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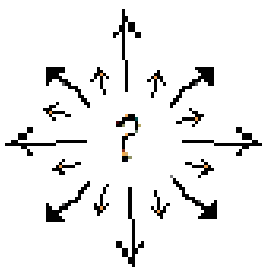
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Professionalism is a Humanism

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To borrow Sartre's famous title "existentialism is a humanism", I think that professionalism needs and deserves to be considered primarily as an opportunity and prospect for the promotion and maintenance of humanism in personal and social existence. By "humanism" I do not mean particularly the understanding of Sartre and the existentialists nor abstract philanthropy, kindness, and the uncritical selflessness that are often confused and replaced with gratuitous volunteerism and eccentric charity. I mean humanism according to the etymological sense of the word.

The journey of the word through the ages in theories and interpretations is estranged almost imperceptibly from its linguistic roots. The first is the most ancient sense, the sense of the natural home: *humus*, fertile layer, from which grows all life, also human. From this view, the "humane" is something earthly, ordinary, and trivial. Unlike *divinitas* (sacred, divine things), it refers to practical matters of secular life, but not to knowledge and activities related to Scripture. *Humanitas* was understood in this way by clerics and scholars at the time of late antiquity and the Middle Ages. "Humanitarian" for them was the one discipline that included the study of fine letters and discourse: rhetoric, logic, the works of Greek and Roman authors, and the humanist was "someone who taught those subjects or provided material for others".[1] In this sense *humanitas* is a theory and practice, associated with the most human of all human things – speech, thought, education, and training. But even then, in ancient times, the word was ambiguous depending on who used it – the

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[1] T. Davies, *Humanism* (Routledge Press, 2008), 126.

masses or the enlightened man, as Aulus Gellius remarked in *Attic Nights* (*Noctes Atticae)*. In a note about the word *humanitas* he states that it was not always used in the sense of "humanity" and of cooperation, but of favor to all people without distinction.[2] Its older meaning was closer to what the Greeks called education, and what the Romans conceived as teaching and learning in the sciences and arts, because the care for their study and the affinity to them is given to no other living creatures except man. Therefore it is called *humanitas* – humanity. So etymologically, the ancestor of "humanism", appears ambiguous, the winner of two different meanings that exist and are used independently of each other.

The first of these can be defined as "educational" and refers to the concept of elite education, dominant both at the time of Aulus Gellius and long after it, up to the Enlightenment period. According to him, education is appropriate and necessary for the lords' exercise, for those who have power and social status which require learning and training by the cultivation of the ability to think logically and speak convincingly, to exercise successful power. In this context, education is more a function and privilege of power: although it is a universal pursuit, erudition is not attainable by all. So it becomes understandable, as B. Russell insists, that curiosity and the acquisi-

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2   Gellius, Aulus, Noctes Atticae, XIII, 17: "Humanitatem" non significare id, quod volgus putat, sed eo vocabulo, qui sinceriter locuti sunt, magis proprie esse usos.I. Qui verba Latina fecerunt quique his probe usi sunt, "humanitatem" non id esse voluerunt, quod volgus existimat quodque a Graecis philanthropia dicitur et significat dexteritatem quandam benivolentiamque erga omnis homines promiscam, sed "humanitatem" appellaverunt id propemodum, quod Graeci paideian vocant, nos eruditionem institutionemque in bonas artis dicimus. Quas qui sinceriter cupiunt adpetuntque, hi sunt vel maxime humanissimi. Huius enim scientiae cura et disciplina ex universis animantibus uni homini datast idcircoque "humanitas" appellata est.II. Sic igitur eo verbo veteres esse usos et cumprimis M. Varronem Marcumque Tullium omnes ferme libri declarant. Quamobrem satis habui unum interim exemplum promere.III. Itaque verba posui Varronis e libro rerum humanarum primo, cuius principium hoc est: "Praxiteles, qui propter artificium egregium nemini est paulum modo humaniori ignotus". V. "Humaniori" inquit non ita, ut vulgo dicitur, facili et tractabili et benivolo, tametsi rudis litterarum sit – hoc enim cum sententia nequaquam convenit -, sed eruditiori doctiorique, qui Praxitelem, quid fuerit, et ex libris et ex historia cognoverit. (http://www.forumromanum.org/literature/gellius13.html#17)

tion of knowledge are "a kind of love for power".[3]

The second meaning of humanitas reflects the idea of morality as humanity. Underlying this idea is the understanding of love as the ability of humans to care for others and to not be indifferent to the fate and circumstances of those whom we love. The subsequent history of humanistic ideas reveals the basic preponderance and gradual imposition of this second meaning, with which "humanism" is popular today – to emphasize a moral attitude towards others. Our morality is in readiness for humanism – humanity, which is always limited and therefore always insufficient. On the one hand, our finiteness is in seeing "humanity" too broadly, as an abstract category, an empirically untouchable object. On the other hand, as John Durham Peters noticed, quoting Kierkegaard, in Love the individual is placed above the general: the requirement for helping a neighbor in need is a stronger calling than the requirement to help all hungry orphans in the world.[4]

Peters also remarks, that although we insist on love for all people, our physical limitations do not provide us enough time to allow us real intimacy and so we are able to care for only a few. In the course of our lives it can be with relatively few people; we can love only personally. In this sense, love is paradoxical because its requirements are universal, but it is only possible as a concrete engagement since we can share our time and physical proximity with only some but not all people. Overcoming this paradox seems possible when humanism is seen not just as a dimension of love, but as a way of freedom. Its road is in education, in the sense of enlightenment that makes people knowledgeable and humane because it implies self-improvement through teaching and learning. It's not accidentally that humanists such as Montaigne and Rousseau discussed education more than the ideal state.

Today the concept of improvement and self-improvement through cognition and learning is associated mostly with what is called "higher education" because it provides knowledge based on scientific achievements. Often, however, people forget that it is called so, not only because we receive

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[3] B. Russell, *Marriage and Morals* (Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1929).

[4] John Durham Peters, *Speaking into the Air: A History of the Idea of Communication* (University of Chicago Press, 1999).

it through university, but also because in the university, according to Ortega y Gasset, the average student "will be prepared as a good specialist and a cultural man".[5] In other words, learning skills for this knowledge is interpreted and applied in a spirit of humanism, the readiness of humanity, hand-in-hand with the utilization of the expertise required of every professional specialist.

In this context, the discussion of professionalism requires that it mean an ethical category which is associated with a specific morality, based on certain social paradigms. Therefore the question arises: Is it possible for there to be other discussion of professionalism other than merely as technical skill?

At first glance the question seems rhetorical and superfluous in view of the tautology that it contains, but such an impression is misleading because it leads to a rhetorical answer. As if, for example, professionalism can be spoken of only by professionals. From this view, any professional can talk about professionalism, but not about the professionalism of every profession, only for certain ones – the professionalism of the profession that they practice.

But what implies a discourse of professionalism as human quality, norms, and standards of behavior, choice of action, cooperation, and relationships between people? This question is no longer a matter of professionalism but of ethics. In a sense, ethical discourse can be professional when it is done by people involved professionally with ethics: teachers, scientists, and professors of ethics. Ethics is then exercised and understood as a specialized, theoretical (philosophical) cognitive aspect of morality.

But ethics can also be understood in other, different senses, which was noticed for the first time by Aristotle. This is the meaning of ethics as knowledge about moral experience as daily practice of governing behavioral interactions and relationships between people living together in society but doing (performing) different things. In this case, an ethical discussion of professionalism cannot remain within one's own professional discourse because it relates to human ethos as a civil position and social status. In such a

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5   José Ortega y Gasset, *Misión de la Universidad* [Mission of the university], tr. by
     Howard Lee Nostrand, 1930.

condition, various professions and their communities are consti-
tuted and legitimized, as is evidenced by their histories. This historical
frame suggests that the modern professionalization of labor has its own tra-
dition and principle in the face of the modern, urban type of culture and life-
style, as well as the modern model of citizenship, also known as civil soci-
ety.

The predecessor of this culture and society is the medieval town from
the twelfth century. In this period, cities represented new forces, which,
from the late-Middle Ages they turned into the most influential political and
economic centers, and formed the core of a new Europe: Europe as the *topos*
of civil liberties. Actually, the new is a new principle of European urbaniza-
tion, thinking about the city as *libertas* and that "urban air makes us free".
Besides greater communal autonomy, this freedom gives people the confi-
dence and awareness of belonging to a different social order – the order of
"people without a master" as bakers, printers, weavers, traders, masters, etc.

All such citizens lead lifestyles that do not attach them firmly to the
vertical chains of themselves and to the hull of a traditional society. The
only rules they recognize are the city's laws and general norms. According
to their norms, all rivalries and conflicts among residents, who gave an oath
of citizenship, are resolved. In addition, citizenship, as noted by Michael
Walzer, is "the first position, key social and political [space]... and a prereq-
uisite for all other positions, as far as non-citizens have no right to run for
office;"[6] that is, citizenship is any position from which the political commu-
nity as a whole has an interest, selects who should administer it and regu-
lates the procedures by which people are to be elected.

New forms now distinguish this choice in the modern world. In this
world the distribution of positions is not inherited or sold and cannot be ap-
propriated by private individuals. In this world is every job for which a di-
ploma is required for every job so that "all citizens, or at least all citizens
with the minimum qualifications or skills, have the right to be taken into ac-
count in the appointment of office".[7] This freedom that allows civil equality

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6   M. Walzer, Spheres of Justice: A Defense of Pluralism and Equality (New York:
    Basic Books, 1983).
7   Ibid.

is the source of a new form of competition and rivalry between individuals, and a new kind of power. It is a power that is not typically based on physical force or wealth but on knowledge, skills, and experience, which suggests in each the qualification of professional training.

From this view we can say that the professionalist is primarily a citizen who can occupy a post, because he is "certified" and has a qualification whose legitimacy is based on criteria other than the "market" or at least not only the market because it refers to common values and goals of the society.

In particular, modern society is a community where people come together, guided by the idea of themselves as citizens: as free and equal in dignity and rights, based on reciprocal recognition of everyone as autonomous and responsible individuals. So mutual recognition of rights includes an implicit understanding of human dignity, and the related respect and observance of a person's autonomy and inviolability as a fundamental and inalienable right alongside the rights to life, physical and personal.

Not coincidentally, the same understanding is central to modern professional codes of ethics in various practices. The pursuit of a profession is now more than ever linked to social positions and described by Uolzar as "a place of confidence, legally established power or subordination... position or job".

As a professional place, however, the position is related to specific standards of rationality, fairness, and efficiency that cannot be applied mechanically but require an assessment by the person who depends on their implementation. The assessment itself is not a question of standards – there is no standard that defines how to do an assessment. Therefore, the assessment depends exclusively on the goodwill and the qualities of the assessor, his competence and honesty, ability and preparedness to assess, so that his decision does not conflict with standards and does not replace the objectives in the name of which they are taken.

Thus, professional standards, unlike social ones, are not formal and mandatory but recommendable and guiding because they are designed to delineate the limits of possible decisions, not to command what is to be decided. This means that the professional can be criticized by those whose interests affect his assessment (decision) when the assessment does not satisfy

them or, worse, when it prejudices those interests.

Such a view allows the word "professional" to be understood as "every professional" and not just a certain type – doctors, lawyers, teachers, journalists, etc. Consequently, if we want to say something that is valid about professionalism, and that can be valid for all professionals and non-professionals alike, it is to insist on professionalism and to have it as an objective, thanks to ethics, which is required in every occupation. This insistence and the desire for it today are facts. There is also the fact that the lives of increasingly more people are dependent on professionaly differentiated and professionaly regulated relations and behavior.

Undoubtedly the first and obvious reason for the increasing professionalisation in the form of new professional fields and new requirements to existing professions is the progress of science and the application of its achievements in the form of various technologies whose use requires knowledge and training. An inevitable result of this process is the intellectualization of labor and people's lives, their communication, cooperation, and coexistence. In short, we live in a culture of professionalism. Of course, the attitude to this varies because some professions are among the contexts in which people can experience first hand the old community sources of moral obligation, whereas others see them as a conspiracy of specialists against non-specialists.

On the other hand, the increasing importance of professionalism on a global scale means that this discussion does not relate only to private, local interests – the interests of individual professionals or their communities – but also to the public interest. Its public character can be seen in the potential for the consolidation of professions, the solidarity which can provoke collegial relationships in professional communities, between those who identify themselves as similar thanks to the intellectual qualities and social significance of their professions.

In the world of globalisation and its information society – in which people communicate mostly in the language of professionals – professional communities emerge as serious competitors to the old, traditional identity-models based on religion, nationality, and race. From this view, the presence or absence of interest in the situation and development of the professions is not only an indication of our attitude towards them, it is a criterion and a basic

condition for their prosperity or decline, development or neglect, in each particular society, and therefore the public status of the very people living in it.

A good professional is usually spoken of as the good man, the moral man, because the words "good" and "moral" are often understood as synonyms connoting valuable, important qualities from the standpoint of morality and free choice. In the same way, when we talk about "professionalism" we usually means what is positive, acceptable, and desirable in the exercise of the professions. In this sense, professionalism is a synonym of good. Otherwise we should talk about "moral" and "immoral" professionalism, which is like talking about "moral honesty", "moral love", or "moral justice".

Of course, moral and good (also professionalism and morality), are not completely identical in content. Their duplication is partly because the good is not limited and is not identified with everything moral, and "professionalism" does not exhaust the entire area of professionalism but describes the ethical paradigm necessary to the practice of any given profession. According to this paradigm, professionalism is the core of professional ethics, valid for people who practice the same profession, as the good is the core of everyday morality, valid for humans as private individuals, as subjects of private life.

Professionalism in this sense is also a reason for morality, the subject of a special professional ethics, including specific responsibilities and moral obligations governing "the ways in which professional activities affect moral rights".[8] The only justification for the specificity of these rights is the social significance of professions: that the professions take care of promoting, maintaining, and guaranteeing one or another social good, such as peace, justice, life, health, knowledge, etc.

Although we have known technological details for a long time, we have to remind ourselves how to apply them in regard to professional behavior. Indeed, the expertise and skills for their application attach a particular status to the profession as a set of skills and a combination of competences that include ethical skills achievable alongside specialized training. This is different from traditional notions of morality, which are not questions of

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8   Benjamin Freedman, "What really makes professional morality different: Response to Martin" in *Ethics*, Vol. 91, No. 4 (July, 1981), 626-630.

competence but of socialization, a personal and shared moral culture.

Professionals in a particular area often appear as a privileged group because of their belonging to a specific community or body of knowledge, around which they form the basis of specialized education and training. Being privileged implies having power. In this line of thinking, it is appropriate to cite what Alvin Toffler noticed in his work *The Third Wave*: that knowledge is the source of power of the highest quality because it allows us to avoid traditional means of pressure, such as violence or wealth, to be persuaded, and to get other people to act in a certain way in anticipation of answers to their personal interests.[9] With particular force, Toffler's words refer to expert (professional) knowledge with regard to the power understood as an opportunity to impact, influence, guide behavior and thinking, our attitudes, our desires, and thus to achieve one or another goal. Like every form of power, the professionals' power is not absolute. It is relative because the nature of expertise today, in the age of information technology and mass-communications, is permanently lost by the charisma of its esotericism.

The loss is that everything done by the doctor, lawyer, administrator, or bank clerk can be put in doubt by their customers, clients, and patients, since if desired every person can in principle learn the rudiments of a profession from access to public discussions, the internet, or reading. While they cannot do this in full, they can get much of what these professionals know. Another reason for the relativity of that power is its "official" limitation with "publicly" imposed and controlled procedures and criteria for the authorization of any professional practice. The main argument of these restrictions is that we are not willing to leave helpless or needy people to be dependent on the self-styled officials who have not undergone the necessary process of training or examinations.[10]

Therefore, if the determination of professionalism relates to use knowledge, the freedom of its use, as well as moral right, then the autonomy of professionals choice about how to use that knowledge must also include responsibility for that choice. In this sense, professionalism is a paradoxical point of overlapping power and freedom and obtains by their balance. The

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[9]   Alvin Toffler, *The Third Wave* (Bantam Books, 1980).

[10]   M. Walzer, op. cit.

equilibrium of power is a privilege that is received by means of the knowledge and freedom to use it.

Of course, knowledge serves the goal of determining the criteria for the balance. When this goal is one or another social good, it is – because it is important for all – fundamental. Whence comes the agenda for the professional use of knowledge. It would seem that the basic sense of professional autonomy is this: the interiorization of responsibility as awareness of the need for the adequate (professional) reaction to certain expectations, fixed in professional (ethical) standards. From this point of view, professionalism can be a kind of self-awareness and an ability to perform reliable self-assessment according to patterns that are established and recognized as professional because the motive for their observance is not only a specific, private interest, a separate single benefit of professionals and non-professionals, but also the social good and the importance of the professions, of their conscientious practice in the name of values and goals that are not only individual but also social goods, e.g., life, health, peace, knowledge, etc.

In the same context, from Walzer's view of professionalism, we may posit: "an ethical code, social connection, model of mutual regulation and self-discipline".[11] The mutuality of this regulation is in the realization of professional "feedback" together with non-professionals. These relationships depend on the distance that professionals actually establish and tend to establish between themselves and others. According to the size of their domain, they can choose to command or to cooperate with others, whether to impose more categorical than hypothetical imperatives, tempted by an intoxicating sense of superiority and contempt towards ignorance. Or they might resist the temptation to impose their wills on others and to prefer authoritarian behavior by reason of the authoritarian recognition of the humanistic paradigm of professionalism.

This is the paradigm of professionalism as a specific attitude towards knowledge and understanding – that we need the professional's power not to enjoy but to pursue and achieve humanistic goals that professional work serves, based and justified on concern for other humans. Therefore, the typi-

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[11] Ibid.

cal humaneness of professionalism consists in the recognition that professional care and responsibility for people differs contextually. Not everybody is the same, thus always personalized: the successful treatment of one patient, the excellent results of one student, the satisfaction of one client, and so on, do not indicate any guarantee of successful treatment, training, or service to all.

It's about the complexity of life – businesslike, everyday life – that brings us all those cases, called "specific" because we are not able to foresee them. Namely, we are in need of assessment that is not beyond standardization. Whatever the case, it is impossible to distinguish a case as "private" and to resolve it, if in advance we lack the knowledge, known patterns of typical cases, and the standard methods of any professional practice.

Of course, professional knowledge has its price and its application requires its pay, which depends not only on quantitative parameters but also on the public prestige of social values. Consequently, when we talk about health, justice, knowledge, science, etc. and their social value, we mean not only the people engaged professionally with them and their (personal) responsibilities as doctors, lawyers, teachers, and architects, but also the prestige of the hospital, the court, the school, the university as their professional environments and as the institutions that they represent.

The ability of society to ensure successful functioning of these institutions and the conditions for pursuing and achieving social values such as professional goals are measured by their public willingness for maintenance and development in the long term of institutions that are public. The direction indicator for this willingness is called education.

There is no clearer example of professionalism in education than how education is the only perceived cure for arrogance, trivial thinking, meaningful and ordered categorical knowledge.

In such a situation, residents who, according to Plato's words, are pseudo-wise instead of wise, and whom Jose Ortega y Gasset called "the most common type of human" or "middle man" are prone to mislead and are weak and cowardly because they fail to meet the major requirements that the real, complex, precise and demanding modern world places on them. Instead of answering to its challenges, says Ortega, this "middle man" is subservient to fraud and to false existence because he has invented his own simple

world and prefers "to replace his life with a deceptive and simple existence closed in a cocoon as his caterpillar".[12] Such people are not happy because they are incapable of living a good, happy life – their limitations push them to a minimalism that reduces freedom to asceticism and simple living to survival. Unlike them, the people for whom knowledge is a serious and vital task do not cease to learn, to educate, to exercise, to engage proper cognition in their lives and be useful to both themselves and to others with whom they communicate and live.

For the minimalist, on the contrary, any specialized education and culture is sideline entertainment, hobby, useless ornaments decorating the life of the idler. But his simplistic outlook is dangerous because this dilettantism and primitivism repel and reject every thought, every speech which is different because they don't aim for the truth. This is the terror of the uneducated, under-educated, and self-taught: just as moles dig tunnels in all directions, eat incidently found roots, and might never reach the other end, they cannot taste the fruit of the plant because they neither planted it nor cared for it.

Guided by the desire to avoid mental effort or acquiring serious speech and cognition, these people are ready to condemn it and to think of it as arrogant and unnecessary. They prefer to do so instead of being compared to those who have more knowledge and intelligence and to use them as a measure in the search of comprehension, in the name of sharing the truth, rather than twisting it from incomprehension. This brings us back to the old, well known but still valid maxim, that there is no better way to the best in education because the people without it remain blind and tend to have delusions like the chained captives in Plato's cave.

The problem is, as Walter Lippmann described, that there is some innate difficulty when we use the reasonable method of causality in our activities with the unwise world. Description, which is offered on this occasion by Lippmann, makes it clear that the "unwise world" is something more than inhumane.[13] It is also a metaphor for the world of the uneducated, under-educated, semi-literate people, of dilettantes. Their ignorance and incompe-

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[12] Ibid.
[13] Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion* (MacMillan & Co., 1922).

tence is a major source of conflict and rupture within education, inevitable in times of crisis.

By referring to Plato, Lippmann describes this conflict figuratively and artistically in terms of the true pilot who knows what is best for the ship. At the same time he draws attention to the problem that stems from the pilot who knows the crew's difficulty in correctly assesing the pilot's decisions. The crew does not know what the pilot knows and the pilot, awed by stars and winds, does not know how to make his crew recognise the importance of his knowledge. Therefore, according to Lippmann, the true medicine is education. It alone will enable the sailors to evaluate the decisions of their leader as a result of the ability to distinguish false from true crises. In this distinction, according to Lippmann, lies the biggest challenge to human prudence because it requires more than extraordinary effort.

The ship owners on land should know this because only the coastal people can plan many trips. Lippmann's passage affirms clearly and categorically that there is no more serious crisis than the crisis of education. Moreover, every crisis is a crisis of education and nothing more. All other crises are false because the crisis of education generates all other crises: the absence or lack of knowledge about how to behave, how to live in uncertainty. And the longer it lasts, the more false crises there are. It is because of the people who refuse to resist these crises, those who ignore education, that we are doomed to wander forever in the stormy sea, because we cannot distinguish the pilot from the cabin boy.

Critical Thinking in Politics -
A Postmodern View

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Of course, we cannot now speak on behalf of the entirety of postmodern philosophy in an attempt to express its principal political preferences. However, we can grasp for something that different postmodern contexts might have in common as far as political opinions are concerned.

Most generally, it can be said that postmodern philosophy is noted for a high level of political non-conformism, that it tends to be in opposition, and that the majority of its community tries to "take to the left" as much as possible. In the opinion of postmodern philosophy, many of the achievements of today's West European civilization are doubtable.

