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Solidarity and the Crisis of Trust

Edited by Jacek Kottan

social theory

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Series idea of solidarity

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SOLIDARITY AND THE CRISIS OF TRUST

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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Solidarity has turned out to be a crucial concept for understanding political, moral, and human reality – indeed, crucial for understanding today's world at large. Although I intend neither to summarize nor conclude the thoughts of the many marvelous thinkers present in this volume, I do wish to formulate several remarks which either directly or indirectly arise from those thoughts. Let me stress that it is worth noting the radical deficit of social solidarity (or "brotherhood", as one of the authors prefers) that appeared in the modern era (that is, following the French Revolution). It is also worth noting not so much how the idea of solidarity takes shape, but how its practice does.

The first idea is paradoxical and relates to the collapse of social solidarity with the dynamic development of liberalism, which no doubt owes much to the French Revolution both in a positive and negative sense. The universalism of the revolutionary ideas along with the revolutionaries' fundamental slogan – namely, "freedom" – facilitated the practical transformations of both legal provisions and mentality. Conversely, the horrors of the Reign of Terror inclined thinkers like Benjamin Constant to mount a thoroughgoing defense of private freedom against all political intervention. Thus began the long history of conflict between the communitarian idea of democracy and liberal individualism.

Secondly, inasmuch as Europeans in the nineteenth century were gradually becoming equal before the law, the fact of their

material inequality was also becoming clearer – all the more so as said inequality was frequently dramatic and left unmitigated. Over time social democracy led to a reduction of these inequalities and gradually civilized them, but there was never to be a return to the times when people felt satisfied with the forms and the level of life in the communities in which they were born and which had seemed natural to them.

Thirdly, these very communities underwent forced decline as a result of social transformations, above all urbanization, something which brought about the demise of village and small-town communities of the type that some city planners are now endeavoring to reconstruct, inspired as they are by the philosophy of communitarians.

What was the result of this? What foremost appeared was the problem (just decades ago not yet present) of the limits of universalism, or its modern version – namely, globalization. What is the relationship of solidarity to the universalism of the liberal idea? We know better and better that not only some practical difficulties, but also some serious doubts on the part of theoreticians of political thought are related to the issue. After all, does universalism, including the universal idea of human rights, foster the diversity of human communities, or rather does it undermine the diversity, which is of course essential for the existence of solidarity? The truth is that there still are unrepentant optimists who believe that one day all of humanity will be bound in solidarity – however, sober reflection on reality rules out any such possibility in the foreseeable future. Moreover, universalism pretends to treat the individual as ever and always the same by nature, and hence belittles local customs, traditions, and ties. If, however, we insist that universalism (as an idea accompanying humanity at least since the birth of Christianity) is not acceptable, we thereby deprive ourselves of the philosophical tools which humanity has developed all over the centuries. This dilemma is

just one among many which accompany the extinction of genuine social solidarity.

The second dilemma is the matter of trust. Although there is no need to idealize the past, neither is there the slightest doubt that trust is in short supply today both in relations between people and in relations between people as citizens and the political power, even in democracies. In fact, many modern philosophers (the most illustrious of whom was Thomas Hobbes) held basic doubts concerning whether or not trust is at all a feature we may discern in society. Thus, it is no coincidence that Hobbes' political philosophy is a focus of intense interest for virtually all outstanding contemporary thinkers. Hobbes stated the matter in no uncertain terms: if not for rules (legal ones included) imposed by the sovereign, and to which people have expressed consent, there would be ceaseless war between them, as in the state of nature *homo homini lupus est*.

Nonetheless, both purely practical reasons and overriding political concerns have persuaded us to recognize trust as the basis for a reasonable life in democracy. We may bluntly state that without trust democracy does not and cannot exist. After all, the idea so fundamental to democracy of representation rests on trust, as do all the participatory behaviors proper to free-market democracy. Of course, the law exists, but democracy can never be reduced to the rule of law. Those who propose the legal regulation of as many political and social behaviors as possible are sometimes right, but usually they are not, as they supplant what we are accustomed to calling "decency" or "responsibility" with legal regulations. And in so doing they deprive us of our humanity.

Trust is also the basis of solidarity, both in the sense that without elementary solidarity democracy cannot function well, and in the sense that solidarity is a form of mutuality in human relations based not on interest, but on the feeling of community. Indeed, if we were to limit solidarity to a community of interests,

the very idea of solidarity would be superfluous. Solidarity is a community of trust. In the radical sense, one that was assuredly never practical, solidarity guarantees for us that, even in the worst misfortunes, we will not be left alone. In the more moderate and practical sense, solidarity is merely the (otherwise lofty!) conviction that the community binds. That voluntary or innate belonging (here communitarians have carried out many distinctions) to a community rests primarily with the act of membership – that is, with mutual obligation. This is not simply loyalty, as loyalty is always loyalty toward someone. Trust is something more – namely, loyalty towards all members of the community.

The deficit of trust appeared together with the weakening of communities, and thus it is no doubt linked to the negative consequences of universalism. However, the shortage of trust (whether we ascribe it to overblown individualism or an excess of legal regulations, or to the marked demise of traditional communities in the modern era) is to a certain degree unavoidable. We must therefore ask the question that for now has no good answer: can democracy in its present form be expected to last without trust? Political philosophy inclines us to respond in the negative. However, reality sometimes leads us to solutions which philosophers never even dreamt of.

Here we encounter the third problem – namely that related to the following questions. What kind of communities may we contend with today? Within the framework of what kind of communities can social solidarity be saved? In what frameworks has the idea of solidarity been buried once and for all?

The basic community with which we have had to deal with since at least the nineteenth century is the nation. Despite the hopes of the radical supporters of transforming a shared Europe into a whole that would resemble a nation, very little has been achieved in that aim. Indeed, the recent crisis has revealed that opposing trends are increasingly evident. The nation, despite all

the threats associated with that concept that have emerged in the recent past, is (in the Western world, at least) the fundamental type of community, and one in which social solidarity most often appears – or at least should.

For the nation is still, despite the threats and the ideology of aggressive nationalism, a spiritual realm within which people feel certain tangible forms of community. One may harbor serious doubts concerning how much the concept of nation has been diminished in regard to the views of the great nineteenth-century ideologues of the cultural concept of the nation, but nonetheless there is no other large and genuine community that could be the subject of solidarity. And thus serious misunderstandings arise between the liberal current (which acknowledges the factuality of nations), and those currents (nonetheless strong in liberal thought) that fear the national idea as the devil does holy water (not without some justice). The attitude toward the concept and reality of the nation has presently become one of the fundamental problems (albeit one none too eagerly discussed in political thought). Reducing the national idea to joint games and, consequently, to a caricature has a certain justification if we examine the universal weakening or even virtual disappearance of patriotic feelings. However, it is not the state of individuals' feelings, but indeed the fact of the existence of nations that makes national solidarity the strongest form of solidarity available (either currently or potentially). We must live with this and deal with it as best as we can, and not turn our backs to the problem or attempt to get rid of it by applying an embarrassing silence.

Of course, alongside the nation exists the level of local solidarity, the development of which all the member-countries of the European Union so strongly encourage. Aware of the significance of solidarity (or, as EU officials prefer, "local cohesion"), we must also be mindful of the fact that the recently popular idea of local homelands serves the noble work of creating communities often

invented from scratch, on the basis of ones purported to have existed in the past. There is no harm in this, but neither is there need to invest excessive hopes in such ventures.

In summing up, let me reiterate that without social and political solidarity democracy, as we have known it since the eighteenth century, is impossible. However, it is not certain if political and social solidarity can be restored without trust and without real communities that would be its carriers. Things are bad, but because we do not really know how to fundamentally alter such a state of affairs, we must within its context make a substantial endeavor if only to make corrections. And in order to do that, we must know what we are dealing with. That is the purpose and task of the present volume.

Translated from Polish by Philip Steele

Shlomo Avineri

DEMOCRACY WITHOUT SOLIDARITY?

If it is the case that the French Revolution was an attempt to realize and institutionalize the various threads of the Enlightenment, then the slogan *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité* appears to encapsulate successfully, though with a rather broad brush, the political principles underlying it. Yet the democratic and liberal traditions, which view the Enlightenment as both their legitimizing origins as well as their template, have given unequal weight to the three pillars of this slogan.

This holds true both for political theorists as well as for the documents, and practices, associated with modern liberalism. The various aspects of liberty and equality appear universally as the defining foundational norms of the liberal and democratic order, sometimes accompanied by the claim that they theoretically and practically complement each other, sometimes – less simplistically – accompanied by the awareness that there may exist a built-in tension between the two, which needs to be addressed by balancing one against the other and finding institutional solutions to overcome, and curb, the *stasis* which may arise if they are allowed to function unchecked. So much of Alexis de Tocqueville's contribution to political theory rests on his insights into the tension between the two and his attempt to search for institutional constraints addressing it. Absent such awareness, an unbridled

hegemony of one of the two principles – especially if it be that of equality – may end up in the kind of new tyranny associated with the radical Jacobin rule and the Reign of Terror. John Stuart Mill in his *On Liberty* drew attention, though in a different way, to the same kind of possible danger; and the acute awareness of the possibility of the tyranny of the majority goes back to the acknowledgement of this inherent tension between these two ideas. While democracy and liberalism are usually seen as made of the same seamless cloth, the tension between majoritarianism and the need to protect individual rights is at the root of the different ingredients which went into the construction of modern liberal democracy.

Compared to the rich literature associated with these interpretations of the traditions of liberty and equality, Fraternité did not receive similar attention. Part of it may have to do with what could be seen as a hazy, fuzzy and perhaps even kitschy and quasi-romantic aura associated with the term and its origin in the concept of family – an institution usually neglected (with the possible exception of Aristotle and later Hegel) in classical political philosophy. Some of it may have been caused by the fact that while liberty and equality have a clear and visible subject (the person), such a defined subject is lacking when it comes to fraternity. Last and not least, it is obvious that since liberal democracy has been identified with legislation both constructing and defending it (constitutions, laws etc.), it is easy to find legal definitions and guarantees for both liberty and equality, while fraternity is much more difficult to put into the Procrustean bed of legal instruments. Since the modern political order is based, to a large extend, on the traditions of Roman law with its strict and neat definitions and distinctions, fraternity does not fit very easily into it.

To this should be added the fact that modern liberal democracy owes much of its metaphysical grounding to the Kantian

tradition, and it is difficult to transcend the ontological individualism at its base. Nothing can express this better than the fact that even the Kantian categorical imperative, other-directed as it is and aimed at giving a foundation to social ethics, is totally anchored in the individual, and it ultimately means that only the individual has ontological standing and everything else is mainly instrumental. In a way this ontological individualism is a secular version of Protestant theology and ethics, focusing exclusively on the individual soul, its inner subjectivity and its inherent ability to commune and communicate – with no need for mediation – with the Divine.

Echoes of this Protestant ethic and ontological individualism are clearly to be found in John Rawls' *A Theory of Justice*, perhaps the most eloquent and sophisticated neo-Kantian re-statement of modern liberal democracy. The influences inspire both its remarkable clarity and forcefulness, but also point to its limitations. Margaret Thatcher was probably unaware of these philosophical dimensions when she famously said "There is no such thing as society" – but she was squarely in this tradition, even if Rawls would probably be rightly shocked to find himself in this company. For all the dissimilarities in their politics, philosophically they belonged to the same family.

Because traditional liberal thought – and its political expression in constitutional history – have both neglected the elements of fraternity embedded in the Enlightenment tradition, this strain was picked up by socialist thought. On a theoretical level, socialist criticism of the modern liberal state – as, for example, it appears in Karl Marx's early philosophical writings – welcomes the achievements of the French revolutionary traditions but maintains that its "merely formal" nature leaves out the element of fraternity which socialist thought then tried to introduce into the political discourse by the idea of class-consciousness anchored in a universal proletarian solidarity. While one may

remain skeptical whether the modern working-class is truly capable of being the historical vehicle for such solidarity (and this is besides all the valid criticism of the Soviet oppression supposedly carried out in the name of this solidarity, real or imagined), the fact of the matter is that it was the socialist movement, especially in its trade union aspect, which tried to address the fraternity deficit in the modern political discourse. It is also for this reason that the emergence of *Solidarność*, which, by its very name, put a mirror to Soviet-style communism, made solidarity – fraternity – such a significant concept. Although solidarity was supposed to be the trade-mark of any socialist movement, it failed so dismally under Stalinism and its successors. No wonder it gained such an almost universal reception in Poland and abroad and was so crucial in bringing down – and peacefully – Moscow-style communism.

Earlier, attempts like the Weimar Republic, under the impact of the rich tradition of German social-democracy, tried to integrate elements of fraternity – i.e. social responsibility – into a constitutional framework. The challenges faced by this attempt have to be explained not only in terms of the historical conditions then prevailing in Germany – with the bureaucratic, military, aristocratic and academic elites being basically anti-republican – but also by the inherent difficulty in translating precepts of solidarity and social responsibility into constitutional and legal terms, especially when the political will to implement them may be lacking among large sectors of the population.

But going back to the enormous achievements of *Solidarność* in Poland, it would be worthwhile to try to understand the reasons for its unprecedented resonance in Polish society. Part of it can of course be attributed to the stagnation of the Brezhnev era and the parallel uninspiring Polish communist leadership at that time; part undoubtedly harks back to the seeds sown in 1956 and 1968. Yet perhaps the most remarkable aspect of the movement

is that at its very profound level it did not view itself merely as calling for the rights of workers, and its message to Polish society – transcending class and occupational or professional affiliation – was ultimately not anchored in a theory of human or individual rights, or even intellectual or moral opposition to communism, either in theory or practice. It went much deeper: it built on the solidarity of the Polish people against what was conceived as a foreign occupation; that this occupation was not only communist but also Russian added a deep historical dimension which made the rights and wrongs at the Gdańsk dockyards into an issue of national solidarity and – in plain words – of Polish patriotism. Moreover, the fact that the Church could serve as an organizational and inspirational framework for the movement was undoubtedly connected not only with the historical links of the Catholic Church with Polish nationalism, but could hark back to perceptions of Catholic Poland being, once again, oppressed by Orthodox Russia. These sentiments and associations were not limited to Church-going and devout people, but could be easily shared by non-observant, and even non-Catholic, people, immersed in the traditions, legends, narratives and myths of centuries-old Polish history.

This leads us to the question of nationalism and national consciousness. It is only natural that in the wake of the enormous crimes committed in the twentieth century in the name of the nation and nationalism, there is a wide-spread understandable reluctance to be associated with any of its manifestations. But historically and theoretically, it should not be forgotten that initially nationalism appeared on the European historical scene as an emancipatory force, a child of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. It emerged as one of the most powerful expressions of the quest for freedom, popular sovereignty, the right of self-determination and the fight against tyranny and oppression, especially against such authoritarian regimes as the Tsarist, Habsburg and

Ottoman empires, the post-1815 Restoration and Metternichian Reaction and, in the case of Italy, papal medieval hegemony. 1848, after all, the *Völkerfrühling* – the Spring of the Nations – was viewed as the insurrection of oppressed and downtrodden nations aiming at emancipation, self-determination, freedom and national sovereignty. This was the nationalism of Giuseppe Mazzini, of "Young Italy", "Young Germany"; this was the nationalism which made the aim of Polish national independence the hallmark of progressive, democratic movements all over Europe in the nineteenth century. This universalistic, humanistic aspect was beautifully captured by Mazzini when he maintained that by being a citizen of one's country one becomes a citizen of the world. Cosmopolitanism is not an abstract, it can become a concrete, living reality only if mediated through a real attachment to a specific group of people with whom one feels solidarity in the sense of a willingness to act for them, and on their behalf, and not only for one self. The nation, thus, is a laboratory of humanity. In a different vein, internationalism can be achieved only via the transcendence of nationalism, but in order to transcend the national one must first of all have it; the dialectics of *Aufhebung* could not be clearer.

This universalistic aspect of nationalism is important to recall as it is an antidote to the kind of aggressive, expansionist and xenophobic nationalism identified, for example, with the writings and politics of Heinrich von Treitschke, and which was so influential in the intellectual and political development in Germany, leading eventually to 1933 and to what followed.

Nationalism is twin-headed, Janus-like, and its development from its emancipatory beginning as an outcome of the Enlightenment to the horrors of the twentieth century is a cautionary tale that should never be forgotten. But nor should its emancipatory aspect be overlooked and be allowed to be hijacked in the theoretical and political discourse by the crimes committed by its aggressive variant. After all, a similar ambivalence resides in most

religions, and the legacy of Christianity includes both the Sermon of the Mount and the Spanish Inquisition; similar ambivalences can be equally found in Islam and Judaism.

The Mazzinian variant of nationalism is a call to transcend egoistical individualism in the name of a relational ontology – communitarian in contemporary language. It maintains that human beings should be understood not as self-absorbed and self-contained monads, but as relational beings, whose identity (in a different language one would probably use the term "essence") is determined by their relations to other human beings and their willingness and readiness to do things for these others, not just for themselves. Moreover, their own "self" includes the other: hence, being a father or mother not only determines a person's relationship to other human beings, but is part of his or her own identity. Being a father or a mother changes the identity of human beings when they become "father" and "mother". On a poetical level this can be encapsulated by Blake's "No man is an island"; Hegel's dialectics of family/civil-society/state is a philosophical attempt to make the same point. If one follows Herder – and Mazzini and most nineteenth century national liberation movements did all drink from his fountain – the kind of language one speaks or culture within which one feels at home, are not just instrumental communicative tools, but define a person by his or her relationship to other persons. The national community which thus emerges should, however, not be absolutized or made into the ultimate goal of human identity; on the contrary, by achieiving it a human being can transcend beyond it – towards humanity. But mediation – Hegel again – is thus crucial. There is no effective, real universalism without mediation, and for mediation to be effective it needs a really-existing identity in which the person sees himself in the other and gives a concrete expression to this in institutions and active behavior. The spirit has, metaphorically, to become flesh. A similar vein can, of course, be discerned in

Rousseau's call for a civic religion and in the republican tradition which, after all, was so much part and parcel of the intellectual baggage of many thinkers of the Enlightenment.

There are some contemporary consequences – and challenges – arising from this analysis. It is one of the characteristics of the American version of liberal democracy that due to its ontological individualism the market becomes the only normative regulator, and human rights – viewed in purely individualistic terms – become the sole legitimizing political factor. This is what Hegel would call mistaking the body politic for a mere civil society. Liberal democracy is then relegated to a merely legalistic mechanism of maintaining purely instrumentalist "rules of the game" and the state – or government, as the Anglo-Saxon tradition would prefer to call it – is just an umpire, like Lassalle's "Night Watchman" state. The state as such does not represent any values, and solidarity does not play any role in the political discourse. The most extreme expression of this approach can then be seen as encapsulated in Ronald Reagan's statement in his Inaugural Address that "government is not the solution, government is the problem".

Different contemporary attitudes to the current economic crisis in the US and in Europe attest to the fact that while this purely instrumentalist approach is dominant in the American discourse and policies, European responses were informed by the responsibility of the nation-state to its citizens and the legitimate expectation of the citizens that their country – and their government – protect them in the case of crisis.

Concretely this expresses itself also in different ways in which taxes are being viewed. Again, in the American case, taxes are viewed as basically evil. Obviously, everyone would prefer to pay lower taxes, but in the American case, taxes are viewed as almost a theft, or at best an insurance policy. Yet the European view – perhaps best exemplified in the Swedish case – views

taxes as an obligation we have not vis-à-vis a mythical Leviathan or Behemoth of a state, but towards each other, and high taxes – in the Swedish case, very high taxes – are viewed as a positive indicator of a developed, responsible and human body politic, where solidarity does not crush individuality, but is its twin brother.

Per contra, some of the discourse surrounding the recent financial crisis suggests that the often mentioned "democratic deficit" connected with the abstract and somewhat alienated institutions of the European Union is not just a question of elections and lack of communication, but has also to do with solidarity – or lack of it.

The vehement negative response, especially in some of the German public discourse, regarding the Greek financial crisis is a case in point. Beyond what could sometimes be viewed as racial stereotyping of Greek people as irresponsible Mediterranean spendthrifts, a much wider sentiment could be discerned. For all the talk of the emergence of a European *demos*, especially after the heated arguments connected with the Lisbon Treaty, the underlying fact was that most Germans did not feel any solidarity with Greeks; the Greeks were "them", not "us". If it were one of the states of the Federal Republic that would face bankruptcy – Bavaria, or Lower Saxony – there would obviously be, for all the resultant heavier financial burden to be borne by all German citizens, a basic feeling of solidarity "to help our brethren" which was so lacking in the Greek case. Most Germans did not feel that they and the Greeks were citizens of the same body politic.

In the German case, this is not a mere hypothesis. Germans were tested, and found to be willing to bear the burdens of solidarity, when it came to the question of German unification and the almost universal willingness of the citizens of the Federal Republic to bear the enormous costs of unification. The "Ossies" (for all the

occasional criticism voiced against them, but this was usually attributed to the heritage of communist rule) were our brothers. As Willy Brand so eloquently put it, "what belongs together, comes together". The citizens of the DDR were members of the same nation, the same *Volk,* though for reasons of political correctness justly rooted in recent German history, that term was never used in the West (though in the East it took just a few days for the slogan "*Wir sind das Volk*" to be turned into "*Wir sind ein Volk*"[1] – probably due to the different way in which the term *Volk* was used by DDR ideology, e.g. *Volkseigene Betriebe* to connote nationalized or state-controlled enterprises). So it is not that the burghers of the Federal Republic were not ready to share their wealth with others. With fellow Germans they had been ready to share, with fellow EU-Greeks – no. Solidarity, in this case, had a clear delineated border, running along historical national frontiers. The EU suffers not only from an institutional democracy deficit – it suffers even more from a solidarity deficit.

All this raises, of course, serious questions for any democratic discourse and institutional structure. It was mentioned earlier that unlike liberty and equality, fraternity – solidarity – is not easy to institutionalize or to be framed in legally-binding norms. On a political and not just legal level, this means that there are occasions when it is incumbent for candidates running for political office to tell their constituents: "Vote for me because I am going to raise your taxes". Put in this way, this sounds absurd if not ridiculous. Usually it is, of course, the other way round.

But it is not as absurd as it looks. This is what politicians and governments do in the case of war or any external emergency, when it is the rhetorics of "blood, tears and sweat" which wins the day – and compared to which president Bush's exhortation

1 The meaning of the slogan is thus transformed from "It is we who are the nation" into "We are one nation" – J.K.

to the American public after 9/11 to "go out and shop" sounds not only hollow, but is now reaping its terrible costs in terms of mass human financial misery and unemployment.

But even in non-emergency situations, people can be educated – again, as in Sweden and other countries with a long social-democratic tradition – that higher taxes are not evil, not are they a sin, but, on the contrary, a testimony to a nation's progressive, humanistic and solidarity-oriented vision. Religions like Judaism and Islam, different as they are and at the moment not exactly on speaking terms, have a common communitarian tradition, which views religion not just as a matter of personal piety and the vehicle for the salvation of one's individual soul, but as a framework for a social ethics which can – at least ideally – become the foundation of a body politic. Strangely as it may look at the moment, this is a common thread which has informed the secular version of this Judaic traditional ethics in the foundation of Zionist solidarity and the establishment of Israel. Similarly, and paradoxically, it is this which makes communitarian Islamic movements like Hamas and Hezbollah – beyond the terrorism sometimes associated with them – so much attractive to some of the poor and downtrodden in the Arab and Muslim world.

