study spirit according to the methods of natural sciences. Therefore Husserl formulated his phenomenology because he desired to develop a proper method for understanding the existential nature of the spirit and to overcome naturalistic objectivism. The most important idea in Husserl's phenomenological method that influenced Jaspers was, as seen earlier, philosophy without presuppositions (i.e. presupposition-less philosophy) which he implemented in his psychopathology.

Husserl begins with the thinking self that is 'the ego'. He says that for appropriate approach in philosophy, we begin with the decision to disregard our present knowledge. He tries to build a philosophy without any pre-conceived notions. He looks solely to things and facts as they are given in actual experience. He made it a cardinal rule of his method to judge only by the evidence and not according to any past idea or pre-supposition. Husserl sought to describe his experiences as fully as possible in terms of evidence of the experience itself.

Every experience obviously revolves around the self or the ego. For Husserl the source of all knowledge is the ego. He puts primary emphasis upon experience. His concern is to discover and describe the given experience as it is presented in the *pure form*. It is the immediate data of consciousness. He believed in *pure subjectivity*. He describes the actual facts of human experience. This aspect of Husserl's phenomenological approach Jaspers incorporated in his psychopathology.

Jaspers is also highly influenced by Soren Kierkegaard's existential philosophy (as noted earlier). And one finds that he picks up from Kierkegaard, and Husserl's phenomenology that traditional methodology cannot work in either philosophy or psychology. As mentioned in the book, *A Companion to Phenomenology and Existentialism*, "Picking

up from Kierkegaard, Jaspers argues that existence cannot be grasped rationally: "existence is.....inaccessible to objective intellect." It is to be grasped, then, "beyond the bounds of objective knowbility in a leap that exceeds the capacity of rational insight. Philosophizing begins and ends at a point to which that leap takes me." (Jaspers, 1970: 6)"<sup>6</sup>

Jaspers is known for his two books in psychology:

1. General Psychopathology (1913) (as seen earlier), and
2. Psychology of World Views (1919).

But latter Jaspers moved from Phenomenology to Existentialism; where 'existence is already determined through the fact that it is that which is "never objectified."' <sup>7</sup>

So phenomenology of Husserl definitely influenced 20<sup>th</sup> century existential philosophers like Heidegger, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty and Jaspers as well. Although, Jaspers incorporated Husserl's phenomenology in his psychopathology; there comes a point where Jaspers deviates from phenomenology. According to Jaspers human existence has to be given more importance than 'the essence'. "One of the important differences between Husserl's phenomenology and those of existential philosophers (like Jaspers) is that for Husserl there is stronger emphasis on essence, and that for him philosophy should be treated as a science. Existential phenomenology gives a detailed description of phenomena in our everyday experiences, but the emphasis is on human existence. Sometimes Husserl's phenomenology is criticized for neglecting individual human existence and Being itself."<sup>8</sup>

In Jaspers' own words, "Husserl impressed me most, comparatively speaking, although his phenomenological method did not strike me as a philosophical procedure. I took it – as he himself did at first – for descriptive psychology. As such I used it to make psychopathological

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<sup>6</sup> Dreyfus, Hubert L. and Wrathall, Mark A. eds., *A Companion to Phenomenology and Existentialism*, John Wiley and Sons, 2009, pp. 163.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. pp. 163.

<sup>8</sup> Tymieniecka, Anna-Teresa, ed., *Logos of Phenomenology and Phenomenology of the Logos*, Springer Science and Business Media, 2006, pp. 45.

descriptions and formulated it in principle for purposes of psychopathology.”<sup>9</sup>

Jaspers makes a clear cut distinction between ‘the object of intuition’ and ‘the act of perception’. An individual’s basic conventional wisdom and the realm of knowledge are in fact based on his/her acts of perception. The forward movement of Jaspers from phenomenology to existentialism is he takes the descriptive character of Husserl’s phenomenological method, applies it to his descriptive psychopathology and goes deep into the ‘lived experiences’ (*Erlebnis*) of his patients. The ‘lived experiences’ and ‘mental processes’ takes one to existential level, which helps to know the perceptions and feelings of the patients, including self-awareness.

According to Filiz Peach in his article, *Phenomenology, History and Historicity in Karl Jaspers’ Philosophy*, “He (Jaspers) adds that descriptive psychology ‘proved fruitful to describe the inner experiences of patients as phenomena of consciousness.”<sup>10</sup> But again it can be deduced that Jaspers’ divergence from Husserl’s Phenomenology is due to Husserl’s thrust on “essences”, while Jaspers concentrates on “individual’s existence”. In his book *General Psychopathology* Jaspers writes, “Husserl used the term (*Phenomenology*) initially in the sense of “a descriptive psychology” in connection with phenomena of consciousness; in the sense of the “intuition of essences” (*Wesensschau*) which is not a term we use in this book. Phenomenology is for us purely an empirical method of inquiry maintained solely by the fact of the patient’s communications.” Jaspers at this point is completely cut off from Husserl’s phenomenology, as according to him philosophy and science has fundamental differences which Husserl dissolved by saying ‘Philosophy as Rigorous Science’. (*Husserl’s Essay*)<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Jaspers, Karl, *Philosophy*, 3 Vols., E. B. Ashton, trans., Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1969; Vol. 1, in 1955 epilogue to the 3<sup>rd</sup> German edition in 1932, pp. 06.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. 46

<sup>11</sup> Walker, C., *Karl Jaspers and Edmund Husserl 2: The Divergence*. Philosophy, Psychiatry, and Psychology 1: 4, Dec. 1994, pp. 128.



In conclusion, it can be observed that Jaspers was influenced considerably by Husserl's Phenomenology. His philosophical contributions were already reflected in his books on psychology, especially in his book '*Psychology of World Views*' (1919). Though not well doctrinated, the existential view point is reflected in this book, which he tailored in typical Jaspers' style. He was severely criticized as noted earlier by Rickert (1863-1936) and Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) also for placing anthropological and experiential questions into philosophy and 'thus of contaminating philosophical analysis with contents properly pertaining to other disciplines.' But the relevant point is he went against Neo-Kantians and restoring Kantian philosophy, he emphasized not on Kant's formalist doctrine of self-legislation but brought to the forefront Kant's metaphysical experience, spontaneously decisive freedom, and authentic inner life (like a mystic).

For Jaspers rather than the content of the patient's history, the form is important. As noted by David Goldberg, "This starts with what is still the best description of phenomena of abnormal psychological functioning. In making diagnostic assessments, we should be guided by the form, rather than the content of symptoms. His (Jaspers) fundamental distinction was between understanding and explaining in thinking about mental disorders.....In any given case, the judgment of whether a meaningful connection is real does not depend on its self-evident character alone, but depends primarily on tangible facts – about the patient's culture, his acts and way of life, and his underlying personality. The fewer the data, the more interpretations are possible, and the less we understand. Explaining, on the other hand, is the way knowledge advances in psychiatry, and advances by accounting for one set of phenomena in terms of another set of observations. It is essentially an unlimited procedure."<sup>12</sup> The quote justifies Jaspers' psychopathology which incorporates phenomenology and existentialism.

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<sup>12</sup> Goldberg, David, *Karl Jaspers – General Psychopathology – reflection*. The British Journal of Psychiatry, Feb. 2013.

Jaspers, like Husserl, “respected the achievement of the natural sciences, but rejected empty verbal formula (as are sometimes peddled in the humanities). Natural sciences are for him not an alternative to psychopathology, but an integral component of it.”<sup>13</sup>

And, “Psychopathology as defined by Jaspers is thereby a chance for molecular psychiatry to look beyond its own biologicistic borders and to overcome its solipsism, frustration, and lack of orientation. Psychopathology can assist finding answers to essential questions that cannot be addressed by neurobiological means alone, but are fundamental to psychiatry.”<sup>14</sup>

This was a brief version of Husserl’s phenomenology rendering influence on Jaspers and his deviation from it.



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<sup>13</sup> Thome, Johannes, *Centenary of Karl Jaspers’ General Psychopathology: Implications for Molecular Psychiatry*. *Journal of Molecular Psychiatry*, 2014; 2(1): 3.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

**Abstract:**

**Phenomenology as a Method in Jaspers' Psychopathology**

Karl Jaspers (1883-1969) started his career as a psychiatrist, later swapped to philosophy. In philosophy his notable contribution has been to epistemology, philosophy of religion and political theory. From 1910 to 1913 he immensely contributed in the field of psychiatry, especially psychology that created foundation for 'descriptive psychopathology'. He brought about the metamorphosis of Husserl's phenomenology and adapted it in his psychopathology. That was called "static understanding" which means unbiased intuitive reproduction [*Vergegenwärtigung*]. He also adopted 'description of conscious phenomena' as a method for his psychopathology. But later he gave up the descriptive method, and adopted 'existential philosophy' in his 'general psychopathology'. This was a complete deviation from Husserlian Phenomenology. Therefore it has to be kept in mind that Jaspers' phenomenology in the field of psychopathology has to be studied independent to the philosophical movement called "phenomenology". It has to be noted that Husserl's Phenomenology is more of an 'essential concept in philosophy'; whereas Jaspers' Phenomenology has a complete 'empirical outlook'.