Given the non-conformist attitude of postmodernism, it is not surprising that its entire attention is focused on what might be called the "critical resource of political thinking". The critical position could, apart from constituting grounds for revolutionary opposition and dissent, become a basis for erecting an alternative system of political values. We should not be misled by the word "thinking", for, no matter what criticism postmodernism might deliver, it always implies *action – some kind of practical activity*; modern philosophy has no chance of getting by with theoretical speculations or even practical recommendations; it should make efforts to implement those. This road, however, is full of ambiguities and traps, and the notion of "political criticism" raises an entire layer of serious problems. Most of them consist in attempts to understand whether the hopes that we set on criticism are justifiable or utopian, or, in other words, *whether opposition can exist in the era of postmodernism*.

Strictly speaking, postmodern philosophy can hardly help us feel reassured and freed from doubts. In most cases, it merely diagnoses the disappearance of distances, thus indicating a sort of meta-linguistic dead-end for political reflections. Opposition has nothing to say and almost nothing to do, since

the space of its potential activity has become a territory for official ideology.

Below we will try to particularize these assumptions.

The problem of political criticism consists in the loss of the transcendent place, look, and word – that is, loss of the position that allows opposing in an active manner. A modern oppositionist is, first and foremost, an individual integrated in society. It is no surprise that his "rebellious" qualities are questionable: he is much too conforming to struggle. Such condition of modern societies is defined by P. Sloterdijk, for example, as "universal and diffuse *cynicism*". Cynicism of this kind is not looking-and-mocking from the outside (which is characteristic of Diogenes' *kynicism*) but is rather something common, ordinary, and mainly legal. Modern criticism of social life is anything but asocial; instead, it is incorporated in the social routine without a hint of scandal or the revolutionism that has been so much poetized by romantics. A modern oppositionist "instinctively takes his mode of existence not as something evil and sneering, but rather as an involvement with the collective and realistically corrected opinion of things"[14] – which means, of course, that he does not oppose political realities but, on the contrary, ensures their stability. In other words, criticism of power is hindered by the absence, at the disposal of criticism, of a self-contained system of values; oppositionists "feed" on the same meanings and social codes as the ordinary "man in the street". The fate of a modern oppositionist is different from the life of a Christian anchorite or an ancient Cynic; those had a *cardinally different* point of view that had nothing in common with mainstream ideology, and could therefore attack the latter with the full power of their weapons – the ability to see things in an entirely different light. Postmodernist considerations with respect to this issue are simple: an opposition, which is not ready for *political radicalism*, which in the language of political practice means *readiness for revolutionary activity*, is merely a fake opposition, a shadow of power that follows its mistress obediently and does nothing but produce an appearance of struggling and opposing.

However, the ability to oppose power is, in the modern understanding,

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[14] P. Sloterdijk, *Critique of Cynical Reasoning* (Rochester: University of Minesotta Press, 1998), 47.

something cardinally different from traditional concepts. For instance, the ability to make a revolution in modern Western societies is apparently weakened. Citizens are not ready for serious changes and transformations and, as a rule, confine themselves to minor demands that the standing power finds no difficulty in satisfying. *The masses*, which J. Baudrillard refers to as "*the silent majority*", are losing their political will; they can strive for some private (mostly consumption-oriented) interests, but are not willing to turn the course of history. "The masses are not a subject of history, since they are not able to represent themselves in the political. On the other hand, the masses are not an object of history as well, for they assimilate the social and the political with processes of hyper-conformism, silence, and indifference to them. The masses themselves have turned into a public which is interested solely in 'shows' – and this is the way the important political events are perceived in the country. They are withdrawing completely into the world of private life."[15]

The main problem consists in the changing nature of power itself. In the modern world, power becomes de-substantivized or, in other words, loses its "subjective representation" – from now on, this is a neither a subjectified nor an objectified agency that can be localized, for example, in the figure of the president, the officials, the police, the law or anything else. In the terminology of M. Foucault, it is more correct to speak of the "microphysics of power", a phrase meaning the diffused nature of power, its "coming from everywhere."[16] An ordinary view that sees power always connected with a specific authoritative institution will be illusory since the mechanisms of power exist everywhere, in everyday practices, such as education, medical treatment, upbringing, marriage, etc.

> The pre-condition for the possible existence of power should not be viewed as an original existence of some central point, some 'place of sovereignty' from which the forms that derive and originate from it radiate; such pre-condition would consist in the existence of a mov-

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[15] Jean Bodrillard, *In the Shadow of the Silent Majorities, Or the End of the Social* (MIT Press, 1998), 17.

[16] M. Foucault, *Will to Knowledge* (London: Penguin Books, 1998), 60.

able platform of power relations inducing constantly – due to their imbalance – certain power states that are always local and unstable. One should, of course, be a nominalist: power is not some institute or structure, nor a certain specific force with which somebody is endowed: it is a name given to a complex and strategic situation in a given society.[17]

But, if power is neither subjectifiable nor objectifiable, how can one struggle with it? What can one oppose, if opposition itself comes within the framework of the application of mechanisms of power? The non-apparent nature of the enemy poses a serious problem for opposition. If power is everywhere, then, perhaps, the struggle of opposition is part of the rules of the game that are adopted by power, and it is impossible to elude power, since "it constitutes the same that is attempted to be opposed to it".[18] Specifically, it means the following. Long before we see power as a conspicuous target (no matter whether it is a monarch, a president, a government, or the structure of a state as a whole), it has already completed its task in a hidden way, namely at the level of basic *attitudes of knowledge*, and the latter are now at the disposal of the opposition, which naively believes itself to be independent. True power lies at the deep level of the structures of knowledge to which both "*power*" and everything that is "*subject to power*" belong. Strictly speaking, both opposition and power have to share the space of the same discourse, within which the notional confrontation performs a sort of compositional function. But, under such a state of things, opposition cannot have a *cardinally different* point of view any longer.

If power is not something that lurks in parliaments, courts, and governmental institutions, but is rather something that is concealed in our heads and everyday practices – i.e., is related to the sphere of knowledge – it would be more correct to define it through an *access to generation of signs*. Many postmodern authors emphasize that the principal feature of modern power is the increasing shift to the area of the significative: "epistemology" (D. Lukacs), "ideology" (L. Althusser), "epistemological order" (P.

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[17] Ibid. 82-83.
[18] Ibid. 87.

Bourdieu), et al. It is in the struggle for establishing the system of the sym-bolic structuring of the world, its representations and meanings, by which the interests of the dominant groups reveal themselves. This is the way in which power reveals itself. The point is that power is not the institution that possesses the means of repression or even the means of production; it is rather an institution, which is involved in generating signs that are presented to mass consciousness and is authorized to pronounce their sense and mean-ing. This assumption implies that what we customarily call an independent judgment, some kind of freethinking (even though it is not burdened with apparent compulsion) is doomed to a certain delay, since all meanings are already defined by power. For postmodern thinking, which recognizes that power is capable of inducing meanings, force is not a direct attribute of power and therefore, even in cases when a certain opinion is enforced by means of an insuperable force, power does not yet begin. Power "begins" and remains unnoticed where there is space for choice, for a spectrum of sense alternatives that makes "this" be seen as "this", and "that" be seen as "that". Power seems meek and humble enough; it seems undoubtedly re-spectful of the right of choice its fellow citizens have – since, as soon as the necessary differentiating procedures are complete, power leaves the stage, deeming it unnecessary to force the citizens to something that they have al-ready been forced to accept by virtue of the logic of sense.

Thus, power becomes less and less apparent, which does not mean, of course, that it is becomes less effective. Another reason why it is difficult to find power is because it employs something that H. Marcuse refers to as "suppressive (repressive) tolerance". This term means that power does not need terror to maintain the dominant ideology; it is enough merely to ignore various forms of opposition – to be tolerant to them – to doom any opposi-tion, any live discussion to fading away. For this purpose, it will suffice to practice the "misleading pluralism"; i.e., to refrain from prohibiting any of the expressed opinions, but to devaluate them by equalizing them. ("All opinions are sound." "There is another opinion.") Thus, tolerance becomes an instrument for suppression.

All this in turn brings about *a change in the nature of ideologies*. The change consists in what we see as the "classical times" – namely, the time of

Enlightenment, from which modern politics became deprived of equal means to resist ideological deception. The spirit of Enlightenment sought to reveal the true state of things, to uncover the mechanisms whose latent operations resulted in some pseudo-reality that was passed off as reality of the first order, while being merely a reality of the second order, created and maintained by figures (not only by people, but also by anonymous structures) most successful in achieving their selfish goals in a medium where a specific ideological order prevailed. What was most important for the Enlightenment, though, was the fact that the forces, whose deep strategies gave rise to certain surface effects (social ideals and values, state priorities, national ideas, and what we call public opinion) remained securely hidden from the consciousness of outsiders or even from mediators of such forces themselves.

Modern societies feature somewhat different circumstances of interaction with ideology. From now on, the origin of social and political products and their social nature will not be much of a secret for their "producers" or "end consumers". Citizens have a rather clear idea of how political space is arranged, how and why ideologies exist, what forces represent whose interests, etc. They might even understand that power, from time to time, misleads them. This sophisticated knowledge, however, does not make citizens more critical, and knowing what ideological deception consists of, they are in no hurry to oppose it.

What, then, is left for opposition? It is clear that its stakes on "unmasking" will not pay off. "Unmasking" power does not mean breaking it down or disavowing it; desacralization does not work anymore as a means of demoralizing the enemy. Besides, if modern political reason is an educated reason, there is no need for power itself to hide its true motivation. It does not have to hide its "on the other side" since all this has long been unfolded "on this side" as a gesture of total knowledge and understanding citizens. In such a case, criticism of ideology will be blocked, since such criticism always pursues a particular goal; i.e., uncovering what stays off screen, the behind-the-stage games, the clandestine and the hidden. Yet, the problem is that such "uncovering" is part of the adopted rules of the game. Even irony, mockery or open scoffing at the falseness of power and ideology do not pose any threat for either power or ideology. With the opposition's

strength depleted, irony can only simulate the distance of criticism; it just pretends to occupy the transcendent places, whereas such irony is patronized by power as it is; and the latter, to whom human amusements are not alien, simply laughs at itself.

Thus, the stability of modern ideology consists in the fact that knowledge that "something is wrong" does not constitute a threat to the established system of relations, but is rather embedded in the foundation of such system from the very beginning. For Sloterdijk, whom we mentioned above, this circumstance gives an opportunity to change the Marxian definition of ideology as "false consciousness" to his own definition, which states that "ideology is an educated false consciousness". Invulnerability of power is in its "transparency". In this respect, according to J. Baudrillard, "transparency is something behind which nothing can be found, nothing can be detected, since there is simply nothing behind it. The system's strategy consists in assimilating its own substance. Where, then, can it be found? In terms of which law can we criticize it? How can anything "Different" be constituted in relation to a system, which is nothing else but itself, equal to itself? Even if you do not accept it, you cannot become constituted into a difference. This is the situation in which we are now living."[19]

Thus, a modern oppositionist, who must endeavor to be "Different" with respect to the system, can neither work out nor make use of the resource of criticism: he is hindered by the non-localized nature and the un-called-for friendliness of the enemy.

What happens, then, to the political system itself? Postmodernism answers that in conditions of absence – or, more correctly, the non-efficiency of the "Other" (the "Different", the opposition) – it naturally *becomes absolute*. We are speaking now about quite specific processes, which, however, need clarification. *Absolutism* of the West European political system is understood as a vector directed to total *globalization*, whereas the *non-efficiency* of the "Other" is understood in the sense that globalization –

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[19] Жан Бодрияр, *Вирус прозрачности*. Интервью с М. Рыклиным в книге «Деконструкция и Деструкция: интервью с философами» (Москва: Логос, 2002), 69. [J. Baudrillard, *The Virus of Transparency*. Interview with M. Ryklin in *De-construction and Destruction: Interviews with Philosophers*.]

which is going on essentially as "westernization" – has no real rivals or competitors, and is carried out under the sign of the best system of values. In other words, postmodern philosophy tends to ask two questions: the first on globalization as a process of the totalization of a specific system of values, and the second on the status of the "Other" (an alternative system of values) in a globalized world. Since it is obvious that not the entire world – but only a portion thereof – has been globalized so far, can we deem the non-globalized segment a candidate for the role of the Other? And, if such a non-globalized segment of the globalized world *is* the Other, will it not become an involuntary carrier of negative values?

On the one hand, postmodern philosophers indicate the injuring nature of the process of globalization, which implies a World without the Other for us. Living in such a world might seem unbearable, for one thing, because generalization tends to oppress and discriminate, and a system without its Other becomes deprived of heteronomy – which, for culture and for human-kind, means a steady tendency towards mass-orientedness. On the other hand, due to the undesirable consequences arising out of such circum-stances, globalized society will tend to restore its boundaries and seek the Other. But who will take the responsibility of playing this role? Any total-ized system needs the Other – its antipode – at least as an agency that certi-fies the boundaries of its identity. Yet, when a system is really a total one, we have to speak, then, of total control as well; i.e., the system has to *select* the Other *for itself*, or, to put it more correctly, to create the Other for itself. And, if the totalized system maintains a positive set of values, the Other will have to represent a negative one.

Thus, first and foremost, such an Other cannot not remain part of the globalized world (since there is no place for it in such a world, and, there-fore, it is expelled); second, the system should not lose sight of it but should be defined and bounded. We must understand by crossing the boundary of "the zone of evil action". These rather abstract speculations bring us to the following conclusion: The "Other" is not just philosophic but, first and foremost, it is a political category since it symbolizes the "explosion-hazardous" areas of political life. For instance, in the 1980s and 1990s, the social and political context of the philosophic problem of relations between the System and the Other accommodated the oppositions of Western De-

mocracy / Soviet Union and "West/East", in which the latter stood for the global (absolute, imperial) evil. Later, after the collapse of Communist regimes in the East, new candidates had to be found for the role of the Other to embody the evil. In today's conditions, this role is most efficiently tackled by Islam, terrorism, and certain odious individuals (such as Saddam Hussein and Bin Laden). In particular, Baudrillard writes that

> Islam has become a new principle of Evil and has superseded the Soviet Union in that way…The case of Islam represents a test, a global check of this response [to the Other] and this democracy. In fact, this democracy is also a principle of the Evil; it blames integrism for giving rise to the Evil and encouraging it, for causing death; yet, it does the same.[20]

Besides, this separating line has since recently been loaded in terms of geopolitics: this is a line of demarcation between West European and Third World countries. The latter are infinitely poor in terms of economics and are under-developed in social and political aspects. The discourse is well known to all modern sociologists and political analysts; some of them agree with it, others do not. But, if we ask the question of who the subject of the discourse is – who the meta-narrator of the story of the oppressed and under-developed condition of the Third World countries is supposed to be – the answer will be obvious: this "external" voice belonging to the Western elite. In a word, the socio-economic and political way of life in those countries, as well as the state of their culture and morals, represent the Other for the West; however, such an assessment is a consequence of the initial generalization/universalization of cultures on a common base. Indeed, it is only such assumptions that can result in a judgment of conformance or non-conformance. Here, postmodern philosophy is ready to make its principal comment: "…there is no moral ascendancy of democracies over their Other in any way".[21] The rhetoric that is characteristic of Western democracies is much too totalitarian. Even when the subject is the gentle export of liberal

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[20]   Ibid. 66-67.
[21]   Ibid. 71.

values to societies where such values are not always followed, grossly vio-
lated or do not exist at all, the Western world takes up a position of a meta-
narrator, who imposes, upon the outside order of things, certain ideas that
have meaning only from the inside. The problem is that, on top of being not
quite fair, such an approach is rather dangerous.

Anyway, the tendency of modern societies toward totalization results
in the system's attempts to assimilate the "Other" and to standardize, nor-
malize, and sterilize it, and, thus, results in hindering the criticism that might
transcend the system. Eventually, intentions of criticism that aim to reveal
the principal ideological fictions inevitably collide, inside themselves – in-
side their meanings – with a mediating context that is imminent to ideolo-
gies themselves. The problem is that the road to ideological self-
determination of opposing discourses goes through the sense-meaning,
which is established by the dominant ideology itself.

Yet, apart from complex conceptual explanations of the crisis of oppo-
sition, such crisis has rather prosaic causes. To a large extent, it is connected
with the fact that a high level of living standards (in the economic aspect)
can be provided solely by the dominant order of the actualization of power.
But this means hidden suppression. In conditions of maintaining the
achieved economic welfare, which is, in a way, imposed; for, according to
Baudrillard, "A consumer society is not the society where there are items
and goods that people want to by, but the one where consumption itself is
consumed as a myth".[22]

Antagonistic attitudes are not popular, and revolutionary struggle has
no serious grounds. Modern society in the lens of postmodernism is struc-
tured as a detrimental combination of multidirectional forces rather than as a
sobering struggle of opposites. In other words, criticism runs into such a
situation when economic progress mutually reconciles the antagonistic
forces and, de-facto, impedes opposition. But this means retardation of pos-
sible social changes that could result in the establishing of new forms of so-
cial and political life.

Thus, the roots of the anti-revolutionary spirit are so deep that the task

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[22] J. Baudrillard, *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures* (Nottinham Trent
University Press, 2005), 34.

of finding those who have not yet "integrated themselves" into the system becomes harder and harder. Perhaps, if anybody at all could perform a revolution both in minds and on barricades, these would be the *outcast* and the *outsiders*; i.e. those least involved in consumerist practices in the broader meaning of the word, those who demonstrate a non-standard way of thinking and way of life. The philosopher's task, in turn, will be to resist the power of commonly accepted meanings and to try to protect discourse against trivialization and devaluation. To achieve this, the philosopher will always have to be in opposition, including opposition to opposition, but in no case on the side of the official ideology. The above idea is best summarized in the statement by H. Marcuse:

> Modern industrial society is on its way to totality. By manipulating the demands through vital interests, it prevents the appearance of an efficient opposition to the whole (for totalitarianism gets along quite well with a 'pluralism' of parties, newspapers, 'control forces', etc.) The totalitarian nature of achievements of a well-developed industrial society leaves the theory of criticism without reasonable grounds for transcending such a society. At the stage of its highest development, domination functions as administration; in super-developed countries of mass consumption, the administrated life becomes a standard of welfare for the whole – such that even oppositions unite in order to protect it. This is a pure form of domination. And, vice versa, its negation appears a pure form of negation. The theory of criticism by the society does not have, at its disposal, any notions that might throw a bridge across the abyss between its present and future; as long as it neither gives promises nor demonstrates success, it will remain negative.[23]

This means that after all the expropriations of revolutionary resources, after its structural "merger" with the dominant order, there should remain, nevertheless, some radical residual negativity – a fundamental, non-conceptual and non-bribable "No", which can still be opposed to everything

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[23] H. Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man* (Boston: Beacon, 1964), 114-15.

else. This kind of "value-added" negativity, with which one cannot come to terms, signifies a zero degree of content-richness: all it has to say is negation of the existing state of things. It is only under such conditions that it can retain its sovereignty: the pure ability to oppose itself to the system.

It means, similarly, that neither a scientist nor philosopher will have a chance to stay sheltered, under the pretext of scientific studies, in the privacy of the university, but will, perhaps, have to use the lecturing desk as a tribune. A philosopher who wishes to retain his philosophic reflection may not state that it is only politicians who should deal with politics. For a philosopher, staying in the shadow would mean losing his philosophic skills, since a modern philosopher is valued not so much for theoretical developments as for his freedom of conscience and freedom of speech. A true intellectual will never delegate his political will to "duly authorized persons"; he should tackle politics before politics tackles him. According to P. Bourdieu,

> Everything goes on in such a way as if a more and more relentless censorship for the scientific world – the latter more and more preoccupied with its independence (real or seeming) – was more and more severely imposing itself upon researchers, who, in order to win the status of scientists, would have to kill, in themselves, a politician, thus ceding the utopian functions to less scrupulous and less competent colleagues or to political figures of journalists… I believe that nothing can justify such 'scientistic' abandonment, which destroys political opinions, and that the moment has come when scientists should, on a fully legitimate basis, intervene in politics – with full authority and power that is granted to those belonging to the independent universe of science.[24]

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[24] P. Bourdieu, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press), 236.

From Banville to Black and Back Again:
Beyond the post-Saussurean Signifier

John McSweeney (Cork, Ireland)

Irish novelist John Banville suggests that his turn to the crime genre with *Christine Falls*, under the pseudonym Benjamin Black,[1] was not a mere diversion from the more "serious" business of literary writing, but part of a "transition", a process of getting out of a "rut", of "breaking free from the books I had been writing for the last 20 years, these first-person narratives of obsessed half-demented men going on and on and on and on."[2] If, arguably, signs of such transition can be detected in the narrative structure of the most recent "Banville" novel, *The Infinities*,[3] questions remain as to the significance of Banville's "turn to crime" and the precise transition being effected therein – questions for the growing literary study of Banville's work certainly,[4] but questions also, I wish to argue, for philosophy within the continental tradition, given Banville's self-conscious creation of "European novels of ideas."[5] (Banville 2006) In this article, I will examine the

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[1] Benjamin Black, *Christine Falls* (London: Picador, 2006).

[2] John Banville, "John Banville Takes on Benjamin Black (interview with Nathan Ihara)", *LA Weekly*, 24 April 2007, available at http://www.laweekly.com/2007-04-26/art-books/john-banville-takes-on-benjamin-black/.

[3] John Banville, *The Infinities* (London: Picador, 2009). As shall be discussed below, *The Infinities* is narrated by the god Hermes, a move which suggests a complex disruption of the first-person narrative, in which a multiplicity of characters" inner monologues can be narrated by a quasi-transcendent narrator and a shared world narrated in a way irreducible to any subjective perspective. Nonetheless, Hermes, as Greek god, remains suspended somewhere between immanence and transcendence, and thus partially constitutes narrator and partially a character, problematising the very question of "first-person" narrative.

[4] A succinct, up-to-date survey of literary studies of Banville's work has been provided by John Kenny in his recent monograph on Banville. (Kenny 2009, 3-4)

[5] John Banville "John Banville and Derek Hand in Conversation", *Irish University Review: A Journal of Irish Studies* (Spring-Summer 2006), accessed at www.articlearchives.com/humanities-social-science/literature-literature/380686-1.html on 4 June 2009.

specific idea that – in his movement from Banville to Black and back again – Banville effectively rethinks the nature of (fictional) writing, in what amounts, I shall argue, to a charting of a way beyond the post-Saussurean, deconstructive conception of the signifier (and its deep Cartesian roots)[6] – a conception, which has not only dominated continental debates concerning language, but which has been central (following the work of Jacques Derrida) to the question of the very possibility/impossibility of contemporary critical thought.[7] Indeed, I shall propose that the impasse experienced by Banville before the post-Saussurean signifier suggests a related impasse in Derridean deconstruction and that the "Black" novels and especially *The Infinities* indirectly points[8] to a possible post-deconstructive matrix of critical thought that remains attentive to the question of language.