This may perhaps seem to be a strange way to end an essay on the need for solidarity for building sustainable democracy, and it can be very easily misunderstood. But the point is that the fate of a purely instrumental view of democracy as a mere mechanism for maximizing one's individual self-interest may turn out to be, under stress, not different from the fate of those institutions, like banks, truly based on this principle. When there is a run on the banks, they cannot stay above water – unless (surprise, surprise) bailed out by governments. Solidarity is an essential ingredient of well-functioning democracies, and nothing proves this better than what happens to democratic structures when the element of solidarity is missing.

Pierre Manent

CONFIDENCE, FAITH, TRUST, OR THE LACK THEREOF, IN CONTEMPORARY EUROPE

Since we are bold enough to address very difficult notions in order to understand a very obscure situation – the European situation – it is best to begin with a clear-cut proposition. We will add the necessary qualifications later. The diagnosis I would submit is the following one: the current European distemper is mainly a case of distrust, or lack of trust. We could say also: lack of faith. Or again: lack of confidence. Lack of trust, faith or confidence in what? Lack of trust, faith or confidence in our forces, in our ability to do things ourselves, in our ability to act according to our better judgment, as a unity of purpose whose legitimate rulers are responsible before an identifiable body politic, an identifiable people.

This is bad enough. What makes things worse, is that we interpret this very serious shortcoming or weakness as proof of our moral superiority over our lesser brethren in America, or Asia, or the Middle East, who still fancy that they have in themselves enough legitimacy and strength to advance their interests and support their prestige without asking for the permission of any higher authority. We have abandoned this pretension and we feel the better for that. Immanuel Kant seem to be the true President of the European Union, as the only legitimate actions are those susceptible to be generalized. We still feel the urge to extend or

expand our domain, but we understand this extension or expansion as the progressive conversion of our neighbours to our superior morality. Our soft power is the power of example. Other peoples sooner or later will follow our lead. They cannot fail to be duly impressed by the idea under which we think, act and feel, they cannot fail to be duly impressed by the highest idea of all, the most encompassing and authoritative idea, the idea of humanity. The European Union is not an ordinary body politic, it is not truly a body politic, it is the first, and constantly growing, embodiment of mankind sloughing off its old skin, with the attendant vices of greed and self-aggrandizement. The European Union augurs the end of all particularity, the beginning of universal humanity immediately present to itself. This is, I think, a fair rendering of our highest aspirations.

These moral aspirations are not vain conceits, they translate into reality. They have come to more and more determine our economic, social and political mores. They have come to more and more determine what is usually called the construction of Europe. What is the principle of this construction? It is a logical, or philosophical principle: what is more general is superior to what is less general, or more particular. It is a very radical principle, indeed. Any association of human beings, as soon as it exists, as soon as it is real, is a particular association – it falls under the condemnation, at least the suspicion of the higher principle. The more real the association, the more suspect. The most real association in Europe, the association through which European peoples have developed their talents, the association in which they still live principally, is the nation, the old European nation-State. The effective truth of the European construction is the delegitimation of the nation-State, which in Europe has been for so long the political form *par excellence*.

To come back to the terms of my introduction, it is as citizens of their respective nations that Europeans have learnt to act

according to their better judgment, as a unity of purpose whose rulers are responsible before an identifiable people. It is as citizens of their respective nations that they have accordingly developed trust, faith or confidence in their own capacity or strength. Nevertheless the authority of the higher principle does not bear upon the old nations only; it bears upon all ancient and particular associations, it accordingly bears upon the old Churches, especially the one which has most preserved its spiritual and organizational physiognomy, the Catholic Church.

Among many considerations which here could be adduced, I will single out this one which is more relevant to our subject. If what I said about the power of the higher principle is tolerably accurate, the European Union, rather than organizing action, will be busy preventing it, or organizing inaction. It is indeed what we observe. The higher principle is translated into the practical principle of freedom of circulation for everything and everybody. A good and fair principle as far as it goes, but its effects are especially deleterious when it has been made the only organizing principle. Thus the trust in our ability to act together has been progressively eroded and replaced by faith in a necessary mechanism: if only goods, services and human beings are free to move, the results will be overwhelmingly positive. Here a misunderstanding is to be eschewed.

The principle of freedom is one of the mainsprings, perhaps the mainspring of European accomplishments. But its fecundity is predicated upon the prior existence of a self-governing body politic. Human beings better govern themselves when they give themselves more freedom. But when freedom is divorced from any real self-governing body politic, it is a wholly different case indeed. Individual action is given encouragement, but collective action, that is, properly political action, is discouraged. More critically, it tends to lose meaning. People less and less understand what it means to act as a purposeful whole. It is sadly ironical for

Europeans to deplore the political weakness of Europe since it is precisely what they are busy organizing.

It is clear then that Europeans have not lost all trust, faith or confidence. But trust, faith and confidence in collective action have been replaced by trust, faith and confidence in impersonal processes. Contrary to what many critics contend, these processes are not solely economic processes; it is not only a matter of the "market" providing the only or principal regulation of our lives. These processes are also spiritual processes: just let people "move" as they think fit and convenient, they will recognize one another as equal and similar human beings, and the purpose of the human species will be fulfilled. The European enterprise is not a petty endeavour. It aims at a configuration of things in which human beings no longer need political associations to be fully human. More, it is by eschewing truly political associations that they will be truly human at last.

How has it come to pass that Europeans have gone from trusting their own capacity or strength through collective action to distrusting and even renouncing political action, and trusting impersonal processes? It is of course beyond the scope of these remarks to even try to answer this question. I will limit myself to a few points.

Whatever else it might have been, the modern project which swept Europe from the seventeenth, or even the sixteenth century onwards, was a prodigious expression or manifestation of self-confidence, or trust, or faith in one's own forces. While they laboured under repression, poverty, even hunger, and all sorts of incurable diseases, the Europeans dreamt of a free and prosperous society where human beings led long lives in comfort and health. And lo and behold, thus it came to pass. It was not a dream. It was an emphatically rational project, encapsulated in Bacon's motto of the relief of man's estate, or Descartes' motto of the mastery and possession of nature. Here is the still unresolved enigma: how

could these great men so confidently believe that mankind could and would accomplish so great a transformation when modern science had just declared its ambition but had yet nothing to show for it? It is one of the great mysteries of European faith.

Thus modern Europe began with a leap of faith. I have just stressed that this leap of faith was first made by a tiny squad of eminent and supremely self-confident men. A decisive inflexion intervened when the transformation they had confidently called for and mightily prepared began to appear to a growing body of European people as an irresistible process. This human endeavour was so consonant with human reason of which it was a self-evident expression, and its effects were so obviously good that it would hurtle along till it had encompassed the whole world in its beneficial embrace. And it would ride roughshod over the material or even human remnants of the old order. At some point progress was no longer simply our task or work, it inseparably became our lord. Henceforth it was not so clear whether we were its masters or its servants.

From about the middle of the eighteenth century to about the middle of the twentieth century Western history evolved under the cloud of this ambiguity. History with a capital "H" became the new deity which could claim a constantly growing number of believers and faithful. Faith in History became the prevailing faith, although there was much disagreement about the right interpretation and the legitimate interpreters of that faith. "Secular religions", in Raymond Aron's phrase, came to blows, and much worse. It was a matter of securing for one's sect the exclusive favour of the new and supremely powerful deity. The ordeal between Nazi Germany and Communist Russia was among other things a superhuman and inhuman exertion to disclose and manifest the right bearer of History's favour or grace.

It would be ungrateful and unjust to consider the hyperbolic wars and murderous totalitarianisms of the previous century as

the ultimate result of the modern project, to view the recent Dark Age as the comeuppance for the Enlightenment enterprise. At the same time, it is difficult to deny that the modern project launched into the world the notion of an unlimited human action, of a human action greater than man himself, and which it was only natural that man at some point felt the need to obey instead of governing it. With the benefit of hindsight, we see rather clearly that one of the most potent springs of the European disorders lay in the complicity and conflict between the notions of an unheard-of human Action and a superhuman History. Herein lay the ambiguity of the European faith in the modern period.

As I have just intimated, it would be wrong to look at European history through the lenses of its greatest disaster. Below the gathering clouds of History, European peoples rather reasonably and successfully developed the new frame of their collective action through the progressive building of the representative government within a national setting. Here was arguably the cumulative and positive result of the whole European development, as discerning nineteenth century historians such as Guizot clearly understood. But we will dwell on the merits and shortcomings of the political form proper to Europe another day. In the context of our present subject, a point needs to be stressed.

Representative government rests not only on a difficult arranging of institutions, but also on a precarious ordering of affects. To put it in a nutshell: to the trust of the people answers the feeling of responsibility of the rulers. As everybody knows, just as the former are prompt to withdraw their trust, the latter are prone to forget their responsibility. Trust and responsibility, here is the rub and the philosopher's stone. There are periods in which the two dispositions cooperate rather happily, and others in which they give way to distrust and irresponsibility. At times, these periods are common to most European countries, at other times, they are limited to this or that country. However that may be, it is

pretty sure that trust and responsibility can grow together only in a setting where the fellow-feeling, the feeling of commonalty, is wide and deep. Otherwise, however excellent the intentions of the protagonists, there can be neither trust nor responsibility.

Now, if we consider the whole arc of modern European development, we will find this triangle of affects. First, the founding confidence, perhaps overconfidence, in one's own forces; then the (at first concurring, then more and more conflicting) faith in the sovereign power of History on the one hand and trust in the truly representative character of the representative regime on the other. These three riders, confidence, faith and trust have thus carried us away as the vehicle of European life bumped along till it tipped into the ditch. Where are we now? Let us go back to our introductory remarks.

The confidence in our own forces, or capacities, is still with us. It is part and parcel of the modern dispensation, under the authority of which we still live. At the same time, we in the West are more and more alert to the limits, even the drawbacks, of progress. The Baconian or Cartesian confidence, perhaps overconfidence, in one's own forces has migrated to Shanghai, Mumbai and Dubai. We still work madly at the lengthening of human life while despairing of our ability to pay for it. Our confidence is at times hard to distinguish from spiritual inertia.

While the disasters of the previous century have made us lose faith in History, we at the same time no longer feel the need for political trust in a body politic fit for representative government. We in Europe no longer live in the political element. We no longer live in the element of action, collective action to be decided after a reasonably common – reasonably democratic – deliberation. After having put implicit and blind faith in it, we have completely abandoned History. Time has neither promises nor threats for us. Space is all there is. The soft and irresistible – irresistible because soft – extension of the European way of life is all there

is. Human life, this is our new contribution to mankind. Human life can be best organized by the enforcing of general rules, an enforcing which requires neither a sovereign State nor a cohesive political association or form. Warily confident in the modern project, feeling no faith in History, having no need of trust, we have abandoned ourselves to the supposed necessity of the extension of the democratic civilization which was first nurtured under the protection of the sovereign State and in the friendly setting of the national association, and which we have confidently waged is able to survive and prosper without either. The tender flesh of democratic mores is able to survive and prosper without the shell of State and nation. This is at least the wager which the so-called European institutions are meant to make good.

This is a wager we are fated to lose. There is no salvaging, to say nothing of developing, European civilization while dismantling its political conditions. Present-day Europe lives on a logical error: it pretends to enjoy beneficial effects while methodically destroying their cause. On a political error: it pretends to build an ever better democracy while getting rid of any identifiable people – to build a *kratos* without a *demos*. On a moral error: it turns its back on meaningful responsibility by pretending that the enforcing of human rights can and should be independent of any concrete human association. These errors are fairly easy to discern. Why are they so difficult to acknowledge? It is not only that so many persons and institutions have their credit resting upon them. It is that these three errors hold together and shine as a resplendent truth because they condition and undergird the mightiest affect in Europe today, which is the feeling of moral superiority to which I alluded at the beginning of these remarks. We feel too morally superior to condescend to consider elementary facts of political and moral life. And this exacerbated moralism has succeeded in imposing a fairly severe discipline of speech among us. It is for good reasons that European institutions and the European

political class enforce this discipline. Only this strident moralism stands between European citizens and the acknowledgment of the terrible vacuity of the European endeavour in its present form. What has been aptly called political correctness is not a harmless fashion nor even a bothersome fad, it is today the most effective instrument of social and political regulation and control in Europe.

Only by shedding this unwarranted conviction of moral superiority will the Europeans make themselves able to engage again into meaningful actions. Moral superiority is the rationale for principled inaction; the common purpose of Europeans today seems to be to preserve an innocence they have recovered in their own conceit when they fairly recently disowned and renounced the sins of colonialism and war. This inaction cannot go on for ever, or it will end by depriving the European enterprise of any remaining plausibility. Then even the most stringent enforcing of political correctness will not save it.

Like all other political bodies or groupings, Europe needs to engage in collective actions, actions through which it will be recognized by others and recognize itself as an identifiable whole. Since the European Union has no real political existence, these collective actions can only be the common endeavour of at least a number of European nations. Europe will begin to exist politically when different European nations will succeed in formulating a common European purpose, and acting upon it. Solidarity between Europeans cannot be presupposed, and it is not susceptible to be properly willed. To be real, it must be the effect or, so to speak, the by-product of common European actions.

Speech is the beginning of action. It gives action its impetus, motives and horizon. Sound political life is the lively and judicious ordering of speech and action. European solidarity, European common life, will come into being when Europeans, at least some Europeans, will prove able to elaborate and enunciate a distinct and forceful European speech. A distinctly European speech.

A speech, that is, a take on the world, that is not soluble in the cheap universalism of supposedly globalized mankind. A distinctly European speech, *not* the cloying catechism of "European values" which serves only to give cover to stultifying political correctness.

What could this European speech look like? It cannot be divined before it has been produced. It will not be the contrivance of any individual, however gifted, nor of any group or sect, however zealous and ambitious. We can safely say that if it ever comes into existence, it will build on the real associations having for centuries contributed to European life, that is, European nations and Churches. There will not be any meaningful European discourse if Europeans deprive themselves of the variegated wisdom and manifold splendour of their national and religious traditions. I hasten to add that this discourse cannot consist in the pious repetition or continuation of ancient formulae and mores. It cannot rest simply on what has come to pass since it must make us able to bring into being what could be.

Now, if I cannot say what this distinctly European speech will be, I can guess, I think, *where* it will be elaborated. Meaningful discourses, great speeches or views through which human beings become able to find a new orientation in the world, these discourses, speeches or views are born on the problematic edges, the unsettled borders, of human associations, where the latter confront their limits, where they meet with other human associations. Western political and moral philosophy was born when and where Athenian civic life encountered the limits of Greek city. And we gain some access to Christianity as soon as we notice that the sparks of Jesus' and Paul's predication sprang up where the Jewish people rubbed against the Roman, or Greco-Roman empire. What European speech or discourse will spring up where Europe confronts the rest of the world? What European speech or discourse on, and about, this border which Europeans push farther and farther away, this border which they are so reluctant

to acknowledge and which they have made themselves nearly unable even to see?

Mistaking our longing for death for a proof of our moral superiority, we brace ourselves against the most necessary and salutary discourse, the discourse which would limn or carve the distinctively European take on the world. We look with reprobation, even loathing, at what is truly the condition of our survival, at least of our continued life as a significant element in the life of the world. This European discourse, if it ever comes into being, will be produced through our political and spiritual confrontation with the other great protagonists of the present world. It presupposes, it has as its precondition, the affirmation of our political existence as an independent actor, a politically and spiritually independent actor in the world. *In principio erat verbum*, says John. *Im Anfang war die Tat*, Goethe's Faust suggests as a better rendering. Reluctant to lean on God's word, and unwilling to fetch for the Devil, I will only say: the meaningful discourse I have in mind will follow hard on the heels of our common action as soon as the latter begins. The only purpose of my argumentation here was to encourage, however feebly, the first beginnings of European action.

Gianni Vattimo
SOLIDARITY, UNIVERSALISM AND THE INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

All of us probably remember the famous sentence by Nietzsche on the death of God. And also its clause: God will still cast his shadow for a long time on our world. What if we apply Nietzsche's sentence also, and above all, to religions? In many ways, it is true that in a large part of contemporary world religion as such is dead, but it still casts its shadows upon so many aspects of our private and collective lives. By the way, let us note that the God whose death was announced by Nietzsche is not necessarily the God in which many of us still believe – I consider myself a Christian, but I am pretty sure that the God who died in Nietzsche is not the God of Jesus. I even believe that exactly thanks to Jesus I am an atheist. The God who died, as Nietzsche himself says somewhere in his work calling him "the moral God" is the first principle of the classic metaphysics, the supreme entity which is supposed to be the cause of the material universe – and which needs that special discipline which is called *theodicea*, a series of arguments that try to justify him/her/it in face of the evils we see everywhere in this world. My thesis, here, will be that religions are dead, and deserve to be dead, in the same sense in which Nietzsche speaks of God's death.

Not only moral religions are dead, in the most obvious meaning of the word. Speaking from inside the Christian and Catholic

society of Europe, it is easy to show that very few people observe the commands of the official Christian morality. In a more profound sense, what is dead are the "moral" religions taken as a guarantee of the rational order of the world. This was the moral God of metaphysics, who in the view of Socrates made us sure that whoever is morally just does not have to fear any evil in this world nor in the other one. Religions have not only promised the union of virtue and happiness, as Kant would say, i.e. the final triumph of justice; as in the case of the moral God, they have powerfully helped to establish and keep the "just" order in this world, becoming strong institutions and rigid hierarchies enforcing morality. The institutionalization of the beliefs, which gave rise to the churches, involved (I do not know whether only in fact or necessarily) a claim for historical power, in the sense that it was almost natural and necessary for a moral religion to become a strong worldly institution. This seems to be simply the experience of Catholicism; but many other similar phenomena are visible in the history of other religions. Even Buddhism has given rise to a state, the Lamaistic Tibet, which is now struggling for its survival against China. But everywhere – e.g. in Hinduism – the very existence of a difference between clerics and lays involves that religion becomes an institution, which is always primarily concerned with its own survival.

It is considered trivial to observe, as people have done so often, that the monks and clerics do not work. But in the very end this objection should be taken more seriously, above all if one considers how important it was, e.g. in Christianity, to choose poverty, with Jesus who never had a home or a stone on which to put his head. And all the preachers and founders of the traditional religions were non-institutional characters. How far they are from the solemn chiefs religions now have all over the world: popes, patriarchs, every kind of "chairs"! One may answer that, if this has been so continuously happening in the history of

religions, there must be a sort of historical necessity to it. Let me refer again to the example of the Catholic Church: if it had not survived throughout the centuries, I would not have been able to receive the Gospel, the good news of the salvation. The sacred texts both found and require the authority of the Church in order that the message reaches the faithful. Even more important is the presence of "teachers" in the orally transmitted religions. Here, too, a form of institution is needed for the very existence of the religious practice.

Again, as in the case of Nietzsche's death of God, the death of the institutionalized religions does not mean that they have no legitimacy. Simply, a time comes in which they are no longer needed. And this time is our time, because, as it is visible in many aspects of today's life, religions no longer help to live a pacific life, they do not represent a means of salvation anymore. On the contrary, in so many situations they have become a principle of division and conflict. The example of the crusades can help to understand what I mean. But all over the history of modern Europe, with the struggle against Muslims and also with the long European religion wars of the sixteenth to eighteenth century, instead of being a factor of peace, religion has been a cause of bloody division. Of course, this happened mostly because of the ideological use of the religious belief by kings and states. Religion reveals to be a strong factor of conflict in moments of intense interchange between different cultural worlds. This is the case today, at any rate: we live in an increasingly intercultural society. In Italy, for instance, there is now a problem concerning the construction of mosques, because the Muslim population has dramatically increased. The traditional hegemonic condition of the Catholic Church is challenged, but the Catholics themselves, unlike the bishops and the Pope, do not feel any threat in all that. Of course, for the very fact of being an institution, the Catholic Church is also a natural ally of the Institutions, although sometimes

some conflict arises on the areas of their respective powers. Also in these cases of conflict, Christianity as such is not at stake at all, they are all simply matters of power. The Church claims that it wants to defend its power (and the economic aspects of it) in order to preserve its capacity of preaching the Gospel. Yes, but as in many institutions, the ultimate reason of its existence is very often forgotten in favour of the mere continuity of the status quo.

What I mean is that in today's world, especially in the industrialized West, religion as institution has become a factor of conflict and an obstacle to "salvation", whatever this means. I want to emphasize that I speak of the death of religions in the sense in which I accept the announcement of Nietzsche on the death of God. The religion which is dead is the religion-institution, which deeply helped the development of civilization, but in the very end it became an obstacle. Among Christian theologians, Karl Barth is the one who the most strongly opposed the identification of the Christian faith with a religion. I am not sure if my use of the term is faithful to his, but I am sure that is exactly what also Barth had in mind: he, and wanted to criticize, religion as a structure of belonging, rules, hierarchies, which is more or less what I mean by religion as institution. (Not to forget: In Italian debates on the duty of exhibiting the Crucifix in public spaces – schools, courts, state offices of various kinds – Cardinal Ruini, then the President of the Italian Episcopal Conference, said that the Crucifix is the symbol of our national identity!).

To speak of the death of religions in a sense related to Nietzsche's announcement of the death of God does not mean obviously that religion has never had a sense for humanity. Even Nietzsche's sentence cannot be taken as if having said that God does not exist. This would be once more a metaphysical statement, which Nietzsche did not want to pronounce, because of his general refusal of any "descriptive" metaphysics. The struggle against the survival of religions that I am talking about has little

to do (i.e. only in the practical political level) with the rationalist denial of any meaning to religious feelings. It takes very seriously the revival of the need for a relationship with transcendence, which characterizes many aspects of today's culture. Let me again quote Nietzsche, who says that God is dead, and we now want that many Gods exist. Believers have killed God in order to be faithful to his command not to lie, because the old moral God is no longer required (in a society in which legal order and technical equipment provide the safety that was expected from the old God) and therefore becomes a lie.

We may say the same in the case of religions: as far as they still want to be strong worldly institutions, they are an obstacle to peace and to the development of a genuine religious attitude: consider how many people are now abandoning the Catholic Church because of the scandal represented by the claims of the Pope and bishops to interfere with civil legislation in Italy. The field of family ethics and bioethics is the most controversial. In the United States, the announcement of president Obama concerning his intention to eliminate the restrictions imposed on the freedom of women to choose to abort, has already raised a vast opposition of the Catholic bishops. The opposition against any form of freedom of choice in all matters related to family, sexuality, bioethics is much more continuous and heavy in countries like Italy and Spain. Note that the Church opposes laws which do not oblige, but only leave to personal choice all these matters. On which side, we should ask, does civilization stand? Not to speak of the appeal to a spirit of crusade that is so often repeated by the catholic hierarchy. The Pope repeated, very consistently, that there can be no negotiation on truth. Does this "fundamentalism" characterize only Catholicism, or Christianity? What about other great religions?