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## Proclus on the *First Alcibiades*: From Platonic Eros to Aristotelian Friendship

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It is a commonplace to state that Aristotelianism in various modified forms has been interwoven into the Platonic rubric of Neoplatonism.<sup>1</sup> The present paper aims to verify this verdict with particular reference to the issue of the relation between the concepts of friendship and love. Proclus' overlooked Commentary on the *First Alcibiades*<sup>2</sup> will serve as systematic basis and the best Neoplatonic guide for this quest. Along the way, I will be also making remarks pertaining to the Neoplatonic exegesis of Plato, which makes use not only of Aristotle to this end, but also of Presocratic material.

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<sup>1</sup> See e.g. the study of Karamanolis G. E., 2006 ending with Porphyry.

<sup>2</sup> I will be using the following edition-translation (sometimes modified) abbreviated as "on Alc.": Westerink L. G. – O'Neill W., 2011. In Proclus' time there was no question about the authenticity of this dialogue, which served as the 'spring-board' to the late Neoplatonic curriculum of Plato's dialogues. On various interpretive issues regarding the dialogue see Johnson M. – Tarrant H., 2012.

Some modern scholars<sup>3</sup> have proposed that, in fact, Plato in the *Phaedrus* gives us an account of friendship, whose perfect type, at least, surpasses the problems of ascribing egocentric incentives with regards to the erotic desire (ἔρως),<sup>4</sup> since, even when natural beauty fades out, the friendly, spiritual and non-sexual affection between the members of the ideal pair can still remain.<sup>5</sup> In that, of course, the commentators follow Plato's own text which refers to the erotic relationship between lover and beloved as φιλία.<sup>6</sup> So, for example, towards the end of his recantation, Socrates states that "these are the blessings... so great as to be counted divine, which will come to you [sc. the beloved] from the friendship of a lover".<sup>7</sup> Hence, it is not only the beloved's «ἀντέρως»<sup>8</sup> which is actually thought of as friendship,<sup>9</sup> as one would normally expect under the specific social and

<sup>3</sup> Most notably Sheffield F. C. C., "Beyond eros: Plato on Friendship in the *Phaedrus*", *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, CXI: 2, 2011, pp. 251-273.

<sup>4</sup> See e.g. Nygren A., 1953: passim and 166-181; infra, n.33.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. also Proclus, on Alc. 35,11-16, with many overtones from Pausanias' speech in Plato's *Symposium* 183e. From the vast literature about Plato on love and friendship see the old classic study of Gould T., 1963 and a more recent one by Price A. W., 1989, who makes comparison with Aristotle, too. See also the reference supra in n.3.

<sup>6</sup> What is more, Plato's *Lysis*, a (maieutic) dialogue "on friendship", brings sometimes ἔρως and φιλία very close to each other in terms of connotation; see e.g. 221b7-8 and e3-4; 222a6-7. It is generally noted that ἔρως denotes a passionate desire for something contra the (calm) loving affection implied in φιλία. Cf. e.g. Aristotle, *EN*, IX.10,1171a11-12: "This is why one cannot love several people; love tends to be a sort of excess friendship, and that can only be felt towards one person". Every Aristotelian translation comes from Barnes J., 1984. Cf. also *EN*, VIII.6,1158a10-13.

<sup>7</sup> Plat. *Phdr.* 256e3-4. The translation is taken from Rowe C. J., 1988.

<sup>8</sup> See *ibid.* 255e1. This word is coined by Plato to denote the 'loving response' of the beloved; it is translated as "backlove" by Nehamas A.-Woodruff P. in Cooper J. M., 1997, (which is the source for Platonic translations used here with abovementioned exception of the *Phaedrus*). Proclus uses it twice in on Alc.127,5 and 7.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Plat. *Phdr.* 255d8-e2: «...εἰδωλον (image of) ἔρωτος ἀντέρωτα ἔχων [sc. the beloved]· καλεῖ δὲ αὐτὸν καὶ οἴεται οὐκ ἔρωτα ἀλλὰ φιλίαν εἶναι.»

spatio-temporal circumstances,<sup>10</sup> but the lover himself is called «ἐνθεος φίλος».<sup>11</sup>

Now, as would be expected, Proclus, too, uses the terms ἐνθεος ἐραστής and ἔρωσ interchangeably with divine φίλος and φιλία, perhaps in a more systematic manner than Plato does.<sup>12</sup> This is also important because of its consistency with the view of the divine lover as non-egoist and providential towards the beloved.<sup>13</sup> Of course, it is true that the Successor also sometimes praises friendship in a quite Aristotelian manner.<sup>14</sup> However, the above identification allows him to illustrate the lover's positive disposition towards the beloved using the vocabulary of friendship. Consider the following example: “[B]y addressing the subject of disproof as ‘dear’ (φίλον), he [sc. Socrates] anticipates the wound by his affection (τῇ οἰκειώσει) and at the same time shows that for him a purpose of purification is friendship, because ‘no god is ill-disposed to men, therefore neither does he [sc. Socrates]

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<sup>10</sup> See also the relevant note ad loc. in Rowe C. J. 1988: 188.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Plat. *Phdr.* 255b6-7; cf. also *ibid.* b1-2 and 253c5.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. the following instances: on Alc. 36,15; 38,8; 40,11; 140,7; 134,12, the last one contrasting the inspired lover («ἐνθέου φίλου») with the common one («πρὸς τὸν πολλὸν ἐραστήν»). Cf. also the similar case of Alcinous' *Handbook* with a short prehistory in Dillon J., “A Platonist *Ars Amatoria*”, *The Classical Quarterly*, 44: 2, 1994, pp. 388 (and 392). On the other hand, Collette-Dučić B. in Stern-Gillet S. – Gurtler G. M., SJ, (ed.), 2014: 87-116, 87 and 94-95 stresses that for the Stoics a friendly relation is only between equals (that is the sages), while love is the asymmetrical relation of a sage for a young boy appearing to be beautiful. (Cf. also *ibid.* 91ff.) Stoic friendship is the aim and effect of Stoic love.

<sup>13</sup> For this see Vasilakis D. A., 2014: e.g. 94-136.

<sup>14</sup> See for example on Alc. 109,3-6: “for friends have the same relationship (λόγος) with each other;... Further, friendship is between good men of serious purpose (ἀγαθῶν καὶ σπουδαίων), but among villains moral character is not in evidence”. Cf. also *ibid.* 221,16-222,2: “...This is the aim of virtue as a whole, so the Pythagoreans assert and also Aristotle who rightly observed that ‘when all people are friends we have no need of justice,’ and ‘mine’ and ‘thine’ are annulled, but ‘when everyone is just we still have need of friendship’ to unite us.” For references to the relevant works see Westerink's critical apparatus ad loc. and O'Neill's nn.416 and 417. From the again huge literature on Aristotle on friendship see Stern-Gillet S., 1995 and Smith Pangle L., 2003; with specific reference to Aristotle's overlooked *Eudemian Ethics* see the relevant articles in Leigh F., 2012.

do anything of this sort out of ill-humour (δυσνοία),<sup>15</sup> as he has observed in the *Theaetetus*,<sup>16</sup> and because among the gods the agent of purification extends its operation to the imperfect out of goodness, not out of estrangement towards them.”<sup>17</sup> What is striking about this passage is that, following the characteristic Proclean strategy of drawing parallels between Socrates-Alcibiades and the ontological hierarchy, it applies the terms of friendship to (higher) godly and (lower) human entities,<sup>18</sup> although famously Aristotle had declared that man cannot be friends with god, since there is no equality between them.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, Proclus will be

<sup>15</sup> Cf. also Plat. *Phdr.* 255b4: “...the goodwill (εὐνοία) that he experiences at close quarters from his lover amazes the beloved,...”; cf. Aristotle, *EN*, IX.5,1167a3-4: “Goodwill (εὐνοία) seems, then, to be a beginning (ἀρχή) of friendship”, (almost identical to idem, *EE*, VII.7,1241a12 and 14), and *EN*, VIII.2,1155b33-34: “goodwill when it is reciprocal being friendship”.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Plat. *Theaetetus*, 151d1-2.

<sup>17</sup> On Alc. 228,23-229,4.

<sup>18</sup> In this light we should interpret the ascriptions of «φιλανθρωπία» (and «φιλάνθρωπον»: ‘well-disposition towards man’) to Socrates (in on Alc. 312,10 and 81,3 respectively; cf. the use of Socrates’ «φιλοφροσύνη»-‘friendliness’ ibid. 25,7 and 26,7). Being a word widely used by Christian authors, e.g. Dionysius the Areopagite (cf. Vasilakis D. A., 2014: 242, n.118), Plato uses the adjective in the superlative («φιλανθρωπότατος») for Eros in Aristophanes’ speech in the *Symposium*, 189c8-d1, and in its basic form for god Cronus in Plat. *Laws*, 713d6, whereas the substantive «φιλανθρωπία» is ascribed to Socrates in Plat. *Euthyphro*, 3d7. What is more, the word is included in the academic *Definitions*, 412e11-13: “love of humanity, or kindness; the easy-going character state of being friendly to people; the state of being helpful to people; the trait of gratefulness; memory, together with helpfulness”. Finally, let us not forget that according to the *Symposium*, 212a6, the man who has ascended to Beauty becomes «θεοφιλής» (‘beloved by gods’; cf. also the use of the same word in Plat. *Resp.* VI, 501c1, id. *Philebus*, 39e11 and a statement from Socrates’ exchange with Thrasymachus in id. *Resp.* I, 352b1-2, according to which a just person is friend of the gods.).

