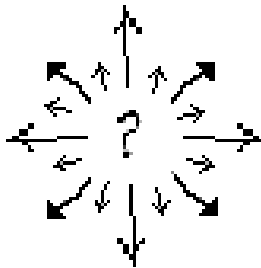


# Sofia Philosophical Review

Alexander L. Gungov, Sofia University, Editor  
John McSweeney, Cork, Ireland, Associate Editor  
Karim Mamdani, Toronto, Canada, Book Review Editor  
Kristina Stöckl, University of Innsbruck,  
International Editor

Vol. X, No. 2  
2017

Academic Community in  
Civil Society



This issue is printed with the kind support by the Ph.D. Program in Philosophy Taught in English at the University of Sofia.



*Sofia Philosophical Review* is a peer reviewed journal indexed by The Philosopher's Index, EBSCO and the MLA International Bibliography.

*Sofia Philosophical Review* accepts papers in the fields of Social, Political, and Moral Philosophy from a Continental Perspective; Continental Philosophy in general; and Philosophy of Medicine. Please send an electronic version of the manuscript accompanied with a 100 word abstract to:

Editor

*Sofia Philosophical Review*

E-mail: [agungov@phls.uni-sofia.bg](mailto:agungov@phls.uni-sofia.bg)

Web site: [www.sphr-bg.org](http://www.sphr-bg.org)

All prospective contributions should follow

*The Chicago Manual of Style.*

Review materials should be sent to the Book Review  
Editor at:

*Sofia Philosophical Review*

Faculty of Philosophy

Sofia University

15 Tsar Osvoboditel Blvd.

Sofia 1504

BULGARIA

ISSN 1313-275X

© Aglika Gungova, cover design

---

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

### SPIRITUALITY AND SUBJECTIVITY

<b>The Ways of Spirituality.....</b>	<b>5</b>
Ken A. Bryson (Cape Breton University) .....	5
<b>Broaching the Difference Between Intersubjectivity and Intersubjection Inspired by the Feminist Critique.....</b>	<b>38</b>
Iraklis Ioannidis (University of Glasgow)	

### PHILOSOPHY LOOKING AT SOCIETY AND POLITICS

<b>Is Political Humour Dangerous?.....</b>	<b>69</b>
Aysel Demir (Kirikkale University)	
<b>Maximization of the Win.....</b>	<b>79</b>
Boryana Angelova-Igova (National Academy of Sports “Vassil Levski”)	
<b>Acknowledgement, Not Recognition: A Wish-To-Say .....</b>	<b>90</b>
Erturk Demirel (Bogazici University)	

### BOOK REVIEW

<b>Jill Stauffer, Ethical Loneliness: The Injustice of Not Being Heard. New York: Columbia University Press, 2015. Hardcover, 240 pp. \$55.....</b>	<b>114</b>
Dessislava Petrova (University of Sofia)	

### ANNOUNCEMENT M.A. AND PH.D. PROGRAM

<b>IN PHILOSOPHY TAUGHT IN ENGLISH .....</b>	<b>118</b>
--	------------

### INFORMATION ABOUT AUTHORS AND EDITORS

<b>IN ALPHABETIC ORDER.....</b>	<b>124</b>
---------------------------------	------------



---

# SPIRITUALITY AND SUBJECTIVITY

---

## The Ways of Spirituality

*Ken A. Bryson (Cape Breton University)*

### ***Abstract***

The fact that we are that spiritual being seeking to know itself clouds the meaning of spirituality. Thus, the study of spirituality is in part autobiography. Spirituality is the ‘inside’ world of psyche trying to make sense of the ‘outside’ world. To be more precise, since I am not a dualist, spirituality is the subjective correlate of consciousness seeking to make sense of its objective correlate. Spirituality triggers existential restlessness in the human pursuit of happiness. Aquinas’s vision of perfect happiness explains our existential restlessness (*ST* 1.11:3:8) “Final and perfect happiness can consist in nothing else than the vision of the Divine Essence.” Spirituality is an ongoing struggle to discover the Divine Essence within the folds of consciousness.

### ***Introduction***

The fact that we are that spiritual being seeking to know itself clouds the meaning of spirituality. Thus, the study of spirituality is in part autobiography. Spirituality is the ‘inside’ world of psyche trying to make sense of the ‘outside’ world. To be more precise, since I am not a dualist, spirituality is the subjective correlate of consciousness seeking to make sense of its objective correlate. Spirituality triggers existential restlessness in the human pursuit of happiness. Aquinas’s vision of perfect happiness explains our existential restlessness (*ST* 1.11:3:8) “Final and perfect happiness can consist in nothing else than the vision of the Divine Essence.” Spirituality is an ongoing struggle to discover the Divine Essence within the folds of consciousness, but spiritual energies plug into negative sockets and positive outlets depending on human choices.

Spirituality is not religion. All persons are spiritual, but not necessarily religious. Spirituality is a necessary condition in the absence of

which religion cannot occur, but not a sufficient condition, that is in the presence of which religious belief must follow. The innate character of spirituality suggests that human moral experience is filtered *a priori* through spiritual lenses, however. But our spiritual core remains intact even when human nature appears to run amuck (addictions, hate literature, negative emotion). Spirituality and experience are interconnected in our moral decisions. Finally, my views on spirituality are anchored in a metaphysics of persons. Everyone is human but humans are not equally personal. This fact opens the door to different views on spirituality.

### ***The Structure of Spirituality***

Spirituality presents as a movement towards the discovery of sacred values such as the good. A study by Hamlin, Wynn, and Bloom (2007)<sup>1</sup> found that preverbal infants can assess individuals based on their behavior towards others. These infants show a marked preference for individuals who help others to one who hinders another. A CBC television production by David Suzuki (*The Nature of Things*, 2013)<sup>2</sup> provides empirical evidence that babies are innately attracted to the good they see in others. This suggests that the spiritual thirst for sacred meaning is at the core of our loving relations. The drive towards the good extends to the environment and to our own psyche (contentment) as well as to other persons. The negative experience we have of other persons can shift our spiritual tendency towards immoral behavior (evil). Since no amount of finite good or evil can ever completely satisfy the spiritual appetite, the behavioral drive towards good and evil is ongoing. The tendency towards the good is part of the structure of human understanding along with other innate characteristics of reasoning such as the need to discover sufficient reasons and identities whenever we think. The Suzuki study, and studies in psychology before Suzuki, provide empirical evidence of the innate origin of spirituality. As we mature, the role of reason and will in pursuit of the good is filtered by cultural, so-

---

<sup>1</sup> Hamlin, K., Wynn, K., Bloom, P. 2007. "Social Evaluation by Preverbal Infants." *Nature* 450 (7169), 557-559.

<sup>2</sup> Suzuki, D. (July 4, 2013). Babies Born to be Good." *The Nature of Things*. CBC Television. <http://www.cbc.ca/natureofthings/episode/born-to-be-good-1.html>. Accessed September 21, 2016.

cietal, economic, political, ethical, and past moral choices. While infants are genetically programmed to pursue the good, they are born in a contingent world marked by the possibility of negative influences and the luxury of making bad choices. Children learn that selfishness and dishonesty appear to pay off now and then.

The distinction between secular and sacred spirituality introduces two aspects of the good. The innate drive towards spiritual good is framed from the point of view of compassion, love, nurturing, and acts of kindness towards persons, and the environment. This paper argues that we become more personal through relationships with other persons, the environment, and the self. Therefore, sacred spirituality is based on a dynamic vision of personal growth. This view does not preclude the pursuit and enjoyment of secular spirituality (material goods), although the exclusive pursuit of secular goods often frustrates the spirituality principle. The ongoing character of the spiritual tendency explains how our affective and cognitive processes raise the sacred spirituality bar beyond the level of disease and disunity. To illustrate the difference between the role of sacred and secular spirituality I invite my students to reflect on the possibility of personal death. To this end, I sentence them to die in 12 hours. To make the prospects of personal death vivid, I ask them to write their personal obituary and recount what they do with the remaining few hours of life, and provide details on the manner of their death. The realization of looming personal death makes the point that spirituality's search for sacred meaning trumps the search for secular meaning. No one worries about buying new boots when life is at an end. We continue the exercise with a reading of the usual suspects—Leo Tolstoy's (1828-1910) novel *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*,<sup>3</sup> and Martin Heidegger's writing on human death (*Being and Time*, 1962),<sup>4</sup> along with Raymond Moody's books on the near-death experience to bring the point to a head. The acceptance of personal death functions as a source of inspiration to make the best of the now because it focuses on sacred good. Visions of death are peace seeking moments imbedded in us from birth. But why wait for a crisis to direct spirituality towards sacred outcomes? Some individuals focus spirituality towards religion but not everyone. A

---

<sup>3</sup> Tolstoy, L. 1981. *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*. New York: Bantam Books.

<sup>4</sup> Heidegger, M. 1962. *Being and Time*. Translated by Macquarrie J. and Robinson J. New York: Harper and Row, 279-311.

recent tweet by Bishop Robert Barron claims that for the first time in its history, Harvard University admitted a Freshman class in which atheists and agnostics outnumbered professed Christians and Jews.<sup>5</sup> A debate between Christopher Hitchens and Richard Dawkins in 2013 on the value of religion concluded that we are better off without religion.<sup>6</sup> Perhaps the conclusion is a reflection of debating skills but the looming question remains: if spirituality does not plug into religion or the God socket where does it go?

### ***Spirituality and religion***

Spirituality as an embedded part of human nature is factual rather than normative. The study of how this concept has been used since mid-1980s reveals its great flexibility. The most frequent use of spirituality is in its connection to religion, including Satanism. The three main characteristics of religion are (1) a focus towards the good (2) a belief in God (or Higher Power), and (3) a belief in the existence of an afterlife state. Does sacred spirituality connect with all three characteristics? It does. The research of Hill, Pargament, Hood, McCullough, Swyers, Larson, and Zinnbauer (2000)<sup>7</sup> among others threads the connection between the understanding of the ultimate good as perceived by the individual with religious agreement on the use of prescribed behaviors “that receive validation and support from within an identifiable group of people.”<sup>8</sup> Sharing in the rituals of a religious community leads to the feeling of belonging to a group of like-minded individuals. The attraction between spirituality and religion is therapeutic. Religion feeds the need to be part of an identifiable group perhaps as a coping mechanism for stress. We do not always intend the good, however. The Abraham religions equate the fallen human condition with the existence of evil. Religion also an-

---

<sup>5</sup> Barron, R. 2015. “Your Life Does Not Belong to You.” <https://twitter.com/downloads?s=13> accessed October 2, 2015.

<sup>6</sup> Hitchens, C. and R. Dawkins, 2013. “We’d be Better Off Without Religion.” <https://www.youtube.com> accessed October 2, 2015.

<sup>7</sup> Hill, P. C., Pargament, K. I., Hood, R. W. Jr., McCullough, M. E., Swyers, J. P., Larson, D. B., and B.J. Zinnbauer. 2001. “Conceptualizing Religion and Spirituality: Points of Commonality, Points of Departure.” *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*. 30 (1), 51-77.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 66.



swers the fear of personal extinction by providing hope for salvation and the existence of a pleasurable afterlife state.

The etymology of religion is from the Latin *religare* which means to reconnect with the Transcendent to be healed or become whole. The process of relationship with the Sacred takes place through the practice of cherished symbols and rituals. The word spiritual is from the Latin word *spiritus* which means breath or life. The sense of breath includes moving towards an intended end such as God. But we never fully connect with God. Spirituality's unending quest for the good explains existential restlessness as we press onwards in search of that ultimate connection. Kant argues that It legitimates the belief in the existence of the afterlife state as a place to attain holiness. John Daniel Wild (1962)<sup>9</sup> also argues that restlessness provides an argument for the existence of God. His explanation is that we are restless because no finite good completely satisfies our appetite for meaning. It continues until we discover God as the source of infinite love. Viktor Frankl's classic work *Man's Search for Meaning* (1985)<sup>10</sup> suggests that the love of others is the apex of human experience. Frankl's experiences in an Auschwitz concentration camp during World War II taught him a lesson in spiritual survival through the visualization of his wife and the love he felt for her. Religion equates infinite love with God. Moments of intense pressure bring the ongoing search for ultimate meaning into clear light because an existential crisis (disease, divorce, death, Auschwitz) brings spirituality completely out of the closet! The pursuit of meaning is an ongoing reclamation of what is best about the human condition. Healthy individuals strive to be more loving, compassionate, caring, forgiving, and tolerant in all their associations—qualities we usually associate with spirituality and religion. But the same spiritual search for ultimate meaning can also be directed towards the worst destructive elements of human nature or quite simply the pursuit of disempowering relationships through religious wars. The fact that our relationships never completely satisfy us provides insight into the dynamic character of spirituality, in its victories and failures. My desire for a new bookcase or laptop is not a significant

---

<sup>9</sup> Wild, John. 1962. "An Existential Argument for the Divine Transcendence." *Journal of Bible and Religion*. 1 October, Vol. 30 (4), 269-277.

<sup>10</sup> Frankl, Viktor. 1985. *Man's Search for Meaning*. New York: Washington Square Press.

spiritual ambition but it can turn sour if I steal a laptop or seek to disempower other persons and the environment. The will to enter relationship with God is more promising of authentic meaning. Spirituality is connected more with religion and healing outcomes than with a furniture store. But the search for the good, the bad, God and immortality takes a turn as it becomes clouded with the goals of secular spirituality and the focus on economic development rather than human development; on the use of persons as a means for self-development; on shopping at Walmart in search of the good life; and on pollution of the environment for economic gain. We frame the meaning of life in ways that reflects the best and worst of what it means to be a person.

***A Person is The Output of Relationships:  
Metaphysics of Spirituality***

No one acts in a vacuum. Therefore, the view of spirituality found in the literature is based on the pursuit of the good through the operational relationships that define persons. We are equally human beings but we are not equally persons because we experience different sorts of relationships. Spilka (1993) focuses on the multidimensional character of spirituality and religion.<sup>11</sup> My interpretation of multidimensionality is that we become persons through three main clusters of associations or relationship streams. Our most basic spiritual relationship exists at the level of our carbon origin as the output of matter and energy. The strings of relationships that take place at this level include our genetic structure and the whole of the environment (Bryson, 2010).<sup>12</sup> We are carbon atoms along with other carbon atoms eating them and being eaten in turn. The second stream of relationships to individuate persons is the social or

---

<sup>11</sup> Spilka, B. (August 1993). "Spirituality: Problems and Directions in Operationalizing a Fuzzy Concept." Paper read at the meeting of the American Psychological Association. Toronto, Ontario. Cited in Hill, P. C., Pargament, K. I., Hood, R. W. Jr., McCullough, M. E., Swyers, J. P., Larson, D. B., and B. J. Zinnbauer. 2001. "Conceptualizing Religion and Spirituality: Points of Commonality, Points of Departure." *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 30 (1), 51-77.

<sup>12</sup> Bryson, K. 2010. "Person as Verb." Augustine Perumalil (ed.), *Satya Nilayam Journal of Intercultural Philosophy*. Special Issue on Human Person: Various Perspectives, 17, 65-95.

interpersonal perspective. The social-self cluster of associations includes all person based associations, as well as associations with pets and all other living things. A person is the output of a social network consisting of parents, siblings, relatives, friends, neighbors, strangers, the global society-at-large, animals, and other living things such as trees, and plants. The third layer of person-making process takes place in the internal processes of consciousness, and the unconscious. Self-awareness characterizes this area of associations, although the unconscious operates mainly in the dark. The mind is aware of itself as it identifies and processes, restores, and replaces lost or broken sources of meaning. The psychological-self is the clearinghouse of meaning; the place where old sources of meaning are varied and new relationships formed, including the attempt to heal broken relationships as they arise in the string of associations that populate the psyche or internal-self, the social-self and the carbon-self.

**The theology of spirituality is based on the metaphysics:** In my opinion, the clearest personal expression of religion and the view of God as Trinity exists in the relations that make us persons. The connection with religion as per the Second Vatican Council (Flannery, 1988)<sup>13</sup> is that the search for meaning in Christian spirituality is enacted primarily by entering relationship with Christ and the Blessed Trinity.<sup>14</sup> The following begins to make sense of the Blessed Trinity: God the Father corresponds to our carbon relations because the Father is the creator of the carbon universe. Pope Francis's focus on the sanctity of the environment illustrates how the relation with God the Father is evolving. On the other hand, God as Christ is found in the relation that exists between persons. The belief in the existence of an afterlife state in Christian theology is based on the death and resurrection of God the Son, while God the Holy Spirit is expressed through the wisdom and insight required to guide sacred spirituality towards the ultimate good of human existence. My view of spirituality is more intimately connected with the Blessed Trinity and Christianity than might be the case in non-biblical ethics. The elements that populate sacred spirituality are gleaned from the Old Testament as

---

<sup>13</sup> Flannery, A. 1988. *Vatican Council II*. Northport New York: Costello Publishing Company, 769-772.

<sup>14</sup> Bryson, K. 2011. "An interpretation of Genesis 1:26." *Journal of Philosophy and Theology* 23:2, 187-213.

well as from the New Testament Bible in their historical setting. The spiritual history of Judaism is told through the cultural, societal, political, economic, and ethical setting of the Old Testament as a religious paradigm. Thus, this spiritual voice is heard primarily through relationship with God the Father. In Hebrew Scripture, God the Father, YAHWEH, and Creator of the world is imagined through the arm of the carbon-self set of relationships. The absence of an explicit reference to the social and/or internal self in the Old Testament explains in part why not all Jews believe in Christ as God or accept the existence of an afterlife state of existence. The focus on personal relation with the divine is absent in Buddhism and therefore Buddhism is not a religion per Western criteria, although the Buddhist spirituality of enlightenment mirrors the panentheistic character of God the Father found in Western religions;

The vision: The spirituality of the carbon-self seeks the attainment of a peace that exists beyond survival, disease, destruction, and death. The goal of the spiritual tendency as it manifests itself in our carbon relationships is the production of a world where nothing needs to survive because disease, destruction, and death threaten nothing. My spiritual vision of the realization of the religious world is one in which the cold, the hurricanes, the waters, the fire, and gravity exist side by side in peace with all living things. This is a world where the coyote and the lamb, the lion and the rabbit exist in peace with all things. This is a world where you go naked into the cold of winter without freezing to death, or plumb the depths of the ocean floor without fear of drowning or of being crushed by water pressure; this is a world where no carbon atom threatens any other carbon atom. The spiritual tendency at the level of carbon relationships contains an implicit promise of immortality. This non-destructive environment is what spirituality strives to attain in all things that are a product of gravity. And this is what religion promises at the level of the carbon-self. This is the carbon-self vision of sacred spirituality and an essential aspect of the ultimate good promised in the innate quest for sacred meaning.

On the other hand, the highest aspirations of social spirituality are expressed in the discovery of a personal absolute, one that is imbedded in a spirituality of love and compassion for all our peace-making relationships. The spiritual tendency moves us towards the discovery of a good that exist beyond selfish love to the discovery of a gentle letting be of the other. To love the other is to help them nurture their person-

making relationships. The spirituality of the social-self begins with the awareness of our embodiment. The human body is the product of loving relationships between persons. Thus, we do not have bodies any more than to love is to possess the other. We are incarnate consciousness in the world along with others and share with them the responsibility of civilization and the production of a better world (historicity). But our world is laced with violence, war, and the destruction of other human beings. How is the religious social promise possible?

The vision: The vision of the spiritual social self begins within the family unit and moves on to extend this loving relationship to include other persons. The spirituality of a peaceful social-self is attained by seeing other living things as an extension of our own social-self relationships, as Gabriel Marcel details in his works. The goodness of the mother-son-daughter-spousal relationship brings on the realization of a world in which each person is an extension of the other. Thus, the spiritual drive leads me to honor you as I honor myself; to love you as I love myself. The spiritual tendency directs us towards the attainment of a loving world that shares in the loving peace of Jesus Christ.

The associations that generate the internal-self take place in the realm of mind rather than brain since the latter is the output of carbon relationships. The nature of the internal self is elusive because the mind exists as embedded in carbon atoms. It corresponds to what some pre-Cartesian philosophers (Aquinas) called the soul. The soul appears to 'lie in wait for data' to move into the operations of knowledge. Jacques Maritain suggests that only God knows us the way we seek to know our self. Jungian psychology plumbs the contents of the obscure by peeling away progressive layers of insight into the nature of the affective self through 'individuation' or the process of integrating the contents of the unconscious into consciousness. The nature of the epistemic self remains elusive because of a false start. In my opinion, no I, ego or self exists outside of relationships. The internal-self is but one of three main streams of person-making relationships. This is the place where new relationships are formed; a place where the person institutes and varies relationships between means and ends in the attainment of a perceived ultimate good. The internal-self relationships are not material or carbon-based although they take place in the company of those associations. The mind needs the carbon-self (brain) to operate but what it produces is not reducible to the activities of the carbon-self. This view is based on

the distinction between mind and brain. The contents of the mind are dependent and independent of the carbon-self. They are dependent on it because in the world of gravity, space, and matter we cannot think without the carbon-self but at the same time, the contents of mind are not reducible to the activity taking place in the brain. The spiritual addiction to the ultimate good violates the laws of the irreversibility of space and time which no carbon-based relationship (brain) can produce on its own. The contents of thought cannot be expressed through the properties of carbon relationships (what color is love, how much does honesty weigh...) or exhausted by concrete art; no painting ever catches the full expression of love, motherhood, dignity; the spiritual imperative to draw one more painting or write one more love (or hate) song, or produce one more play is ongoing.

The vision: The fulfillment of the spirituality of the internal-self is based on divine wisdom—the provenance of God the Holy Spirit—and the realization that all things are interconnected. The immaterial character of mind, thought, beauty and love is evidence of the Holy Spirit in the world. It moves towards the (Buddhist) view where all things exist in relationship. The ego disappears because nothing exists in-itself. The act of thought provides an instance of unity as it becomes one with its object. The ultimate unity of all things shall generate a Kantian reversal where the carbon-self will depend on the mind for its existence, while the global self transforms into a dynamic unity of social-selves. The spiritual reality of love and compassion shall light up the other in luminous insight. This is the ultimate realization of our innate addiction to the Sacred in all things; a vision that carries us to a place where the word is more easily expressed by the arts than by language as divine ubiquity overcomes the illusion of separation (Hinduism) to reveal the three faces of persons in the one God.

Blaise Pascal develops an interesting argument that the non-believer can use to wager on the existence of God (Brown, 1984).<sup>15</sup> He claims that the benefits of wagering on the side of God's existence outweigh the loss sustained if we happen to be wrong; winning the wager places us in good stead about eternal life. On the other hand, losing the

---

<sup>15</sup> Brown, G. 1984. "A Defence of Pascal's Wager." *Religious Studies* 20 (3), 465-479.

wager costs us very little—perhaps a few hours in prayer. Even if evidential reason is not on the side of God's existence, prudential reason suggests that Pascal's wager is a safe bet. Further, Pascal's belief in the existence of the Christian God of love allows us to build better relationships with other persons and with the spirituality of the environment than would otherwise be the case. The sceptic can play along without loss and perhaps the illusion that God exists will create the reality? At the end of the day, if not God (and religion), then we need to find an alternative conduit to appease the nagging promise contained within our spiritual tendency.

***The Application of Spirituality to Alcohol Use Disorder:  
The Psychology of Recovery***

Alcohol abuse is an obstacle to positive spiritual growth in depth psychology. The literature on the treatment of alcohol use disorder falls into three broad complementary areas. The first is based on total abstinence and traces its origin to Bill W (*Anonymous*, 1935).<sup>16</sup> The question whether *Anonymous* is a program that focuses on living sober rather than on recovery from addiction is a moot point because the literature on the success of controlled drinking is mixed. The second treatment modality is based on the (carbon-self) scientific study of brain chemistry and dopamine receptor cells, while the third approach to alcohol use disorder is based on clinical psychology, namely positive reinforcement, and behavior modification. The second and third approaches seek to promote problem-free moderation, although abstinence from alcohol is necessary for those individuals with more severe symptoms. While total abstinence could be a desirable condition of recovery, the success of treatment does not depend on it. D. L. Davies in the early 60s and Mark and Linda Sobell in the early 70s pioneered the behavioral treatment of alcohol use disorder. Although the debate about the possibility of alcoholic's ability to drink in moderation is far from settled, their research prepared the way for the ongoing study of addiction. In our day, Keith Humphrey, Professor of Psychiatry at Stanford University School of Medicine, and Robert Miller, psychologist and Distinguished Professor

---

<sup>16</sup> *A.A. World Services Inc.* 1976. *Alcoholics Anonymous*. Third Edition. New York City: Alcoholics Anonymous Publishing.

Emeritus of psychology and psychiatry at the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, are spearheading fresh approaches to the study of alcoholism. Dr. Miller is the author of numerous studies on alcohol and drug abuse including ‘Integrating spirituality into treatment,’ and ‘Controlling your drinking.’ He developed a ‘Feeling-State’ protocol that is open to the ways of AA while making room for other harm reduction treatment modalities such as CRA and CRAFT (community reinforcement and family training). Dr. Miller suggests that the solution to alcohol and drug abuse should come from the client rather than the counselor. He says that the job of the counselor is to help people find the motivation for change. The CRA method developed by Robert Meyers also suggests that the client must decide whether sobriety is more rewarding than drug use. CRA makes drug use less rewarding by allowing its negative consequences to occur. The focus is on helping a client find positive reinforcement for not drinking, or using substances in moderation. Whether the client’s treatment focus shifts to abstinence or moderate drinking depends on the severity of use. In an interview conducted by W. White, Dr. Miller reports that individuals who have a less severe problem appear to be more successful in controlling their drinking than others with more severe symptoms as they often had more success with abstinence rather than moderation, “not because they tried moderation and failed but they found it difficult or not worth it.”<sup>17</sup> Dr. Miller developed CRAFT as an extension of CRA to include community reinforcement and family training in helping a client discover the rewards of moderation or total abstinence depending on the distinction between problem use and dependence.

Other researchers in the alcohol field include Dr. Humphrey, who is policy advisor to the White House on the prevention and treatment of addictive disorders, and Andrew J. Saxon M.D. an academic with numerous publications in the field of addiction. Dr. Saxon is Director of the addiction psychiatry residency program at the University of Washington where he teaches in the department of Psychiatry and Behavioral

---

<sup>17</sup> White, W. 2012. “The Psychology of Addiction Recovery; An Interview with William R. Miller Ph.D.” Emeritus Distinguished Professor of Psychology and Psychiatry. Center on Alcoholism, Substance Abuse, and Addiction (CASA). The University of New Mexico. [www.williamwhitepapers.com](http://www.williamwhitepapers.com) accessed March 9, 2016, 13-14.



Sciences. His research focus is on the brain's reward circuitry and offers an alternative to the *Anonymous* program. The approach seeks to develop a treatment of alcohol use disorders that centers on the role of the brain's dopamine receptors, and the genetic characteristics of alcoholics such as impulsiveness. The medical model is meeting with some success because the total abstinence from alcohol use advocated by *Anonymous* is not for everyone, or even the best course of action to follow in all cases. Statistics from AA world headquarters in New York City reveal that approximately 27% of individuals that seek help in AA are sober at the end of the first year, but this implies that 73% of addicts fail to find sobriety in 12-Step programs. This is not to suggest that alcoholics fail to find sobriety in *Anonymous* after a relapse but the point is that the medical model offers an alternative for the segment of the population that does not immediately return to *Anonymous* after a relapse or maintain total abstinence from alcohol use. A program on alcohol-drug misuse that aired recently (2016)<sup>18</sup> on CBC television suggests that 87% of individuals that cannot maintain abstinence from alcohol beyond the first year in *Anonymous* can nonetheless achieve some degree of sobriety through medical intervention and therefore will reduce the risk of harming themselves if they seek that help. Suzuki borrows the title *Wasted* for his program from a book written by Pond and Palmer (2013).<sup>19</sup> In that book, Michael Pond, a self-proclaimed alcoholic therapist, promotes harm reduction as the method of choice for the treatment of alcohol use disorder. Pond expresses strong, personal dissatisfaction with the *Anonymous* program, in part because of its alleged focus on the negative emotions of guilt and shame associated with 'relapse.' He suggests that the experience of shame following relapse leads some individuals to suicide. In my opinion, the problem appears to arise because the term relapse lacks specificity. For instance, Dr. Miller's tongue-in-cheek assessment of the issue is on how many drinks and what length of time between drinks constitutes a relapse?<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> Suzuki, D. (Jan. 20, 2016). *Wasted*. The Nature of Things. CBC television.

