

Sofia Philosophical Review

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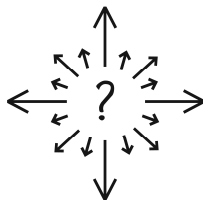
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I. BOOK REVIEWS

Kurtul Gülenç et al., *Alacakaranlıkta Hegel'i Düşünmek (To Think about Hegel at Dawn: Criticism, Freedom, Social Ontology)*, Istanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları, 2021, 336 pp., ₺ (TL) 42.85 ISBN: 9786053145127

Cengizhan Kaptan (University of Sofia)

The book begins with Seyla Benhabib stating that there has been a Hegelian Renaissance since the 1960s. For Benhabib, the continuing legacy of Hegelian thought in contemporary German philosophy results from the as-yet unresolved relationship between Kant, Hegel, and Marx. Benhabib indicates the essential points of the articles and states that the republic is a project, not a property, as inspired by Habermas.

In the foreword, editors Kurtul Gülenç and Özgür Emrah Gürel define the purpose of the book as contributing to the efforts of re-reading and interpreting Hegel in the twenty-first century, based on the question of whether there is sufficient need or reason to. They state that this aim has two axes: first, to present in detail the connection between social ontology and political thought, shaped within the framework of Hegel's philosophy; second, to propose a new philosophical framework that would be an alternative to the agnostic stance derived from Carl Schmitt and Martin Heidegger.

They state that the book aims to present a comprehensive view of Hegel's understanding of freedom and autonomy, based on a review of the metaphysical dimension of Hegel's political theory. This would allow readers to reconceive Hegelian thought in the context of contemporary issues. In addition, such a framework addresses the progressive phase, which Hegel describes as ethical life, as a historical structure constructed within language, and as the non-discursive ontological construction of this structure. Kurtul and Gürel state that it also provides an illuminating set of concepts to analyze social institutions along with their sources and the pathologies they generate. In this context, re-

reading and re-establishing Hegel's thought with Hegel himself provides crucial insight into understanding how his concepts of freedom, power, law and sociability were developed within later philosophical movements such as Critical Theory.

The editors also propose three periods concerning the development of the Hegelian framework in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The first was the attempt to re-read Hegelian ontology and dialectical understanding inaugurated in the 1960s and developed within Critical Theory and the hermeneutic tradition especially. The second period started in the 1970s and extended into the second half of the 1990s, moving beyond the borders of Continental Europe, largely through Habermas whose works built a bridge between Critical Theory and American pragmatism. For the editors, the first quarter of the twenty-first century can be interpreted as the continuation of the Hegelian Renaissance when we begin to see American interpretation come to the fore.

Regarding the peculiarities of these three periods, Kurtul and Gürel mention that the attitude of the first-period Hegel commentators was characterized by a Western Marxist perspective, one directed against Soviet Marxism's determinist, rigidly materialist, and communication-denying approach. Hegel commentators of the second period focused instead on the critique of neoliberal societies that use power and the state to completely hinder the creative activities of the modern subject through power. In our contemporary period, studies of Hegel have been remarkable for exploiting the critical possibilities of both previous generations and for offering a holistic interpretation of Hegel.

In "A Pre-Preparation on the Possibility of Understanding the Hegelian Ontology of Social Being," Güçlü Ateşoğlu states that if ontology is given priority in Hegel's philosophy, we should look at what kind of priority this is and whether this leads us to a conceptualization of being independent of and prior to all singular things. We should also ascertain whether conceptualizations such as Spirit, Idea and Absolute, which can have different meanings in philosophy, take on an a priori, transcendent, and/or timeless quality with respect to all singular beings. The second issue is the treatment of nature and society, i.e. the external world, either according to a mechanistic idea or in terms of constitutive understanding. One of the main issues is whether a mechanical or organic understanding of nature and society is more satisfactory. For Ateşoğlu, one of the biggest problems of Hegel's privileging of the second conception as

more holistic and satisfactory is the problem of teleology. This is what Ateşoğlu aims to address in his article. Third, epistemological distinctions between the theoretical and the practical, the private and the public, the ideal and the real, obstruct philosophy's effort to establish the ontology of social existence. He argues that such distinctions reveal a schizophrenic human nature, which detracts from the unity of man with himself, nature, and society. Therefore, he follows a path that describes these dualisms and then overcomes them.

Ateşoğlu claims that the most suitable title for Hegel's work would be "contradiction and totality," with subtitles like negation, determination, mediation, relation, reason and actuality. These conceptualizations, which manifest themselves in different elements of his thought, pave the way for a philosophical science in *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, where "philosophical knowledge" manifests itself. Ateşoğlu maintains that the basic idea in this work is to process knowledge in such a way that it oscillates between the subjective and the objective, between seeing ordinary or natural knowledge as a tool and seeing it as an environment. The meaning of Hegel's famous phrase "to grasp [*aufzufassen*] and tell the truth, not as Substance but also as Subject"¹ is that the truth, which is one of the basic conceptual pairs of ontology or the absolute of metaphysics, both on objective grounds, prioritizing the medium, and on a subjective basis, i.e. on the basis of treating knowledge as a tool. Lenin's *Philosophy Notebooks*, Lukacs's *History and Class Consciousness* and *The Ontology of Social Being*, Marcuse's *Hegel's Ontology and Theory of Historicity* and *Reason and Revolution*, and before all of them Marx: Ateşoğlu claims that all returned to Hegel due to this ontological essence and unity of the subject and object.

In his essay on Herbert Marcuse, Gülenç states that Marcuse differs from both Dilthey and Heidegger in important points in terms of Hegel's theory of historicity. For him, Dilthey goes a few steps beyond Heidegger because he considers the sociality of life and erects a philosophy of life that puts this sociality at its center. For Dilthey, the establishment and assimilation of the constructed world by living beings is central to the historicity of this world. Heidegger, on the other hand,

¹ Kurtul Gülenç et al., *Alacakaranlıkta Hegel'i Düşünmek* (İstanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları, 2021), 27.

does not believe that historicity expresses a world-historical process but rather exists as an individual temporal horizon. In addition, while Dilthey has notions of social praxis and intersubjectivity, individual Dasein as a “being-toward-death” always has priority in the human-world relationship in the Heideggerian framework.

Gülenç maintains that, in both Hegel and Dilthey, continuity is established between individual temporality and historicity in such a way that there is a dialectical relationship between the singular I and the plural We: I am at the same time as We do. There is no such continuity in Heidegger. The only way for Dasein to establish a genuine relationship with “worldliness” is through the authentic moments that signify (or depict) interruption. For Heidegger, these moments are not mediations in the Hegelian sense, but a radical rupture from the context in which they occur. For all these reasons, Gülenç says, Hegel is the name that Marcuse turns to, but through the construction of a new theory of praxis.

Hegel's social ontology is the ground of a normative intersubjectivity that constantly maintains its internal contradiction and dynamic tension. In the Hegelian sense, autonomy is based on being able to stay with oneself in relation to others, and there is an understanding of mutual recognition that implies positive liberation in the social field, and of the practical interventions of radical action. This enables us to avoid evaluating concrete individual action as introverted private action, and paves the way for establishing an ontological unity between individual and collective action. This creates the structure for new practices of social struggle, both at the theoretical and practical level.

For Gülenç, Hegel claims that freedom, taken at the social level, can only be realized within society and through relations of mutual recognition; indeed, according to Hegel, the condition of my freedom is that others are also free, just as in the Marxist framework. Gülenç argues that these are the reasons that Marcuse found the answer he had been seeking since his student days: the possibility of a revolutionary praxis that is found in Hegel's freedom-centered social ontology.