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Aristotle, *EN*, VIII.7,1158b35-1159a5: “...gods...surpass us most decisively in all good things... when one party is removed to a great distance (πολὺ δὲ χωρισθέντος), as God is, the possibility of friendship ceases”, since “friendship is said to be equality”(«λέγεται γὰρ φιλότης ἰσότης»: ibid. 1157b36; cf. *EE*, VII.6,1240b2 and ibid. VII.9,1241b11-13) and, hence, “perfect friendship is the friendship of men who are good,



in a position to ground the thought that “if... all belongs to the gods, all belongs also to good men (σπουδαίων)”<sup>20</sup> on the assumption of the well-known Pythagorean maxim that “the possessions of friends are held in common”.<sup>21</sup>

These differences from Aristotle ultimately stem from Proclus’ fundamental equation of Eros with Friendship qua divine entities.<sup>22</sup> For our present purposes it suffices to say that when in the Commentary the Successor is confronted with two distinct traditions with respect to the god of Friendship («φίλιος»),<sup>23</sup> the one in favour of φίλιος Zeus

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and alike in excellence” (: *EN*, 1156b7-8; cf. *ibid.* 1160a7-8 and 1161a33-36: “where there is nothing common to ruler and ruled there is not friendship either, since there is not justice; e.g. between craftsman and tool, soul and body, master and slave”). This Aristotelian conception is consistent with the Stagirite’s view of the Unmoved Mover. On the other hand, see *EN*, X.8,1179a30-31, where, due to the wise man’s intellectual ‘assimilation to god’, it is declared that “[h]e, therefore, is the dearest to the gods (θεοφιλέστατος)”. In this case Aristotle uses in the superlative the very adjective used (in the positive) by Diotima/Socrates/Plato, when it is declared that the man who will have ascended to the Beautiful, presumably through the Theaetetan ‘assimilation to god’, will be ‘beloved by the gods’ (Plat. *Symp.* 212a6; cf. also *id.* *Tim.* 53d7). In what way Aristotle is near to the Neo-Platonic sense will be clearer in what follows. Finally, it is worth mentioning that, the friendship-theory of the *Eudemian Ethics* is interestingly different in some respects from the respective ‘Nicomachean’ one.

<sup>20</sup> On Alc. 165,3 and 2. Of course, this statement should rather be read by way of analogy and to the extent that the σπουδαίοι partake in/are assimilated to the godly realm. A good guide to understand this is the following passage from *ibid.* 172,4-11.

<sup>21</sup> On Alc. 165,2-3: «κοινὰ γὰρ τὰ φίλων»; cf. O’Neill’s n.327 (and Westerink’s apparatus ad loc.) for references to Euripides, *Orestes*, 735 and Porphyry, *De Vita Pythagorae*, 33. This maxim appears quite a few times in Plato (see *Lysis*, 207c10; *Resp.* 424a1-2&449c5; *Laws*, 739c2 and, most notably at the end of the *Phaedrus*, 279c6-7. Cf. also *id.* *Gorgias*, 507e5-6, although «κοινωνία» might have a more general sense there.) For Aristotle see *EN*, VIII.9,1159b31-32, *EE*, VII.2,1237b33 and *ibid.* 1238a16. Finally, see the strong resemblance of this Proclean syllogism with one by Diogenes the Cynic apud Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae Philosophorum*, 37,5-7; (cf. also *ibid.* 72,1-3).

<sup>22</sup> For more on this ontological issue see Vasilakis D. A., 2014: 192-199.

<sup>23</sup> See on Alc. 232,10-234,5.

and the other of god Eros,<sup>24</sup> Proclus characteristically unites/‘contracts’ the two, claiming that “Love is contained within Zeus”.<sup>25</sup> Sometimes friendship seems to apply more to instances of a ‘horizontal’ union within one stratum of reality, hence between quasi-equal entities,<sup>26</sup> whereas eros, denoting the deficiency of an entity, fits better a vertical scheme, in which lower strata of reality desire what lies beyond them.<sup>27</sup> Proclus thinks of friendship when speaking of love and vice versa.<sup>28</sup>

On the other hand, Proclus’ divergence from Aristotle, as to the possibility of friendship between gods and humans, is not radical, since the Successor holds that there is an ontological hierarchy. Not only that, but he also thinks that the hierarchical scheme is a condition for the possibility of (productive) love/friendship between entities of different levels. This can be inferred from passages like the following: “The lover, then, must pay heed to any one fine point in the beloved in order that he may be both more perfect and

<sup>24</sup> Cf. *ibid.* 233,11-12: «τῆς γὰρ φιλίας αἴτιος ὁ Ἔρως». See also how Proclus introduces Empedocles’ divine principle of *φιλία* (see B29 Diels) in on Alc. 113,13-21.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.* 233,15. I follow Westerink in writing «Ἔρως»/‘Love’ with the first letter capital, since it refers to the god Eros.

<sup>26</sup> See also the Aristotelian flavour (at least in its beginning and end) of *ibid.* 109,3-10.

<sup>27</sup> In fact, one possibility is not mentioned here, i.e. that of vertical-downwards eros. One could propose that Proclus had better use the term eros -implying deficiency and strong aspiration- for an entity’s upwards tension, whereas to the providential one he could have applied the sole (and ‘calmer’) term *φιλία*. Still, this is a device that Proclus does not choose to exploit, since he calls both the lover and the beloved ‘friends’. What is more, it would be at odds with the usual vocabulary of the relevant texts of Plato’s era, where we have seen (cf. nn.8 and 12) that the lover is supposed to have ‘eros’ for his beloved, although the latter’s affection to the former was termed ‘friendship’. Nonetheless, Proclus hardly uses the verb «φιλεῖν» to describe the aspiration of lower entities for the higher realm. In this respect of upwards striving eros has a prominence, although it does not exclude *φιλία* from its semantic scope, but it just makes it much tenser.

<sup>28</sup> See the interweaving of the two notions early in the Commentary in on Alc. 26,2-5, alluding to *De Oraculis Chaldaicis*, 25 (Kroll; cf. O’Neill’s n.50) and Plat. *Tim.* 32c1-4 and 43a2.

immediately superior. For in this way one would lead upwards, the other be led upwards, and the former would exercise providence with some fellow-feeling (μετά τινος συμπαθείας).”<sup>29</sup> Hence, Proclus of course does not object to the thought that gods are superior entities, and thus surpass human beings in excellence, but he follows an ontological reading of the *Phaedrus*’ type relation, where, as we have seen, a) the lover and the beloved stand for entities of different ontological strata, and b) they are also called ‘friends’.

However, even in that respect Proclus is not very far from Aristotle’s perfect type of friendship between good, and hence equal, men. The Stagirite assumes that there is a large gap between mortals and god(s), something which is consistent with his ontology-cosmological philosophy. Nevertheless, a characteristic of especially the late Neoplatonists is the attempt to fill this vertical gap by postulating strata of mediating entities, i.e. levels of reality which can bridge the gap between the One and the material cosmos. Now, what preserves the cohesion of this vertical continuum is the similarity between the entities in different strata.<sup>30</sup> According to the *Elements of Theology*, a principle

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<sup>29</sup> On Alc. 140,17-20. Cf. ibid. 123,8 and 12-13: “Well then,... the agent (τὸ ποιοῦν) must surpass the patient (τοῦ πάσχοντος) in essential being”. What is more, apart from being a precondition for friendship, the hierarchical scheme still remains after the elevation of both lovers, as the following passage suggests (ibid. 116,20-117,1): “it is never lawful for effects to escape from their causes and rise superior to the nature of the latter.” Cf. also ibid. 146,1-3 and Proclus, *The Elements of Theology* (henceforth *El.Th.*), proposition 124, ll. 26-28. ‘Sympatheia’ is an ontological term as well, correlated with (universal) «φιλία», used by the Stoics and then by the Neoplatonists; cf. infra n.35 and Dodds E. R., 1963: 216.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Procl. *El.Th.* 32,6-7: “But all things are bound together by likeness (συνδεῖ δὲ πάντα ἡ ὁμοιότης)...”. Cf. also in Proclus’ fragment from *De sacrificio et magia*, 148,23-149,1. NB that Proclus does not avoid the hierarchization of even the horizontal strata. Cf. Procl. *El.Th.* 110,11-12: “For not all things are of equal worth, even though they be of the same cosmic order”. Consequently, it is more faithful to Proclus to go with Dodds E. R., 1963: passim, who speaks of the horizontal strata as “transverse”. Thus, it is perhaps easier to understand why Proclus so

of the procession, and hence of the complementary reversion, is that it takes place through like terms.<sup>31</sup> The same idea is reiterated and related to the issue of eros (/friendship) in the following passage<sup>32</sup> from the *Alcibiades' Commentary*: “[W]hat is completely uncoordinated (ἄσύντακτον) has no communion with its inferior, but love finds its subsistence among those who are able to commune with each other, since it itself is perfected through the likeness of the inferior to the superior, through the uniting (συνδέσεως) of the less perfect with the more perfect and through the reversion of what is made complete to the causes of completion.”