<sup>19</sup> Pond, M., and M. Palmer. 2013. *Wasted. An Alcoholic Therapist's Fight for Recovery in a Flawed Treatment System*. Toronto, Ont.: Greystone Books Ltd. University of Toronto Press.

<sup>20</sup> White, W. 2012. "The Psychology of Addiction Recovery; An Interview with

Miller's view is entirely consistent with the goal of harm reduction but not with *Anonymous*' focus on abstinence. As if to settle matters, the scientific community claims that alcoholics inherit genetic traits that make them more susceptible to impulsiveness. The explanation proffered on *Wasted* is that alcoholics have fewer dopamine receptors than non-alcoholics and presumably fail to activate the brain's reward circuitry in the usual way. The detoxification process puts alcoholics at risk because the brain rewires itself to depend more on itself and less on alcohol. Several drugs such as Ativan (Benzodiazepine) are used to treat anxiety disorder during this period of transition. Medicine provides anti-convulsant medication such as gabapentin to reduce the risk of dying from rapid convulsions (DTs). The narcotic antagonists Naloxone (NLX) and Naltrexone (NTX) reverse the effects of an overdose of heroin or some other types of pain killers. Naltrexone blocks dopamine receptor cells and its slow release effect reduces the craving for alcohol for a period lasting up to 30 days. Naltrexone is available in liquid injectable form in the U.S. (Vivitrol) but is only available in capsule form in Canada. Naltrexone acts directly on the brain's reward pathway and reduces the addict's impulsive behavior. In *Anonymous*, the impulsive behavior of addiction is attenuated somewhat by practicing a series of 12 behavioral steps towards a renewed sense of spiritual awareness.

It seems possible for drug counselors to recommend the use of whatever model works best for a client. This choice depends on a cost/benefit ratio in which a client weighs the negative consequences of alcohol use against the benefits of reducing consumption, or in some cases total abstinence from alcohol. Following Dr. Miller's experience in the alcohol field, the client decides the best course of action rather than a counselor or other experts in the field of alcohol addiction. One major difference between the *Anonymous* program and the cost/benefit model is that *Anonymous* is based on a Higher Power centered spiritual recovery, that is, on the addict's willingness to enter relationship with a Higher Power such as God. This point is not to be missed. Miller finds that spirituality is hardly possible during the first year because the indi-

---

William R. Miller Ph.D." Emeritus Distinguished Professor of Psychology and Psychiatry. Center on Alcoholism, Substance Abuse, and Addiction (CASA). The University of New Mexico. [www.williamwhitepapers.com](http://www.williamwhitepapers.com) accessed March 9, 2016.

vidual must first attend to higher needs such as health and employment. This point, it seems to me, misses the connection between the carbon-self and spirituality. Medicine focuses on controlling disease and therefore on controlling a patient's health outcome. However, a patient's spiritual energies can be redirected towards healthier 'carbon capping' outcomes. The focus on redirecting spirituality is urgent in the *Anonymous* program and indeed functions as the necessary condition of recovery. The individuals that seek help from AA do so because the severity of symptoms undermines the autonomy and consent required to redirect spiritual energies. The AA claim "We were powerless over alcohol..." presents as a blockage to personal growth. The program of *Alcoholics Anonymous* is spiritual to the core. The focus on recovery from negative emotions is based on the change in personality that arises out of practicing a 12-Step program. Abstinence from alcohol use is but a means to that end. On the other hand, *the medical and clinical models focus on harm reduction rather than recovery.*

**An in-depth study of the spiritual character of the *Anonymous* program:** Some of the beliefs expressed by self-declared alcoholics such as Bill W. fit Herbert Spencer's definition of spirituality as 'God-consciousness' (*Anonymous*, 1976).<sup>21</sup> But God-consciousness is open to a variety of meanings to enable the spiritual awakening promised in the *Anonymous* program. The way in which spirituality connects with a 12-Step program is different from the connection between spirituality and other threads because the type of spirituality practiced in AA is tailored to the special needs characterized by substance or behavioral dependency (addiction). The parameters of recovery from alcohol dependency bring out an essential characteristic of spiritual growth. While this application extends to other dependencies whether behavioral such as sex or gambling dependencies, or substance based as in dependency on narcotics, the use of a 12-Step method to overcome addiction is historically first in line since it was introduced in 1935 by Bill Wilson and Dr. Bob Smith. Based on the metaphysical structure of spirituality the essential character of the *Anonymous* program clusters about the arms of a person-making process, namely the carbon-self, the social-self, and the

---

<sup>21</sup> Spencer, H. 1976. *AA World Services Inc. Alcoholics Anonymous*. Third Edition. New York City: Alcoholics Anonymous Publishing, 570.

psychological-self. The spiritual imperative finds meaning in those three areas of personal growth.

12-Step programs have no explicit connection to organized religion, although the spiritual thread is present in both. Spencer's descriptive 'God-consciousness' is sufficiently vague to incorporate both camps. The visualization of God by individuals in recovery provides insight into the non-religious aspect of spirituality. The alcoholic expresses a need to find the meaning of life but uses alcohol to fix negative emotions. Thus, 12-Step spirituality opens as an attempt to reverse false spiritual starts or non-life giving spiritual connections. Too much dependency on a 'Higher Power' can also be a source of sour spirituality. It can become addictive. Leo Booth (1991) claims that "Religious addiction does exist; it is a disease like any other addiction; and it can and should be treated by the same methods used to treat other addictions."<sup>22</sup> No point going from the frying pan to the fire; while religious spirituality plays a negative role in freeing the faithful from sin and guilt, it can play an equally negative role if God becomes a scapegoat for the inability to take personal responsibility for a wrongful course of action.

The first introduction of a 12-Step program intended for personal recovery from substance and/or behavioral dependency is found in the Twelve Steps of *Alcoholics Anonymous* (1935). While the Oxford Group's focus on spirituality and recovery predates *Anonymous*, and influences its development, the Oxford Group's intent is primarily to provide a religious experience rather than a spiritual recovery. This fact points to an important distinction between spirituality and religion. Furthermore, AA's spirituality arises out of deflation of the ego at depth rather than in the practice of the Oxford Group's precepts of absolute purity, honesty, unselfishness, and love. Dr. Silkworth, one of Bill W.'s early mentors gave him solid advice (A.A. World Services Inc. 2005)<sup>23</sup> when he told him not to focus on the Oxford Group's four absolutes—purity, unselfishness, honesty, and love—when dealing with alcoholics because their spirituality is not of an evangelical type. Rather the focus must shift to the consequences that arise from a deflation of the alcoholic's ego; "deflation at depth is the foundation of

---

<sup>22</sup> Booth, L. Fr. 1991. *When God Becomes a Drug*. New York, N.Y.: Penguin Putnam Inc., 38.

<sup>23</sup> Silkworth, W. 2005. *A.A World Services Inc. Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age; A Brief History of A.A.* N.Y.: Alcoholics Anonymous Publishing, 68.

most spiritual experiences.” Without that bit of advice, the AA program might not have come to light. The alcoholic’s willingness to search for a power higher than self (Second Step) depends on the admissibility of a First Step, namely the admission of personal powerlessness and unmanageability. Carl Jung, a spiritually minded analytical psychologist, recognized the spiritual role of ego deflation when he directed a patient (Roland H.) that was experiencing problems with alcohol use to meet with Bill W’s group of friends in recovery.<sup>24</sup> The alcoholic, it seems is seeking sacred meaning and therefore is spiritual, but the search for meaning using alcohol results in misdirected spirituality. Jung’s referral is highlighted in a letter he sent to Bill W. (William G. Wilson) on January 30, 1961: “Dear Mr. Wilson, I had no news from Roland H. anymore and often wondered what had been his fate...alcohol in Latin is ‘spiritus’ and you can use the same word for the highest religious experience as well as for the most depraving poison.” The spirituality that animates recovery appears to emanate out of the Jungian imagery of the ‘wounded healer,’ a spirituality that exists deep within the realm of personal pain. In Jungian analysis spirituality arises out of the integration of the contents of the unconscious into consciousness (individuation) rather than in the outward pursuit of perfection. The depths of personal failure serve as a source of strength as illustrated through the immortal lyrics of Leonard Cohen:<sup>25</sup>

Ring the bells that still can ring  
Forget your perfect offering  
There is a crack, a crack in everything  
That’s how the light gets in.

That view aligns with *Anonymous*’ focus on five personal ‘inventory’ Steps because recovery from substance dependency is contingent on self-awareness. That belief is consonant with the experience of Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) and William James (1842-1910) as they both appear to draw spiritual strength from their personal struggles with depression. The focus on personal brokenness marks a significant departure from the spirituality of the Oxford group.

---

<sup>24</sup> Jung, C. (Jan. 30, 1961). *Letter to Bill W.* <http://www.silkworth.net/aahistory>. Accessed August 20, 2015.

<sup>25</sup> Cohen, L. Anthem. Lyrics. <http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/leonardcohen/anthem.html>. Accessed March 3, 2016.

The clearest expression of the central role of spirituality in recovery is expressed in *Anonymous*' 12th Step; "Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps..." Thus, a 'spiritual awakening' implies that the alcoholic had otherwise misdirected spirituality until that point. This is to say that the individual in recovery becomes aware of the need to redirect spiritual energies after the fact of the previous eleven Steps. Adherence to the Twelve Steps is prescribed as a necessary condition of recovery from dependency. Further, the 11<sup>th</sup> step's suggestion that the need to 'improve conscious contact with God' is integral to righting spirituality, signals the pivotal role of God or a Higher Power in personal recovery. The word 'recovering' might be a more appropriate characteristic of the spiritual awakening than 'recovered'; the A.A. program promises 'spiritual progress' rather than 'spiritual perfection.'<sup>26</sup> Thus, 'spiritual awareness' refers to an ongoing process of recovering from alcohol dependency rather than a cure for a medical condition. This marks a clear break from the medical and psychological models.

The study of these steps reveals that recovery is contingent on the discovery of a Higher Power (Step 2) and the willingness to turn 'will and life' over to the care of that Power (Step 3). The nature of the Higher Power is unspecified, as expected from a non-religious movement. Members will take from this concept what they need to recover from dependency. The only requirement for membership in *Anonymous* is the Third Tradition: a 'desire to stop drinking.'<sup>27</sup> The 12-Steps are suggested as a necessary condition of recovery. While the nature and function of the Higher Power is unspecified, the individual is invited to enter relationship with it or turn control over to God so that God can do for the individual what was otherwise unattainable. The action of Steps 2 and 3 is presented as a necessary condition of recovery. This is the first indication that spirituality could have a transcendental character but not necessarily so. The *Anonymous* program is designed for atheists as well as theists. It arises out of the individual's relationship with whatever Power the individual identifies as being 'greater than self.' No reference to the God of religion is made or intended. The ongoing process

---

<sup>26</sup> A.A. World Services Inc. 1976. *Alcoholics Anonymous*. Third Edition. New York City: Alcoholics Anonymous Publishing, 60.

<sup>27</sup> A.A. World Services, Inc. 2006. *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. New York N.Y.: Alcoholics Anonymous Publishing, 139.

of spiritual awakening (steps 4 through 11) subsequently appears to be contingent on the ongoing effort to remove whatever obstacles stand in the way of relationship with a Higher Power. The insight into the nature and function of the Higher Power changes in recovery.

Five blockages to ongoing recovery and spiritual awakening (personal deficiencies, defects of character and shortcomings) are addressed from Steps 4 through 5-6-7, and 10, while two other impediments to spiritual growth are found in blocked relationships with other persons (steps 8 and 9). Shaming others who do not or cannot maintain sobriety is not part of steps 8 and 9. On the contrary, the *Anonymous* program is based on the resonance and identification between alcoholics, not on shaming others but on accepting others as they present themselves. The AA slogan ‘live and let live’ captures the essence of the relationship with others. Further, the other in recovery is a portal to God. The 11<sup>th</sup> Step provides an opportunity to deepen the relationship with a Higher Power. The focus of the ‘inventory steps’ is on inner work as the release from the bondage of substance and/or behavioral dependence progressively gives way to the discovery of an alternate source of sacred meaning. The net effect is a ‘spiritual awakening’ and the realization of several promises. While the promises contained in *Anonymous* are expressed throughout its pages, the greatest concentration of promises is found on two pages of that volume. The promises arise as the beneficial outcome of cultivating the spirituality found in the teachings of this program. The emotional benefits of 12-Step spirituality include the discovery of a new sense of freedom, happiness, and serenity; “that feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear...Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change. Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us...We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us.”<sup>28</sup>

These emotional changes happen because of the connection between spirituality, the Higher Power, and mental states. *Anonymous* promises recovering addicts that the negative emotions of the past such as the fears, insecurity, and guilt that arise out of mishandling spirituality and past emotional challenges will give way to a new sense of belonging. The belief in the existence of a Higher Power and the individ-

---

<sup>28</sup> A.A. World Services Inc. 1976. *Alcoholics Anonymous*. Third Edition. New York City: Alcoholics Anonymous Publishing, 83-84.

ual's willingness to change provide a promised map to recovery. The act of entering personal relationship with a Higher Power—usually expressed through other persons in recovery—puts life's issues into clearer perspective. That outcome is promised in the *Anonymous* fellowship; "Are these extravagant promises? We think not. They are being fulfilled among us—sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will always materialize *if we work for them.*" (italics added)<sup>29</sup>

It seems possible to affirm that spirituality plays a dual role in the Anonymous programs; not only as a tendency towards meaning but also a tendency to unmask what stands in the way of sacred meaning: "We recovered alcoholics are not so much brothers in virtue as we are brothers in our defects, and in our common striving to overcome them."<sup>30</sup> The spirituality of *Anonymous* is characterized by a process that begins with the recognition and admission of failure. This is an explanation of how an emotional blockage provides a spiritual opportunity for personal growth. The experience of ego deflation and failure prompts some addicts to seek out a source of sacred power outside the self. The Higher Power morphs into a God of their understanding. The process of recovery leads to a spiritual awakening. This sets the stage for an alternate substance free search for meaning. Spirituality in this instance is the awareness that the promise of a meaningful life is at hand without the use of alcohol (or any other minds altering substance or behavior). The spiritual awakening and the ensuing physical sobriety ushers in a new era of personal growth otherwise beyond the reach of the individual. The process paves the way for a spirituality now unblocked from dependency to step into the light of recovery to the discovery of new meaning in life. Bill Wilson says: "sobriety is only a bare beginning; it is only the first gift of the first awakening."<sup>31</sup> The published stories of alcoholics in recovery confirm that promise.<sup>32</sup>

The distinction between God's nature and God's attributes highlights a main difference between the spiritual character of 12-Step pro-

---

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>30</sup> A.A. World Services, Inc., 1998. *As Bill sees It*. New York: Alcoholics Anonymous Publishing, 167.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>32</sup> A.A World Services Inc. 1976. *Alcoholics Anonymous*. Third Edition. (1976). New York City: Alcoholics Anonymous Publishing, 453-561.



grams and the spiritual character of religious beliefs. It seems possible to suggest that the addict's first introduction to a 12-Step program should focus on the existence of God as such (Higher Power) rather than on divine attributes. The reason for this suggestion is that the addict's experience of what God does is generally negative. Perhaps the Augustinian religious tradition carries the same negativity as a spiritual weakness that turns into a source of grace? Spiritual maturity is required to enter a positive relationship with God. The addict's God consciousness is laced with negative emotion because the relationship with God does not appear to produce a plan that includes ongoing use of the drug of choice. God does not provide the peace required to maintain an addict's status quo. The movement towards recovery calls for a revolutionary change of relationship with God. The addict that seeks recovery must first learn to accept that a life without substance use is possible, and second that this is carried through by developing a challenging relation with a seemingly uncaring God. The recovering addict gradually develops a clearer vision of God as ultimate good. At the end of the day, the suspension of belief in the attributes of God followed by a belief in the pure existence of God generates a rich source of spiritual insight. At some point in recovery the individual's willingness to trust this unknown source of power is filled with glimpses of God's attributes as God fulfills the spiritual promise of recovery found in the AA program. At that point the addict might be ready to raise spirituality to the next level by seeing God at work in the person-making process. The spirituality of an addict in recovery whether from substance dependence or a negative religious experience is purer than unblemished religious spirituality because it emerges out of the depths of a personal hell.

While the view of alcoholism as disease finds its explanation in the brain's dopamine receptors and the brain's reward circuitry, it seems that the higher road to mental health is integrative. For instance, the Mayo clinic's successful approach to alcoholism includes a focus on the spiritual.<sup>33</sup> The success of the medical model depends on the view of the patient as disease but perhaps medicine can attain greater success by reclaiming its foundational roots in the ancient art of healing.

---

<sup>33</sup> Mayo clinic. 2014. See <http://www.mayoclinic.org/disease-conditions>. Accessed June 28, 2015.

### *The Application of Spirituality to Medicine: Spiritual Welding*

In 2004, I coined the term ‘spiritual welding’ as a guide to making spiritual connections in medicine. Spiritual welding is a process of restoring meaning loss in the life of a person through disease, divorce, addiction, unemployment, aging. Meaning loss arises on the cluster of associations that populate the arms of the person-making process.<sup>34</sup> The connection between finding meaning in suffering and healing is undisputed, but does medicine pay more than lip service to healing? The primary focus of medicine is to cure disease, not to heal illness. But I think that this focus is changing. Marilyn Gladu’s Bill-C277 passed with unanimous support in the House of Commons (March 2017) and is currently awaiting review by the health committee. The Bill introduces parameters for palliative care and a subset of ‘healing’ services for acute care, home care, crisis care, spiritual and psychological counseling. The key to its success lies in the provision of a distinct budget line for holistic care so that the competition between allocating funds for curing or for healing ends. At the end of the day, funding will be available for the treatment of depression and other psychological ills, not only at end-of-life but **hopefully** as an integral part of all medical coverage. The PMB has garnered unanimous support from the Canadian Medical Association, the Canadian Nursing Association, the Quality end-of-life coalition, including 38 stakeholder organizations.<sup>35</sup> Adding the focus of political or legalized spirituality to medicine provides holistic care that is especially significant in the face of a terminal illness when all attempts to cure disease fails but also as a treatment modality for patients suffering from stress, anxiety, depression, and other psychological problems. Hopefully this will put an end to cases of individuals committing suicide after being turned down by a hospital because of an underfunded mental-health system and the unavailability of spiritual help.

Ironically the explanation for the relatively recent focus on holistic care in medicine is due in part to the success of medical technology. With each technological breakthrough medicine became more success-

---

<sup>34</sup> Bryson, K. 2004. “Spiritual Welding 101.” *The Yale Journal for Humanities in Medicine* (YJHM).

<sup>35</sup> For a complete listing of stakeholder organizations see <http://www.marilyngladu.com/pmb-c-277>

ful in eliminating disease but unfortunately it also became more impersonal. The goal of spiritual healing is to find personal meaning in face of the suffering, discomfort, costs, and all the negativities usually associated with a serious disease. While personal healing can only be accomplished by the patient, the staff's compassionate care provides the appropriate framework required for this process to take place. A patient is more than a disease. The idea is not entirely new because approximately 85% of our training facilities across the US and Canada since 1985 include courses on spirituality and health in the medical curriculum. But the strands have yet to come together to provide a level of holistic care that includes treatment for all the relationships that individuate a patient—carbon based, interpersonal, and psychological. This includes the (carbon based) focus on curing as well as the willingness to treat the whole person. We can begin with something as simple as personalizing the patient's hospital room by inviting some aspect of a home environment into it. The proposed treatment plan must include a focus on helping a patient find fresh meaning in the face of meaning loss. We need to address all three streams of relationships found in the person-making process. Attention is given to the patient's social-self dimension by ensuring that the patient's cultural perspective is incorporated into the treatment plan. The focus includes a patient's religious life. Kirkwood's hospital handbook contains a useful breakdown of the various religious traditions that surround patient care.<sup>36</sup> Spiritual counseling includes a focus on family as well as on all the patient's person-making relationships.<sup>37</sup> The psyche can be a hotbed of negative emotions at time of disease when life loses meaning. A patient is vulnerable in times of crisis. How can the healthcare team help a patient find meaning in personal suffering? Why couldn't our hospitals enlist aid from volunteers to augment their scarce economic resources? To borrow from the 12-Step model, holistic recovery begins with resonance and identification with the suffering of the other. This is compassion at-work. For instance, in addition to compassionate nursing care we can enlist the help of patients in remission from cancer to meet with patients that have cancer, or con-

---

<sup>36</sup> Kirkwood, N., 2005. *A Hospital Handbook on Multiculturalism and Religion*. New York: Morehouse Publishing.

<sup>37</sup> Burkhart, M.A., Nagai-Jacobson, M.G. 2002. *Spirituality: Living our Connectedness*. Albany, NY: Delmar.

nect patients struggling with depression with others successfully living with the tragedy of depression. Spiritual growth happens when like-minded friends share their personal stories of tragedy and triumph with each other. Perhaps a compassionate patient will use his/her story of suffering as a gateway to the pain of the other. But nurses/patients must first be aware of their own search for meaning and need for healing before they can help anyone. Part of that learning process takes place in the classroom. Identification with the suffering of the other is the true test of compassionate care. The patient/nurse resonates and identifies with the pain of the other to find spiritual meaning in his/her personal suffering. In Christian faith, for instance, the faithful identify with the suffering and courage of Christ, left to hang and dry on a wooden cross. My nursing students are introduced to holistic pain management by learning to keep a log on how they find meaning each day. Journaling is an aid to the development of spiritual growth; a prelude to social action as they use their own search for meaning, often in the face of personal stress and meaning loss, as a gateway to the suffering of others in the hospital environment.

### ***The Application of Spirituality to Social Work: Healing-at-Large***

The spiritual character of social work is based on the sacred structure of the person as a tendency towards good. The social worker's motivation to help others is effective because it grounds this 'Élan Vital,' as Bergson might have it, in human rights and social justice. Sociology is the technology of choice to deliver compassionate care to persons in need beyond the medical model. While Auguste Comte overstates the might of sociology, he understates the role of structure or the metaphysical root of the possibility of social work. The sense that Comte assigns to the word 'positive' in his 'Cours de philosophie positive,' is that of data purified from metaphysical speculation. The work of Emile Meyerson raises serious doubts about that possibility. His comprehensive review of the whole of scientific thought—from its earliest beginnings to its latest developments—argues that science is not now or ever was free from metaphysical speculation about the structure of data (Bryson, IEP).<sup>38</sup> Meyerson's study of the psychological principles that ac-

---

<sup>38</sup> Bryson, K. 2004. "Emile Meyerson (1859-1933)." *Internet Encyclopedia of*

company reasoning in science (and common sense) finds that a concern for the structure of the phenomena of observation is an integral part of scientific inquiry. That metaphysical structure is the glue that holds science together. Description is not now or ever could be the only business of science. The metaphysical focus on the core of being personal is therefore an essential aspect of social work.

Social work is a profession concerned with helping people to ensure their individual and collective well-being:

It aims to help people develop their skills and their ability to use their own resources and those of the community to resolve problems. Social work is concerned with individual and personal problems but also with broader social issues such as poverty, unemployment and domestic violence.<sup>39</sup>

The ethical underpinning of social work is contained in the structure of being a person, enshrined through the *Charter of Human Rights* and the principle of social justice. The principles of social work focus on the dignity and respect of individuals along with the promise to treat each person equally “without unfair discrimination on the basis of disability, color, social class, race, religion, language, political beliefs, sex or sexual orientation.”<sup>40</sup> The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) and the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) share this common objective and have signed a bicameral Memorandum of Understanding agreeing to a collaborative relationship to advance social work in North America and internationally.<sup>41</sup>

Nowhere is spirituality more in evidence than in the application of the ethical principles of social work to serve the best interest of at-risk individuals. The person-making process provides the metaphysical foundation for a model we can use to monitor the application of the principles of social work to the constructivist needs of the individual in a community setting. The following distribution is based on the linkage to practice principles identified in the CASW Social Policy Principles pa-

---

*Philosophy.*

<sup>39</sup> Canadian Association of Social Workers. 2003. <http://www.casw-acts.ca> accessed December 29, 2015.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Canadian Association of Social Workers. 2012. <http://www.casw-acts.ca> accessed December 29, 2015.

per (2003). These principles can be downloaded onto the three types of relationships that constitute the human structure:

(A) Internal-self: *dignity and respect*; “commitment to the values of acceptance, self-determination and respect for clients.”<sup>42</sup>

(B) Social-self: because of A: *equality*, “Affirmation of the importance of equal opportunity for clients to reach their full potential”; *equity*, “Recognition of the need of affirmative action and targeting for some clients in order to minimize social exclusion”; *comprehensiveness*, “recognition that solidarity in society is a fundamental basis of cooperation with and among clients and significant others”; *social dialogue*, “Recognition of the right, and obligation, of social workers to participate in professional and community associations in order to influence the development of social policies”.<sup>43</sup>

(C) Carbon-self: because of B and A: *quality services*, “Empowerment of the client through excellence in the work place and involvement of the client in administrative decision-making”; *constitutional integrity*, Recognition of the regional and linguistic diversity of the country in the delivery of social services to clients”; *subsidiarity*, “Insuring that decisions and the delivery of social services, are made as close as possible to the client.”<sup>44</sup>

The fairness of the linkage between principle and a case can be assessed based on the distribution of the principles of social work on the arms of the person-making process. The linkage between the needs of a client and the services provided by a social worker can be expressed mathematically along the arms of the person-making process. The appearance of a broken string of associations on any of these arms suggests that a basic client need and right linkage is yet unmet. This is a call for spiritual welding. The allocation of scarce social work resources can be prioritized along lines that set out to meet the needs of the most vulnerable clients such as children and the elderly, taking care that the process is holistic, that is ensuring that the mathematical linkage between resource and client need is grounded in the structure of being human rather than in the quasi metaphysically neutral mathematical rela-

---

<sup>42</sup> Canadian Association of Social Workers 2003. <http://www.casw-acts.ca> accessed December 29, 2015.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

tionship between resource and need. Social work is religion's healing dimension at-large.

***The Application of Spirituality to the Arts:  
The Golden Road to Wellness***

Art reaches the human structure at the core of personhood. If the following appears as an ode to the majesty and centrality of the healing role of the arts in a human life, then this is as it should be. Otherwise the word is at fault. The word is a pale conveyor of meaning in comparison to art. The arts have a special capacity that we need to celebrate because they move us into spontaneous consonance with the whole of reality. The healing role of the arts owes its success in part to the fact that it moves us to a level of personal insight that exists beyond the limitations of logic and language; art shifts the focus away from the piecemeal world of linear logic and moves its object into the realm of forms and figures to experience relationship between all things. Art feeds language.

The genealogy of art: In Thomistic metaphysics the primacy of *esse* underlies the claim to objective knowledge and the possibility of art. In the primary operation of knowledge, the mind connects with the being of things through the concept. The concept is the means or process to knowledge that carries being's intelligibility to the senses as to the understanding. The idea or term of knowledge arises in a subsequent movement as the mind examines this conceptual becoming of the other to produce something to its likeness and express it through language or art. Being's unconcealment provides the metaphysical foundation of art. The Greek word *ousias* and Heidegger's *Unverborgenheit* suggest that being's self-disclosure provides the metaphysical foundation for the possibility of logical truth and artistic truth (*alêtheia*) as being's unconcealment sends us on an errand to discover and represent the nature of things as they speak to us. The experience of standing in the presence of the beauty of being's unconcealment can move us beyond language, however.