In “Theodor W. Adorno's Negative Dialectics: The Exit Door Out of Totality,” Önder Kulak states that society, according to Adorno, is a totality formed by individuals in which the universal places the individual under its yoke. In this totality, society subjugates the individual and forces him to obey it. He argues that this manifests itself most clearly in our capitalist society. The universal, which is the first element in the re-

lation of the universal, singular, and particular under the Concept Doctrine in Hegel's *Logic*, constitutes a uniform and identical unity in-itself. Singulars do not differ in this universality. In the next case, the universal encounters an element separate from and opposed to itself. This element is a particular that has universality in itself but contrasts with another universal; their relation is one of opposition. After these determinations, Kulak refers to the example of the Roman Empire in Hegel's lectures. He mentions that the dominant subjects of the state include other particular and universal elements in themselves and subjugate them. As such, universals become integrated with and within the prevailing universal. Indicating that denial should be denied for the sake of such concrete integrity, Kulak states that every learner can create a whole by overcoming their own universality, and yet this is singularity.

Thus, at the moment now reached in the Hegelian framework, the singular is added to the relationship between the universal and the particular. The singular is also the universal; but what it contains is the coexistence of particulars in their similarities and differences. When the individual is alone, their individuality has no meaning; it is necessary to reveal its particularity in social relations. This socialization and its particular-universal relations imply a process that starts from the family and extends to civil society. The next stage is the state, where these interpersonal relations can be seen as a whole, and the universal will be completed.

Kulak states that Adorno sought an alternative to Hegel. Against Hegel's dialectic, based on affirmation, the content must be based on negation. In this context, Adorno criticizes the character of Hegel's concept of negation of negation. Adorno attributes the reason for this to Hegel's establishment of a system dependent on the abstract, even though it is a system connected to the concrete. Practice, which constitutes the basis of the concrete, has been handed over to the Absolute from the very beginning. As such, the existence of humanity continues to be based on contradiction, falsifying Hegel's claim that this contradiction has been overcome.

Adorno, like Lukács, argues that labor power is transformed into a commodity in accordance with the idea of objectification. Indicating that objectification does not have a negative content in Marx, Kulak states that it is given a negative content due to capitalist alienation. Herein lies Adorno's distinct intellectual dimension, which differentiates him from Marx; he argues that human labor enables direct objectification. This is

not just a technical detail, as Adorno will argue, contrary to Marx, that the primary process is consumption rather than production. By doing so, Adorno dismisses the role of the productive forces that cause reification.

For Kulak, the barriers that Adorno places around the individual sphere expose his framework as a significantly weak stance. To overcome this, the individual needs to be enabled to continue their path. This requires an immanent critique. Adorno's suggestion to go out of history is solid. This suggestion can be read as a crucial commentary regarding ideas that depend on historical accumulation, if a detailed perspective is considered. In this way, emphasizing anti-totalitarian experience as the exercise of resistance, along with Adorno's proposed "preventing the problem before it arises,"² provides important possibilities for evaluation in terms of a historical account. Nevertheless, Adorno's escape from class and lack of focus on the autonomy of communities renders his framework too weak for such a construction and fails to support it in terms of universal experience.

In "Trying to Stand Still in the River: On Hans-Georg Gadamer's Conservative Historicism," Albayrak claims that considering the historical course of the Subject and its relationship with Hegel, the issue goes beyond academic boundaries and extends to the social and political nature and function of philosophy. Albayrak argues that the work of philosophy in Hegel, metaphysically, is not less transformative than it is destructive. While Spirit is the substance of accumulated historicity, the human action that creates it is based on real people who both interpret that substance and create and transform it with their cultural inheritance, experience, and action. So, Gadamer and Hegel separate according to the attitude they take in the substance-subject opposition, making their positions relative to each other evident.

Albayrak argues that in the twentieth century, the human and social sciences, based, unlike the natural sciences, on understanding rather than explanation, began to be generally accepted in European thought. For Albayrak, Gadamer's approach, shaped around the concept of "history of influences,"³ fits into this context. Albayrak maintains that Gadamer's attempt to use all of Hegel's basic concepts and arguments to

² Ibid., 152.

³ Ibid., 160.

justify an opposite assumption voided all of humanity's gains, especially criticism, against the pressures of authority, and this attempt constitutes neither a literary nor a philosophical effort. Albayrak thinks that the issue lies beyond Hegel and concerns the struggle-filled history of humanity. The implications of Gadamer's use of critique and critical thought, removed from all concrete historical contexts, rather entails the consolidation of politics instead of mounting any kind of challenge to it. It is, therefore, possible to say that Albayrak criticizes Gadamer for being too conservative and preserving a stance that is uncritical of the political mechanisms that impede social transformation for the better. For Albayrak, history demonstrates that criticism must be essential and challenging and a tool against authoritarian structures that degrade the essence of people who suffer alienation.

In "The Relationship between Constitution and Revolution in Habermas's Philosophy of Law: Defending the Democratic Republic as an Embarrassed Hegelian?" Gürel argues that Habermas's assessment of the Cold War, as a conflict between Natural Law (the West) and Revolution (the Eastern Bloc), gains special importance when the internal relationship between the rule of law and popular sovereignty, or between constitutionalism and revolution, is properly understood and grasped. Habermas argued that Marxism went too far when it doubted the idea of legality. In this respect, Gürel argues that, for Habermas, the essential and historical link connecting the natural law tradition and the ideal of revolution, established in Hegel's political philosophy, was severed in the Marxist framework. Caught between Marxist and liberal theories, the young Habermas was torn between legality and revolutionary violence. On the eve of 1968, when socialist/communist parties gained strength in Europe and student demonstrations erupted in the streets of Paris, Berlin and Rome, Habermas was forced to choose between these two political positions.

Gürel explores which issues Habermas sought to open for discussion when he returned to the historical connection between revolution and natural law, which Hegel discussed in depth in his *Philosophy of Law*. He also asks why the "tense relationship"⁴ between legality and legitimacy should be maintained so as to allow the rule of law

⁴ Ibid., 181.

(*Rechtsstaat*) to preserve an open and evolving character from the vantage point of our contemporary time. Gürel's contribution aims to provide an answer to such questions through the transformative processes of the constitutional state (*Verfassungsstaat*), and to outline a radical reform project able to combine the legitimacy of revolutionary understanding and the principle of legality of the rule of law, by rethinking the dialogue between Hegel and Habermas. Gürel addresses the alleged contradiction between liberalism and democracy in Hegel's *Elements of the Philosophy of Right* and Habermas's *Between Facts and Norms*, attempting to offer a solution by describing them as "internally related" and "mutually supporting"⁵ concepts. Gürel concedes that Habermas embraced the normative horizon of the Hegelian philosophy of right, but in a reticent manner. He argues that Max Weber's thesis that instrumental rationality, the distinguishing feature of modernity, creates an "iron cage" in bureaucratic capitalist societies lies at the heart of the Critical Theory tradition, and also affected Habermas. Nevertheless, and contrary to this pessimistic claim, Habermas sought to reintroduce the "essential" features of rationality; primarily as the capacity for political deliberation and practical reasoning power.