We can deduce from this passage that actual and direct friendship/eros can take place only between adjacent entities, viz. between the cause and its immediate effect; that is, between the most similar possible entities. As far as ascending eros is concerned it is true that every entity aspires to the Good. Yet it actually approaches it through the former's union to its immediate progenitor, as the *Elements* claim.<sup>33</sup> Further, as far as downwards eros is concerned, we can assume that it directly relates adjacent entities, whereas providential eros for even remoter beings should be thought of as indirect. In other words, an entity can be providential for its offspring; but since the off-spring gives rise to further entities, the providential preservation of the former entails providential preservation of the latter, too.<sup>34</sup> Consequently,

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easily conflates *eros* with *filia*, and that even a horizontal friendship of the Aristotelian ideal type cannot take place in Proclus' system.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Procl. *El.Th.*, 28,10-11 and 28-34. Cf. also *ibid.* 125,10-13 and 32,3-4: “All reversion is accomplished through a likeness of the reverting terms to the goal of reversion”.

<sup>32</sup> On Alc. 140,20-141,4. Cf. also Procl. *El.Th.* 123,7-9.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. on Alc. 28,30-32.

<sup>34</sup> According to Proclus an entity already contains its descendants κατ' αἰτίαν (: as their cause). Cf. Procl. *El.Th.* 65 and on Alc. 146,1-2: “the superior powers everywhere in a simple manner comprehend (περιεληφέναι) their inferior”. Cf. also Procl. *El.Th.* 144,21. Hence, the higher entity ‘knows’ its inferior(s) in the manner appropriate to the former, not the latter. See *ibid.* 124,10-13, with numerous parallels in On Alc. (e.g. 87,12-17); cf. also Procl. *El.Th.* 121,10-12. An interesting consequence, exploited by Medieval and early modern philosophers -cf. Dodds E. R., 1963: 266, n. ad loc.-, is that it gives an answer (perhaps

from Aristotle's ideal case of 'friendly' equality (of good properties), Proclus switches to the idea of 'friendly-erotic' similarity.<sup>35</sup> The divergence is a small one, since equality does not exclude similarity.<sup>36</sup> What constitutes a difference is the Proclean introduction of *hierarchical* similarity as a precondition for the (actual and direct) friendship or love to take place.<sup>37</sup> What we see here is then a Proclean synthesis of Platonic and Aristotelian perspectives, which in itself is the further outcome of Proclus' equation of ἔρωϝ with φιλία.

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unacceptable to us) to Vlastos' objection about the individual, qua individual, as an object of love in Plato. Vlastos G. (ed.), 1973: passim, e.g. 24, 26, 28-33 observes that what the lover admires in the beloved is not his particular beauty, but the degraded image of the Form of the Beautiful; hence, the lover does not really appreciate the particularity of the beloved, but aspires to the abstraction of the Form. But a higher entity's more abstract mode of knowing the inferior is inevitable and necessary due to their ontological difference. For the Neoplatonists the fact that the superior does not know the inferior in the mode of being of the lower is not a mark of deficiency, but denotes the superiority of the former. In this way the Neoplatonists give their answer to Plato's *Parmenides*' 'greatest difficulty', and can explain why the philosophizing of the *Republic* can have knowledge, and not mere belief, of matters pertaining to the intra-mundane/political realm. However, for a view (by Butler E. P.) that ascribes almost the highest position to individuality in Proclus' system (cf. the Henads) see Hankey W. J., "God's care for human individuals; what Neoplatonism gives to a Christian Doctrine of Providence", *Quaestiones Disputatae*, 2: 1 & 2, 2011, pp. 33-36 and Hankey W. J., "Neoplatonist Surprises: The Doctrine of Providence of Plotinus and his Followers both Conscious and Unconscious", *Dionysius*, XXVII, 2009, pp. 122 and esp. 124-125; cf. also Butler E. P., 2014.

<sup>35</sup> The history of «ὁμοιότηϝ» and the "similia similibus" theory, starts already with the Presocratics (e.g. Empedocles; cf. also Dodds E. R., "The *Parmenides* of Plato and the Origin of the Neoplatonic 'One'", *The Classical Quarterly*, 22: 3/4, 1928, p. 141), and has been frequently evoked since then; see for instance the relevant sections of Plato's *Lysis*. Cf. also Plat. *Resp.* IV, 425c2 and id. *Gorgias*, 510b2-4 (with the note ad loc. of Dodds E. R., 1959: 344).

<sup>36</sup> See also the Aristotelian reverberations in on Alc. 230,16-231,2. In *EN*, VIII.7,1156b7-8 Aristotle himself speaks of similarity with respect to virtue between good men: "perfect friendship is the friendship of men who are good, and alike in excellence (καὶ κατ' ἀρετὴν ὁμοίων)".

<sup>37</sup> As to the aforementioned claim about humans being friends with gods, for Proclus the ascription of 'god' belongs to a wide range of entities.

## Abstract

Various forms of Aristotelianism are interwoven into Neoplatonism. The present paper verifies this verdict with reference to the relation between friendship and love. Proclus' Commentary on the *First Alcibiades* serves my basis. Proclus, uses the terms from Plato's *Phaedrus*: ἔνθεος ἔραστῆς and ἔρωσ interchangeably with divine φίλος and φιλία, but in a more systematic manner than Plato, while it is also true that he sometimes praises friendship in a quite Aristotelian manner. However, Proclus applies the terms of friendship to (higher) godly and (lower) human entities, although famously Aristotle declared that man cannot be friends with god, since there is no equality between them. My discussion shows that Proclus' divergence from Aristotle, as to the possibility of friendship between gods and humans, is not radical, since the Successor holds that there is an ontological hierarchy. My conclusion is that from Aristotle's ideal case of 'friendly' equality, Proclus switches to the idea of 'friendly-erotic' similarity.

## Keywords

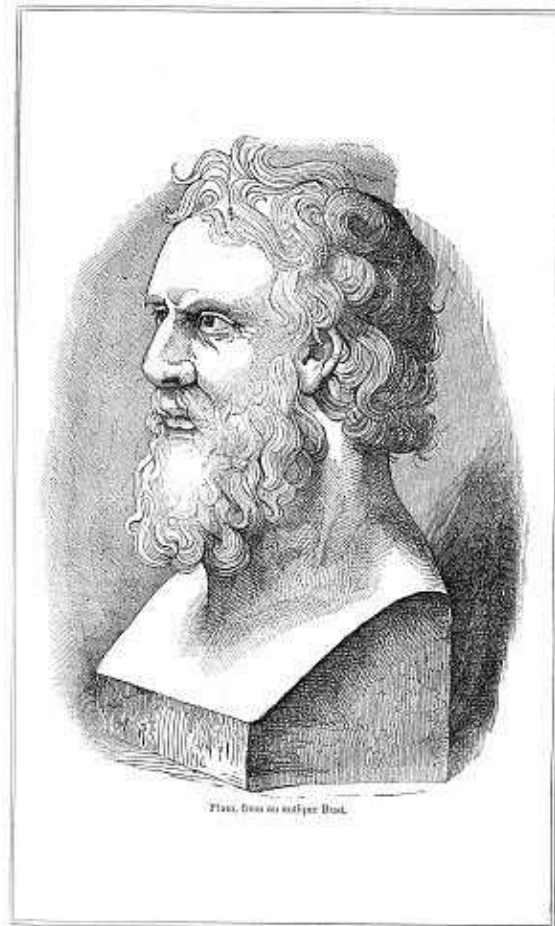
equality, eros, friendship, hierarchy, horizontal, love, vertical

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The spectrality of Democracy  
From post-foundational political thought to  
the Levinasian ethics  
*Some critical reflections on the question of  
'the political' in late modernity*

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From politics to 'the political' through the Weimar moment

The contemporary political theory has been transformed into a political onto-theology, i.e. a philosophical, epistemological and ethical combination of political metaphysics, political ontology and political theology. Actually, gradually, from 1970s onwards, the postwar political theory does not primarily concern the surficial aspects of the political phenomenon itself, but its deep roots; its abyssal origins; its chaotic foundations; or, by and large, the invisible and almost post-metaphysical and/or post-onto-theological attributes of politics. For example, the seminal oeuvre of thinkers like Claude Lefort, Cornelius Castoriadis, Jean Baudrillard, Jacques Derrida, Emmanuel Levinas and Giorgio Agamben, to name only few of them, are without

doubt very characteristic of this new approach of the power in the contemporary social and political theory. In fact, post-foundational political thought must be seen as the social and political theory about power in the era of late modernity. When the time is out of joint, to memorize some of the amazing words of Hamletian Shakespeare, political metaphysics is back so powerful and fertile (Marchart, 2007).