Banville's Impasse

The impasse in Banville's first-person narratives can be given precision, when the novels from *Doctor Copernicus* (1976) – the first of his so-called science tetralogy – to *The Sea* (2005) – the final novel prior to the publication of *Christine Falls* – are understood as inscribing a double movement.[9] First, they enact a kind of Nietzschean eternal return (a repetition in pure irreducible difference) of a singular fictional scenario:[10] the

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[6] I shall be concerned, less with the technical details of Saussurean and post-Saussurean conceptions of the signifier as such, than with the conception of language and broader epistemic structure to which it points.

[7] The question of the possibility/impossibility of writing has always been a key concern of Banville's. See Richard Kearney, "A Crisis of Fiction: Flann O'Brien, Francis Stuart, John Banville", in *Navigations: Collected Irish Essays: 1976-2006* (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 2006), 207.

[8] Banville is insistent that his fictions, as autonomous works of art with their own inner unity and genetic law of development, cannot be made to serve a directly political, critical purpose. Yet they do constitute a kind of action or intervention, which ought to bear indirectly on critical thought. Joseph McMinn, *The Supreme Fictions of John Banville* (Manchester and New York: University of Manchester Press, 1999), 17.

[9] John Banville, *Doctor Copernicus* (London: Martin Secker & Warburg Ltd., 1976); idem, *The Sea* (London: Picador, 2005).

[10] Cf. Rudiger Imhof, *John Banville: A Critical Introduction*. Second edition (Dublin: Wolfhound Press 1997), 158-9; McMinn, *Supreme Fictions*, 1.

male individual struggling creatively, in the milieu of the death of God, to put order on the world through language and artistic-scientific endeavour, and ultimately failing to do so; having the world break in upon and break up that ordering, because, to differing degrees, of the inadequacy of human imagination and skill, or of the inherent chaos of the world, or, again, because of the self-deception of the human being and/or the deceptions and malevolence of others. In other words, these novels constitute sustained, repeated plumbing of the peculiar predicament (and possibilities) of modern "man".

Second, this repetition traces a movement which broadly maps the succession of modern epistemes delineated by Michel Foucault in *The Order of Things*,[11] in an overlapping sequence, which frequently folds back upon itself. Banville's fictionalised Copernicus, Kepler and Newton belong, in spirit at least, to Foucault's "classical age" of "words and things",[12] with the sequence incorporating a progressively greater attention to the Romantic humanist notion that naming the things of the world is not a "reading off" of an apparent order, but a profoundly artistic-creative act (as Foucault reveals the figure of "man" to be a human creation), such that Banville's scientists can be said in a certain sense to create, or co-create, the order of the world. The sequence too exhibits a growing awareness of the resistance of the world to such ordering, if not primarily because of any inherent chaos, then, because of complexity – not least the complexity of the mundane world of human living, which abstract intellect struggles to grasp adequately. Thus, on his deathbed, Banville's Copernicus recognises the failure of his efforts at order, rooted in the fact that he has tamed the complexity of the world only by discarding "the commonplace truths for the transcendent ideals", so that he has lost "the thing itself, the vivid thing."[13] While the aged Newton is made to write of being reduced to silence by encounters with everyday people, who were "themselves the things they might tell", for he does not know the language in which "commonplace things speak to me".[14]

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[11] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York and London: Routledge Classics, 2002).

[12] See Banville, *Doctor Copernicus*, 3-4.

[13] Ibid., 240-1.

[14] John Banville, *The Newton Letter: An Interlude* (London: Martin Secker & War-

The shift in *The Book of Evidence* toward a form of Nietzschean per-
spectivism arises from the cumulative sense that such failures arise because
creations of order do not express a pre-existing, perceived reality, but are
limited attempts to constitute it in accordance with individual human
"dreams" for such order.[15] As Rüdiger Imhof highlights, the challenge for,
Freddie Montgomery, Banville's narrator in *The Book of Evidence*, is to de-
termine what there is to express, and the adequacy of that expression to hu-
man living, when the world is solely apprehended "through a particular kind
of poetic imagination".[16] Not least, morality becomes reduced to a question
of imagination. Having brutally murdered the maid who interrupts his theft
of a portrait of an unknown woman, with which he is obsessed, Freddie can
coherently, if inadequately claim, that his "essential sin" is that "I never
imagined her [the maid] vividly enough; that I never made her be there suf-
ficiently, that I did not make her live."[17]

If Montgomery is caught in an uneasy existentialism "beyond good
and evil,"[18] its would-be redemptive sequel, *Ghosts*, in turn, echoes some-
thing of Foucault's notion of the "return of language" as "outside" of
thought, albeit with greater ambivalence concerning this return. Perspectiv-
ism is complicated by a narrative that reveals itself to be no longer simply
the expression of an artistic imagination, but always already enframed by
"outsides': linguistic, discursive and aesthetic regimes which condition what
can be expressed and the very nature of expression, and whose choice by an
author is complicated by desire; moreover, whose aporias and slippages, de-
termine (à la Derridean *différance*) the dynamism of a text beyond the au-
thor's control, even as they are a condition of the possibility of individual
expression. The minimal redemptive denouement of *Ghosts* is undermined
when the narrative is revealed to have been structured by Freddie, from the
outset, such that its critical scene will have mirrored the composition of a

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burg Ltd, 1982), 50-1.
[15] John Banville, *Frames: The Book of Evidence, Ghost, Athena* (London: Picador,
2001); idem, *Kepler: A Novel* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1981), 3, 191.
[16] Imhof, *John Banville*, 189.
[17] Banville, *Frames*, 183.
[18] See ibid., 47.

painting by the fictional Vaublin, whom he studies – a painting which in all likelihood is a fake.[19] Invention of our selves within an ordered universe (that is, invention both of ourselves and an ordered universe) is a matter of copies of copies, fakes of fakes, whose significance shifts and slips, often beyond our noticing, and certainly beyond our control, and yet which, even if it leaves us within the "glass prison" of ourselves,[20] appears essential to the possibility of a human life. Thus, speaking of his book on Vaublin, Freddie can declare, with an ambiguous, but subtle hope: "Vaublin shall live! If you call this life. He too was a copy of his own self. As I am, of mine."[21]

Subsequent novels elaborate and deepen the sense that insofar as the world is opaque to human ordering – even as the human self cannot but seek to realise itself in worldly discourses – then, the "narrating the self... can get as lost in words as any object."[22] Where once Banville could hope that fiction could "*get at* the world", "speaking the things themselves", via the disengagement of the autonomous work of art,[23] now the encounter with a world in which "nothing is exactly plausible, nothing is exactly what it is", leads to a growing "inwardness", an expansion of the subjective, which is not a return to the "essential self", but a displacement of a perplexing outside by subjective complexity (somewhat akin to Hegel's beautiful soul).[24] Even when this growing inwardness is short-circuited by loss and the imminence of death, as it is in *The Sea*, leading to a focus, as Kenny highlights, upon the depths of self rather than its horizontal, worldly entanglements, one may still only hope (however nobly) that something essential will somehow ultimately have been said about the self: "be expressed totally... delivered... [that] I shall be, in a word, *said*."[25]

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[19] Ibid, 408.

[20] Ibid, 402.

[21] Ibid, 410.

[22] John Kenny, *John Banville: Visions and Revisions*. Irish Writers in Their Time Series (Dublin and Portland, OR: Irish Academic Press, 2009), 176.

[23] John Banville, "Making Little Monsters Walk", in Clare Boylan, ed., *The Agony and the Ego: The Art and Strategy of Fiction Explored* (London and New York: Penguin, 1993) 108-111.

[24] John Banville, *Eclipse* (London: Picador, 2000), 15.

[25] Banville, *The Sea*, 185; Kenny, *John Banville*, 177-181.

Banville may thus be considered to perform, over thirty-odd years of fiction writing, the evolution from "classical" early modernity to "postmodernity", with his work increasingly sharing with poststructuralism a broadly post-Saussurean conception of language: as *langue*, system, "outside" of thought, existing in a tension between its inner *différance* and the discursive regimes and unconscious desires that would fix its meanings. Nevertheless, the deconstructive impulses of his work cannot be simply reduced to postmodern, Foucauldian, or Derridean forms of critique. Not least, as several commentators have highlighted, even as he recognises the ways in which the modern self is decentred, he retains a certain Romantic nostalgia for the self[26] and a commitment to its necessity, as that "I-beam set down in the dead centre of the world and holding the whole rickety edifice in place".[27] As such, it is tempting to see the impasse in his work as a romantic refusal to deconstruct fully the modern subject. However, this, I wish to argue, would be a mistake.

Across the novels under consideration, Banville does not simply remain committed to the notion of the creative subject, but to the peculiarly modern knot of creative subject, ordered world and mediating language, in which each element achieves its precise form in dynamic relation to, and in dynamic tension with, those of the others. Indeed, where Foucault argues that the figure of "man" emerges in the space defined by the trihedron of the human sciences (biology, ethnography, economics), Banville suggests that the distinctively modern "space" of thought is defined by the trihedron of creative subject, ordered world and mediating language. And hence, on the analogy of Foucault's trihedron, it is the space (of modern thought) defined by these three elements which one might expect to be deconstructed, rather than these structural elements themselves. Or rather, because modern thought cannot be conceived of apart from them, these three structuring

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[26] John Banville, "All artists think they are gods, creating worlds that didn't exist, bringing something into the world. You might call me an unreconstructed 19th century Romantic artist (interview with Sara Keating)", *The Irish Times Online* (4 June 2011). Accessed at http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/weekend/ 2011/0604/1224298360473.html, 6/10/2011. Also Kenny, *John Banville*, 12-18; McMinn, *Supreme Fictions*, 7.

[27] Banville, *Frames*, 212-3.

elements enduringly frame modern thought, even as they are simultaneously experienced as deconstructed within the dynamic space, which they constitute. This at first paradoxical idea is underscored by the fact that, even if the order of the world is reduced, within this dynamic space, to a Nietzschean perspective itself complicated by discursive and other framings of linguistic possibilities, "things themselves" retain, for Banville, even in the later novels, a power to disrupt subjectivism and language (and not merely as an excess which cannot be tamed by language, but reflecting an encountered order to which the system of language is profoundly, if subtly heterogeneous). In turn, even if the subject is alienated in language, something of its expressive power and creativity decisively exceeds this alienation (such that its erosion in practice is regretted). And even if language fails to do justice to subject or object, it remains the distinctively and properly human locus of being-in-the-world.

For Banville, then, it is insufficient to deconstruct subjectivity in favour of the textuality or outside of language, as Derrida and (early) Foucault variously do. For the textuality or linguistic "outside", to which deconstructions might appeal, itself emerges precisely within the modern Cartesian commitment to founding subject and objective order. This is not to deny that questions of language or textuality arise outside the modern episteme, but to insist that one cannot assume that all textualities are reducible to some general textuality. It is to suppose that modern textuality has a specific quality because of the epistemic conditions of its constitution. The only viable Banvillean deconstruction, in these novels, is of the modern episteme itself, and, then, it is a matter of demonstrating, from within, the consequences of the specific modern epistemic knot, in repeated iteration of its trihedral relations in their specificity, possibilities and tensions. (If his half-demented first-person narrators are the index of this deconstructive movement, their specific difficulties are due to the constitution of the subject as creative *in relation to* an ordered world and mediating language.)[28] The impasse of writing

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[28] It is not accidental that the eponymous (fictional) Newton's letter is written to Locke. For Locke is the philosopher who strips the Cartesian system of its dependence upon innate ideas, calling for a science of signs, a semiotics, which would mediate between subjective ideas and objective world, even as he desires – insofar as the imperfections of words allow – a "classical" correspondence be-

which Banville encounters is thus not due to his failure to deconstruct some distorting illusory element of this knot, but instead lies in the limits of this specific modern epistemic structure as such and his challenge is to grasp both this specificity and ways of beginning to think and write otherwise.

An Impasse in Deconstruction?

Arguably, Foucault came to a similar conclusion in the late 1970s, when he recognised that his earlier pronouncement of the death of the subject obscured the fact that human beings repeatedly construct themselves (in significantly different ways) as subjects, as they (re)construct the world of objects (via language). With hindsight, he could now clarify that his concern had properly been to announce the death of the *modern* subject and its specific knot of subject, world and language, but that his lack of clarity had led him to posit the death of the *subject* as such.[29] That is to say, he had remained entangled in the modern episteme, seeing change as occurring within its coordinates: although he posited the death of the subject he sought for resources for critical discourse in one of the other two poles of modern thought, language – its functioning as "outside" being a specific evolution of its "classical" modern constitution in relation to the death of the subject. He had not pursued – as he would do in his later turn to ancient thought – the more profound interrogation of how the knot itself, and not merely the arrangement of its elements, might be re-figured.

Less clear is whether Jacques Derrida has adequately addressed such tensions in his deconstruction of the modern subject, even if he too refuses liquidation of the subject as such.[30] As Sean Burke has highlighted, Der-

tween words and things. Hence, it is Locke who shifts the focus from founding, indubitable subject to the relation of subject, language and world, constructing the epistemic knot characteristic of modernity. John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Ed. Peter H. Nidditch. Corrected edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 475ff, 720-1.

[29] Michel Foucault, "Interview with Michel Foucault", in *Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984. Volume 3: Power*. Ed. James D. Faubian (New York: The New Press, 2000), 275-6.

[30] Jacques Derrida, "'Eating Well', or the Calculation of the Subject", in *Points: Interviews 1974-1994*. Ed. Elisabeth Weber, trans. Peggy Kamuf et al (Stanford,

rida's early work is marked by a tension between uncovering a persistent logocentrism within Western thought, of which the author/subject is not a cause, but merely an index, and the need to claim the exemplariness of certain subjects/authors, in whose writings logocentrism is decisively inscribed and exposed. Specifically, in *Of Grammatology*, Derrida must appeal to the exemplariness of Rousseau among all "classical" authors, and of a relatively marginal text within Rousseau's oeuvre, in order to establish his logocentric thesis. (Derrida is at pains to argue that the text in question – Rousseau's *Essay on the Origin of Languages* – is a mature work, written after the Second Discourse, which thus properly reflects Rousseau's thought.) Moreover, the question of supplementarity and *différance* in the text proves, in Derrida's reading, to be intimately bound up with Rousseau's psychobiography.[31] If Derrida thus makes a structure of discourse strangely dependent upon a subjective textual construction, he must, Burke argues, subsequently sharply distinguish between Rousseau's (intentional) statements and (non-intentional) gestures, so that authorial intent and structural logocentric effects are once again clearly distinguished. As Burke highlights however, it is equally possible – with only a slight adjustment of Derrida's reading – to construe Rousseau as constructing a more complex text in which he intentionally deploys both statement and gesture in a self-conscious engagement with the modern tension between subjective voice and linguistic structure, while recognising that both statement and gesture exceed authorial control.[32] Rousseau would, then, not serve as an exemplary meeting point of logocentric impulses, but would constitute the interrogator *par excellence* of the decisively modern structure of thought from within a matrix of subjectivity and language marked by the Banvillean tension between a putatively "originary" structure and its self-deconstruction. There is thus a case to be made that, here at least, Derrida's attempt to refuse the kind of specifically modern epistemic structure performed by Banville tends toward that structure's

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California: Stanford University Press, 2000), 255-6.

[31] Sean Burke, The Death and Return of the Author: Criticism and Subjectivity in Barthes, Foucault and Derrida. Second Revised Edition (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), 117ff.

[32] Ibid., 144-150.

subtle reinscription. Not only can his self-deconstructing order (logocentrism) be constituted only through the Rousseauian subject, but, additionally, only within the strict distinction of subject (intention) and order (structure) – a modern distinction par excellence, raising the question of whether the precise operation of *différance*, which Derrida claims to discover in the text, and thus of modern textuality as such, may in fact be generated, in important respects, by this distinction. (The point is less to do with Derrida's *conception* of subjectivity per se, but with how the near-universal logocentric *structuring* of discourse, can be crystallised only via implicit appeals to *subjective* conceptions of authorship.)

Arguably, such tensions intensify in Derrida's later work, where he is concerned to articulate an ethics of deconstruction, against growing questions about the susceptibility of the practice of deconstruction itself to deconstruction – to the point of dissolution of its critical force in radical relativism. As Slavoj Žižek has argued, rather than justify deconstruction by delimiting its specificity (that is, arguing that logocentrism is a decisive impulse in certain key texts from the tradition, and that, therefore, deconstruction is justified as the mode of critique of those specific texts on the grounds that attention to *différance* has a critical force in these instances), the later Derrida has sought to generalize the reach of deconstruction – primarily via his notion of messianicity without messianism and the related claim that justice is undeconstructible.[33] The notion, however, that one should attend to *différance* in such a manner so as to remain maximally open, within the horizon of the "future-to-come", to the promise and possibility of justice (valorising, as Žižek suggests, the pure, abstract potentiality of difference to come), appears to have less to do with any intrinsic ethical imperative associated with the fact of *différance* than with a preference for the messianic, for the possibility of an ideal justice (as horizon of action), and for an ethics permeated by haunting and mourning, receptivity and hospitality. One might equally, for instance, seek to build a critical practice upon the deconstruction of the notion of justice, as Foucault proposes in his debate with Noam

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[33] Slavoj Žižek, *The Puppet and the Dwarf: The Perverse Core of Christianity* (Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press, 2003), 140-1.

Chomsky,[34] or argue, as Žižek does, for political criteria for determining the significance of specific instances of *différance*, or of self-differing more generally. Indeed, in his justification of messianicity without messianism, Derrida tends to elide the difference between *différance* as a general structure of experience and *différance* as of general significance for experience, thus deciding the apparent undecidability of the significance of *différance* precisely in favour of a messianicity which would remain maximally open to it.[35] To this extent, he tends to stabilise the structure of the deconstructive impulse against its own self-differing – grant it a general *order* – via a very particular abstraction of concrete *différance* that seems rooted in certain *subjective* "preferences" and in a certain subjective sensibility.[36] It is perhaps symptomatic of these tensions, that deconstruction, which was said to be found already operative within texts, increasingly becomes in later years a distinctively *Derridean* deconstruction – its very form (and not merely its content) scarcely thinkable apart from Derrida's subjective concerns, preoccupations and individual history.[37] The question once again, then, is whether the peculiar ethical force of deconstruction's attentiveness to *différance* depends upon a certain subjective deciding of the undecidable significance of *différance*, and whether Derrida thus remains entangled in a specifically modern paradigm of thought: in Banville's terms, that this *order* (now found in language's self difference after the deconstruction of objectivity and meaning) is a profoundly *subjective* creation, which can offer no reliable perspective upon reality (even the reality of language), but rather is entan-

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[34]   Michel Foucault and Noam Chomsky, "Human Nature: Justice vs. Power (1971): A Debate between Noam Chomsky and Michel Foucault", in *The Chomsky-Foucault Debate: On Human Nature* (New York: New Press, 2006), 47-50.

[35]   Jacques Derrida, "Faith and Knowledge: The Two Sources of "Religion" at the Limits of Reason Alone", in Jacques Derrida and Gianni Vattimo, eds., *Religion*, trans. David Webb (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998), 17-8.

[36]   Ibid., 7-8.

[37]   It is not simply that Derrida's practice of deconstruction has given the major works of deconstruction a subjective colour. It is rather that Derrida's subjective preoccupations appear to have decisively shaped deconstruction itself as well as the notion of *différance* as an ethically decisive quasi-universal feature of language; and, moreover, that Derridean deconstruction is not fully attentive to the tension between the claim that *différance* is a quality of language as such and this subjective constitution.

gled in the expanding inwardness of the modern self in its confrontation with a world in which "nothing is quite as it seems".

Banville's writings, at least, warn that the movement of Derridean deconstruction risks such a reinscription of a modern epistemic structure; that it is insufficiently attentive to how language, in the modern era, is constructed in relation to the modern subject, and thus in relation to the post-Cartesian knot of subject, language, and world; that the precise movement of *différance* and its force upon discourse, arises from the Cartesian structure of founding subject and ordered world, and the place it ultimately will yield to language after Descartes. Moreover, Banville's work explicates a related impasse that threatens deconstruction. An important lesson of his novels is that language's "system" of difference *together with* its system-rupturing movement of *différance* is, in turn, repeatedly ruptured by subjective experience and encounters with a world, which prove heterogeneous to language's mediating capacities. In other words, the self-difference of lived experience is not reducible, for Banville, to *différance*. *Différance* does not adequately "get at" the spectrum of human experience (of difference) even if human experience is linguistically mediated, which is to say, experience is both linguistically mediated *and* exceeds language. The challenge for Banville is to refigure the knot of subject, language and world, in a manner that can do justice to language as a constitutive "outside" of human being and thought, and to the rich and complex reality of language witnessed to in his own work and revealed by deconstruction and other contemporary discourses. At the same time, it is to break out of the "glass prison" of late modern language and its subjective locus, and to articulate anew a world that is both mediated linguistically *and* exceeds and precedes language, in the process rethinking the subject.

Benjamin Black and the Crime Novel

How do the Benjamin Black novels meet such challenges? Even if it marks an important transition, the first Black novel, *Christine Falls*, contributes little directly. While a fine crime novel that has the merit of addressing Ireland's socio-political past (in a manner impossible for "Banville')[38]

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[38] Kenny, *John Banville*, 7-8.

and of realising a transition from first- to third-person narrative, it nonetheless remains dominated by the exigencies of the genre's conventions of plot and suspense. In Roland Barthes" terms, it is dominated by the inauguration and gradual completion of narrative units at multiple levels of story-telling, and by the generation of suspense via "keeping a [narrative] sequence open (through emphatic procedures of delay and renewal)" and "offer[ing] the threat of an uncompleted sequence, of an open paradigm... constituting a veritable thrilling of intelligibility: by representing order... in its fragility)."[39] As such, it is a narrative shaped by key narrative events/units, "nuclei", and by "catalysers" which fill the interstices of plot, modulating its intensity and generating textual depth.[40]

By contrast, the second "Black" novel, *The Silver Swan*, has a very different narrative dynamism.[41] While the conventions of the genre are broadly respected, plot and suspense are far less important. Instead, the novel typically seems to advance *between* key plot points rather than *through* them. The "events" narrated by what ought to be "nuclei" of the narrative often merely have an external, even superficial, impact upon characters (and the narrative), delimiting characters" immediate spheres of possibility certainly, but without affecting them at a fundamental level. When an "event" does profoundly affect a character, it is because of some coincidence between this external event and the capacity of the character to be affected by it. Thus, the narrative is primarily advanced by characters moving through a world thick with affect and experiencing complex sequences of

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[39] Roland Barthes, "Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives", in *Image Music Text*. Essays selected and edited by Stephen Heath (London: Fontana Press, 1977), 119.