As I said before, it is very likely that forms of "temporal power" exist in all religions in which there is a difference between

clerics and laymen. Therefore there is some form of institutional authority. But, as it is to be expected, given the central role played by Europe and the "Christian" West in the history of these two millenniums, the "death", or destiny of dissolution, of institutional religions is particularly felt and visible in Western European Christianity. It is the responsibility of whoever speaks of civilizations to take into account this particular condition. For instance, and above all, there is a need to combat the general tendency of religious institutions to exploit the renewed need of the people for transcendence – a need largely motivated by the threats with which our civilization is faced in a time of intense techno-scientific development and of progressive exhaustion of the natural resources – in view of a reestablishment of their authority. Look at the frequent inter-religious dialogues that take place everywhere in the world, where the partners are almost always "officials" of the different confessions. They do not engage in dialogue with the view of proposing any change; dialogue is just a way of reconfirming their authority on their respective groups. Did anything useful for peace and reciprocal understanding of the peoples come out from these frequent encounters? Until the authoritarian and power aspect of religions is not cancelled, there will be no possible progress in the reciprocal understanding between different cultures of the world.

If until now I have primarily emphasized the "religious" aspects of the problem, that is, that the institutionalized religion has ended or is coming to an end. It is in order to act against this same religious sentiment where no one listens anymore to the Pope; he is a conservative power, a preaching respect only for the Western way of life. What Nietzsche called the death of god, that is, generalized nihilism, has also a strictly philosophical meaning which is to discredit universalism.

Generally the crisis of the universal concept of truth and of the universalism that belongs to it is tied to the "epistemological"

recognition of the limits of rationality. We have become wiser in pretending that we actually know the true and definitive essence of things. While Wittgenstein taught us that each proposition may claim validity only within a specific "language game", and James and Dewey that truth is only "what is good for us", Heidegger went even further by emphasizing that every experience of truth is an experience of interpretation and that such interpretation may never claim to become the faithful mirror of reality, whatever we intend by this term. But also those philosophers who acknowledge this transformation of truth – who, by the way, are not that many, given that most schools continue to think truth in terms of the adequation of thought to a thing – avoid developing further this epistemological level of the problem. These philosophers and schools seem to believe in a history of truth that has finally reached a more "realistic" awareness of that there are limits to knowledge. But such awareness is once again thought of, more or less explicitly, as a "truer" truth than the one realists and objectivists of all sort believe in. This truth, as it demands universal acceptance, is still equipped with a general claim of legitimacy which, paradoxically, clashes with the pretences numerous other philosophical, religious, and juridical doctrines make to universality. As we can see, all this sums up to yet another version of the anti-sceptical argument: if you claim everything is false, you still pretend to be correct and affirm a truth… etc.

Nietzsche wrote once: if you abandon a certain theoretical position, do not pretend to fully explain the reasons of your change. Even when you embraced, in the past, the position today you deny, you have not done it for theoretically demonstrated reasons.

My point is that when philosophy is faced with the question of universalism it cannot hope to solve the problem in terms of purely theoretical arguments. In an essay that here I assume as a guide for our discussion – *Solidarity or Objectivity?* – Richard

Rorty tried to trace the origins of philosophical universality claims back in a specific moment of the history of Greek polis when they expanded their commerce beyond the restricted sphere in which traditionally they used to deal. It is in this moment that Greek philosophy became interested in affirming opinions capable of achieving consensus also with those who were not citizens of the Greek polis, in other words, for the sake of some sort of non-violent domination.

Regardless of how things went at that point, we have become accustomed to consider this "discovery" of universality as a positive passage on the way of progress of humanity and civilization. Still today, thinkers we all value and respect, such as Apel and Habermas, believe that it is not possible to make any affirmation without claiming at least implicitly its validity *erga omnes*. And these *omnes* are not only the ones who play our language game or our fellow citizens, etc; they are the universal stage of humans upon which our affirmation claims validity in the name of Reason itself.

But in the contemporary condition, which Heidegger would call the end of metaphysics, and Nietzsche the triumph of nihilism, it is just this call to a universal rationality that has become very suspicious. One asks who speaks, who represents the voice of rationality that, according to the hypothesis, speaks in every man. Is the experience of this suspicion simply the bad consciousness of western culture? This is a legitimate question. In the West this claim of universality, which was first developed in Greek philosophy, has become even more clear and peremptory because it has fused together with the Christian idea of salvation, offered by God through his incarnated Son, to all men. It is Saint Augustine, the first great Christian philosopher, who preached that truth is in the intimacy of every man and only there it can be looked for. This was a decisive passage towards the affirmation of the value of every single person, regardless its affiliation or

belonging. Unfortunately, Saint Augustine is also the author of the motto *compelle intrare*, "compel people to come in" (into the Church, of course), which has been for decades legitimating every sort of violation by the religious authorities of that same interior freedom that Augustine taught us to recognize.

This is why we can consider providential, a *felix culpa*, the fact that today we are faced with the problem of religion wars, emphasizing the absurdity of such wars not only means recognizing more clearly what is happening, clearing out an error; it is also an occasion to clarify the sense of religion in our world in favour of the religious consciousness which will hopefully also serve the implicated churches and confessions. In other words, thinking about the question of religion wars (and its inactuality) in our world also means beginning to think in a more authentic way about the universalism of the great religion of salvation upon which the modern world has constituted itself and has fertilized the western civilization that we belong to.

This is why I talk about the end of metaphysics in Heidegger's sense. Today each universalism, each claim that founds itself upon a truth which is supposed to be known by every human being – either for the very nature of rationality, or for the divine revelation entrusted to a religion – has to come to terms with the phenomenon (unimaginable in previous historical worlds where civilizations lived much more isolated than today) of globalization. This implies both the necessity of a direct confrontation between ideas and the awareness that this confrontation is never a pure confrontation of ideas.

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Having said this, we can understand why the history of western colonialism and imperialism remains essentially relevant for philosophy today. Philosophy, regardless of its level of reflection,

knows that pretending to found the human coexistence on truth is still a dangerous colonialist and imperial prejudice which is also followed by many ex-colonial cultures that have assimilated the "bad habit" of their ancient oppressors.

We are not exaggerating if we think that also universalism is one of the harms produced by the colonial dominion over other populations. Each intercultural and interreligious "dialogue" today ought to start from here, from the research of a way of common life which we can leave aside any pretences of truth.

Let us come back to the Pope**.** Benedict XVI wrote his first encyclical with the title *Deus caritas est*. In such a document he could not avoid repeating that *caritas* without truth does not have any sense. Truth, as we know the Pope's vocabulary, means dogmas, ethical-political disciplines, power. And also, when it is possible, *compelle intrare*. For example, it is a moral duty of the "shepherds" (Pope, bishops, priests) to make sure the Christian masses are not subject to too many temptations and do not receive "wrong" indications and so forth. This, you might say, is a Christian experience or even a catholic one, if not merely an Italian one. But in an intercultural and interreligious dialogue one cannot avoid the question of the universalist claim of (our? any?) religion. From the point of view of an European raised in the parameters of the Greek-Christian universality tradition the only way out is to push to the extremes charity and solidarity's prevalence over truth. In Italian we have a paradoxical saying that goes: "Thanks to God I'm an atheist". This could be translated: "Just because I am a Christian, I don't believe in truth". I am always asked: "How can you love the other if you do not believe that, truthfully, he is your brother?" (human nature, divine common descendants, rationality that talks to everyone). Is it possible to love the other without foundations to believe in? I certainly do not believe it is possible to set apart my history off the Christian history. It is only by pushing to the extreme what

comes from such history – universality, but also the awareness of the errors that it has produced – that I find a reasonable way of not worrying anymore about truth. But how do my philosophical and religious fellows respond to this argument? Until now all dialogues of this sort have oriented themselves towards the search of a "common truth" which functions as foundation. But what will happen if finally the common search is directed to do without truth and that is, without power. In the Christian scripture, and again in Saint Augustine, there is a base to think that of all virtues the one that survives for ever is only charity, certainly not the faith in this or that proposition on God, man, or the cosmos.

Provisional Conclusions

If we look at the history of Western civilization (I speak from within it, of course), universalism reveals to have always been a way of legitimizing some sort of imposition on the other. Not consciously**,** remember Plato: if you reach the real truth, you feel the need (compassion) to share it with your fellow human beings. If they do not want to listen to you, you may also use a certain amount of violence. Saint Augustine: *Compelle intrare* (into the church, to save your soul).

Do we, humans, really need universal truth(s) in order to survive or to be happy? For instance, does the construction of a viable world need a common belief in some sort of "descriptive" proposition (all men are equal, man is essentially free, etc.)?

To put all this another way: do we need to acknowledge a truth to reach an agreement, or do we say that we have reached the truth when we reach an agreement?

What I am trying to show is the connection between any claim to validity in the theoretical level and the factual existence of a power. In order to state that things "are" so and so you have

to be somehow "in power". Hobbes: *Auctoritas, non veritas, facit legem*. We could translate this as follows: "Universal truth is only what is stated by the power (state, statement, *episteme*)".

I am not telling the truth. I am telling a story, the narrative of my experience as a philosopher who grew up in the Christian western world, and has had his experience with universalism. I used to believe that we, the westerners, as philosophers and as Christians, had been given the truth, and we had the task to announce it all over the world. For compassion vis-à-vis our fellow human beings. Still, the "practical" fact of the revolt against colonialism and the practice of the new imperialism of globalised capitalism obliges me to rethink my philosophical idea of universalism.

I have not made any theoretical discovery. I have just realized that I can no longer speak of a universal truth in a world where different cultures have taken visibility. I can no longer ignore the deep connection between truth and power.

So what? Is there any conclusion to this *prise de conscience*? What I can offer as a Westerner to my partners in an interreligious dialogue is my experience with the story of universalism. By the way, this is also my way to be Christian. The "superiority" (in many quotation marks) of Christianity consists in the fact (no matter what the popes think and say) that it is a religion-non-religion. The core of the Christian message is that God has abandoned his/her transcendence to become one of us. In other words, as an Italian dictum says, thanks God, I am an atheist.

What else remains, though, if not a universal truth, a unified world under a "rational", democratic authority? I do not know. What (I think) I know is that, as a Christian, I have to take part with my fellow human beings who in their large majority are not what Benjamin called the "winners", shareholders of the existing order and therefore supporters of the practical, imperial universalism which threatens to cancel humanity in its irreducible multiplicity of forms and values. Of course – as it is probably the case of all

religions – I do not have the recipe for an ideal state. One cannot project an anarchic order. But in the current situation, it seems that some form of anarchic – theoretical and practical – opposition would certainly help.

Ivan Krastev

THE CRISIS: SOLIDARITY, ELITES, MEMORY, EUROPE

The impact of the economic crisis of 2008 will not be limited to the trillions of dollars "burned" and to the millions of jobs lost. It will not be remembered only with political turmoil it will (or will not) stir and the geopolitical earthquake it will (or will not) cause. The crisis we are in is foremost the crisis of our expectations concerning what the future has stored for us. It is a cultural crisis that will force us to re-interpret the world in which we live.

In a popular psychological experiment a man is shown in a quick succession pictures of a hundred of cats and when asked what he sees, he naturally says that he sees cats. When in-between the pictures of cats pictures of dogs are inserted (after every nine cats – one dog), the man still claims that he sees only cats. It takes a disruption, somebody calling his name or interruption in the showing of the pictures so the man can see the dogs. Psychologists used the experiment to demonstrate that usually we see what we are used to see. The crisis of 2008 was such a disruption. It did not change the world but it revealed what has been changed in the last decades.

In 2005, 21.2 percent of the US national income accrued to just 1 percent of earners. Contrast 1968, when the CEO of General Motors took home in pay and benefits, about sixty-six times the amount paid to a typical GM worker. Today the CEO of Walmart

earns 900 times the wages of his average employee. Before the crisis we knew that the last three decades have been the time of growing inequalities in our societies, but the crisis made us think about the social and political implications of the rise of inequality. The dramatic decline in trust in public institutions in most of the advanced democracies of the West was not something that we learned in the day when Wall Street collapsed. It took the crisis to make us see the dogs among the cats and realize how ungovernable our societies have become.

It is fair to say that in order to imagine the long-term impact of this crisis, it is more important to focus on what did not happen – not on what did happen – in the last three years. Our expectations were shaped by the comparisons with the Great Depression. We expected societies to turn to the left (another red decade). We expected the return of solidarity. We expected a radical alternative to the present political order to come onstage. We expected the failure of the market to bring back the demand for more state intervention. But all these expectations were wrong. There is a lot of instability and anger on the streets of Europe and America but no major political mobilization can be detected. There is no new collective utopia that has captured the public's imagination. Instead of bringing new life to the political left or the political right, the crisis challenged the very notion of the left-right structured democratic politics. Europe and world have gone populist. But this is a strange version of populism – people revolt not with the idea of change but with the idea of revenge and punishment. The rebels of today do not oppose the status quo of yesterday; they try to preserve it. This pro-status quo radicalism can be seen on the streets of Paris where students protest against the increase of the pension age or in the city of Stuttgart where citizens protest against the construction of new railway station in the city. What most people fear is not the status quo, what they fear is the change. The globalization we prayed for yesterday is what we fear today. In

short, we are not back in the 1930s, what we witness today much more resembles 1960s – it is 1968 in reverse. In 1968 students on the streets of Europe declared their desire to live in a world different than the world of their parents, now students are on the street to declare their desire to live in the world of their parents.

The crisis did not lead to the triumph of a specific economic model. It turned into a crisis of all models. America is heavily indebted, Europe does not know how to grow in the next decade and how to pay for its welfare state, China does not know to preserve social stability if her growth is less than 8 percent per year. What started as a run on the banks turned into a run on the states. The state saved capitalism. But the trust in the state was not restored. In the US the crisis of the de-regulated market did not bring back a new solidarity moment as some liberals thought it would; it brought the rise of the Tea Party – a strange mixture of anti-establishment populism and economic libertarianism.

Another striking aspect of the current crisis is that it did not have a major impact in the realm of ideas. Re-praising Keynes and re-publishing Marx is intellectually entertaining but it does not amount to an intellectual revolution. Not a single new idea came out of the crisis of 2008. The neo-liberal consensus was vilified but it was not overthrown. Economists succeeded in trivializing the crisis. As Martin Sorrel wrote in the *Financial Times*, "in every era financial or irrational exuberance ends with shutters coming down. Tulip mania, the South Sea bubble […] and the first Internet bust were part of the same ebb and flow. We should not expect it to be different now, but that does not make it easier to accept the cyclical nature of the economy" (Sorrell 2009). It is really amazing to realize how little the current economic crisis has affected the major assumptions of the economists. The newspapers were full with articles announcing "the end of neo-liberalism" but in reality the crisis re-affirmed the mistrust towards the state as economic player instead of shattering it. There is talk for smarter

regulations but there are no revolutionary changes in regulation of the economy. And when it comes to the economics departments of the universities they remained detached and unmoved by the suffering of the real economies. It will be fair to argue that neo-liberalism is much more the ideology of the economic departments of universities than of businesses. And economists are the only one who clearly benefited from both neo-liberal paradigm and its crisis.

When it comes to the competition between different political regimes, the crisis instead of becoming "the moment of truth" became the moment of confusion. Many political theorists expected that the crisis will result either in failure of the new regimes of authoritarian capitalism like Russia or China or that it will end up in the repetition of the 1930s and it will destroy the new democracies in Central and Eastern Europe. The crisis in a perverse way led neither to the collapse of the new authoritarians nor to the demise of the new democracies. In a strange way the crisis validated Huntington's observation made 40 years ago that "the most important political distinction among countries concerns not their form of government but their degree of government" (Huntington 1968: 1).

The crisis of 2008 forced us to see how much the democratic regimes have been changed. Like in the already quoted psychological experiments we were too eager to see cats where there were dogs. When political scientists describe the democratic regimes of twentieth-century Europe, they usually talk about the voter, the newspaper reader, the taxpayer, the soldier and ultimately the citizen. Voters usually belonged to the Church of the Left or the Church of the Right and changing sides historically was as unlikely as changing your faith in the time of the religious wars. The newspaper reader was better informed than those who preferred not to read; he/she was loyal to his paper and always ready to discuss the big issues of the day. The taxpayer was keeping the

state running and the citizen soldier was ready to die defending his fatherland. Most of these figures are irrelevant if we want to understand our own democratic societies. For a younger European today it is more natural to defend his/her rights through court than through the political process. Suing the government today is more promising than voting for any of the uninspiring parties that populate the political space. And changing your vote today is as easy (or even easier) than changing your favourite perfume. Trying something new is what determines the political preferences of the many voters. The newspaper reader is a vanishing animal being succeeded by the TV viewer and recently the blogger. But what is more important as the studies of the Fox News audience demonstrate, watching more Fox News does not make you better informed. The taxpayer is also a figure from the past. Fortunately it exists but he lost his power to the investor. It is the investors who shape governments' policies today. Attracting investors and not raising taxes is what makes societies rich today. And even the soldier is not what he used to be. He is not a citizen any more. He is just a professional. He is not sacrificing his life, he is simply doing his job. In short, the crisis did not bring to the stage any real alternative to democracy but it revealed the growing tensions between democratic majoritarianism and liberal constitutionalism that tears apart modern democracies.

The crisis has demonstrated that something fundamental has changed in the way our societies live and think. In the developed world the cultural revolution of the 1960s, the economic revolution of the 1980s and the democratic revolution of the 1990s all together profoundly changed the nature of the capitalist society. The cultural revolution of the 1960s stressed the importance of "now" and emancipated the modern self from the burden of thinking about the future. The protestant postponement of immediate gratification was replaced by "enjoy and pay later". The hippie of 1960s was easily transformed into the indebted borrower of the

2008. Reagan-Thatcher revolution succeeded in de-legitimizing the post-war welfare state, while democratic revolution linked the political and the economic experience of our time making the voting consumer the central figure of our societies.

American sociologist Daniel Bell as early as three decades ago emphasized the fact that the predominance of pre-capitalist culture (family structure, religion, forms of solidarity) is an essential pre-condition for the success and sustainability of capitalist societies. What the 1990s brought was the erosion of the pre-capitalist structures and modes of thinking and the expansion of the logic of the market beyond the economic sphere. The 1990s transformed American middle class from a saving class to a borrowing class. Consumption and the thirst for credits became a defining feature of the new middle class that was born out of rising stock markets, the rapid increase in house prices, and the access to cheap credit. It was not simply consumption but competitive consumption that was the defining characteristic of advanced societies in the last two decades. Households were caught in the "keeping up with the Joneses" spiral. American households that used to save about 8 percent of their disposal incomes as far as a decade ago now are dangerously indebted.

In this sense the crisis has three critical dimensions that remained neglected: the first is the crisis of the meritocratic elites; the second is the unexpected encounter between Europe's post-1989 generation and Europe's pre-1945 past; and the third the end of the illusion of European Union's universalism. All three matter.

The Rise and Fall of Meritocracy

Governing was never easy but these days it becomes almost impossible. In the early weeks of the crash it was painful to recognize how powerless our elites are. The next moment was

to recognize how hated they are. Why meritocratic elites are so hated is a question central to our understanding of the cultural and political foundations of the current crisis.

Meritocratic elites based their legitimacy on achievement and not on belonging. The young Wall Street investment banker who comes from a middle class family, graduated from Harvard and made millions before reaching 35 is the highest flying representative of the type. He achieved what he wanted simply with talent and education, and he achieved it quickly. He was the citizen of the world and the taxpayer of offshore heavens.

In his book *The Revolt of the Elites* (1995), American social critic Christopher Lasch distinguishes meritocratic elites from their predecessors by their lack of interest in leadership and their wish to escape from the common lot. They are not dependent on their country's education system (their children go to private schools) or national health service (they can afford better hospitals). And they have lost what anthropologist Ivaylo Ditchev calls "emotional citizenship" – the tendency to share the passions of their community. The end of the Cold War set in motion the process that has liberated the meritocratic elites from fear, guilt, ideology, the chains of community, national loyalty and even from the necessity to govern.

The public's hatred against meritocratic elites is at the heart of the new populism in Europe and America. The populists do not offer a real alternative, nor are they egalitarian. Their attraction lies in their promise to renationalise the elites, to re-establish the constraints that were removed. The covert aim of populists is to inject fear and insecurity into the life of elites, or even imprison them (the one thing elites cannot escape is the justice system). It is not a struggle for justice or equality, but for intimacy. Populists are like an abandoned wife who cannot accept her husband's new freedom and indifference and will do everything to remind their partner that they are still married.

"The End of History" Generation

The crisis of meritocratic elites is accompanied by the return of national historical narratives. History really ended in 1989 or some years later; not in the sense that liberal democratic capitalism turned to be the fulfilment of the dreams of humanity, but in the sense that the post-1989 generation in Europe is not interested in history any more. It lives outside history. This is a generation that "google" history for facts but it cannot reconnect with the experience of the previous generations. It has lost the ability for empathy. History has ended because it did not matter anymore.

In the aftermath of the Cold War students were not taught history anymore, they were taught the lessons of history. Teaching the lessons of history and not the history itself is at the heart of the post-Cold War culture. The past has been reduced to code words like "Munich", Auschwitz", "Srebrenica" followed by the exclamation "Never more".

Making the illusions of the previous generations unintelligible is the unintended consequence of the focus on the lessons of history. We cannot imagine any more how a normal person can become fascist or communist but it is at the heart of European history in the twentieth century that normal persons were becoming fascists or communists. Teaching only the lessons of history, we lost the ability to speak with the dead. Contrary to the official claims, West Europeans did not transfer to Eastern Europe their own experience in dealing with the past; they transferred what they believed they have learned from this experience.

The de-nationalization of history was a fundamental element of the EU construct but the problem with the de-nationalization of history is that societies' collective experiences tend to re-surface as national narrative and in the time of crisis national experience

is the one that shapes policies. Germany's reaction to the current crisis cannot be understood outside of the German experience of the 1920s and 1930s when inflation and political polarization paved the road for Hitler's coming to power. But while past experience determines policy choices, this past experience cannot be communicated any more to the younger generations.

The perverse effect of the end of history is that the political communities of yesterday represented by nation states were weakened while new European public space was not created. As an outcome the crisis weakened rather than strengthened the solidarity feeling both on the level of the nation states and on the level of Europe. Middle classes are reluctant to pay for the poor, Germany is angry being forced to pay for Greece. The discourse of solidarity is dead in Europe today. European governments and societies still practice solidarity but we do not believe in it any more.

The End of the Illusion of European Union's Universalism

The crisis also marked the marginalization of European continent in global politics. Europe has become a periphery in a world that is shaped by the US and China. As it stands now, Europe has lost its self-confidence, its energy and its hopes that the next century will be the "European century". From Beijing to Washington – and even in Brussels – the Old Continent is widely viewed as an extinguished geopolitical force. The EU is not so much a declining power, it has decided to be a "retired power" – wise but inactive, prosperous and accommodating.

Contrary to the expectations of the European elites, the crisis of the American style capitalism – instead of being a demonstration of the superiority of the European model – has turned into a profound crisis of EU's self-confidence. Diverse factors contributed to Europe's bad mood, the most important being

demography, democracy, loss of geopolitical importance and the lack of leadership.