For Gürel, Habermas underlined that the Western Marxist tradition overlooked and even ignored the essential and inexhaustible dimension of rationality due to the influence of Weber and his follower Lukács. On the contrary, Habermas, as he endeavors to reconstruct the relationship between reason and revolution, will turn to Hegel's pioneering and normative theory of politics. Gürel states that Habermas then tried to overcome his initial hesitations and confusion regarding Western rationality by linking Europe to an ideal West that did not actually exist. This non-existent West is a utopia, an idealized depiction of Enlightenment Europe as a space of public deliberation and the rule of law. In conclusion, Gürel claims that the philosophical roots of the utopian understanding implicit in Habermas's philosophy of law and politics stems from the immanent critical framework of Hegel's philosophy.

In his article "(Left-)Hegelian Revision of Critical Theory: Axel Honneth and the Concept of Recognition," Volkan Çıdam examines how Honneth redefined and developed immanent critique, along with

⁵ Ibid., 182.

his theory of recognition. For Çıdam, the concept of recognition, which determines the content of criticism, represents a significant change in Honneth's critical theory, while immanent critique plays a decisive role in methodological terms. Honneth explored the problem of recognition in social contradictions in his book *The Struggle for Recognition*, where the concept first appeared as the basis of his critical theory. Honneth sought to grasp the dynamics of the transformation of institutional structures in his other major work, *The Law of Freedom*.

Çıdam maintains that in this later work Honneth successfully put into practice the continuation of the left-Hegelian tradition. Social struggles and areas of conflict, which were central issues in *The Struggle for Recognition*, became only important to the extent that they contributed to the analysis of social institutions, while the analysis of social freedom only allowed for an internal critique. This critique seeks an answer to the question of how appropriately the principles and ideals inherent in institutions are reflected in reality. Therefore, the horizon provided is reformist only, whereas the most important element of the left-Hegelian vision, whose beginnings lay mainly in Marx, was that the immanent critique of existing social institutions and practices allowed for a radical transformation. Such radical transformation does not emerge in Honneth's work.

In "Normativity, Recognition and Freedom in Contemporary American Hegelianism," Alper Türken outlines the main philosophical dynamics that motivated the "Hegelian turn" in the tradition of analytic philosophy and the new American Hegelians. He concentrates on the concepts of "normativity" and "recognition," which he believes form the central points of contemporary interest in Hegel.

Türken argues that two main tendencies are pivotal in the recent interpretations of Hegel: 1) taking Hegel's metaphysical stance wholly and reading him as more of a traditional-conservative thinker; 2) a selective adoption of Hegel's emphasis on concepts such as recognition, sociability, and freedom. Türken states that the second line of interpretation presents Hegel as a thinker conducive to certain contemporary ways of thinking. According to this line, freedom is generally thought of as respecting identities and preferences determined by relations of social recognition, and this opens the way for the realization of the demands of these identities and the ability of successful mutual recognition to achieve desired statuses. Türken argues that this type of interpretation is

not compatible with the historical Hegel, and it misses opportunities to adequately construct the concepts of subjectivity and freedom. In this respect, Türken explains and criticizes the Brandom-Pippin interpretation of Hegel and presents the basic tenets of a third line of interpretation, one he believes gives the historical Hegel his actual importance in contemporary frameworks.

For Türken, freedom and recognition are concepts that remain abstract and contentless unless they are based on an ontological framework. He interprets Hegel's ontology as based on the concept of true infinity and on remaining-oneself in the other. Türken claims that the founding elements of autonomy, freedom, and self emerge in this concept. He argues that Hegel's ontology is not a metaphysical understanding of the other side of the historical, i.e., the social. It is, instead, a reflection on the character of our existence. Türken states that we should start by asking who we are and what we want. Freedom, for Türken, depends on our answer to this question. Recognition of our answer to this question by other subjects is necessary for the realization of our freedom at the social level. If our answer is determined by social relations, then freedom does not exist. For Türken, Hegelian thought is libertarian, an ontology of freedom, not despite its metaphysical tendencies, but because of them. This understanding of freedom, which is based on the concept of "remaining-oneself" in the other, preserves its prevalence even today.

In the final piece, "Philosophy on Earth: Ethical Life and Cosmopolitanism in Şeyla Benhabib," Zeynep Savaşçın argues that Benhabib's philosophy problematizes the mutual demands and claims of the fields of law, politics, and ethics in today's societies and in contemporary thinking, bringing Kant's legacy of cosmopolitanism back to actuality from within a Hegelian tradition focused on the concept of ethical life. Benhabib explores the possibilities of the understanding by emphasizing the intersection between the three separate areas in Kant: a) the moral actions of individuals in the private sphere; b) the actions of citizens in their political and legal organizations; c) the actions of world citizens regarding their cosmopolitical existence.

For Savaşçın, Benhabib embraces the understanding of cosmopolitanism on a ground that saves the metaphysical duality in which it is embedded and allows thinking and making sense of the universal by returning it to the history in which it is embedded. She does this while keeping the inseparable link connecting individual freedom with the in-

stitutional structures of action and the world of meaning created in social interaction. For Savaşçın, Benhabib's embrace of these elements revives the understanding of ethical life in Hegel. It reveals hegemony; however, it does not sacrifice the reconciliation between Spirit and the history of Spirit.

As a concluding remark, I wish to note that this book is a distinguished work that helps readers to assess Critical Theory from a Hegelian perspective, and vice-versa, through well-conceptualized arguments and discussions about the political perspectives that influence our societies today. As such, it provides insights into the Hegelian movement in contemporary analytical philosophy and into American Neo-Hegelianism.

Shoshana Zuboff, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power*, New York: PublicAffairs, 2019, 704 pp., \$38, ISBN: 9781610395694

Pedro Pinheiro (Centre of Ethics, Politics and Society, University of Minho)

In *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power*, the American sociologist Shoshana Zuboff analyzes how our days confront the surreptitious control of human behavior and draws out the consequences of such control. Zuboff locates the current moment of surveillance capitalism in a wider segment of time: “the third modernity.” She argues that the development of modernity began two centuries ago with what she calls the “first modernity,” the time when life became “individualized” for great numbers of people as they separated from traditional norms, meanings, and rules.⁶ During the second half of the twentieth century, the history of individualization changed, thus marking the beginning of another phase: the “second modernity.” Zuboff writes, “democratic politics, distributional policies, access to education and health care, and strong civil society institutions complemented that wealth, a new ‘society of individuals’ first began to emerge.”⁷

Whereas the first modernity suppressed traditional cultures and communities, creating new collective solutions to replace the preceding ones, and simultaneously suppressed the expression and growth of the self as then known, the second modernity made the “self” all that exists. The second modernity was the moment in which the capitalism of indus-

⁶ Shoshana Zuboff, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2019), 34.

⁷ Ibid., 35.

trialization and mass production allowed each individual, in their singularity, to give a new meaning to terms like family, religion, sex, gender, morality, matrimony, community, etc. Finally, from that paradigm, we jump into the moment of the “third modernity,” in which digitalization merges with capitalism. Zuboff notes that this jump is not accomplished with neoliberalism, as we could easily – but wrongly – imagine. The “neoliberal turn” is a central moment of the second modernity, as the societal focus was completely transferred from the masses to the individual. Zuboff argues that during the 1970s, socio-economic inequalities in Western society were unveiled because of events like the US financial crisis, the Watergate scandal, and the increase in government corruption. Such events made it necessary to accept neoliberal policies. Consequently, citizens’ existential possibilities were circumscribed by the cult of the competitive entrepreneur.