How do the arts serve as a conduit for spirituality? In the same way that beauty attracts attention, Thomas Aquinas's definition of beauty is "that which gives pleasure when seen."<sup>45</sup> An artist can arouse the sense

---

<sup>45</sup> Aquinas, T. 1952. *Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Domini-

of awe in the human condition by drawing attention to the mystery of life, love, compassion, suffering, and joy through art. The possibility of entering spiritual communion with art exists because the work of art rises above the limitations of matter. Aquinas says that immateriality is at the root of all knowledge, practical as well as speculative; the knower can enter union with the form of the other because of a freedom from the limiting conditions of matter.<sup>46</sup> But the appreciation of beauty through the union of forms is contemplative rather than discursive. In this sense, it can be argued that beauty is a transcendental property of being, that is it applies to everything that exists, though not everyone would agree with the claim. The reason is that not everyone is able to perceive the beauty that is in all things because of excessive mind-flapping. How, for instance, can someone appreciate the beauty of cancer? While the beauty of cancer is not evident in its relation to the individual with cancer, it must be recognized that it has beauty as a cancer that is best expressed through art. The view that beauty is a transcendental property of being is shared by Koren (1955) as he cites with approval a text of Aquinas on Dionysius: “There is nothing that does not participate of the beautiful and the good; for everything is beautiful and good according to its own form.”<sup>47</sup> The whole of existence has beauty. Jacques Maritain (1954)<sup>48</sup> shares the view that beauty is a transcendental property of being although the interpretation of beauty is subjective and therefore admits of degrees. Not all things are of equal beauty. Other transcendental properties of being include unity, truth, and goodness. All things express unity in that they resist destruction. Reality clings to existence and therefore the parts of a being cling to themselves by acting primarily for the good of the whole. The transcendental truth is also interchangeable with being because the whole of reality exists in conformity with the divine mind, that is in harmony with the divine plan for creation. And the

---

can Province. Chicago Ill.: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1a, q.5, a.4, ad 1.

<sup>46</sup> Aquinas, T. 1953. *The Division and Methods of the Sciences* (Questions V and VI, Commentary on Boethius’s *De Trinitate*.) Maurer, A. trans. Toronto: The Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies. q.v. a 2, 17.

<sup>47</sup> Koren, H., 1955. *Dionysium de Divinis Nominibus*, c.4, lect. 5. *An Introduction to the Science of Metaphysics*. New York: Herder Books Co. 99.

<sup>48</sup> Maritain, J. 1954. *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books Inc.



whole of reality is good because being is pleasing to our appetite for goodness. The whole of reality acts towards the attainment of the good. In a sense beauty expresses all the transcendental properties of being; because being has unity, truth, and goodness, it has beauty. While Aquinas did not develop a system of aesthetics, he leaves no doubt that beauty is perceived through an intellectual intuition and that art is a conduit to personal healing through the integrity, clarity, and harmony found in the object of art. Art makes us whole.

The individual at peace sees the beauty of dying. No one wants to die, but the clarity (truth), integrity (unity), and harmony (goodness) that can come from dying is indisputable. Art, poetry, music, and the beauty of nature play an important role in helping a patient find peace in the face of a terminal illness. Art and music also play an important role in Church history as primers for a relationship with God. The role of Chaplains and pastoral counselors is to help patients blend their experiences of religious connections into the arms of the person-making process. The existential feeling of hopelessness in the face of death provides evidence of a frustrated spiritual drive. The role of Chaplain is to assist the patient's desire to find the fresh meaning needed to repair broken associations. Art serves as a healing conduit between broken spaces. A life-threatening illness affect all aspects of personal relationships. Anger and depression are not unusual outcomes of dying. The spiritual rewards of the religious connection are found in the psychological benefits that arise out of being with like-minded friends in time of need. Music is useful because it can cut through the dark of disease and the separation between persons.

Major poets often draw on the inspirational character of their works to provoke action (Ponomareff C. and K. Bryson, 2006).<sup>49</sup> T. S. Elliot's *The Wasteland* reads like a religious poem that takes Western European civilization to task for its spiritual bankruptcy, while Musorgsky knew that he had been touched by the sacred when he wrote his poem *Night on Bald Mountain*. Albert Camus (1955) also claims to have a sense of God, though he does not believe in personal immortality; "Yes. I have a sense

---

<sup>49</sup> Ponomareff, C. and K. Bryson. 2006. "Part One: Spirituality from the Perspective of the Humanities Tradition." *The Curve of the Sacred: An Exploration of Human Spirituality*. Amsterdam-New York: Editions Rodopi. B.V., 5-67.

of the sacred and I don't believe in a future life, that's all."<sup>50</sup>

According to Maritain, the arts provide a profound medium to express spiritual insight. He discusses the connection between art and poetry in the A. W. Mellon lectures he gave at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D. C. in the summer of 1952, published as *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry* as we saw above. This volume of six lectures provides a seminal introduction to the role of art and poetry in the life of a person. The spontaneous, sensed, consonance that arises between the artist and the object of beauty generates a spiritual awakening that is filtered through the medium of reason and emotion. The product of art arises as an expression of that encounter as the artist seeks to express the wonders and inexhaustible richness of spiritual insight. No single work of art ever completely succeeds in expressing the rich totality of a poetic experience, however. The awakening of artistic spirituality opens into a lifelong project to deliver through canvas, poetry, music or some other medium the sensed insight that the soul knows spontaneously and that our sensibilities can only approach awkwardly through the geometrical medium of logic. No series of paintings or poem can completely catch the rumblings of an artist filled with the beauty of a landscape, seascape, or presence of the beloved. The progress of healing is always ongoing. No human tear can hope to catch the turmoil of a patient dying from cancer, but the beauty is in the expression of pain and anguish, not in the victory dance of disease. Each act of painting, each stroke of the brush prepares the way for the artist's urgent and impatient expression of spirituality on fire. The artist becomes the landscape or seascape that reason seeks to replicate through art. Each success is also a payment of rent on the triumph and futility of trying to capture the whole of the sensed objective correlate of beauty. Each note I write is a payment of rent in making peace with the world I leave behind. To catch it all would be to extinguish it; to recognize that reason has impoverished it, lost it, by reducing it to the mathematical and sterile expressions of quantitative analysis. Thus, the spiritual is sensed rather than constructed; it's an awakening rather than the fruits of discursive reasoning; an act of faith rather than an act of reason; an awareness of the good and evil that exists in the human condition; a cry and a sob; a laughter and a tear; a moment of denial and

---

<sup>50</sup> Camus A. 1955. *The Myth of Sisyphus*. New York N.Y.: Random House.

acceptance; a moment of life and healing in the face of disintegration and death. A world without art is spiritless and as good as dead.

### ***Conclusion***

It seems possible to conclude from this essay that the spiritual thrust towards the Divine Essence manifests itself in many colors. Spirituality builds bridges to healing. Our world is laced with discord and violence, disease, death, and broken relationships. Spirituality strives to weld fresh associations on the metaphysical arms of the person-making process. It provides the invitation to practice compassion and kindness towards other persons, the environment, and self. We fail as often as we succeed. Our spiritual direction depends on person-making choices and Divine grace.

### ***Bibliography***

- A.A. World Services Inc. 1976. *Alcoholics Anonymous*. Third Edition. New York City: Alcoholics Anonymous Publishing.
- A.A. World Services, Inc. 2005. *Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age; a brief history of A.A.* N.Y.: Alcoholics Anonymous Publishing.
- A.A. World Services, Inc. 2006. *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. New York N.Y.: Alcoholics Anonymous Publishing.
- A.A. World Services, Inc. 1998. *As Bill Sees It*. New York: Alcoholics Anonymous Publishing.
- Aquinas, T. (1952). *Summa Theologica*. Translated by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province. Chicago Ill.: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1.2. 94, 2.
- Aquinas, T. 1953. *The Division and Methods of the Sciences* (Questions V and VI. Commentary on Boethius's *De Trinitate*. Maurer, A. (trans). Toronto: The Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies. Q.V. a 2, 17.
- Barron, B. 2015. "Your Life Does Not Belong to You." <https://twitter.com/downloads?s=13> accessed October 2, 2015.
- Booth, L. Fr. 1991. *When God Becomes a Drug*. New York, N.Y.: Penguin Putnam Inc.
- Brown, G. 1984. "A Defence of Pascal's Wager." *Religious Studies*, 20 (3) 465-479.
- Bryson, K. 2011. "An Interpretation of Genesis 1:26." *Journal of Philosophy and Theology*. 23:2, 187-213.
- Bryson, K. 2010. "Person as Verb." Augustine Perumalil (ed.), *Satya*

- Nilayam Journal of Intercultural Philosophy*. Special Issue on Human Person: Various Perspectives, 17, 65-95.
- Bryson, K. 2004. "Spiritual Welding 101." *The Yale Journal for Humanities in Medicine*. <http://yjhm.yale.edu/essays/kbryson1.html> accessed September 21, 2015.
- Bryson, K. 2004. "Emile Meyerson." *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Fraser J. and B. Dowden. eds. University of Tennessee at Martin. <http://www.iep.utm.edu>
- Burkhart, M.A., and M. G. Nagai-Jacobson. 2002. *Spirituality: Living Our Connectedness*. Albany, NY; Delmar.
- Canadian Association of Social Workers. 2003-2012. Phelps, F. CASW Executive Director. National Office. <http://www.casw-acts.ca> accessed March 8, 2017.
- Camus A. 1955. *The Myth of Sisyphus*. New York N.Y.: Random House.
- Cohen, L. Anthem. Lyrics. <http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/leonard-cohen/anthem.html> Accessed March 3, 2016.
- Flannery, A. 1988. *Vatican Council 11*. Northport New York: Costello Publishing Company, 769-772.
- Frankl, V. 1985. *Man's Search for Meaning*. New York: Washington Square Press.
- Gladu, M. 2017. Bill C-277. <http://www.marilyngladu.com/pmb-c-277> accessed March 12, 2017.
- Hadzic, M. 2011. "Spirituality and Mental Health: Current Research and Future Directions." *Journal of Spirituality in Mental Health*, 13, 223-235.
- Hamlin, K., Wynn, K., and P. Bloom. 2007. "Social Evaluation by Preverbal Infants." *Nature* 450, (7169), 557-559.
- Heidegger, M. 1962. *Being and Time*, trans. Macquarrie J. and J. Robinson. New York: Harper and Row.
- Hill, P. C., Pargament, K. I., Hood, R. W. Jr., McCullough, M. E., Swyers, J. P., Larson, D. B., and B. J. Zinnbauer. 2001. "Conceptualizing Religion and Spirituality: Points of Commonality, Points of Departure." *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 30(1), 51-77.
- Hitchens, C., and R. Dawkins. 2013. "We'd Be Better Off Without Religion." <https://www.youtube.com> accessed October 2, 2015.
- Jung, C. (Jan. 30, 1961). *Letter to Bill W*. <http://www.silkworth.net/aahistory>. Accessed August 20, 2015.
- Kirkwood N. 2005. *A Hospital Handbook on Multiculturalism and Religion*. New York: Morehouse Publishing.
- Koren, H. 1955. *An Introduction to the Science of Metaphysics*. New York: Herder Books Co.

- Maritain, J. 1954. *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books Inc.
- Mayo Clinic. <http://www.mayoclinic.org/disease-conditions>. Accessed June 28, 2015.
- Pond, M., and M. Palmer. 2013. *Wasted. An Alcoholic Therapist's Fight for Recovery in a Flawed Treatment System*.
- Toronto, Ont.: Greystone Books Ltd. University of Toronto Press. Ponomareff, C., and K. Bryson. 2006. "Part One: Spirituality from the Perspective of the Humanities Tradition." *The Curve of the Sacred: An Exploration of Human Spirituality*. Amsterdam-New York: Editions Rodopi. B.V.
- Spilka, B. (August, 1993). "Spirituality: Problems and Directions in Operationalizing a Fuzzy Concept. Paper presented at the meeting of the American Psychological Association. Toronto, Ontario. Cited in Hill, P. C., Pargament, K. I., Hood, R. W. Jr., McCullough, M. E., Swyers, J. P., Larson, D. B., and b. J. Zinnbauer. 2001. "Conceptualizing Religion and Spirituality: Points of Commonality, Points of Departure." *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 30(1), 51-77.
- Suzuki, D. (July 4, 2013). "Babies Born to be Good." CBC Television. *The Nature of Things*. <http://www.cbc.ca/natureofthings/episode/born-to-be-good-1.html>. Accessed September 21, 2015.
- Suzuki, D. (Jan. 20, 2016). *Wasted. The Nature of Things*. CBC Television.
- Tolstoy, L. 1981. *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Wild, J. 1962. "An Existential Argument for the Divine Transcendence." *Journal of Bible and Religion*. 1 October, Vol. 30 (4), 269-277.
- White, W. 2012. "The Psychology of Addiction Recovery; An Interview with William R. Miller Ph.D. Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Psychology and Psychiatry." Center on Alcoholism, Substance Abuse, and Addiction (CASA). *William White Papers*. The University of New Mexico. [www.williamwhitepapers.com](http://www.williamwhitepapers.com) accessed March 9, 2016.

# Broaching the Difference Between Intersubjectivity and Intersubjection Inspired by the Feminist Critique<sup>1</sup>

*Iraklis Ioannidis*  
(University of Glasgow)

## ***Abstract***

In Critical Philosophy and, particularly, phenomenology ‘intersubjectivity’ is a core theme of analysis. As Zahavi put it, intersubjectivity, “be it in the form of a concrete self—other relation, a socially structured life-world, or a transcendental principle of justification, is ascribed an absolutely central role by phenomenologists.” Yet, when dealt with in this way, ‘intersubjectivity,’ as a conceptual attempt to refer to our ontology, to who we are, conceals other phenomena. In this paper an attempt is being made to articulate the phenomenon of authentic intersubjectivity by contrasting it with what we refer to as intersubjection, when only one subjectivity is expressing the Other by expressing the Other through the same, as in the case of empathy. Following the feminist critique we identify intersubjection as the tendency to reduce the Other to one’s own categories hence muting them or, at best, imposing on them a category which is intended from one subject only. Following Sartre, we articulate intersubjectivity as a reciprocal, bilateral relation where subjec-

---

<sup>1</sup> This paper has been presented at *SEP-FEP 2016*, in *Lectures with Dan Zahavi on Self and Other 2016* at the University of Ruhr (Ruhr-Universität Bochum), and in the Annual Meeting of the *Existential Philosophy and Literature Network Conference 2017* at the University of Glasgow. I would like to thank Susan Stuart and Olivier Salazar-Ferrer for their comments on the first draft of this paper, Dan Zahavi and the attendees of SEP-FEP for their valuable comments and contributions on the previously revised version of this paper. This version addresses all the previous comments and questions.

tivities are revealed to each other through the ontological structure of motivation/resistance.

**Key words:** *intersubjectivity, empathy, intersubjection, motivation, resistance, the Other, difference, feminist critique*

### ***Introducing Hot Intersubjectivity***

Intersubjectivity is a hot topic. Hot in all senses. When we say that someone is hot we usually mean that s/he is sexy. There is an erotic element. If we begin with Plato in the *Cratylus*, the erotic can be broken down in its three parts forming the question, the *ἑρώ/τη/σις*: what is it, or who is s/he? The erotic here *as a drive towards* implies an experience of intrigue, an experience which captures our interest, which excites and fascinates; a desire, eros. But this question of the Other, as in the platonic text, is always in the name of the father—*Poros*, literally passage, is the father of Eros.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, however, when something is hot is also linked to the concept of danger as it can burn us and induce us pain; physical pain. Finally, hot is also associated with the concept of importance or significance as in the case of referring to a hot issue. The hotness here is attractive under the condition of the significance it bears on some current state of affairs, something which casts some influence on our standing. In this case, our philosophical standing. As a topic, a theme, a subject, intersubjectivity is hot.

To pick up on some prominent work on the *subject* of intersubjectivity, let us start with the work of Dan Zahavi who has *subjected* the concept to an elaborate analysis. As Zahavi put it, intersubjectivity, “be it in the form of a concrete self-other relation, a socially structured life-world, or a transcendental principle of justification, is ascribed an absolutely central role by phenomenologists.”<sup>3</sup> There is much to be said about what these three categories or *subjects* of (philosophical) interest are about. However, before even dealing with any of these areas separately, there is an intrigue, a question arises: Are the above, topics, thematizations or

---

<sup>2</sup> Πλάτων, *Κρατύλος ή Περι Ορθότητας Ονομάτων* (Αθήνα: Πόλις, 2001). [Plato, *Cratylus or Per Correctness of Names* (Athens: Polis, 2001)]

<sup>3</sup> Dan Zahavi, *Subjectivity and Selfhood: Exploring the First Person Perspective* (London: MIT Press., 2005), 148; Dan Zahavi, “Intersubjectivity,” in *Routledge Companion to Phenomenology*, eds. Sebastian Luft and Søren Overgaard, 180-189. (Milton Park: Routledge, 2012), 1.

*subjects* just various manifestations of the phenomenon of intersubjectivity or is intersubjectivity the condition of such phenomena? Let us not *subject* this question to an answer at this present point, but let us start from the beginning, that is, the *arche* as Jacques Derrida advises.

Intersubjectivity. Inter-subjectivity, like inter-national, like inter-personal, ‘has’ the notion of relation—in this case a relation *of* subjectivities; or a relation *between* subjectivities (maybe as in a relation between persons and between nations?). Initially, we can say that intersubjectivity refers (at least terminologically) to “a relation between subjectivities.”<sup>4</sup> In other words, subjectivities which relate. It seems fair then to phenomenalyze ‘subjectivities’ and ‘relation’ in order to understand what intersubjectivity is, or, better, in order to understand intersubjectivity. In terms of classical phenomenology, we could say that we first need to demarcate the regional eidetics which make up the *eidos*, or the eidetic structure. Yet, a perusal in the literature dealing with these *subjects* reveals a tendency to phenomenalyze intersubjectivity through subjects. Intersubjectivity is usually revealed, theorized, defined, described as a “relation between subjects...a subject-to-subject relation.”<sup>5</sup> The difference is described through the concepts of subject-object. “Phenomenologists have generally distinguished sharply between intersubjective relations—or subject–subject relations—and subject–object relations.”<sup>6</sup> Let us then trans-pose our first philosophical thorn into a question: is ‘subjectivity’ synonymous with ‘subject’?

From this question, let us advance our philosophical analysis, let us move with existing philosophical means of transport, with existing philosophical metaphors. If one likes to move in Cartesian ways, as a dualist, then, the empirical everyday subject is seen as a composite of a body (*res extensa*) and a soul (*res cogitans*). In this theorization, subjectivity, as the essential *whatness* of the subject is the *res cogitans*. *A fortiori*, intersubjectivity here must be used to theorize the relation of such immaterial entities. From this perspective we hardly ever *see* in the literature what such a relation between subjectivities as ‘immaterials’ is. Either

---

<sup>4</sup> Dan Zahavi, *Self & Other: Exploring Subjectivity, Empathy, and Shame*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 189.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 193.

<sup>6</sup> Dan Zahavi and Søren Overgaard “Intersubjectivity,” in *The International Encyclopedia of Ethics*, (<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/9781444367072.wbiee274/full>), (2013), 4.



literally or metaphorically, intersubjectivity becomes invisible.

Let us now move and flow through the perspective of the (structuralist) phenomenologist, the so-called modern. The modern phenomenologist moves away from and even negates the existence of a concrete/determined (*res*) cogito. In our critical tradition, subjectivity is now theorized as the transcendental condition of consciousness. There is a co-motion towards what Zahavi calls a one-level account of consciousness<sup>7</sup>. That is, subjectivity is taken to be the pre-reflective self-awareness of our embodied being. In an alternative formulation, the latter has also been referred to as ‘mineness’ after Heidegger, and, with further elaborations and tweaks, just like folk tales and songs move from one generation to the next, subjectivity is now to be conceptualized as a first personal acquaintance with the world and the others who populate it. In his latest work, Zahavi refines this formulation and underscores how important subjectivity is for any theorization of our experiential life. “Experiential life is as such and from the beginning characterized by pre-reflective self-consciousness and by first-personal character and for-me-ness.”<sup>8</sup> This for-me-ness no longer expresses the weight of the ‘mineness’ of traditional existential phenomenological accounts as something ultimately subjective and mine that no one else or nothing else is or feels, but it is to be understood in a minimalist way as a first personal acquaintance with my experience in the world, an acquaintance which has a perspectival difference with that of the other subjects.

When referring to the first-personal character of phenomenal consciousness, to pre-reflective self-consciousness, experiential selfhood, and for-me-ness, I am referring to the self-presentational character of experience and to the entailed experiential perspectivalness. I am claiming that we have a distinctly different acquaintance with our own experiential life than

---

<sup>7</sup> This co-motion is witnessed in the critical philosophical tradition, whose subject matter is predominantly phenomenology, or other subjects which (who?) are categorized as continental. In the analytical tradition consciousness goes hand in hand with the subjects of scientific thinking and is layered in states hierarchically but without rhythm, arithmetically and without tempo-rality, that is, a-rythmetically; there is always a Higher State of Consciousness as was musically put by Josh Wink in the 1990s. Consciousness, there, is hot with capitals (HOT).

<sup>8</sup> Dan Zahavi, *Self & Other*, 62.

with the experiential life of others (and vice versa), and that this difference obtains, not only when we introspect or reflect, but already in the very having of the experience.<sup>9</sup>

This account, however, moves us to form another question. If this is a way to talk about subjectivity, would it not mean that intersubjectivity is a relation between pre-reflective self-consciousnesses, between acquaintances? What would be the manifestation(s) of such a relation? Zahavi who follows Edmund Husserl<sup>10</sup> and Edith Stein proposes empathy. But to empathize someone seems to imply, at least *prima facie*, a unidirectional movement from the empathizer to the empathized. Once again, at least *prima facie*, empathy does not seem to depict a subjectivity-subjectivity relation but a subject-subject relation or a subject-object precisely because it depicts a unidirectional phenomenon (the empathizer to the empathized and not vice versa in a single episodic relation). The empathizer empathizes the empathized but the empathized does not empathize back. One person becomes the subject of another's person's empathy. One is subjected by another. One's person's movement towards an Other, one's person's motion (emotion?) toward an Other. Yet, the Other is passive in this episode, a moot point with respect to the per-

---

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 25.

<sup>10</sup> The critique we are raising here is not new either. Husserl, unlike Zahavi, had understood that Empathy is not "an originary experience" of the Other qua Other qua me. In the *Ideas I*, Husserl has appreciated this philosophical thorn whereby the "empathic viewing" is not a consciousness of the Other whereby "the latter [is] given in consciousness as originary." Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy: First Book* (Hingham, MA: Kluwer, 1983), 6. This appreciation is prevalent in all the *Ideas I*. "Empathic seizing upon someone else's consciousness" is later defined by Husserl as an immanent intensive mental process which is different with the transcendent intensive act of consciousness which characterizes the seizing of the physical object (Ibid., 90). Natalie Depraz underscores that in Husserl's empathy there is this phenomenon of unidirectedness initiated by the subject who empathizes – there maybe an intentional consciousness from both subjects but "*cette double intentionalité contient une dissymétrie*" [this intentional consciousness contains a dissymmetry]. Natalie Depraz, 2004. "Autrui: Autrui et L'Atruisme," in *Dictionnaire D'Éthique et De Philosophie Morale*, ed. Monique Canto-Sperber, (Paris: PUF, 2004), 123-127, at 124.

spectival-ness of the subject who empathizes. No motion from the empathized towards the empathizer. This unidirectionality then cannot do justice to the meaning of *between-subjectivities*, of intersubjectivity. But we shall come back to empathy later.

In the modern route then, there seems a bit of an impasse when it comes to reveal the relation, the movement of one subjectivity to another, the intersubjective relation. Let us move to the post-structuralist means of uncovering inter-subjectivity. In the radical post-structuralist critique of the subject, the subject is theorized not as subjectivity but as intersubjective itself, an embodied unity of oneself as another. The subject is a derivative of an original intersubjective being. This is a far more complex and difficult move to make and when made the intrigue is intensified. If the *I* that I am is 'intersubjective' then how is this 'intersubjectivity' (my intersubjective being) (to be) manifested with respect to another person who is also an *I* that/who is intersubjective? If the subject that I am is already intersubjective hence I can reflect myself as another—as a platonic voice as presence springs forth immediately as Other/otherness in any phenomenological reduction<sup>11</sup>—then there must be an-other difference of the Other intersubjective structure which/who can do the 'same.' Multiplying this to the estimated billion of embodied unities for the year 2016 then there must be an equal amount of differences. But apart from these immanent differences of the embodied unities, we must factor in the exterior differences of the intersubjective relations between the intersubjective beings. Ontologically, must there not be another difference between the immanent and the exterior manifestation of such a theorization of 'intersubjectivity'?; *phenomenologically* there should be (many? One too many?) eidetic difference(s), (*εἰδοποιός διαφορά*). But what is/are it/they?<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> We are referring primarily to Derrida's critique in *Speech and Phenomena*, *Of Grammatology*, and in *The Problem of Genesis in Husserl's Philosophy*: Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998); Jacques Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973); Jacques Derrida, *The Problem of Genesis in Husserl's Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

<sup>12</sup> This critique is not new. We see it in the literature with Jean-Luc Nancy whom we follow closely here when he asks "What is the space opened ber-

These four philosophical horns arise precisely because we have moved with the contemporary attempts to understand intersubjectivity or how subjectivities relate. In the following lines there is an attempt to move away from this kind of philosophizing. These paths move us to an impasse. Without rejecting, we move as by migrating. Time to *resist* this impasse by re-turning to previous philosophers' attempts to express the intersubjective experience. First, we shall make the *arche* with Edmund Husserl and then move *not to what can be defined* as intersubjectivity but what we (could) *feel* as intersubjectivity.

### ***The Theme or Subject of the Other***

In moving through the various philosophies concerning the Other, the philosophies of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, Jean Paul Sartre identifies a conceptual theme that subtends them all: Knowledge—"my fundamental connection with the Other is realized through *knowledge*."<sup>13</sup> Particularly in Husserl, where we trace the *arche* of the modern phenomenol-

---

ween eight billion bodies, and, within each one and, between phallus and cephalé, among the thousand folds, postures, falls, leaps and bounds of each?" Jean-Luc Nancy, *Corpus* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 82. Ricoeur has also anticipated the same issue with what he refers to it as the problem of the criteria of ascription. "The thesis of the sameness of self-ascription and of ascription to someone else demands that we account for the equivalence between ascription criteria (whether experienced or observed); and, beyond this equivalence, that we account for the reciprocity that remains to be interpreted between someone who is me and another who is you." Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 39. In his discussion with Nancy, Derrida admits that the issue always comes back to *who claims* responsibility in one way or another. Jacques Derrida, "'Eating Well' or The Calculation of the Subject," in *Who Comes After the Subject*, eds. Peter Cadava, Peter Connor and Jean-Luc Nancy (London: Routledge, 1991), 96-119.

<sup>13</sup> J.P. Sartre, *Being and Nothingness* (Colorado: Pocket Books, 1971), 233; emphasis in original. In the same entry as the one mentioned earlier, Depraz provides a concise yet profound analysis of the main philosophies of the Other whereby the issue of knowing the (objective) world has always conditioned the question of the Other. Similar analyses are offered by Theunissen: Michael Theunissen, *The Other: Studies in the Social Ontology of Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, and Buber* (Cambridge, MA.: The MIT Press, 1986).

ological tradition, to prove that the Other is an-Other like me, who can constitute the world as an objective phenomenon like me, becomes of paramount importance in order to arrive at the objectivity of the world; a foundation for objective knowledge. This presupposition, however, when subjected to further analysis reveals two rather different philosophical directions. These two directions can be seen, or, better, we can phenomenalyze these two philosophical paths through the philosophizing of Maurice Merleau-Ponty. The Merleau-Ponty of *Phenomenology of Perception*, moving hand in hand with Husserl's principles (*archai*), wrote:

the phenomenological reduction is idealistic, in the sense that there is here a transcendental idealism which treats the world as an indivisible unity of value shared by Peter and Paul, in which their perspectives blend.<sup>14</sup>

Intersubjectivity is the phenomenon of "blending" or "communication,"<sup>15</sup> this being "immediately in touch with the world,"<sup>16</sup> the constitution of meaning, world, noema. In Sartre's words, such Husserlian conceptualization of the Other reveals the Other being there along with the subject and object of my perception; with the *of* of my perception:

Whether I consider this table or this tree or this bare wall in solitude or with companions, the Other is always there as a layer of constitutive meanings which belong to the very object which I consider; in short, he is the veritable guarantee of the object's objectivity.<sup>17</sup>

This perspective elevates the Other to the importance of the foundation of knowledge. My world is such because of the Other who guarantees it. This guarantee, however, unfolds with a bifurcation. Either the world to which I have access is my world and the Other guarantees it but never accesses it, just like *un garant Parisien*, who guarantees my home without it being their's to live; or, we both live in a world which we constitute together, a shared value, a blending of perspectives, an "idealistic" world—or a socially structured world with Zahavi.