Demography plays a critical role in explaining Europe's fears about the future. The predictions are that the median age in Europe will increase to 52.3 years in 2050 from 37.7 years in 2003, while the median age for Americans will be only 35.4 years. Europe's share in the global GDP is predicted to shrink in the decades to come and at the same time the European public is scared at the prospect of the growing immigration. Europe's failure to integrate the fast growing number of immigrants is at the core of its newly found insecurity. Europe's democracy has been pre-conditioned on the ethnically homogeneous societies and well-functioning welfare states – both of which are currently under pressure. There is a growing fear of the return of identity politics in Europe.

The loss of geopolitical centrality is another important factor explaining Europe's change of heart. It is not simply that European powers are not the major actors on the international scene; what is new is that Europe is not any more the place where the action takes place. Contrary to its behaviour in the 1990s, the EU has turned into a risk-averse, neither here-nor there power, paralysed by a deficit of solidarity, imagination and by a lack of leadership.

The emergence of a multi-polar world has unexpected consequences to Europe's worldview. Despite the fact that in recent years Europe was one of the sharpest critics of America's unipolarity, in reality America's world was quite hospitable to the European project. It was due to America's global hegemony that the EU emerged on the world stage as a superpower, because America's global hegemony allowed the EU to be a superpower without the need to be a nation-state type of actor. It was Washington's global hegemony that allowed the EU to enlarge itself and to concentrate on its internal institutional architecture. America's security umbrella allowed EU to become a global power without the need to become a real military power. America's global hegemony, which

turned the world into a competition among companies and not among States, perfectly fitted European interests.

In the new post-American world, the international stage will be dominated most probably by nineteenth-century-minded traditional powers that fundamentally differ in their assumptions from the Brussels consensus. So, Europe started to look at its advantages as vulnerabilities. At present, the EU has a surplus of popularity, but a deficit of power. In short, the decline of American power and the collapse of American hegemony — no matter what you feel about it — is one of the reasons for Europe's bad mood.

The EU is also powerfully hit by the change of ideological fashion. For the last decade, European public opinion assumed that globalization is synonymous with the decline of the nation state and nationalism as a political force. The EU was tempted to read its own experience of overcoming ethnic nationalism and political religions as a universal trend. The end of history was an American slogan, but a European reality in the 1990s. As Mark Leonard has put it: "Europe represents a synthesis of the energy and freedom that come from liberalism with the stability and welfare that come from social democracy. As the world becomes richer and moves beyond satisfying basic needs such as hunger and health, the European way of life will become irresistible" (Leonard 2005: 170).

But what till yesterday seemed universal in the European experience today starts to look exceptional. It is enough to look at China, India and Russia in order to see that both ethnic nationalism and religion are back in shaping global politics and as major ideological driving forces. Post-modern post-nationalism and secularism are making Europe different from the rest of the world. The world is becoming more capitalist, but this does not necessarily mean more democratic. It is not difficult to predict that in the next ideological cycle, liberalism will be in retreat. The rise of ethnic nationalism and the return of religion are not only

more and more present in the non-European world; they are also more present within Europe itself. Brussels as the capital of the EU is very different in spirit from Brussels as the capital of Belgium. The EU's Brussels is in love with diversity and multiculturalism, while Belgium's Brussels is witnessing the rise of symbolic politics and the return of the ghost of ethnically driven partition.

In short, the ideological and geopolitical impact of the current economic crisis has affected Europe much more than America. The crisis has put post-national politics on trail. It revoked collective national experiences and brought back national narratives – Germany's behaviour being the best illustration of it. At the heart of Europe's loss of ambitions is the fact that EU succeeded to create institutional identity but it failed to build political identity for itself.

John Gray

TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY CONFLICTS: IN THE WAKE OF THE RADIANT FUTURE

In the early twenty-first century the world is governed by many regimes. There are civic republics and constitutional monarchies, liberal and social democracies, nation-states and multi-national empires, secular states and theocracies, tyrannies, failed states and regimes that do not match any recognised political category. Around two hundred states cooperate and contend with one another, participating in shared transnational institutions while pursuing their own goals and interests.

In harbouring many varieties of government the world is no different today from what it has always been. What is different is that the prevailing mode of thinking continues to be shaped by the belief that the actually existing diversity of regimes is a transitional phase in a process of development that can have only one result. Emerging towards the end of the eighteenth century along with the European Enlightenment, the belief has taken hold that the end-point of history is a single type of regime whose legitimacy will be accepted everywhere.

There has never been any consensus as to the nature of this regime. Marx envisioned an egalitarian communist society, Comte a neo-mediaeval industrial hierarchy, Spencer minimal government and John Stuart Mill a complex version of liberal democracy.

They did not claim a universal regime was inevitable. But though its achievement was not guaranteed, a single mode of government was required by the nature of the modern world. Unless progress was derailed, the upshot of modern development could only be a universal civilisation.

As we know, nothing of this kind has come to pass. The first half of the last century witnessed the rise of modern versions of barbarism – Bolshevism and its continuation in Stalinism, Nazism and versions of fascism and nationalism in Europe and Asia, for example. Not only did these regimes make full use of modern technology, they were also committed to distinctively modern projects. Universal human emancipation, national-self-determination and racial domination are very different goals, but they are alike in deploying categories of thought that were not available in pre-modern times. The nation-state is not more than a few centuries old, political projects of universal liberation developed in the late eighteenth century and the use of race as a scientific category began in mid-nineteenth century Germany. The result was a variety of regimes, some tolerably decent and some thoroughly malign, others with mixed records, all of them modern.

The Second World War destroyed many of these regimes and liberal democracy was consolidated in Western Europe, India and Japan, though not in the half of Europe that the Yalta conference consigned to the Soviet sphere. While a belief in progress was widespread, the destruction of Nazism was accomplished without any strong belief in a coming universal order. (For its founders, the UN was a continuation of great-power politics by other means.) Post-war leaders understood the fragility of civilisation too well to be tempted by false hopes.

The mood changed with the Soviet collapse and the reunification of Europe in the tumultuous years of 1989–1991. Together with accelerating market reform in China, the Soviet collapse seemed to show that the "normal" path of historical development

had been resumed. In reality an opposite process was underway. The dissolution of the Soviet system was a major advance for human freedom. At the same time, by allowing Russia to revert to its historic role as a Eurasian power, the fall of communism was also the defeat of a westernising project, though few recognised this at the time.

Fukuyama's apocalyptic pronouncement of the end of history was only an extreme expression of what many then believed: liberal democracy, the type of regime that was in place in the US and now throughout most of Europe, was "the final form of human government". A regime of free markets, liberal democracy and human rights was the only one that could any longer claim legitimacy. An idealised version of American institutions would prevail throughout the world.

Again, nothing of the sort has occurred. Capitalism has spread nearly everywhere. But the type which is advancing most rapidly is Chinese state capitalism, while with the nationalisation of large parts of the US financial system in the course of the bail-out the American free market variety has ceased to exist. Versions of "democratic capitalism" are in place throughout post-communist Europe but there has been no similar development in Russia, where a resource-based economy has emerged, market-based but fused with the state under the control of elements from the former Soviet intelligence services. In this key instance, where western opinion confidently expected a transition to western-style government, the transition has not occurred.

Equally, the embrace of capitalism in China has not been accompanied by any political shift. Whatever it may pretend for the sake of regime continuity, the Chinese communist party is no longer committed to any variant of Marxism. But it is not an enfeebled gerontocracy gradually giving way to a more liberal generation. A presence in every part of society, the party has not lost the will to rule. Nor has it renounced the traditional Chinese

sense of belonging to a superior civilisation. China's economic success has been based on a consistent contempt for western advice. While it will continue making pragmatic borrowings China will also continue to develop in its own terms. As in Russia, the rejection of communism goes with the rejection of any western model.

Despite these developments the belief in eventual convergence remains powerful and pervasive. Those who hold to it invoke various theories of modernisation, mostly of a sub-Marxian variety. Economic growth creates an expanding middle class; this middle class will demand liberties of the kind western societies enjoy – or so we have long been assured. Like Marx, though they nominate the free market rather than communism as the terminus of history, believers in convergence ground their expectations in one short phase in the development of a few western societies. In a rapidly changing world it is a slender foundation for policy; but at bottom the belief in convergence does not rely on evidence. It is an article of faith, a tenet in a secular theodicy that cannot be empirically supported or falsified.

The belief in regime convergence is a version of the faith in progress, which has replaced the idea of providence as the guarantor of the meaning of history in the secular cultures of the west. The core of the idea of progress is the belief that the kind of cumulative advance that has taken place in science can be replicated in society. In ethics and politics, however, we are faced not with soluble problems – however difficult – but with intractable dilemmas. Contrary to post-modern relativists human values are not simply cultural constructions; some are grounded in the nature of humans and thereby species-wide. But there is no progress in the good life of the kind that occurs in science. Whereas human knowledge tends to increase, human beings stay much the same.

Scientific advance has no tendency to make humans more civilised. Before anything else civilisation means the restraint

of violence; but the twentieth century was perhaps the most sanguinary in history. Probably more people were killed than at any other time. Yet western thinking continues to be shaped by an irrational faith in the civilising magic of advancing knowledge. Enchanted by the Socratic dream in which reason and virtue are one and the same, the post-Enlightenment west has denied the truth contained in the biblical myth of the tree of knowledge.

Western governments think their policies are based on reason, but their behaviour belies this self-image. Over the past twenty years their strategies have been in crucial respects faith-based. Costly and dangerous projects have been repeatedly attempted, when a little reflection would have showed their goals to be impossible.

Regime change in Iraq is an example. The claim has been made *ad nauseam* that the weakness of Allied policy was failing to think through a post-invasion strategy. The truth is that if sufficient thought had been given to conditions after the invasion it would never have been launched. Gertrude Bell, the civil servant who more than any other single person invented the state in 1921, noted at the time that a democratic Iraq would be one in which power was in the hands of the Shia clergy. Over eighty years later, when plans for the invasion were being hatched, her comment was still valid. Overthrowing Saddam meant the destruction of his predominantly secular regime and empowering Islamist forces. The upshot could only be a mix of weak democracy with theocracy and anarchy in a fractured state.

None of this is hindsight. During the year preceding the invasion opponents of the war (of whom I was one) reiterated Bell's warning on many occasions. I was not surprised that these warnings had no effect. It was not just that the decision to invade had already been made. More to the point, the decision expressed a faith-based view of the world. I do not mean the Christian fundamentalist world-view that may have shaped

aspects of the thinking of George W. Bush. The faith was that of neo-conservatives who viewed regime change in Iraq as part of a "global democratic revolution", which would install something like American government throughout much of the world.

Some of these believers were former followers of Trotsky who had moved from the radical left to the centre and right of American politics while retaining the chiliastic certainty regarding the future that is characteristic of Leninists. This radical version of secular faith preserved the delusion that the Bolshevik revolution was a benign advance only later corrupted by Stalin. Mutating into a type of belligerent progressivism, the same secular faith nurtured delusions of global democracy. History records that tyranny is often succeeded by anarchy, followed soon afterwards by another species of tyranny; but for neo-conservatives these facts were irrelevant. The past was of interest, if at all, only as the prelude to a radiant future.

It was hardly to be expected that these visionaries would be deterred by the predictable consequences of their actions. Such considerations would trouble only remnants from former regimes belonging to what an anonymous White House staffer described contemptuously as "the reality-based community". Rather than being any kind of conservative, neo-conservatives were utopians of the most radical kind. But they were not alone in basing national strategy on millenarian visions. More than a few American liberals followed them. Utopianism refers to any project whose goals can be known in advance to be unrealisable. Installing secular democracy in Iraq fell into this category, as did exporting a western-style market economy into post-communist Russia.

The utopian quality of western thinking about Iraq and post-communist Russia contrasts with the realism of the anti-communist movement in the seventies and eighties. Anti-communism was a movement supported by people of many world-views

– liberals and conservatives, social democrats and partisans of free markets, religious believers and sceptics. Those of us who participated in the movement believed the Soviet system lacked internal legitimacy and would not endure. What most did not anticipate was that, when it came, the Soviet collapse would produce a mood of western triumphalism in which realistic thinking would be scorned.

Utopian fantasies of the kind that surrounded regime change in Iraq have been dissipated by events, and a chastened mood prevails. But the inability to distinguish between what is possible and what is not, which is the mark of the utopian mind, has not disappeared. Western strategy remains faith-based even if it is now less militant.

Consider Afghanistan. Destroying terrorist bases in the aftermath of 9/11 was a legitimate objective, and from one point of view this initial mission succeeded. Al Qaeda no longer operates in Afghanistan (it has moved on to Pakistan and other countries). Preventing al Qaeda's return is also a legitimate objective, and one that can be achieved by retaining the option of destroying any new bases. While this presupposes some kind of government in the country, and one that is not actively hostile to western interests, it does not require a modern state of the kind western policy has attempted to install. Unlike Iraq, which under Saddam was a modern despotism, Afghanistan has never been a modern state. Various types of monarchical and imperial governance have been in place for long periods, but power has continued to be dispersed among tribes and clans. Even Soviet forces, which approached the work of state-building more ruthlessly than western forces do today, were unable to create a modern state in the country.

In the rush to project a version of western institutions into other lands the protracted struggle that was required to secure them in western countries has been forgotten. The US became

a modern state after a devastating civil war, France after Napoleon and Germany after two European civil wars. The nation-states of eastern Europe were formed, in many cases, only after years of civil strife and ethnic cleansing. Though there are counter-examples – the peaceful separation of Czech and Slovaks, for example – modern states are normally built only after much struggle and violence, usually extending over decades or generations.

Given this fact, how can anyone expect a modern state to be built in Afghanistan in a few years, even – if Obama's pronouncements are taken seriously – a matter of months? The idea is absurd, but no more so than the reality it has created: a pseudo-state run by a shifting coalition of tribal elites, run on mafia lines to produce the maximum profit for those elites. Clearly, a regime of this kind will not command the allegiance of most of the population. Western commentators woodenly repeat that Afghan security and military forces are improving with training. No doubt the competence of these forces can be enhanced. That says nothing about their loyalty, which in a country that continues to be practically stateless can only be a tradable commodity.

That the American-led Afghan mission has suffered strategic defeat is not in doubt. The deeper truth is that after the initial bombing campaign it lacked any realisable objectives. There was never any prospect of building a modern state in the country. Even if one could be constructed on an acceptable timescale, there is no reason to believe it would be friendly to western interests or values.

The ruling illusion is that modern states have a built-in tendency to evolve towards something like liberal democracy – if they do not, then something is preventing them from doing so. But Nazi Germany was a modern state, and there are no grounds for supposing that it would have evolved into anything better; it could only be destroyed. The Soviet Union was also a modern state, and western opinion-formers shared Gorbachev's belief that

it could be reformed. In fact it could only collapse, an outcome hastened by defeat in Afghanistan.

Ironically, the closest Afghanistan has come to having a modern mode of government may have been the Taliban regime. Far from being an expression of indigenous traditions it was a construction put in place by Pakistani intelligence and Saudi money. In a number of respects it had more in common with the Pol Pot regime than with any traditional mode of Islamic governance. Certainly, aside from the period of Soviet occupation, it was more repressive than anything the country had hitherto experienced. Yet the Taliban seem to have acquired some popular support as protectors of a flawed Hobbesian peace – a fact that must be taken into account in any serious thinking about western policy after the bulk of Allied forces have withdrawn. The worst outcome would be that Afghanistan would become an ungoverned space in which India, Pakistan, Russia, China and Iran play out their geopolitical rivalries. Yet that is what the country will become in the absence of a credible government, which in any foreseeable circumstance must include the Taliban.

The Taliban regime flouted the most basic civilised values. Stoning women and gays is barbarism pure and simple. That did not prevent western governments dealing with the regime in the Nineties, and nor can it today. As some British military observers have commented, installing an effective modern state would require an occupation of forty years or more. That would mean reverting to old-fashioned imperialism; but whatever the morality such a reversion is impossible, for there are no more imperialists. No western country has the appetite for an imperial mission – or the funds.

Unreal thinking continues to shape many policies, including European policy. The EU began as an experiment in post-war reconstruction and for several decades was extremely successful. The launch of the euro initiated a currency union that might

have been long-lasting had it been confined to a small number of similar economies. The actual development of the euro has left it a utopian relic whose break-up can only be a matter of time.

The euro in its present form is a utopian project in an exact sense: its inherent lack of viability was clearly known before it was put in place. Monetary union without common fiscal mechanisms was always going to be unsustainable. There were some who believed disparities between member economies would provoke a crisis from which a common fiscal mechanism would emerge. a crisis has occurred, and disaster has been averted; but there is no prospect of European structures being stabilised. The austerity package that has been imposed on Greece is not only economically self-defeating in that withdrawing purchasing power only increases the burden of debt, but also politically impossible. No democracy will accept steeply declining living standards in return for a vague promise of growth in a hypothetical future – especially when the package is imposed from outside. Whatever European officials may say Greece is heading for default. The event will be described in terms of restructuring, but for the markets the reality will be clear enough.

The break-up of the euro is only one aspect of the larger upheaval that began with the near-collapse of the American financial system. Though symptoms of imperial overreach have been evident for decades, the change in America's position in the world has been abrupt. The "Washington consensus" that was incessantly proclaimed only a few years ago is only an embarrassing memory. Any American claim to leadership is now regarded throughout most of the world as risible – an attitude exemplified by Chinese students, who responded to Timothy Geithner's assurance when visiting Beijing in June 2009 that China's investments were safe in the US not with anger, but laughter.

As a side-effect of American decline, the anti-Americanism of the past is fading into insignificance. a post-American world

has already arrived; but it is not so much multi-polar as non-polar, a world of several great powers none of which has the authority that the US has lost. Critics of American hegemony may yet regret its passing, for no state can now underwrite global stability as the US did during the cold war. a part of this shift is due to globalisation, the logic of which is to disperse power and resources away from the US. The precipitate pace of American decline is self-inflicted, a consequence of the hubris of the Bush years.

The perception of decline has yet to reach America itself. In part this is testimony to the belief in progress, which is nowhere more deeply embedded than in the US. The very idea of decline has been discredited. The rise and fall of civilisations, which the Roman historians and Gibbon and Mommsen perceived so clearly, is denied. Any sign of decline is seen as a spur to progress; once identified, the process of decline can always be reversed.

In this regard Obama is a symptomatic figure, who resembles Gorbachev in coming to office on an indeterminate programme of renewal and then being confronted by problems that are insoluble. Of course there are large differences. Obama possesses a democratic legitimacy Gorbachev never had, while America is not going to collapse as the former Soviet Union did. The knock-on effect of unsustainable American debt on US military capabilities has yet to be felt. Whatever happens, the US will remain one of the world's great powers; but America's position in the global system has changed irrevocably. In the short term the effect of high unemployment, falling incomes, the destruction of retirement savings and a continuing slide into depression may be to leave Obama powerless in the face of a Republican-controlled Congress. That means gridlock, ending any prospect of meaningful action on the deficit. The medium term political impact cannot be known, but the rise of Tea Party nativism is a warning sign of the unhinged reaction that could follow the next crisis. While

a Palin presidency may be the stuff of nightmare, something of the sort is entirely possible.

American capitalism has been profoundly weakened, and only the continuing purchase of federal funds by China staves off a larger crisis. Clearly China's leaders are fearful that the US will seek to reduce its debt burden by debasing the dollar. But what can China do? Economists are confident the relationship's mutual benefits ensure its continuation – any sudden cessation would damage China's existing holdings, while leading to a protectionist reaction against Chinese goods. If the China-America relationship changes, they say, it will be in a gradual process of readjustment. But it is unwise to rely too heavily on enlightened self-interest in international affairs, and recent history does not support the belief that large changes are bound to be incremental. Sudden shifts – the fall of the Shah, the Soviet collapse, the American financial implosion – are closer to the norm. Darwinian analogies are usually misleading, but punctuated equilibrium is a better way of describing recent history than gradual evolution. a run on the dollar, and the world could change again very quickly.

We cannot foretell the course of events. The post-Mao blend of communist despotism and unbridled capitalism may implode. Then again, it may grow wealth at a faster rate than liberal societies for generations to come. Russia's resource-based economy may founder in corruption and demographic decline; or the peaking of world oil reserves, together with the country's endowment of natural gas, may enable Russia to reassert itself in global geopolitics for decades to come. The European Union may continue its present course of disintegration, with economic dislocation releasing ethnic nationalism, xenophobia and the old poison of anti-Semitism; or else the EU may emerge from its present discontents a stronger (if perhaps smaller) institution. We simply don't know. But we can be sure that the world will be full of regimes that do not feature in the inherited narrative of progress – booming

tyrannies and declining imperial republics, stagnant knowledge economies and floundering welfare states, new versions of empire and many as yet unfamiliar hybrids.

Future conflicts will not be only or even mainly between the west and the rest. Loose talk of clashing civilisations has obscured the changing pattern of threats. Unlike any Islamist regime North Korea can accurately be described as totalitarian. (Anyone who questions this should ask themselves why there have been no street demonstrations in Pyongyang.) With its nuclear capability and unpredictable leadership, North Korea poses a larger threat than any Islamist state. The situation would change if Pakistan were to destabilise or Iran to succeed in acquiring nuclear weapons. The 9/11 attacks were the work of globalised Islamist networks whose reach has extended to Yemen, Somalia, Spain, Iraq, Lebanon, Chechnya, Bali and the UK, amongst other places. Islamist terrorism poses a serious continuing threat. Even so, a rag-bag of warring sects is not going to reshape the global landscape however much damage it inflicts on western and Muslim countries.

The rise of China, India, Latin America and other emerging countries is the truly historic change. In some ways the world is returning to a genuine normalcy, the state of affairs of a few centuries ago in which power and economic energy was as strong in the east as in the west. Still, the shift comes with risks.

Far more than any clash of civilisations the twenty-first century's most intractable conflicts are likely to be geopolitical struggles. Climate change is real, largely man-made and apparently accelerating. Interacting with worsening scarcities in energy, food and water, the geo-political rivalries of earlier periods of history have acquired a new severity – as well as new protagonists. In the era of the great Game, the players were Britain, Russia, Japan and Germany. Today they include India, China, Russia and America, while Europe is passive and Japan seemingly quiescent.

The most dangerous conflicts may be resource wars among emerging great powers.

The human response to climate change will itself intensify international conflict. As programmes to curb carbon emissions prove ineffective – an unavoidable consequence of world-wide industrialisation – attempts will be made to mitigate the effects of climate change by geo-engineering. (Already, climate-control is practised widely in China.) Global warming is a planetary problem, and climate engineering has world-wide effects; but geo-engineering is unlikely to be coordinated according to any global plan. Given their divergent goals, the great powers will be more inclined to implement separate projects independently. The possibilities of conflict are obvious, and it would not be surprising if work were already underway in several countries on the military uses of climate-changing technologies.

When facing the challenges of the twenty-first century a little realism might prove useful. We cannot hope to act effectively unless we have some understanding of how the world is actually developing. But western thinking in the post-cold war period has not been guided by a need to understand. Instead it has served a mood of triumphalism, and more recently a need for reassurance.

With the decline of monotheism the secular cultures of the west have taken refuge in myths of progress. That western governments should repeatedly adopt self-defeating policies, such as the Iraq war and the current Afghan mission, is only to be expected. Nor is the emergence in Europe of a cabaret-style neo-Bolshevism, which asserts that a new world can be created through terror while disregarding the gruesome farce that has followed every such attempt, in any way surprising. Current western thinking is a mix of adamant hope and hidden despair. As the twentieth century's greatest Enlightenment thinker has written, it is only in logic that contradictions are forbidden.