The third modernity, in which Zuboff argues we are currently living, is defined by the conjugation of capitalism with the digitalization of the world. The third modernity is the step into a digital world where capitalism persists, but not as we would typically understand it. Contemporary economies are based on surveillance capitalism, thanks to the digital, and Zuboff describes not only the lineaments of this situation, but also how it came to be. Advertising played a very important role in the first phase of surveillance capitalism. It was the heart and lungs of the digitalization organism. With the passage of time and the growth of the internet marking a new dimension of our social dynamics, user profiles started being created out of the search history in a given search engine. All the data included in search histories and clicks around the web were to be used exclusively for developing the capabilities of websites like Google. Instead, they were used to improve marketing targeting.

In what way does this represent a problematic turn? Zuboff argues that Google’s economic model doesn’t consider users as clients, or even products. Without even knowing or noticing it, users are “the sources of surveillance capitalism’s crucial surplus: the objects of a technologically advanced and increasingly inescapable raw-material-extraction operation.”⁸ Like the colonial economies of the Americas in the nineteenth century, Google’s policy favors the digital expropriation of users’ be-

⁸ Ibid., 10.

havior. In this new digital world, it is impossible to answer three questions: who knows? Who decides? Who decides who decides? Users become the source of surveillance capitalism by consenting to a contract that is a non-contract. In response to this situation, the author promotes the need for regulation in this uncivilized and anti-democratic field.

Exceptional circumstances offer the best opportunities for surveillance capitalism to conquer and build users' blind consent. Zuboff explains that relations between the Pentagon and Google grew closer after 9/11, when the government wanted security more than privacy. Additionally, reading Zuboff's argument in the aftermath of the measures against the Covid-19 pandemic (like telework that erodes the frontier between the domestic and work realms) helps one to understand the debate regarding security and privacy and to see the pros and cons of each side.

The expropriation of behavior is not exclusive to the internet. Many Western homes are now "intelligent houses," based on the expropriation of behavior data: Smart TVs can hear and see, apartments built by Amazon have Dot microphones that listen to conversations and teach "Alexa" how to speak, intelligent vacuum cleaners share the plan of the house with their manufacturer, etc. The rise of such new digital technologies, which are not exclusive to the home but begin to infiltrate all areas of our lives and society, work towards the new goal of the third stage of capitalism: "acquire ever-more-predictive sources of behavioral surplus: our voices, personalities, and emotions."⁹

Zuboff conceptualizes the power of surveillance capitalism on its own, as she considers it distinct from power wielded by the twentieth century's totalitarian Western governments. This new form of power, which she terms "instrumentarian power," is surprisingly the antithesis of George Orwell's 1984 "Big Brother." This type of power reduces human experience to measurable behaviors and aims to process, render, calculate, scan and control all behaviors: "the instrumentation and instrumentalization of behavior for the purposes of modification, prediction, monetization, and control."¹⁰ Instrumentarian power doesn't want to oppress people like totalitarian power did, but instead wants people to talk freely – as long as it can scan their dialogue. It's obvious that if we

⁹ Ibid., 11.

¹⁰ Ibid., 352.

inhabit a world where every expression is scanned, we are all “living in glass houses.” Consequently, Orwell’s “Big Brother” is replaced by the “Big Other.”¹¹ Instead of having a Big Brother appraising one’s behavior, glass houses allow one to be observed by all the others that form the Big Other. In other words, it replaces “the engineering of souls with the engineering of behavior.”¹²

Zuboff notices that we now face a philosophical problem: the end of the self. That is, the abolition of all parts once human behavior is rendered in machines that are one machine, since all machines are synchronized. Against this background, Zuboff demonstrates the singularity of twenty-first century surveillance capitalism, which differs from the capitalism theorized by Adam Smith in the eighteenth century and even the capitalism described by Friedrich Hayek during the second half of the twentieth century.

Living in glass houses (a metaphor that Yevgeny Zamyatin exploits in his novel *We*, to which Shoshana makes no reference) causes us to run to cover up and hide from our own lives. That is the new need of humankind, since the outlaw digital machine impedes our escape from hive dynamics. We are free, but under surveillance. Zuboff argues that laws and regulations are needed to stop the growth of the anti-democratic threat that surveillance capitalism represents. The absolute knowledge of citizens’ behaviors by corporations with private interests enhances inequality and increases social injustice. Perhaps, democratic institutions can decelerate the controlling capital and reduce quantitatively the instrumentarian power. In my opinion, Zuboff’s proposal is not enough. It is important to understand that change is happening not only on a global scale, but also on an intimate one. I propose studying this issue from a structuralist and subjective perspective.

Zuboff argues that surveillance capitalism destroys privacy. This means that there is no space for secrets, as there is no space for non-visibility. To be alone is an important requirement for creating divergent thinking, for not being influenced by the community, but being alone is impossible since there is no space for non-visibility. Even our silence is observable and quantifiable by instrumentarian power. I argue that, con-

¹¹ Ibid., 376.

¹² Ibid., 374.

sidering the dangers of being alone or of loneliness (which is serious and can kill), we must get away from the “Big Other” by trying to develop an encrypted language. New types of language and communication, new small-scale community languages and expressions can be created away from digital sensors. The ability to create and communicate such creations is the first step in opening the difficult conditions for freedom, as freedom is the possibility of escaping from extraction and prediction. It is also a way to avoid the loneliness in which the digital world subversively puts human beings. Briefly, encrypted language is the way to the survival of the self. In addition to the need for structural reforms (constitutional changes) that promote equality and democratic regulations, human beings would keep alive the possibility of freedom through the creation of languages that act in conflict with the “Big Other” and make use of the ignorance of the latter to restore the self.

Luca M. Possati, *Software as Hermeneutics: A Philosophical and Historical study*, London: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2022, 193 pp., £87.50, ISBN: 9783030636104

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Luca M. Possati's book *Software as Hermeneutics: A Philosophical and Historical Study* attempts to shed light on one of the most widespread artifacts humans have ever invented. In fact, the ubiquity of software requires not light as such; it is the kind of light that matters. Possati's book is both philosophical and historical but, even more interestingly, it is also post-phenomenological and critical; or, put differently, hermeneutical. The study takes its place as a work of philosophy of technology, though it is not technology related to machines; it has to do with artifacts and especially those found everywhere, which usually hide their very nature: writing and software as a kind of writing. Indeed, one of Possati's main theses is that software is a text.¹³ But before focusing on the main arguments, let us try to grasp the book's angle on the philosophy of technology.

Possati, a researcher and lecturer at the University of Porto in Portugal, maintains that the most fruitful approach to software is post-phenomenological, an approach that combines aspects of Husserl's thought with aspects of American pragmatism and offers "a particular mode of science-technology interpretation,"¹⁴ one that takes science and technology to be fundamental mediations between the human being and the world. Post-phenomenology makes the techno-scientific mediation between humans and their world indispensable in two senses: first, there is no direct subject-object (human-world) relation, but rather an always mediated human-technology-world relation; and, secondly, this techno-

¹³ Luca M. Possati, *Software as Hermeneutics: A Philosophical and Historical Study* (London: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2022), 7.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 67.

scientific mediation actually constitutes both the subject and the object. As Possati puts it, “intentionality is not a bridge between subject and object, but rather a fountain from which both of them emerge.”¹⁵ To account for the dual nature of techno-science as both constraining and opening up possibilities, post-phenomenologists introduce the notion of “multi-stability,” which states that technologies gain new interpretations in different contexts, a notion that Ihde, the founder of post-phenomenology, credits to Heidegger’s initial conception that “an instrument is what it does, and this in a context of assignments.”¹⁶ However, in general, post-phenomenology is far from accepting the general techno-pessimism of Heidegger, for whom the new world of technology poses grave and insurmountable dangers for the authenticity of human living; instead, it opens up the possibility of a relational ontology mediated by an indispensable technology. One could say that post-phenomenology’s acceptance of the inevitability of technology leaves behind the techno-optimism/techno-pessimism dichotomy for a more honest approach to our relationship with technology. It is in this spirit that Possati approaches the phenomenon of software in the present book.