In the former case, the Other can never have access to the world

---

<sup>14</sup> Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* (London: Routledge, 1945), xxi.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., xxii.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., xxiii.

<sup>17</sup> J.P. Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 233.

that I experience but s/he guarantees it since we share it and we can talk about it, it is our common surrounding world, the object-world. Yet, this ultimate inability of the Other to see the world through my eyes, so to speak, betrays the possibility of there being something always out of reach for One and Other. That something could be either some sort of phenomenal experience due to each person's particular physical, psychological, and historical constitution, or, and this is of the greatest importance, the inability to ever verify that when we all talk about, say, experiencing 'quenching thirst' we are all indeed do experience (have experienced) the 'same' thing. This approach to knowing the Other whereby there is this inevitable inability to equate each other's experience because of the inability to verify that the object of experience is the same for all, borders with solipsism.

In the latter case, however, solipsism is not an issue because there is no world to be an object of experience. Experience is the creation or, better, the constitution of the world. Experience is the world-object, the lifeworld. There are no such objective relations about which we can talk about but never be absolutely certain that we are all experiencing the same way. We are the relations as we constitute them together by living them, we co-constitute them. The world is a co-constituted sociality, noema—one could even say that everything is socially constructed. Yet, we can "eidetically trace the essential possible variants"<sup>18</sup> of such co-constitution whereby the result would be the correlate of our factual experience called "the actual world"<sup>19</sup> as one special case among a "multitude of possible worlds and surrounding worlds."<sup>20</sup> In either case, however, both options are within the paradigmatic modality of thought of transcendentalism. For either case to happen there must be something, a condition, some sort of thing(in)itself; an unknown whole that makes our experience possible. It may not be the case that it "exists in itself" in a Kantian way but it can exist in itself by the permanence guaranteed by its materiality/physicality which allows us to constitute it.<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*, 106.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 107.

<sup>21</sup> In marginal note in *Ideas I* Husserl writes: "Natural attitude is related here to

In *The Visible and The Invisible* Merleau-Ponty tried to move away from such transcendentalism by moving closer to a material theorization of the world and the Other. “[I]t is in the world that we communicate, through what, in our life, is articulate.”<sup>22</sup> But this world is already objective “from this lawn before me that I think I catch sight of the impact of the green on the vision of another...It is *the thing itself*, that opens unto me the access to the private world of another.”<sup>23</sup> The thing itself here is guaranteed by its material distinctness about which we can talk. Intentionality becomes intensionality. It is not by chance that Merleau-Ponty will then attempt to trace those material categories of perception that condition the distinctness of an undifferentiated, intertwined material whole as breadth and depth.<sup>24</sup>

We cannot but notice a reversal in thinking: The later Merleau-Ponty is more materialistic and explicitly more Kantian. It is the objective world which conditions the affirmation of the existence of the Other contra Husserl where it is the self-other relationship that conditions the constitution or discovery/unveiling of an objective world—where “we come to an understanding with our fellow human being and in

---

the real world at hand; the world is a universe of “what exists in itself.” But being broadened it must become related to everything “ideal” “existing in itself” over against “us” which, to be sure, is there for us as coming from spontaneities, as a product, but then it too is nevertheless there “mentally.” (Ibid., 55).

<sup>22</sup> Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Visible and the Invisible* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968), 11.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.; my emphasis.

<sup>24</sup> The discussion has been prepared in the *Phenomenology of Perception* by making breadth and depth those categories which interchange depending on the prominence of material organs. Breadth is the other side of depth. “What we are dealing with is a mode of presentation and a type of synthesis which are new and which transfigure the object” (260). “In both cases depth is tacitly equated with breadth seen from the side, and this is what makes it invisible” (297). Intersubjectivity is then approached through a thing in itself. “All men accept without any speculation the equivalence of depth and breadth; this equivalence is part and parcel of the self-evidence of an intersubjective world, which is what makes philosophers as forgetful as anyone else of the originality of depth. But prior to this we know nothing of the world and of space as objective, we are trying to describe the phenomenon of the world” (298).

common with posit an Objective spatiotemporal actuality.”<sup>25</sup> The Other is just like me only because we are already connected through various material “intertwinings” (*entrelacs*). There are invisible chiasmatic (material) relations where everything is (inter)connected and becomes visible. Just like a glove that has two sides so the world has two sides, the visible and the invisible. But this invisible is not something immaterial or metaphysical. It is the Other side of the visible. There are chiasmatic relations everywhere. I do not see or immediately sense my inner organs; in one sense they are invisible, yet in various circumstances these very organs can be sensed, they can come to the experiential foreground, the visible, I can sense them. There is then a co-corporation, an intercorporeity of various things which through different conditions can constitute unities, ie my body. Merleau-Ponty frequently uses the metaphor “flesh and blood.” The fetus of a pregnant mother is within the body of the pregnant woman, invisible. It is this ‘one’ flesh and blood that constitutes them. As Leder explains following Merleau-Ponty, my fetal and embryonic development “proceeded through a series of visceral écarts.”<sup>26</sup> Therefore, it is not that with and through the Other that I/we know our world by what is in us visible in the broadest sense possible. Rather, it is through the world that we come to be and know each other because we have come out of the same stuff. We are already connected through various invisible processes of material being. Hence, the question of knowing if there is an Other (qua subjectivity qua me) just because it is not immediately visible becomes redundant and non-sensical just like the question of knowing if there is a heart in me which is not visible.

Using Merleau-Ponty as a metaphor, we see that either moving with some strand of transcendentalism or with materialism the subject of the Other has been approached through the subject of knowledge. But Sartre, anticipating today’s materialism which like a virus has moved in propagation and has affected all subjects of philosophy, even phenomenology, resisted this path. Following the Nietzschean admonition, he appreciated that knowledge is always perspectival. The way that I know my flesh and blood from within is not the same way I know the flesh

---

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>26</sup> Drew Leder, “Flesh and Blood: A Proposed Supplement to Merleau-Ponty.” In *The Body*, ed. Donn Welton (Malden, MA: Blackwell.Leder, 1999), 200-210 at 206.



and blood of the Other. And since there is a phenomenal-experiential difference between the two, such difference constitutes a being that has to be accounted for. The material turn is inadequate for that. My heart, the way I am acquainted with it is not the same way that another person in general or a cardiologist is acquainted with it. For the former, if the way I know my heart that beats or the hand that I move was the same as I get to know the Other's, then unavoidably we would end up asking with Husserl "What makes this organism another's, rather than a second organism of my own?"<sup>27</sup> There is something that it is mine (my body) and something that is not mine (the body there) but in the plane of consciousness (I am conscious of my body and that body there) they are both mine.<sup>28</sup> For the latter, the case of the cardiologist who 'successfully' transplants a body's heart into another body, they can claim that the body before *functions* as the body now with a new part. Just as when my Citroen C2 VTs remained functionally the same with my Citroen C2 VTs when I changed its engine because I had burst it, so the doctors and nurses were telling Claire Sylvia that she was the same Claire Sylvia after a change of heart—wholistically the same based on functional sameness; Claire Sylvia subjected to material principles was the same before and af-

---

<sup>27</sup> Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*, 113.

<sup>28</sup> This philosophical problem surfaces again when neuroscience tries to account for the recognition of the Other through the so-called mirror-neurons. Crudely, a set of neurons have been 'discovered' that display the 'same' pattern of activity of goal directed body movements whether the movements are of the object of study (monkey) or an object of the object of study (the experimenter as the visual object of the monkey). Evan Thomson offers a compelling case that the discovery of these so-called mirror neurons provide neuroscientific evidence of Husserl's pairing phenomenon; briefly, that we come to know the Other through our bodies, by appresenting one another. Yet, if they are the same, and the stipulation of phenomenology as non-inferential recognition of the Other is kept, Husserl's question "What makes this organism another's, rather than a second organism of my own?" remains unanswered and begs. Either there is a mineness that will characterize this activity as mine and the other as of an-other's, or, a difference between the activities must exist for the non-inferential pairing to occur as (felt) immediate pairing. Evan Thompson, "Empathy and Consciousness," *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 8.5-7 (2001), 1-31.

ter. But Sylvia, or better to say Claire, was clearly “not feeling it”; “she ain’t feeling it” as the slang version has it. Rather, she was going ‘mad’:

I didn’t know who I was or what I was doing here. My body, the nurses assured me, was doing fine...But it wasn’t my body that concerned me. It was everything else...I was going through the early stages of an identity crisis.<sup>29</sup>

Like the ‘mad’ Nancy after the transplant

If my own heart was failing me, to what degree was it ‘mine,’ my ‘own’ organ? Was it even an organ? For some years I had already felt a fluttering, some breaks in the rhythm, really not much of anything (mechanical figures, like the ‘ejection fraction,’ whose name I found to be pleasing): not an organ, not the dark red muscular mass loaded with tubes that I now had to suddenly imagine. Not ‘my heart’ beating endlessly, hitherto as absent as the soles of my feet while walking.<sup>30</sup>

Reducing everything to material relations or functions cannot, therefore, reveal what we feel when we refer to the experiential selfhood or, concomitantly, the experience of intersubjectivity. Material reduction is ontological destruction. As Sartre has shown in other subjects of philosophy, both materialism and idealism are fraught with destructive presuppositions. Both ways of thinking have to be resisted in order to free the concept of Intersubjectivity.

### ***Sartre’s Intersubjective Phenomenology***

Sartre starts with the cogito. The cogito as the first truth, as “an apodictic basis.”<sup>31</sup> But this cogito is not exactly the Cartesian one. It is not “a substantial being analogous to that of a thing”<sup>32</sup> but “the manifes-

<sup>29</sup> Claire Sylvia, and William Novak. *A Change of Heart* (New York, NY: Warner Books, 1998).

<sup>30</sup> Jean-Luc Nancy, *Corpus* (New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2008), 167.

<sup>31</sup> J.P. Sartre, “Consciousness of Self and Knowledge of Self”, in *Readings in Existential Phenomenology*, eds. Nathaniel Lawrence and Daniel O’Connor (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc, 1967), 113.

<sup>32</sup> In *Being and Nothingness* the Cartesian cogito is falling into the “error of substance” and the Husserlian cogito “functional description” (73).

tation of consciousness. In knowing I am conscious of knowing.”<sup>33</sup> There is something where/to which/at I can ascribe my experiences through ascribing them. My cogito is my subjectivity, my consciousness, something completely and ultimately felt as mine.<sup>34</sup> In this sense there is always an ontological separation between me and the Other (an ontological separation of Self and Other).<sup>35</sup> Therefore, intersubjectivity, is indeed a question of the relation of subjectivities, mine, which I feel through my being conscious of myself and the Other. But how do I know or how can I know that there is an Other the way I know that I am in the apodictic basis that the cogito can provide? If the Other exists like I do, then my cogito in its being, will be able to disclose the Other not as a structure of itself like a emaciated logical Kantian category—to use Polanyi’s expression—or in terms of being constituted by me as I come to know anything else which is not a subjectivity. Rather, the only option for the condi-

---

<sup>33</sup> J.P. Sartre, “Consciousness of Self and Knowledge of Self”, in *Readings in Existential Phenomenology*, eds. Nathaniel Lawrence and Daniel O’Connor (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc, 1967), 114.

<sup>34</sup> The Cogito as an apodictic basis is indeed as has been traditionally construed the first firm basis of theoretical knowledge. Yet, as Henry points out in *Barbarism*, this basis is itself a knowing, exactly as Sartre mentions above, yet this knowing is itself of a different kind (*un savoir autre*), not theoretical. Only such a different knowing can dispense the moment of absolute doubt. This knowledge is a feeling, a way of being affected (*sentir*). Only a feeling, a pathos in the old sense of being affected can dispense with the convincing power of the theoretical, logical apodicticity of any proposition or system of propositions or even theoretical paradigms. And this feeling is itself a power, an I can which I can destroy all knowledge and habit—just like Dostoevsky who brilliantly says that you can propose to me the ultimate truth of the world, God himself but still I can say that I don’t believe it, I may resist it. Why? Because I can. And this ‘I can’ need not be considered as a present or a presence in all its senses but as a possibility of presenting, as a something which may condition all attempts to objectivation yet not itself being objectivated. In speaking of consciousness it is a consciousness which cannot be fully conscious of itself, that is, in Sartre’s parenthesis conscience (de) soi. In Derridian terms, the ‘de’ which marks presence and definitions needs to be under erasure, *sous rature*. Michel Henry, *Barbarism* (Paperback. London: The Continuum International Publishing Group Ltd, 2012). Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Notes From the Underground* (London: Alma Classics Ltd, 2010)

<sup>35</sup> J.P. Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 213.

tional 'if the Other qua Other qua being like me is possible', is for them to be revealed in my cogito as cogito; "by disclosing to me the concrete, indubitable presence of a particular 'concrete Other just as it has already revealed to me my own incomparable, contingent but necessary, and concrete existence.'"<sup>36</sup> But what does this actually mean?

Sartre's approach is something like a transcendental *reductio ad absurdum*. The transcendental premise works within the process of the *reductio* like *partes extra partes*. That dynamic way of philosophizing provides him with the compelling thesis: Only if there is another like me, can I make sense of my experience of presenting to myself my self as another (I am what I am not and I am not what I am) which is phenomenized in the modalities of shame/pride. But let us move with Sartre from the start.

If the Other and the self are necessarily separate and no relation of whole-parts defines them such that a totality is constituted of of them like in Husserl; and if the only possibility of one existing for the Other is an immediate certainty as guaranteed by a reflective-transcendent cogito in its modality of givenness to itself; and if this modality also reveals that the self can never (fully) objectify itself even in self-consciousness (hence *conscience (de) soi*) but only be given as pure presence to self (the apodictic feeling of the cogito); then, the only possibility for the existential certainty of the Other, is the Other to be given to me (my cogito) as a subjectivity (as another cogito). But since this subjectivity cannot be construed as Cartesian epistemic access (precisely because the what it is like is a past modality of being in order to be), it must be given in a mode of an immediate situation, an ontic-existential way in connection with me if we were to use Heidegger's terms, simply in the everyday praxes. That is, as a consciousness with the certainty of the experience. But such certainty only my cogito can reveal and guarantee as it has done in revealing my self in my own self-ascription: in thinking I am thinking. With Theunissen, "the task has much rather to be, or Sartre thinks, that of leaving the encounter with the Other its factual character and still exhibiting its indubitability."<sup>37</sup>

Moving forward, Sartre thinks that *if*<sup>38</sup> there is an-Other for me

---

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 251.

<sup>37</sup> Michael Theunissen, *The Other*, 205.

<sup>38</sup> A very important point needs to be made here. In modern logic the conditional 'if' is construed within a binary logical presupposition. Something cannot be A

there, in the world, then I must also be An-Other-for-the-Other, I must be an Other for them. So any proof about the Other for me must also be a proof of me as another for them. But that is not enough. We both need to become conscious of these proofs of one another, at the same time, in the same place. This is the missing part from Husserl. It is not enough that I gain a certainty of the Other as Other based on my pure immanence (as in Husserl's empathy). That certainty is incomplete so to speak. Certainty would be that the Other is revealed in me (as a cogito) as Other, as a subjectivity and I do the same for them; a "bilateral relation"<sup>39</sup> which at the same time and place all *Is*, eyes meet, that is, (we) become conscious of each Other. If the analytic stops with what I think (that) I know based on my categories, then the Other is not revealed as cogito as subjectivity but as a subject. The Other is subjected by me. Even if I treat them as a subjectivity I still subject their being to what I constitute them to be. My subjectivity as constituting intentionality does not reveal the Other constituting intentionality in its freedom to constitute but reduces it to my way of constitution, my I can. This fine phenomenological point that Sartre makes had been well appreciated from Gabriel Marcel, the early Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Michel Henry.

Marcel elaborates on this point in the *Philosophy of Existentialism*. Even if I thematize the world with the phenomeno(logically) similar Other as a subjectivity, as a constituting intentionality, that does not mean that the Other magically becomes an-Other qua subjectivity qua

---

and not-A at the same time, the ultimate thesis of non-contradiction. For the ancients, however, this was not the case in their logos and in their art of logos, their logic. What Derrida shows us in his analysis of the ancient greek *ἄλφα* through the *φάρμακον* is precisely this non binary logical option. The *pharmakon* is both cure and poison at the same time, in the same space: living is at the same time dying. The ultimate presupposition of modern logic does not correspond and cannot be applied to the being of being human. This *ἄλφα* is what makes Sartre's thesis so compelling. When the 'if' is construed as *ἄλφα* then there cannot be an experience of shame or pride without the Other. These are happening both at the same time, at the same place, to-get-there. The there is the revelation of the Other to the self, self-and-Other together, subjectivity-and-subjectivity together, intersubjectivity [see Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy* (New York, NY: The Harvester Press, 1982) and Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination* (London: The Athlone Press, 1981)].

<sup>39</sup> J.P. Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 361.

me. Even as a supposed subjectivity, the other is reduced to a subject. Trying to treat one as subjectivity I already have subjected them to how I want them to be treated. And in the place of perception, such constitution falls short as an awareness of others as they are. It is “*concerned with a series of metrical relations...it has nothing to do with the relationship between human beings.*”<sup>40</sup> The Other is next to the door, or two meters away, or is moving towards, or her name is...But it is always me that makes a subject of what they are. The other is categorized through my zero point. Their being a subject is for me based on my own horizon of perception.

The early Merleau-Ponty elaborated on this very point by taking the important factor of temporality into consideration.

My consciousness, being co-extensive with what can exist for me, and corresponding to the whole system of experience, cannot encounter in that system, another consciousness capable of bringing immediately to light in the world the background, unknown to me, of its own phenomena...even if I succeeded in thinking of it [the other body there] as constituting the world, it would be I *who would be constituting the consciousness as such, and once more I should be the sole constituting agent.*<sup>41</sup>

The crucial point that Merleau-Ponty makes here is that the Other cannot be revealed as cogito, as subjectivity in a past modality of the Cartesian and analytic phenomenal consciousness of what it is like to (be) x. It is not what has been, the *en-soi*, which is at stake when it comes to revealing another subjectivity. The Other as subjectivity, as a consciousness, can only be revealed through their consciousness, through their *pour-soi*. When Sartre uses the metaphor of the «perfected robot» in order to emphasize that the factuality of the Other through their body cannot reveal their subjectivity just because it seems to be analogous to mine (they might as well be perfected robots), he does it to underscore that the perfected robot is an *en-soi* by the very fact that it is already finite in its programming. There is no *pour-soi* in something programmed and perfected be it even the most open system possible in quantum mechanics. Consciousness, subjectivity, is free through and through to constitute. Con-

---

<sup>40</sup> Gabriel Marcel, *The Philosophy of Existentialism*, (New York: The Citadel Press, 1970), 70; my emphasis.

<sup>41</sup> Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 407; my emphasis.

sciousness is not a system. The Other, if they exist as I exist, then, they must be a true openness, a total freedom to be whatever they can be motivated to be, that is, they can choose out of the infinite rather than to adapt to the possibilities of a (pre)determined finitude. It is through the Other's look which is like mine if they are a subjectivity that "I effect the concrete proof that there is a 'beyond the world.'"<sup>42</sup>

These two points, largely neglected in discussions of intersubjectivity, are of paramount importance because if the analysis or the attempt to find the Other (if they exist) is punctuated to what I constitute them to be without their being expressed as they are, then what we experience is not intersubjectivity but *intersubjection*. We relate to the Other (inter-) by thematizing them according to our own categories (making them our subject of experience, subjection). As the feminists rightly say, we reduce them to our own categories. We (the same) reduce them (the Other) to the Other of the same—as Luce Irigaray has theorized the condition of women being subjected by men: "reducing the Other to the Other of the Same which could also be interpreted as submitting the real to the imaginary of the speaking subject."<sup>43</sup> Zahavi's Husserlian inspired empathy has this unfortunate shortcoming. The empathizer may say "I feel ya" but that is their subjecting the Other to what they think they know about the Other, how one subject(ivity) intends an object/subject which it constitutes as a subject(ivity). Empathy here is not feeling with the Other, but feeling the Other as a possible Other of the same. Feeling empathy for the Other *as such* "one reappropriates it for oneself, one disposes of it, one misses it, or rather one misses (the) missing (of) it, which as concerns the other, always amounts to the same. Between the proper of the other and the other of the proper."<sup>44</sup>

This relation defers (to) the relation of master and slave. It only slightly differs from the phenomenon of generosity that Friedrich Nietzsche discussed: the master auto-calls himself generous by giving alms to the slave. Generosity here, Nietzsche advises us to wake up, is not defined by the one who receives the alms but by the one who is giving them. The empathizer to the empathized based on the *arche* of em-

---

<sup>42</sup> J.P. Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 270.

<sup>43</sup> Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1977), 99.

<sup>44</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, xii.

pathy. And this is exactly what has happened with phallocratic science who has perpetuated all the relevant myths about women as Simone de Beauvoir rightly says:

But most often woman knows herself only as different, relative; her pour-autrui, relation to others, is confused with her very being; for her, love is not an intermediary 'between herself and herself' because she does not attain her subjective existence; she remains engulfed in this loving woman whom man has not only revealed, but created.<sup>45</sup>

Women have been subjected to what men want them to be. And through our analysis it seems to be stemming directly from this phenomenon that we are trying to articulate, of intersubjection. It is the appropriation of the Other, their definition based on our own categories. The Other does not constitute, they are constituted.<sup>46</sup> It all, then, comes down to who makes the start of expression, the arche, the archon, the lord:

The lordly right of giving names extends so far that one should allow oneself to conceive the origin of language itself as an expression of power on the part of the rulers: they say 'this is this and this', they seal everything and event with a sound and, as it were, take possession of it.<sup>47</sup>

The question of whether there is another like me has been answered in the way I, the questioner, want it to be answered based on the evidence that I observe.<sup>48</sup> Once again with Nietzsche, in the process of

<sup>45</sup> Simone De Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1956), 631.

<sup>46</sup> And this process is still in play in today's moral philosophy as well. Recent rhetoric about effective altruism is just a recurrence of the same phenomenon. The effectiveness of altruism is not corroborated by the one who is receiving the help. That one is muted. The effective altruist receives the stamp of the effective either but himself or by, as Irigaray says, a hom(m)osexual exchange.

<sup>47</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings*. eds. Judith Norman and Aaron Ridley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 27.

<sup>48</sup> Another such case of intersubjection is the case of the modern ethnographer who, even in the case of Malinowski who advocates for the complete immersion in the context of situation for the understanding of the Other, understands through his own categories. He "has to rely on the living reality of spoken language *in fluxu*" so that he "can study directly the conditions and



trying to find the Other I destroy them. My initial intrigue, my erotic experience, the desire, to find whether there is another like me ends up with violating their being, raping them.

We do not experience intersubjectivity but a relation of master-slave. Intersubjection then is the semblance of the “good old skool” physical master-slave relationship. In firmly denying that this is intersubjectivity, a bilateral authentic we relation, a relation of subjectivities, Sartre writes:

It is sufficient to observe that the Slave is the Truth of the Master. But this unilateral recognition is unequal and insufficient...I am...a being for-itself which is for-itself only through another. Therefore the Other penetrates me to the heart.<sup>49</sup>

These phenomena are left hidden when we philosophize egologically with *Cartesian Eyes* and *Kantian Is*; they are left concealed in the phallographic binary logic of soft/hard, up/down, homo erectus/penis erectus. Moving with Sartre, *Quia* there is another then such tendencies must be resisted if the Other is to be revealed. The Other is revealed only if the tendency to subject them as an object of our subject is resisted.

I am a consciousness means that I find myself somewhere in the world. To say that I am found in the world or that I have been given to myself as a self-consciousness is for Sartre the inability of treating myself as an object. I can never ultimately objectify myself unless I kill myself—and even that is debatable from an existential perspective. Therefore, thinking dynamically if there is an Other, then, for this Other to have the same existential status as me, they must be experiencing the same ‘thing’. Therefore, the

---

situations characteristic of a culture and interpret the statements through them” but this interpretation is utterly unidirectional - empathetic. It may empathetic but it is not sympathetic. The Other, as in the tribe, the savage, the primitive or however they are called, is not voiced with respect to whether this interpretation is anywhere near to their experience and the wor(l)d. One’s demonstration, one’s predication, one’s word violating another’s world as Lionnet described in *The Mirror and the Tomb*. B. Malinowski, “The Problem of Meaning in Primitive Languages,” in *The Meaning of Meaning*, eds. C.K. Ogden and I.A. Richards, (New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1923), 296-336 at 307; Françoise Lionnet, “The Mirror and the Tomb: Africa, Museums, and Memory,” *African Arts* 50-59 (2001).

<sup>49</sup> J.P. Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 237.

absolute certainty of the existence of the Other is (if it so happens) that *I* experience the process of *my* being objectified by the Other. But since in my own consciousness I can never objectify myself, ***the proof of the Other as subjectivity would be mutatis mutandis et ceteris paribus that I experience a resistance of being objectified by another subject.*** By resisting the Other in their process of my being objectified by them as I do for myself in the mode of being of self-consciousness. This is the process by which the Other as a subject is revealed to me as subjectivity in the certainty of the cogito. It is me who will resist the objectification of the Other by being presented as a subject to them. But because I will so resist, I will be presenting myself as an-Other to them-as-subjects. Thus, intersubjectivity is the relation of subjectivities which are presenting themselves to each other without being subjectified to objectifications or subjectifications. This process of resisting objectification by subjection Sartre attempts to explicate through his well-known analysis of the re-gard/the look.

### ***Sartre's Structure Look-Shame/Pride as Entropy***

The Other's look can make me feel shame or pride *if* I claim it as a look toward me. Zahavi claims that Sartre's shame "presupposes the intervention of the other, not merely because the other is the one before whom I feel ashamed, but also and more significantly because that of which I am ashamed is only constituted in and through my encounter with the other."<sup>50</sup> But it is not *because* of the intervention of the Other that I feel ashamed. There is no speck of causation in Sartre's metaphysics of authentic human relations, of intersubjectivity, or in his metaphysics of presence of self and of self to an Other self. And neither can any (material) modality of causation fully account (for) the workings of shame. As Sartre says many times following consistently his approach to consciousness, shame is a modality of consciousness. I am ashamed. What this means is that being ashamed is literally a being that I am as being ashamed and at the same time a being that I am not since I am the one who is being ashamed of (my self). The Other has no place in my self-consciousness of shame as Sartre underscores—let alone any kind of intervention. The Other is neither a mechanical or quantum cause nor a condition which implies some sort of causality. What the Other does is

---

<sup>50</sup> Dan Zahavi, *Self & Other*, 213.

to look at me. To look *at me* is to motivate me if I grant the ontological importance of their look. Looking at me the Other motivates me to come back to myself, to be motivated to resist my current situation and realize the being of myself which is not available to me while being immersed in my projects, in my situation. This coming back to myself while being motivated by the Other is what the ancients called entropy—literally, shame, *ἐντροπή* (*entropy*)<sup>51</sup> or the coming back towards one's being (see also Lidell and Scott's relevant entry).<sup>52</sup>

*La honte*, or shame, or *ἐντροπή*, is the being given to oneself that being that one does not have access to. Zahavi insists that this is close to what Husserl called iterative empathy:

According to Husserl, this case of iterative empathy, where my indirect experience of another coincides with my self-experience, can be described as a situation where I see myself through the eyes of the other (Husserl 1959: 136–7). When I realize that I can be given for the other in the same

---

<sup>51</sup> Sometimes the text reveals to us its secrets if we ask different questions as Hans-Georg Gadamer advised us to do in *Truth and Method*. In the Sartrean text it was always a question why is shame mentioned twice, once before the section of the *Look* and then one after. Even Marjorie Grene who does appreciate that Sartre's philosophy being dynamic is trying to combine both phenomenology and rational exegesis, she fails to take into consideration that shame in Sartre is not to be construed moralistically as most commentators do. It is the being that I am that shame reveals not a negative emotion: "Shame reveals to me that I am this being, not in the mode of 'was' or of 'having to be' but in-itself. When I am alone, I can not realize my "being-seated;" at most it can be said that I simultaneously both am it and am not it. But in order for me to be what I am, it suffices merely that the Other look at me." Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York, NY: Continuum, 2004); Marjorie Grene, *Dreadful Freedom: A Critique of Existentialism* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1948). J.P. Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 262.