Freud's observation suggests caution about the prospects of a more realistic way of thinking. Western societies are not the end-point of history, but liberal civilisation is well worth defending. What is needed for its defence, however, is not secular faith in progress but sobriety and realism. Those who belong to traditional religions have shown they can resolutely resist modern barbarism. The history of Solidarity is testimony to that fact. Sceptics too have acted resolutely in the struggle against Nazism and communism. The danger of nihilism comes not from vigilant doubt but from the collapse of ersatz religion.

Today belief in progress is more an expression of fear than of genuine conviction. But it remains the ruling faith of western societies, and without it they are lost. The west may prefer to retain its illusions, while continuing its retreat.

Peter Sloterdijk

THE DOMESTICATION OF HUMAN BEINGS AND THE EXPANSION OF SOLIDARITIES

We are such stuff the solidarities are made on

Pastoral Metaphysics: The Discovery of the Domestication Problem

The fact that human beings can and must relate to themselves and others in a manner that can be described with verbs such as trammelling, taming and guarding is a high-level anthropological insight. It has arisen twice in completely idiosyncratic contexts in the evolution of ideas in the West, on both occasions at key turning points in intellectual history. The first time this complex of notions arises, it is linked with Plato. When trying to find precise concepts to reinterpret the traditional practice of educators and those at the helm of state, the founder of the Athenian academy came across a kind of anthropological difference that fissured human beings from within. Because in high cultures people cannot by nature be what they are according to nature, they have to be educated as individuals while, as citizens, they need to be subject to reasoned direction. Education and political leadership are the two fields of practice in which the inability of the inhabitant of a high culture to realize his own wishes without direction (to

put it in the terms of Classical Antiquity: the inability to obey his own nature) is especially manifest. When trying to define the pedagogic and state-cybernetic functions more closely, Plato resorts to images and analogies derived from the pastoral world. Above all, the dialog in *Politikós* is a mature case of Plato's political pastoral theory. It is in this context that we find the well-known and to this day scandalous phrase on the art of directing the state being the "art of shepherding" unfeathered, unhorned, thoroughbred bipeds, with the significant qualification that this implies voluntary supervision of a herd of creatures who live together voluntarily (*Politikós*, 276e). After all, tyranny is out of the question for the Greeks in general and philosophers in particular. Innate to Greek rationalism is the conviction that humans can be persuaded to renounce their irrational proclivities and enter the house of reason only by means of a specific form of asceticism (i.e., a system of enduring exercises). There is no further need here to go into how the Platonic pastoral anthropology set an example. Thanks to a series of translations and reformulations it has, above all following its amalgamation with the New Testament figure of the Good Shepherd, left deep tracks in the Occidental imaginary.

The second discovery, of the need to mould humans into humans, occurred under conceptually radically different circumstances in the nineteenth century, after Darwin had placed humans at the end of the evolutionary chain by naturalizing the history of the species and declaring the so-called *homo sapiens* a cousin of the giant apes. Since that time, the traditionally pedagogic question of how humans can be moulded into humans has been played out as only one act in the biological/evolutionary drama. Instead of the tension between irrationality and rationality; post-Darwin we have the antagonism of savage setting versus civilization or, to put it in the terms of mythology, of Dionysian versus Apollonian forces. It is not until this situation has been reached that we can

talk seriously about domestication. The moulding of humans is no longer only metaphorically construed as their entry into the house of reason, but must quite literally be understood as their relocation from animal wilderness into civilized domesticity. At this point Nietzsche upsets the applecart. He intervenes as one of the first to grasp that the process of generations in the literal sense always also implies self-breeding, or, as he said, usually in the sense of ongoing self-castration or of rendering oneself harmless in line with the key notion of priestly or anti-aristocratic prejudices. This is the reasoning behind the provocative verse from the song *The Bedwarfing Virtue* in the third section of *Thus Spake Zarathustra*: "In their hearts they want simply one thing most of all: that no one hurt them. [...] Virtue for them is what maketh modest and tame: therewith have they made the wolf a dog, and man himself man's best domestic animal".

It suffices here to state that we can today still appreciate Nietzsche's observations; however, his concerns are no longer those of the present. While the author of *Zarathustra* thought long and hard about the problem of how one can protect the suppressed glory of wildness against the total victory of castrating civilization, for us the question is rather how we can succeed in preventing the return of savagery at the level of high civilization.

Beyond Taming: From Pedagogics to the Revelation of Neoteny and Back

The specific contribution the twentieth century makes to a new description of the *conditio humana* stems from the insight that the categories of evolutionary theory are no longer enough to describe domestication, either for pets in general or for the king of pets, the human being. Sequences of generations who follow a trend to domestication are not subject to the usual pressures of selection of a purely natural environment. They benefit from

a special semi-natural, and semi-culturally-created climate in which it is not necessarily those who are best adapted to external nature who survive, but rather those members of the species who best adapt to the internal relationships. These are the creatures who stand out for a special agility, for an enhanced ability to learn, for superior sociability, and finally for their prime bioaesthetic qualities.

There is a prelude to this in natural history with the creatures that build nests, especially birds, not to mention various reptiles, such as the well-known Mexican salamander, which throughout its life retains its larval form. Then there are specifically those mammals that are able to offer their offspring a high standard of nest safety and brood care. Among such creatures, biologists have discerned a complex of characteristics that since the late nineteenth century has been denoted as neoteny or the fixation of juvenile features (and/or the concept of pedomorphism). The tendency to bring the term of the point of birth forward should be considered in the same group of phenomena as it leads to the birth of exceptionally immature young creatures. We find all these tendencies concentrated in *homo sapiens*, whose offspring are characterized at the time of birth by exceptional immaturity. *Frühgebürtlichkeit* – the fact that humans are *per se* born prematurely, or so the reading by Adolf Portmann from the mid-twentieth century onwards, not only means that the juvenile phase in the human lifecycle is unusually prolonged; it even leads to the paradoxical effect that the biologically speaking "adult" examples die out, while the premature, larval or foetal forms gain a monopoly on reproduction. As long ago as the 1920s, Louis Bolk, the Dutch paleoanthropologist whom we have to thank for these dramatic insights, formulated the truth about *homo sapiens* in terms of evolutionary theory – that it constitutes a species of culturally and biologically successful primate foetuses, who, despite their juvenilization (indeed foetalization), constitute a species capable of reproduction.

These brief remarks on the neotenic condition of the human being go hand in hand with a third discovery on human domestication which imbues the two preceding discoveries with new meaning. The lifting of the mystery of neoteny underscores the insight by cultural anthropologists that humans must from elementary stages onwards be considered as cultural beings. The fundamental cultural nature of humans is henceforth to be seen in a double light. Firstly, culture signifies the continuation of a biological nesting privilege with civilization's means; in this context domestication means moving neither into the house of reason, nor into the house of civilization, but the gradual transformation of the safety of the nest into architectural security and sociotechnical privileges. Since then, we have discerned with greater clarity that culture as a whole functions like a comprehensive incubator which embraces its members. In this sense, all cultures are solidarity systems and all solidarity systems are communities that protect their members. On the other hand, these considerations show that *homo sapiens* depends on cultural control mechanisms down to its innermost drives. Following the reduction in purely biological orientation programs that is the product of humans' extreme neoteny, *homo sapiens* has to offset the losses it has sustained through the lack of internal direction by systems of instincts and the loss of a firm linkage of environment and human brain. This compensation is achieved by means of systems of symbolic direction, that replace instincts by authority, a theme on which Arnold Gehlen elaborated in the mid-twentieth century. The systems of symbolic order relieve all young humans of the task they will never manage to master alone, namely of generating from within themselves the experiences and inventions of their ancestors.

The introduction of the concept of neoteny into the science of human beings without doubt entails the most subversive innovation ever recorded in the field of anthropological knowledge

since Darwin. We can still not say just how extensive is its reach, especially as most disciplines, specifically in the humanities, have to date not appropriately taken it into account. What is probably decisive is that the discovery of neoteny sheds a new and different light on phenomena that people assumed had been studied exhaustively, such as education or handing down a tradition. Neotenology demonstrates, on the one hand, that pedagogics always comes to later, as the new-born human as the result of the prematurity of its birth initially does not need education but can lay claim to the continuation of gestation by extra-uterine means. On the other, the theory conversely shows that people can never be educated enough, as their entry into the house of symbolic orders will always remain an operation prone to disturbance. Above all today's psychologists know this, and they are increasingly warning us of the dangers that come with the weakening of the symbolic authority of the post-modern (fatherless) society.

Naive Pacifism as the Refusal to Cooperate in Borderlines Situation of Culture

The above remarks should have explained, albeit very roughly, why members of the species *homo sapiens* have always as such constituted the products of autodomestication: biologically, owing to their neotenization; culturally, thanks to their inclusion in self-generated symbolic orders; ethnically, given their membership of organic systems of solidarity. As a result of the synergy of all three aspects, cultures initially and usually comprise closed survival units in which the individuals are kept as if in artificial enclosures or incubators. This is the state of affairs that is sometimes described with the metaphor of *Menschenpark* – "the human zoo" (Sloterdijk 2009). That "human zoo" is a local system of solidarity in a cross-generational process.

It becomes clear in light of these considerations that self-domestication is a concept that summarizes the human race's past. The fact that *homo sapiens* exists despite being a biological impossibility is a mystery that can only be understood in terms of an anthropology of domestication. At the same time, we are faced by the concern that the methods of domesticating, taming and communalizing man have to date evidently been insufficient. If we look at the tasks of a higher pedagogics of the species, we immediately see that the task of civilization has only been half-completed. If human domestication seems to be a *fait accompli* (to the extent that there are only humans in the incubators of their respective cultures) in key respects, this by no means signifies that the work of civilizing is complete. It is easy to see why. Within their internal solidarity systems cultures may respect domestic order, but in their external relations domesticity remains incomplete as the individual cultures initially and usually by no means exist under a single roof; instead they form mutually alien, not rarely uncanny and inimical environments. The historical trace of residual non-domesticity in human external relations is war, which has practically determined the species' entire historical existence. The forever latent possibility of war is reflected in the history of xenophobias.

If we define cultures as units capable of waging war, then we have a concept at hand that enables us to understand how non-domesticity casts its shadow over the inner relations of cultures. To the extent that successful cultures are always preparing war, their members can never really feel safe even from within the protection of their own homes. Anyone wishing to overcome the poisoning of domestic life by preparing for a war with the outside world must therefore think about how to extend domestication beyond the scope of the older ethnic units of solidarity. We can find elements of this insight above all in early Buddhism, in Stoicism and in early Christianity. All three doctrines of wisdom (and they

are often misunderstood to be religions) are essentially movements in de-domestication. Its originators call on the followers to break with their domestic systems to date. Buddhism calls those who turn their backs on their old communes in order to tread the path of the Dharma, *expressis verbis* the "home-leavers". We all know of Jesus' shocking demand that we must leave our fathers and mothers for the sake of the Kingdom of God. Stoicism gave birth to the ethical demand that the wise man is he who considers himself a citizen of the universe (*kosmopolités*) and not just a member of his primary ethical commune. Needless to say, these radical de-domestication programs do not entail a return to the wild (although there were hermitic phenomena in all three movements), and they certainly do not involve a regressive break with the peoples' symbolic orders. This notion of uprooting from a worldly home serves to foster a relocation to a higher level of domesticity that henceforth can only ever be expressed in spiritual or cosmic symbols. In essence, the Buddhist, Christian and Stoic de-domestication programs can be read as acts of conscientious objection. They renounce membership of cultural communities whose existence is based on waging war against alien cultures. War is that borderline situation of domesticated units that also forms the basic situation of non-domestication between the alien units. In this structure, only he can refuse to wage war who refused to cooperate with his own collective in order to dedicate himself to the domestication of humanity beyond all polemical individual cultures. At this level of moral evolution we can ask the question how the naive pacifism of the major doctrines of wisdom and philosophies can be continued by the contribution cultural anthropology makes to a scientifically rooted pacifism. The answer to this is given by a theory of second-order domestication. This likewise provides the basis for a general theory of extended solidarity.

Maximal Stress Cooperation in Cultural Groups

We now understand that the individual cultures function as primary domesticators by granting their members the protection of their symbolic and material orders. It is likewise now evident why the domesticators initially and usually cannot themselves be domesticated: they continue to take their cue from the emergency of non-domesticity, the life-and-death struggle with aliens from other cultures. With a view to these conditions, we can redefine the phenomenon of culture (and in everyday-speak it is not unjustifiably often equated with the notion of a "people") as a symbolically integrated population, whose members cooperate with one another not only in domestic situations, but also in situations where it is a matter of a life-and-death struggle. Cultures thus constitute real, operating, survival units, or, to use the words of Heiner Mühlmann, maximal stress cooperation groups. This definition offers the advantage of highlighting why the most successful cultures are as a rule both the most domesticated and the most bellicose. The prime example of this in the Western cultural world are the Romans, whose civilization described one huge parallelogram that blended the family and militarism. The secret to the success of Roman culture, like any other decidedly military culture, was that it created a war technology the principle behind which could be termed "the moral taming of the major stress response in the face of contemporary threats to life". There is no need to explain that people in leisurely situations are capable of cooperation. By contrast, there is every need to explain the phenomenon that men cooperate under conditions of maximum stress, i.e., pursue joint goals in battle and when death is at their shoulder. Cultural theory shows that this presumes a large number of moral injunctions (categorical prohibition of cowardice), cultural idealizations (heroism), polemogeneous external relations

(images of an enemy) and technical preparation (exercises in the use of weapons and corps drills).

Everything would suggest that the phenomenon of maximum stress cooperation can be considered the key to the successful survival of cultures. At the same time, we must concede that such a form of cooperation constitutes a paradoxical phenomenon of domestication. This can be seen from the act of military drills, which places the most fierce of biological processes (the greatest stress responses) in the thrall of strategic goals. Anyone thinking about the continuation of man's self-domestication and its integration into over-arching communities of solidarity must therefore address the question whether the traditional culture-defining forms of maximum stress cooperation can actually be overcome.

Taming the Wild Animal of Culture

Here, we can see a fourth meaning to self-domestication emerging, and with it a stage of the solidarity phenomenon. Having spoken of man's taming and domestication first by political pedagogics, then by neotenic juvenilization and finally by internalization of the symbolic orders, the phenomenon of military drilling of stress responses focuses our attention on a highly technical version of the domestication problem. Pacifism, if elaborated in anthropological terms, cannot rest content with the relational individual moving from the house of the family or the people into the house of God or Dharma – or joining the invisible people of the Wise. These morally discerning movements lead in a critical scenario to martyrdom, to the extent that the latter means providing proof of the conviction that it is better to allow oneself to be killed than to continue to show solidarity with a murdering cultural group. From the perspective of cultural theory, it bears assessing whether this exceptional form of non-cooperation with

maximum stress co-operators can be transformed into a rule that can be observed universally. This assessment leads to a positive result, although the attendant difficulties remain significant. If we should understand cultures as themselves non-domesticating systems of domestication (or as systems of solidarity that show one another no solidarity), then any interest in higher-order domestications can only be satisfied by a revision of the previous design of cultures as polemical survival units. In this context, the concept of solidarity has a specifically transcultural tone.

The work of taming the wild animal of culture unfolds in three stages in keeping with the nature of the beast. The first is reached when through mimetic approximation of one another, several survival units reach such a point that they can keep one another in check. Now, although this does not enable them to achieve internal domestication and demilitarization, mutual *détente* ensures containment, and this creates the precondition for subsequent advances in civilizing. At this stage of relations between ethnic groups and between states, diplomacy arises – as the art of well-tempered animosity. It is obvious that under this regime there can be no excluding relapses, the reason being that in many places the equation of culture with survival unit remains in force.

Logically, the second stage of the containment of polemogeneous cultures entails their transformation into interdependent systems. Here, the cultures render their vital interests so dependent on interaction with partners in alien cultures that we can speak of the emergence of a higher-order survival unit. This can at present best be observed in the economically networked democratic nations in the West, between whom the probability of bellicose regression has become minimal. In this instance, the domestication effect is exerted by the reformatting of the intuited survival unit. This transgresses its prior outer limits and thus makes the previous enemy or rival a co-operator who himself has

a survival edge thanks to the greater unit. The most impressive example of this process can be seen in the historically singular structure of the European Community, which, against a bellicose background that is not in the all too distant past, has by means of a fascinating process of self-containment transformed itself into a higher-stage political domestication unit. This is not to say that even such units of self-containment do not have to contend with endogenous forces of disintegration. This is evidenced by the results of the referenda on the European Constitution held in France and in the Netherlands in May and June 2005, when clear majorities of the populations indicated that they continued to consider the nation and not the European Union as the survival unit that counted for them. Here we can sense a deep resentment against the enlargement of the effective community of solidarity. The results of the votes in both countries are *ipso facto* deeply illusionary, as for both their own survival interests can only be met in the European format. (The core of the will to illusion resides in the fear of losing economic privileges which people wish to believe have been generated by nations as such and not by a system of interaction between them.)

The third stage of domestication of the wild animal that is culture would first be reached at that moment when the large, internally domesticated survival units, which have been called civilizations using Samuel Huntington's terminology, i.e., "the West", "Islam", India, China, Africa, and Latin America, in turn then develop such a degree of affirmed interdependence among one another that they, too, move beyond the stage of non-domesticity in their external relations. There are undeniably tendencies that point in this direction. However, they do not lead beyond the stage of reciprocal containment. Likewise there is no overlooking the fact that immense conflicts arise along the fault lines between the major units – in particular along the Sino-American and Occidental-Islamic fronts. The clashing cultural blocks are a far

cry from effectively moving in under a shared civilizing roof. As regards the major units' external relations, there cannot yet be any talk of the law of the excluded emergency that governs internal civilizing processes. Indeed, even containment itself is repeatedly questioned, not least by the tragic dual role played by the monopolar world power, the United States of America. While it had subscribed to a global civilizing mission, it is at the same time pursuing crude regional policies in only its own interest that essentially deny its own ideals. It offers the drama of a civilization that takes the stage as both domesticator and wild animal. In this way, the United States discredits in a very dangerous way those ideas, the credibility of which should be maintained at any price if the ongoing civilizing of the individual cultures is to move beyond the level of polemic containment.

The Expansion of the Space of Solidarity and Disarming the Population Weapon

The above deliberations show one thing very clearly, namely we cannot grasp the essence of non-imaginary communities of solidarity as long as we continue to narrate the myths of the early Enlightenment, according to which Modernity's notion of solidarity is nothing other than friendship between citizens progressing into a global legal cooperative or the transformation of Christian brotherliness into the principle of human rights. If we depart down this path, we will simply continue to chase after the phantoms of abstract universalism that materialized in the communist regimes of the twentieth century. In truth, solidarity must always be construed as the element linking real cultures or ideologically motivated communities in struggle. Real cultures are always real communities of reproduction which maintain their existence from one generation to the next – and which are subject to a strange multiplying dynamism in Modernity. For

this reason, I must point here to a fifth meaning to the concept of domestication. Alongside the cultures' insufficiently tamed polemical external relations, the sensitive point of their internal regulation, namely biological reproductive action, is also in great need of regulation. In this respect, too, the wild animal of culture proves to be an entity thirsting for domestication. This means quite unequivocally reducing the birth rate in all cultures to proportions compatible with living conditions that we can control in socio-economic terms. This would prohibit any form of fertility out of poverty, as it would any polemically intended reproduction at all cost, something that has been seen for more than a century now in countless Islamic countries. There, between 1900 and 2000 the population grew from 150 million to 1,200 million, or by a factor of eight. Immense discharges of violence are the almost inevitable consequence. More recent demographic research has highlighted the fact that there is a correlation between critically exaggerated birth rates and bellicose and/or genocidal events. In the case of manifestly or latently polemically motivated surplus production of people, it tends above all to be the young men aged 15–30 who form a risk group that places an overly great strain on their own culture's potential for domestication. According to information from institutes of strategic research, in the Arab world in the coming 20 years several hundred million young men will be available for all kinds of polemical activities. It is to be feared that the majority of them will be recruited for religiously coded self-destruction programs.

In light of these circumstances, we need to divide the question whether humanity will domesticate itself and as a consequence then largely be able to show solidarity with itself into two parts. The first sub-question would be whether such self-taming is to be expected in the immediate future. The answer here would be a clear "No". In all probability, the first half of the twenty-first century will be reminiscent of the excesses of the twentieth century.

The losses of life could soon reach immeasurable proportions, with unforeseeable damage to culture and morality. The second half of the question refers to the longer-term prospects, which we should nevertheless rate cautiously as being positive. If success is made in the longer term in controlling the two biological explosions in human cultures, the polemophile stress programs and the exaggerated reproduction programs in the individual cultures, then at the end of the day we can issue a favourable forecast for the process of global self-domestication (others would simply say: the process of civilization). Under pressure from the compulsions of global coexistence, solidarity between the cultures could one day hold in check the inexorable competition between them.

Translated from German by Jeremy Gaines

Jadwiga Staniszkis

THE EPISTEMOLOGIES OF ORDER: AN INQUIRY INTO GENESIS, CLASHES AND COLLAPSE

Introduction

The first decade of the twenty-first century in Europe was marked by two interconnected phenomena: the origin and collapse of the Lisbon Treaty, and the global crisis. The Lisbon Treaty was to play the role of an innovative, post-Kantian way of dealing with complexity and multiculturalism. Its syncretic space of parallel normative realities – colluding with each other, but treated as equally justified – was accompanied by procedural instruments making it possible to build in each EU member state its own, unique combination of norms. Under the principles of the Lisbon Treaty power was understood in three different ways: first, as a dictate of form (as the acceptance of equality of these normative orders meant that none of them would be treated as absolute), second, as Hart's "secondary rules" concerned with the meta-level of recognition, with change and with dispute resolution, and third, as delineations of solid minimum standards that would limit the activity of the state in the creation of its own combinations of norms.. This was power, one has to add, that did not hide its Hobbesian, arbitrary character. The standards it referred to were constantly subject to severe renegotiation and – after the

refusal to treat any of the orders as absolute – no longer had a solid, objective basis. Indeed, the identity of both the EU and each member state can be grasped in reference to Nicolas of Cusa, who said: "You are what you are able to make out of your inner contradictions and tensions". Identity was thus defined as "becoming" rather than "being".

The economic crisis of 2008–2009 propelled the collapse of such a sophisticated method of handling complexity, networking and integration. The Eurogroup, closing ranks around its own more homogenous space, does not need any more experiments with differing intensities of norms and the diverse ontological statuses of the law. The authoritative developmental state in the Eurozone, elements of a garrison state in the US, military form without militaristic content in many Asian countries, rural reform in China as a method for adding energy to its domestic market, but also of reorienting dreams of democratization towards civil, not citizen society – these are only some of the political outcomes of the present crises. However, at the same time, three new observations can be made.