Although present everywhere, software is still not generally well defined. Possati claims that software is a complex thing that cannot be casually defined simply as the immaterial part of the computer – with hardware as the material side. The basic reason is that software also has a material side, since it uses written algorithms. But the nature of software is not confined to an algorithm. Actually, Possati claims that software is “a specific entity defined by (a) a problem, (b) an algorithm (logic + control) and (c) a code (a formal language).”¹⁷ At an ontological level, these characteristics are fundamental for software and exhibit a complex unity. But there are other aspects that Possati also captures, built upon the fundamental characteristics that make software unique in relation to other technologies in its phenomenological break between lived digital experience and the code that enables it. Software is not just a tool but rather an entire culture;¹⁸ it is a living organism that lives be-

¹⁵ Ibid., 68.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid., 48.

¹⁸ Ibid., 43.

yond its implementation and has an artistic dimension.¹⁹ All these aspects are captured best by the book's main thesis that software is basically a text.

Possati follows Paul Ricoeur's definition of the text as written discourse in which the forces of distancing and appropriation operate dialectically. Narrative is another important concept for Ricoeur, one that mediates between human reality and the text. Possati distinguishes three basic steps in Ricoeur's textual hermeneutics: the pre-understanding of the world of action, the emplotment or configuration of the text, and lastly the effects of the text on human experience and the human world.²⁰ Possati further summarizes these three phases as prefiguration/configuration/reconfiguration²¹ which form a hermeneutic circle, even a spiral, that "would carry the mediation past the same point a number of times, but at different altitudes,"²² as Ricoeur says. Possati claims that software, which mediates between concrete problem solving in the human world (prefiguration) and the action of the machine that instantiates the software (reconfiguration), exhibits Ricoeurian distancing. That has the effect of placing software in the realm of pure writing,²³ as it occurs in different layers,²⁴ uniting them towards greater abstraction. Software is a procedure of writing and re-writing that corresponds to the level of configuration in Ricoeur's scheme, with the difference being that its configuration takes place in both the user and the machine (and not just in the reader). But this difference is an extension of Ricoeurian hermeneutics.²⁵ In configuration, reflective judgment in the Kantian sense, about which more will be said below, plays a central role for both the classic Ricoeurian text and software. We are thus led to a reconfiguration that happens when the machine, acting upon software instructions, translated to the appropriate machine language narrative, finally acts on the human world, creating new meaning. We arrive at a new hermeneutic circle – analogous to the Ricoeurian one – summarized

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 44.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 71.

²¹ *Ibid.*; see figure 3.1.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*, 76.

²⁴ *Ibid.*; see table 3.2.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 77.

in figure 3.2.²⁶ The software reconfiguration is more pervasive in terms of its effects on the human users of technology than other technological effects categorized and studied in post-phenomenological research.

There are two further points that I would like to stress regarding Possati's thought-provoking book. First is his attempt to address the main claim that software is a type of writing, more precisely a type of pure writing.²⁷ In a thorough historical analysis of writing as technology, Possati uses both anthropological and philosophical sources to show that software can be perceived as an extension of the materiality of writing, in particular as the culmination and apogee of the symbolic revolution that took place in the development of mathematical language, primarily in the work of Descartes. Writing is indeed shown to be a material technology that revolutionized human civilization. Socrates offered a critique of it in the Platonic dialogue, *Phaedrus*; a further development with important consequences, when writing became mechanized, was the invention of typography. Finally, through the symbolic writing of mathematics, we come to software which "*must eliminate ... meaning and reduce itself to a pure process of writing and rewriting – a circulation and transformation of electrical signals*. From this point of view, software takes the revolution begun by Descartes to its extreme consequences."²⁸ The second point worth stressing is the notion of a digital reflective judgment introduced in chapter 5. Reflective judgment is a Kantian concept that "presupposes a particular individual or narrower concept and advances from it toward a universal or more general concept."²⁹ Aesthetic and teleological judgments are typical examples of reflective judgment. A common characteristic of reflective judgment is the a priori transcendental principle of finality.³⁰ Possati claims that software acts as a digital reflective judgment because it confronts a particular problem that is then subsumed under a higher-order principle. This is possible through the imagination of the programmer, who provides a solution to a real-world problem through acts of comparison, reflection and abstraction. The graphic materiality of written software plays a cru-

²⁶ Ibid., 79.

²⁷ Ibid., 76.

²⁸ Ibid., 139; emphasis in the original.

²⁹ Ibid., 146.

³⁰ Ibid., 148.

cial role in grounding the need for design, and this also gives rise to a feeling of delight, which points to the principle of finality.³¹

In the final chapter, Possati situates his research in the broader context of the newly established field of critical code studies. For Possati, critical code thinking aims to analyze biases and to use the narrative turn in post-phenomenological studies to understand the narrative that software tells us about society and the times we live in. The narrative turn tries to reconcile post-phenomenology with Heidegger's thought, especially by incorporating the element of time, but also through analyzing social elements and adopting a more critical stance towards the conception of subjectivity used by post-phenomenology. Possati claims that "software has put an end to one phase of capitalism and opened the doors to an entirely new post-capitalist society based on sharing goods, as demonstrated by the phenomenon of open source. Therefore, software represents the most powerful, but also the most dangerous, tool for capitalism."³²

Possati's book is a demanding, well-grounded study that draws from many and various sources to address one of the most important, ubiquitous and interesting entities of our new digital era; software. It explores new, involving and above all fruitful and promising paths in the philosophy of technology, particularly in the philosophy of software seen from a continental perspective. It is basic reading for anyone interested in the future of continental philosophy in the age of digitalization and in the post-Fordist, capitalist, information-based societies of our present and future.

³¹ Ibid., 170.

³² Ibid., 188.

Raffaele Pisano, Joseph Agassi, and Daria Drozdova, *Hypotheses and Perspectives in the History and Philosophy of Science: Homage to Alexandre Koyré 1892-1964*, New York: Springer International Publishing, 2017, 482 pp., £109.99, ISBN: 9783319617121

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Alexander Koyré is at the center of the 21 papers included in this work, from which several interconnecting and overlapping key understandings emerge. The introduction suggests four different angles of study:

- 1) The occasion, starting from Koyré's intellectual background, for an interdisciplinary reflection on the philosophical history of science
- 2) An interlacing of the history of scientific, epistemological and philosophical thought
- 3) The main concept of the scientific revolution and the birth of modern science
- 4) An analysis of historical epistemology and philosophical categories of investigations

In this review, I would like to reduce them to three, although keeping them close to the ones proposed by the editors with extra emphasis on the phenomenological inheritance in Koyré. In the first instance, the book can be seen as a historical examination of the "history of science" as a discipline. Koyré takes center stage as the father of the new historiography by leading the philosophical enterprise from the legacy of Sartre and Duhem to the post-Kuhnian tradition. Second, the collection is a study of the scientific breakthrough of modern philosophy through the analysis of major figures such as Galileo, Descartes, Copernicus, Pascal and Kepler. Here, some charges of one-sidedness or obsolescence (specifically regarding the debate on Galileo) are applied to Koyré. Finally, the text offers insight into the Göttingen Circle and the beginnings of the phenomenological movement. As a student of Husserl, Koyré found himself not only strongly influenced but also personally involved in the dramatic debate triggered by the "transcendental turn." My review will be structured according to these three reading keys.