<sup>52</sup> Richard James Blackburn appreciated Sartre's theory of entropy although solely in materialistic terms. This entropy is the Aristotelian and modern scientific one, not exactly the one we are talking about here which relates directly to being affected by oneself through the presence of another self which is a metaphysical phenomenon, a "metamorphosis" as Sartre calls it a handful times. Richard James Blackburn, *The Vampire of Reason: An Essay in the Philosophy of History* (London: Verso, 1990).

way as the other is given for me, that is, when I realize that I myself am another to the other, my self-apprehension is transformed accordingly. It is only when I apprehend the other as apprehending me, and take myself as other to the other, that I apprehend myself in the same way that I apprehend them and become aware of the same entity that they are aware of, namely, myself as a person (Husserl 1954: 256; 1973b: 78). Thus, to exist as a person is, for Husserl, to exist socialized in a communal horizon, where one's bearing to oneself is appropriated from the others (Husserl 1973b: 175; 1954: 315; 1952: 204–5; 1973c: 177, 603).<sup>53</sup>

Sartre's look does not involve "seeing myself through the eyes of the other" and it is certainly not an indirect experience of the Other. If it were, how would it be that we are in a situation where "I apprehend the other as apprehending him and take myself as the other to the other that I apprehend myself in the same way that I apprehend them..."? To begin with, the very concept of apprehension is an arrest, a bar to the self-motivating consciousness that I am. As mentioned before, the Other does not cause nor intervene for revealing to me the being that I cannot reveal to myself while being it. The Other motivates me by looking at me. "Motivation is not causation."<sup>54</sup> To be motivated by the Other means essentially that the Other is not an inert other—just like a material object. A stone cannot motivate me—but only a subjectivity like me. Causation runs to the physical plane while motivation, ontologically, – if motivation has any meaning at all—runs in the metaphysical. I do not cause myself to be (the scholastic and analytic philosophies of *causa sui*) but I motivate myself to be.<sup>55</sup>

---

<sup>53</sup> Dan Zahavi, *Self & Other*, 236.

<sup>54</sup> J.P. Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 27.

<sup>55</sup> This point about the ontological difference between motivation and causation that Sartre elaborates here by applying it to the consciousness of the Other, comes directly from Husserl's *Logical Investigations* and the *Ideas*. For something to be able to be experienced, that is, the experienceableness of something is not related only to a possibility of logic but rather "a possibility motivated in the concatenations of experience." Consciousness itself is "through and through one of motivation" which always points beyond itself. In a footnote Husserl explains that "this fundamental phenomenological concepts of motivation...(and in contrast to the concept of causality as relating to the transcendent sphere of reality)...is a universalization of the concept of motivation in accordance with which we can say e.g. that the willing of the

As Robert Olson<sup>56</sup> explained, motivation is a key theme in Sartre's phenomenology (he identifies at least three theories). Consciousness is theorized through the metaphysical concept of motivation which is not causation.

For the same reasons it is impossible to assign to a consciousness a motivation other than itself. Otherwise it would be necessary to conceive that consciousness to the degree to which it is an effect, is not conscious (of) itself. It would be necessary in some manner that it should be without being conscious (of) being. We should fall into that too common illusion which makes consciousness semi-conscious or a passivity. But consciousness is consciousness through and through. It can be limited only by itself.<sup>57</sup>

So if another subjectivity, another consciousness, is like me the revelation of the consciousness that they are must logically reveal itself through the ontological structure of motivation-resistance. The Other's look insofar as I claim it presents me with my being seen. But this is only an attempt of being objectified. The presentation of my being as a being seen is an attempt to become an object. The Other is not yet revealed to me as they are. In my attempt to *resist* this objectification, to transcend it, and then being resisted by Other in their attempt to resist my resistance, my transcendence transcended, is the verification that I know the Other is another like me, another freedom, another constituting intentionality, another subjectivity. There is no clearer passage than the following where Sartre pulls to-get-there all the elements of his phenomenological analysis:

Shame is the **revelation** of the Other not in the way in which a consciousness reveals an **object** but in the way in which one moment of consciousness **implies on the side another moment as its motivation**. If we should have attained pure consciousness by means of the cogito, and if this pure consciousness were only a consciousness (of being) shame, the Other's consciousness would still haunt it as an inapprehensible presence and would thereby escape all reduction. This demonstrates sufficiently that it is not in the world that the Other is first to be sought but **at the side of**

---

end motivates the willing of the means." Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*, 106-107.

<sup>56</sup> Robert G. Olson, "The Three Theories of Motivation in Jean-Paul Sartre," *Ethics* 176-187, (1956).

<sup>57</sup> J.P. Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, lv.

**consciousness as a consciousness in which and by which consciousness makes itself be what it is.** Just as my consciousness apprehended by the cogito bears indubitable witness of itself and of its own existence, so certain particular consciousnesses—for example, “shame-consciousness”—bear indubitable witness to the cogito both of themselves and of the existence of the Other.<sup>58</sup>

The Other subjectivity is revealed to mine as they motivate me to resist the being that I am before they try to subject the world in their own way of which initially I am an object for them. Shame as entropy is this recoil to make a decision to either be motivated by the Other to their own way or to resist it anew. It is in this factual embodied situation that the Other existence is revealed to me the way that I have been revealed to myself. At the end, it is me who can resist or be motivated, it is my choice. But as Henry underscores the Other is revealed as subjectivity in this “practical limit of my ‘I can.’”<sup>59</sup> The phenomenon of a transcended transcendence, my resistance to be motivated to the direction of the Other is a sort of countermovement against my movement, an active pressure that I nevertheless cannot experience otherwise than in the impeded dynamism of my ‘I can.’<sup>60</sup> Intersubjectivity then, as an authentic relation of subjectivities, of consciousnesses, of constituting intentionalities, cannot be theorized without the ontological structure of motivation-resistance.

### ***Sartre’s Intersubjectivity and the Perpetual Conflict Para-myth***

It is true that Sartre does mention that the relations with Others are (can be?) a perpetual conflict. From the earliest commentators, from the polemics such as Jean Isère and Marjorie Grene, to the sympathetic ones such as Iris Murdoch<sup>61</sup> and Robert Olson, all the way to the recent hermeneutics of Zahavi, Sartre has been *subjected* as leading us to a state of perennial conflict. What all these commentators have missed is to

---

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 272-3; all types of emphases are mine.

<sup>59</sup> Michel Henry, *Incarnation: A Philosophy of Flesh* (Chicago, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2015), 209.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Iris Murdoch, *Sartre, Romantic Rationalist* (Yale: Yale University Press, 1953).

*subject the text* to the following question; in Sartrean words, to resist it ontologically: How can Sartre talk about a radical freedom, a dreadful freedom to use Grene's phrase, and still make a claim about an ontological structure which suggests something so platonically eternal, the universal and the necessary, the *a priori*? What kind of antinomy is this to be free and at the same time be in conflict forever? One does not have to resort to *Nausea* or *The Words* for the answer. Even in *Being and Nothingness* and in *Materialism and Revolution* Sartre tried to empower us by analyzing the fact that we are *Nothing In Particular*, we are free, we can be anything we can be motivated to be. We are an ignition, an arche, a principle of being something by not being anything else and at the same time of being able to resist this being by being motivated to be something else. After all, to be motivated to do something one has to resist doing whatever it is that they are doing which is not what the motivation is for. But a freedom can only be revealed by another freedom. An 'I' needs the Other to be revealed as 'I.'

The conflict that has been characterizing most human relations, this intersubjection, is an *en-soi*, till the moment we say what the case is and the words cease to vibrate. That does not mean that there have not been any authentic intersubjective relations or that they could not be in the future. The ontological structure of conflict is about the past on which we reflect. There is no ontological force for determining the future or making the present words messianic, to use Derrida's expression; that it will always be like that. As long as we are we are choosing. Finally, to make a claim that something is not something else there must be some sort of experience of an ontological difference between the two. Therefore, an authentic intersubjectivity must have been felt so as to theorize about all other relations not being such. This ontological difference we can see in the writings of Emmanuel Lévinas, Alfred Schutz and Simone De Beauvoir.

In Lévinas,<sup>62</sup> the Other's face reveals the subjectivity that they are. It is a radical transcendence from the ultimate immanence of what I am to the revelation of the Other as what they are, the Other like me. Lévinas's account is a genetic account, an attempt to show that even when taking

---

<sup>62</sup> Emmanuel Lévinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority* (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1961).

Nietzschean naturalism or animalistic evolutionary Darwinism to the extreme, morality is not just custom or social constructed utilitarian rules. Morality is an optics, the first view of the Other qua Other qua me. Morality is a metaphysical connection to/with the Other, the breaking off my own egoistic contentment to the appreciation, understanding of the Other. In Lévinas's account the ontological structure of resistance-motivation is subtending the whole analysis.

If one is contented in their projects where the Other is but an object on the way, their being can be overcome and transformed just like in the case of transforming a trunk into wood for the fireplace. Why not kill if one can? Ultimately, in a pre-social atheistic animalistic condition there can be no ('civilized') reason at all for not killing the Other as one kills animals to be fed. According to Lévinas, it is the Other who reveals themselves as a subjectivity that I am and this situation arrests/resists the freedom of my being a potential killer. And this revelation need to come only in a conflict of equals, the same Nietzschean ethos, status. Lévinas is well aware of the part where Nietzsche explains the phenomenon of requital. But this requital construed ontologically can equally apply to cases of seemingly non-equals. Lévinas chooses to pose the question why one would not kill a helpless mother and an orphan. It is in their face that a requital is performed; a requital in the opposite direction. The resistance that the face of the helpless reveals is a pure communication of their inability *to physically* resist the killer. The potential killer is faced with something strange, a luminous sur-face. The face betrays the ontological I can of the expression I cannot physically resist you by hitting back or fleeing. This is still a resistance ontologically. It is still a requital. For Lévinas, the killer as a transcendence becomes a transcendence-transcended in the face of the Other's inability to physically resist the killer: I reveal you as a potential killer: You can kill me, I cannot physically resist you. I do not negate your physical freedom, I amplify it. I requite positively. *And thus you are free to choose*, or better yet, you are faced with choices as your path is interrupted. It is not disrupted, it is interrupted, there is communication in this event. You can kill me or help me, or leave me or... You have possibilities. But *I* revealed these possibilities for you, *I* phenomenized them, *I* presented them to you, *I* presented your being free; *I* recognize your freedom as *we* were found in a situation; Your free choice becomes your responsibility: You can help me or you can kill or... But this I is not an eye/I. As Lévinas explains



elsewhere, this I cannot be converted into the grammar of consciousness. “It resists it to the point that even its resistance is converted into a content of consciousness...a face disconcerts the intentionality that aims at it.”<sup>63</sup> Lévinas keeps the metaphor of the sight not as vision which has a beginning/end in the visible object but an *optique* which is infinite. The Other is encountered as an infinity.

The face of the Other for Lévinas can reveal the subjectivity that they are by resisting positively, by looking at someone and presenting them their being without intention, in the pure givenness of the surrender, the ultimate positivity, a sacrifice. This dis-concerting, dis-orienting is an entropy. Shame as entropy is still at work before any further act is chosen. Simonne Plourde uses the term “revirer” to express this movement: a turning anew, an entropy. Shame must be construed ontologically and not moralistically as it happens. Entropy is not *αἰδώς* (moral shame) but conditions it. Shame or entropy is the stopping of one’s way of being, one’s trope, one’s course of action. It is a turn on one’s being based on another, a cata-strophe ontologically speaking.<sup>64</sup> The presence of the Other freedom is that which will resist another by motivating it to understand, to reflect the being in which one is before being looked, that is faced with, ontologically. Therefore, the first experience is not an *apologia* as Lévinas states in the sense of giving an account of the act that was about to be done. Before the *apologia* there is always an *tacit omologia* (confession), an under-standing that the Other is another like me.

This understanding of the Other as subjectivity that they are can be called, with Max Scheler, “participation” “as a re-action to the state and value of the other’s feelings.”<sup>65</sup> It is a fellow-feeling, feeling with, sympathy. This participation is not to be confused with the dominance of the subjective eyes on the Other as in the case of empathy as feeling the

---

<sup>63</sup> Emmanuel Lévinas, “The Trace of the Other,” translated by A. Lingis, in *Deconstruction in Context*, ed. Mark Taylor (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 345-359 at 353.

<sup>64</sup> In *Of Grammatology*, Derrida traces Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s theory of the genesis of language in a catastrophic trope cause by the finger of God. In Sartre, the catastrophe which is required for genesis is the Other, the Other’s look. I am born through the Other’s look which looks at me. [see Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*.

<sup>65</sup> Max Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy* (London: Routledge & K. Paul. 1954), 14.

Other vicariously. “Thus in this case the two functions of vicariously visualized feeling and participation in feeling are separately given and must be sharply distinguished.”<sup>66</sup> The vicarious feeling is close to what we have been referring to as intersubjection. A subjection of the Other’s being to the Other of the subject who subjects.

Participation, sympathy, omologia, are all concepts that enable us to articulate and describe the metaphysical phenomenon of intersubjectivity. But again, these concepts have to be rid off their moralistic and rationalistic stains that various philosophies have burdened them over the years and transvaluated their meaning. Speaking ontologically, sympathy is not to be related to a particular emotional state; omologia (literally the same logos, confession) should not be related to any religious appropriation or the plato-aristotelian transvaluations of these concepts. Another attempt to clarify these concepts can be traced in the work of Alfred Schutz, for instance, who has attempted to describe exactly where such phenomena take place in the various ways that Self and Other relate in our social being.

In the *Homecomer* Schutz described the intersubjective experience as: “Our sharing a common vivid present this unique individual personality in this particular situation,” the “pure we-relation”<sup>67</sup> as “experiencing one another as unique personalities by following their unfolding thought as an ongoing occurrence and by sharing therefore their anticipations of the future as plans as hopes or as anxieties.”<sup>68</sup> In *Concept and Theory Formation of the Social Sciences*, the intersubjective experience is theorized through Max Weber’s *Verstehen*, understanding, «the protocol propositions of the psychophysical world,”<sup>69</sup> meaning. A phenomenon elusive of any sensory observation of sensory behaviour. This philosophical movement allowed Schutz to ask How is such *Verstehen* or understanding possible?<sup>70</sup>

The answer comes in *In Making Music Together*, since the above

---

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Alfred Schutz, “The Homecomer,” *American Journal of Sociology* 50.5 (1945), 371.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, 372.

<sup>69</sup> Alfred Schutz, “Concept and Theory Formation of the Social Sciences,” in *Readings in Existential Phenomenology*, eds. Nathaniel Morris and Daniel O’Connor (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc, 1967), , 380-390, at 381.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, 383.

the question reveals:

the basic issue, namely, whether the communicative process is really the foundation of all possible social relationships, or whether, on the contrary, all communication presupposes the existence of some kind of social interaction which, though it is an indispensable condition of all possible communication, does not enter the communicative process and is not capable of being grasped by it.<sup>71</sup>

It is here that Schutz will re-visit Sartre and state that Sartre's basic concept of "looking at the other and being looked at by the other" (*le regard*),...examples of the endeavor to investigate what might be called the "mutual tuning-in relationship" upon which alone all communication is founded. It is precisely this mutual tuning-in relationship by which the 'I' and the 'Thou' are experienced by both participants as a 'We' in vivid presence; the possibility of living together simultaneously in specific dimensions of time:

...two series of events in inner time, one belonging to the stream of consciousness of the composer, the other to the stream of consciousness of the beholder, are lived through in simultaneity, which simultaneity is created by the ongoing flux of the musical process...this sharing of the other's flux of experiences in inner time, this living through a vivid present in common, constitutes what we called in our introductory paragraphs the mutual tuning-in relationship, the experience of the 'We,' which is at the foundation of all possible communication.<sup>72</sup>

The example of making music together is not just an example or a creative thought experiment floating in the space of the philosopher's imagination. It is an actual experience. If we take into consideration the influence of Husserl on Schutz we can see what this tuning-in actually is. According to Husserl, consciousness is a structure of retention-consciousness of now-protention. The example Husserl gives us is that of understanding something as a melody. The melody consists a consciousness of the notes that I now hear and not completely let go as I anticipate the ones to come. The 'now,' as the Scottish say, is always a presence of

---

<sup>71</sup> Alfred Schutz, "Making Music Together: A Study in Social Relationships," *Social Research* 18.1 (1951), 78.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 92.

what has passed and is to come. Subjectivity as consciousness is such a temporality that temporalizes itself. Therefore in the schema

Subjectivity 1: retention-consciousness of now-protention

Subjectivity 2: retention-consciousness of now-protention

it is the tuning-in of these structures necessary for the creation of a melody to occur. And we can take it further, by saying that all meaning is just a tuning-in. The expressions ‘I see what you mean,’ ‘I see your point,’ or ‘I lost you’ are all attempts to describe the stream of consciousnesses “lived through in simultaneity, which simultaneity is created by the ongoing flux of the [whatever] process...this sharing of the other's flux of experiences in inner time, this living through a vivid present in common.” But this tuning-in insofar as each stream of consciousness is expressed freely means resistance/motivation is always conditioning this free expression whereby conflict may or may not occur. To reach balance playing see-saw fluctuations are most likely inevitable. And even if it takes forever to reach that tuning-in, that fine balance, it makes it even more rare and special.

### ***Intersubjectivity and Responsibility: Epilogue instead of Conclusion***

From the analysis above, it seems fair to appreciate that in our daily lives authentic we relations, intersubjective relations, are very rare if they ever occur. The evaluation of any fact is a choice we make and we have to take the full responsibility for it—lest in bad faith we attribute it to some God or to some paradox like an uncreated evolved yet open system of causal closed connections. In a system of head-phallo/capital exchange which is driven under the auspices of antagonism—where we eat each other symbolically as Derrida has showed—by competition and by the concept of the correct, of the winner, of the normal, it would be serious bad faith to maintain such relations as intersubjective, authentic we relations of subjectivities, of freedoms. Depressing? Very. Pessimistic? Not for a dreadful free subjectivity which resists and is motivated by a future s/he moves with complete responsibility to allow for free expression, for Otherness. Intersubjectivity is concealed, one can choose to unconceal it, and face it, and deal with it or remain in bad faith where everything is sour grapes—where everything is in-defer-ance.

---

# PHILOSOPHY LOOKING AT SOCIETY AND POLITICS

---

## Is Political Humour Dangerous?

*Aysel Demir*  
(Kirikkale University)

### ***Abstract***

In this study, I discuss the relation between humour and political authority. I claim that humour is an innocent passive resistance against the authority whose main intention is to keep society under control. People use humour as a way to criticise authority. Laughing is an opposition to beat the fear which is created by authority and thus humour becomes the language, the eyes and the ears of society. Adolph Hitler thought humour was dangerous! “Joke courts” were set up to punish those who made fun of his regime. On the other hand, when George Orwell said “every joke is a tiny revolution!”, he was thinking of subversive humour. People use a highly creative and intelligent humour as a reaction to all kinds of restrictions. People humorously criticise the discourse of the authority through social media. Using ironic language they usually try to make the authority powerless and break down its discourse. Humour is fearless but intellectual! Therefore, humour is the best instrument to take what you want!

### ***Introduction***

In this study, I claim that humour is an innocent passive resistance against the authority whose main intention is to keep society under control to protect its own interest and power. If society notices authority’s intention and cannot do anything about it, then people start to show their reaction through humour. They know that humour is the best strategy. Today with digital tools and social networking sites, humour can be an even more effective strategy to criticize authority. I discuss the relation between humour and political authority in terms of political philosophy and these are the central questions to answer: What is humour? What

does humour tell us about politics? What do political powers think about humour? What are *the limits of political humour*?

In general, humour refers either to something intended to cause amusement or which makes something amusing. Like aesthetic pleasure, humour clearly informs our mode of human-being and enables us to communicate with others and seek their attention more effectively. In other words, it has some benefits which can puncture pretentiousness, lighten mood and it can help people to cope with their anxieties about disease, disability and death. Humour is the only domain of creative activity where a stimulus on a high level of complexity produces a massive and sharply defined response on the level of physiological reflexes.<sup>1</sup> It usually awakens us to automatic, uncritical thought patterns in a way that we don't find threatening. It has the ability to block negative emotions of fear and anger, emotions that make us more reactive than proactive and more rigid than flexible.<sup>2</sup> Humour is a great tool in defusing difficult situations and an antidote to intransigent discourse and hardened doctrines. It encourages intellectual elasticity and make people more sociably adept. We reveal the things that sometimes remain hidden against opposed systems or dogmas through humour in general and the joke, in particular. However, although humour may be funny, it can also be highly offensive to others. It can offend, hurt and enrage! Therefore, we sometimes should know its limits. *When we ask what are the limits of humour, we can say that there are some rules that draw the boundary of humour.* For example, there are certain tragedies, like terrorist attacks which cause many innocent people to die, so some emotional distance is required before humorous perspectives can be offered about them. In this sense, humour has been perceived as important a virtue as compassion, tolerance or common sense.

The acceptable forms of humour vary from country to country and culture to culture. In different countries and contexts, people have different notions of what constitutes humour and what is off limits to joking. Humour is deeply embedded in language and culture. Especially culture has an important effect on humour because it is based on values and situations. According to this, every society has its own sense of hu-

---

<sup>1</sup> Arthur Koestler, *The Act of Creation* (London: Arkana, Penguin Books, 1964/1989), 31.

<sup>2</sup> John Morreall, "Humor and Emotion," *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 20, 1983, 297-304.

mour among classes, groups, and time which means that shared cultural motifs are the most important aspect of a national sense of humour. Humour is a kind of communication strategy and people usually use it to critique what is wrong in society.

As a communication strategy, humour uses critical thought through some theories such as the superiority theory, the incongruity theory, and the relief theory. The superiority theories suggest that we laugh at things to which we feel superior. Incongruities to which we do not feel superior are threatening to us, rather than humorous. The incongruity theory claims that it is an incongruity in the trigger that creates humour. We laugh at things that are incongruous but have been forced together in a joke or similar humorous event. Relief theories speculate about why humour exists. These range from Herbert Spencer's release theories taken up by Freud, to the arguments taken up by evolutionary psychologists that humour acts like a circuit breaker protecting us from ill-advised thought patterns such as infinite regress.

### ***Philosophy and Political Humour***

Philosophy is the activity of reflective critical thought and systems of thought, therefore, laughter and humour have been constant subjects of philosophical disquisition. The humorous attitude begins to sound like what has traditionally been called the "philosophical attitude," and indeed the comparison is enlightening. The person who looks at his life philosophically does not let his emotions color his view; he is distanced, as we have been saying, from the practical aspects of his situation. And this calmness makes his assessment of his situation more objective, more like that of an unbiased observer. In both respects the humorous attitude is like the philosophical: the person who can appreciate the humor in his own situation is liberated from the dominance of his emotions, and so he has a more objective view of himself.<sup>3</sup> Humour belongs to the rich treasury of the instruments of politics and thus, political humour is based on creativity and flexibility of thought.

The use of political humour dates back to ancient Greece and

---

<sup>3</sup> John Morreall, *Humor and Freedom, Writing and Reading Across the Curriculum*, 3rd ed., Laurence Behrens and Leonard J. Rosen, eds. (Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1988), 365.

Rome. Politicians, citizens, and elites have marvelled at and even feared its powerful influence on public opinion for centuries. Since the Classical period, humour has informed philosophical thought and from the nineteenth century onwards, many modern thinkers have continued to debate this subject. To understand just what this means in practical terms, we might recall them. From ancient times to the 21st century, we can see that some philosophers wrote about laughter or humour but it was usually comedy until the 18th century. Philosophers such as Plato, T. Hobbes, and I. Kant did not focus on humour particularly, they only mentioned laughter or humour in their books for a few paragraphs within another topic.

The history of philosophy shows us that politicians have been persistently cautious, and sometimes hostile to political humor and satire. Satirists, such as Aristophanes used rich political satire and irony to expose hypocrisy in ancient Greece. Aristophanes's *Lysistrata* was the first in a long line of anti-war comedies. In *On the Orator*, Cicero offered tips to politicians on when and how to use humour in speeches. He advised them not to make jokes about tyrants, for example, since the audience will expect something stronger. Aristophanes, "the comic genius of political criticism" explored themes of status, power, and war, all within the frame of a play that rendered his satire both humorous and incendiary.<sup>4</sup> In *the Republic* (388e) Plato said that the Guardians of the state should avoid laughter and in *Philebus* (p. 48–50), he said that the ridiculous was a certain kind of evil, specifically a vice. He saw satire as a type of magic that needed legal penalties which means, according to him, that comedy and satire should be under control. Aristotle seems to agree with Plato in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (IV-8) and *Rhetoric* (II-12), and he said that mockery and jesting should be forbidden. In the *Poetics*, Aristotle also described comedy as "an imitation of people who are worse than the average."<sup>5</sup> Plato and Aristotle focus on this common comic feature, bringing it to our attention for ethical considerations.

In early Rome, emperors banned satire and employed a punishment of death to satirists. Monastic law declared that laughter was the most

---

<sup>4</sup> Charles E. Schutz, *Political Humour from Aristophanes to Sam Ervin* (London: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1977), 10.

<sup>5</sup> Aristotle, *Poetics*, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, 2 vols. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 1460a, 1449a.



serious violation of the vow of silence, which was one of the fundamental virtues of religious life. It also was banned during the medieval Age. In medieval times, a jester had freedom to satirize and could mock the king and tell him those unpleasant truths others could not. In the Renaissance, satire emerged as having a social function to expose vice.<sup>6</sup> The 18th century saw humour or satire expand to a wider range of topics, including politics and social issues, instead of only human weakness, as was the norm until then; the works of Voltaire, Cervantes and Swift are core examples.<sup>7</sup> In the same way that T. Hobbes discussed these aspects of humour in the *Leviathan*, in 1651, and claimed that humour was based on feelings of superiority: “The passion of laughter is nothing else but sudden glory arising from a sudden conception of some eminency in ourselves.”<sup>8</sup> Like Plato and Aristotle, his view of humour is negative.

According to I. Kant, there is no pleasure to be found in the contradiction of intellectual expectation itself: only intellectual frustration could result, and frustration is not a pleasant state in itself. In *The Critique of Judgment*, Kant gives a clearer statement of the role of incongruity in humour: “In everything that is to excite a lively laugh there must be something absurd (in which the understanding, therefore, can find no satisfaction). Laughter is an affection arising from the sudden transformation of a strained expectation into nothing” (I, I, 54). Arthur Schopenhauer offers a more specific version of the incongruity theory, arguing that humour arises from a failure of a concept to account for an object of thought. He also emphasizes the element of surprise, saying that “the greater and more unexpected...this incongruity is, the more violent will be his laughter.” Kant and Schopenhauer were saying that humour arises when the decorous and logical abruptly dissolves into the low and absurd. For Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, the word ‘humour’ was a threat to power and a potent weapon. In the 1900s, satire or humour returned to its classical roots in terms of format and emphasis; satirists “voice a dystopian view of their reality and perceived future, deconstructing modern utopias as well as favouring technology and the

---

<sup>6</sup> Da Silva, Dias Patrícia and Garcia, Luhs Josÿ, “YouTubers as Satirists,” *Ejournal of Edemocracy and Open Government* 4.1 (2012), 95.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 101

<sup>8</sup> Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), 8

mechanical as satiric objects.” Orwell and Huxley embodied the satirist as a “cautionary prophet,” highlighting the weaknesses of utopian, idealistic ideas of progress.<sup>9</sup>

### ***The Fear of Authority: Political Humour***

Humour has for many years been playing an important role in political life. Humour, especially satire has historically been used as “a means of discrediting to the authority.”<sup>10</sup> Making fun of politicians is a fundamental part of political humour. Therefore, political humour can make politicians nervous because it attacks their character or policy and after that people begin to ask questions about politicians or authority figures. It is ridicule of the speech and language of politics. Even Freud said that jokes were suited for ridiculing people in high places who we would otherwise fear to attack because of inner or outer inhibitions.

Political humor is important, of course, not only deployed in resisting or coping under a dictatorship, but also in the day to day workings of a democracy.<sup>11</sup> In reality, humour has always had a very natural place in politics, particularly in democratic regimes. However, there are some stories of political leaders calling for satirists to be jailed, or censored in undemocratic regimes. At this point, we can ask this question: “Can humour be dangerous for people?” It brings up another question: “In which regime do you live?”