Firstly, that the liberal tradition is insufficient to deal with the multicultural world of the twenty-first century. The West must obtain the ability to understand the epistemology of faith, going beyond its institutionalized, post-secular scepticism. Poland's Solidarity (*Solidarność*), with its positive neo-traditionalization built around Thomist realism (with its stress on dignity and justice) is a good laboratory for understanding politics cum religion. The interest that Western scholars take in this phenomenon (as well as in the narration that, in the way it connects the individual and the collective, goes back to Thomism) points to a certain "counter-reformation of atheists". Such a paradoxical phenomenon in the scientific community is based, however, not on curiosity – but on fear originating in the powerlessness of liberalism.

Secondly, it needs to be recognized that society should no longer be taken for granted. Even in Europe the inner gaps (with segments of society giving the impression that they live in a different historical time with differing "epistemologies of order") lead to two conclusions: one that liberal democracy is in crisis, and the other that perhaps only a consociational pattern of democracy can work, with elites recruited from each segment (proportionally to its quantity), and the discreet substitution of political parties with opinion polls to estimate the numbers of each constituency. All this clearly leads to the aggravation rather than to the elimination of disparities,

Thirdly, an observation made when the Lisbon Treaty was being negotiated is that in Europe today we have at least two epistemologies of order. One, which the Treaty is a product of, is rooted in the nominalist breakthrough and the subsequent movement of ideas (from Hobbes to Locke to Kant). The second, present in many new EU member countries, is based on pre-nominalist, realist tradition and incorporates elements of contemporary neo-Platonism.

This gap in intellectual experience, together with the divergence of various concepts of order, power, and law, and a completely different mode of organizing and justifying those values all contribute to an escalation of conflicts and to the diminishing of trust – to one of the most striking phenomena of the twenty-first century, which I will closely examine in this paper.

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The most important changes begin in the mind. Leafing through some of my old notes I came across an entry concerning something once said by that now deceased expert on China, E.R. Hughes from Oxford. Hughes stated, following the Chinese historian of ideas Fung Yu Lane, that the basic difference between China

and the West lies in the fact that China froze in an image of the world created by the classics two and a half thousand years ago. Here I would add my own gloss that China conformed its conception of the human and of power to that image, also. Hughes went on to note that the West, in turn, had not elaborated a similar image until the Middle Ages, and that its subsequent intellectual history was just ceaseless attempts to overcome the tensions and dilemmas accompanying that vision. Having said this, Hughes quipped to his equally outstanding colleagues, "Of course, you all know what I mean". But I myself did not know. And so I spent several days obsessively trying to decipher the meaning of that short digression. What image of the world was he talking about? And which period of the Middle Ages did he have in mind? And what are (and were) in both cultures – Asia and the West – the consequences of that culturally based ontology? In the end I grasped that it concerns Taoism's multi-layered construction of the world, replete as it is with indefinability in that it is lacking both a fixed point of support and a conception of the absolute. But it also concerns Confucianism, as based on the dictate of form and relativism within a framework of a unique "meta-ontology" of relations. After all, the exigency of practical functioning within the context of that vision created in China a conception persisting to this day of a *perpetuum mobile* of power, one without a clear centre and defined hierarchy. In other words, we have a vast machine for power based on building relations and managing them on behalf of the meta-values of "harmony" and "correspondence". This is characterized by a relativization of duties that is ingrained by ritual, along with a relativization of what is the norm for given relations, albeit without absolutizing any of them. This was accompanied by an anthropology based upon the requirement to search for one's own "suchness" as it stems from each person's unique location in time and multi-dimensionally conceived space. The journey

down that road demanded a rejection of the category of "difference" and of universal standards for rationality. And this in fact makes it easier for people raised in that culture to function in a network world. For the epistemology based on multivalent logic, paradox, and antinomy that accompanied this instils in Asians the knack to mentally function in a situation evincing a permanent lack of certainty.

Thus, I came to the conclusion that a similar image emerged in the Western world in the late Middle Ages together with the nominalist breakthrough. Nominalism cast off the earlier Thomist realism, imbued as it was with Platonism and with an ontological justification for the order of values and universals. I also realized that the basic difference that Hughes spoke about concerned the adaptation of that whole cultural construction in Asia to functionality in a situation of uncertainty. When the West, in turn, was struck by a similar uncertainty in the ontology of nominalism it undertook the opposite endeavour. That is, not of adaptation to, but of elimination of uncertainty. The apogee of this effort is found in Kant's philosophy, as he recognized that the single foundation of order can be the acceptance (if only as a premise) of what the nominalist breakthrough rejected. And this describes the nature of today's "post-secularism".

This divide in the thought sphere continues on to this day and delineates divergent strategies for development and building institutions. Moreover, the presence or absence (as in Poland) of the intellectual experience of the nominalist breakthrough still divides the countries now in the European Union. For the culturally grounded, differing epistemologies of order determine the opportunities for moving about in the world, the degree of correspondence, of culturally grounded thought matrix on the one hand – and complexity and network quality on the other. And this decides whether or not we perceive ourselves to be living in a world of chaos – or of order.

This is what I wish to propose. For I am convinced that the clash of divergent epistemologies of order is the most important problem of the twenty-first century. After all, this is not merely a clash of values, but a clash of their divergent ordering and justification. This also concerns a given culture's possession – or not – of a theoretical dimension that permits a taming of the syncretic character of the normative space via embracing it within a metanarrative. This, for instance, is the case with Asian processuality, which recognizes conflict as a thought defect, a failing to discern that the diversity of standpoints expresses only varying aspects and stages of the same process.

Thus, the basic feature of the twenty-first century, in my view, will be that of the collision of two abovementioned differing epistemologies of order and the crisis of the hitherto reigning formula of "Westernness".

First of all, the West, in order to better move about in the contemporary multicultural world, will have to understand and acknowledge anew the very phenomenon of "faith" (regardless of its subject matter), not so much in terms of its hermeneutics as of its epistemology. For the majority of people live in a world of faith, with its unique ontology and epistemology. It is only the West, first modelling politics on religion (in order to increase the persuasiveness of the former) or, as is recently the case, reconstructing certain normative universals exclusively as a "foundational reality", that became ever more indifferent (as Leo Strauss wrote) to "religious truth" as a unique cognitive experience.

Secondly, in order to function in conditions of global complexity and a network reality, the West must learn from Asia how to deal at the thought level with permanent uncertainty. This is because all the post-nominalist strategies applied by the West to eliminate uncertainty from social life have proved illusory and insufficient – from the Hobbesian arbitrary power of the sovereign, limiting the arbitrariness of individual "civic theologies", through Locke's

entrusting of freedom as a cognitive situation, to the various formulae of the contract and civil society.

Herein lies the crisis of the West as a developmental path. As it turns out, both the countries of Asia and the new members of the European Union from Central Europe may offer a divergent experience in the thought-realm, one that allows them either to better function within the framework of the global matrix, or – as in the case of Poland – to maintain optimism (a strongly felt dimension of community life), and faith in the Solidarity utopia that conjoins freedom, dignity, and justice. Indeed, the epistemology of order that hearkens to Thomist realism is also undergoing crisis with regard to its lack of correspondence with the network world. But its narrative combining dignity with justice helps to reproduce society, even though the girdle that formed the institutions of the state is being loosened. The West does not possess a narrative of this kind, one that is lastingly built into culture and gives rise to society.

To sum up, each of the grand epistemologies of order has its advantages and drawbacks. The tradition of Asia well corresponds with complexity and networks, and it engenders society through the imperative "to produce knowledge", which requires stepping out from one's own "suchness" toward the "other". But its drawback is the predominance of the individual's duties over their rights. The post-nominalist West manages well with the dictate of form, but the thought strategies of that tradition are not capable of squaring off with the mountain of uncertainty accompanying globalization and the crisis. This perspective also fails to manage the progressive societal decay. The ideology of liberalism is simply defenceless vis-à-vis multiculturalism and the phenomenon of faith. The tradition of Thomist realism, in turn, better conforms to the two latter challenges, but it does not permit effective functioning in networks as it does not accept the autonomy of form.

These divergences are also the cause behind the lack of mutual trust and the difficulties in communication and cooperation.

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"Order" is not just a feature of a structure that brings about a focusing of energy in the aim of performing work on behalf of the whole that is contained within that structure. Nor is it simply "biased links" – that is, non-random exchanges regulated by norms, the law, and institutions. No – it is a thought matrix that allows us to discern the meaning and logic of functioning. Depending on the cognitive perspective, the very same thing may be seen as either chaos or order. What is crucial here are the ontological premises defining what is considered "real", the epistemological tools (based on cultural tradition and/or knowledge) for recognizing that reality, and its logical basis (e.g., bivalent or multivalent logic that takes into consideration the factor of time, for instance). In this sense "order" is a function of the mind and hence one may speak about the epistemologies of order, their cultural diversity, and their conflicts – even within the EU. We may thus also talk about their rise and demise.

We have an example of this from August 1980, when moral categories were activated and employed in the role of a descriptive (or rather, a taxonomic) language for the political stage and – all at once – this generated the expression of "order", and it also consolidated the collective subject *Solidarność*. This occurred on the basis of a Levi-Straussian understanding of *bricolage*, when the emotion-laden collective experience of risk in the name of values elevated those values to the role of cognitive tools that not only revealed the essence of the conflict (good against evil), but allowed the articulation of an anti-political utopia of the state and society functioning according to that very moral code. Such a description of the world required a change in the attitude of individuals to themselves (i.e., they discerned themselves as moral subjects) and dynamized a Camus-type rebellion in the attempt to defend the dignity thus regained. This in turn became

the vector of the social movement and fuelled the reconstruction of the community. The demise of that thought perspective with regard to later experience (martial law, the transformation that proceeded at odds with Solidarity's utopia) caused the subsequent demise of that community. Indeed, Solidarity's moral experience, which at the same time became a cognitive experience, deeply composed itself into our part of the world's dominant tradition of Thomist realism. For in that tradition we are dealing with an ontologically rooted narrative (via its thesis on the participation of the human individual in the Absolute) that conjoins individual dignity with the experience of the community. The "other" is endowed with a similar dignity and this is conducive to the right to justice. This is rather more a language of the collective subject (a movement, a nation) than that of an internally diverse society. Here the language of natural rights functions more powerfully than that of duties.

The sundry ways of experiencing the ideas of order (including the relation between the individual and the collective) stem from the application of diverging epistemologies of order, including other culturally grounded ontological premises concerning the essence of reality and human nature. Thus, Taoism has no categories of the "Absolute" and the starting point is the cultural imperative "think about thinking", with the individual's duty to pass down a thought path (and reject the cognitive tool we know as the category of "difference" and logical dualism) in the aim of encountering one's own unique "suchness". Later, in the name of the next imperative – "produce knowledge" – one is to heed, as it were, other "suchnesses" (with their unique cognitive perspectives) and discern aspects of a given problem not seen by oneself. Thus, "producing knowledge" also produces society.

Turning to the post-nominalist culture of the West and its rejection of Thomist realism, the epistemology of order is conjoined with recognition of many irreducible levels of reality (with discernment

of the autonomy of form negated in realism). This also involves rejecting both the existence of universals (in the axiological realm, as well) and the inevitable (as Hobbes noted) arbitrariness of power. The dynamic of building order in this situation is delineated by three processes: 1) the Sisyphean effort to perfect the law and institutions so that they draw the levels of reality near; 2) the attempts to limit the arbitrariness of power, whether by social contract, the gradual democratization of the sovereign, or Hegelian civil society with its free-will recognition of the necessity of the state and the law, or, finally, a Kantian "founding" of universals, although without their absolutization (continued to this day in post-secularism); and 3) the cultivation of a Lockean liberal vision of freedom as a cognitive situation making the impossible possible and allowing people to conjoin in their imaginations dimensions of reality that cannot be reduced to one another. This was accompanied by a deepening of the capitalist contract culture based on building relations and cultivating them in the framework of the duties so agreed to. In this grasp, as we see, the source of order is none other than the human individual himself (whether by "founding" or by contract and duties), and not (as in the realism that is still very much alive in Polish heritage) the interconnection of two entities (the human individual and the absolute).

The status of the individual in the tradition of the West is, paradoxically, both stronger (with regard to individualism, contractuality, and the postulate of freedom) and weaker than in the realist tradition. For there is no objective, external grounding of the individual's rights. Rather, there is more of the duties than natural rights. And this of course is similar in Asia, with its even clearer relativization of duties to the character of relations – and of rights to the individual status.

Each of these divergent epistemologies of order is rooted in a different cultural tradition and manifests a different kind of usefulness in today's world with regard to its complexity and network

character. The Polish tradition of realism (and the epistemology of order which accompanies it, and which derives from ontologically grounded dignity) was a very good tool for rebellion and for building a protest movement. However, its usefulness as a tool allowing people to discern the logic of the globalized world (or even the EU) with its new figures of power in the Lisbon Treaty, is significantly lower. Two further perspectives seem in this regard to be meaningfully superior tools in allowing us to impose order where we Poles perceived only chaos.

Just a single example: the European Union and the new proposal for control and integration contained in the Lisbon Treaty. This is obviously a document that has arisen from a post-nominalist epistemology of order. I say this not only because the Charter of Basic Rights at once treats differing value systems as co-equal (which denies any one system the claim to being absolute) and orders them on the basis of syncretism, not hierarchy or a "realist" narrative.

Thus, the EU's identity (and the essence of integration) is defined in the Lisbon Treaty differently than an essentialist, objective, "realist" ontology would dictate. Indeed, we may speak here of a transition to an ontology of relations. For it is the relations that define the place and the opportunities. Here, as I mentioned before, we may speak of three dimensions of this EU construction: 1) the space common for all (that is, the initial space containing tensions and a repertoire of norms, the space limited by ever re-negotiated boundary conditions); 2) the shared tools for moving about in that space (i.e., the economy of norms and the new ontology of law that enables its presence to vary in intensity); and 3) the individual combinations of said norms and law, as created by particular countries. Let me add that they are created using both those tools and fragments of the initial ("theoretical") repertoire, as well as within the framework of strictly defined boundary conditions – albeit without concealing the arbitrariness

of that operation. The relationship between the whole and its part can no longer be expressed in the essentialist, realistic language of hierarchy and subjects, for the reason that this is a situation of parallel realities, as it were, with individual combinations of features characterizing the whole. What is common is only the initial field of those features – norms and values – and the shared tools and boundaries for creating original combinations of them. Here we may discern spontaneously introduced elements of multivalent logic such as syncretism and the factor of time. For in network-regulated processes the sequence in proceeding ahead performs the function of hierarchy, creating ad hoc biased links or focus on producing knowledge through "interprocedural" liberalism (in that it does not concern subjects). One example is the proposal for simultaneous legalization and application of two divergent methods of counting votes – namely, the square root of populations and the double majority, in order to better understand the essence of conflict in a given matter.

The inability to perceive this mode of operation by the countries that did not pass through the nominalist breakthrough is striking. In their case the experiencing of chaos (or: of the absence of order) is connected with the mismatch of their "realistic" culturally grounded epistemology to network-regulated processes – and to situations when there is no longer a system, but rather only complexity.

Sometimes, however, the expression of chaos is connected with the collapse of that tradition itself. This has been seen in Poland in the case of the cross that stood for about five months in front of the Presidential Palace in Warsaw.[1] This was a matter that went far beyond the scope of a political event. In my view the most important elements were that of the creeping, superficial, and

1 A reference to protests organized in response to the catastrophe of the airplane with the Polish president and members of the political elite onboard that took place near Smolensk in Russia on 10 April 2010 – J.K.

belated nominalist revolution leading to a desubstantialization of the cross, treated (even by a portion of the clergy) as merely a symbol that acquires meaning via context (i.e., the nature of the space in which it functions). This introduces not only a moment of the autonomy of form (overlapping with a realistic conjunction of essence and form), but also a sharply divided space. And this is precisely how the Reformation began in the West. In the present case, the visible division of Polish society expresses, in my opinion, not so much a conflict of values on the same plane, but rather divergent experience of the idea of order, differing justification of the same values, and even a diverging conception of the human person and their rights and duties. We may say that the individual segments of society are living in differing historical times, and that perhaps only consociational regime can somehow unify. After all, what we are witnessing in a superficial and pastiche way, one fostered by the EU, is an imitation in one part of Polish society of pieces of the nominalist breakthrough from centuries ago, without the accompanying philosophical and theological discourse – while the other part of society feels secure in a "realistic" perspective, albeit one experienced just as superficially. The sharpness of the conflict, compounded by the media, makes impossible any syncretic conjunction of the two perspectives. Before it seemed (and indeed was) possible, and was connected with an atheoretical experiencing of the world in our basically rural culture. For such an atheoretical experiencing of the world permits an opportunistic greasing of the wheels and toleration of contradiction, with an understanding for *bricolage*, one so meritorious in the times of Solidarity, and which allowed an *ad hoc* classification and taxonomy that erased the earlier image and did not hearken to a linear dynamic of meanings.

Another cause, this time a structurally conditioned one, of the collapse of order (and together with it, of the feeling of community) in the post-communist countries is that of the growing

gap between the principles for the functioning of institutional space on the one hand, and of the private sphere on the other. For insofar as we may apply to the latter an essentialist subjective ontology, the former cannot be understood but through the prism of the ontology of relations – that is, where the relations between the elements of deconstructed subjects are the proper object of analysis. One instance is the combination of norms and ways for adopting EU law that are proper for a given country. Or – the degree of correspondence between the procedures and institutions grafted from outside and a given economy's developmental stage. The lack of correspondence led to "structural violence" and serious problems with the formation of domestic capital. The application of this perspective of "relational ontology" requires knowledge and (in the case of societies remaining in the realm of realistic tradition) collides with the epistemology of order that is culturally conditioned by that tradition. The result of the emergence of this gap is that of the ever more shrunken "order" of the private sphere (which is still understood in reliance upon traditional concepts) and the swelling chaos in the public realm. Another aspect of this expanding gap is the fact that only in the private sphere can one attempt to absolutize a defined system of values. In the public realm (regulated by the EU) an already post-secular syncretism is binding – one that not only rejects the strong ontological grounding of moral norms, but also may be said to institutionalize scepticism. For this post-secular scepticism treats the various, even antagonistic systems of norms and values as co-equal, and this makes impossible absolutizing any one of them – indeed, it only allows the search for an optimal (i.e., closest to one's own tradition) combination of them. With both aspects of this gap (in the realm of ontology and axiology, as well) brought together, only a few people are able to create a vision of order through simultaneous application of both of the divergent perspectives. I am speaking here of cognitive strategies. Others

are left to concentrate on local matters and the smallest links in society (family, friends). Still others feel compelled to hysterically cling to symbols that in the past permitted them to integrate the public and private spheres – hence one of the reasons for defending the cross in front of the Presidential Palace.

Thus, "order" is not only a system of institutional linkages gathering energy and preventing the multiplication of interruptions, but also a problem of conceptualization and, in general, of cognitive competencies.

The drama of our Polish cultural setting, hearkening as it still does to a realistic ontology (inasmuch as we have never gone through the nominalist breakthrough) rests on the fact that the same mode of thinking that allowed the reconstruction of collective subjectivity (i.e., calling upon "rights" stemming from the ontological grounding of such values as "dignity" and "justice" and reconstructing the feeling of community around that rebellion in the name of values) today encumbers an understanding of the principles which the state, the economy and the EU play by – all of them being tied together by the strings of network regularities into a certain complexity rather than just a system. Without understanding these network principles of syncretism and the ontology of relations, it is difficult to grasp just what power is today and how to defend the interests of one's country in the international realm. When we look through the prism of (subjective) realism we continue to overestimate the political moment (and inter-governmental moment), and fail to appreciate the institutional challenges pertaining to the imperative to struggle for control over oneself. This concerns eliminating the structural violence of procedures and standards introduced from outside that are not compatible with the developmental level of a given economy or state. This encumbers the formation of capital on the scale of a given country, via reorienting its resources to serve a market of different scale and historical time, that is,

with differing standards and procedures. The position of a given country is decided by the institutional relation (correspondence or its absence), and political decisions or demands. In order to discern this, one must, however, give up the realistic perspective with its essentialist standpoint and apply a post-nominalist ontology of relations, introducing the additional factor of time. For the key here lies in the proper institutional sequence. As we see, this concerns not only ontology, but also the logical foundation of epistemology. For what is necessary is the introduction of elements of trivalent logic.

In line with the above, in my view the opportunities for individual post-communist countries, whether in the EU or on the global stage, rest not only with their economic potential, but also with their capacity to overcome this thought gap. The Baltic states, which (via Sweden) have had some contact with nominalism (with its processuality and its stress on Sisyphean struggle in building correspondence between levels and on the awareness of the autonomy of form), are among those countries that are better equipped intellectually than those countries (like Poland) that are deeply rooted in realistic tradition. All the more so, as the realistic tradition was revitalized during the struggle against communism in 1980.

The progressive demise of that tradition increases the feeling of chaos – and not only because of its plain inadequacy as an operational tool (albeit no longer a long-term one) for moving about in a world of complexity and networks, but also because of the pressure of the institutionalized scepticism of the post-nominalist EU. For no new epistemology of order has emerged – only pastiche elements taken out of their context (such as the attempt to change the ontological status of the cross, to desubstantialize it and treat it purely as a symbol taking its meaning and import from its context and the character of the space where it is raised). The only resort is to knowledge.

Willard V. Quine once stated in his *Philosophy of Logic* that the shift to multivalent logic (and acceptance of the concomitant epistemological tools – that is, as I would like to state in the present argument, of "order", "control", and "integration") must be preceded by a change in ontological premises. In other words, what first must change is the conception of what is real, in the sense of the capacity, as the Chinese say, "to become a cause". In my book *Antropologia władzy* (*The Anthropology of Power*) I described the consequences of change to such premises on the level of the European Union, and – in effect – of change to the very formula of power and integration, with the introduction of tools for coordination known from countries where cultures have given rise to trivalent logic with its ontologization of time. That change was associated with the fact that the administrative hierarchy of the EU's bureaucracy in the end withdrew from the attempts to govern the networks with the help of hierarchy and to unify the complexity (that is, transform it into a system), opting now to devise a method for imposing on the power apparatus a network character. But the global crisis led to, as I have shown, a partial return to an essentialist (subjective) ontology, which was possible with regard to closing off the Eurogroup of 15 into a more uniform space in terms of values and developmental level. The Lisbon Treaty, despite its later deformation as it was being implemented, has nonetheless remained a result of a Quineian change in ontological premises and – in effect – a change to the formula for power and its logical bases.

This intellectual evolution on the level the European bureaucracy has been further widening the above-mentioned gap between the EU and the typical thinking about order in Poland, where it is based on a realistic ontology. Poland's persistence in this kind of thinking is strengthened by the "limited" (in the definition of Basil Bernstein) language competencies, with their absence of sensitivity to the "meta" level. And it is at that level

where both power and integration are presently focused, and where they divergently solve the issues of relevance here. While in the EU at the level of the European Commission (and it apparatuses) we are dealing with what Dworkin elsewhere interprets as an open, non-deterministic coordination in the case of collisions between syncretically ordered norms, at the level of individual state administrations we are dealing with Hart's "meta-regulation" (with its proceduralization showing how to behave during such collisions, how to carry out changes, and how to recognize – that is, classify – new situations).

This evolution in the epistemology of order, quite plain in the Lisbon Treaty, in the case of Western Europe continues the thinking about power which took shape in the period of the nominalist breakthrough and later (Hobbes, Locke, Kant) in the course of removing dilemmas caused by this new ontology of social reality. Presently that approach is being augmented by recognition of the processuality of phenomena and introduction of the ontologization of time. After all, only this enables us to a comprehend such phenomena as the function of sequence steps that by means of its domineering role replaces former hierarchies in existing networks: for this is how biased (directed, weighted, non-neutral, and non-random) links are created.