This massive philosophical, theoretical and epistemological transformation of the social, political and ethical thought took place for the first time during the Interwar period (1919-1939) within the intellectual ranks of the so-called Weimar Renaissance in Germany. In fact, Weimar era does not represent only the hard core of the so-called Continental Philosophy but the specific intellectual field within which a very radical paradigm shift was held concerning the nature and the function of both modern politics and ethics. It goes without saying that this strong metaphysical and epistemological change came to the fore due to the brutality of First World War (1914-1918) and its enormous consequences on the minds and the bodies of ordinary people but first of all on the sensitive senses of that era's great thinkers. Weimar era could be considered as the turning point of contemporary neo-capitalism till the so-called late modernity. In this critical period of modernity the problem of evil and the relevant question of Theodicy took once more a very essential character within the reflexive ranks of European philosophy. Political metaphysics was once more ante portas (Gordon and McCormick, 2013).

As a matter of fact, this philosophical, theological, theoretical and epistemological turn has been stigmatized by the controversial figure of Martin Heidegger (1889-1976). By changing radically the meaning and the content of traditional metaphysics of the presence, using the crucial concept of foundational ontology, that is to say the ontology of the foundations beyond foundations, something like post-foundations or abyssal origins, the eminent German thinker in fact completely challenged the linear and institutional perspective of conventional political and ethical thought. Paraphrasing Pierre Bourdieu, it could be claimed that

Heidegger's foundational ontology opened up the chaotic space of the political and moral possibilities of modern reality (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 40). According to this Heidegger-inspired hermeneutical ontology nothing could be taken for granted anymore. Every political and ethical institution especially democracy itself should resist not simply against the threat of Totalitarianism but first and foremost against its immanent evilness. This democratic paradox is the new fate of democracy after Auschwitz (Mouffe, 2009).

From then on until today, the crucial and in most of the times thorny question of politics does not concern, as aforementioned above, the typical surficial elements of the political phenomenon as such, for example political parties, parliaments, leadership, pressure groups and the like, but the metaphysical, ontological, theological and moral origins of politics. Thus, it is no coincidence that in the contemporary terminology of political theory, this Heidegger-like ontological difference between ontology and the ontic beings, or between the Being with capital 'B' and the particular entities (human or whatever else), has been transformed into the political difference between 'the political' and politics. As far as Jean-Luc Nancy is concerned, politics (*la politique*) is about the social value of polis, whereas 'the political' (*le politique*) concerns the existential value of it (Nancy, 2014, p. 17). Thereby, contrary to the concept of politics, the term 'the political' chiefly concerns the invisible or metaphysical sides of politics or, in Heidegger's terms, what is far beyond the traditional metaphysics of presence (Heidegger, 2000). Instead of political surface, political theorists who study in-depth the political origins of politics, i.e. 'the political' itself, are concerned with the ontological, phenomenological and theological aspects of the political phenomenon on the whole.

The last decades, contemporary political theory is interested in political foundations. The whole problématique is about the ontological aspects of political foundations themselves. Is there a concrete political foundation (for example God, King, State or the People to name only few of them) or the political foundations must be perceived as an open and nearly empty place of actual creation and at the

same time unimaginable catastrophe? This very critical question about the openness and emptiness of political foundations brought to the fore the equally critical question of a post-foundational political thought. Undoubtedly, the most characteristic example is the work of the eminent political thinker Claude Lefort (1924-2010). The French political theorist claims that since French Revolution (1789) onwards political power must be defined as an empty place (Lefort, 1988, p. 17). Actually, from the beginning of modern times until today we have witnessed the lack of a stable political foundation (e.g. King as the vicar of God on earth). Openness and emptiness of political power brought to light the ambivalent character of modern democracy. Since then, democracy is regarded as an empty signifier. Laclau says that democratic society is precarious and impossible (Laclau, 1990, p. 89 and Laclau, 1996, p. 46). For Derrida, democracy is defined only as a democracy-to-come (Derrida, 2005, p. 78). Wendy Brown claims that democracy's popularity depends on the openness and even vacuity of its meaning (Brown, 2011, p. 44).

According to today's basic political theories, democracy is an empty space. In other words, democracy is a political place without specific or concrete foundations. This kind of theoretical approach is called post-foundational political thought. For most contemporary political theorists, the dominant political subject of democracy, i.e. the People, is actually an empty and open ontological field; something like a chaos or an abyss; full of energy, ready for creation or catastrophe at the same time. In fact, the People with capital 'P' is perceived as a full negativity. Therefore, it is quite difficult to define the ontological characteristics of the People in democracy. Ontologically speaking, the People can be seen as the metonymy of the Being. The People is the basic democratic political foundation but without a specific ontological nature. In Heideggerian terms, the People is just an *Abgrund*, i.e. an abyssal foundation or a foundation without onto-theological origins. So, 'the political' is the definition of political openness and emptiness. This critical

philosophical and theoretical assumption dominates within the ranks of contemporary political theory (Marttila, 2015).

### **Towards a post-foundational political thought in late modernity**

The so-called post-foundational political thought must be regarded as the theoretical analysis concerning democracy in the globalized neo-capitalistic late modernity. According to Claude Lefort political power is now an absolutely empty place. This condition of democratic emptiness and openness represents the fact that modern power has no longer a stable and solid foundation. For Jean Baudrillard, Western democracy dies slowly within a paradoxical fatal game between carnivalization and cannibalization (Baudrillard, 2010). Since French Revolution, the political power does not base either on an invisible metaphysical or theological foundation or a visible political basis like the presence of the King during the Middle Ages. The God and the King, as the vicar of God on earth, are not the stable reference points of political power anymore.

In this vein, Lefort claims further that in modernity we live in a political environment without stable principles or values or without perpetual or eternal certainties (Lefort, 1988, p. 19). Paraphrasing Zygmunt Bauman, it could be said that since 1789 we have been immersed in a social and political context of liquidity (Bauman, 2000). In fact, this fluidity is the substance of post-foundational condition. Power is perceived as a liquid phenomenon without a nature or content. The only condition that dominates throughout modernity is the condition of silent masses (Baudrillard, 2007). But now masses and the People are not typical subjects but constitute a contingent negative form of energy full of creativity and destruction.

According to Jean Baudrillard, masses are seen as a paradoxical self-catastrophic power. He defines this strange democratic phenomenon by using the term implosion. The popular power in modernity is conceived as an internal

explosion; as a definitely chaotic situation; as an abyssal process where the People as a sovereign power is frenzy moved between the onto-theological poles of democratic liberalism and authoritarian Totalitarianism. In this specific regard, democracy and Totalitarianism are not considered as two distinctive political regimes, but as the two polar moments on the historical continuum of modern political power itself. It is no accident that Nicos Poulantzas, in his seminal book about Fascism, defines Totalitarianism as a mass phenomenon, where the People as a sovereign power moves straight towards self-catastrophe. The leadership is only the tip of the iceberg: i.e. the surficial expression of a self-burning mass (Poulantzas, 2018).

In the long history of modern political thought only Niccolò Machiavelli and Baruch Spinoza have seen so clearly the demonic aspects of popular power. Thus, both of them tried to control this negative almost self-catastrophic energy by using different institutional techniques. Machiavelli used either the balancing anti-power of hegemon, i.e. the realist Machiavelli, or the self-conscious citizen, i.e. the republican Machiavelli (Lefort, 2012), while Spinoza followed gradually a realistic approach strongly supporting the balancing power of a strong state (Balibar, 2008). The demonic negativity of modern popular power, which balances between heaven and hell, is illustrated in the phenomenon of post-foundationalism. According to this theoretical approach, nothing is stable and forever. Especially, democracy itself is seen now as an absolutely fragile political regime, ready to follow even the historical course of self-catastrophe. Weimar Republic, in the interwar Germany, is only the ideal historical example of this kind of theoretical analysis (Kaes, Jay, Dimendberg, 1995).

To the extent that there is not a stable and solid political foundation, popular power could be described as a chameleon, which changes facades unstoppably. Within the Freudian depth of modern history, masses keep a negative face without a specific positive determination. This is a sort of a political *theologia negativa* or a negative political theology. In this case, the People must be regarded as a *deus*

absconditus, that is to say an absent or a hidden God (Mjaaland, 2016). Cornelius Castoriadis analyses further this characteristic element of democracy strongly claiming that in the epicenter of democratic regime dominates the abyssal power of an imaginary self-institution (Castoriadis, 1997). This radical imaginary is actually a negative demon which lacks any aspect of positivity. In Marx's lexicon, it could be said that the popular power is a process of a creative destruction. This extremely openness and emptiness of modern popular political power has transformed the game of politics into a very hazardous phenomenon. Politics is actually a risky procedure. Nothing can be taken for granted. Everything is under question. Therefore, this contingency and indeterminacy makes politics both appealing and terrorizing.

Thus, post-foundational political thought concerns a kind of political power which entirely lacks any metaphysical or ontological foundation. In other words, this post-foundational character of modern political power in late modernity, especially when it has invested the form of sovereign People, is neo-capitalist democracy itself. Baudrillard speaks about the onto-theological condition of democratic turbo-capitalism, where power is governed by a fatal self-catastrophic agony (Baudrillard, 2010a). For most of the post-foundational political theorists, democracy is by definition an empty and open space without stable and permanent certainties. As we have seen above, this democratic openness and emptiness is called by Chantal Mouffe as democratic paradox. Democracy has a very paradoxical character. While it is open, actually it is always under challenge from inside. This paradoxical and radical immanentism is the onto-theological ambivalent expression of this *sui generis* character of modern democratic power (Robbins, 2011).