From the old to the new historiography of science

J. C. Pinto de Oliveira and Amelia J. Oliveira introduced Sarton in a quite original and indirect comparison with Thomas Kuhn to underline the main differences between the old and new historiographies. They recognize the founder of the history of science as a Whig thinker. Sarton saw the *gradual* conquest of objective truth as playing a major role in the overcoming of violence, intolerance, error and superstition. In a most Baconian and positive fashion, rationalism and experimentalism are then underlined in Sarton as the real engines of scientific development. On the other side, the new historiography (and Kuhn here recognizes Koyré's legacy) "viewed these 'prejudices' or 'points of view' and 'principles' or 'conceptual frameworks', not as impediments but as essential to the development of science."³³

Agassi revises the mentioned experimentalist and gradualist ideas by introducing the main feature of Koyré's thinking, namely the role of trans-scientific concepts for the possibility of the scientific enterprise. Moving away from the Baconian inheritance on one side and the Duhemian idea of continuous development on the other, Koyré introduced qualitative changes and "showed the relevance of both theology and metaphysics to the scientific revolution."³⁴ For the author of the *Etudes galiléennes*, it is effectively within space, intended as a "complex network of trans-scientific ideas such as philosophical, metaphysical and also religious ones,"³⁵ where human thought reveals its unity and interconnection. Following Koyré, once errors, *Idola* and metaphysics are set aside, not much remains to explain scientific dynamics. Drago states this clearly when he considers that this feature, the introduction of the historical (regarding contextual time), cultural and philosophical/metaphysical context, is what enabled Koyré to overcome traditional history more than any subsequent historians.³⁶

The contextualization of the debate, the introduction of the conti-

³³ Raffaele Pisano, Joseph Agassi, and Daria Drozdova, *Hypotheses and Perspectives in the History and Philosophy of Science: Homage to Alexandre Koyré 1892-1964* (New York: Springer International Publishing, 2017), 290.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 7.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 19.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 124.

nuity/discontinuity dichotomy and the role of external ideas as relevant factors for theoretical improvement, are the parts of Koyré's legacy that most influenced Kuhn to develop his dynamic of scientific development. All of his best-known conceptual tools, such as "community," "normal/revolutionary science," "problem solving" and "paradigm shift," can be seen as an attempt to encompass the entire previous debate within the discipline. Schuster suggests that the originality of the author of *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* was to make visible a model and a dynamic that was hidden within Koyré's textual analysis. However, at the very core of his paper, he shows how Kuhn's sociological and psychological position goes beyond the two historians. Indeed, several authors discuss Koyré's internalist position and its strong rejection of social dynamics as possible explanations for the emergence of the modern revolution. Strongly critical of the Marxist approach and Edgar Zilsel's position, Koyré was more prone to state that "the sociological 'why' explains the 'necessary conditions,' [while] the theoretical or metaphysical 'why' explains the 'sufficient conditions'."³⁷ The rejection of any social context seems the blind spot of Koyré's history of science; it was something which, on the contrary, Kuhn never overlooked. Raven gives us a better insight into this idea by showing us how the elements of the dichotomies, such as theoretical/experimental or theory/practice, reflect two different socio-cultural spheres, respectively the scholars' and the artisans' conception of knowledge. Neither of the two seemed able to develop modernity without a mutual confluence which, according to Raven, was possible at an institutional level.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that Ferrari offers an interesting parallel between Koyré and Cassirer. He underlines how they independently embraced and discussed remarkably close ideas such as "scientific revolution" and the active role of philosophy in its origins and development, although starting from different traditions (phenomenological in the former and neo-Kantian in the latter). The author regrets that Cassirer's position never received appropriate recognition from the historians of science. His being part of a fading neo-Kantian tradition is proposed as one possible reason for the eclipse of his insights.

³⁷ Ibid., 55.

Koyré's methodology and the role of trans-scientific Ideas in modern Science

Koyré's methodology was based on a deep analysis, which we might call hermeneutical, of original sources and it strived to understand the network of ideas that led to the emergence of the modern scientific enterprise. His work illustrates a huge range of philosophical, metaphysical and religious concepts directly linked with scientific development. The authors in this collection name them "trans-scientific ideas." The papers agree on the main features introduced by Koyré when referring to his idea of scientific revolution. Drozdova unfolds them in four different overlapping concepts: the mathematization of nature; the geometrization of space; the transition from the world of more or less to the universe of precision; and moving from the closed world to the open universe. Koyré highlighted these as the key new attitudes which, external to purely experimental research and discoveries, opened up the possibility of modern scientific development.

Galileo was the key figure of Koyré's study. His quoting of the well-known statement that the book of nature is written in "the language of mathematics" is considered one of the main proofs of an underlying Platonism within the work of the author of the *Discorsi*. In this sense, Koyré's approach shows an outstanding similarity with Husserl's *Krisis*, which I will refer to later in the review. The main idea is that the overlaying of a metaphysical construction on the physical cosmos allows Galileo to trigger the new conception of science intended as an everlasting mastery of nature. Koyré held such a belief to the detriment of the experimentalist approach. By analyzing the biographical and theoretical facts behind Galileo's leaning tower of Pisa Experiment, Crapanzano states that Koyré's disproving of the experiment "is indeed functional to the affirming of [his] perspective on the genesis of scientific theories."³⁸ A similar concept is underlined by Gaukroger when he affirms that Koyré, by drawing attention to the metaphysical dimension of scientific question, effectively translated the latter into the former.³⁹ A critique of the one-sidedness of Koyré's work is thus visibly present over the col-

³⁸ Ibid., 82.

³⁹ Ibid., 179.

lection. However, De Caro argues that such a criticism cannot only be applied to Koyré but must also be discussed in relation to Galileo and the several later interpretations in Platonist, Aristotelian and Archimedean terms. He is more prone to treat as obsolete the “debate on the prevailing philosophical underpinnings of the Scientific Revolution.”⁴⁰ Finally, it is Jorland who defends Koyré’s position when he affirms that “he could not mean that Galileo was a self-conscious follower of Plato, but rather that, willy-nilly, what he achieved was the accomplishment of Platonism.”⁴¹

Descartes is Koyré’s second source on the path to the already mentioned mathematization/geometrization of nature, which was one of the main features of the Scientific Revolution of the seventeenth century. Just as in the case study of Galileo’s interpretation above, Gaukroger affirms that Koyré’s reduction to the metaphysical was a major cause for overlooking the real reason behind Descartes’ refusal of the void. As Gaukroger says, “Koyré assumes that what motivates Descartes’ rejection of the idea [...] are *a priori* epistemological and metaphysical arguments about the void deriving from Aristotle and the Stoics.”⁴² Consequently, “he misses [...] one of the most significant conceptual parting of ways in the seventeenth-century physical theory: the rift between hydrostatic/statical models for dynamic and kinematic ones.”⁴³ Hartz and Lewtas devote a chapter to Descartes’ trans-scientific idea of theological voluntarism, namely the idea that God will determine both normative and contradictory aspects of reality which are independent of God’s own thought, and ask whether it represents a coherent argument within his philosophy. They agree with Koyré that “voluntarism undermines the major arguments (including the cogito) in the *Meditations* by making them logically or normatively circular.”⁴⁴ On the other hand, they part from the historian when he affirms that Descartes abandoned the idea toward the end of his life, in order to protect his philosophical system. A position that, according to the authors, he never rejected.