In this situation where a realistic conceptualization of the world suits only the private sphere, the existential dilemmas people face also change. Earlier in this tradition the main problem was the "suspect" status of such a value as "freedom". For on the one hand freedom creates a moral range of action – but on the other it collides with the "natural" status of "rights". Currently, in the framework of the post-nominalist perspective of viewing axiology and the law, what is crucial is another dilemma. The contractual character of duties, the liquidation of universals, and the change in the justification of laws (presently rooted in the very nature of the human, and not in their participation in the

Absolute) on the one hand strengthens individualization. But on the other it weakens the position of the individual, if only vis-à-vis power. The human's rights are no longer objectively strengthened, but rather are treated as Kantian premises. Moreover, there is no realistic narrative for ordering such rights, as with deriving justice from dignity.

Despite these changes there still exists a convoluted relationship between religion and power. Both concur with the premise of the amoral character of "necessity". In the Catholic version, still resting on Thomist realism, this gives rise to a theological problem. For such realism has difficulty absorbing both "necessity" and "freedom". Each power also still pursues usurpation of the right to define what is "necessary" (having no alternative) and to control the sphere that is found outside moral judgement. The current lack of control over new forms of power, forms which evade the everyday epistemology of order, free the authorities from the need to refer to that dialectic of necessity and freedom. Today power is becoming ever more invisible, in that it slips out from under popular perception, or it boils down to the dictate of form. It now operates as the above-mentioned structural violence, discreetly imposing on a given country the rationality of a greater scale and another developmental phase than its own. Only that sometimes it returns to the dictate of force, and the least often to the dictate of ideas. In this latter sphere what becomes key is not so much substance, as the ontological status of a given idea (the cross which is now just a symbol) and the way it is justified. This does not reject values – it only justifies them differently. And it is this deontologization of rights like dignity and justice, which makes them weaker today than they once were in their former "realistic" interpretation. Syncretism and networks teach opportunism vis-à-vis "internal" rationalities. Kantian "practical reason" usually operates via transforming concepts and meanings, making of them mere symbols or metaphors that need not be taken

literally. For intellectuals these operations are truly gripping, but anyone who has come into contact with their effects, will find the operations genuinely demoralizing. Paradoxically, today it is precisely in that direction that the interpretation of the Lockean conception of freedom is moving as a cognitive situation: not only ponderous thought and illumination, but a turn-around from serious treatment of concepts and from taking full responsibility for their use. This also upsets social order and the community through its corrosion of trust.

Another paradox is that in today's Poland adeptness of experts and people from the special services (who today are again mobilizing themselves, and were prepared in communist times to "manage via innovations") is connected with the fact that they did not participate in a genuine way in the rebellion of 1980 that revitalized that Thomist, realistic anthropology. They did not experience, therefore, the Sisyphean labour of conjoining freedom and justice. They have also found it easier to cultivate contact with Western experts and politicians, as they did not bear the mark of neo-traditionalization. Thus, in their imitation of "modernity", they eagerly submitted themselves to the rigors of structural violence.

This dividing axis exists to this day. This divergence of intellectual perspectives (including the allegiance to a different epistemology of order rather than only to the interests of one's own political power base) might be the central factor that affects the public discourse in Poland. Individual segments of the so called "audience" instinctively follow arguments of various kinds (including those of aesthetic sort) to support one of the camps. And yet the so-called "masses", sensing that the Carnival of "mass uprisings" had ended, delved back into a cognitive chaos like before 1980. The causes today are of course different, although in both cases they need be sought in the ontological sphere. For insofar as communism was a Hegelian "appearance" (different

than its own foundational reality, but incapable of discarding its dysfunctional language, as I have discussed in my book *The Ontology of Socialism*), the case of post-communism, absorbed as it is into global logic and the structures of the EU, reveals an increasing gap between, on the one hand, the ontology of relations and the axiology of the world of institutions, and on the other hand the still essentialist, realistic ontology of direct experience. For the majority in society, that first world remains unexpressed and incomprehensible, as it evades the everyday epistemology of order. And this is where chaos enters in. That demise of meaning descends ever deeper. Thinking again of the example of the conflict surrounding the cross, we note that we are dealing with a creeping, superficial, pastiche, and largely unaware attack by the nominalist vision of the world.

But there is one basic difference in the comparison with the cognitive chaos of the communist period (overcome in the heyday of *Solidarność* – 1980–81, on the basis of a *bricolage* through efforts that activated moral categories to the role of language describing the public stage). Today individualization is much stronger, as individuals have found support within themselves, and not so much in their thinking, as in their experience of their own resourcefulness and survival skills. Secondly, unlike during the communist period, there no longer is an ideology attempting to give meaning to chaos. There is only the empty key-word "normality".

Thus, the freedom of manoeuvre (especially in a peripheral county subjected to structural violence) is so small that even the old adage "conservatives try to protect people from something, and liberals try to make things possible for them" is no longer apt. Perhaps therefore we are left with just the difficulty of shaping the local and private dimension, with guiding ourselves by aesthetic directives, by "matters of taste", as Polish poet Zbigniew Herbert would have it. Yet we are also left to focus on expanding

and popularizing knowledge (in order to help people manage the thought chaos), as well as to build innovative institutions – in order to limit structural violence.

Conclusion: Can Tradition Be Modern?

The capability of meeting the challenges of modernity within the framework of one's own time-space (that is, avoiding structural violence) is crucial for functioning in the twenty-first century. What is also crucial is the sheer capability of being a society rather than an ever more fragmented aggregate of individuals. The rising indifference toward others resulting from the inability to understand interdependence, but also from the disappearance of the social principle of the common good and the vitally experienced dignity of the human person, is gradually sliding into indifference towards oneself and the disappearance of the social dimension of experiencing oneself as a moral subject. This also applies to would-be "modern" societies. This was the very diagnosis of the condition of the Dutch after the tragedy in Srebrenica. The refusal of the soldiers to defend the civilians entrusted to their protection (which sentenced those civilians to death) rocked Dutch society. But the Dutch failed to confront the situation in the intellectual sphere and to undertake self-reflection. The tragedy in Srebrenica amounted to nothing more than a temporary change in voter sympathies.

In this perspective, our own Polish tradition of Thomist realism, with its ontologically grounded and generalized principle of inalienable dignity (owing to the participation of the human person in the Absolute), seems more useful today for experiencing the community and, at the same time, experiencing the moral dimension of existence. All the more so as this principle easily spills over to the social dimension through the command of justice, with its powerfully experienced rights.

This kind of culturally conditioned experiencing of the link between the individual and society especially proves itself in crisis situations. However, it lacks the Asian element of mutual and daily duties in the framework of particular relations, as well as Western culture's contract culture, which became the axiological foundation of capitalism.

What is ever so crucial for the "modern" character of society today is the capacity to create institutions and law that correspond to the complexity of the contemporary world and to its network structure. Here of greatest utility is the Western, post-nominalist sensitivity to the autonomy of form and the merely "internal" grasp of "rationality" and "truth", as concerns accepted premises. This approach, which seeks out ways to limit the arbitrariness of power (something inevitable following nominalism's elimination of universals), has now adopted the formula of institutionalized scepticism that hearkens to the popular notions found in neo-Kantianism. It also treats moral norms as hypothetical premises necessary for the maintenance of order, although they are deprived of strong, "realistic", ontological grounding and any absolute character. But multiculturalism, with its forceful claims to be recognized, pushes Europe to go beyond its mild post-secular perspective. When one looks for contemporary manifestations of such an approach, the Lisbon Treaty and the Charter of Basic Rights seem perfect examples with the way they offer syncretistic equality to different normative systems and at the same time refuse to treat any of these systems as absolute. Under these rules each country is allowed to compose its own combination of norms that will remain in accordance with the minimum standards valid for all members.

Such an order, which hearkens back to the "economy of norms" escapes the epistemology of the order characteristic for our realistic tradition. For this tradition substantially relies on natural laws and on certain ways of organizing and justifying

them. a confrontation with the post-nominalist formula of order might seem chaotic.

For Poles, this culturally grounded epistemological gap is the most important feature of today's world of ideas. And it is a feature that compels Poles to ponder the "modernity" or "non-modernity" of their tradition. Poland's integration with the institutional space of the EU has caused that even in everyday experience we can shield ourselves neither from the impression that there is no "order", nor from the difficulty in grasping meaning. For example, comprehension of the phenomenon of "structural violence" (crucial for the course and costs of the transformation – when into the post-communist vacuum institutions and procedures were injected that had their origins in a developmental phase different than ours, which encumbered the formation of national capital and re-oriented Poland's resources to work on behalf of markets of a larger scale) requires introduction of the concept of "correspondence between levels". It also requires a processual approach that pays heeds to the matter of proper institutional sequence and the phenomenon of the dictate of form. Such an approach, however, is foreign to our "realistic" epistemology of order. The normative space is also in demise. For what turns out is that in the public realm the most that can be done is to optimize the combination of norms, but without absolutizing any one normative system. Such absolutization is possible only in the sphere of personal life. For the man or woman in the street this entails a cognitive problem and a moral challenge that forces them to wonder what "community" means today. For the power elite, which does not understand the post-nominalist, Western epistemology of order, this is also a source of difficulty in moving about within the structures of the EU and defending Poland's interests within them.

This epistemological gap is therefore a real problem. But does this mean that we, by our own tradition, are "non-modern"? We

need to bear in mind that none other than our "realistic" tradition, with its narrative that conjoins dignity with justice, enabled us in 1980 to step out from communist alienation and rebuild the social fabric. This included our experiencing of ourselves in categories of collective subjecthood with the capacity for collective action. And although today it is hard with the thought tools of that tradition to move about in the network world and build everyday cooperation, perhaps that tradition is still the only effective foundation for our minds to function upon in conditions of fundamental threats. The dream that arises from that tradition of conjoining freedom with justice and dignity is still vital among us and can be a signpost when ideologies run into dead ends. Respect for the very phenomenon of faith (and the lack of modern scepticism) can facilitate contacts with other cultures: after all, it was only Poland in all the European Union that defended and understood the outrage of Muslims after the caricature of the prophet was published. Besides, and as I have indicated, the most interesting phenomena in the realm of thought in today's Poland concern precisely the creeping entrance into daily life of elements of nominalist ontology. After all, the conflict surrounding the cross also addresses its ontological status in some substantially complicated questions such as: is it merely a "symbol", as nominalism teaches (and hence, its meaning is dependent on the character of the space in which it is found) – or, as our still dominant realist tradition teaches, should its meaning be grasped literally, such that the division of space is an abuse? The conflict over the burqa in the public sphere (but also – the reverse process – the contextualization, in the name of control, of certain civil rights accorded the sharia – although this concerns women citizens of the UK), these are problems that today divide Western societies and our tradition places us Poles, paradoxically, on the side of significantly greater respect and tolerance for individual convictions and diversity of

religious orientations and outward manifestation. We are closer to the open, liberal tradition of American republicanism than to the oppressive, administrative post-Enlightenment method of dividing the social space into the public and private, as is today the case in certain countries of Western Europe.

Translated from Polish by Philip Steele and Miłosz Wojtyna

Scott Lash

MORALITY AND SOLIDARITY: CHINA'S RELATIONAL ECONOMY

What we want to understand as relationality, which is in a very important sense the cultural logic of Chinese and perhaps more than Chinese contemporary capitalism, is painted very clearly in François Jullien's book, *Dialogue sur la morale*. The original title is more revealing: *Fonder la morale – Dialogue de Mencius avec un philosophe des Lumières.* Actually it is a dialogue of Mencius with two Enlightenment philosophers: Rousseau and Kant. But it is Mencius who is at the heart of this. Mencius is writing 150 years after Confucius, in the middle of the fourth century BC. He is writing 100 years before the rise of the Han Dynasty. It is the era of the Warring Kingdoms[1]. There is no dynasty. There is anarchy. And at the same time there are the Hundred Schools of Philosophy[2]. There is endless debate. Endless agon. There is Mozi arguing for altruism. There are philosophers (as distinct from sages), arguing for an ethics of self-interest. Argument and

1 The Warring States period (475–221 BC) was one of the most prolific eras in the history of China. Intensive civilisational and cultural development resulted from the birth of significant philosophical schools and from the rise of new forms of social and political life that continued to be influential until the twentieth century. The period culminated in the unification of the states into the Chinese empire – J.K.

2 The period between the sixth and the third centuries BC, marked by substantial developments in philosophy, is nowadays referred to as that of the Hundred Schools of Thought. It was during this period that major Chinese philosophies, such as Confucianism, Taoism, Mohism, and Legalism, came into being – J.K.

some notion of the truth are at stake. This is when China at its at its closest to the West and Greece. Chinese thought is beginning to work in the register of philosophy. Mencius is taking part in these arguments. But he is arguing in effect against argument. Against the centrality of truth. He is engaging in a discourse against discourse, an anti-dialectic dialectic. He is pitting the sage, *sagesse*, wisdom, against philosophy. He is looking back to a previous period of dynastic stability. He is looking back at the same time of course to Confucius. He is saying that what counts is not truth but conduct.

Where Western modern ethics operates in the register of the actual and is individualist, the foundations of morals in China are virtual and collective, in a certain sense intersubjective. This "intersubjectivity", indeed original solidarity is not so much actual as virtual. It is the beyond-experience of the *dao*, which is beyond experience yet efficacious at the same time. Important to this is the relationality, the filial piety of Confucianism. But at the very heart also of such filial piety, at a deeper and more virtual level than this filial piety is the most important governing virtue of humaneness. This rather than individualism or the man-God relation, or man-Christ relation is at the heart of Mencius's relational morality. For us this relationality is central to construct in China of economic life. Now this prime and governing virtue of humaneness is a question of again *renyi* (仁義). *Renyi* is also righteousness. Yet unlike Christian righteousness, which is a quality of the individual, righteousness *renyi* is a property of the relation. *Ren* (仁) itself means "humane". It is comprised of a people radical[3] on the left (*ren*, 亻), while the right side of the radical (*er*, 二) signals that it means two people[4], that is it already relational.

3 In the Chinese character system, a radical is a semantic component of a character, or, in other contexts, a component of any kind – J.K.

4 In Chinese, 二 (er) means "two" – J.K.

At stake is surely not and very much the opposite of a Kantian, rule-bound ethics. Kant's morality is based on reason. But Mencius's ethical action is not guided by rules. It has no connection with anything like a model, or any kind of ideal. It is on the one hand strongly attached to the situation that it finds itself in. So it is not based on any kind of normativity, but much more embedded in the facticity, the reality of the everyday. In this sense, too, it is efficacious as Granet pointed out. Not just are the cultural emblems efficacious, but so is the conduct. Yet it is not utilitarian, not a question of empirical pleasure and pain. As Jean-François Lyotard observed, if Chinese thought is efficacious, then western thought is very un-efficacious. And it was not this lack of efficacy, lack of being incorporated into reality, that made Hegel criticize Kantian transcendental ethics from the point of view of *Sittlichkeit*. Not to be guided by rules is at the same time for conduct to be very much in the present, to situate ourselves where opportunity is about to unfold. This is not just opportunist but also seeing the bigger picture apart from the moral rules, taking into account the place of others. This resembles, for instance, Rollo May's "situation ethics" or Seyla Benhabib's "situating the self". The point is to take the opportunity, to see the larger picture, but also to place oneself integrally into the unfolding of a situation, into the propensity of things, and the propensity of time (Wang Hui). If Rousseau starts from pity, from empirical pity, then Kant – arguing against the empiricism of British moral sense philosophy, wants to abstract from pain and pleasure to address instead how reason would constitute obligation. On an a priori obligation to determine the will.

Following on from Granet, Jullien also has heavy focus on efficacy. Lyotard was one of the first French scholars to receive Jullien's work in a review essay written in "Le Monde" in 1997 on Jullien's *Treatise on Efficacy*. Jullien's efficacy is less tied up with the emblem than is the Durkheimian Granet. Lyotard notes that

Jullien's efficacy sets itself up against non-efficacious Western thought. To be non-efficacious is to be in the realm of rather purer knowledge, in a realm cut off from what Lyotard calls Jullien's Chinese "practical empiricism". If knowledge inhabits a separate realm from the grain of the everyday, then this will encourage a notion of action that is based on means and ends, in which the ends are set up as the ideal good. Here we have knowledge in the realm of the ideal or intelligible and the everyday in the grain of the material. Indeed this means-ends model has been standard in the sociology of action from Max Weber to Talcott Parsons. To this Chinese thought counter poses Laozi's non-action. To the *wu wei* (無為) at the heart of Taoism. Here *wei* (為) also means cause, indicating that we are also breaking with chains of cause and effect in understanding how we conduct our lives. Conduct does not follow such means-ends chains. In Chinese thought the means are not thought of as being justified by the ends. Indeed there is no notion really of legitimation at all, as in say Habermas's justification of speech-acts or Weber's legitimation of different forms of power. Instead the legitimation is carried in the action itself. Or the legitimation is itself is the course of the action. This seems to converge some with Lyotard's (and Niklas Luhmann's own) "*Legitimation durch Verfahren*", i.e. legitimation that happens through the performance of action or conduct itself. Instead of action based on disembedded means and ends set up as future ideals for the agent there is efficacy, there is what Jullien calls "transformation". Action is loud. It is disruptive. Its far away predecessor is the hero of the Western epic. His action is heroic and noisy and an intrusion in the everyday. Indeed so much of Western narrative and, say, narrative cinema is based on the intrusion of the protagonist into the everyday. The Clint Eastwood outsider into the settled community in the Western. In Chinese not action but conduct: we do not intrude. Instead the Sage embeds himself in the situation. He does not set up ideal models of a future to

regulate his present, but lives instead in the moment. So the efficacious is in the moment. You don't intrude from outside. But you situate yourself inside and try to detect the propensities of the unfolding of things. You are opportunist. Sagacity is to make your intervention upstream in the flow of things. And all is flow in the *Tao*. As courtesan you intervene in the prince's thought before he has made up his mind. You let nature and your nature take its course. You don't do a frontal attack on the thing whether in war or in knowledge, but you detour around the thing(s) in the situation. You work not through argument but through purview, giving an ever-fuller view of the situation. Like a gardener, weeding and hoeing. If the philosopher is the "guardian of being" then the sage is the "gardener", says Lyotard, "of becoming" (*étant*). You intervene before maturation of the situation where potential is at its greatest. You embrace the situation. This is efficacy. Efficacy is effect, but it is as Lyotard notes "effect without cause". The effect comes not from the cause. The fullness of the effect, i.e. the most efficacious unfolding comes instead from the way, from the *Tao*. The *Tao* and Chinese thought is a book of recipes to coordinate the fullness of the unfolding of the effects. Chinese thought consists less of rules or causes than recipes – think of algorithms: as Lyotard notes, "recipes for efficacy" (Lyotard 1997: 22).

Paul Ricoeur has entered into dialogue with Jullien in the context of the latter's *Du "temps". Éléments d'une philosophie du vivre.* This will stand in contrast to Ricoeur's monumental *Temps et récit*. Jullien puts time in scare quotes, and asks western thought to question its notion of time. In Chinese you have on the one hand duration (*shijian*) and on the other the moment (*shihou*). What we do, and you do not have, argues Jullien, is a sort of envelope that contains both. In the West this comes under the heading of indeed the unthought-of assumption, the fold of abstract time. Again following from Granet. Jullien contrasts the Western idea of time with seasons in China, of Western anticipation with Chinese

availability, of the Western deafening intrusion of the event with Eastern quiet and constant transition, of Western insouciance with eastern care, of time that passes with a time that is linked with domains and climates, of the dramatization of relations of time with silent continuation. Ricoeur looks at benchmarks in the Western notion of time such as Aristotle's primacy of change in time, which is present in the succession of number and in the distinction of two instants in which we can think the interval (Ricoeur 2003: 219). He points to Augustine's neo-platonic lived present, itself divided into the present-past, present-future and present-present, situated in a sort of "tension between distension and intention". Ricoeur recognises the distance between this Western time, the time of his *Temps et récit*, and on the other hand the permanent coming and going of Chinese time; the renewal without origin or conclusion where life is not between a beginning and end, where we do not live in a "between" (Ricoeur 2003: 217). Without a creator God and without an afterlife, beginning and end become less relevant. Time de-narrates: whether Newtonian time or the existential drama of being and time. The point is that time leaves the province of the me-subject in China. What is available is not so much the subject but the coming and going of time itself. Time shifts from being circumstances for the me-subject and my projects to being a question of the situation. This is a truly adverbial time. This is because time always evolves, a time of the "moment-situation". Ricoeur's criticism is that Chinese thought is not so much a *penser de dehors* as Jullien thinks. That the very reflexivity of language, and the connecting cosmopolitanism of different intelligibilities and the possibility of translation makes an emergent universality possible, instantiated in the way that Jullien can think Chinese in French.

But the larger point for us is the question of conduct. The question of the ethics of the world religions as Weber put it. The question is what kind of ethics is at stake and how these ethics

again for us infect and inflect the logic of capitalism, the logic of economic exchanges. It is surely a question of conduct as much as action, of how we live our lives. Thus Jullien in his book on morality duplicates Weber's discussions of otherworldly and this-worldly religious ethics. Justice should be about a certain recompense for virtue. Christians, noting that often the wicked and not the virtuous gain success in this world, posit another world. And Jews a messianic age in which there will be justice as redemption or salvation. In China there is neither salvation nor redemption. Indeed Parsons contrasted these immanentist versus transcendental religions as perhaps the major theme in his classic *Structure of Social Action*. But have things changed today? Where best can we get our economic ethic from? On the one hand an actual individualism, on the other an immanent not individualism but relationality. On the one hand a normative and regulating (indeed "governing") "ought". On the other – an energising and factical "is". These presume very different connection between the intelligible and the sensible. Thus Kant's antinomy of practical reason leads him to posit the necessity of God, and the juxtaposition of this world that is experienced into another solely intelligible world that is not experienced. Here God has to mediate justice. For Mencius justice must be this-worldly and the long run reward of the virtuous prince. That is, in Jullien's works, virtue has an efficacy in this world. This takes us back to Granet. The efficacy of his emblem is always this-worldly. Indeed, efficacy is this-worldly and inefficacy always otherworldly, whether Platonist or Judaeo-Christian.