On the other hand, historically speaking, each time we tried and eventually managed to close, cancel or reduce this balancing element of democratic paradoxity, democracy led to the brutal and violent hands of Totalitarianism. From this point of view, democracy looks like an ontological and also theological or metaphysical condition of human freedom.

Like the mythical Prometheus or Sisyphus, the modern People as a sovereign power is realized as a hard and chiefly continuous agonism between goodness and evilness. Actually, democracy today is realized as a paradoxical agonism against itself. In the fruitful intellectual ranks of contemporary republican and radical political theory, this genre of Promethean and/or Sisyphean agonism is defined as democratic agonism (Mouffe, 2005, p. 1).

### **Democratic spectrality and the onto-theological question of Totalitarianism**

The question of Totalitarianism brings to the fore the critical issue of democracy itself. Claude Lefort's contribution remains crucial within the ranks of contemporary democratic theory. For Lefort, the element of a fundamental indeterminacy is demonstrated for the first time clearly in the French Revolution (1789). From then on, the problem of political power does not concern the materiality of institutions or state apparatuses, i.e. the corpus of Jesus (Corpus Christi) or the mortal body of the King, but its symbolical almost linguistic and hermeneutical character. Since French Revolution, political power is transformed into a symbolic phenomenon and by extension democracy into a Hamletian spectre of ambiguity and contingency. Actually, this symbolic entity of democratic political power is the so-called 'the political'. Lefort's strong influences from the French phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty led his analysis about democracy to a visible/invisible pattern. Politics is the visible part of power while 'the political' is the invisible one (Lefort, 1986, p. 292).

These absolutely unique ontological, theological and phenomenological attributes of modern political power give democracy its symbolical oddity. Lefort claims that democracy represents a new type of social form (Lefort, 1988, p. 11). At this stage of his analysis, he brings focus to Ernst Kantorowicz's seminal work 'The King's Two Bodies' (Kantorowicz, 2016). Therefore, both his political ontology



and phenomenology are turned into a political theology. His main argument is as follows: while in the pre-modern societies the foundation of political power had a strong, stable and permanent metaphysical or theological or transcendental character (God or the King, the vicar of God on earth), in the modern social form of democracy power has an open and empty symbolical character. In terms of linguistics, democracy is an empty signifier. The physical body of the King after his execution during the French Revolution gave its place to his spiritual body by transforming political power into a symbolical entity or an empty sign without a specific referent. But even though masses or the People or the multitude have replaced the King in the position of political power, democratic multitude seems like a Hamletian spectre without concrete characteristics (Kantorowicz, 2016, p. 314).

Although the King is dead, the power, in the sense of a social form, i.e. democracy, never dies (see the well-known motto 'The King is dead; long live the King'). In contrast to the mortal human body, power and especially democracy is perceived as an immortal and symbolical entity which reproduces itself in perpetuity (Kantorowicz, 2016, p. 193). This constituent split between political materiality and political symbolism brought to light the lack of social unity. Democratic society is a splitted and fragmented body. In this respect, Laclau speaks about the impossibility of society (Laclau, 1990, p. 89). Lefort claims that this image of political power draws its origins from Machiavelli (Lefort, 2012, p. 240).

This internal tension of democracy has a *sui generis* character: while it keeps democratic society in a condition of a perpetual struggle, at the same time it provides it with the quality of an open and free society. Drawing her theoretical inspiration from Lefort, Mouffe defines this condition as democratic paradox (Mouffe, 2009). Both openness and emptiness of democracy are stemmed from its profound ontological and phenomenological indeterminacy and contingency (Howard, 2002). Democracy is conceived as a human condition of class difference and social division. For Jacques Rancière, democratic politics is the politics of

dissensus (Rancière, 2010). However, at the same time, this fundamental social clash constitutes its real ontological, symbolical and institutional power. For this reason, democracy is regarded as an open, empty, ambiguous, risky and absolutely indeterminate social form. The close of this open and explosive system suggests the end of democracy; the advent of Totalitarianism; and in fact the end of politics as such. This is the best lesson we have learned from Hannah Arendt (Arendt, 2004).

This ontological, phenomenological, theological and ethical radicality of modern politics signifies the radicality of democracy itself. Democracy is no longer a typical political regime. It is a paradoxical social form. Thus, if French Revolution is the archetypal model of Democratic Revolution then democracy must be seen as a perpetual revolutionary condition (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001, p. 159). Democracy behaves like a spectre which refuses to be visible. It is always a negativity. It is a strange social entity that lacks any material essence. Its only substance is that it has not any specific content. It is an empty space. Its unity is a chimera; an illusion. It is a spectre or an ideal that is never realized. In Derrida's jargon, democracy is always to-come (a-venir). Hence, democracy is understood more than an agonistic exercise than something that is taken for granted (Mouffe, 2005a, p. 51). In fact, by praising democratic indetermination, Lefort praises the Sisyphean democratic agonism. Democracy is a continuous revolutionary praxis which is governed by its ontological frenzy to radically overturn itself. Democracy is a spectre without any bodily foundation. It is an empty sign full of temporary faces and flashing figures. In fact, it is the realization of post-foundational condition. In Heideggerian lexicon, it is an *Abgrund*, i.e. an abyssal foundation.

In the kernel of this democratic spectrality, indeterminacy and contingency, the self-catastrophic situation of Totalitarianism is always hidden. So, Totalitarianism must be seen only as the evil side of democratic spectrality (Lefort, 1986, p. 273). In Freud's lexicon, Totalitarianism is something like a democratic uncanny; this *unheimlich* (or the

evilness of Id) that comes back in order to terrorize our democratic selves (Freud, 2003). Totalitarianism is our monstrous self. It is no coincidence that Nicos Poulantzas defines Fascism as a mass phenomenon par excellence (Poulantzas, 2018). It is the historical moment when the People or the masses or the multitude commits its (public) suicide. Actually, it is the moment when populism leads democracy to its self-catastrophe. The populist leader is only the tip of the iceberg. Behind its shadow the frantic crowd is led towards implosion (Baudrillard, 2007 and Baudrillard, 2010).

The spectrality of democracy denotes its empty and open character. From this point of view, democracy is marked by the agony of its ultimate foundations. Jean Baudrillard defines this phenomenon as the agony of democratic power (Baudrillard, 2010a). Thus, if the People constitute the ultimate foundation of democracy, then, actually it is a foundation without ultimate foundations. In Spinozian terms, it could be supported that the democratic multitude could be seen as a collective conatus; or as a sort of an all-powerful energy; or as an impulse without ethical restrictions; or, in the final analysis, as a Freud-like instinct that is balancing between eros (i.e. creation) and death (i.e. catastrophe).

### **Democratic public sphere as exteriority: The didactic case of Levinasian ethics**

Refugee crisis poses the question of hospitality [or hos(ti)pitality in Derridean terms] as the main ethico-political question of a democratic public sphere in a globalized world. For Emmanuel Levinas, hospitality means personal and by extension, through the-so called ‘Third’ or the third person, political responsibility for the absolute Other. This is the quintessence of Levinasian ethical and political thought (Levinas, 1991). It is noteworthy that this heterodox metaphysical ethics does not concern conventional moralism or typical charity either in the case of personal ethics or in the case of political ethics. Instead, it concerns the foundation

of a public sphere or a democratic set up as an open threshold of justice. In Levinasian terms, this is a question about a difficult freedom, whether we focus on the case of host or on the case of foreigner (Levinas, 1997).

In the personal situation, we have a face to face justice, where we are totally responsible for the absolute Other. Our face to face ontological encounter in-the-world is the precondition of our human existence (Levinas, 2007). In the political context, Levinasian ethical philosophy of infinity and exteriority turns into a political theory of a democratic public space in a globalized world. This is the question of political justice or the question of 'the Third'. In this condition, our personal and unconditional face to face ethics turns into a political ethics among free and equal citizens. Our responsibility does not concern only the preserve of the absolute Other, but first and foremost it concerns its phenomenological and/or public appearance in the field of citizenship.

Practically speaking, in the frame of a state-like applied ethics, this twofold base of Levinasian moral and political thought means on the one hand, we have to open, unconditionally, our households to the absolute Other, and, on the other, we have to illuminate its concrete metaphysical and therefore ontological face by putting it in the middle of a democratic public sphere as a *primus into pares*. To put it in a nutshell, this thesis suggests that an efficient public policy on refugee question should not be determined only by the ethics of hospitality but must be mainly concerned with the critical question of citizenship. Thus, in the final analysis, the ontological inclusion of the absolute Other implies, apart from the ethical (i.e. interpersonal) recognition/respect of him/her, its political (i.e. collective) acceptance in the body politic of our well-ordered society. Undoubtedly, this is a form of ethico-political justice worthy of the name (Llewelyn, 2005, p. 125).