[40] Ibid., 120. Already, the opening pages of *Christine Falls* are replete with such procedures of suspense: the unspecified fear of nurse Brenda Ruttledge; the revelation that she is to take an unnamed child to America and her unease about doing so; her ignorance of what is to happen when she arrives; the "prophetic" shiver, of the protagonist Quirke, a pathologist, in unexpectedly encountering his brother-in-law Malachy Griffin in his morgue in the early hours of the morning; Malachy's evasiveness; etc. (Black, *Christine Falls*, 1-15) The novel proceeds with increasing suspense, substantial revelations, plot twists, all borne by the "delay and renewal" of suspense. Much of the detail of the novel has the quality of Barthes" notion of "catalysers" that fill in the interstices of the plot,

[41] Benjamin Black, *The Silver Swan* (London: Picador, 2007).

persons, places, situations, objects, times of day, memories, feelings – all the elements of everyday experience and others less ordinary – and being affected by them to differing degrees. Moreover, the descriptive narrative style of the crime novel – here stripped of much of the dynamism of suspense, but yet with that open, undecided quality typical of the genre – underscores that no less than the reader moving through a world of straightforwardly, "flatly" described things, whose ultimate significance is (as yet) closed to them, so too do the characters move through a world of largely "opaque" objects, not governed by any clear dynamism, and decipherable to a degree only through attention to the subjective affects that they produce.

That Black deploys a distinctly *Spinozist* notion of affect in *The Silver Swan* is hinted at by a brief recollection of Quirke's early in the novel. There he recalls a moment six months earlier when, to his amazement, he had realised with unaccountable certitude that he had just taken his last drink. He felt that it was not he who had made the decision, but somehow that it had been made for him. Despite all his training and all his years in the dissecting room he had a secret conviction that that body has a consciousness of its own, and knows itself and its needs as well as or better than the mind imagines it does. The decree delivered to him that night by his gut and his swollen liver and the ventricles of his heart was absolute and incontestable.[42]

If it uses slightly different terminology, such an account has unmistakeable echoes of Spinoza's mind-body parallelism as it modulates his philosophy of affect.[43] It recalls the notion that an action of the mind is simultaneously and equally an action of the body and vice versa (without, for Spinoza, either mode of human being having primacy). It equally evokes a common theme of the novel – a version of Spinoza's notion that capacity to act is profoundly conditioned by how mind and body are affected by what they encounter. That is, in Gilles Deleuze's terms,

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[42] Black, *Christine Falls*, 4.

[43] Banville offered a sympathetic review of Antonio Damasio's *Looking for Spinoza*, in 2003, which also hinted at an emerging appreciation for the nuances of Spinoza's philosophy of affect; Banville, "Making Sense of Sensibility. Review of Antonio Damasio, Looking for Spinoza: Joy, Sorrow and the Feeling Brain. – William Heineman." *Iris Times Weekend Review* (21 June 2003), 10.

mind and body are subject to passions which enrich their capacity to
act or are detrimental to it (generating joy or sadness, respectively),
insofar as what is encountered accords with and amplifies our power
of being, or opposes and diminishes it. In particular, Quirke's stop-
ping drinking highlights how, within such a matrix, "appetite" is
"nothing but the effort by which each thing strives to persevere in its
being", and desire nothing but conscious appetite.[44]

Other aspects of the novel support the further Spinozist notion that
consciousness often takes the conscious effects of human action to be the
locus of causal acts of its own, whereas not only are acts of the mind and of
the body, but the greater part of mind proves to be unconscious, so that our
(conscious) ideas are typically inadequate to our being. Quirke, for instance,
acknowledges that he does not know what it is he is doing in intervening in
the case of the murdered Deirdre Hunt/Laura Swan. He is affected by her
death both in mind (unconsciously) but also in body, finding himself repeat-
edly "brought" to various places and people related to the crime, even
thought this evidently places him and others in grave danger.[45] Similarly, his
daughter Phoebe sum ups, reflecting upon the gap between consciousness
and the factors that actually shape (affect) a life: "Life consists... in a long
series of misjudgements."[46]

At the same time, reflecting the influence of poststructuralist and psy-
choanalytic discourses, Black translates Spinoza's pure geometry of affect
to the lived reality of 1950s Ireland. First, he stresses how everything within
the characters' world is always already affected by specific, often constrain-
ing socio-political and cultural constructs. (Everything is overlain with a
claustrophobic religious and social morality, an air of economic and socio-
cultural poverty, and the negative effects, in the lives of many, of the exer-
cise of power and privilege by the few.) Hence, the novel stresses that even
everyday objects mediate powerful structural affects that constrain possibili-
ties of human becoming. Second, Black highlights the extent to which char-

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[44] Gilles Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*. Trans. Robert Hurley (San Fran-
       cisco: City Lights Books, 1988).
[45] See Black, *Christine Falls*, 99.
[46] Ibid., 90.

acters are profoundly shaped by their (often traumatic) pasts and seem condemned to cycles of behaviour that compound the brokenness of their lives.[47] The novel stresses that traumatic affects in the past damage our capacity to be affected in the present, rupturing and distorting, with skewed appetites and desires, the pure, simple arithmetic of choosing what affirms life and avoiding what is detrimental to it.[48]

More subtly, however, the novel conveys that the everyday world thus tends to becomes suffused with traumatic and other affects as the individual, through his or her individual appetites (and desires), gradually "colours" the affects of familiar objects. To pass through the everyday world, to perform one's everyday routine, is to subtly re-invoke and reinforce the affects that have profoundly shaped one's being, so that the everyday and familiar becomes suffused with these affects and, in turn, has a profound, if subtle affect upon human being and becoming. Thus, Quirke's frequent walks along city streets see him encounter sounds, sights, smells, situations, and so forth, which are imbued with moods and emotions, triggers of memory and evocations of trauma whose traces are laid down in a whole history of such walks as he has battled, often unconsciously, with his past in its complex relation to his present. These walks threaten to envelop him in a world that traces and retraces his past traumas.[49] If Black's characters are circumscribed by structural power relations and their subjective repetitions, the novel, nevertheless, also suggests that the overlaying of the world with affect allows for a negotiation of its opacity, however flawed or inadequate that negotiation might ultimately prove. The world becomes familiar and characters can, for good or ill, partially anticipate how their everyday world will affect them. As such, there occurs a certain humanising of a world whose "objective" or ultimate significance remains beyond human perceptual capacities.

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[47] Included here might be experiences such as Quirke's time as an orphan in an industrial school, his loss of his true love, the death of his wife, and his abandonment of his daughter; experiences such as Phoebe's separation from her true father, her discovery of the truth, her rape while still a teenager.

[48] Quirke's drinking represents an obvious instance of a skewed appetite, protecting him from his past, even as it repeatedly undoes the possibility of a life in the present.

[49] See, for example, ibid., 58.

In these ways, Black re-situates Spinoza's system at the nexus of post-structuralist discourses of power and the subject, in ways that share something with Deleuze's practical reading of Spinoza, but ultimately have more resonance with a Foucauldian perspective on power and a psychoanalytic view of the subject, and that raise interesting questions about the ambiguities and possibilities arising from the "humanising" of the world described by these discourses. More fundamentally, he breaks with the post-Cartesian trihedron of structuring subject, ordered world and mediating language. The key characteristic of the world is no longer its order, but its affects – one knows the world (as such, vaguely) insofar as it impacts upon one's human existence and, then, in the mode of concreteness characteristic of affect. Equally, it is no longer a case of the founding subject prior to any world and establishing[50] its structure, but (à la Spinoza and Deleuze) consciousness is in an important sense *caused* by the "determinative affections" that impinge upon it. It is a matter of a consciousness that is activated immanently, and whose activity is shaped and delimited, by that which affects the human being. (At the same, Black retains Banville's emphasis upon the subject as somehow not simply consciousness of affecting objects.[51] If only by its desire or discomfiture at its dilemmas, it reveals itself as an active (if not a founding) principle of being, a node or knot in the world of affect.) In broad agreement with Spinoza, Black offers a framework in which the subject is no longer trapped within mind as such, to the extent that affect is simultaneously mental *and* bodily, each complicating and impinging upon the other. Moreover, insofar world and subjectivity are not principles of order from the outset, it is a question, à la Deleuze, of determining from within a world and within an experience of subjectivity what a body and mind are capable of.

Black and Language

Beyond the question of affect in general, language also forms an important dimension of Black's deployment of a philosophy of affect. (The distinction between speech and writing is far less important within Black's

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[50] "Establishing" is apt here for it bears the connotation of both determining (a pre-existing order) and creating.

[51] Deleuze, *Spinoza*, 17-29, on this last point, see also Spinoza, *Ethics* II, 48.

Spinozist framework that it was for prior Banville novels.) His narrative is almost entirely constituted by third-person descriptions of first-person perspectives, so that they double them. Hence, as a "flattened" world of encounter with often "opaque" objects of experience is narrated (as befits a crime novel), the text also effectively depends upon and reflects a further part – the linguistic part – of that experience. That is, although *describing* the bodily affects of objects and the mental affect of the mind's perception of them, the text also *mirrors* the further mental affects of objects that are constituted by and in words themselves. Hence, insofar as the world is encountered as "flattened" out, into sequences of unadornedly described and thus "opaque" objects, which may have a certain everyday familiarity but whose ultimate significance is unclear, so too (in parallel) language (not just for the reader, but also the characters) is encountered as "flattened" out "opaque" words, without the kind of rich supplementary matrix of associations, shifts and slippages which generate the sophisticated and seductive webs of signification typical of the late modernist writing of Banville's later novels (or indeed, typical of Derridean writing). Complexity and depth are instead introduced into language, in the novel, to the extent that words are the medium of affects. Indeed, *The Silver Swan* gains its narrative power to no small extent from creating a narrative sequence of words, which is relatively simple in itself, but which evokes a sophisticated web of such affects.[52]

Again here there are parallels with Spinoza, although with respect to language Spinoza is a "classical" thinker who seeks to articulate clear and distinct ideas and, no less than John Locke, for instance, bemoans the confusions of language.[53] In any case, Spinoza argues that, in view of the parallelism of body and mind, affects on the body also generate affects on the mind

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[52] Banville admires Georges Simenon's capacity to create "work in that kind of simple – well, apparently simple – direct style." And he explicitly states that this was an inspiration for his Black novels; Banville, "John Banville Takes on Benjamin Black."

[53] Benedict de Spinoza, *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect*, n.88, in *Complete Works*, ed. Michael L. Morgan and trans. Samuel Shirley (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing, 2002), 24; Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, 475ff.

– via the mental awareness of bodily perception of affect, certainly,[54] but also the direct mental affect of objects – which is to say, by the affect of words themselves. Words are precisely affects. And insofar as affects arise through perception, and thus through a certain perceptual "image" of the affecting object, so too words are imaginary rather than ideational – although we typically take them to be the latter (and thus suppose that they are adequate to reality as such), leading to profound confusion.[55]

This confusion of language begins, Spinoza argues, when our sense perception of individual things – typically perfectly adequate in relation to familiar objects as they bear upon the basic functions of human living (e.g. objects as foods to eat, an animal or human being as a threat to bodily safety, etc.) – are brought to bear on more complex objects. When human perception attempts to apprehend "objects as such', or a "human being as such" it is often "mutilated and confused" and "without order", and rooted in "vague experience." As a consequence the words and language that emerge as a certain perceptual image of these objects are equally confused and disordered. Moreover, our images of external objects that affect the body are limited by individual bodily perception of them. And the body has a limited capacity for distinct perception, leading to its reduction of many distinct things to a single common object, with the loss of their differentiating differences. Not only is this, for Spinoza, the source of problematic universals ("ideas in the highest degree confused"), but the content we individually give to these universals is coloured by concrete individual experience, so that, for instance, commonly attested to universals such as "being" or "human being" or "object" unavoidably have differing content for different individuals. The reduction of differing things to instances of a single universal thing is further complicated by the matrix of our concrete individuality.[56]

Spinoza is also concerned that, insofar as affects on the body are typically associated with a complex matrix of contiguous affects,[57] so too "we

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[54] Spinoza, *Ethics*, II, 22.
[55] Spinoza, *Ethics*, II, 40, S1, S2.
[56] Spinoza, *Ethics*, II, 40, S1, S2.
[57] Spinoza, *Ethics*, II, 18.

form many conceptions in accordance with confused arrangements of words in the memory, dependent on particular bodily conditions."[58] Rather than produce clear and distinct ideas that grasp things themselves, imagination tends to run riot, creating whole webs of associated words, which reflect the complexity of affects and thus the complexity of human experience as mediated by the body's specific, limited perceptual apparatus and its inadequate ideas of its perceptions. Finally, words themselves also produce affects on the mind, as *signs* with material and aesthetic qualities which fundamentally condition perception, for instance, the perception of the relation to things to one another: our knowledge, if in an imaginative register and of a lower kind, often arises from "signs; as, for example, when we hear or read certain words, we recollect things and form certain ideas of them similar to them, through which ideas we imagine them."[59]

Black's writing, in *The Silver Swan* (and after), suggests agreement with Spinoza on several points, although these are refigured within Black's contemporary concerns. Thus, for instance, his work supports the idea that words are relatively clear and reliable in relation to basic human experiences, but less so in relation to more complex objects of experience, as well as the notion that attempts to attain universality in language are subverted by the concrete, individual locus of affect. As seen, for Black, however, even the most everyday experiences are typically overlain with complex affects (socio-economic, moral, and subjective), so that the clarity and reliability of even the simplest language is from the outset complicated. Inversely, however, attempts to negotiate socio-economic and moralistic structuring of affect and individual trauma, often leads Black's characters to a certain simplification of their linguistic understanding of this complexity. The world as described and thought (in language) simplifies a daunting difficulty. At play here is the notion that, for Black no less than for Spinoza, words are "images" that can only reveal reality insofar as they affect. That is, the "opacity" of words to reality as such, encourages a certain simplicity of linguistic description and narration of the world. At the same time, that words are humanly constructed images (generated by how the world affects the mind)

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[58] Spinoza, Treatise on Emendation of the Intellect, n.88, p.24.
[59] Spinoza, *Ethics*, II, 40, S2.

rather than ideas that are adequate to reality as such, is also arguably key to the capacity of language in the Black novels to create, for characters, a human space of living against the constraints of socio-economic structure and the traumas of experience. Black, of course, recognises with Spinoza that our linguistic imagin(in)g of the world can be flawed and reductive, and his characters exist in the tension between the imagining of a world via mental affect and the impacting force of bodily affect.

Strikingly, however, the Black novels do not embrace Spinoza's sense of language as a generator of affects via a proliferating web of word associations, juxtapositions and imaginings. Yet the reason is, perhaps, straightforward. The turn to the crime genre is, among other, things a formal exercise in stripping back language (inspired by Georges Simenon's *romans dur*),[60] of breaking precisely with the typically tangled late modernist web of language within which the later Banville novels were becoming mired, in order to reframe the relation between subject, language and world. Banville could only hope to break from his half-demented first person narrators and the modern episteme which gives rise to them, by breaking with the seductive aesthetic possibilities of "modern" language. Shifting directly from one mode of linguistic complexity to another, he could not practically have hoped to succeed in achieving such a disentanglement. Nevertheless, as the linguistic austerity of the Black novels has succeeded in achieving a degree of reframing of language, there has been a gradual, subtle complication of Black's style of writing, with more typically Banvillean words, phrases and turns of expression creeping into the later Black novels. (From the recent *A Death in Summer*, a sentence unimaginable in the early Black novels: "The euphoria that blossomed as the alcohol spread its filaments through him, like the roots of a burning bush, was irresistible.")[61] Moreover, *The Lemur* involves something akin to the reintroduction of a typically first-person Banville narrator into a Black novel (though, arguably, not altogether successfully).[62] However, most important in giving full weight to linguistic com-

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[60] Banville, "John Banville Takes on Benjamin Black."
[61] Benjamin Black, *A Death in Summer*, (London: Picador, 2011), 64.
[62] Benjamin Black, *The Lemur* (London: Picador, 2008); see Declan Hughes, "A Glimpse of Banville Through Glass. Review of John Banville, *The Lemur*. Picador." *The Irish Times Weekend Review* (27 Sept. 2008), 11.

plexity within a philosophy of affect has been the most recent Banville novel, *The Infinities*.

The Infinities

The distinctive narrative structure of *The Infinities* derives from having as its narrator the god, Hermes, who, at times, appears as a traditional omniscient third-person narrator (if a somewhat mischievous and not altogether reliable one) and, at times, assumes the form of one or other of the human characters. More subtly, he can decide to align his perspective with theirs, allowing us to glimpse their subjective experience. Indeed, at one moment, his third-person narration simply morphs without comment into ("old Adam's") first-person narration.[63] The upshot of this form of narration is to underscore the lesson of the Black novels: that the external world of bodily affect and the inner subjective world are equally accessible to us, even if they each have their own specific qualities, which might tempt us to build walls between them. As is narrated of "young Adam":

> He thinks again of the child on the train and is struck as so often by the mystery of others. How can he be a self and others others since the others too are selves, to themselves? He knows, of course, that it is no mystery but a matter of perspective.[64]

And the novel, via the figure of Hermes, repeatedly shifts between such differing first person and third-person narratives, successfully conveying a sense that this apparently unreal scenario of a god moving among human beings, in fact, reflects everyday human reality: we continuously shift from first-person subjective positions (grounded in mental affect) to third-person perspectives (grounded in bodily affect), existing as it were at different levels at once, and via this capacity can acknowledge the existence of multiple selves, without any great difficulty, even if the detail of others' subjective experience may remain something of a mystery to us.

The language of *The Infinities* plays a strong part in generating this framework. Although here there is a certain reversion to typically Banvil-

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[63] Banville, *The Infinities*, 33.
[64] Ibid., 8-9.

lean prose, beyond the pared-back austerity of Black's writing, the form of his writing has undergone significant shifts. First, a large part of the narration remains third-person and concrete, describing, if in more literary terms, an encountered, affecting world. Moreover, even as characters are fully aware of themselves as individual selves, sometimes almost to the point of solipsism,[65] their sense of self is conditioned by double access to and double impingement of the world via affects upon body and mind. These Banville characters retain the Spinozist sense that the mind is affected both by the body's perception of affects and by the direct mental affect of external objects that is words. Thus, character's subjective preoccupations are often typically articulated as related to or a thinking on "objective", impacting reality more than those of the pre-Black novels, where language increasingly did not refer to anything other than itself. Characters one might say are simultaneously within their subjective selves and without it, something that fundamentally conditions the quality of subjective experience.

At the same time, there is a renewed sense here of the imaginative and creative quality of words, and of language constituting a system of signs, à la Spinoza's philosophy of language. Where words for Black were "flat" and "opaque" mediators of affects, in this new Banville novel there is an appreciation that the proliferation of associations, the nuances of words and their juxtaposition, of style and tone, the material and aesthetical quality of words, sentences, texts and discourses, grant to language a semi-autonomous power, once more, to articulate (and, indeed, also perhaps to constrain) human experience and the human world. What Spinoza bemoaned – that words proliferate in creative and imaginative "confusion" at a remove from true ideas about the world – opens up, for Banville, a distinctively linguistic space within which to encounter and negotiate the world.

Again, this quality of language differs significantly from that of his earlier "Banville" novels. Even if language here comes to form something like a differential system of signs, this system remains integrally rooted in and generated by mental affect. That is, even as the differing and deferrals of words from one another (à la Derrida) opens up new distinctive and properly linguistic possibilities of signification, this remains one of two dimen-

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[65] Ibid., 34.

sions of a matrix of linguistic differing and deferral. The other has most obviously to with the juxtaposition, in the mind, of the sphere of linguistic affect with that of bodily affect via (as Spinoza has been seen to argue) minds being affected by the body's perception of being affected by external objects. In Derridean terms, *différance* is juxtaposed with the difference of word and the mental awareness of body-affecting-thing. However, a more subtle self-differing of language is occurs within this "obvious" difference. As a quasi-autonomous sphere of language emerges with the proliferation of a web of associated words, a gap opens between a word as the linguistic (mental) affect of an object (or experience) as such and its evolving signification within that sphere of language (the relation of words to one another. That is, it is not simply that the autonomy of language is ruptured by things themselves, but that internally language itself has two dimensions of difference: what we may term *différance* and the difference between words as affect and as element of *langue*. (By contrast, Derrida's notion that "there is nothing outside the text" (*Il n'y a pas de hors-texte*)[66] tends to reduce difference to a single textual principle: either one cannot "get at" reality itself, but only the thought-constituting matrix of language, or that reality itself self-differs in a manner similar to a text, so that one cannot escape textuality, and thus that questions of *différance* and the trace are *the* fundamental philosophical-critical questions.)

It follows that it is appropriate and a properly linguistic question to ask concerning those differences that exceed *différance* – those differences, on this reading, open up the question of language as human response to (a human mode of being affected by) the world. While such possibilities can be given only abstract articulation here, what is involved is ultimately quite accessible and concrete: it invites the exploration of ways in which human beings in diverse political, socio-economic, cultural and existential situations create through language possibilities of living, more or less adequate to human being, against the constraints and unfreedoms of such situations, not simply at a remove from the ambiguities and complexities revealed by various poststructuralist discourses, but upon and traversing them; additionally,

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[66] Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*. Trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Johns Hopkins University Press. Baltimore, 1976), 158.

possibilities that are ambiguous and complex no doubt, but whose dangers, constraints and possibilities are not reducible to the matrix of those revealed by poststructuralism. Of importance here is to break with the subtle totalising tendency of certain poststructuralist discourses which constrain linguistic performance entirely to the movement that defines structure and its excess. It is thus a question of how language can be deployed to create a human space of living against and in relation to such structural constraints, and a question of how language both as writing and speech can operate upon a vector other than that defined by the interplay of structure and its excess.[67] Not least, it is a matter of breaking with deconstruction's tendency to constrain thought to the question of linguistic signs and their *différance*.

Conclusion: The Significance of Banville's Trajectory

The final difference between *The Infinities* and Banville's earlier novels is both subtle and substantial. On the one hand, his work remains committed to poststructuralist ideas of structural constraint and of power relations, and to psychoanalytic insight into the degree to which the subject is constituted in relation to such constraints, and often condemned to a painful repetition of the Same. His work retains a sense of the difficulty of making sense of the world, of ethically negotiating it as a subject, of coping with its vicissitudes, as well as of the ambiguities and limits of language alongside its beauty and power. Nevertheless, the opening of a new vector of the self-difference of language within his refigured frame of thought and writing, suggests a subtle breaking of the impasse of the post-Cartesian trihedron of founding subject, ordered world and mediating language with profound consequences. It is as though a reconstituted puzzle bears a small additional piece, which signals that although the vast majority of the pieces remain the same, they are completely reorganised to accommodate the new piece, with the result that the pieces themselves are shown to have a new significance.