The point is that not just our economic ethic, but also our economics flows from this two-world separation of the intelligible and the sensible. The Kant-Rousseau juxtaposition with what is the Chinese, quasi-Confucian ethic and the spirit of capitalism is telling. Firstly, because Kant really gives the model for sociological notions of action. These are individualistic for a start. Secondly,

they are rationalist (and not empiricist) in a very important way. Thus Weber gives us four action types. The most important are ends-rational and means-rational actions. The third is traditional. A traditional action is empiricist in that it is legitimated by the last available empirical case. But *Zweck* and *Wert*-rational are rational in not just not being irrational or not making sense. Indeed traditional action is reasonable and not at all irrational. But in terms of their being rooted firmly in intelligibility and not in empirical sense. This is all the more important to us in that Weber's *Zweck*-rationality was modelled on and is fully consistent with the assumptions of marginalist and neo-classical economics. So, at stake in our understanding of this sort of Confucianist ethic, this relational mode of economic conduct is a direct critique of neo-classical economic action. Which in its very abstraction and assumptions is questionable in its efficacy. In any event, Kant, as Cassirer notes, was completely seduced by Rousseau's *volonté générale* in beginning to think about practical reason, in his ethical and moral critique. But Kant quickly grew disenchanted with the empiricism and dependence on the sensible entailed in Rousseau's assumptions that sentiments of pity and compassion are at the basis of morality. That Rousseuan pity that starts from an "inclination" means that indeed interest may be at stake. Kant, more the Enlightenment philosopher than Rousseau, needs the moral will to be determined only by reason with no empirical referent. To be embroiled in the empirical feelings of pity or shame would mean that your moral action could be contaminated by an interest. So where Rousseau founds his ethics on sentiment, on a tendency in human nature, entailing the empirical and the sensible, Kant is looking not at nature or the senses but at *a priori* obligation. That is why the *Critique of Practical Reason* speaks of "pure practical reason" and not empirical reason. Now Kant juxtaposes the pure practical will with the empirical will. The empirical will is not what Jullien is speaking about. Instead Chinese relational

morality is grounded in intersubjectivity. Or in a dyad in which A and B are so implicated in one another that they cannot even be seen quite as subjects at all. The empirical will – and the use of the will means that he is speaking of the sphere of ethics, morality and practice – is very much like the model of knowledge in the First Critique. Which is always empirical. Kant insists that even in mathematics – whether geometry or a question of number – that there is an element of intuiting or sense – whether in the spatiality of the figure or the temporality of number.

But in the ethics at stake is the pure practical will. For both Kant and Rousseau the question is what determines the will (Jullien 1996: 37–8). Then we shift to Mencius who speaks of the prince, whose feelings of pity make him protest about the slaughter of a cow and who would risk his life to save a child who had fallen into a mineshaft. Here, like Rousseau, we see the empirical or sensible. But the pity in Rousseau is the basis to ground morality. In Mencius it is just the empirical correlate of the ground of morality, which is the *ren*, the implicated intersubjectivity (仁). This *ren* is not empirical. But empirical pity is its outcome. It is a virtue, a virtue that is invisible and we never encounter. As a virtue it is virtual and a "generator" of empirical pity (and shame). This is the foundation of ethics and morality in China. So it is neither a transcendental foundation as in Kant's imperative, nor an empirical and actual foundation as in Rousseau's pity. But it is a virtual entity whose energy generates empirical pity. It is a virtual entity in the sense that virtue in Taoism, the *de* (德) of the *Dao de* (道德)[5], is always invisible and virtual. The *ren* (仁) as humaneness and *renyi* (仁義) as righteousness or compassion signal a root of solidarity that is an original and natural human bond.

5 Such a treatment of virtue is characteristic for the *Dao de* school of Taoism, whose rules are based on the canonical book *Tao-te Ching* (*Daodejing*, third century BC, translated into English as *The Classic of the Way and Virtue*) – J.K.

Jullien points out that for Mencius and the Confucian tradition (224 BC to 1900 AD) it means human nature and humanity are a virtue rather than something empirical. In other words, this virtue comes not from what we encounter but from our depths. What is at stake is not an imperative or even primarily a set of obligations, but something that is natural. That is, whereas Rousseau founds morality in an empirical nature, Chinese thought does so in an immanent nature. What is more, for Rousseau in the state of nature we are individuals, while for Chinese thought we are bonded with one another. There is an original relationality. Economic connections are relational in China, and so is property. Some have said that property rights are blurred in China. But more accurate is that they are shared and overlapping, and also partly immanent, that is not fully realised. As not fully realised, transactions and contracts and property are fundamentally a question of process. And as such we will see they are processular, always in process.

This virtue of relational humanity is also in China a question of conscience. Again conscience is not sensible or experienced. What is conscience? It is *ben xin* (本心 or *liang xin*, 良心). In *ben xin*, *xin* is heart or mind or even *psyche* (psychology is *xinlixue*, 心理学). And *ben* is root. This gets to the heart of the sort or relationality at stake here. It is between consciences, asserts Mencius, between the roots of consciences. But whereas in the West we hear and speak of the "voice of conscience", a voice that repeats the voice of God, in China conscience has no voice. There is no personal god as in Judaeo-Christianity, or Islam or the Zoroastrian tradition. There is instead a place: *tian* (天)[6]. There

6 *Tian* is an impersonal power, in Chinese religions identified as nature, deity, heaven, and, in the period of the Zhou dynasty, also as the source of moral law and destiny. The ambiguity of this term, and of many others in the ancient Chinese thought, results from a different way this tradition approaches definition – phenomena are approached not through strict definitions but in a relational mode, that is, in as they appear in their relations to other phenomena – J.K.

is talk of *tiandao* and *tiancheng*[7], the mandate of heaven. Instead of the voice of God, there is the mandate of heaven. *Tian* is not a voice, but motivates and regulates the order of things (Jullien 1996: 53–4). My conscience is virtuous by heaven's mandate.

It is natural for the relational man to live in solidarity, in society. Indeed in classical Greece Aristotle spoke of *zoon politikon*, man as the political animal born to live in society. If man's nature is as *zoon politikon*, then the Greek city-state does not need to be founded in law. If the state develops as an extension of the virtues of *zoon politikon* in ancient Greece, you do not need the legal system of the Romans. Indeed, Confucius saw the state as a simple (Jullien 1996: 62–3) extension of the morality of the *dao*, *yin-yang* and humaneness as mediated by the rites of etiquette. But what that does not give you is institutions. It does not give you civil society. Even though there is originary solidarity, this does not lead to civil society. All of these have been erected including constitutions, not on Aristotle's assumptions of *zoon politikon*. These gave rise to a different kind of state – and of constitutions very different from modern constitutions. Ancient Greek constitutions were substantive rather than formal-procedural like Western constitutions, based, in turn, on a sort of Hobbesian contractuality. Here the assumption is not of a natural *zoon politikon* but that man is a self-interested individual who needs the protection from other stronger self-interested individuals. Hence a contract that sets up the state, the institutions of property and contract law and modern constitutions. So Chinese assumptions are concerned with a solidarity in nature, while there is arguably

7 *Tiandao* (天道) means "the law of Nature" (or, "the law of Heaven"). *Tiancheng* (天成) refers to all phenomena that might have been created by Nature (or Heaven). The mandate of Heaven (*tianming*, 天命), one of the foundational concepts of power in the early days of the Zhou dynasty, refers, in turn, to the idea that the mandate was allegedly given by Heaven to the emperor, hence referred to as "the Son of Heaven". The mandate was not based on the irreversible granting by a deity, though, but on the legitimacy of the ruler, whose power could be revoked in the case of any misappropriation – J.K.

a lineage of Western morality and individualism from or Judaeo-Christian assumptions of the fall. God created man as good, but man fell from grace. Thus there is also the doctrine of original sin and the other-worldliness of Judaeo-Christianity. This means not an investment of, shall we say, cultural energy in other people in this world but, instead, in God mediated by Christ, and in the next world. In Chinese religion, on balance, God did not create man at all. For Confucius and Mencius the world begins with very ancient kingdoms. Also there is no end of the world, there is no afterlife, or Messianic redemption. Hence both the investment of energy in the other, and relationality. The problem, though, is that while this relationality may be functional for the contemporary economy, as it stands in China, it is not functional for the rule of law, democracy and civil society. This cultural logic of immanence and relationality can lead to a set of empty political institutions, and to an absence of democracy and civil society. In the West we have very private foundations of morality. Here the link is not the social or cultural bond with other people, but instead with God and the world to come. This gives a private basis to the structure of public order, on the basis of contract: to what Jullien understands as a "political instrumentality" that gives order to our institutions and law. In China instead of law you have through the Confucian *Classic of the Rites*, the *Yili* (儀禮), instead the "social formalization of morality". In China, you have either, on the over hand these rites (*li*) or on the other the legalism of the law (*fa*, 法). In the second case there is only the void and the machinery of the state.

Jacek Kołtan

AFTERWORD: WHAT SOLIDARITY OF THE FUTURE?

The society we used to know is no longer. Our imaginations of the social world are increasingly incompatible with the reality of our everyday experience. Nevertheless, we continue to use the same concepts, as if unaware of the radical cultural consequences of the crisis, whose influences extend far beyond the financial dimension. Some difficulties awaiting anyone who attempts to describe the current state of affairs, as it became evident due to the recent crisis, might be illustrated in the following anecdote. A well-known actor, when asked a question by a journalist, was trying to explain the intricacies of his own profession. He first warned his interlocutor against understanding the job in the way the general public understands it – as imitation of behaviours from real life. He went on to claim that genuine acting consists in becoming, that is, in a creative approach to situations that a human being might confront. Thus acting was, to his mind, composed of four moments of experience. The first – to listen; the second – to find associations. These two consume enormous portions of energy as actors find themselves exposed to unexpected realities. The third moment – to respond – is an aftermath of the first two. The fourth constitutes a closure and is the most surprising – it highlights the passive nature of experience and the necessity to question certainties which habitually tend to shape the ways in

which we perceive our situation in the world. It is: not to know what comes next. These moments, and the fourth above all, force us to embark on our search – to abandon prior knowledge and skills that have up to a certain point been the only tools in our perception of the world we live in.

The cultural circumstances we have recently found ourselves in resemble the fourth moment of the actor's stage situation. With decades of raging debates concerning the crisis of societies behind us, nowadays it is this very moment that deserves attention.

Not To Know What Comes Next

Our contemporary experience differs substantially from even comparatively recent descriptions of the traditional hermeneutic experiences in which man assimilated the world by means of extending his horizon of understanding. When going beyond what the most immediate vicinity offered, man reflected on wider and wider circles of the world, and the horizons of the new and the unknown naturally merged with the prior experience of the world. As a result of transformations of modernity, however, we are more and more inclined to think that our situation is no longer hermeneutic; it has become hermetic.

Our experience is no longer that of continuous broadening of perspectives, but rather that of powerful collisions against divergent points of view that cannot be reduced to a common denominator. Our horizons do not merge with those of other worlds. On the contrary, they are permanently disjunctive – they render untenable the post-romantic vision of a community of agreement (final understanding). The past and the present meet, and fail to acknowledge each other in a continuous tension between what we have known and what we cannot and will not know. We collide against our own ignorance, which hibernates us in what is only too well known. Our situation is therefore that of a confrontation with

permanent not-knowing – the not-knowing of the kind that cannot be alleviated within by our cognitive capacities. Au contraire, in these circumstances we do not know and can neither know nor predict; we cannot expect that future developments will resemble any of the ones we know from the past.

The figure of the wanderer, prominent in the traditional hermeneutics of Gadamer's *Truth and Method* (1975), is no longer representative of our cultural experience. We are no longer the wanderer, who by climbing further and further into the mountains extends the range of the visible. Our contemporary experience is more likely to be typified by a chess knight that moves on and on to new, unknown places. It is, therefore, not the fusion of divergent interpretive horizons but rather the confusion in confrontations against permanent otherness that creates our basic experience. Instead of extension of our own horizons, we experience tension between the references we were used to on the one hand, and those we are confronted with on the other. Collision and conflict rather than dialogue and full understanding (*Einverständnis*) constitute the first, but surely not the last moment of this experience. This is therefore the elementary hermetic situation of individual and collective life in the societies of globalized world.

"Becoming" and "not-knowing" – these two concepts have been crucial to the descriptive discourse of the last decades of the twentieth century, retrospectively referred to as "reflexive modernization" (Beck, Giddens, Lash 1994). The concept of "becoming" not only indicates how profound a redefinition has altered the forms of social and political life but also opens our eyes to post-traditional models of individual and community life. Thanks to an increased awareness of *autopoiesis* we are now aware that social subjects, equipped with a certain potential, are capable of forming new identities. The concept of "not-knowing", in turn, reveals an inevitable component of technologically advanced

societies – confrontation with permanent risk, which is the dark side of modernization processes. The catastrophe in the nuclear power plant in Fukushima was a powerful reminder of the uncertainties characteristic for our lives in risk societies. Do we still, therefore, remain the offspring of modernization, continuously disoriented between various creations of our identity and the inability of predicting the consequences of the modernized life?

A Post-Social World

The only answer to the above question seems to be in the negative. With the consequences of the financial crisis becoming all the more evident, the second decade of the twenty-first century seems to be a radical break from rather than a next stage of reflexive modernity. The promises of creative self-destruction of the industrial era, strictly related with raging individualization and the rise of social self-criticism, have come to nothing. The intensification of citizen autonomy of action as a counterforce to the institutionalized world of politics has not yet translated into the birth of new social actors. The liberation from traditional cultural forms – be it fully-conscious or involuntary – has not resulted in an increased sense of subjective self-control and awareness – both of which might have allowed to rationally limit the negative effects of modernization. Something opposite has occurred: we now live in a world in which political institutions and global financial and multimedia corporations extend their capacity of social control by recording and technologically predicting practically all actions and words of citizens. The Snowden affair is a perfect case in point – it laid bare the scale of the activity of NSA, whose totalizing operations went beyond the mere suspicions related to the control of international information flows.

We now are in a post-social situation. The thesis about the existence of societies and the disintegration of individual

segments of social systems is powerfully undermined by Jadwiga Staniszkis, who claims that the primary challenge for us is to develop a culture that will cope with the divergent character of various social orders we might become part of. The most significant element of such a culture is the acceptance of the uncertainty that is generated in confrontations with the (sometimes radically) other. Ivan Krastev, in his illustrative analysis of the traditional figures of the voter, the reader, the taxpayer and the soldier, claims that elementary forms of social life have not only been subject to thorough redefinition, but have also rapidly lost their political legitimacy. It does not mean, as it seems, that the society, in a simple sense, does not exist any more; it means, however, that the actions of social actors do not translate into new forms of social life that would potentially coagulate into larger totalities and justify their existence. On the contrary, we live in a world in which citizens deprived of political identities attempt to construct new figures of their own.

The global economic system has emancipated itself from the social world; it has received complete autonomy and at the same time has rendered institutions and social actors thoroughly dependent. The institutions did not re-organize in the crisis; instead, they were destroyed (Touraine 2014). Even if such a statement might seem far-fetched and far too drastic, upon closer scrutiny it seems that the crisis either directly deprived institutions and social actors of their social legitimacy, or simply served as a catalyst to the process in which this legitimacy was lost. Financial capital, in turn – which generated subsequent critical situations in a chain of speculative financial bubbles – seems to be losing its innovative potential. Investments in innovations have been replaced by attempts at the accumulation of capital, including those related to global financial flows. The activity of Apple is a perfect example – in the first half of 2013, instead of taking investment risks that are necessary for technological

innovation, the powerful concern accumulated the record sum of 145 billion dollars in its accounts (enough to buy out several significant market competitors).

Apple is a classic example of the ways in which autonomic capital spaces operate in isolation from the social system. This American company has not only minimized costs by transferring its production process to China for the sake of cheaper labour, but it has also eliminated fiscal liabilities towards its own homeland. When sharing dividend among shareholders, Apple found it more profitable to take a loan in a spectacular campaign of bonds sale rather than to transfer money from their foreign accounts. The evasive move allowed the concern to contribute over 50 times less tax to USA budget. This and many other cases indicate that the relationship between the economic sphere and the sphere of social life is polarized – the latter being dramatically dominated by the autonomously developing space of capital.

How does it all affect interpretations of the cultural moment we have found ourselves in? The hermetic character of the circumstances has been enriched with new meanings: these days it is not only the "not-knowing" that results from the risks generated by modernity. The financial crisis revealed a more radical shape of it: we no longer know what comes next, and it is so, above other reasons, because prior forms of social life have been extinguished, and their place has not been yet filled with new meanings. The situation is therefore different than in the case of reflexive modernization, whose aesthetic dimension was described by Scott Lash in the early nineties. While the emotional mosaic of the social world was at that time composed of risk, uncertainty and care, over the last few years the experience of crisis has highlighted confusion, conflict and outrage. These phenomena have dominated the psycho-political landscape of contemporary life. John Gray draws our attention to certain echoes of these transformations, when he underlines the inherently sudden nature of cultural

changes and the way such changes force us to refute the powerful belief in progress and ultimate convergence evident in the commonly recognized concept of the end of history. Pierre Manent, too, addresses the crisis of confidence in human capacities as a crucial component of modernization processes. "I don't know", Gianni Vattimo claims in an adamantly hermetic response, when asked about possible replacements for the recently abandoned epistemological and political certainties of the world we live in.

Flashes of Solidarity

In the history of Europe such time of paradigmatic changes was conducive to questions concerning new forms of solidarity activities among citizens. The word "solidarity" has flashed intensely specifically in the periods of crisis. In the nineteenth century it became a key concept to the French solidarists, who sought new forms of social and political order in the aftermath of the Great Revolution. Picked up by the working class at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the concept of solidarity was expressive of a large need for class liberation. After the second World War, to some, it served as a principle for constructing a social-democratic order both in the society and in economy. In Poland, in the beginning of the eighties, hopes of the people concentrated around the idea of solidarity as a way of opposing the authoritarian regime. Polish Solidarity was not only a trade union movement or a national liberation movement, but, above all, as Alain Touraine indicated, a social liberation initiative (Touraine, Wieviorka, Dubet, Strzelecki 1983). The movement allowed the citizens to regain a sense of agency and to see themselves as actual actors, who would determine the new organisation of social life.

The situation in Central and Eastern Europe after the collapse of communist regimes changed substantially, though. The concept of "solidarity" has lost its aura. This part of the continent, and its

individual states, did not witness any significant experiments after 1989 – neither in terms of new forms of economic life, nor of new forms of representative democracy. On the contrary, they engaged in implementation or, as Ivan Krastev puts it his *In Mistrust We Trust* (2013), in imitation of the economic solutions and political models of the countries of the West, collectively motivated by what was sometimes understood as "attempts at normalcy". The politics of anti-politics, initiated by oppositionists who in the seventies wanted to build a political culture alternative to the mainstream authoritarian regime, soon gave way to post-politics. For it was the technocratic political parties (together with the global capitalism) that began to define the framework for everyday lives of citizens in the post-communist states. The conservative dream of the end of history, which was supposed to take place after the collapse of communism, proved to be based upon a significant misconception. Krastev explains that it consisted in a certain negligence of tensions that are present between capitalism and democracy which aims to legitimize its institutions. For the indisputable achievements of their political transformation post-communist states paid with the loss of their social energy. The energy, rather than being invested into new forms of public life, was spent in protest movements of the nineties that centred around various difficulties related to the gradual development of citizen societies.

The term "solidarity" entered the lexicon of all words that are used far too often both in political affairs and in public debates; it was invested with sentimental and post-romantic connotations and burdened with the image of a community that might grow based on common understanding. The extensive use of this term might seem striking today: solidarity is called for both by politicians who are no longer able to control the project of the European Community, and by global bankers, who – as Shlomo Avineri sarcastically observes – having led to yet another market

crisis, expect national state governments to unite in loyal help. Banks, the mainstream political claim goes, are far too important to be allowed to collapse. The immediate consequence of such an approach – the assumption that millions of citizens-taxpayers are far less important than banks and therefore not a subject to be considered – is representative of the distribution of power in the post-social world.

The abuse of the term "solidarity" does not result from the expansion of solidarity as such, but of the overwhelming deficit of it. We miss the sense of closeness and belonging; we miss the security that they generate. These longings are accompanied by an overwhelming feeling of uncertainty regarding the future. The reorganization of labour in a post-industrial world resulted in the disappearance of traditional spots of trust-creation and cooperation that Zygmunt Bauman called "the factories of solidarity". Transformations in the culture of labour, which has been dominated by competition and self-sufficiency, have led to an atrophy of natural cooperative skills. A manager confronted with the common task of organizing and managing ever-changing teams of employees is unable to contribute to a profound culture of cooperation. Employees, in turn, obliged to maximize effectiveness of their work, cannot risk a gesture of aid and sympathy towards a colleague from the neighbouring cubicle in a corporate skyscraper.

In the world of radical acceleration and permanent circulation of employees, cooperation has been replaced by "imitated solidarity". Such an attitude consists in behaviours that can be applied in the contact with each cooperating partner, in different cultural contexts and diverse situations. Such a culture in the organization of labour has been dominated by a pathos of professionalization, of leadership, of team member trust, of resources management, of managerial coaching and so on. The fact that the rhetoric of excess in corporate organizational cultures conceals inefficient cooperative models and "the triumph of the emptiness" (Alvesson

2013), does not reduce its contribution to the effective enfeebling of the practices of social life.

Richard Sennett's analysis presented in *Together: The Rituals, Pleasures and Politics of Cooperation* (2012) indicates quite clearly how profound role in our everyday reality is played by both the abovementioned institutional and cultural metamorphoses of the last few decades. Sennett makes us realize that in a world deprived of factories that "produce" social bonds, massive collective initiatives such as the workers Solidarity movement in Gdańsk Shipyard are no longer possible. This does not mean, however, that we have irretrievably lost the capacity of effective cooperation. It means that culture creates individuals who are characterized by radically impaired capability to coexist with others. With a striking increase of social inequality in the last decades of the twentieth century, we live in worlds which depend more on identity (of ethnic origin, of life style) than on difference. We are immersed in a culture which is hardly capable of accommodating the experience of the other and to creatively assist the crossing of boundaries between what is our own and what is foreign. If we follow Sloterdijk's understanding of solidarity as an immunological system that allows various cultures to develop mechanisms of damage control in relation to this kind of boundary crossing, then our contemporary, socially complex world turns out to require new practices that will allow space for experimentation in boundary areas. Cultural experimentation should lead to the acceptance of uncertainty as an inherent part of our experience. Moreover, they should also enable us to institutionalize good practices and habits that are developed in such cultural experiments.

We are currently becoming witnesses to new ways of expressing solidarity. New social mobilization movements have redefined generally accepted frameworks of political culture. A major wave of social movements in Northern Africa, together with various

expressions of outrage throughout Europe (following the model of the Spanish Indignados) are crucial cases of reaction against the overwhelming powerlessness contemporary societies suffer from in the creation of political reality. These movements adamantly prove a certain potential for cooperation and mobilization among individuals and groups that, as of yet, have remained silent. These groups, it seems, have chosen cyberspace as their natural sphere of communication. With its widely recognized slogan "We are the 99%", Occupy Wall Street is a great case in point – it manifestly revealed the degree of social injustice and went on to overcome its own powerlessness and to (at least for a time) become a new social actor. The fact that the waves of outrage disperse as rapidly as they appear, proves our predicament: we have not yet reached a vantage point that might allow us to see a future far ahead. The term "Anonymous" is a key concept for understanding the strategy the new actors follow when creating their own (still fragile) identity on the post-social stage. When members of the protesting groups don laughing Guy Fawkes masks, they do so to conceal the identity that is still to take its shape. This action is largely symptomatic of the period of transformation we currently experience. Crowds gathering in the name of a "Man without a name", prove quite adamantly that the term "solidarity" has transformed into an empty place that demands new senses to be filled. A question arises therefore. Might the discomfort of not knowing what comes next allow us to find ourselves moving further and further away from the world we have become too familiar with?

Translated from Polish by Miłosz Wojtyna

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