Various regimes have severely punished the humour directed towards them. In the 20th Century, Hitler thought humour was dangerous! “Joke courts” were set up to punish those who made fun of his regime, and one Berlin cabaret comic was executed for naming the horses and dogs “Adolph.”<sup>12</sup> As Hitler’s second in command Hermann Goering referred to anti-Nazi humour and instructed the Academy of German Law, that the telling of a joke could be an act against the Fuehrer, against the state, or even against the whole Nazi Weltanschauung, and the crime

---

<sup>9</sup> Da Silva and Garcia, “YouTubers as Satirists,” 92.

<sup>10</sup> Keith Cameron, *Humour and History* (Oxford: Intellect Books, 1993), 6.

<sup>11</sup> John Morreall, *Humor and Freedom*, 361.

<sup>12</sup> Humour strips away illusion about politicians and, in doing so, enables people to judge them more realistically. Therefore, dictators kill the comedians when they take power.

was punishable by death.<sup>13</sup> A classic Soviet joke reminds us of the results of making jokes about authorities or state which runs as follows: One secret policeman asks another: "So, what do you think of the government?" His colleague looks around before replying, "The same as you, comrade," whereupon Policeman no.1 declares, "In that case, it is my duty to arrest you!"<sup>14</sup>

When George Orwell wrote in a 1945 essay called *Funny but not Vulgar*, "A thing is funny when it upsets the established order. Every joke is a tiny revolution." He claims that "you cannot be memorably funny without at some point raising topics which the rich, the powerful and the complacent would prefer to see left alone."<sup>15</sup> "Each joke is a tiny revolution" also refers to how through jokes "the unimagined" is made "imaginable." He was thinking of subversive humour, the jokes that deliberately cock a snook at repressive regimes, their leadership and their violence. Orwell has utilized the political dramatics of speech to oppose the language corruption of the detested regime. In it, Orwell verges on comic invective against political language. Thus, he describes "doublethink," the mental process of "newspeak" as reality control.<sup>16</sup> In short, he was saying that to be funny, you must upset the established order.

Humour questions the status quo and allows us to consider that there are other, possibly better, ways of being. Every expression of humour has an element of criticism and people use humour as a way to criticise authority. In other words, Political humour conveys criticism against the political status quo. The politics of humour challenges the political status quo and strengthens the values and dominant aspects of authoritarian politics.<sup>17</sup> Freud claimed that "tendentious jokes are especially favored against persons in exalted positions who claim to exercise

---

<sup>13</sup> John Morreall, *Humor and Freedom*, 362.

<sup>14</sup> Alexander Rose, "When Politics is a Laughing Matter," *Policy Review* (2001-2002), 59, 63.

<sup>15</sup> Chris Powell and Paton, E.C. George, *Humour in Society: Resistance and Control*, Michael Holquist, ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988), 40.

<sup>16</sup> Schutz, Charles E., *Political Humour*, 315-316.

<sup>17</sup> Tsakona, Villy and Popa, Elena Diana, "Humor in Politics and the Politics of Humor: An Introduction," in. *Studies in Political Humour*, Tsakona, V., Popa, D., eds. (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2011), 70.

authority. The joke then represents a rebellion against that authority, a liberation from its pressure.”<sup>18</sup> Humour has always played an important role in every political circumstance. Therefore, we can say that political humour deconstructs politics, politicians, policy, institutions, and authority. This deconstruction often involves questioning, mocking, and criticising the status quo.

Humour can have a decisive effect on politics since it is a good means of breaking down cognitive barriers. Political humour provides a serious political, social, and economic effect on the positive or negative way of the state and society. *When we ask what are the effects of political humour; we can say that* political humour and satire can be complicated or have fairly simple messages that people disregard and do not pay much attention to. Both ways of processing these messages can lead to different effects. Therefore, it is very difficult to summarize their effects exactly.

Political humour, based on an idealised view of politics, dwells on the contradiction between appearance and reality.<sup>19</sup> At the same time, the use of rhetoric is the common denominator between humour and politics. However, although humour seems to be a *prima facie* good, it can have very unpleasant effects too. It is usually against the highest political authority and it sometimes can be highly offensive for politicians or leaders. Political humour usually targets authoritarian political leaders and their wrong tyrannical policies.

Humour was used in quite different political opportunity structures, from open democratic societies to harsh repressive regimes. Although political humour often presents a new way of seeing, unfortunately, the authoritarian regimes hate it and they limit people's lives to keep them in the dark and put pressures on people about what they should think and see. Political power has been using highly effective methods to depoliticise people through discourses, images and symbols in every area and spreads its own ideology. They usually claim that they do this to maintain the security of the state. However, this limitation and pressure create a political resistance in different ways on society.

Where no democratic structures exist at all, as in some of their ex-

---

<sup>18</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* (New York-London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1960), 105.

<sup>19</sup> Schutz, Charles E. *Political Humour*, 313.

amples, humour mostly works vigorously and often darkly in the space of that overarching deficit. Where there is a system of formal democracy, but some doubt about its effective operation, the gap between ostensible and real provides rich territory for shared ironies and critique, variously inflected. It is not the idea itself that is being 'mocked' but the limited modes of its implementation.<sup>20</sup> Although the people have democratic freedoms and also use political humour easily in modern societies, under modern dictatorships that political humour shows itself quietly in the everyday life. The political humour thrives best in dictatorial and undemocratic conditions. The powerless are able to conquer the powerful with laughter. In this point, humour plays a key role if people's lives are limited by authoritarian regimes to which society objects and doesn't take seriously. A collective action is not tolerated in many authoritarian regimes. Instead, opposition is expressed in messages embedded in comics, films, and humour generated by popular culture. Especially through humour, society shows its own reaction and its challenge to the regime.

Political humour declares war against the authority using discourse and aesthetical images, in the form of graffiti, film and on social media, to express their opposition. Especially in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, which is called the age of information technologies, social media has been very effective and people use it to make political humour. Political humor today include some comedy shows and satirical websites. Media systems work not only to circulate political humour. They are also, of course, a major site for its production, the mainstream routes now being joined by an increasingly wide range of online traffic.<sup>21</sup> Social media plays a substantial role in creating and spreading the language of humour. Wall posts in social networks and graffiti in the streets contribute to the development of each other.

### ***Conclusion***

Political humour fundamentally pokes fun at authority, ridicules it, uses the destructive force of laughter, humiliates everything representing

---

<sup>20</sup> John Corner, "Putting the Mock in Democracy," *Media, Culture & Society* 34.8 (2012), 1052–1058 at 1052.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 1052.

authority. The language of humour seems more authentic due to its edgy and anti-authority style, or perhaps due to its entertaining yet critical attributes.<sup>22</sup> The power of humour is that to distil certain truths and convey them to people in ways that are not only digestible but simple and enjoyable.

Humour is a social corrective and double-edged sword that can have both negative and positive impact. Laughing at something or someone defines it as outside the social order. Laughing is an opposition and a social power to beat the fear which is created by authority and laughing together connects people through their similarities as a species in spite of our social and political differences. People humorously criticise the discourse and language of the authority. Criticism and joy go extremely well together in political humour. Political humour becomes the language, the eyes and the ears of society which is under pressure. The role of humour is an important factor for reducing people's fear of the regime, making them less likely to be afraid of someone when they can be laughed at. Using an ironic language, they try to make the authority powerless and break down its discourse. Political humour is leading political change by offering a different perspective on political issues.

Authoritarian states can have totalitarian characteristics and individuals would like to find very clever ways to carve out areas of social, physical and mental freedom. Humour and especially political humour helps people to be free. Political humour in society has important implications for raising awareness. It has the potential to invigorate civic culture and encourages people to engage with politics, while it can also inspire political discussion and attract citizens into politics.

Humour reminds us of the absurdity of life and in this context, it deserves our serious consideration. We can say that "humour is fearless, rebellious and intellectual! If one weapon doesn't work, humour absolutely works as a weapon!" Therefore, humour and laughing are the best weapons to beat the enemy!

---

<sup>22</sup> P. Jeffrey Jones, *Entertaining Politics: Satiric Television and Political Engagement*, 2nd ed. (Lanham, (Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2010), 47.

# Maximization of the Win

*Boryana Angelova-Igova*  
(National Academy of Sports “Vassil Levski”)

## ***Abstract***

Rulon Gardner’s epic victory over the great Russian wrestler Alexander Karelin in 2000 remains one of the most compelling moments of the modern Olympics. But, in 2013, after the Games in London 2012, the International Olympic Committee decided to remove wrestling from the Summer Olympic Games, because the sport had low TV ratings. Ultimately, this did not happen. However, what Rulon Gardner said about it is important: “It’s the IOC trying to change the Olympics to make it more mainstream and more viewer-friendly instead of sticking to what they founded the Olympics on, and that was basically amateur sports.”<sup>1</sup> Nowadays the Olympic Games are more about winning at all costs, because sports should be attractive, athletes have to break records and win medals. Maximization of the win may even cost athletes’ health. There were such examples during the Cold War in the totalitarian regimes. Gold medals were used for the needs of state propaganda. This kind of favoritism towards the win is characteristic for the professional sport that puts interests outside of sport first. It turned out that the focus of the Games is not on the athletes and their natural human desire to show their “agon” (Classical Greek ἀγών—contest), their natural aspiration for winning, or to show their capacity, value and skills to play their favorite game, but to win symbolic capital for their countries, sponsors or everyone that owns the athletes. Athletes have become machines that have to manufacture medals.

This work is about maximization of the win and how this maximization impacts on the general perception of trainers that nowadays are replaced by coaches, and about the athletes today who are described and

---

<sup>1</sup> Meredith, L., *Rulon Gardner, U.S. wrestlers stunned by IOC decision to drop sport*, WashingtonTimes, 12 February 2013, Accessed 20 April 2017, at <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/feb/12/rulon-gardner-us-wrestlers-stunned-ioc-decision-dr/>)

coached as machines. My attention is focused on the changing viewpoint of what professional athletes and coaches should do. They should win medals, but what do those medals mean—prestige for their country, for their sponsors, human development, heroism? Should winning be pursued at all costs?

### *The Value of Winning*

Because of the mentality of winning at all costs, coaches have started to perceive athletes as gold medal producing machines. We can see how the moral perspective has been changing with time. Examples of this kind of utilization of athletes by their coaches was a practice during the Cold War and especially in totalitarian regimes. In this period, winning in sport was associated with state prosperity and good governance. That is way winning became extremely important for the athletes. Despite their victories, we can see some negative consequences for their personal life and realization. For instance, in 1980 at the Olympic Games in Moscow a small country such as Bulgaria, with a population of less than 8 million people, was the third nation according to the medals table, winning 8 gold, 16 silver, and 17 bronze medals; but at the same time students in the field of philosophy and pedagogy in the same country were discouraged from reading Sigmund Freud, Herbert Marcuse, Michel Foucault and many others, whose ideas only seeped through home-grown criticism. At the same time, the pedagogical methods of Anton Makarenko were largely studied and instruction was associated with punishment and harassment.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, in Bulgaria sports schools (the so called “Olympic Hopes”) were boarding-schools, which were not very democratic places. Athletes there were regarded exactly as machines. They were selected in their childhood, sent to those schools where their training was severe and very often included punishment, harassment and doping usage. Many of the Bulgarian Olympic

---

<sup>2</sup> Желязкова-Койнова, Живка Елеонора Милева, Весела Славова, Боряна Ангелова-Игова (2015) . Българска адаптация на тест за изследване на учебни стратегии. сб. ЛМС 20 Изд. НСА-прес, 2015 [Zsheliaskova-Koynova, Zshivka, Eleonora Mileva, Vessela Slavova, Boryana Angelova-Igova, 2015 Bulgarian adaptation of a test to study learning strategies. LMS 20 Ed. NSA Press]



medalists later developed cancer or mental disorders, and some of them died an early death.

Those examples show that there is something wrong with the system of coaching and we need to regard this question more critically. Nowadays in Bulgaria those “totalitarian” coaches are regarded as heroes because they brought gold medals to the country, but very few people remember the athletes-machines that actually won those medals. There is even a feeling of nostalgia among Bulgarian society for those years when the “sport was big.” However, we could not judge coaches for those negative consequences, as Philip Zimbardo said in his TED lecture *The Psychology of Evil* (February 2008) there are no bad “apples” when the system is corrupt. Coaches just obeyed, they were also victims of the system that regarded them as successful only if their athletes won. During this period, coaches and athletes-machines were regarded as heroes but as we shall see later in this text their heroism was a myth. Hannah Arendt (2000) stresses out that the evil is banal and all people that just observe, analyze and even obey evil are guilty for what they have done or have not done.<sup>3</sup> Real heroes are those that do what is really good for humans and resisted to the corrupted system.

### ***From Trainer to Coach***

“Act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of another, always at the same time as an end and never simply as a means.”

Kant

According to the German philosopher Immanuel Kant:

a rational beings can never be treated merely as means to ends; they must always also be treated as ends themselves, requiring that their own reasoned motives must be equally respected moral obligation is a rational necessity: that which is rationally willed is morally right. Because all rational agents rationally will themselves to be an end and never merely a means, it is morally obligatory that they are treated as such.<sup>4</sup>

Is it possible for the contemporary coach to follow this moral im-

---

<sup>3</sup> Hannah Arendt, *The Portable Hannah Arendt* (Penguin Books, 2000).

<sup>4</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*. Trans. Ellington, James W. (3rd ed.) (Hackett, 1993 [1978]), 62.

perative? Some coaches do, most of them do not. Evidence for this comes from doping scandals, and early amortization of the athletes' bodies. This is a big problem in contemporary moral philosophy. A successful coach is the one who trains gold medalists. This is valid for totalitarian societies where the maximization of the win is obligatory. But here I will try to trace back this problem before the rise of the totalitarian regimes, i.e. to the period after World War I. The key point here lies in the transition from trainer to coach. For instance, at the 1924 Summer Games in Paris, Harold Abrahams won the 100m with a time of 10.6 seconds, beating all the American favorites, including the 1920 gold-medal winner Charley Paddock. However, Abrahams was coached by Sam Mussabini, who in total led athletes to eleven medals over five Olympic Games. However, in an era where amateurism was praised, Mussabini was not officially recognized because he was a professional coach. This was a turning point. Despite the fact that the Olympic Games according to Cubertine's philosophy were supposed to be for amateurs, in 1924 we see how coaches started to replace trainers. According to Cubertine: "The important thing in life is not the triumph but the struggle, the essential thing is not to have conquered but to have fought well" and he applied this view to the Olympic Games. Cubertine's view was aristocratic, his moral was aristocratic, according to which any kind of labor was of lower value, so he viewed sport competition more as pleasure, as self-improvement or as something that cannot be applied to professional sport or to the so-called bourgeois morality. Bourgeois morality became mainstream morality because of the new social conditions that put earning and achievements first. After World War I, Cubertine's world was gone with the wind and the maximized win became of utmost importance.

However, in this example we can see the changed moral perspective in sport. For instance, Sam Mussabini was officially acknowledged nearly 90 years after his death, as late as 2012, when English Heritage installed a blue plaque at 84 Burbage Road, Herne Hill. The house was Mussabini's home from 1911 until about 1916 and behind the Herne Hill Stadium, where he worked as a cycling and athletics coach from the 1890s until his death and trained several medal-winning Olympic athletes, including the young Harold Abrahams. This gesture signifies a change in our way of thinking. From our contemporary perspective, he was a great coach, but in 1924 his work was regarded as a secret, even

as something wrong. In 1981, his work was immortalized in a famous movie *The Chariots of Fire* (1981).<sup>5</sup> It tells the fact-based story of two athletes—Eric Liddell, a devout Scottish Christian, who runs for the glory of God, and Harold Abrahams, an English Jew, who runs to overcome prejudice. Sam Mussabini is also presented in this movie as a successful coach but having in mind the fact that the movie was made almost 60 years after the Games, the point in it is different. The movie puts an emphasis on Harold Abrahams' Jewish origin and not on the fact that he was claimed to be the first athlete to use a coach. It seems that if somebody else was using one probably nobody would pay attention to it! However, it happened, and the turning point became reality, after which all athletes started using coaches not trainers.

All these examples are to show that our understanding of the coach has changed. Olympic games are not for amateurs any more but for professional athletes that are supposed to be trained by coaches not by trainers. Here comes the logical question what makes a successful coach? On the one hand, it is supposed to be the person whose athletes have won more medals. But nowadays we have endless competitions and some medals are more medals than others. There is a big difference among medals, we distinguish Olympic, National, European, from World competitions, etc. In a country such as Bulgaria, the state gives additional financial rewards only to the coaches whose athletes have won Olympic medals. The UK offers no rewards to the Olympic winners and their coaches, so what do we understand by “win”? As earned money—from the state, from companies, i.e. as symbolic capital. In this regard it is interesting how we define success. Nicholas Dixon in his article *On Winning and Athletic Superiority*<sup>6</sup> explains that sometimes winning is arbitrary because the rival team has made mistakes, or because of refereeing errors, or because of cheating as it was the case with Ben Johnson in the 1988 Olympic Games. He won a gold medal, but he was caught with doping. In this case Johnson won the medal, but later he was stripped of it, so was it a victory? Whose fault is doping cheating? The coach's? The athletes' doctor? The scientists that develop this dop-

---

<sup>5</sup> Hugh Hudson, *Chariots of Fire* (1981)/. See <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0082158/>.

<sup>6</sup> Nicholas Dixon, “On Winning and Athletic Superiority,” *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport* 26.1 (1999), 10-26.

ing? The problem is in the system that puts winning/success first. A. Gungov, in *Logic in Medicine*, explains that it is not a case only in sport but it is a tendency.<sup>7</sup> Doctors, exactly as described in relation to trainers, have to obey the market or the totalitarian state because of their existence. Morality has changed and all professionals should react according to the corrupted system. All these examples aim show that winning, even supported by medals, is not clear evidence for success. So why is winning so important and why does it cost so much money and becomes a reason for athletes to be turned into machines?

### *Symbolic Capital*

Probably it is because of the symbolic capital that athletes produce. Is it possible for winning to be just symbolic capital for the given country? The products, achievements, and especially the Olympic medals of athletes are a symbol of national dignity, prosperity, and successful governance. The symbolic capital they produced became extremely important during the Cold War when direct battles between the two superpowers were not fought on the battlefield but at the stadium and in the space race. The country that could take home more gold medals from the Olympic Games was regarded as more powerful and more developed. On the other hand, the gold medal could consolidate and reunify people from one nation. Before the rise of international sport competitions, symbolic capital was found in archeological artifacts or in the works of “national” writers. Nowadays the gold medal and the world record are this kind of symbolic capital that can stimulate national dignity and consolidate the people from one community. Top athletes are very famous and can become decision makers. However, very often this symbolic capital serves the purposes of state propaganda.

The rise of propaganda and how sport became its instrument can be witnessed as early as the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This became possible only with the athlete’s body regarded and used as a machine. The body-machine had dual functions: to win medals and to be a role-model for the youth, but also to be used by the mainstream political system and to be a market product. At events such as the Olym-

---

<sup>7</sup> Гънгов, А. Логика в медицината. Изд. Авангард Прима, 2012 [Alexander Gungov, *Logic in Medicine* (Avangard-Prima, 2012)]

pic Games, these body-machines demonstrate their ambivalent qualities. They can become a symbol of the human rights movement as when Carlos and Smith raised their fists during the award ceremony of the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico. In this case Carlos and Smith created a collective meaningful narrative for their community which should be the “true winning in sport” or as John Gleaves described it:

sport also writes meaningful narratives that speak about communities. These collective narratives provide stories about both those who follow the sport and about the communities that embrace the sport. Such collective narratives occur because sports are shaped by communities to provide individuals with explanatory accounts about certain meaningful characteristics in publicly demonstrable activities. These meaningful characteristics, which combine different qualities of physical prowess such as strength, endurance, and physical skill with tactical cunning, moral virtue, courage, or other personal traits, both reveal athletes’ personal identities and allow athletes to shape them further.<sup>8</sup>

In those cases, we can see athletes as heroes and we can say that the creation of a meaningful narrative is the real win in sport. Although Carlos and Smith knew that the consequences for them would not be good, they did it to support their cause. However, unfortunately this heroic nature of sport is very often stolen for the athletes and they can be used by the state propaganda as well, the way it happened in 1936 in Nazi Germany or throughout the history of sports in the USSR. In these two different countries, regimes and cultures, athlete-machines and especially their bodies became very important images in paintings and movies as the new heroes. Of course, all the represented bodies were handsome, strong, and healthy. According to totalitarian regimes, there was no place for handicapped, different people because their symbolic capital was of “lower value,” and when people became machines only their productivity was important.

Nowadays top athletes are not so involved in state propaganda, although there might be exceptions, as the Beijing and Sochi Olympics demonstrated. Today, the athlete-machines are more involved in presenting market products. Many sportswomen and sportsmen are multi-

---

<sup>8</sup> John Gleaves, “Sport as Meaningful Narratives,” *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport* 44:1 (2017), 29-43.

national and they work for multinational companies, e.g. Michael Jordan works for Nike, Michael Phelps for McDonalds, Usain Bolt for Puma etc. Of course, their bodies should be strong and handsome because that way their symbolic capital is bigger. People expect the new heroes to be just like those from visual arts and those from the movies—big, strong, and fast machines.

The need of this symbolic capital creates the need of creating the so-called athletes-machines. These athletes-machines should win in any case. They were produced to win and this is their function.

But how do we create those body-machines? The body-machine has been a philosophical problem since it was introduced as a concept in the seventeenth century by the French philosopher René Descartes in his book *The Treatise of Man*.<sup>9</sup> Descartes regarded the body merely as a machine. According to Descartes' religious philosophy, the body is just a receptacle of the divine soul or the thinking mind, granted by God. According to Daniel Black, Descartes in his philosophy depersonalized the human body.<sup>10</sup> The human was not important as a physical presence; the body was just an avatar of somebody else: God, monarch, factory owner, and so on. Since Descartes, the human has been regarded as an executor of another one's will. This made it easier to think of the other person as a tool, an instrument or a machine. Still, Descartes regarded the human body as a machine operated by a ratio, which was given by God; in other words, the human itself was not seen as a machine. In this respect, people started to be seen in their ambivalent function as both machines and humans. Julien Offray de La Mettrie argued in his book *Man a Machine* that all earthly creatures are machines.<sup>11</sup> For him, there was no difference between the human and the animal—the human was just a better, more developed machine. The discourse of the body as a machine has had a large influence on philosophical thought ever since.

According to the first generation of the Frankfurt School (Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse) the Cartesian perception of the body made it possible for people to be apprehended as machines, their uniqueness and charisma meaning nothing in the utilitarian world. People could thus become

---

<sup>9</sup> René Descartes, *The Treatise of Man* (Prometheus Books, 2003 [1664]).

<sup>10</sup> Daniel Black, *Embodiment and Mechanisation: Reciprocal Understandings of Body* (Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2014).

<sup>11</sup> Julien Offray La Mettrie, *Man a Machine* (Hackett Publishing, 1994 [1774])

instruments, machines for work. From a Marxist perspective, the body of the worker serves to produce goods but the worker is alienated from his or her work. All that workers have is their human force, so there is no difference between the human and the machine; even worse, according to Marx workers are cheaper than the machines and simply provide for them, being reduced to cogs in the larger machine, the factory.

Hannah Arendt, in her book *The Human Condition*, however, did not agree with Marx's views that there was unproductive work and that workers should only produce wealth. Arendt finds that there are two types of work: one is intellectual work that produces symbolic capital, and the other is manual labor producing goods.<sup>12</sup> Still, we might ask if a body-machine is not capable of producing symbolic capital as well.

A certain type of labor that has remained outside the scope of these philosophers is that of the athlete's body-machine. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with the rise of professional sports, a new body-machine was invented: the athlete. Today, in everyday language the body-machine is associated with the bodies of athletes. Michael Phelps, for example, is very often described by sports journalists as "a machine." Professional sport became possible in modern times, and those new athletic body-machines became very important because they produced symbolic capital for their countries.

This change in labor is characteristic for coaches as well. Coaches, not trainers, should prepare machines not human beings and it is because of the maximized win. Athletes are supposed to win because of the symbolic capital not because of themselves, because of their values, moral etc. even not because of their own interest. As we can see in the Eastern Bloc during the Cold War many of the athletes-machines pay for their gold medals with their lives. Nowadays we still do not have any statistics about what happens with top athletes after they finish their careers. They win medals, fame, maybe are billionaires but have they learned how to live after sport?

### ***The Winning Heroes***

To quote Bertolt Brecht "*Unhappy the land that is in need of heroes.*" The totalitarian regimes created new types of heroes. Those heroes should win gold medals and explore the outer space. But how are

---

<sup>12</sup> Arendt, *The Portable Hannah Arendt*.

depersonalized heroes possible? Only if they are a myth, something artificial but with a claim for authenticity. Webster's Ninth Collegiate Dictionary (1983) defines "hero" as:

- a) a mythological or legendary figure often of divine descent endowed with great strength or ability, b) an illustrious warrior, c) a man admired for his achievements and noble qualities, d) one that shows great courage

So athletes can be defined as heroes, because they have strength and ability, they could be warriors because their medals are victories for their states, everybody admires them for their qualities and they definitely show great courage. They are heroes not because of what they are but because of their victories or as Jaspers says: "only the need for admiration of the soul of the masses creates its heroes... it puts the individual at the center of its attention, however, he/she is quickly forgotten as the limelight now falling over each other."<sup>13</sup> Unfortunately this happens with the athletes-machines, they are heroes only when they win medals, after that they are forgotten. After losing their extraordinary power they are useless, especially if they are sick or caught with doping, then they are even regarded as criminals. According to the definition in the philosophical dictionary of Andre Comte-Sponville,

heroism is an extreme degree of selfless courage, opposing any actual or likely harm. Such courage is able to resist fear, suffering, fatigue, sadness, disgust, temptation, etc. This is an exclusive virtue of exceptional people. Nobody is obliged to be a hero and therefore the characters always evoke admiration in us.<sup>14</sup>

In this sense, the hero is a role model with high morality and free will. He/she is a standard by which others measure themselves but can never reach. The hero is in an asymmetric position in relation to society, it goes (they go) beyond human scale. But the machine could not be a

---

<sup>13</sup> Ясперс К. Духовная ситуация времени В: Смысл и назначение истории. Москва: Политиздат, с. 288-420 [Karl Jaspers, *Spiritual Situation of Time Q: The Meaning and Purpose of History* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1991), 288-420.

<sup>14</sup> Конт-Спонвиль, А. Философский словарь. Москва: Издательство "Этерна". [Andre Comte-Sponville, *Philosophical Dictionary* (Moscow. Eterna Publishing House, 2012), 125.]



hero because it does not have free will. Athletes in totalitarian regimes are regarded as heroes by the state propaganda. They are represented on post stamps, cards, in paintings, movies etc. but their heroism is just a slogan as their win is just a slogan. There is an essential example that supports this thesis, a movie called: *In the Name of Sport* (1983), a documentary by Adela Peeva, which was banned during the communist regime in Bulgaria.<sup>15</sup> The film reveals the secret inhuman methods of training elite athletes seeking to prove at all costs the advantage in sports of the so-called “most human society.” Even before it was finished, in 1983, the film and all the resource materials were confiscated. The first public screening of the film took place in 1989, after the democratic reforms in Bulgaria. This documentary movie introduces to the public some of the top Bulgarian athletes, gold medalists, in 1983 when they were at the top of their careers despite the fact that they describe themselves as unhappy, uncertain and confused. There is a scene in which Adela Peeva asks Valentin Hristov a bronze medalist in weightlifting from the Olympic games in 1980 how he feels and he explains to her that he feels uncertain, and weak, despite that everybody tells him that he is the strongest man in Bulgaria and everybody loves him, everybody tells him that he is a Bulgarian hero, for him the most difficult battle is to prove to himself that he is somebody...

### ***Conclusion***

Athletes' winning is a big victory for the humankind but only if it is truly natural, if it is human. Machines do not have free will and high morality, they cannot create meaningful narratives, because they work in accordance with their function—only to be the fastest, first, to win, and to produce symbolic capital. Winning without doping, without cheating, winning in the name of human development is true winning but it could not be maximized. Winning can be heroic only if it includes meaningful narratives for the community, for the state, for humans. Sport is great cultural wealth but maximized winning creates only the bad image of sport.

---

<sup>15</sup> Adela Peeva, *In the Name of Sport* (1983). See <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0961532/bio>.