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[67] Written works form one important form of such linguistic creation. One might mention here the works of American novelist and theorist Doug Rice and Tom McCarthy's *C* both of which deploy language to exceed Lacanian notions of the Symbolic and its Real excess. See Doug Rice, *Blood of Mugwump: A Tale of Tiresian Incest* (Illinois: FC2 Normal, 1996); Tom McCarthy, *C* (London: Vintage, 2010).

The deep reorganisation sees world and subject no longer as ordered and ordering, respectively, and thus language as no longer mediating between them. Instead, following Spinoza, that mind and body are both affected by worldly objects means that the human being is always both within subjectivity and within the world. If the decisive issue is now to discover what a body and mind are capable of (within this world, as this being and as this subject), language is no longer solely or primarily a post-Saussurean system of differential elements. Instead, it is precisely a human subjective affect, an imaginary response to the world, which enables us to map and negotiate the world, but also to intervene within it. It is this very prospect of a creative moment of language even within the interplay of structure and affect, which grants the greatest significance to Banville's trajectory from Banville to Black and back again. A certain possibility of novelty, articulated negatively as other than deconstructive, invites consideration of how language (in its complex relation to the body and world) may support precisely *human* spaces (since words and language are the distinctively human mental affect) of living and resistance, of difference. (Quirke and Phoebe, for instance, in the Black novels, for all of the socio-cultural and moral constraints under which they live, allowing for the depth of their trauma, for the recalcitrance of power before efforts at securing justice, and for the ambiguities and complexity of life, nonetheless succeed, at least in moments, of constructing what Deleuze might term "a life." *The Infinities*, in turn, suggests something of the contribution language might make to such realisation.) Although *The Infinities* is a literary work of art, whose range of significance and concerns goes far beyond what is discussed above, it hints at such space of linguistic possibility, inviting broader philosophical and critical discourses to ponder how they might create, occupy, and deploy, such spaces, challenging us in the process to re-interrogate the extent of our entanglement in the modern and to begin probing the possibilities of thinking and writing otherwise.

II. ONGOING DISCUSSION ON LEVINAS

The Grotesque "I" Before The Face Of The Other : The Eschatology Of The Grotesque

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The introduction of the concept of the Other makes Levinas responsible not only for the Ethical turn in Western philosophical thought, but also for a new disputation in the field of philosophy: a disputation about whose works are more obscure – Levinas' or Heidegger's. Considering the myriad of superficial interpretations of Levinasian philosophy, in which, through the concept of the Other, thinkers pay unfair tributes to the omnipresent ontology, it is quite difficult to give an easy answer. Heidegger might be obscure but he is on his own ground in ontology, while Levinas' task is to point out the way to ethical transcendence *through* the inevitable ontology. The interpretation of Levinas' thought is much more difficult, for his method is characterized by *overcoming* ontology rather than by *answering* to its call, as it is in Heidegger. It is exactly the *overcoming of* that is common to both philosophers and, at the same time, that is exactly what makes them distinct. Through the concept of the Other, Levinas overcomes the primacy of ontology and offers an ethical reconciliation of the ontological *I* with the Other. What Heidegger does is to present Dasein's overcoming, a project thus moving beyond his current self-contentment unto death. The ensuing reconciliation supposed by Heidegger is between Dasein and anonymous-Being.

It is unnecessary to go through the whole of Levinas' argument in order to explain what the *I* means in his philosophy. According to him, the *I* is independent, autonomous, and is in the state of *movement to self in enjoy-*

ment and happiness.[1] The meaning of "self" here pertains to the state of contentment of the *I*, in which he perceives himself as complete. The Heideggerian approach to Dasein's being-in-the-world as his own self (and his focusing on himself and circling around that focus) reveals a strong resemblance to the *I* of Levinas. The "imperialistic I" concentrates his ambitions on achieving his own arbitrary project and catches hold of whatsoever stands next in his self-actualizing way.[2]

The *directed movement* of the *I* is the very gist of the analyst offered in this paper, which aims to reveal the radical difference between Levinas' eschatology and that supposed by Heidegger. The outrageousness of the autonomous and arbitrary subject, his constant strife to go beyond himself in the name of fulfilling his new desires, determines a *hyperbolic* movement. However, the presence of the Other determines the difference in the eschatological direction of that movement. The Other's presence before the *I* reverses the process of winding his arbitrary projects around himself. That inverse direction, in which the *I* is stripped of the greatness of his self-contentment and happiness, pertains to characteristics of the *grotesque*.

There is a resemblance in the very logic of functionality in hyperbole and grotesque that is of crucial importance in the context of this analysis. The literal translation of the Greek word ʽυπερ-βολή (hyperbole) is: ʽυπερ (over, above, beyond, more than); βολή – from βαλλω (to throw). The *I*'s movement to *self*, i.e. to self-contentment and the ensuing fulfillment of his project, determines an arbitrary process of self-actualization, which has a fi-

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[1]   E. Levinas, *Totality and Infinity – An Essay On Exteriority* (Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1979), 112.

[2]   М. Димитрова, *Социалността и справедливостта*, София 2009, 51. Further, Dimitrova emphasizes that Levinas points out Heidegger's failure to overcome the inauthentic and instrumentalizing *Das Man*. The Dasein is still in the grasp of the being-unto-death, which determines the care about his own survival and continuation of his own life while considering the inevitability of death. That is the reason why the Levinasian concept of the I should not be understood as pertaining only to *Das Man*, i.e. to inauthenticity, but also to the Dasein. According to Dimitrova, "The activity of the subject, including his cognizance, supposes the intentionality which springs from the active subject and then comes back to him. So, the direction towards the objects of cognizance always grasps from them only that which is interesting for the subject and that which is suitable for his own purposes and intentions." (translation mine), 51-52.

nal point pertaining to a new self-perception. That state of a new self serves as the point of departure towards the next project of the *I*. The logic of the grotesque, taken directly from the original Latin meaning of *grotto* (cave), considered together with the patterns of the "arabesque" and the "Moresque", points to an inwardly-bound movement. Thus the grotesque, in this context, will be used as the inverse of the hyperbole, the difference between them being only in the direction, but not in the movement of going beyond the self. Since the state of *self*; i.e. of contentment, means completeness, then going out of that state in a backward direction, is also a *going beyond.* The difference is that the down-going of the *I*, his grotesque movement is caused by a presence, for without it the *I* will still be in the grasp of his own arbitrariness. The presence of the Other provokes a response, which interrupts the self-throwing of the *I* and unwinds the coil of his arbitrary projects.

The radical difference of Levinasian eschatology from that of Heidegger stems, of course, from the presence of the Other. That pre-sence determines the direction of the eschatological movement of the *I* in just the same way as the anonymous call of Being in Heidegger's philosophy sets the pattern of Dasein's movement towards death. Dasein, through over-coming his *Das Man* condition, passes to the state of authenticity and enters a world where his hyperbolic qualities determine his movement and its very direction. The woodpaths, in which human thought wanders until it finds the view of the solitary mountain shelter (*ein einziges Ge-birg*); the lightning of Zeus as the absolute power to shape and rule the world through his own arbitrary will, such Heideggerian allegories reveal the self-hyperbolizing quality of the anonymous Dasein. The arbitrary self-projecting force of Dasein and his being-unto-death does not suppose any explicable eschatological probability.

That which could be *implied* from the novelty of Levinas, introduced through the concept of the Other, puts the Self in a completely different and much more complex situation. This new analytical structure (i.e. the *I* in a relationship with the Other) supposes a new direction of movement – "*death does not announce a reality against which nothing can be done.*" This assertion of Levinas lays one of the theoretical fundaments according to which the *I* is caught in the whirlwind of a grotesque movement, a movement

which marks his down-going, his stripping away from the self-projected heroic image back to an intra-subjective eschatology. That, according to Levinas, pertains to a process in which "the subject loses its very mastery as a subject". It is the pre-sence of the Other, which alters the meaning of death – that which marks the impossibility for the *I* to have a project and, thus, puts an end to his arbitrary, imperialistic self-reflection. The grotesque movement of the Self reveals to him the truth about his own project's pitifulness and an insignifance before the face of the Other. The inward-bound spiral movement brought by the *I*'s state of "*not able to be able*" [3] is what determines his grotesque direction.

This leads us to consider the state of of *Dasein*'s thrown-ness into the world and how his thrown-ness occurs. What is this force which, first, throws the human being into the world and, second, makes him realize that he is in the state of thrown-ness? As is well known, there is no definite answer, nor could there be, which could spring from the Heidegger's own ontological approach. As the influential translator of Levinas's works in English, Alphonso Lingis says: "Heidegger himself has apparently recognized the exaggerated anthropocentrism and subjectivism of his point of view, which he has tried to correct by an opposite emphasis on a quasi-independent Being in his later and more obscure writings." [4] Clearly, the ontological approach inevitably leads to arbitrariness in terms of the lack of a firm point of departure, of a well-defined benchmark according to which the path and the very movement of the Self is determined.

The moment in which *Das Man* realizes his own thrown-ness is the moment of entering the dimension of authentic Being. Just to schematically delineate the similar situation in Levinas' thought, it is the violent *I* who realizes the existence of the Other through his ab-sence, demonstrated by the Other's trace. The *I* comes to realize his own violence and, in this way, his own irresponsibility towards someone whose presence he had already ignored or denied. The realized ab-sence has the function of hypostasis over the trace left by the Other to the inauthentic *I* busy with his own concerns. The *I* (who at this point enters his authentic Being by his self-criticism) is

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[3]   E. Levinas, Time And The Other, from *The Levinas Reader*, editor S. Hand, 42-43.
[4]   A. Lingis, Translator's Introduction, from *Totality and Infinity*, 11.

involved in the situation of constantly acknowledging the presence of the Other.

In this context the modality of hyperbole is quite applicable. Undoubtedly, the hyperbole of thrown-ness supposes violence. The state of thrownness supposes somebody as a perpetrator of the very act of throwing. Who is responsible for that act? As discussed above, the ab-sence of the Other is produced through the act of violence and that same violence is the imperialistic extension of the *I* over the Other, reducing him to the status of the Third – that is, to the status of *Das Man* in Heidegger's terms. That is the act which corresponds to the 'υπερ- of the throwing. If we stay in the orbit of Heidegger's philosophy we should ask how it would be possible for the *I* to throw himself beyond himself without any additional presence: in the Heideggerian logic this is completely unthinkable, for the loneliness of *Dasein* supposes nothing more than arbitrariness. Here is a paradox – on the one hand, without the Other it is impossible to conceive of the act of violence; on the other hand, however, it is not the Other who is actively responsible for the act of throwing; i.e. of the violence towards the *I*.

Jacob Rogozinski tries to reverse the direction of the hyperbolic movement from the Other to the *I* and asserts that there is (and with the same intensity) a violence coming *from* the Good, from the Other towards the *I*:

> That which chases me relentlessly, which literally persecutes me, thus is the violence of the Good; a certain continuity holds when we pass from the epiphany of the face to persecution. And yet, the direction of this relationship can be inversed, and the same term can come to designate the 'maliciousness' of the Other, 'the face of the fellow man in his persecuting hatred'.[5]

Clarifying the mistake in this particular assertion is of crucial importance for the sake of a proper understanding of the Levinasian concept of the Other and thus the direction of his eschatology. Unlike in the ontological

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[5]   J. Rogozinski, "From the Caress To The Wound: Levinas's Outrageousness" – In *Levinas' Trace*, ed. Maria Dimitrova (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), 6.

framework of Heidegger, where *Dasein* is in a state of responding to the call of Being, the *I* of Levinas enters into a heteronymous relationship with the Other. In that relationship, it is the *I* who is in a responsive position to care for the Other. In the preface to *Totality and Infinity* Levinas asks: "Would the violence which, for a mind, consists in welcoming a being to which it is inadequate contradict the ideal of autonomy that guides philosophy – which in evidence is mistress of her own truth?"[6] Here, it is important to avoid the trap set by ontology, the heteronymous relationship and the respective sub-ordination of the *I* does not mean that the "commanding" Other is in the position to violate the I. The violation does not spring from the Other. Rather, it is true that the *I* who has met the Other passes grammatically and ethically from the imperative to the accusative case; in other words, the *I* becomes *me*. The term offered by Levinas is "welcoming" and it would be illogical to welcome a being capable of violence. What is more, Levinas introduces the concept of responsibility to the Other in order to confirm that same assertion: how would it be possible to be responsible to someone who violates me? – except for cases when that someone threatens by force. Why would he be willing to respond to a violator? In the shift from *I* to *me*, the desire becomes hope. In this process the *I* is constantly being pushed backwards (through and because of the presence of the Other, but also *by the reflection of the I's own violence*) towards the point of no retreat. It is not the feminine approach towards Levinas' logic, according to which there is someone, the Other, on whose *actions* the *me* relies. The Other taken separately is not active towards the *I*. The activity of the Other is through the *I* towards the accusative, towards the *me*. That is how the active approach to the philosophy of Levinas is preserved. That is how the hyperbole becomes grotesque.

Before focusing on the grotesque pattern, it would be relevant to consider the hyperbolic outrageousness of comparing its pattern to the mechanism through which the thought of the *I* reaches out, desires, goes beyond itself. It is the same mechanism through which the self-throwing takes place. As remarked above, Heidegger fails to overcome anthropocentric arbitrariness, but in some of his later works he manages to develop a quite relevant

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6   E. Levinas, Totality and Infinity, 25.

model pertaining to the hyperbolic movement of human thought. In his book *Woodpaths,* Heidegger begins his analysis with the image of a path in the forest. There, Heidegger manages to discover a model representing the *movement* of thought. Here is the passage pertaining to this model:

> Wood is an old name for forest. In the wood are paths which mostly *wind along* until they *end quite suddenly* in an impenetrable thicket. They are called 'woodpaths'. Each goes its peculiar way, but in the same forest. Often it seems as though one were like another. Yet it only seems so. Woodcutters and forest-dwellers are familiar with these paths. They know what it means to be in a woodpath.[7] (emphasis mine)

What is of interest here, in the particular context of the hyperbolic model, is that Heidegger uses the image of a wood with cut passages. It is not, for instance, a labyrinth, one taken for granted as a preliminary planned structure. It is a forest where the current *activity of man* is prioritized and, what is more, there is a thicket awaiting exploration. The image springing from this passage evokes an association with the Levinasian *I* who is also *cutting* his way out, creating his own paths, and passing through already cut ones. That is the unavoidable fate of the *I*, determined by his inherited desire to *go beyond*. Heidegger continues:

> Thought-paths, which are indeed passed when one has passed by them – although for one who has been going on them they persist in coming – *wait*. They *wait* upon the times that thinkers go along them. While usual technical representational thinking, technical in the broadest sense, forever wills to go forward and tears ahead of everything, paths which point out a way occasionally open upon a view of a solitary mountain shelter [*ein einziges Ge-birg*].[8] (emphasis mine)

Along with the hyperbolic model mentioned already, there is the

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[7]   D.F. Krell, Translator's Introduction, *Early Greek Thinking*, by Martin Heidegger (Harper SanFrancisco, 1984), 3-4.

[8]   Ibid, 5.

model of the grotesque that is much more appropriate to be considered when the discussion pertains to the conceptology of Levinas. It seems that after one is well acquainted with the conceptologic novelty introduced by Levinas, Heidegger can be understood as having anticipated the introduction of the Other. More precisely in this passage, he reaches the ultimate point in which that deficit is strongest. The *waiting* bears a meaning of eternity – a human path marked by the infinite. The Levinasian Other corresponds to those eternally-waiting paths (the plural here is quite appropriate since the Other is revealed through the face, which once entered reveals itself as different, as Other). That otherness has a power so enormous that it gravitates the ʽυπερβολή of the *I* and reflects it back to him. That creates the mechanism, through which the imperative *I* changes to the accusative mode and becomes a *me*. As says Rogozinski, "…the I, which was formerly defined by the selfish conatus, by its power of identification and its sensual possession of the world, now gives power to an I without power and without qualities, and that receives its uniqueness and identity entirely from its pre-assignment to the Other."[9] Here is how the presence of the Other reflects the hyperbolic force of the I and puts him into a movement and development characterized by the grotesque.

While we are still under the influence of the image of the Heideggerian wood, let us approach the grotesque through the patterns of arabesque and moresque. The volutions of the arabesque and the spirals of the moresque's foliage express an inward spiral direction, whose ending, very often, is an enlarged and filled circle. The path of thought, the path of the *I* without the Other is arbitrary, while the path is already waiting; the path already carved by the *other* is that which is worth considering. Its pattern and direction correspond to the volutions and the spirals of the arabesque and the moresque as bound to the internal ending point. The arbitrariness as a basic quality of the *I* is unavoidable, but entering into a relationship with the Other it starts to be reduced, downgraded. The intra-subjective ethical path has a similar pattern. It is exactly before the Other, in His path, where the *I* is bound for an end. Heidegger calls that end a solitary mountain dwelling. The only way I could agree with him is if this solitariness is the mode of ex-

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9   J. Rogozinski, op cit, 75.

istence without the *I* and its imperialism; if it is the moment in which the agonizing *I* is "skinned alive" through the presence of the Other.[10] It is the primordial and eternal presence of the Other which causes the shift, the ethical turn in the intentionality of the Self. That is another way to see that the direction of violence is not from the Other to the *I*. Rather, it is the *intentionality* of the *I*, which is the *response-ibility* of the *me* to the presence of the Other in the face. The Other does not intend, he is even more passive than the passivity of the *me*.

What else than a self-mythologizing mechanism determines the mode of existence of the imperialistic *I*? The act of violence towards the naked face and towards the world is the attempt to totalize the world, to make it more convenient, to create a cozy home out of it. Through his desire to mythologize himself, the *I* predetermines his remoteness from anything other. The greed of desire, however, projects, hyperbolizes the self-image of the *I* to an extent, which goes far beyond himself. Maria Dimitrova writes:

> …the appearing of the grotesque signals the end of some monolithically serious myth. Labeling some belief as a myth already presupposes distance, suspicion, reflection, and end of faith. The grotesque describes exactly the myth's picturesque agony. And grotesque has as its function not only to demythologize and represent the death of the myth but our liberation of it as well…[11]

The arbitrary hyperbolic movement of the *I* is interrupted by the moment of realizing the Other's presence. The ensuing *me*, being in simultaneous existence, in totality with the *I*, experiences the suffering and becomes a witness of the grotesque alteration of his totalitarian other.

> Levinas' ethics wants to show us that my Self, becoming *me* can be elevated, inspired to fly beyond his attachment to the totality of worldly interests. For Levinas this happens when the Self is not only for-itself, but for-the-Other.[12]

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[10] Ibid, 79.
[11] M. Dimitrova, "Outrageousness As A Grotesque"*, In Levinas' Trace,* p. 99.
[12] Ibid, 92

Here is a demonstration of the Levinasian eschatology based on a hyperbolic elevation, on the Self's going beyond totality through his responsibility to the present Other. From the perspective of the grotesque, there is also an eschatology but from a different, intra-subjective order. Witnessing his own defeat, before and through the face of the Other, the *I* becomes other to itself. That change goes through a stage of stripping down the *I* from the false qualities he has given to himself. Keeping the logic of the grotesque, we could use the allegory of the human with wings, who changes into a bird with human hands.[13] In brief, it is the process of the deterioration, of the downgoing of the *I* within the totality of the self, which could be viewed as an eschatological movement that brings the *I* and the *me* together in a qualitatively new Self.

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[13] Ibid.

Emmanuel LÉVINAS' Early Aesthetic Views:
A Difficult Friendship between
the Subject and the Artist

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Those who find in Emmanuel Lévinas' ethics a key to the Good and humaneness in man, and at the same time are in love with art and literature, believing not only in their aesthetic but also ethical capabilities, face difficult choices. The difficulty comes from the fact that, in the words of Maurice Blanchot, when it comes to accessing the ethical, "Lévinas does not trust poems and poetic activity"[1] understood in the sense of *poiesis*, or the beautiful as face, insofar as it contains in itself a possibility of enchantment; hence, the "indifference or ethical cruelty" (IRB 119). Such opinion is related to the centuries-long dispute over Plato's "expulsion" of the poets of the Republic, and we can only regret that one of the most original European thinkers of the 20th century has not left a comprehensive system of aesthetic views, but separate essays, and comments (fragments) in his main works.

It is assumed that the metaphysics of Lévinas, which coincides with ethics, is displayed before and over ontology, and offers a fundamental revision of the problem of the ethical[2] subject in light of his responsibility for the Other[3]: a responsibility whose essence consists in being not just an attribute, but a fundamental structure of subjectivity (EI 95-96). Originally in-

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[1]   Blanchot, Maurice, *The Infinite Conversation*, trans. Susan Hanson (University of Minnesota Press, 1993). *L'Entretien infini* (Gallimard, 1969), 53.

[2]   In this text I will distinguish the term *ethical* from *moral* with regard to the difference, which at a later stage of his works Levinas made between *ethical* as a term in the realm of metaphysics and *moral*, such as in the field of ontology and socio-political reality: "By morality I mean a series of rules relating to social behavior and civic duty" (in Cohen, Richard, ed., *Face to Face with Levinas*, Sunny Press, 1986, 29).

[3]   For a detailed analysis of the concept of subjectivity in Levinas, presented on the background of the ideas of Descartes, Kant, Fichte, Hegel, Husserl, and Heidegger, see Мария Димитрова, *Социалността и справедливостта* (София: Център „Академичната общност в гражданското общество", 2009), с. 63-79.

fluenced by, but gradually more critical of the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl (and especially of its ontological development in the philosophy of Martin Heidegger), Lévinas' ethical project removed the meaning of the subject's existence outside the noetic-noematic totality of consciousness and beyond the ontic-ontological difference between Being and beings, and placed it in the Other (*Autrui*), into the Infinity.