Koyré gave a lot of importance to astronomical studies and their

⁴⁰ Ibid., 85-86.

⁴¹ Ibid., 220-221.

⁴² Ibid., 183.

⁴³ Ibid., 187.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 189.

authors. A particular interest was the study of Kepler. The collection refers especially to two trans-scientific concepts that, following Koyré, affected the astronomer's work both positively and negatively: the harmony of the spheres and the belief in a finite universe. Lombardi reveals how in his 1961 book *La révolution astronomique*, Koyré asks himself if it is plausible that Kepler arrived at his "Third Law" only by "trial and error."⁴⁵ Not being convinced by a purely accidental discovery, he turns to the astronomer's classical background and spots a key role played by the scientist's contemporaneous musical interests. Koyré was a pioneer in giving "importance to the discipline of music as a key to understanding some crucial passages in the Scientific Revolution of the seventeenth century."⁴⁶ Pisano and Bussotti offer insight into how a second metaphysical belief stopped Kepler from believing in an infinite universe, the main feature of Koyré's explanation regarding the possibility of the scientific revolution. The historian asserted that Kepler's universe is linked to several Aristotelian concepts which effectively prevent it from moving beyond the concept of finitude. However, the authors assert that Koyré gave too much importance to Kepler's classical background and that such trans-scientific ideas still stand within the corpus of the interpretations of the astronomical revolution.

Descotes finally brings to readers Koyré's few references to Pascal's thought. The papers devoted to the French philosopher recall a critique of experimentalism that was already mentioned in relation to Galileo's leaning tower experiment. Koyré argues that Pascal's Rouen experiments, dedicated to the discovery of the vacuum, are far from clear: something seems concealed from us. In his opinion, it was performed and described only to "prepare the reader to admit the physical theories."⁴⁷ Koyré's argument regarding Pascal can be criticized, nevertheless, he is credited with having first perceived the active role of rhetoric and persuasion within the philosophical enterprise.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 234.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 225.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 120.

Phenomenological background in Koyré's life and thought

The collection often refers to the weight of his phenomenological formation in Koyré's lifeworld, and Parker gives us the best insight into the matter by reviewing the primary sources and debate. Where biography is concerned, the authors tend to focus or simply mention the relationship with Husserl and Koyré's departure for Paris after the founder of phenomenology decided not to accept his thesis on paradoxes. Starting from a more philosophical perspective, the author argues that Koyré's work (despite his not being conscious of the weight of any phenomenological background) "can (and perhaps ought to) be read as an extension of Husserl's project, specifically the historical–teleological way into phenomenology that Husserl sketched in his *Crisis* writings from the 1930s."⁴⁸ Further theoretical analysis of Koyré's thought might be necessary to verify such a thesis. Sticking with the collection, we can sketch two possible points regarding Koyré's similarities with Husserl's last work, the *Krisis*:

1. Stoffel, in his analysis of the anthropological consequences of the Copernican Revolution, recognizes as part of Koyré's legacy the critical insight regarding the divorce between the "world of science" and the "world of life." A position that directly recalls Husserl's *Krisis* and the forgotten "lifeworld." My view is that the concept of the "lifeworld," as a pre-given and pre-reflective everyday world, fits that complex network of trans-scientific ideas already mentioned and which might relate Koyré to a more hermeneutical phenomenology.

2. The second similarity relates to the concept of the "mathematization of Nature," which lies at the very core of Koyré's Galilean studies and is also a quite familiar concept of Husserl's *Krisis*. The ideas overlap so strikingly that it makes it very difficult not to accept a kind of mutual influence.

Further parentheses must be opened regarding Koyré's period in Paris. He is sometimes mentioned as an indirect contributor to phenomenology, which at the time strongly merged with Heidegger's thought. Yampolskaya mentions, however, that "Koyré's affiliation to the [French] phenomenological movement is debatable, his thought owes much to Husserl's phe-

⁴⁸ Ibid., 246.

nomenological method.”⁴⁹ According to her, links are made to phenomenological thinkers such as Levinas and Henry.

A final discussion concerns the debate whether a Hegelian interpretation of Koyré is necessary. The collection gives us four different references to this topic. While Braverman suggests that the Hegelian dialectic stands behind Koyré’s analysis of mistakes,⁵⁰ Agassi is more prone to accept the idea of a Platonic dialectic, directly criticizing Stump’s assertion that the label of “Hegelian” is more appropriate when speaking of Koyré’s work.⁵¹ A different analysis must be opened regarding the possible involvement of Koyré (either directly or indirectly) in contributing to the Hegelian influence on the development of French phenomenology. Far from giving an extensive analysis, the collection offers two opposite interpretations by Parker and Yampolskaya. While the former asserts that the compenetration of the two philosophies seems more the doing of Kojève, who in 1933 took over Koyré’s course,⁵² the latter rejects the idea by affirming that “it was indeed Alexandre Koyré who was responsible not only for the anthropological but also for the neo-Hegelian twist in early French phenomenology.”⁵³

Supplying a final word on the debate included in the collection is not part of the plan of this review, which is only interested in highlighting some emerging concepts for possible further development. Following the editors’ suggestions, I have tried to develop three reading angles (which are far from being exhaustive) to help anyone interested in the work to gain a homogeneous view that is far from the nature of a collection.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 453.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 25.

⁵¹ Ibid., 15.

⁵² Ibid., 265.

⁵³ Ibid., 455.

Irene Binini, *Possibility and Necessity in the Time of Peter Abelard*, Leiden: Brill, 2021, 326 pp., €138, ISBN: 9789004470286

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Peter Abelard never ceases to be a fascinating thinker, one whose crucial ideas and innovative solutions have been brought to light and brilliantly analyzed by scholars after a long oblivion. Irene Binini's *Possibility and Necessity in the Time of Peter Abelard* enriches the academic landscape with a synthesis of *Doctor Palatinus'* logics, presenting the thesis – already anticipated in some of Binini's recent essays – that Abelard's reflection on modals should be seen within the frame of the widespread interest in logical notions and their metaphysical and theological applications at the beginning of the twelfth century.

The outstanding elements of Abelard's theory are meticulously traced using the analytical techniques, typical of Anglo-American philosophy, already adopted – to remain in the sphere of the most conspicuous sources of Binini's study – by John Marenbon, Christopher Martin and Massimo Mugnai, employing historiographical methodology capable of focusing on the examined object without anachronisms. The reading of still unpublished sources also allows the author to place Abelard's peculiar theses in the context of the first half of the twelfth century, a period characterized by crucial changes in the logical curriculum, including the progressive dropping of sources that had been influential between the eighth and tenth centuries and which focused on translations of and commentaries on Aristotle's *Organon* and Boethius' logical works.

In the first of the three parts of her study, Binini clarifies terms, methods of analysis and sources shared between Abelard's logical works and a selection of anonymous treatises from the first half of the twelfth century – still being transcribed, edited and cataloged – whose presentation constitutes one of the most interesting elements and scholarly merits of this volume. The essays under analysis, preserved, with a few exceptions, as unique copies, form a part of collections of logical works preserved in manuscripts from prestigious libraries all over Europe. Sub-

stantial uncertainties concerning authorship, dating and circulation result from a composition to which different authors may have contributed at different times. Despite the reference to contemporary masters such as William of Champeaux, Alberic of Reims, Gausleno of Soissons and Abelard himself, notions of authorship and textual identity are not always applicable to them.