# Acknowledgement, Not Recognition: A Wish-To-Say

*Erturk Demirel*  
(*Bogazici University*)

## *Abstract*

In the following I shall examine disagreement in Rancière's philosophy, drawing on his notion of politics which defuses the debate on the socio-political identities demanding recognition. I shall illustrate my points here by reflecting on the speech of Percennius the slave in Ancient Rome. Percennius helped the organization of a slave rebellion and his address is indicative of the situation of the people where they appear out of place, speaking out of turn signifying a wrong, and demanding a just response which will put an end to the policing.

For Rancière, politics is irreducible to recognition which has been pivotal to the emancipatory project of identity politics. In fact, recognition is a part and parcel of what he describes as the policing which aims to administer and control the uncontrollable: that is, the subaltern, the oppressed, and the uncounted have always already been recognized, and *misrecognized* as the weaker, the mute, powerless mob that cannot take part in politics. Since recognition is a part of the perennial problem that haunts the representative forms of politics, politics can only begin with the acknowledgment of a past (mis-)recognition which reduces aporias to management and control of the uncontainable mob.

I will also further address Rancière's aesthetic writings and argue that although there is "something like a logic of recognition in [the] most important pages"<sup>1</sup> of his oeuvre, politics for Rancière is not reducible to recognition. That is why I prefer the term 'acknowledgment'

---

<sup>1</sup> J. Deranty, "Between Honneth and Rancière: Problems and Potentials of a Contemporary Critical Theory of Society," in *Recognition or Disagreement: A Critical Encounter on the Politics of Freedom, Equality and Identity*, eds. Katia Genel & Jean-Phillippe Deranty (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 39.

to refer to the disruptive act of speech that poetically investigates the silent figure that comes before the law. In other words, it is not simply registration of emergent identities; the act of speech at stake also reveals the construction of the people as the 'we.' As such, it requires new norms and forms of thinking, acting, speaking, making sense and living. The constitution of our identities by disagreement reveals that the 'we' is a fiction only stabilized and immobilized by power.

Disagreement is an assertion of equality between the undecidable figure that demands response and of its addressee; successful response would culminate in the acknowledgment of undecidability (of norms and identities) and a movement toward the re-constitution of society toward greater equality. In other words, once the speech act is successful, the community of sense will have been re-constituted in such a way that not only others outside the community will disrupt the representative regime of policing, but also the those who don't count as subjects within the society will be in a lived situation of greater equality. To engage on a deeper level with politics is to take it as an act of speech that is irresponsible to the present norms of interpretation, of acting and speaking; an act of speech, I will argue, that is performed in the name of a justice that goes beyond the normative understanding of recognition because recognition is also bound with the politics of power, which has always been bound with the prevalent criteria<sup>2</sup> of seeing and hearing which preclude the other from having a viable subjectivity to contest the Police.

Although I take Rancière's thematization of equality as a part of his more ambitious project of problematizing justice, his is not an ethics of response to the Other. One of his keen readers, Deranty, assumes that the defining gesture that sets Rancière's thinking apart is the rejection of alterity: "Rancière's 'heteronomic' logic of politics is not premised, as these latter accounts [that of Levinas and his followers] are, on an ethics of alterity, itself underpinned by a radical critique of Western Metaphysics."<sup>3</sup> In fact Rancière charges his mentor, Lyotard, with passive servitude to the unrepresentable, mute, victimized other before the Big Other, criticising

---

<sup>2</sup> Judith, Butler, "Giving an Account of Myself," in *Diacritics* 31.4 (Winter. 2001), 23.

<sup>3</sup> J. Deranty, "Afterword," in *Jacques Rancière: Key Concepts*, ed. Jean-Philippe Deranty, (Durham: Acumen, 2010), 10.

“the way in which Lyotard [among others] ontologises otherness,”<sup>4</sup> and refusing “to reduce *le compte des incomptés* to the marginalized or excluded.”<sup>5</sup> Deranty draws the inference that Rancière’s is a politics of recognition where the universal subject demands recognition.<sup>6</sup>

If Rancière indeed “opens a path toward a progressive post-identity politics”<sup>7</sup> does he aim to do so by releasing us from “the inescapable enslavement to the Other”<sup>8</sup> in the scene of what political theorists so far has considered as recognition? One can suggest that the main theme that chimes through Rancière’s understanding of ontology finds its articulation in “each party’s difference from itself”<sup>9</sup> that structures political community of sense as one in which recognition and identity seem like a matter of mere normative force of policing<sup>10</sup> by *partage du sensible*. Yet, otherness could also be understood as one’s difference from oneself one should acknowledge, a notion which Rancière subscribed to in framing democracy as a relation to oneself as other. That implies either that Rancière’s framework does not provide an alternative to the other-oriented ethico-politics of response and recognition or that the pull between his ontology and politics leaves a remnant that has a fair resemblance to otherness. Panagia tends toward this interpretation: “It is this unrepresentable, sublime element that is, for Rancière, the *sine qua non* of democracy. Politics, then, is distinguishable from the police by a con-

<sup>4</sup> Jonathan Lahey Dronsfield, “Nowhere is aesthetics contra ethics: Rancière the other side of Lyotard,” in *Art & Research* 2.1 (2008), 2.

<sup>5</sup> Samuel Chambers, “A Queer Politics of the Democratic Miscount,” in *Borderlands* 8.2 (2009), 1.

<sup>6</sup> J. Deranty, “Jacques Rancière’s Contribution to the Ethics of Recognition,” in *Political Theory* 31.1 (Feb., 2003), 136.

<sup>7</sup> T. May, “There are no Queers: Jacques Rancière and Post-Identity Politics,” in *borderland* 8.2 (2009), 3.

<sup>8</sup> Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible*, trans. by Gabriel Rockhill, (London: Continuum, 2004), 15.

<sup>9</sup> Jacques Rancière, *La Parole Muette: Essai Sur les Contradictions de la Littérature* (Paris: Hachette, 1998) 18.

<sup>10</sup> For the definition of Police as opposed to Politics, see G. Rockhill, & P. Watts, “Introduction/Jacques Rancière: Thinker of Dissensus,” in Jacques Rancière: *History, Politics, Aesthetics*, eds. Gabriel Rockhill & Philip Watts, (New York: Duke University Press. 2004), xiii.

stitutive unrepresentability that interrupts the order of mimesis.”<sup>11</sup> This occurs when one ceases to recognize oneself in an identity.

I shall argue that, although both Panagia’s and Deranty’s accounts have some diagnostic value, they both miss the point of controversial anonymity of a self relating to oneself as an other; ‘the self’ and ‘the other’ are not fixed positions in an address but anonymous place-holders as subjects.

I argue that recognition always entails policing: i.e. ossification of identities and the closing of the space in which politics can be conducted. What should rather be acknowledged, I will argue by drawing on Rancière, is a wish-to-say in the situation of disagreement; as an act of speech, a wish-to-say is the act of being present before others to demand equality. It disregards limitations of the present which represents us as identities, and enacts a scene of acknowledgment, as opposed to recognition. I shall first discuss the tenability of positioning Rancière as a theorist of recognition of identities, and offer an exposition whereby the speech-act of a subaltern, the address of Percennius the slave, indeed dis-identifies everyone addressed by his imagination that interrupts the relations between meaning and truth. Rancière re-narrates the story of the people’s movement to arrive at his notion of politics “in terms of the staging of a dissensus in which those who are deemed to lack speech make themselves heard as political animals.”<sup>12</sup>

Percennius was one of the slaves who engaged in rebellion when the Roman emperor died. They withdrew to the Aventine Hill and negotiated with the councils. In Rancière’s account they thus enact a disagreement as rational members of society who can be reasoned with because they changed what counts as rational. In my account, Percennius the slave delivers *a speech that goes unheard and performs an act of speech that speaks in silence*. In truth the slaves were the mute addressee of the law that constituted them, not as parts of *demos authorized to rule*, but as insensible bodies ordered to labour, fight and die outside the community. Yet Percennius ignores that, envisioning another distribution of the sensible where they would be subject. His speech-act was a wish-to-say that mobilizes the undecidability of the

---

<sup>11</sup> David, Panagia, *The Poetics of Political Thinking* (New York: Duke University Press, 2006), 93.

<sup>12</sup> A. Schaap, “Enacting the Right to Have Rights: Jacques Rancière’s Critique of Hannah Arendt,” in *European Journal of Political Theory* 10.1 (2011), 23.

sensible that moves between the matter and the ideal. The next section will break down the elements of his *poesis*: a making by words. Percennius first unmakes his (collective) identity of a slave incapable of political speech and action, and makes a novel identity of one commanding language and people. He indeed assumed an identity from the archive of representations, the most troubling one for democracy: that of the subject, but only to reveal the undecidability at the heart of it and disrupt the project of representative policing.<sup>13</sup> The act of speech Percennius performed is possible as the silent visibility, Rancière will point out, is indifferent to identities.<sup>14</sup> Percennius ignores the address of the present law of the sensible, becomes unrecognizable in the eye of the ‘we,’ but whether that characterizes him as an excluded subject will be a question I shall raise in the next section.

### *1.1. Recognizing the People*

One can interpret Rancière’s aesthetico-political philosophy as a subtle post-Althusserian theory of tension between domination and liberation that take place within the contested space of equal recognition. Yet this interpretation would risk placing him in identity politics, half way between Habermas as a theorist of solidaristic emancipation<sup>15</sup> and Lyotard as a theorist of irresolvable conflict and agonistic politics. I for one, read him as a thinker of agonistic politics, aesthetics of displacement, and free literarity. Deranty, reading Rancière as a “thinker of recognition who rejects the notion of understanding,” suggests that “Rancière’s fundamental political concern is the denial of recognition experienced by the dominated.”<sup>16</sup> Newman subscribes to this account: “For Rancière, politics emerges when an excluded subjectivity—that part

---

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Agamben’s politics of exception with regard to subjectivity: Giorgio Agamben, *State of Exception*, tr. Kevin Attell, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005), esp. 36.

<sup>14</sup> The visible in Rancière’s theory is dependent on the sayable that identifies and interprets it. A mute body can be anybody socio-politically, depending on the interplay between the sensible and the sayable.

<sup>15</sup> Jürgen Habermas, “The Rule of Law and Democracy,” in *The Political*, ed. David Ingram, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 161-162.

<sup>16</sup> J. Deranty, “Jacques Rancière’s Contribution to the Ethics of Recognition,” in *Political Theory* 31.1 (Feb., 2003), 137.

which remains uncounted, excluded from political life (the poor, the demos)—claims for itself the universality of a whole community.”<sup>17</sup> In this reading, the hegemonic political forces, legitimized by consensus, function like the canonical representations of society that only make certain social phenomenon recognisable, i.e., visible within the confines of the canvas and/or audible within the range of hearing. Here I shall critique Deranty’s view that the ever-widening horizon of democratization grants recognition to the subjectivities.

### ***1.1.1. Recognition: The Subject as the Stranger***

In his interpretation of Rancière, Deranty highlights the way Rancière supports his theory of domination with an account of equality demanded by the dominated subjects that, in dissent, make their ways into the political picture through authorization of new sensibilities that disrupt the prevailing representations and precipitate their recognition. According to Deranty, the second ambition informing Rancière’s project is to hear the unheard voice of the dominated to disagree with the hegemony that had denied them recognition as equal subjects endowed with reason. Deranty adds, Rancière’s thoughts on democracy rises above “a theory of representation”<sup>18</sup> in its two senses, viz., representation of the extra-conceptual (the matter, the given, the sensible) by the conceptual (the ideal, linguistic, the discursive), and representation of the masses by their political proxies. By contrast, Rancière may be seen as deepening the dilemmas of state-centred politics “unable to represent the interests of those who are denied social and political recognition.”<sup>19</sup>

Accordingly, Rancière’s aesthetico-political theory from Deranty’s pen starts to sound like a revolutionary Marxist politics. Transformed from “a political imperative into a methodological rule, that is, the rule that all individuals have the equal ability to express and defend their

---

<sup>17</sup> Saul Newman, “Rancière, Anarchism, Poststructuralism and the Future of Radical Politics,” in *SubStance* 36.2, Issue 113: The Future of Anarchism, (2007), 12.

<sup>18</sup> J. Deranty, “Jacques Rancière’s Contribution to the Ethics of Recognition,” in *Political Theory* 31.1 (Feb., 2003), 139.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

own rights,”<sup>20</sup> the axiom of equality presumes that the dominated subjects can nevertheless represent themselves and express their desire for recognition. The dominated groups demand, and fight for recognition, maintains Deranty, within the parameters of the logic of the wrong, “the dialectical articulation of universality and particularity within the polis.”<sup>21</sup> The *universal* subject position (“the subject of speech”), equally available to *others of the society*, i.e., any singular wronged party to articulate their *particular* demand of justice, becomes ground zero for the contestation of hierarchies engendered by “socioeconomic” differences. The gist of Deranty’s reading portrays Rancière as a thinker “who puts the notion of the subject at the centre of his political thought,”<sup>22</sup> attributing to him “a strong rejection of the death of the subject.”<sup>23</sup> In other words Deranty brings home by his reading of Rancière a disputable message that, after the demise of Marxist sociology and the revolutionary proletarian class, the subject of speech far from being deconstructed and dethroned, re-emerges universalized and embraced by all dominated identities unequivocally. According to Deranty, the vocation of the political theorist is thus to help them “pull down the barriers that exclude their speech from the authorized forms of speech”<sup>24</sup> in order to include the perspective of the unrecognized subject.

*However, these barriers are paradoxically those of the sensibility that constitute the subject of speech through discourses.* Deranty argues that the term ‘aporoi’ denotes a collective subject, or a social group unrecognized as an actor by the socio-political order, but against him I argue here that the subject is constructed by those who don’t count as a political subject. While a conflict amongst the members of the sensible community can be resolved by justifications by the prevalent norms of recognition, a contestation over the criteria of membership initiates a debate on the founding norms of a political community of sense.<sup>25</sup> The latter challenges the dominant principles of justification by the present

---

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 140.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 136.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 141.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Jacques Rancière, *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy*, trans. Julie Rose, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 4.



norms of recognition, which coincide with the present representative principles of *partage du sensible* which constitutes subjects of politics. Those who demand justice, however, risk the illegitimacy of a subjective-position that displaces itself from the community of sense, being insensible and unrecognizable until they create a new form of sensibility. However, they are not heard as if they make sense when they challenge the norms of making sense. In other words, the political conflict that the *aporoï* epitomized calls into question, paradoxically, the very standpoint from which it is represented—the limit to authority and identity of what is sensed and recognized to be the subject of speech and politics. In contrast to Deranty's account, the subject of speech is deconstructed by literarity, as well as universalized.

I need to emphasize that this challenge is not done from outside the community, but from the border, by muted parts included as those who have no part and wish-to-say the unsayable: that *the people is a fiction*. Thus, it is a challenge to the archive of subjects, the self of the community, and the norms of recognizability: its own deconstruction. It thus reveals the subject as a groundless *fiction* in the making, not identifiable with those present.<sup>26</sup> The poetics of justice over immobilizing normativity in this respect does not presume a given identity to be recognized, but calls into question “being together to the extent that we are in between—between names, identities, cultures, and so on.”<sup>27</sup> It dissolves the subject in an unrecognizable force of speech, emptying the identity recognized as the addressor. In fact authority is interrupted in this address, but this disagreement, Rancière argues, is not the subject's intervention into the norms of recognition, i.e., those of sensibility, but its dissolution in the symbolic gap of disagreeing literarity: between the body and speech, the visible and the audible, the matter and the ideal, *and the self and the other of the community of sense*. This vertiginous effect of literarity is created by *the mobility* amongst the elements of the sensible, and the gap can be filled by any identity. Its principle is analogous to the formula: a body who is nobody can be heard and seen as anybody by anybody. Since any identity is a fiction, poetical work of politics, the gap between meaning and truth about the addressee within

---

<sup>26</sup> Bonnie Honig, *Emergency Politics: Paradox, Law, Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 19.

<sup>27</sup> Jacques Rancière, *Disagreement*, 63.

the similar polemical, controversial configurations of political agency that resides within “the gap that separates subject and predicate”<sup>28</sup> shapes the critical contours of what Rancière calls “literarity.” Its universality is *characterized* by contestation and its *undecidable character* ignores limitations, exclusions, and hierarchies that identify and ‘recognize’ others through distribution of the sensible.

What follows from this presupposition is the attempt to “evacuate the foundation upon which every deconstructive ethics is built: the (ethical) category of alterity,”<sup>29</sup> not to resurrect the subject in universal disguise or dismiss *ethos as the self*. The *aporoï*, Rancière’s other, is thus an anonymous third party, i.e., a stranger materialized by the distribution of the sensible, by the fictive constitution of the people: it appears as an empty signifier that, being indifferent to identities, “haunts the dialogue [between the self and other], [as] the confrontation with the Unknown...”<sup>30</sup> That confrontation, I shall argue, is configured as mutual exposure between the body that has a meaningless sense and literarity that makes sense of it by poetic imagination that ignores the sensible.<sup>31</sup> Therefore the debate about otherness comes down to the confusion about the self reduced to the subject and reduction of the sensible to fixed identities otherized by the police, not a sublimity that forever eludes effective political disagreement, or the subject-oriented framework.

### 1.1.2. Recognition: Misrecognition of The Self as the Other

On the account I am developing here, the other is a fictive subject-position in the address. It also justifies only *ad hoc* reference to it as a subject of speech since it embodies but a “quarrel over the issue of speech”<sup>32</sup> that threatens its own subjectivity over the words, putting its authority at risk, and giving itself over to words that seek their addressee. The speech of the addressor overthrows its image, its represen-

---

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 113.

<sup>29</sup> Alain Badiou, *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*, trans. Peter Hallward, (New York: Verso, 2002), xxxv.

<sup>30</sup> Jacques Rancière, *The Aesthetic Unconscious* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009), 39.

<sup>31</sup> The visible always needs interpretation, Rancière argues. And the body is encountered as the visible that is subject to interpretation.

<sup>32</sup> Rancière, *Disagreement*, 23.

tation that cannot do it justice, and the constraints of the prevalent regime of the sensible. It disagrees with its own body as somebody else, and the self as other. It thus disidentifies and acknowledges a body to the extent that disagreement is a poetic investigation that *futurely* salutes a presence to come. Its speech also becomes available for re-appropriation by others, fatherless, anonymous, and hybrid. Defying the spatial distribution of the sensible that matches visibilities and sayable words in identities, it challenges the bodily arrangement of the sensible, and hence its own identity: "It is the age of hazardous subjectification, engendered by the pure opening of the unlimited, constituted from places of speech that are not designatable places but rather singular articulations between the order of speech and that of classifications."<sup>33</sup> In other words, the so-called universality revealed by disagreement is a *singular* articulation of the visible that (dis)identifies the addressor.<sup>34</sup> It reveals itself just as a disagreement with the Police. In this sense it deploys the "the power to put into circulation more words, 'useless' and unnecessary words, words that exceed the function of rigid designation."<sup>35</sup> Unstable as it may, however, it performs an act, a speech act that litigates, represents wrong, and demands justice against domination as Rancière tells us in his account of *aporoi*: "The order that structures...domination recognizes no logos capable of being articulated by beings deprived of logos, no *speech* capable of being proffered by nameless beings, beings of no *ac/count*."<sup>36</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Jacques Rancière, *The Names of History: On the Poetics of Knowledge*, trans. H. Mellehy, (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1994), xviii-xix.

<sup>34</sup> Singularity belongs to the visible articulated by the sayable; it is an effect of the act of speech. Cf. Butler's *Giving an Account of Oneself*, 2001, 25, where she notes that "singularity has no defining content other than the irreducibility of exposure, of being this body exposed to a publicity that is variably and alternately intimate and anonymous."

<sup>35</sup> Jacques Rancière, "Dissenting Words: A Conversation with Jacques Rancière," co-author David Panagia, in *Diacritics* 30.2 (Summer 2000), 115.

<sup>36</sup> Jacques Rancière, *Disagreement*, 24. Emphases original. Acts of disagreement for Habermas, for instance, are to be overcome. Similarly, say, the Palestinians in Israel do not count as political subjects of the state. And in Nazi Germany "the Jews," although citizens, were not equal to others before the law. In many countries, the demands of the LBGTQA are not heard as rational and justified claims

The constitution of the community<sup>37</sup> illustrates that Deranty was right to point out the material effect of a fiction, for the speech-act of disagreement aims to materialize a new community of sense where authority is undecidably both taken away from and re-invested into the people unrecognizable to themselves.

### ***1.2. Recognizing the Subject: Mute Poet of the People***

Against Deranty's thesis that reduces disagreement to a demand for recognition with a claim of the subject defending its interests, I am arguing that disagreement is a poetic acknowledgement that disidentifies the subject that sets the norms of politics. These norms are constantly challenged by subjectless speech that destabilizes identities: literarity thus does not authorize anyone as the subject in the constitutive address that is assumed to recognize the addressee. Rancière in fact suggests that literarity voices the silent parts that have no part in the community of sense, but this is not the voice of a stable identity coming before the law to demand recognition: it is a "mute" speech in a sense that I explain below.

---

to the future law as if they do not count as a part of the greater society. May makes the same point when he notes that "[t]he refusal to allow gays and lesbians to marry is presented as grounded in a natural fact: that marriage is between a man and a woman. This supposed natural fact generates the inequality of two sets of people before the law. If, by contrast, we suppose the equality of homosexuals and heterosexuals as speaking beings, this directly challenges their unequal treatment before the law." T. May, "There are no Queers: Jacques Rancière and Post-Identity Politics," in *borderland* 8.2 (2009), 3.

<sup>37</sup> Here a discussion of aggregative models of democracy may be relevant; in Rousseau's theory a general will is formed by the sum of private wills. Likewise Habermas argued that every opinion and argument should count toward the formation of public opinion that is translated into a policy and the law. The shift from interests of individuals to their singular opinions is achieved through speech where rationality and persuasiveness of an argument, according to Habermas, should prevail over the numerary advantage (of a majority forming an interest group). When the "best" argument wins, it forms the general will and sways the majority vote of the society. Yet if some of us do not count as members of the society, or are not recognized as rational subjects equal to the majority, or their forms of expressions are not seen as speech, rational argument and persuasion, the aggregation turns into a wrong that points to a situation of unjustified power; i.e., hegemony of the 'we' over the people.

### 1.2.1. *Recognition as Misrecognition: The Subject*

For Rancière speaking had been wrongly considered to be the act of the sovereign *subject*, an orator, a master of rhetoric addressing the assembly, and the act follows it thanks to the *social force of the speech*, the authority of the speaker, instead of its illocutionary force. “The power of making art with words was linked to the power of a hierarchy of speech, of a relationship of address regulated between speech acts and defined audiences on whom these speech acts were supposed to produce the effects of mobilizing thoughts, emotions and energies.”<sup>38</sup> He does not hold the principle of policed sensibility of representative regime of politics: “Kings had to act and speak as kings do, and common people as common people do.”<sup>39</sup> If the normative link between audibility and the archive of identities recognized and authorized is severed off, he reasons, the *aporoï*, the subject-positions that are seen as the mute nameless mob whose speech is “by definition without depth”<sup>40</sup> can be understood as having an authority to stage their own *aporia*.

They were assumed to be mute as their dissent was not authorized; not because they were unrecognized but because they were recognized *not to be political subjects of speech* who can distinguish between the just and the unjust: “For instance, Aristotle says, the slaves have the *aisthesis* of language (the passive capacity of understanding words), but they don’t have the *hexis* of language (the active power of stating and discussing what is just or unjust). More generally, it is always debatable whether a sequence of sounds produced by a mouth is articulated speech or the animalistic expression of pleasure or pain.”<sup>41</sup> Given that they are recognized as brutes lacking intelligence, their speech is silenced by the authority of the norms of recognition that demarcate the sensible, identify them as the slave and dismiss them as not making sense.

The *aporoï* act like the subject in dissent. Rancière gives Percennius’ address as an example of successful poetic speech acts that dis-identifies him with a dominated subject-position that *is (mis-)recognized*

---

<sup>38</sup> Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, 14.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>40</sup> Jacques Rancière, *The Names of History*, 25.

<sup>41</sup> Rancière, Jacques, “The Aesthetic Dimension: Aesthetics, Politics, Knowledge,” *Critical Inquiry* 36.1 (Autumn, 2009), 4.

as our unequal. Their subordination is not predicated on exclusion from the system of sensibilities *that denies them any recognition, but on recognition itself* and their coming into the sensible actually makes poetic use of the system that recognizes them as the insensible part of the community. Rancière explicitly refutes two premises of this gloomy vision of the vicious circle of exclusion, radical otherness and passivity.<sup>42</sup>

The point here is that the *aporoï* were and still are the limit to subjectivity, the borderline between what makes sense and nonsense, the line between politics of policed recognition and the aporetic disagreement of the insensible. That is why the forms of speaking related to “the deceitful event of excessive speaking”<sup>43</sup> of Percennius in Tacitus’ *Annals* that lead to the legionaries’ revolution take place on the borderline of the sensible.<sup>44</sup> Percennius aims to talk like a subject who calls into question who can be the subject.

Parker renames the speech acts Rancière takes as exemplifications of disagreement: “For Rancière, then Tacitus records in his discourse a speech event impossible to imagine phenomenally as a historical utterance.”<sup>45</sup> These speech events form subject positions impossible for those who utter them to embody, but those bodies who “suffered enough...worn out with infirmities...[and] covered with wounds”<sup>46</sup> cannot contain themselves, cannot contain the insensible demand for justice that breaks out. Their acts were not sensible as they were merely slaves, and their speech did not make sense because they were acting out of

<sup>42</sup> “1. Working class youth are excluded from the University because they are unaware of the true reasons for which they are excluded (*Les Héritiers*). 2. Their ignorance of the true reasons for which they are excluded is a structural effect produced by the very existence of the system that excludes them.” Jacques Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation* (California: Stanford University Press), 1991, 61.

<sup>43</sup> Jacques Rancière, *The Names of History*, 23.

<sup>44</sup> They happen outside the public sphere, out of place and out of turn, but nevertheless *inside the community of sense*, during “an interval for the expression of grief or joy” because the subject (their emperor) died. Tacitus, in W. J. Hort, *The English Book in Prose* (London: A. R. Spottiswoode, 1882), 212.

<sup>45</sup> A. Parker, “Impossible Speech Acts: Jacques Rancière’s Erich Auerbach,” in Jacques Rancière: *History, Politics, Aesthetics*, eds. Gabriel Rockhill & Philip Watts, (New York: Duke University Press, 2009), 253.

<sup>46</sup> Tacitus, in W. J. Hort, *The English Book in Prose*, 212.

their character recognized as the slaves.<sup>47</sup>

That is why I believe those acts of speech are not impossible, but poetic, i.e. their felicity conditions do not refer to an authority, conventional norms of iteration and recognition, or the mere presence or absence of the unrecognized groups. What makes them possible is not so much the voice of Percennius that nevertheless, hopelessly speaks (because their revolution failed), as what Tacitus the historian does with his voice: "Percennius had no place to speak. Nevertheless, Tacitus makes him speak."<sup>48</sup> Percennius acts and speaks as if he was the law-giver that Tacitus subjectifies; in Tacitus' poetic representation, Percennius the subaltern gains the problematic identity of the sovereign subject whose demand still reverberates as a claim to the future law. It is the effect of literarity that disrupts the identities of the subject and the subaltern.

Tacitus' voice supplements, substitutes for and brings into visibility Percennius' silent presence in re-iteration of his speech in a context open to further signification.<sup>49</sup> This operation that doubles voices is of the same order of historiology in the sense that the historian can find a point of entry to the secret history of the oppressed through it. Spivak defines the task as thematization of silences that nevertheless speak and I argue that this is exactly what Tacitus does with Percennius' silent address that mimics legislation.

<sup>47</sup> "By remonstrances or by sword, we may now obtain *relief*," (*Ibid.*, emphasis added) cries Percennius whose body had too much of injustice, excitation and fervour, "let everyone receive the arrears that may be due to him," referring to an anonymous soldier.

<sup>48</sup> Jacques Rancière, *The Names of History*, 24.

<sup>49</sup> In Spivak's *Can the Subaltern Speak?*, her conception of re-iteration should be noted in the double senses of representation (as signification and as speaking for) in the liminal zone between speech and silence, through the opening of the context to further re-interpretations which bring down the representative regime of politics. Gayatri Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?," in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, eds. Cary Nelson & Lawrence Grossberg, first ed., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988). Derrida conceives representation as an act of substitution: "Representation regularly supplements presence. But this operation of supplementation ... is not exhibited as a break in presence, but rather as a reparation and a continuous, homogenous modification of presence in representation." Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, tr. Alan Bass, (New York: The University of Chicago Press, 1982). 313.