Even though it is strongly believed that Levinas is a definitely ethical thinker, his moral theory about the Other could be a proper manner for *re-defining* the meaning of democracy beyond the conventional wisdom (Levinas, 1994,

p. 12). At the end of the day, Levinasian ethics seems like a republican-like political theory, where our relationship with the Other is actually our relation with our fellow citizen. The most characteristic element of Levinas's ethical theory is that it is unfolded like an onto-theology of the Other. Contrary to the Western metaphysics, that advances the power of the visibility and/or presence, Levinas articulates his ethical argument around the element of invisibility and exteriority. Here, the Cartesian strength of knowledge and by extension of consciousness is losing its primary position, giving priority to the Other as a non tamed and domesticated being. The Other is not a cognitive part of our sovereign territory. Contrary to this assumption, the Other is always a foreigner; a stranger; or a strangeness, that is not included within our conventional visibility.

Levinasian Other comes from outside. It is an exteriority that appears in front of us only as a condition of proximity. Levinas's onto-theology must be seen as an ethical phenomenology that is constituted beyond the conventional standards of Western traditional metaphysics. Therefore, ontological proximity and phenomenological appearance are not conceived as plain tangible attributes of human being. In contrast, they are defined as an ethical commitment beyond essentialism. According to Levinas, proximity is the metonymy of responsibility for the Other. The Other is not considered as an epistemological theme of our privileged knowledge. Due to its ontological exteriority and absolute strangeness, the Other cannot be thematized. It remains always an authentic being; an original foreigner, like Socrates, who is the foreigner itself (Derrida, 2000, p. 13). Other's image is not a schema or a shape that it can be subscribed into our cognitive consciousness.

Ontogenesis of the Other takes place only as a non tamed face that approaches us from the region of infinity. This face-to-face ethics creates the condition of proximity as a threshold of democratic encounter. Levinas names this threshold responsibility for the Other. However, it is worth reminding that this condition is not a material one. It is a spectral one. It is an ethical one. It is a strong ethical

commitment beyond any kind of distance. Therefore, our responsibility for the Other is not a typical spatial phenomenon, that is exhausted within city walls, as in the case of the classical republican theory, but a responsibility that concerns the Other beyond space and time.

In this heterodox ethical approach, as Derrida has shown, the host is transformed into the hostage of the Other (Makris, 2015; Makris, 2017 and Makris, 2018). It could be said that Levinas builds the condition of a difficult and paradoxical freedom. Actually, freedom is realized through a hostageship. Freedom takes place as an unconditional responsibility for the Other. Theologically speaking, this freedom seems like altruism without conditions. Even though Levinas draws his inspiration from the long Jewish tradition of Talmud, his absolute altruism reminds the life of Jesus Christ. Beyond Aristotelian concept of political friendship, which equalizes people within polis, Levinas creates a passive relationship with the Other; an asymmetrical one; where freedom comes to the fore through an unconditional hostageship to the Other. Undoubtedly, this is an absolutely difficult freedom, because it presupposes an ontological and/or phenomenological passivity that moves on the edge of self-refusal. In fact, its fundamental precondition is the ontological denial of the Self. In this ontological struggle between 'the Self' and 'the Other', the former is a passive servitude of the latter.

To sum up: The eminent French thinker has built a strong theory of ethics and politics which is primarily a theory of a democratic exteriority. According to Levinas, ethics is seen as the first philosophy. Ethics does not regard moralism but a fundamental way to encounter the Other in-the-world. As far as Levinas is concerned, this philosophical ethics is defined in the onto-theological field of (self)reflexivity beyond the limitations of the traditional metaphysics of presence. Levinasian ethics is interested in infinity and exteriority. This pure or unconditional ethics for the infinite face poses the question of justice in the field of democratic politics. In Levinasian terminology, it puts the crucial problem of 'the Third'. Within the ethico-ontological horizon of 'the Third',

personal encounters turn into political, state and institutional relations.

In fact, through responsibility and hospitality, Levinas draws our attention to the major issue of justice in the democratic public sphere. From Levinasian perspective, public sphere is no longer seen as a conventional space of a Habermas-driven political or discursive communication (Makris, 2018a); or as a Kant-inspired inter-state diplomacy, but as an Agamben-like refugium for the ontological preserve of the absolute Other. What is at stake in late modernity can be formulated as follows: Is it possible, in a globalized world, full of refugees, stateless and homeless people, to speak about a Levinasian ethics? Or, to put it another way, is it possible to use Levinasian political ethics of responsibility and hospitality as a threshold in order to encounter the absolute Other?

Undoubtedly, this is a real challenge for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As a concluding remark here, it is worth noting that this thorny challenge does not concern our public happiness in an Arendtian viewpoint, but, most of all, our core faculty as human beings to feel really free by taking into serious consideration this unconditional responsibility for the Other. It is no coincidence that Levinas defines this special kind of liberation difficult freedom, meaning that the only way to set us free from our selfish Cartesian cogito is to take absolute Others life and death very seriously.

Thus, in the final analysis, what could be the utility of this sui generis ethical theory in the field of democracy? Is it possible to be the ideal model for a real political condition? This is a critical question to the extent that according to Aristotle democracy is the political regime of equals par excellence. Political friendship suggests that humans are equalized within polis. Levinas displays an aspect of friendship that is based on the element of a passive and unconditional responsibility for the Other. Could it be regarded as an ethical version of democracy or even a Christian one? Or, should it be perceived as a totally new ontological and phenomenological argument, beyond the conventional wisdom of Western political culture?

## ABSTRACT

Since 1970s, contemporary social and political theory has been developed more as a new political metaphysics than a typical branch of traditional political science. Transferring the center of gravity from ‘politics’ to ‘the political’, contemporary social and political theory has been deployed as a political onto-theology of democracy. Modern democratic form is considered as an empty and open social form. This democratic openness and emptiness demonstrates the risky character of the democratic phenomenon. The democratic paradox is based on the ambivalent and contingent character of modern democracy. Totalitarianism is seen now as the other face of democracy. This ontological and phenomenological immanentism of democracy denotes its really paradoxical almost spectral condition of political modernity itself.

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# *Philosophical Notes*

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JENSEITS DES SEINS,  
*ΕΠΕΚΕΙΝΑ ΤΗΣ ΟΥΣΙΑΣ*  
(Plat. *Polit.*, VI 509 b 9-10)

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Am Anfang glaubte ich, der Beweis der Antithese sei richtig, dann aber geriet ich in Aporien, wenn ich anerkannte, was ich bewiesen hatte. Dann versuchte ich, die These zu beweisen. Und jetzt ist deutlich geworden, welches von beiden Beweisen –denn ich glaube, man kann auf diesen Fall Aristoteles’s zweiwertige Logik anwenden– richtig ist. Dies zu beurteilen überlasse ich dem Leser. In der Dialektik ist jedoch ein formaler Widerspruch möglich<sup>1</sup>. Ich möchte hier jedoch noch eine wichtige Frage erörtern: Wenn die Idee des Guten die Ursache für alle Dinge ist, für ihr Erkenntwerden und für ihre Existenz, welche Funktion haben dann die anderen Ideen? Auf der einen Seite ist das Gute die Ursache aller Dinge (ἀρχὴ τοῦ παντὸς) auf der anderen aber fand ich zwei Stellen, wo die Wirkung des Guten eingeschränkt ist: *Rep.*, VII 517 c: «ἡ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἰδέα... συλλογιστέα εἶναι ὥς ἄρα πᾶσι πάντων αὕτη

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<sup>1</sup> ARIST., *Anal. Post.*, I 6, 75 a 18-27.

ὁρθῶν τε καὶ καλῶν αἰτία» und *Rep.*, II 379 b: «Οὐκ ἄρα πάντων γε αἴτιον τὸ ἀγαθόν, ἀλλὰ τῶν μὲν εἶ ἐχόντων αἴτιον, τῶν δὲ κακῶν ἀναίτιον»; 380 c: «μὴ πάντων αἴτιον τὸν θεὸν ἀλλὰ τῶν ἀγαθῶν». Ich glaube, daß zwei Stellen über die charakteristische Funktion des Guten Aufschluß geben: *Rep.*, VI 505 a-b: «εἰ δὲ μὴ ἴσμεν, ἄνευ δὲ ταύτης εἰ ὅτι μάλιστα τᾶλλα ἐπισταίμεθα, οἴσθ' ὅτι οὐδὲν ἡμῖν ὄφελος, ὥσπερ οὐδ' εἰ κεκτήμεθα τι ἄνευ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ. ἢ οἷε τι πλεον εἶναι πᾶσαν κτῆσιν ἐκτῆσθαι, μὴ μέντοι ἀγαθὴν; ἢ πάντα τᾶλλα φρονεῖν ἄνευ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ, καλὸν δὲ καὶ ἀγαθὸν μηδὲν φρονεῖν; Μὰ Δί' οὐκ ἔγωγ', ἔφη» und *Definit.*, 413 a: «Ἀγαθὸν τὸ αὐτοῦ ἔνεκεν». Die Idee des Guten hat immer einen Vorrang in Platons Schriften<sup>2</sup>.