The aesthetic in the work of Emmanuel Lévinas can be traced in three directions. First, Lévinas repeatedly stresses the role of Russian classical literature and Shakespeare in *preparation* for his interest in philosophy (EI 22, 25). Second, when we read his works, we cannot omit the specifics of his *style* of philosophizing – his insightful references to literature and visual arts, and the wealth of tropes – metaphors, comparisons, personifications, and stylistic figures. The third direction, which we discuss here, refers to texts, in which Lévinas *analyzes* particular aspects of aesthetics, offers challenging interpretations *of* the artistic image, expression, and criticism[4] as well as critical articles *on* specific works.[5] In both cases, the analysis of the

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[4] The texts *about* art describe art generally as an aspect of the existence of existents and Ego in the world: i) the part named "Exoticism" from the chapter "Existence without world" in the first independent philosophical work of Levinas, *Existence and Existents* (1947); ii) *Time and the Other* (1948) where we find no direct comments about art, but based on the understanding in previous work, I think we have reason to rehearse some interpretations related to the aesthetic; iii) the most controversial and most discussed article dealing with the aesthetic views of Lévinas "Reality and its Shadow"(1948); iv) fragments in *Totality and Infinity* (1961) and *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence* (1974). In these texts, Lévinas relates the aesthetic experience to a pre-subjective stage of the Self, primarily associated with sensory pleasure and irresponsibility. Modern experience, and, largely classic aesthetic experience, is reduced to the formless, spontaneous, and exotic, to *il y a*, a term describing the "brutal fact of being" (OE 49), experience that is totally irresponsible and could be "tamed" through philosophical criticism.

[5] Texts *on* art are essentially critical and analyze literary works of contemporary writers, whom Levinas regarded as exceptions to the general "irresponsible" case since they try to discover the possibilities of literary language to articulate the articles "The Transcendence of Words: On Michel Leiris's *Biffure* "(1949), *On Maurice Blanchot* (1975), and the collection of essays *Proper Names* (1976). They outline the possibility of a correlation between ethical and literary language, as both lay the subject out of Being *qua* knowledge and, without being

aesthetic is not an end in itself but woven into the overall fabric of ethical drama. Thus, although it can hardly be said that Lévinas' aesthetic views contribute to aesthetics as science itself, they are an integral part of his philosophy, fit the description of the metaphysical subject and otherness, and thus, in turn, open up opportunities for the renewal of philosophical and critical interpretations of the ethical in subjective aesthetic experience.

This paper aims to present Lévinas' aesthetic views as related to his understanding of two of subjectivity's dimensions: hypostasis and Ego, which characterize the relationship of the existent with its own existence and exteriority. The need for this rather expository analysis stems from my desire to verify the thesis of the ethical nature of artistic experience as preceding (and in this sense also determining) the aesthetic one. In other words, this article should be regarded in the context of a preparatory analysis for a more comprehensive study.

The existential separation of the **existent:** *il y a* and *hypostasis*. **The aesthetic** as **elemental and the return to** *il y a.*

The context in which Lévinas situates his understanding of art refers to the concept of *il y a* as part of his phenomenological interpretation of existence. The concept of *il y a* is central to Lévinas' first original philosophical book (*Existence and Existents*, 1947), written while Lévinas was a prisoner in a Nazi *stalag*. The aim of the book, as Lévinas writes in the preface, is "to leave the climate" of Heidegger's ontology, which continues to be dominated by the "dialectic of being and nothingness…where evil is always a defect, that is deficiency, lack of being: nothingness". Lévinas claims that Being and nothingness are only "phases" (dimensions) of *il y a* which later, in *Ethics and Infinity*, he characterizes as "neither nothingness nor being".

Concerning this omnipresent and persistent *il y a* "one can neither say that it is nothingness, even though there is nothing" (EI 48-49). The term *il y a* reveals Being as coarse and dense elemental matter devoid of the forms of the world (EE 57). Thus, Lévinas describes a more general condition of ex-

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mutually transferable, are a kind of Saying.

istence, which is essentially different from the *es gibt*[6] of Heidegger), and shows the primordial duality of existence. This duality includes Being itself and non-being, and reveals the horror that surpasses the fear of death and care for Being:[7]

> Is not the fear of Being just as originary as the fear of Being? It is perhaps even more so, for the former might account for the latter. Are not Being and nothingness, which, in Heidegger's philosophy, are equivalent or coordinated, not rather phases of a more general state of existence, which is in no wise constituted by nothingness? We shall call it the fact that *there is* [*il y a*]. (EE 20)

Unlike Heidegger, who described death as "the possibility of the impossible", Lévinas sees in the bareness of *il y a* "the impossibility of the possible". This reversed parallelism (*chiasmus*), so characteristic of Lévinas' style, is not an end in itself, but posits existence as an "instant" (or interval) and shifts the relation between the existent and existence to a perspective different from the one that "the world is given to us" and the horror of death (finitude of existence) and non-being. In other words, Heidegger's "fear *for* Being", which measures not only the [in]authenticity of *Dasein*, but also describes its withdrawal from the existential world and excessive concern for its own existence (EI 52), is reduced to "fear *of* being". Thus, the attitude of being as an intolerable burden and a desire for escape/salvation/exit is pulled *before* the relation to the world as a concern. And the first escape is from *il y a*.

Lévinas compares *il y a* with the impersonal humming heard from an empty shell, or with the extreme state of insomnia when the ego feels itself separated from its body in a helpless state of wakefulness, or with the darkness of a room in which a child is put to sleep while the nightlife of adults continues. *Il y a* is not only omnipresent in both Being and non-being, but is

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[6] "There is" (German), but unlike Lévinas' horrifying *il y a*, *es gibt* represents anonymous "giving" and "abundance".

[7] See also: Wahl, Jean André, *A Short History of Existentialism* (*Petite histoire de "l'existentialisme"*), transl. Forrest Williams and Stanley Maron, Westport, CT : Greenwood Press, [1971, c1949], 47-51.

also the horror of existence deprived of the forms that are "ripped from the perspective of the world", that inability to escape from insomnia, a state in which living is unbearable, but death is impossible, or as Lévinas sometimes calls it, "neither nothingness nor being" and "the excluded middle". (EI 48) Maurice Blanchot, describing a similar state, called it a *dis-aster*, signifying the detachment of a being from the meaning of an "all cosmological existence". (EI 50)

There are two key features of *il y a* – anonymity and the impossibility of escape, meaning that the evil of being in-itself is more in its endlessness rather than, as Heidegger claims, in its finitude. (TO 51) *Initially*, Lévinas believed that the only salvation is the light to take existence out of this anonymity. Such a source of light was the idealist-phenomenological understanding of existence, according to which the mere act of pointing to *qua* knowing and determining existence would draw the forms out to things and "re-attach" the existent to being. (EI 51-52) Lévinas grounded his argument on the idea of the relation between "inside" and "outside" that permeates Western idealism, a relation, constituting the subject, more precisely his consciousness, in the center of the world.

This idea leads to the conclusion that the world is given to us, from which the phenomenology of Husserl concludes that intentionality as inherent is human existence: a movement of grasping that spreads from the center of the "inside" to the outside and returns back to center. (EE 39) The organs of perception at a certain moment and place (context) catch the forms of objects, which become meaningful in the flow of experience (knowledge and use) and are transmitted to the interiority. Hence, Lévinas brings enlightenment as the event of *hypostasis* – "a term that in the history of philosophy designated the event by which the action expressed by a verb became a being designated by a substantive". (EE 82) *Hypostasis* is a momentary, transient event of the existent's "attachment" to the existence, or figuratively, when the existent masters its own existence (EI 51):

> Consciousness, position, the present, the "I", are not initially, although they are finally, existents. They are events by which the unnamable verb *to be* turns into substantives. They are hypostasis. (EE, 83)

Thus, through the three characteristics of *hypostasis*, namely consciousness (more precisely still in an early stage of pre-consciousness), present, and position, Lévinas initially describes the emergence of identity out of anonymous being, emphasizing its dual nature: *hypostasis* is neither a final product nor the process of emergence, but both the instant and the way of emergence.

However, appearance in the light does not guarantee salvation from *il y a*. As Levinas writes, "This idea was only a first stage" (EI 51) when The Ego, according to him, is overburdened by the "Care *for* existence" (Heidegger); in other words, the mastery over existence can easily become domination, and this in turn can degenerate into an insatiable desire (even greed) for things in the world. Such a condition makes the subject deaf and blind to other people's suffering, and incapable of charity and sacrifice.

In sum, since the subject is constantly exposed to the threat of forgetting itself and of sinking back into the anonymity of *il y a*, Lévinas realized the need for such a relationship, which would always put in question the mastery of Ego over its own existence. Thus, he concludes, that in terms of being drawn-out of *il y a,* "one must not be posed" (on the throne of his own existence), but at the very (and every) instant of entering into possession he is already "deposed and this deposition is the social relationship with the Other". (EI 52) Nevertheless, in its dimension of Ego, the subject, who is infatuated by the enjoyments and cares of/for everydayness, either does not notice or easily forgets the primordial relationship with the Other, to whom he owes his existence. Even if/when the subject recollects the importance of this relationship, he is inclined to attribute merit for establishing it (however illusionary) to his own Ego.

In art, according to Lévinas, there is a return of the Self from sociality, a light of knowledge and intentionality going back to the darkness of the impersonal *il y a*. Aesthetic experience is actually one of the situations in which the already-identified existent dissolves into the elemental. In line with Kant, Lévinas states that the work of art is foreign to our standard experience and in this sense is *exotic*. The work of art is *exotic* because it strips the forms and qualities of the objects off their objective context of facticity, which gives them their meaning. Moreover, the exoticism of pictures and books – themselves material objects – represents the objects in such a way

that they not only cannot be attributed to anything of known reality, but cannot be attributed to reality at all ("existence without a world"). Thus, the work of art does not actually represent things the way they appear objectively before our perception and knowledge, but throws them directly into the field of subjective sensation, understood now as absolute exteriority.

> Exoticism modifies the contemplation itself. The 'objects' are outside, but this outside does not relate to an 'interior'; they are not already naturally 'possessed'. A painting, a statue, a book are objects of *our* world, but through them things represented are extracted from our world. (EE 52)

One could say that while the concepts of knowledge are "abstracts" (condensed experience), artistic images are simply "extracts", a distorted caricature image of experience, removed from natural context.

The aesthetic effect of modern art breaks the usual relation between the object and its quality as it is created in our perceptions, and confuses consciousness in its expectations of a certain (familiar) sense of the object. Sensibility, instead of reaching the object and clarifying it, is left to wander and returns to the primordial impersonality of the elemental. (EE 53) In other words, art does not indicate our way to reach some hidden nature of the object (as Hegel claims, that art has the vocation to reveal the truth and allows access to absolute knowledge), but rather deviates from this way. This *alterity* cannot even be called "hollow" since hollowness implies form emptied of meaning, but rather the opposite: it is a naked content, a dense "interiority", which, like liquid that lost the container holding it in a certain form and meaning, is back to its original "exteriority":

> The forms and colors of a painting do not cover over but uncover things in themselves, precisely because they preserve the exteriority of those things. Reality remains foreign to the world inasmuch as it is given. In this sense art both imitates nature and diverges from it as far as possible. (EE 53)

Lévinas, who will later describe the importance of the face-to-face encounter between the Self and the Other, will thus always emphasize the

uniqueness of *direct* contact as a primordial *locus* of the ethical, and at this initial stage points out the essence of artistic images as providing *indirect* access to things, thus distorting them "essentially".

The identification of *hypostasis* as *I* (Ego, Self): the ontological opposition to the totality of the world and the subsequent alienation. The irresponsibility of art.

As we have seen, light *qua* intentionality and knowledge in the emergence of *hypostasis* from *il y a* is a sparkle, the first rays of sunrise giving form and meaning to objects as well as to the "existent". Gradually, however, in affirming pre-consciousness into consciousness, i.e. in the transition from the dimension of *hypostasis* to Ego, the subject is irradiated of a light that totalizes not only the objects in the world but also the interiority of Self. This implies the domination of vision over the other senses and of knowledge over the other acts of consciousness. The same "metamorphosis" happens to all other categories, including enjoyment, which degenerates from mastering existence to dominating the existent. Identification, on the other hand, leads the Ego to the desire of separating itself from the totality of the world, to escaping and withdrawing into interiority, and the other name of such desire is self-centering and self-sufficiency. Lévinas emphasizes that this primordial narcissism and selfishness is the basis of the first ontological experience. (IRB 212)

Therefore, at the beginning enjoyment is necessary for the creation of interiority (*psyché*), which in turn is a condition for the emergence of the idea of Infinity, but then prevents the same idea:

> Egoism, enjoyment, sensibility, and the whole dimension of interiority – the articulations of separation – are necessary for the idea of Infinity, the relation with the Other which opens forth from the separated and finite being. (TI 148)

> In enjoyment I am absolutely for myself. Egoist without reference to the Other, I am alone without solitude, innocently egoist and alone. Not against the Others, not 'as for me …' but entirely deaf to the

Other, outside all communication and all refusal to communicate –
without ears, like a hungry stomach. (TI 134)

It is reasonable to ask what causes that transition from one extreme to
another. Maria Dimitrova offers a possible answer by pointing to an impor-
tant feature of Lévinas' terminology, namely the doubling of categories:

All categories, describing human relationships, receive not only a lit-
eral meaning, understood through their place in the totality, but also
one more – metaphorical – meaning, related to the Face of the Other.
It seems as if the ethics is built upon ontology, just as metaphorical
meanings are built upon the literal, but to speak the truth, the situa-
tion is quite the opposite – the metaphorical or ethical meanings gave
birth to the ontological. (ILT 32)

Remarkable in this observation is that it not only provides a key for
understanding his whole system of ethics but also Lévinas' views on subjec-
tivity and, hence, aesthetic's "backward" movement. In other words, to ex-
plain why certain terms related to subjectivity context appear first in a posi-
tive light, and then acquire quite a negative character, we must consider this
doubling of categories. Duality helps us to explain why a phenomenon or
process that was positive (in the transition from one ontological dimension
of subjectivity to another) later works towards its negation (from the per-
spective of the metaphysical level, in a deponent mode, passive in form but
active in meaning).

Lévinas himself, referring to Decartes' *Third Meditation*, notes the
paradox of "this absurd logic inversion" of this *after the fact* effect that oc-
curs in the shift of perspective from the Other (metaphysics) to the Same
(ontology). He highlights the role of thought and memory, supported by the
deeper structure of the *psyché*, where "separation is not reflected in thought,
but produced by it". (TI 54)

Thus, Lévinas deduces the concept of *separation*[8] as an act, performed

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8   For a more detailed explanation of the idea of separation, see Richard Cohen's
     note in TO 45.

simultaneously on two levels that do not coincide (TI 117), and are not mutually translatable. The first level is existential-ontological: "The separation of the Same is produced in the form of an inner life, a psychism", and "the original role of psychism... is already *a way of being* [*une manière d'être*], a resistance to the totality". (TI 54) The second level is metaphysical: "The idea of Infinity implies the separation of the same with regard to the other, but this separation cannot rest on an opposition to the other which would be pure anti-thetical". (TI 53)

Still in connection with this duality, Lévinas emphasizes that "in separated being the door to the outside must hence be at the same time open and closed" (TI 148), and this ambiguous condition must be established within the interiority itself in the form of "heteronomy that incites to a destiny other than this animal complacency of oneself". (TI 149) Lévinas found the roots of this "open-closed" state in the insecure nature of enjoyment, for "the insecurity of the world brings into the interiority of enjoyment a frontier that comes neither from the revelation of the Other nor from any heterogeneous content, but somehow from nothingness". (TI 150) The insecurity of enjoyment is "due to the way the element, in which the separated being contents itself and suffices to itself, comes to this being – due to the mythological depth which prolongs the element and into which the element loses itself". (TI 150) In other words, within the dimension of Ego, in enjoyment, an interiority necessary for the idea of Infinity is formed in the subject, while once again "in enjoyment things revert to their elemental essence". (TI 134)

It is against this background that we are to analyze Lévinas' distrust of art *qua* pleasure and truth (stated in the article "Reality and its Shadow", 1948). It generally falls in the following three relations: 1) art and reality – image, sensibility and rhythm; 2) time and art – meanwhile, or *entretemps*, and 3) art and philosophical criticism.

Lévinas questions the pretention that the artistic work illuminates objects of reality and captures their "irreducible essence" that "common perception trivializes and misses". (RS/LR 130) If we follow this logic, he argues, it would appear that the work of art is more real than reality itself, and the artistic imagination is an act of knowing the absolute. Criticism, which finds its justification as "a form of social behavior", in turn, seems to resign

with this artistic game: "It enters into the artist's game with all the serious-
ness of science. In artworks it studies psychology, characters, environments,
and landscapes – as though in an aesthetic event an object were by the mi-
croscope or telescope of artistic vision exposed for the curiosity of an inves-
tigator". (RS/LR 130) Moreover, it seems that criticism leads "a parasitic
existence" on the back of art or imitating it by producing fuzzy critical texts.
(RS/LR 130)

       While arguing his point (in *Existence and Existents*) that art is intrinsi-
cally linked to the formless *il y a* and thus extracted from reality, now, in
addition to this linkage of art with the elemental, Lévinas introduces the no-
tion of an art work's *completion*. It is the specific formal structure of com-
pletion that distinguishes the work of art from other types of human activity,
for it seems to be independent and indifferent to any external influences,
"the artist stops because the work refuses to accept anything more, it ap-
pears saturated". (RS/LR 131) In this detachment and disengagement with
reality should be understood the illusion of "revival" in the work. From
completion, Lévinas deduces the immorality of the work of art "because it
liberates the artist from his duties as a man and assures him of pretentious
and facile nobility". (RS/LR 131)

       Moreover, the damage that art causes to the secular seems inferior
compared to the more general question of the relation between art and meta-
physics, or "in what does the *non-truth* of being consist?" (RS/LR 132) Be-
ing exotic, i.e. a rupture of habitual life and relations with the world, art is a
kind of transcendence similar to the Ideas, which are light and understand-
ing. However, if the completion of the artwork is a kind of disengagement
from the world, does it give us enough reason to consider it a way "to go
beyond, toward the region of Platonic ideas and toward the eternal which
towers above the world"? (RS/LR 131) Apparently not, because, unlike
them, when left to itself, art is a descent into the original darkness of *il y a*
and an invasion of the shadow. When related to Lévinas' theory of subjec-
tivity, thus described as an essence of art, it reveals the disastrous role of the
artistic work that might mislead the subject on its way to truth and the
Other. (RS/LR 132)

       Lévinas notes that the impact of the artistic image is in its musicality

and rhythm, which capture the subject and, instead of leading him to an intentional action, paralyze and leave him in a state of anonymous and passive participation:

> Rhythm represents a unique situation... because the subject is caught up and carried away by it. The subject is part of his own representation. It is so not even despite itself, for in rhythm there is no longer a oneself, but rather a sort of passage from oneself to anonymity. This is captivation or incantation of poetry and music. It is a mode of being to which applies neither the form of consciousness, since the I is there stripped of its prerogative to assume, its power, nor the form of unconsciousness, since the whole situation and all its articulations are in a dark light, *present*. (RS/LR 132-133)

Therefore, the subject is pulled down and back to the anonymous, possessed against his will and left to wander between the conscious and unconscious, in an "exteriority of interiority". The formlessness of mythic and elemental, from which he was previously saved through the enlightenment of consciousness, now in art recaptures him through the irresponsible game of sensations. Unlike "existence with ideas" where the relationship between reason and perception is direct, in art sensibility is realized only by imagination because "[artistic] sensation is not a residue of perception, but has a function of its own..." (RS/LR 134)

Lévinas points out two omissions of the phenomenology of image as presented in the visions of Husserl and Sartre.[9] The first relates to the *transparency* of images. According to Lévinas, the image is not transparent, as claimed by phenomenology, the way signs, words and symbols are transparent, since the latter (although entirely different from) are directly related to

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[9] Cf. J.-P. Sartre: "The image of my friend Pierre is not a dim phosphorescence, a furrow left in consciousness by a perception of Pierre. It is an organized form of consciousness which refers in its own way to my friend; it is one of the possible ways of aiming at Pierre. Thus, in the act of imagination consciousness refers to Pierre directly, not by means of a simulacrum *in* consciousness." Sartre, Jean-Paul, *Imagination: A Psychological Critique*, trans. Forrest Williams (University of Michigan, 1962), 134.

the objects. The image, by contrast, resembles the object, but it is precisely that *similarity* which prevents direct access to it because the mind stops at the image. (RS/LR135)

The other shortcoming of the phenomenology of image, according to Lévinas, is that it relates to the assertion that the world of images is presented as something *un-real* and beyond consciousness, a kind of transcendence. Lévinas argues that the opacity of images and their resemblance with the original does not give them the status of non-reality, independent and different from reality, that the images are unreal, but dependent and similar to reality, just as the *shadow* is related and similar to the original. Such an understanding of the image's being as a likeness marks a significant change in the life of the original:

> Being is not only itself, it escapes itself…a person bears on his face, alongside with its being with which it coincides, its own caricature, its picturesqueness. The picturesque is always to some extent a caricature…There is then a duality in this person, this thing, a duality in its being. It is what it is and it is a stranger to itself, and there is a relationship between these two moments. We will say the thing is itself and its image. And that relationship between the thing and its image is resemblance. (RS/LR 135)

In a picture, for example, the elements of resemblance, as presented to the perceiving consciousness, indicate the absence of the original, which seemed to expose itself to being dis-embodied by the image. The creative mind of the artist does not go beyond itself because it creates the world of artwork *prior* to the real world and thus cannot attribute it to the latter. "Therefore," Lévinas concludes, "the notion of shadow enables us to situate the economy of resemblance within the general economy of being" (RS/LR 137); in other words, art does not rive being into two worlds, reality and non-reality. In this case, both would be equally eligible to refer to the idea of absolute truth and knowledge. Instead, art mythologizes and duplicates reality and in this sense through resemblance, it represents the very structure of sensation. Subsumed to the sphere of the ethical, the resemblance of reality does not take us beyond and/or above transcendence, but rather beyond and

beneath, or *transdescendence* (a term Lévinas borrowed from Jean Wahl).

To understand art, Levinas draws on the Bergsonian notion of *duration* (*durée*), that mind perceives and processes objects and their movements not as continuity in time (as Decartes, for example believed), but in successive fragments, at intervals of "mortified places and moments," which the mind subsequently animates. He, then, slips art in the gap between the two instances in the *meanwhile* (*entretemps*). According to him, even though an artwork might represent a movement within its own time, it stops real time. It is doomed to the eternal present, unable to move in its own future. Characters in novels, caricatures enclosed in the same actions, can never realize their potential. This endlessly-caught-in-the-meanwhile present, however, is different from the eternity of ideas:

> Art brings about just this duration in the interval, in that sphere where a being Is able to traverse, but its shadow is immobilized. The eternal duration of the interval in which a statue is immobilized differs radically from the eternity of a concept; it is a meanwhile, never finished, still enduring – something inhuman and monstrous. (RS/LR 141)

Thus presented, the analysis of art raises questions about its value in the context of the human situation in the world. Undoubtedly, according to Lévinas, since the sources of art are found in the pre-human of the elemental, it urges escape from the responsibilities of life and therefore never represents the highest value to society: "Art... brings the irresponsibility that charms as a lightness and grace. It frees. To make or to appreciate a novel and a picture is to no longer to have to conceive, it is to renounce the efforts of science, philosophy, and action". (RS/LR 141)

It is not difficult to recognize the unspoken background against which Lévinas develops his reflections on art, namely World War II. In this sense, we can better grasp his words: "...there is something wicked and egoistic and cowardly in artistic enjoyment. There are times when one can be ashamed of it, as of feasting during a plague" (RS/LR 142) – these words are consistent with Theodor Adorno's famous phrase: "To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric".