The notion of law, especially colonial law, figures in Subaltern Studies more often than not as a discursive site of subjectification.<sup>50</sup> And Percennius the subaltern is subjectified as the voice of the law by Tacitus: when the historian's operation of substitution negates his singular identity, he is elevated to the status of the Generalized Other in the Habermasian sense.<sup>51</sup> Percennius' act of speech is resumed by Tacitus as an authority that intervenes to make his address heard in the legal, rational discourse of subjectivity which relies on the misplaced idea that people have stable ideas which can be represented and recognized by the police.

### ***1.3. Disagreement as a Poetic Act of Speech***

The subaltern therefore do not speak their own language, but borrow the language of authority that condemns them, pervert it through the indirect and impersonal use (anonymous 'they,' instead of 'you,' or 'we'), and let the speech act speak itself outside the confines of truth, identity and recognition by the mastery of Tacitus that lends rhetorical force to the arguments of Percennius:

The indirect style, in practice disjoining meaning truth and meaning, in effect cancels the opposition between legitimate and illegitimate speakers. The latter are just as much validated as suspected. The homogeneity of the narrative discourse thereby constituted comes to contradict *the heterogeneity of the subjects it represents*, the unequal quality of the speakers to guarantee, by their status, the reference of their speech. Although [the aporoi] may well be the radical other, the one excluded from legitimate speech, his discourse is included, in a specific suspension of the relations between meaning and truth.<sup>52</sup>

How can we understand the "specific suspension of the relations between meaning and truth" where discursive norms are interrupted? In

---

<sup>50</sup> See Ranajit Guha,, 1987; 135-66, 166-202 and 277-89 in *Subaltern Studies V*; David Hardiman,, 1985, 165-228, in *Subaltern Studies IV* and Upendra Baxi,, 1992, 245-264, in in *Subaltern Studies VII*.

<sup>51</sup> Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action. Vol. 2: Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason*, tr. T. McCarthy. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1987).

<sup>52</sup> Jacques Rancière, *The Names of History*, 23. Emphasis added.



this context, what the *aporoï* achieve by paradoxical use of language is to bring down the distinctions of identity and norms of recognition that do not do justice to them in their image, and rules of language that stabilize reference to the sensible. The second step is to identify themselves as the owner of the voice of the authorities (Tacitus here), and imitate a citizen that has a right to speak and dissent exploiting the crisis of subjectivity that does the job of recognition: “If we ever mean to redress our grievances,” as Percennius emphasizes, “what time so fit as the present, when the new emperor is not yet settled on the throne?”<sup>53</sup> In doing so, they claim subjective authority over words to paradoxically interrupt mastery over language, point out what is common to them and the authorities as anonymous parts unrecognizable from another, and offer the speech act that reveals the linguistic abyss of identity. With the identities and distinctions blurred and destabilized through the anonymity of the subject of speech in interregnum (—Who sits on the throne? No one), indignation at political injustice is represented through the injustice of being recognized: not only being recognized as mute brutes different to rational citizens that make sense in their speech, but also *being recognized at all, as a fixed identity*. Percennius’ act of speech disrupts both the discourse and subjectivity embedded in the representative politics of recognition.

Thus the subaltern expose themselves to the addressee as the unrecognizable uncountable to themselves, being (in)different to the identity that silenced them through recognition; they also move from their position in the insensible by dis-identification that also re-identifies them poetically. The identity of the addressor thus shifts in time and space, over to other bodies three times: in the speech of the *aporoï* unheard by its audience that would legitimize and authorize their act, through its (mis-)representation by the historian that situates the subject of speech legitimately within its rights to speak against itself for the purposes of justice, and in the account of Rancière who speaks for them. Their voices overlap, making it impossible to identify and recognize who it is that speaks and addresses us. This is a poetic act of subjectivity that still seeks its addressor as well addressee, wishing-to-say something about our present democracies and politics of recognition that ignore the

---

<sup>53</sup> Tacitus, in W. J. Hort, *The English Book in Prose*, 212.

mobility of identities and the mobilizing force of an address.

In other words, Percennius' act of speech is made discursive by Tacitus' non-discursive signification that poetically disrupts the relations between truth and meaning in the ensuing paradoxes of futurity. Percennius speaks like the subject to address his situation that has already deprived him of subjectivity. If he is the subject his claim is not justified and if he is not the subject his claim is unjustifiable and that is why his politics has nothing to do with recognition. And on the discursive level, his speech refers to nothing present: he is in truth not the Emperor who can address others in the terms he does. In truth his address is unheard, but paradoxically, in Tacitus' re-iteration we still hear it. His speech does not make sense to others at his present, and he was to invent the conditions under which it would have; if his act was successful (i.e. if his uprising succeeded) he would already have been the emperor who had intervened in order to speak for other slaves and authorize rebellion. In other words, in the disagreeing act he identified himself with his future self that he would have been had his act of speech been successful. He therefore differed from himself in the act and placed his identification within a gap between truth and meaning, between slavery and sovereignty, and between his past and future. The act of disagreement here is a futural disruption of the (temporal, discursive, representative) order.

What is of utmost importance here is not to recognize the addressor *truthfully*, but to invent conditions of meaning under which it can be heard as an address of the anonymous subject that questions preconditions of subjectivity in his/her silence. And Percennius' address was silent: he does not speak but *re-iterates* the address of the subject he never was. Percennius' actual speech was not documented, and it is safe to assume, went unheard of. He is just envisioned to embody a silence filled by others' words: the dead emperor's, Tacitus', and Rancière's. He was a mute poet of the people. And "to restate Percennius' reasons is by no means to repeat them,"<sup>54</sup> Rancière emphasizes, since no one can possibly know them, or voice them faithfully.<sup>55</sup> Here Tacitus himself narrates

---

<sup>54</sup> Jacques Rancière, *The Names of History*, 26.

<sup>55</sup> Tacitus' representation does not document but *invents* those reasons in a manner analogous to "Principle of Actuality" in *La Parole Muette*. Jacques Rancière, *La Parole Muette: Essai Sur les Contradictions de la Littérature*, (Paris: Hachette, 1998).

a story free of concerns with truth, identity and knowledge, enacting the disagreement of a subordinated legionnaire, the allegedly unheard speech made by such a personage through speech acts.<sup>56</sup> As a poetic subjectivity designed to the necessities of the speech situation, Percennius (as Tacitus), speaks for him briefly and paradoxically embodies the anonymous subject-position that wishes to say the unsayable: *that we, the insensible, are a part of the senseless 'we' that cannot recognize itself*. What other political theorists conceptualized as a 'demand for recognition' thus questions and interrupts the legitimacy of the criteria of being a recognized subject of speech, and recognition itself. Therefore, with the singularity of Percennius elevated to the collective status of class (a classless class, i.e., the subaltern), one finds the mobile, poetic element of speech in the anonymity of a newly designated subject-position of speech that can be taken up by countless subjects in the same situation as Percennius. Bereft of singularity, it is universal, i.e. unrecognizable in any identity or subjectivity.

Ranci re thus formulates those speech acts that mimic and undermine discursive subjectivity only to make sense the "place [discourse] gives, through its own agency, to what it declares to have no place."<sup>57</sup> It is *the community of sense that realizes it misrecognized itself through a miscount of the bodies, some of which have no ac/count*. The silent other is indifferent to identities, or recognition.

#### ***1.4 Acknowledgement not Recognition***

Therefore, the democratic struggle for equality is not simply assertion of a demand by a group of people who embrace their pre-given identity. It rather concerns with constructing a new subject position through disagreement of those who don't count as the subject. Actually the subject is nothing but an invention and alteration which traditional theories of recognition does not take into account: "The struggle for recognition is based on a polemical concept of recognition," he maintains, "that entails both a structure of identification and conflict over this identification."<sup>58</sup> And this conflict provides the exact opening for the poetic

---

<sup>56</sup> Jacques Ranci re, *The Names of History*, 26.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>58</sup> Katia Genel, "Jacques Ranci re and Axel Honneth: Two Critical Approaches

constitution of a new subject and a new political world which acknowledges him or her as a subject of speech and reason. “But the presence of a different concept of recognition, which presupposes pre-existing identities, could vitiate the polemical dimension of this critique.”<sup>59</sup> In fact the subject of disagreement must break away with given identities, i.e., disidentify and the process of subjectivization entails an identity in the making. In his later work Deranty again insists that operative in Rancière’s oeuvre is “something like a logic of recognition in its most important pages.”<sup>60</sup>

Although the logic of equality resembles recognition in that “demands for justice first emerges as denunciations of injustice [and] Rancière agrees that recognition has “operative” and “antagonistic” dimensions that are important to retain.”<sup>61</sup> In other words both recognition and the method of equality address a wrong and demand redress. However, recognition traditionally presumes given identities of the subject although in Rancière’s theory “[s]ubjecthood is defined in a way that recalls the earlier structuralist emphasis on the Marxist concept of “support,” as a mere function or ontological placeholder in a structural field, defined independently of any essential traits.”<sup>62</sup> For Rancière, on the other hand, acknowledgment has a world-disclosing function: it reconfigures the world in such a way that new identities, new ways of being, new possibilities of acting and speaking become visible. Recognition for Rancière means two things: first, a cognitive activity of matching knowledge with a perception (such as the memory of a person with the face of the person when we recognize a friend in the crowd) or respond-

---

to the Political,” in *Recognition or Disagreement: A Critical Encounter on the Politics of Freedom, Equality and Identity*, eds. Katia Genel & Jean-Phillippe Deranty, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 25.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> J. Deranty, “Between Honneth and Rancière: Problems and Potentials of a Contemporary Critical Theory of Society,” in *Recognition or Disagreement: A Critical Encounter on the Politics of Freedom, Equality and Identity*, eds. Katia Genel & Jean-Phillippe Deranty (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 39.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 40.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 41.

ing to the claim of a person to treat them as autonomous subjects.<sup>63</sup> Therefore recognition is an act of confirmation which relies on a pre-given identity of the recognized. However, disagreement takes issue with and criticizes pre-given identities because they involve inequality: such as the identity of “women” in the 1800s which is defined as those incapable of voting, reasoning, and speech and dependent on their father or husband. That is why Rancière offers the example of women who argued that they too are men and should have the universal rights of men. “Because if recognition is not merely a response to something already existing, if it is an original configuration of the common world, this means that individuals and groups are always, in some way, recognized with a place and competence so that the struggle is not ‘for recognition,’ but for *another form* of recognition: a redistribution of the places, the identities, and the parts.”<sup>64</sup> In other words theories of recognition overlooks misrecognition and undecidability of identities.

That is why Honneth suggests that Rancière’s is a theory of external struggle for recognition<sup>65</sup> because the claim, outside the present political universe, subverts it and creates a new form of sensibility. However, as I pointed out, the struggle is also very internal and takes as central the main-stream forms of sensibility. Therefore, it is neither external, nor internal, but liminal: the struggle takes place on the border of the Police. And I suggest another name for the verification of equality: it is not recognition but acknowledgement. It relies on a dynamic model of identities, because it is poetic and it poetically invents new subject-positions which hitherto have been not acknowledged. I prefer the term ‘acknowledgment’ because it basically means saluting a person you have met for the first time and it is devoid of the negative connotation of assuming a given identity. But what matters is not identity, as Rancière suggested, but “the enrichment or enlargement of identity: adding new capabilities, new competences.”<sup>66</sup>

---

<sup>63</sup> Jacques Rancière, “Critical Questions on the Theory of Recognition,” in *Recognition or Disagreement*, 85.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 90.

<sup>65</sup> Axel Honneth, “Remarks on the Philosophical Approach of Jacques Rancière,” in *Recognition or Disagreement*, 106.

<sup>66</sup> Jacques Rancière, “Critical Questions on the Theory of Recognition,” in *Recognition or Disagreement*, 92

That is why Rancière puts forward his model of subjectivization based on disidentification: first, a collective identity is created by disavowal of a former identity: a gay person should say, I am not a man but a gay. And secondly, creation of a new subject-position is not creation of a substance: the “‘we’ is not the expression of an identity; it is an act of enunciation which creates the subject that it names.”<sup>67</sup> In other words it is a speech act which performs the very thing it names: the speech act that “we, the workers are equal with the rich” verifies equality. Thirdly, acknowledgment reveals a new political universe peopled with new subjects and it is created by a speech act that does not define, but name a collective identity as strangers: “So they [workers] affirm the *common* capacity, the *universal* capacity as the capacity of those to whom it is denied in general, or the capacity of *anybody*.”<sup>68</sup> Hence it reveals us as strangers who must be saluted and acknowledged.

### ***Conclusion: Acknowledgment as a Poetic Investigation***

I argued that Rancière’s framework of disagreement is not to be conceived, as Deranty does, simply as a recognition claim of the subject to individual liberties, rights and state protection. Although Deranty rightly approaches the issue via the oppressed subjects voicing a demand that at present goes unheard, I suggested that his interpretation of Rancière risks situating him as a theorist of identity politics. In my reading, Rancière’s account of acknowledgment conceives dissent as a silent act of speech that disrupts norms of recognition, displaces its subject and places it in others’ discourse, demands acknowledgment of a wrong (i.e., acknowledgment of the silent addressor), and makes both the addressee and the addressor *otherwise*.

Percennius’ address disrupts relations of truth, identity, and meaning: the conditions under which the subaltern’s assertion, disidentification and signification make sense refer not to what is present, or to the present, but to a possible future. Percennius’ situation illustrates the aporias of the political; the subject cannot take parts in the constitution of the political situation and need acknowledgment of their situation where they cannot exercise their subjectivity to undermine subjectivity. Per-

---

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 92-93.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 93.

cennius' speech rather addresses us to his silent image substituted for, and supplemented by others' speech that subjectify, identify and 'acknowledge' him.

More importantly, acknowledgement is an act of speech that reveals the self as an other to itself; Percennius' singularity is both exposed and displaced by the literarity of his address that, through others' re-iteration, universalizes his subjectivity as an anonymous, silent presence. His address occasions the acknowledgment of himself as a subject in the dialectic of disagreement: it mainly signifies his self as a subjugated other who paradoxically refers to his possible future self as the subject. Tacitus, in narrating Percennius' situation, acknowledges and substitutes his own subjectivity, words and speech for the silent image and unheard address of Percennius. Tacitus *poetically invents* an other who is substituted for his self in the act of re-presentation. In a metonymic move, his historical representation of Percennius undecidably becomes the undoing of representation; Tacitus' makes Percennius speak, lending him his own subjectivity, words, and acts. He *identifies with him*, and acknowledges himself in him—in an other substituted for his self.

Yet the series of identification, and acknowledgments are, for Rancière, merely poetic and political: i.e., aiming to interrupt the policing through disagreement. Rancière aims to dissociate politics from ethics, and from the relentless "imperative dictated by the sudden encounter with the Other"<sup>69</sup> in his/her/its singularity, passivity, and recognizability. Whether it is the unrepresentable Other of ethics of response, The State, The Police, The Father or the Law, for Rancière, "the imperative" to respond to the stronger implies inequality between the addressee 'recognized' in its singularity and the addressor that sets the norms of recognizability. Rancière emphasizes (with Lyotard)<sup>70</sup> the necessity of disagreement and invention of a new norm/language game in order to dis-

---

<sup>69</sup> Jacques Rancière, *The Aesthetic Unconscious* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009), 87.

<sup>70</sup> If it is the singularity of the addressee that should be addressed, Lyotard implied, one needs to invent a new norm ethically and new phrases to respond to the situation. Jean-François Lyotard, *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute* (London: Manchester University Press, 1988), 13. Habermas, on the other hand, seems to privilege the "following the rule" as the only acceptable response of the addressee whose singularity should be a "private" matter.

agree, but singularity for him is a discursive effect of literary (dis-) identifications and not a substance subjects of discourse always already have.

To summarize, Rancière implies that the Police justifies its norms with the present distribution of the senses in agreement with our singular identity captured and recognized.<sup>71</sup> Since identity, *any identity*, is constituted by an address that seeks its addressee, singularity too is a poetic effect of the address that identifies the anonymous body by suspending the relation between our presence and its meaning. The body is again an exposure which addresses us to others, but speech here points to its anonymity. And disagreement does not only identify, but investigates possibilities of identification always mired in material conditions of misidentification and disidentification where the distribution of sensible both limits and reveals what is it that we see. Poetics, here, bring together incongruous elements of the sensible together in an image, in hitherto unimagined ways to investigate and find words in its silence. Singularity is thus not that of the body, but of the poetic speech-act of disagreement that seeks and envisions a new way of being under the shared conditions of sensibility deformed and reformed by it.

As I stressed above, the *aporoi* do not appear out of turn and place only to have their *singular image* ‘recognized,’ but also to mark the limit to our present, hierarchically-structured sensibility that cannot make sense of and recognize their silent presence among us as a sign of us being others to ourselves, not absolute subjects that control the itinerary of the address that make us what ‘we’ are.<sup>72</sup> This is a movement of the people poetically addressed to themselves as unrecognizable others to themselves and it is the policing force of the norms of recognizability that keep them immobilized.

Their mobility is the literarity of subjectless speech that disidentifies in identifying its addressee, but unlike Habermas’ ideal

<sup>71</sup> Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, 12-13.

<sup>72</sup> This is the primary sociability, understood as the senseless forces of a shared life that circulate without a final address or addressee. Its material effect is not predictable, or controllable by the present norms of recognition. Our present sensibility is characterized not by subjectivity over these forces, but by mobility between the subject addressor and the submissive addressee, identification and dis-identification, the insensible and the meaningful, the matter and the imaginary, the body and speech, the present and the future.



speech, it moves people from the position of a lawful selfhood to anonymous otherness constitutive of the self; from a policed sensibility to an imagined ethos and a new shared life. Although it is not ethical, it paradoxically aims to constitute an ethical community of sense where speech reveals we are strangers to our self unattached to and indifferent to identities. Disagreement is the act of speech that exposes us to others constitutive of us and to ourselves as others. What comes before ‘us,’ before the law and before others is an anonymous body that still seeks its possibility conditions, on the aporetic line between what is present and what is to come. It embodies a wish-to-say that can be materialized if heard and responded to with an act that re-constitutes the community of sense. It is futural in the sense that once we respond to it, it will have already been one of us in an “otherwise” society.

---

## BOOK REVIEW

---

**Jill Stauffer, *Ethical Loneliness: The Injustice of Not Being Heard*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2015. Hardcover, 240 pp. \$55.**

*Dessislava Petrova (University of Sofia)*

The feeling of abandonment arises when a person feels alienated from the world. When the person has been totally forgotten by the world, or at least experiences their situation as such. Thought comes when it finds an opening, a space to fit in, if we are ready for it or not. Granting space for thought, we enable it to rest with us.

Following stories of survivors of torture and violence, Jill Stauffer writes about Jean Améry's experiences as he tried to rejoin the world beyond the concentration camp, the extreme loneliness he found himself in, emphasizing that it was the result not only of the tortures and dehumanization to which he had been subject but also the consequence of being abandoned by a society that failed to listen to his story – failed, that is, to acknowledge the injustice that had been done.

Survivors emerge from one injustice to discover that their society is not ready to listen to their testimony or is just unwilling to face it. Then all hope of redemption is lost. The suffering and torture remain permanent as there is no “other” the victims could share it with; no other to understand or help them forget; no one to ease their pain. It appears that the “other” does not exist as society is not ready to accept the victims and give them what they need – acknowledgment of their suffering and torments, justice for what they have gone through and eventual punishment for those guilty. They thus become subjects of social abandonment, which in fact is ethical loneliness.

Society needs to acknowledge that the nightmare the victims have gone through has really happened; that the victims have no guilt for that; and to welcome them as equal members of this same society to which they once belonged, not making them feel ashamed or outcast. What they experienced could have happened to anyone else.

What happened to Améry when he was beaten for the first time in

the concentration camp was that, with the very first blow, he lost all hope, all dignity and all meaning of what it is to be a human being. What physical abuse does, he says, is that it turns the human being into a body. There was something much worse than the physical pain he experienced. It was the sudden thought that he was all alone and there was no one in this world to come and save him. When a human being is deprived of his status as human being, a part of them dies that can never be brought back to life. Dehumanization is in fact loss of humanity and despair of all help.

That feeling he experienced was overshadowed by another one – the feeling of something *déjà vu*. When society refused to listen to his story it did it to him once again: only now the rejection was more bitter and lasting. Given the fact that people are prone to forget about injustice done and prefer to sleep calmly not having to face shameful truths that are unbearable, indifference is essential to assure this narcotic oblivion.

First to experience dehumanization by other human beings and afterwards not being heard or being ignored by “just-minded people” – this marks the way that violated and persecuted people live their past in the present. And this is beyond the capacity of the individual to choose or control. Social support is a very important factor as it gives the victims the comfort that even though they were once abandoned by humanity, they are now safe and injustice will never be done to them again.

Every story requires an audience or else it will be forgotten. The fact is that even audiences specifically gathered by political structures to listen to the stories of the victims of torture and violence, such as post-conflict trials and truth commissions, fail to hear the stories of the survivors. That is what makes the hope for justice, compassion and redemption fade. What it does is bring back the overwhelming feeling of abandonment purposefully done – a second one for the survivors – far surpassing the pain of the first.

Trials and truth commissions are designed to address grave harms and injustice on a local and international level. The examples which Jill Stauffer gives show the limits of the acceptance and realization of the scale of dehumanization done. Koudile will not forgive the murder of her son Sizwe – apprehended, tortured, poisoned, shot and burnt by the police in South Africa. Hanna F. maintains that she was brave in renouncing her Jewish origin in order to survive Auschwitz. Even though this is what society expects them to do, in the light of their own values –

the values of those members of society who have never undergone dehumanizing behavior. As another victim, Kalu, states, what made her angrier than the oppression was that they tried to dictate her forgiveness.

Society finds it more appropriate to bury the memories of injustice and diminish its significance by not declaring the harm done as “worthy of redress.” When, in fact, we need to lay ourselves open and hear the victims of wrongdoing and hear something we might wish not to, something that threatens the way we see the world as an orderly and ordered place. Our unwillingness to confront the harm done gives food to ethical loneliness, as willing ignorance and indifference to ruined lives, the attempt to reduce the injustice to something less dramatic and painful, something that can be more easily digested without leaving a bitter aftertaste.

In order to grant relief and justice to victims, trials should be supported by reparation efforts at the state and community levels. Survivors need to incorporate the story of their suffering into their life story, not solely to concentrate on the trauma as the defining event, so they need to speak and be heard. Silence will do no good. They also need their willingness or unwillingness to forgive to be recognized and accepted as justified.

By not listening to the real stories of the survivors and ignoring them, by refusing to grant consolation to those who have unjustly suffered for no reason at all, society dehumanizes them once again. That is what ethical loneliness is: a brutal separation from society leading to isolation and the inability of the victims to accept the injustice being done to them.

People like Jean Améry cannot and will not accept this. They rebel against the system that wants to seal their memories and even alter their stories so that they fit what we call political correctness; to assume the right place in the structure designed for it. And if it does not fit, there are mechanisms to cut and remove the ill-fitting elements so that everything is acceptable. It won't work for Améry and people like him who will continue to insist on telling their stories the way they experienced them. The revolt against reality consists in an annulment of time because only then is it moral. So what he seeks and demands is a time machine – he wants all the victims and perpetrators who wish the past was different to join together and declare that what happened should not have happened. He wants to regain the human status he was once deprived of; he wants a guarantee that the world will never again abandon him. Forgiving is

like amnesia – it's neither possible, nor just. So, time should be turned back.

In the case of Améry, what made it impossible to forgive and move forward was the fact that German society and the world did not adequately address the crimes done to him. What was done to him was a result of the cooperation of the individuals who tortured him and institutions and structures, most of which will never admit any guilt. If that condition is not met, then safety does not exist. The only thing left for him is to continue to resent.

Survivors of torture and violence have suffered the violation of their autonomy as human beings. The experience of listening to their stories by other members of society threatens the confidence that the world we live in is a cozy and safe place where wrongdoing cannot reach us. Society is obliged to provide a space for such stories to be heard and they should be heard on their own terms without interference; it has to find out what needs reparation and how this can be accomplished. Only then will it be possible to find a way out of ethical loneliness, leaving the unforgivable past to rest.

---

## **ANNOUNCEMENT: M.A. AND PH.D. PROGRAM IN PHILOSOPHY TAUGHT IN ENGLISH**

---

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

Sofia University was founded in 1888 following the best patterns of 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. In addition, the master's thesis can be written on a topic from Eastern Philosophy - an expert in this field will be appointed as the supervisor. The program is structured, yet leaves enough room for student's own preferences. The degree is recognized worldwide including in 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 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 hu-

manities, 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 – €815 per school year
- 2) international students - €3 850 per school year

***Financial aid:***

A) ***Citizens of the EU/EEA and Switzerland*** are eligible for state scholarships carrying a 75% tuition waiver plus a monthly stipend beginning from the second semester.

B) Fulbright Graduate Grants are offered to ***American citizens*** as a form of very competitive financial aid; for more information see [www.fulbright.bg](http://www.fulbright.bg). Furthermore, 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 the Student Loan Network, <http://www.privatestudentloans.com> and <https://www.discoverstudentloans.com>. It is possible for the American citizens to use some other sources of government financial assistance (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). ***Students from the Ukraine, Belarus, and the other CIS countries, the***

***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:** 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. The streets of Sofia are populated by cozy caf  s 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>.

**Contact person:** Dr. Alexander L. Gungov, Program Director

E-mail: [agungov@phls.uni-sofia.bg](mailto:agungov@phls.uni-sofia.bg), [agungov@yahoo.com](mailto:agungov@yahoo.com)

Phone: (+3592) 9308-414 (Bulgaria is within the Eastern European Time Zone)

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. In addition the doctoral dissertation can be written on a topic from Eastern Philosophy - an expert in this field will be appointed as the supervisor. The program is structured, yet leaves enough room for student's own preferences. The degree is recognized worldwide including in 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 – €1450 per school year; extramural: €2440 per school year

2) international students - in residence: € 500 per school year; extramural: € 300 per school year

**Dissertation defense fee:** €50

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

### **Financial aid:**

A) *Citizens of the 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) Fulbright Graduate Grants are offered to *American citizens* as a form of 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 for the American citizens to use some other sources of government financial assistance (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.

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). *Students from the Ukraine, Belarus, and the other CIS countries, the 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*.

**Application deadline:** September 30 (for state scholarship applications--September 15), to start in October; January 31, to start in March.

*The citizens of EU/EEA and Switzerland please check with the Program Director about the state scholarship deadline.*

**Student Visa Matters:** 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 is a number of concert halls, dozens of art galleries, and many national and international cultural centers. The streets of Sofia are full of 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 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>.

**Contact person:** Dr. Alexander L. Gungov, Program Director

E-mail: [agungov@phls.uni-sofia.bg](mailto:agungov@phls.uni-sofia.bg), [agungov@yahoo.com](mailto:agungov@yahoo.com)

Phone: (+3592) 9308-414 (Bulgaria is within the Eastern European Time Zone)

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

---

## INFORMATION ABOUT AUTHORS AND EDITORS IN ALPHABETIC ORDER

---

**Dr. Ken A. Bryson** is Professor Emeritus at Cape Breton University, CANADA.

**Dr. Alexander L. Gungov** is Professor of Logic and Continental Philosophy at the School of Philosophy and Director of the Graduate Program in Philosophy Taught in English, University of Sofia, Bulgaria, EU.

**Dr. Aysel Demir** is Assistant Professor at Kirikkale University, TURKEY.

**Dr. Erturk Demirel** is Visiting Lecturer at Bogazici University, TURKEY.

**Mr. Iraklis Ioannidis** is a PhD Candidate in Critical Philosophy at University of Glasgow, UK.

**Dr. John McSweeney** is Independent Scholar residing in Cork, Ireland, EU.

**Mr. Karim Mamdani** is Independent Scholar residing in North America and Europe.

**Ms. Dessislava Petrova** is a Ph.D. Candidate at the Ph.D. Program in Philosophy, Taught in English, University of Sofia, Bulgaria, EU.

**Dr. Kristina Stöckl** is Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Innsbruck, Austria, EU.