Hier besitzt die Idee des Guten einen Vorrang vor den anderen Ideen. Zur Erklärung dieses Vorranges greife ich auf die Worte von J. Derbolav zurück<sup>3</sup>: “Die übergeordnete Stellung des Guten in der Ideenpyramide kann also mit einem gewissen Recht als ein symbolischer Ausdruck für den Vorrang des ethischen Motivs in Platons philosophischen Konzept verstanden werden”. Diese Autarkie des Guten läßt sich an folgender Stelle zeigen: *Definit.*, 412 d: «Εὐδαιμονία ἀγαθὸν ἐκ πάντων ἀγαθῶν συγκείμενον· δύνამις αὐτάρκης πρὸς τὸ εἶ ζῆν· τελειότης κατ' ἀρετὴν· ὠφελία αὐτάρκης ζώου». Den Einfluß dieser Konzeption Platons finden wir auch bei seinem Schüler Aristoteles<sup>4</sup>. *Eth. Nik.*, I 7, 1097 b 1-8: «ταύτην γὰρ (τὴν εὐδαιμονίαν) αἰρούμεθα ἀεὶ δι' αὐτὴν καὶ οὐδέποτε δι' ἄλλο, [...] φαίνεται δὲ καὶ ἐκ τῆς αὐταρκειᾶς τὸ αὐτὸ συμβαίνειν· τὸ γὰρ τέλειον ἀγαθὸν αὐταρκες εἶναι δοκεῖ». Mit diesem Ansatz meine ich einen Beitrag zur Lösung des Problems gegeben zu haben: Das Gute ist Sein

<sup>2</sup> Vgl. *Rep.*, VI 505 a: «μέγιστον μάθημα». Ibid. VII 518 a: «τοῦ ὄντος τὸ φανότατον»; ibid. VII 526 e: «τὸ εὐδαιμονέστατον τοῦ ὄντος»; 532 c 5-6: «πρὸς τὴν τοῦ ἀρίστου ἐν τοῖς οὔσι θέαν»; 511 b: «τοῦ ἀνυποθέτου ἐπὶ τὴν τοῦ παντὸς ἀρχήν».

<sup>3</sup> J. DERBOLAV, *Erkenntnis und Entscheidung*, Wien 1954, S. 146.

<sup>4</sup> Ich will damit durchaus nicht sagen, daß Aristoteles Platoniker gewesen sei, das wäre eine naïve Verfälschung der Selbständigkeit des aristotelischen Denkens, wenn auch Aristoteles zwanzig Jahre lang Platons Schüler war.

und ist der Grund der Existenz der anderen Ideen, die die Ursache der Existenz der Sinnendinge sind<sup>5</sup>. Ist aber dies wiederum eine reale Möglichkeit? Ich weiß es nicht, und um es mit den Worten von Sokrates zu sagen “früher glaubte ich es zu wissen, jetzt weiß ich es nicht mehr”.

Es ist deshalb sehr schwierig, den Text richtig wiederzugeben, weil Platon seine Philosophie nicht ganz klar dargelegt hat. Die Sache wird noch komplizierter, wenn man zumal bedenkt, daß er wesentliche Punkte seines Denkens-gemäss der sogenannten Platons ungeschriebenen Lehre-überhaupt nicht niedergeschrieben hat wegen seiner “negativer Einschätzung der Schrift”<sup>6</sup>. Selbst die Vorlesung über das Gute, die Platon öffentlich in dialektischer Weise hielt<sup>7</sup>, war dunkel und rätselhaft<sup>8</sup>. Deswegen ist die Aporie formuliert worden: “Wie sollte auch die Idee des Guten als τοῦ παντὸς ἀρχὴ erkennbar sein, wenn sie doch ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας ist? Nun kann nach der klassischen platonischen Metaphysik, nur das, was ist, erkannt werden”<sup>9</sup>. Ich glaube doch, daß es auch eine andere Interpretationsmöglichkeit gibt, die mir wenigstens wahrscheinlicher als die bisherigen erscheint. Wir verstehen nämlich falsch die griechische Ausdrucksweise, wenn wir meinen, daß die Aussage, das Gute sei keine Ousia (Sein), bedeutet, daß es nicht existiert. Deshalb scheint es notwendig, diesen Satz näher zu betrachten.

Nach Platons Ausdrucksweise, wenn etwas (z.B. das Eine) ist, muss es unbedingt an der Ousia Anteil haben (οὐσίας

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<sup>5</sup> ARIST., *Metaph.*, I 6, 988 a 7-11.

<sup>6</sup> TH. A. SZLEZÁK, *Platon und die Schriftlichkeit der Philosophie*. Berlin, W. de Gruyter, 1985, 327; Vgl. dagegen Γ. ΚΟΥΜΑΚΗΣ, *Πολίτευμα και ήθος. Η διαλεκτική και τα «άγραφα δόγματα» κατά Πλάτωνα*. Αθήνα, Συμμετρία, 2008.

<sup>7</sup> M.D. RICHARD, *L' enseignement oral de Platon*. Paris, Cerf, 1986, 396.

<sup>8</sup> Simplicii in Aristotelis physicorum (M. DIELS), *Commentaria in Aristotelis Graeca*. Vol. IX. Berlin 1872, 453, 19 und 454, 39. Siehe dazu K. GAISER, “Plato’s Enigmatic Lecture ‘On the Good’”, *Phronesis*, XXV, 1980, 5-37, 9.

<sup>9</sup> R. FERBER, *Die Unwissenheit des Philosophen oder Warum hat Plato die “ungeschriebene Lehre nicht geschrieben”*. Academia Verlag, 1991, 62.

φραμὲν μετέχειν τὸ ἓν, διὸ ἔστιν; Ναί). Aber die Ousia des Einen (oder des Guten) ist nicht mit dem Einen identisch<sup>10</sup>, sondern von ihm verschieden. Es ist keine Ousia<sup>11</sup>. Dagegen, wenn etwas nicht existiert, kann an der Ousia kein Anteil haben<sup>12</sup>. In diesem Fall sprechen wir von einer Abwesenheit des Seins. Da aber das Gute als Seiendes an der Ousia Anteil hat, existiert es. Der Satz also, daß das Gute keine Ousia sei, bedeutet nicht, daß es nicht existiert, sondern nur daß es von seiner Ousia verschieden ist und folglich nicht identisch. Das Gute existiert, weil es an der Ousia Anteil hat. Das bedeutet, daß gerade die Anteilnahme der Ideen an der Ousia ihre Existenz ermöglicht.

Dieser Interpretation gemäss wird das Problem wohl gelöst. Das Gute nämlich ist zwar keine Ousia, d.h. sie ist nicht mit ihr identisch: «ἄλλο τι ἕτερον μὲν ἀνάγκη τῇ οὐσίᾳ αὐτοῦ εἶναι, ἕτερον δὲ αὐτό, εἴπερ μὴ οὐσία τὸ ἓν... Ὡστε οὐ ταὐτόν ἐστιν οὔτε τῷ ἐνὶ οὔτε τῇ οὐσίᾳ τὸ ἕτερον» (*Parm.*, 143 a-b), hat jedoch an ihr Anteil, weil es existiert. Wegen dieser Anteilnahme ist die Ousia (das Sein) des Guten mit dem Guten selbst nicht identisch, sondern von ihm verschieden. Wenn sie also voneinander verschieden sind, dann kann das Gute die Ousia an Würde und Kraft überragen. Nach dieser Auslegung sind τὰ ὁρώμενα die sichtbare Dinge dieser Welt, und τὰ γινωσκόμενα die erkennbare Dinge, d.h. die Ideen. Die Idee des Guten verleiht den übrigen Ideen nicht nur das Erkanntwerden, sondern auch ihr Sein und Wesen<sup>13</sup>. Dies bedeutet, daß an der Spitze der Ideenpyramide das Gute steht. Es ist der Ursprung der anderen Ideen. Es wird also mit Recht behauptet, daß die Idee des Guten als oberstes Prinzip und als "Letztbegründung von Platons Ethik fungiere"<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> PLAT., *Parm.*, 142 b-c, 143 a.

<sup>11</sup> Ebenda ..., PLOTIN, *Ennead* VI, 91, 37-38.

<sup>12</sup> PLAT., *Parm.*, 163 c.

<sup>13</sup> PLAT., *Polit.*, 509 b.

<sup>14</sup> R. FERBER, *Platos Idee des Guten*. Sankt Augustin, Verlag M. Richarz, 1984, 131; Vgl. auch, M.A. LIZANO-ORDOVÁS, "Eikasia und Pistis in Platons Höhlengleichnis", *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung*, 49, 1955, 375-397, 396. Siehe auch, H. KRÄMER, "Ἐπέχειν τῆς οὐσίας. Zu Platons *Politeia* 509 b", *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*, 51, 1969,





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1-30. IDEM, “Die Idee des Guten. Sonnen –und Liniengleichnis (Buch VI 504 a – 511 e)” in: O. HOEFFE, *Platon, Politeia*. Berlin, Akademie Verlag, 1977, 450-467; G. SEEL, “Is Plato’s Conception of the Form of the Good Contradictory?”, in: D. Cairns, F.G. Herrmann and T. Penner (eds.), *Pursuing the Good: Ethics and Metaphysics in Plato’s Republic*. Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2007, 168-196.

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