For modern society, however, art is the spiritual life *per se*, and Lévinas is well aware of how it would be unwise to reject this. He assumes that art has its place in civilization, but only as a source of aesthetic pleasure, and only as "sifted" through philosophical concepts and interpretations. The task of philosophical criticism is "to integrate the inhuman work of the artist to the human world" (RS/LR 142) and to describe the techniques of creating it, the historical context and trends that influenced the personality of the artist. In other words, criticism does not intervene aggressively to correct the nature of art as a myth and does not seek to "humanize" in the very process of its creation, but rather it examines it by presenting all possible interpretations and by considering the degree of "deviation" from reality. In this way, the un-truth of the myth becomes a source for philosophical truth, as it is a testament to the job of being.

On the other hand, although "the most forewarned, the most lucid writer none the less plays the fool" (RS/LR 143); in the modern era some artists realize the "idolatrous" nature of art as precluding the real and need to construe their own works, with which philosophical criticism cooperates. (RS/LR 143) Lévinas himself commented on the works of such artists and these commentaries serve as an example of how art can be attributed to the primordial dimension of subjectivity; namely, the encounter of the *I* with the Other (Infinity) and the coming back to (remembering of) the subject's ethical nature.

Abbreviations of used and cited works by Emmanuel Lévinas

AT *Alterity and Transcendence*, trans. Michael B. Smith (London: Athlone Press, 1999). *Altérité et transcendence* (Montpellier: Fata Morgana, 1995).EE *Existence and Existents*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1978). *De l'existence à l'existant* (Paris: Vrin, 1947).

EI *Ethics and Infinity*, trans. Richard Cohen (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1985, 2009). *Ethique et infini* (Librarie Arthème Fayard et Radio France).

EN *Entre Nous: on thinking-of-the-other*, trans. Michael B. Smith and Barbara Harshav (London: Athlone Press, c1998). *Entre Nous: Essais sur le penser-à-l'autre* (Editions Bernard Grasset et Fasquelle, 1991).

ILT *In Levinas' Trace*, ed. Maria Dimitrova (Sofia: Avangard Prima, 2010)

IRB *Is It Righteous To Be: Interviews with Emmanuel Lévinas*, ed. Jill Robbins (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001).

LP/CPP "Language and Proximity", in *Collected Philosophical Papers*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1987).

MS/CPP "Meaning and Sense", in *Collected Philosophical Papers*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1987).

OB *Otherwise than Being, or, Beyond Essence*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1998). *Autrement qu'être ou au-delà de l'essence* (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974).

OE *On Escape = de l'évasion*, trans. Bettina Bergo (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003). *De l'évasion* (Montpellier: Fata Morgana, 1982)

PN *Proper Names*, trans. Michael B. Smith (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996). *Noms propres* (Montpellier: Fata Morgana, 1976).

RS/LR "Reality and Its Shadow", in *The Lévinas Reader*, ed. Seán Hand (Oxford, UK; Cambridge, MA, USA: B. Blackwell, 1989).

TI *Totality and Infinity: an Essay on Exteriority*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Boston: Kluwer Academic, c1991). *Totalité et infini:essai sur l'extériorité* (Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1961).

TO *Time and the Other and additional essays*, trans. Richard Cohen (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, c1987). *Le temps et l'autre* (Montpellier: Fata Morgana, 1979 [1947]).

III. SUPPLEMENT

The Cooperation between Azerbaijan and International Institutions in the Field of Humanitarian Activities (1991-2005)

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This resumé looks into the main forms of cooperation that strengthen the humanitarian relations of Azerbaijan with international agencies, foreign companies, and joint ventures such as the Lukoil International Charity Fund, DAWF German Society for Technical Cooperation, Siemens, Itochu, Total, Statoil, McDermot, Exxon Mobil, and Exxon-Azerbaijan. The article demonstrates the need for expanding the relations and cooperation of Azerbaijan with international organizations and foreign companies to get closer to the world community. Apart from economic and social projects in Azerbaijan, the realization of humanitarian programs and charity activities by international agencies and foreign companies contributes to strengthening of the country's social and economic foundations and its integration into the world system.

International organizations, foreign companies, and joint ventures carry out multi-faceted activities in the context of expanding relations between Azerbaijan and foreign countries. Alongside the implementation of various international programs and large-scale projects in the economic, public, and cultural life of Azerbaijan, and the analysis of current experience, they cooperate in providing financial and technical assistance in the humanitarian field as well. During the period under review, the International Public Charity Fund of the Lukoil Company, the World Hope International

Azerbaijani Humanitarian Organization, DAWF German Society for Technical Cooperation, Itochu (Japan), Siemens (Germany), Total (France), Statoil (Norway), McDermot (USA), Exxon Mobil, and Exxon-Azerbaijan companies have all developed active business partnerships in this respect.

Since 1996, the activities of the World Hope International Azerbaijani Humanitarian Organization have included assistance in meeting the humanitarian needs of the people of Azerbaijan, creating the conditions for improving the living standards of households in particular and the community in general, as well as strengthening and fostering the optimism of the populace (21).[1] In the field of reconstruction, the relevant section of World Hope has become the center of assistance contributing to the development and education of displaced people and low-income earners and to rebuilding the physical infrastructure of the construction and reconstruction sector. World Hope renovated refugee centers and improved living facilities, constructing twenty new public schools and boarding schools. In the field of vocational training, the Training Center of this international humanitarian organization provided assistance to create new jobs for refugees, displaced people and low-income earners and to improve their computer and English language skills. In order to meet the requirements of displaced people, homeless children and other underprivileged people in Azerbaijan, World Hope created its Special Projects Division.

This humanitarian agency provided aid to thousands of children, their families and communities in many districts of the country, helped purchase beds for homeless children and equipment for children's playgrounds, distributed books, school desks and chairs, school supplies and gift sets and arranged trips to historical and cultural places for children.

Another major stakeholder in the humanitarian sector of Azerbaijan is the Baku branch of the International Public Charity Fund of the Lukoil Company. This Charity Fund was established in 1996, and the Lukoil Company is among foreign oil companies responsible for creating such a permanent charity fund. This institution is very active in the fields of health, culture, science, and education, and provides assistance to disabled veterans and refugees. The Lukoil Charity Fund also provided financial assistance to

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[1] World Hope International Azerbaijan, B., 2005, p. 3.

ill children and war and long-service veterans so that they could obtain major surgeries and health resort treatment abroad and purchase necessary medicines.

In the field of culture, the Fund contributed financially to organize trips of Jujaliyarim and Oriental Stars children bands to Turkey; to stage student musical comedies in the Azerbaijani National Philharmonic Hall; to present the KVN-95 Panel Games; to refurbish the Russian Drama Theater in Baku; to organize Russia Days in Azerbaijan; to put on the exhibition of the Russian National Tretiyakov Art Gallery and to organize concerts by Liyudmila Zykina (Honored Artist of Russia and Azerbaijan); it also provided significant support to build the monument to Y. Mammadaliyev, the eminent Azerbaijani scientist and academic; to restore the museum of Sergey Yesenin, the famous Russian poet, in the village of Mardakian near Baku; to renovate the monument to Alexander Pushkin and develop the area around the monument; to hold a national artistic contest in Azerbaijan to commemorate the 200th anniversary of this great Russian poet; and to stage the Cheerful Widow opera by F. Zeqar.[2]

In the field of science, the Lukoil Charity Fund supported the publishing of works by Shihab ad-Din Muhammad ibn Ahmad an-Nasavi and the Dede Gorgud National Epic Encyclopedia; helped young Azeri historians and participated in sponsoring Ekologiya magazine, as well as sponsoring the provision of services from the best Russian publishing houses for the Mega Project of the Azerbaijani National Library Fund named after M. F. Akhundov.[3]

In the field of education, the Fund provided financial assistance for capital repairs of Secondary School No. 1 in Baku, bedrooms in Boarding School No. 2 for orphans in Mardakian District, as well as direct financial and technical support to the kindergarten in Chukhuryurd village in Shamakha District. Apart from this, the Fund actively supported the activities of the Russian Community of Azerbaijan, the repairs to its cultural and information center, various cultural and health activities, events of the Russian Orthodox Church of Azerbaijan; it helped the Russian Community to

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2   "Lukoil Company in the Republic of Azerbaijan", B., 2005, p. 28.
3   "Back again," p. 30.

organize health resorts and summer camps for children of war veterans, orphans, and low-income families every year. The Fund has always focused its efforts on providing refugees and veterans of the Second World War and Karabakh War with medical supplies and foodstuffs, including the donation of a 100 kWt Diesel Electric Power Station, medical, humanitarian and social aid to senior, underprivileged people and earthquake victims. One of the major charity actions of the Lukoil Fund in Azerbaijan was a $2 million grant for the development of education and culture and for assistance to thousands of people affected by natural and social disasters.[4]

The government of Japan and Japanese companies allocated $700 million for the development of infrastructure in the humanitarian sector of Azerbaijan and $4 million in technical support for the educational sector. Grants totaling $53 million were provided for the construction of schools, hospitals, kindergartens, roads and drinking water facilities. Itochu was the first Japanese company to start its business in Azerbaijan in 1996. Charity events have also been organized by the International Red Cross Society and other international humanitarian agencies in cooperation with the government of Azerbaijan to build houses for refugees in 1997 and to distribute aid to earthquake victims in Agdash District in 1998.

The International Council of Organizations for Folklore Festivals and Folk Art (ICOFF) helped arrange a trip to Japan for an Azeri children's band as well as various youth sports events in 2000. A special Oil Fund (CIECO MESENA) was established by Itochu in 2001 to supply the country's educational institutions with computers.[5] The Oil Fund donated computers to Baku Computer College, to Secondary School No. 49 in Baku, to Secondary School No. 1 in Agdash District, to orphanages in Ganja and Sheki, to the Technical and Humanitarian College No. 2, named after Mahmudbeyov, to the Technical and Humanitarian College in Balaken District, to the National Oil Academy of Azerbaijan and to other institutions.[6] The government of Japan allocated $2.5 million to build a village for refugees and displaced persons in Mingechevir District, and this village housing 412

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[4] "Back again," p. 29.
[5] Itochu Oil Exploration Company Co.Ltd., 2005, p. 3
[6] "Back again", p. 5.

families was completed in 2003.[7] In addition, the Japanese government provided the following financial assistance for internal migrants: $600,000 in 1996, $486,000 in 1997, $1,180,000 in 1998, focusing mainly on building temporary residential units and implementing social and health programs.[8] Another $2 million was allocated as a grant aid to complete the construction of the Baku Cancer Research Center and to provide three hospitals with medical equipment and supplies.

Exxon Mobil as a world-leading petrochemical company is represented and Azerbaijan plays a significant role in the company's growing activities. The company has a solid and stable tradition of combining its business with humanitarian activities in all the regions where it is active. The company's charity program is one of the largest in the world, and this program in Azerbaijan covers quite a number of fields. All charity programs implemented by Exxon Mobil in Azerbaijan are dedicated especially to education. At the same time, Exxon Azerbaijan provided assistance to publishing Azeri school books in the Latin alphabet, supplied schools and libraries with educational and training materials, donated computers to higher education institutions, and distributed the Children's Encyclopedia in refugee camps.[9]

Exxon Azerbaijan Operations Company, an Exxon Mobil affiliate, spent around $3 million for charity projects in Azerbaijan as of 2002.[10] The major part of these funds was used for educational projects and assistance to refugees. Exxon Azerbaijan cooperated with leading international humanitarian organizations in delivering aid to thousands of people living in refugee camps in Bilasuvar, Saatli and Sabirabad Districts. The projects implemented over the last few years covered various fields such as community development, job creation, construction of schools, public buildings and hospitals, as well as the organization of entertainment events for refugee children. Exxon Azerbaijan actively cooperated with major international and local humanitarian agencies to accomplish all these programs.

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[7]   "Iqtisadiyyat" ("Economics") Magazine, January 24-30, 2003, p. 2.

[8]   *Expert*, 2001, No.5-6, pp.17-18.

[9]   "Iqtisadiyyat" ("Economics") Magazine, No.13-14, March 12-18, 2004.

[10] Exxon Mobil in Azerbaijan, B., 2005, p. 2.

Exxon Azerbaijan provided financial assistance for the construction of schools in refugee camps located in the south of the country. It also supplied those schools with furniture, electrical and heating equipment as well as school supplies. Under the auspices of Exxon Mobil several hospitals have been constructed as well. These hospitals largely facilitated the delivery of primary medical care, the distribution of basic medicines and the circulation of health care information among refugees. Importantly, it also contributed to malaria prevention measures and to organizing training in primary care services in refugee camps. With a view to promoting education in Azerbaijan, Exxon Azerbaijan paid special attention to preparing and publishing Azeri school books in the Latin alphabet, supplying books to schools and libraries and providing higher education institutions with computers and much-needed technological support. The company filled previous gaps by organizing workshops and scientific conferences for teachers, supported the admission of Azeri students to professional and scientific organizations, and cooperated with leading universities to offer new opportunities for Azeri students to study in the United States. The US-Azerbaijan Chamber of Commerce established the Caspian Regional Research Center under Harvard University and with the sponsorship of Exxon Mobil in October 1999. The company also contributed to the creation of "Youth Values Organization" with the purpose of developing business, economic activities and entrepreneurship among young people.[11]

One of the most significant projects funded by Exxon Azerbaijan was the publication of the "Ayna" Children Encyclopedia in the Latin alphabet. This multilingual edition covers a large number of topics – from nature to history, from sports to information technologies. Starting in 1999, Exxon Azerbaijan distributed educational materials to thousands of children through schools and libraries in numerous refugee camps throughout the country. The company also provided financial assistance for the compilation and publication of the first Azeri-English dictionary and the anthology titled "One thousand five hundred years of Oguz poetry."[12]. Every year thousands

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[11] Exxon Mobil: Investments in oil sector and assistance to the people. B., 2006, p. 4.

[12] *Businessman*, 2006, pp. 18-19..

of children from refugee camps, orphanages and schools for people with special needs participate in Nowruz and New Year Holidays, Knowledge Day and other holidays and festivities organized with the support of Exxon Azerbaijan. The company considered the support to children deprived of parental care and attention as one of its priorities and offered new opportunities for them to feel the happiness of holidays and festivities again. Beginning in 1998, the company has been providing financial support to the International Environmental and Energy Academy and to "Energy, Environment and Economics" magazine. At the same time it sponsored a series of scientific conferences in order to bring together scientists and experts to tackle issues concerning the environmental protection of the Caspian Sea.

The delegation of the "Ost-Ausschuss" Association of German Companies working in Eastern Europe and CIS countries met with Mr. Ilham Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, on November 24, 2005 and had a comprehensive exchange of views on economic relations between our countries.[13] The delegation left Azerbaijan with great expectations from the development of bilateral business relations in near future. The Central Clinical Hospital and other hospitals of the Ministry of Health have been supplied with the latest diagnostic equipment by Siemens. The National Oncological Center has long-time partnership relations with this German company, which has played a special role in providing the Medi Club, Leyla Shikhlinskaya, City Hospital, and many other private hospitals with necessary equipment and facilities. Siemens has been actively involved in the country's social life as well: one notable example being its charity event titled "Sing your song" to support and promote emerging new talent.

Large-scale cooperation is underway between the Ministry of Economic Development of Azerbaijan and the DAWF Society for Technical Cooperation. This Society played an important role in organizing the visit of the German Commission for Eastern Economies to Baku on November 23-24, 2005. A delegation representing 14 German companies and headed by Dr. Klaus Mangold had the opportunity to meet with local businessmen. The event resulted favorably with a number of German companies showing in-

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[13] Germany, p. 18.

terest in implementing new investment projects in Azerbaijan.[14]

Mcdermott, a US-based company, is carrying out charity programs in Azerbaijan using its large-scale financial and human resources capabilities. MKKI sponsored a series of humanitarian and educational projects to help the most under-privileged people, particularly children and homeless children. From November 2002 to December 2004, the company spent around $80,000 for charity purposes. Another $50,000 were allocated in 2005 to support humanitarian programs and projects.[15]

The French company Total helped to develop boarding schools in Azerbaijan and provided financial assistance under a five-year program to improve living conditions and equip school rooms with necessary facilities. Moreover, the company provided funds to modernize the first-aid services at children's hospitals in Baku. In the field of education, the European Association of Geoscientists and Engineers (EAGE) together with its Azeri section organized training courses for young Azeri engineers. The Oil Institute of France organized eighteen-month training courses, while Total conducted theoretical training and refresher courses.[16] The company concluded an agreement with the National Rugby Association to develop this sport in Azeri secondary schools. It also carried out various social and economic investment programs in Azerbaijan with a view to support small-size enterprises, communal facilities, schools, rehabilitation centers, infrastructure and communications networks, and to improve the living conditions of people who live along oil transportation routes. International and local nongovernmental organizations actively participated in the implementation of this program under the auspices of Total. In the field of environmental protection, Total cooperated with the Ministry of Environment of Azerbaijan to enforce protection measures in the Qizil Agac Natural Reserve as well as to exchange experience forums between participants. Since 2001, Umid (Hope) and Hayat (Life) Humanitarian Agencies have built 47 schools and have renovated 123 school rooms in the communities of internally displaced people living around Baku and Sumgait cities.

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[14] German-Azerbaijan Business Association, DAWF, 2004, p.2.
[15] McDermott Caspian Contractors Inc., B., 2003, p. 6.
[16] Total: "Using new opportunities in Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan", 2005, p.8-10.

The cooperation among scientists, which was initiated and sponsored by the Statoil company from Norway, created favorable conditions to control the pollution of rivers throughout the Caucasus region. Training courses in the field of human rights were organized for Azeri teachers and students by the Refugee Council of Norway with the assistance of Statoil and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway. To further develop the agricultural sector in Azerbaijan, the Refugee Council of Norway with the sponsorship of Statoil provided financial and material assistance to restoring and improving housing facilities for internally displaced people who returned to their homes in Fizuli District of Azerbaijan.[17] In 2005, Statoil spent more than $2.3 million out of its own reserves as well as funds from oil projects for the projects of social, economic, and community development in Azerbaijan. Statoil closely cooperated with GTZ, International Financial Corporation and British Petroleum (BP) in order to provide technical assistance to local companies with the ultimate goal of increasing the participation in the oil and gas sector of Azerbaijan. Statoil, along with OSCE, Transparency International, and BP, also sponsored the first nation-wide public opinion poll on corruption. Statoil undertook to support projects related to the tradition of promoting Azeri national identity and pride. Statoil contributed to the publication of the work by Ismail Mammadov, the famous Azeri artist, titled "Absheron is a place of wind and fire", which was a logical follow-up to his previous works dedicated to the maps of Baku and its Old City ("Icheri Sheher"). This new map is now a good source of information about numerous architectural monuments scattered all over the Apsheron Peninsula.[18]

The US Exxon Mobil efforts made it a long standing tradition to contribute to community development wherever they work in Azerbaijan. Its aid programs for Azerbaijan have always included the promotion of education and the assistance to refugees and internally displaced people. Exxon Mobil allocated more than $3 million for the needs of education and community development in Azerbaijan; it also financed the publication of much-needed educational and training tools in the development of the Azeri alphabet as well as the organization of the country's educational programs in

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[17] BP, Statoil-Azerbaijan: Report on Sustainable Development in 2003, p. 3.
[18] Statoil: "Delivering gas to consumers", B., 2006, pp.6-7.

the field of environment protection.[19] At the same time, Exxon Mobil continued its cooperation with major humanitarian agencies to promote community development programs and profit making activities for thousands of refugees living in the southern districts of Azerbaijan. Education and environmental protection projects are among Exxon Mobil's priorities and focus on environmental education. In 2004, Exxon Azerbaijan Operation Company supported the implementation of a number of measures in the field of environmental protection. Exxon Azerbaijan worked together with governmental and public agencies to clean public parks, to plant trees, to carry out environmental educational programs for school children, and allocated funds for this purpose.[20] This foreign company also lent effective support to publish Children's Encyclopedias and ABC books related to the environment and to create green spots in a series of Baku secondary schools. With the financial support from Exxon Azerbaijan, the Humanitarian Information Agency and the Caucasus International Cultural and Ecotourism Center organized a number of events in Baku secondary schools and orphanages. Exxon Azerbaijan and the Environmental Educational Center, established by the Ministry of Education of Azerbaijan, jointly organized ecological contests on environment protection of the Caspian Sea. Beginning in 2003, school children in fifteen districts of the country have been regularly involved in this project. Exxon Mobil, USAID, Chevron, Texaco, Statoil, RUC.OSI-AF, SI American Express, Itochu, Unocal Khazar Ltd., Hyatt Hotels and Baker Botts provided significant support and assistance to economic education development programs for secondary schools in Azerbaijan carried out by the Azerbaijani Youth Values Organization.[21]

While strengthening its cooperation with the above mentioned international societies, organizations and foreign companies, Azerbaijan continues to further develop its social and economic system while bringing its national standards closer to international norms and moving towards active integration with the rest of the world.

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[19] Exxon Mobil: Investments in oil sector and assistance to the people. B., 2006, p. 4.
[20] "Iqtisadiyyat" ("Economics") Magazine, No.22, April 3, 2004.
[21] "Iqtisadiyyat" ("Economics") Magazine, No.17, March 26-April 1, 2004.

IV. BOOK REVIEWS

Denkov's Contextual Kantianism

A review of Dimitar Denkov, What is Enlightenment? Texts, Genres and Contexts Around Kant's „Answering the Question: What is Enlightenment?" Sofia: St. Kliment Ohridski University Press 2011. 382 pp.

Reviewed by: Vassil Vidinsky (University of Sofia)

The stated goal of the book (partially based on previous books and articles) is to represent one *specific philosophical case* around Kant's „Answering the Question: What is Enlightenment?" and his notes on logic published by Jäsche (compiled at Kant's request from his late lectures and published in 1800). This specific philosophical case is simply to answer the enlightenment-question itself. "Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?" is a 1784 essay by Kant published in *Berlinische Monatsschrift* (*Berlin Monthly*), edited by Friedrich Gedike and Johann Erich Biester. As Denkov states, the question was posed a year earlier by the Reverend Johann Friedrich Zöllner, who was also an official in the Prussian government (185, 191). This text seems somehow marginal compared to Kant's *Critiques*, but Denkov's reconstruction establishes its connection to the major works and importance. This is only the most general framework, as the book unfolds on at least four different layers:

1. The most immediate layer is the textual analysis of several works by Kant, mainly the rather philosophically marginal but quite popular "What is Enlightenment?" The analysis is enriched and strengthened by Denkov's new translations (included in the book), by comparisons presented in tables (329-338), and by many interesting comments and remarks.

2. The next important layer, which sometimes supersedes the first, is a detailed analysis of: one fable by Johann Zöllner ("Der Affe. Ein Fabelchen"); one letter by Mr ** on The Automaton Chess Player (The Turk) constructed by Wolfgang von Kempelen ("Schreiben über die Kempelischen Schachspiel- und Redemaschinen" by Herrn **); some remarks on this letter (as a response) by Johann Biester; and another letter from London. All these different texts immediately surround Kant's essay in the *Berlin Monthly* and Denkov reconstructs and articulates an original interpretation of the connections and links between these different themes and genres. This sometimes leads us to surprising results, e.g. reducing the question "What is Enlightenment?" to the question "what is it to be human?" or rather *"What is Man?"* (278); or seeing Kant as a mediator between Zöllner and Biester.

3. There is a third layer, a very elaborate one, which runs through the whole book and reconstructs some biographical, contextual and historical influences, connections and paradigms. Here the book is at its best because it tries to show that *we can understand the past much better than it understood itself* (340); and of course for "the past" we can substitute "Immanuel Kant" with ease. What is more important, however, is that Denkov's book is a sustained and thorough criticism of the version of the Enlightenment given by Horkheimer, Adorno, and Lukács (80). It is a difficult task, but Denkov's readings persuade the reader to think about the Enlightenment in a more subtle way and on multiple levels.

4. The last layer is an especially interesting one because it is the systematic and careful presentation of Denkov's own philosophical project: *contextual hermeneutics and history of concepts as common denominators*. This agenda can be found everywhere in the book but it is mainly concentrated in the second chapter. It starts with the paradox about *trying to reach the origin through successive interpretations and clarifications* (7) and slowly goes through different (and sometimes strange) oppositions: monolith–multitude; pathetic–humble; being–event; original–mediating; star–nebula; system(atic)–comment(ary); revelation–translation; authorship–readership (*lectio*); pure–kaleidoscope; seriousness–oddity; text–context; ego-documents and alter ego-documents; and the important pair sub[j]active–subjective (116). We have to keep in mind that these oppositions are not made to divide but rather to unite the whole analysis. The same

tense unity is characteristic of Denkov's account of culture and civilization in Kant – these concepts are not really opposed to each other but sometimes even overlap (82). Denkov lists five preconditions (113) which finally lead us to one very important hermeneutical and phenomenological principle: things, not as they are, but *as they should have been* in order to be what they are now (115). This principle sums up the whole contextual reconstruction of Immanuel Kant and his Enlightenment setting.

In achieving its aims and in presenting its layers the book takes three consecutive steps: it opens and develops its core argument in the third chapter, devoted to the epoch itself: the Enlightenment seen through the *philosophical structure* of "question and answer." This is the most general approximation we can start with. But very soon the analysis concentrates on the German Enlightenment and on the principle of tolerance, which will have a crucial role in the book's final conclusion (because both at the beginning and at the end there's the vitally important distinction between radical Enlightenment and non-radical Enlightenment – cf. 162, 307).

Then we are led through the fourth chapter, which narrows the horizon and tries to reconstruct the specific Kantian "conversations" and *the art of thinking together* by analyzing the *Berlin Monthly* case. The fable, the answer, and the letter are seen as typical genres and philosophical "revelations." We are introduced to different texts and contexts – all of them slowly building a bridge between people, prejudices, upbringings, educations, public roles and anonymities. The chapter concludes the interconnectedness between the Kantian project of Man and the enlightening historical project of technological progress. Man and machine are the main characters (although sometimes not very visible) in these conversations, their tense interactions are the real historical structure of the Enlightenment.

And finally (in the last chapter) we end our journey with Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, the role of Schopenhauer and the typical division of the *Critique* into A/B-editions, which is nicely juxtaposed with Kant as *Homo duplex* (311, 324) and his double project in his logic. Here Denkov asks two crucial and interesting questions: what is the connection between revolution (in thought) and *Denkungsart* (340-354) and how is Kant's transcendental logic related to reason-returning-to-itself (354-378). The first

question aims at the concepts of "protest" and "thought revolution"; it tries to understand their conservative background because *protest* is seen as an inner revolt against an unexpressed *Denkungsart*. In this context it is quite clear why we should protest against the reduction of man to machine. The second question leads us to one unexpected conclusion and quotation (from the *Jäsche Logic* and from the *Anthropology From a Pragmatic Point of View*): "Universal rules and conditions for avoiding error in general are: 1) to think for oneself, 2) to think oneself in the position of someone else, and 3) always to think in agreement with oneself." This is the-returning-of-reason-to-itself and at the same time the principle which shows man's dignity: "Nature, then, has carefully cultivated the seed within the hard core – namely the urge for and the vocation of free thought. And this free thought gradually reacts back on the modes of thought of the people, and men become more and more capable of *acting in freedom*. At last free thought acts even on the fundamentals of *government* and the state finds it agreeable to treat man, *who is now more than a machine*, in accord with his dignity."

It is now clear that the book in not solely concerned with Kant's transcendental project or with his critical philosophy, but rather with the historical context which makes it possible. So it is about the historical possibilities and foundations of Kant's transcendental project. And of course it is about Kant's *Denkungsart* and our *Denkungsart* – that most basic principle of truth and tolerance. Sometimes the book looks like a huge thought experiment and there are several theses which sound risky or speculative; Denkov admits this. But the irony woven into all four layers helps us; and it helps any methodological investigation, because any meta-commentary should be distanced from its source – both epistemologically and emotionally.

As already said: beneath all these different layer runs the most puzzling and crucial question (204): *can a machine think*? And if we try to answer, we should keep in mind one trivial thing: all thoughts occur in contextual, historical, and normative forms, even if they oppose them (8).

Review of Jean-Pierre Cléro,
Calcul moral ou comment raisonner en éthique?
Paris: Armand Colin, 2011. 544 pp. $69.95.

Boryana Angelova (National Sports Academy, Sofia)

Jean-Pierre Cléro's *Calcul moral ou comment raisonner en éthique?*, dedicated to moral philosophy, could be characterized as a fundamental work because it provides many new ideas and puts forward many new questions about ethics, its relation with moral philosophy, nd the meanings of these terms. Ethics and morality have different connotations in the fields of medicine and justice. Their origins are different (*ethics* is a Greek word, *morality* is a Latin one), so they are "naturally" separated yet always related: they were separated by Kant, whereas during the Renaissance their imbrication was deeper. This raises some problems about their meaning and aims, about their development in philosophical thought over the centuries. Examples, provided in the book, are the philosophies of Spinoza and Pascal. Cléro explains them and elaborates them in the new fields of contemporary ethics. Important starting points, as Cléro shows, are the development of the modern State and the changes concerning the meaning of morality. Following upon these, morality has been legalized by the church, the State and the judiciary; nowadays in the modern State, in contemporary society, such a process is impossible because of new values, freedoms and laws. In the modern State, we cannot say what is moral and what is not; so we need a new methodology and approach to ethics – a way to calculate or to cure our contemporary moral. "Calcul" is a French word meaning *calculation* and *gallstone,* and its usage in the title is not accidental; according to Cléro there are many approaches to contemporary "sick" morality and one of them is mathematics, which assists in judgment in medicine. Medicine in the modern State faces the same problems that morality does. There is a real need for a juridical decision on moral problems; however, the decision cannot be *only* juridical as it first needs to employ the methods of philosophy and mathematics and, only after these, of law.

Another important concept which Cléro uses is the meaning of utilitarianism. In contemporary society utilitarianism is a mainstream ideology, everything is morally acceptable if useful, comfortable and "rational"; but the utilitarian act does not always follow the utilitarian rule; the utilitarianism of pleasure is not the same as the utilitarianism of desire... so even on this level we need philosophical ethics to explain and debate morality.

Cléro spends a lot of time on terms and focuses on their explanation. He gives not only their contemporary meaning but their significance down the ages as well. By tracing meanings in this way the book provides an education in philology, contributing not only to ethics but to philosophical history. Cléro explains the meaning of "ethics," "bioethics," "medical ethics," etc., as they appeared chronologically. All pose a similar problem, one which can be solved by philosophy – a philosophy that should remain critical. As indicated above, however, to "critical philosophy:" in Kant's sense, mathematical approaches need to be added.

Starting with his first chapter, Cléro focuses on the problem of argumentation in ethics. This should be clear as it is in mathematics. However, John Locke's example of 2 + 3 = 5 cannot be used to explain complicated contemporary moral questions. Cléro looks for answers in the philosophy of Montesquieu and Rousseau as well. Can argumentation in ethics be as clear as it is in mathematics? Cléro answers this and many other questions.

In the second chapter Cléro turns to the philosophical necessity of managing the problems of medical ethics. He explains why bioethics and medical ethics are utilitarian. Understanding utilitarianism is the new approach to ethics. In this perspective, an important role is played by juridical judgment.

Jereymy Bentham, whom Cléro knows as a translator and as an analyst, plays a major part in this. Included as well is a very interesting theory of emotions which again proposes different approaches, and is increasingly insistent from the perspective of a theory of fictions. In order to engage in a patient construction of the theory of fictions, Cléro's current research unfolds on several levels and is part of a reflection on mathematical and physical concepts which often have the status of fiction.

According to Cléro explanations and demonstrations are often done in the mode of „as if," a contention confirmed by his reading of Bentham. Ben-

tham was a lawyer and his theory of fictions is partly a reflection on law: the theory of fictions Cléro seeks thus gains a greater extension. The deepening of John Stuart Mill's system of logic and problem of induction is a necessary and ongoing concern for Cléro.

Jean-Pierre Cléro is very much influenced by English philosophy, especially Hume. He shows in his book that the foundation of the humanities lies in the philosophy of the passions, but also that passions are logical fictions. So he presents a new theory of fictions that is simultaneously deeply logical and historical, articulating several of our time's fields of knowledge and practices.

Another interesting point in the book concerns a possible theory of play and efficacy. It is a mathematical game but it could be a political game as well. Cléro develops a game theory that on the one hand treats the Second World War and the Cold War, and on the other is concerned with the Kantian critical philosophy and the analytical philosophy of G.E. Moore and P.H. Sedgwick – or maybe this is not analytical philosophy but a new philosophy of utilitarianism?

Jean-Pierre Cléro asks many questions and provides the answers himself, always including a historical background and new perspectives as well. One of the many questions he asks is about utilitarianism and liberalism. At first sight they seem to be equivalent (this is discussed at length in contemporary philosophy); yet Cléro finds that this is not exactly, naturally so. Utilitarianism and liberalism are related but there are some differences as well. Cléro's comprehensive treatment of this and other issues elucidates abstruse analytical philosophy and develops a "utilitarian philosophy" which could be "useful" and equal to the new moral needs in the fields of medicine and jurisprudence. The book is suitable for students and professionals in philosophy, medicine, law, and for anyone interested in those topics, since the answers are there for all to find.

Review of: Salvi Turró, *Fichte.*
De la consciència a l'absolut [*Fichte: From*
Consciounsess to the Absolute], Omicron:
Badalona (Barcelona), 2011. 270pp. €20

Sergi Avilés (CSRF, Barcelona)

One of the main merits of Salvi Turró's book is that he makes Fichte speak in the present, breaking down the two-hundred-year old wall separating us. Beyond the technical or historical interest in reviving the German thinker, there is also the vital, existential and pragmatic intention to grasp what is valuable in Fichte for us. Turró fully endorses Fichte's dictum that only the spirit, and not the letter, is what brings true realization of the sense of thought and life. It is the author's interest to capture the vital motivations and the core ideas in which Fichte built up his thought.

The prose often achieves the directness of body language during oral communication. The author thus maintains a tight congruence between the philosophical concept and immediate, sensuous life that seduces the reader. And it is not necessary that the reader be a specialist in Fichte, only that he/she desire to understand or, rather, to explicitly bring to the forefront and repeat the spiritual motivations that engendered the first Idealist philosophy. Once this is accomplished at any given point, understanding the entire system occurs without violence and validates Fichte's philosophy. If not, it is delegitimized, not because it is false theoretically, but because it has failed in its main purpose: to extract the universal meaning of life. But this conclusion can only be reached at the end of the road or repetition, never at the very beginning.

Regarding its content, the book covers Fichte's full vital and intellectual trajectory, from the formative years of the young man at Pforta and Leipzig, with its important Pietist influences, and his confrontation with the Aufklärung, to the last philosophy of 1813. The design of the chapters and the thread of the arguments reproduce both Fichte's chronological vicissitudes and the nuclei of his thought. In the first three chapters on the formative years, the transcendental foundation in consciousness (Doctrine of Sci-

ence) and the principles of practical philosophy (law, morality and religion) are explained. From the atheism and other disputes of the Jena period, chapter 4 develops the inflections that reshaped Fichte's "second navigation," in Plato sense. The last three chapters focus on the second period, which set out the review of the foundational task regarding the Absolute and issues of applied philosophy (economics, politics, education, religion) as well. These issues occupied the attention of the philosopher in his later years and they constitute the reintegration of philosophy into life. Faced with the traditional opposition between Fichte's two periods, Turró proposes a transcendental but evolutionary unity as the key reading, especially in relation to the link between consciousness and the Absolute. The "second navigation" would bring the Jena transcendentalism to its consummation with the doctrine of the unknowability of the Absolute as such, even as its presence to consciousness represents an "image" for us. Particularly relevant and new in the Hispanic scholarship of Fichte is Turró's thematizing of Fichte's interpretation of Christianity (and even Trinitarian dogma) as the culmination of the Doctrine of Science in 1813.

Turró's understanding of Fichte is the opposite of the one usually transmitted in handbooks, which portray him as merely a mechanical link between Kant and Hegel. Entering into Fichte's vital motivations, repeating his intellectual and personal journey, Turró develops an image of the thinker removed from jargon and clichés. There emerges an independent figure, a religious freethinker without any attachment to preset formulas, a man of indomitable character focused on the great questions. A "metaphysical thinker" without affiliation to any school.

Turró's scientific apparatus is remarkable, up to date, and includes contributions from the great German and French specialists. The more specialized reader will find the bibliography necessary for further research or information in the notes, where there are more technical discussions of specific points, as well as in a chapter at the end of the book that collects and discusses the current state of research.

The publisher has made an effort to offer a handsome, well-made volume to do justice to the contents, pleasant to touch and durable. The design and typography manage to convey a sense of fluidity, power and speed in reading.

V. ANNOUNCEMENT

Master's and Doctoral Studies in Philosophy Taught in English at Sofia University

Sofia University was founded in 1888 following the best patterns of the European higher education. Sofia is the capital city of the Republic of Bulgaria. Bulgaria is a Member of the European Union (EU).

MASTER'S PROGRAM IN PHILOSOPHY TAUGHT IN ENGLISH

The MA Program in Philosophy taught in English provides instruction in all major areas of Western Philosophy; besides, the master's thesis can be written on a topic from Eastern Philosophy as well – an expert in this field will be appointed as the supervisor. This program secures guidelines by faculty and leaves enough room for student's own preferences. The degree is recognized worldwide including the EU/EEA and Switzerland, the US, Canada, Russia, Turkey, China, Indian Sub-Continent, Latin America, and the Middle East.

Courses offered: Philosophical Anthropology, Ethics, Axiology, Philosophical Method, Truth and Meaning, Philosophy of Intercultural Relations, Social Philosophy, Continental Philosophy, Philosophy for Children, Philosophy of Culture, Logic in the Continental Tradition, Theories of Truth, Existential Dialectics, Philosophy of the Subjective Action, Phenomenology, Renaissance Philosophy

Faculty Members: All faculty teaching at the program are approved by the Bulgarian State Highest Assessment Commission. They feature successful teaching experience in this country and abroad and are well published in Bulgarian and English.

Duration of Studies: two semesters of course attendance plus a third

semester for writing the master's thesis; opportunities for distance learning.

Admission Requirements: Bachelor's degree in any field of humanities, social science, science, or professional disciplines. No tests or application fee are required (for citizens of EU/EEA and Switzerland applying for a state scholarship 16 € fee is charged and an interview is held). No previous degree in philosophy is needed.

Tuition fee:
1) citizens of EU/EEA and Switzerland – 500 € per school year
2) international students – 3 850 € per school year

Financial aid:

A) *The citizens of EU/EEA and Switzerland* are eligible for state scholarships carrying 50% tuition waiver plus a monthly stipend beginning from the second semester.

B) The Fulbright Graduate Grants are offered to *American citizens* as a form of a very competitive financial aid; for more information see www.fulbright.bg. Furthermore, the American applicants are eligible for Federal Loans; please check for more details at the Education Department web site, http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSFAP/DirectLoan/index.html; at Sallie Mae, http://www.salliemae.com/, and at Student Loan Network, http://www.privatestudentloans.com   and https://www.discoverstudentloans.com. It is possible to use some other sources of government financial assistance by the American citizens (please contact the Program Director for details).

C) Financial aid to *Canadian nationals* is provided in the form of Government Student Loans by the Province where they permanently reside.

D) *The Western Balkans citizens* are welcome to apply for Erasmus Mundus/BASELEUS Project scholarship carrying full tuition waiver and monthly stipend, http://www.basileus.ugent.be/index.asp?p=111&a=111.

E) *Students from Turkey* can receive financial aid within the Erasmus Student Exchange Program.

F) Financial aid for *Chinese students* is available within the bilateral Chinese-Bulgarian Cultural Agreement. Please contact the Chinese Ministry of Education for more information.

H) *Students from Russia* (Financial aid for *Russian students* is available within the bilateral Russian-Bulgarian Cultural Agreement. Please contact the Russian Ministry of Education for more information), *Ukraine, Belarus, and the other CIS countries, Indian Sub-Continent, Latin America, and the Middle East* receive financial aid in the form of inexpensive dormitory accommodation (about 50 € per month including most of the utilities) plus a discount on public transportation and at the University cafeterias. The same type of financial aid is available for *the citizens of EU/EEA and Switzerland, American citizens, Canadian nationals, Western Balkans citizens, students from Turkey,* and *Chinese students.*

Application deadline: September 30, to start in October; January 31, to start in March.

Student Visa Matters: The Sofia University in cooperation with the Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science provides the necessary documents for student visa application to all **eligible** candidates outside the *EU/EEA and Switzerland.*

Cultural Life and Recreation: Being the capital of Bulgaria, Sofia features a rich cultural life. In most of the cinemas, English language films can be seen. There are a number of concert halls, dozens of art galleries, and many national and international cultural centers. Streets of Sofia are populated by cozy cafés and high quality inexpensive restaurants offering Bulgarian, European, and international cuisine. Sofia is a favorable place for summer and winter sports including skiing in the nearby mountain of Vitosha. More about Sofia and can be found at http://www.sofia-

life.com/culture/culture.php. You can follow Sofia and Bulgarian news at http://www.novinite.com/lastx.php.

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     Mailing address: Department of Philosophy, Sofia University, 15 Tsar Osvoboditel Blvd., Sofia 1504, BULGARIA.

DOCTORAL PROGRAM IN PHILOSOPHY TAUGHT IN ENGLISH

The Ph.D. Program in Philosophy taught in English, besides studies in residence, offers an opportunity for extramural studies (extramural studies is a Bulgarian version of distance learning). This Program provides instruction in all major areas of Western Philosophy; besides, the doctoral dissertation can be written on a topic from Eastern Philosophy as well – an expert in this field will be appointed as the supervisor. This program secures guidelines by faculty and leaves enough room for student's own preferences. The degree is recognized worldwide including the EU/EEA and Switzerland, the US, Canada, Russia, Turkey, China, Indian Sub-Continent, Latin America, and the Middle East.

Courses offered: Psychoanalysis and Philosophy, Philosophical Anthropology, Applied Ethics, Epistemology, Philosophy of Science, Social Philosophy, Philosophy of Intercultural Relations, Philosophical Method, Continental Philosophy, Philosophy for Children, Philosophy of Language, Philosophy of Culture, Time and History.

Eligibility Requirement: Master's degree in any field. No previous degree in philosophy is needed.

Checklist: CV, two letters of recommendation, standardized tests scores are NOT required. No application fee (for citizens of EU/EEA and Switzerland a 32 € fee is charged and an entrance exam is held).

Tuition fee:
1) citizens of EU/EEA and Switzerland – in residence: 940 € per school year; extramural: 600 € per school year
2) international students – in residence: 6 500 € per school year; extramural: 3 300 € per school year

Dissertation defense fee: 1 400 €

Duration of studies: in residence – 3 years; extramural – 4 years; opportunities for distance learning.

Financial aid:

A) *The citizens of EU/EEA and Switzerland* studying in residence are eligible for state scholarships carrying full tuition waiver and waiver of the dissertation defense fee plus a significant (for the Bulgarian standard) monthly stipend. For extramural studies only tuition waiver and the dissertation defense fee waiver are available.

B) The Fulbright Graduate Grants are offered to *American citizens* as a form of a very competitive financial aid; for more information see www.fulbright.bg. Furthermore, they are eligible for Federal Loans; please check for more details at the Education Department web site, http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSFAP/DirectLoan/index.html; at Sallie Mae, http://www.salliemae.com/, and at Student Loan Network, http://www.privatestudentloans.com and https://www.discoverstudentloans.com. It is possible to use some other sources of government financial assistance by the American citizens (please contact the Program Director for details).

C) Financial aid to *Canadian nationals* is provided in the form of Government Student Loans by the Province where they permanently reside. This type of aid is usually unavailable for extramural studies.

D) *The Western Balkans citizens* are welcome to apply for Erasmus Mundus/BASELEUS Project scholarship carrying full tuition waiver and monthly stipend, http://www.basileus.ugent.be/index.asp?p=111&a=111.

E) *Students from Turkey* can receive financial aid within the Erasmus Student Exchange Program.

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of Education for more information.

H) ***Students from Russia*** (Financial aid for ***Russian students*** is available within the bilateral Russian-Bulgarian Cultural Agreement. Please contact the Russian Ministry of Education for more information)***, Ukraine, Belarus, and the other CIS countries, Indian Sub-Continent, Latin America, and the Middle East*** receive financial aid in the form of inexpensive dormitory accommodation (about 40 € per month including most of the utilities) plus a discount on public transportation and at the University cafeterias. The same type of financial aid is available for ***the citizens of EU/EEA and Switzerland, American citizens, Canadian nationals, Western Balkans citizens, students from Turkey,*** and ***Chinese students.***

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