Theological debates on divine omnipotence and omniscience, developed by Anselm of Aosta and William of Champeaux through a dialectical and analytical approach focused on the definition and examination of the logical notions of necessity and possibility, show that most of the instances in Abelard's work, as well as some of the theses traditionally regarded as his innovations, were already known and used in contemporary sources. Nevertheless, if the distinction between semantic and grammatical structure and that between the interpretation of the modal terms *de sensu* (i.e. as a nominal predicate of the meaning of the relevant categorical proposition) and *de re* (i.e. as an adverb qualifying the inherence of the predicate in the subject) already appear in the sources of the time, Abelard appears to be the first to offer a systematic analysis of the existential implications and interaction of modal operators with other logical connectives, such as quantifiers and temporal markers, and to construct an organic theory of the conversion of modal propositions and their related syllogistics. The presentation – including useful graphics and schemes – of the system of relations of opposition, equipollence, conversion and inference between possible, impossible and necessary propositions is intended to show how Abelard conceives his modal logic as an extension of the logic of categorical propositions into a unitary system capable of applying the same principles to all utterances. While Abelard's modal thought has often been presented as an intersection of paradigms difficult to compose, Binini emphasizes the coherence of *Doctor Palatinus'* logic with the gnoseological doctrine of *De Intellectibus*. Indeed, the domain of the intelligible is defined by the faculty of knowing an entity from discerning the properties that constitute its nature. Abelard's peculiar position on universals, whereby only particular substances exist, is thus consistent with an ontological foundation of modals in the actual order of the world, from which counterfactual states of affairs are excluded. Indeed, the second half of the volume is dedicated to Abelard's definition of possibility and necessity in relation to the concept of "natura rerum," whereby that which is possible is not

incompatible with the nature of a thing and that which is necessary is implied or required by that nature. A large part of *Doctor Palatinus'* interest is directed to the analysis of puzzling cases in the twelfth century – such as unrealized possibilities or those attributed to non-entities and future things – with logical tools that take the debate of the time to a new level of sophistication. Binini thus notes the conspicuous differences between twelfth century logicians who define the truth conditions of modal propositions, appealing to alternative possible worlds, and Abelard's modal theory, which holds that the truth conditions of modal notions depend on the specific nature of currently existing entities.

The study concludes with a detailed examination – already undertaken in recent publications by Binini – of the refutation of the determinist argument that divine foreknowledge excludes the contingency of the future. Binini highlights the analytical tools by which Abelard, in the *Dialectica* and *Logica Ingredientibus*, evades the enigma of theological determinism from a perspective whose purely logical character may leave the reader dissatisfied. As noted elsewhere by the author, the defense of contingency as non-repugnancy with subject-specific powers doesn't remove suspicions about the necessitating character of individual accidents and external circumstances in the determination of a state of affairs. However, a discussion of the supposed fatalism in mature works, such as the *Theologia Scholarium*, probably due to dramatic biographical events chronicled in the *Historia Calamitatum*, remains excluded from the scope of this volume.

If Binini's lengthy study manages to bring the thought, culture and debates of a long vanished age to life, it's to her credit to outline the developments that this text imposes on research. Indeed, the claims about the logical treatises of the early twelfth century cannot be regarded as conclusive and must await their full transcription, publication and analysis. Moreover, the author imagines similar work that would inquire into the persistence of Abelardian elements in later modal logic, in a context deeply changed by the rediscovery of the *Prior Analytics* and the modal theories in Aristotle's *Physics* and *Metaphysics*.

II. ASPIRATION CORNER

Socrates and Tragedy in respect to irony

Evangelos Kalfopoulos (University of Sofia)

Abstract: The purpose of the article is to provide a genealogical account of philosophical irony. To do that we point to possible connections between the first philosophical usage of irony in Socrates and tragic irony as exemplified in dramatic poetry. In doing so, we examine these practices as performances and we point to a possible prototypical irony based on the cult of Dionysus. We also consider Nietzsche's critique of Socrates concerning Greek tragedy, but we argue that instead of taking Socrates as the destroyer of tragedy we might view him as the philosopher that tried to salvage an ironic and more traditional view of life, in a time of a rapid advancement of reason.

Keywords: Philosophical irony, Socrates, Nietzsche, Tragedy, Dionysus

1. Introduction

The main purpose of this article is to provide a way of thinking Socratic irony in its contemporary context, namely that of tragedy, and to examine the relationship, if any, between Socratic and tragic irony. Our claim is that such a connection is existent and indeed points to another notion of tragic irony, one that we could call *ur-ironie* or prototypical irony, that can be found in the Dionysian rituals and the myths of the God; this irony was represented as tragic irony by the tragedians and, in an epoch when reason appeared to make bold claims as an exegetical power, Socrates represented the same irony through his everyday philosophical, oral encounters in the streets of Athens. In this respect the article presents a genealogy of philosophical irony that ultimately rests in a prototypical irony of religious, Dionysian myth.

The genealogical method which we will employ in our survey of the philosophical concept of irony has an obvious diachronical part, since we need to move through time, speaking about potential predecessors of the philosophical version of irony and carve out a plausible historical explanation of the concept which will also highlight its philoso-

phical importance. But it also has, in contrast to the commonsensical view of genealogy as a historical exercise¹, a synchronic part: a part that will highlight the reasons the concept was employed at the time and the fashion in which it was employed. Nevertheless, in the present article we will exclusively focus on the diachronical part.

In discussing the philosophical use of irony one cannot argue against Socrates and his method as the obvious starting point. All the ancient sources, both Greek and Latin, agree on this point² and we shall also be taking Socrates as the initiator of the use of irony in philosophy. But who is Socrates? There is a classic problem about the historical figure of Socrates, who did not leave us any written work and can only be disentangled with difficulty, if at all, from the writers that made him into a literary persona, above all Plato. Recent scholarship tends to distinguish between platonic dialogues of the earlier, middle and later period, with the first ones to be taken as exemplifying Socrates' original ideas while the two latter periods are using Socrates as a mouthpiece for Plato's own ideas.³

Our method has nothing to offer to this longstanding debate about historical Socrates and perhaps has few things to gain as well, so we will generally follow Nehamas' view that "Socrates' ironic gaze is turned

¹ Genealogy is taken in its Foucauldian and Nietzschean formulation as being opposed to origin and rather tracing the various ramifications and even non-events in the history of a concept. Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History". In *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977).

² In general, it is considered that we have four reliable ancient sources about Socrates as a historical figure, namely Xenophon, Plato, Aristotle and Aristophanes (W.K.C. Guthrie, *Socrates*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971, pp 13-39). Vlastos (Gregory Vlastos, *Socrates: ironist and moral philosopher*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) and Nehamas (Alexander Nehamas, *The Art of Living: Socratic reflections from Plato to Foucault*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996) also refer to Cicero and Quintillian as two Latin authors that have ascribed the notion of "ironia" to the traditional western perception of Socrates.

³ Vlastos, *Socrates: ironist and moral philosopher*, pp. 46-47. For the opposite view see Charles H. Kahn, *Plato and the Socratic Dialogue: The philosophical use of a literary form* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

toward [...] his interpreters as well⁴ and will generally take the interpretations offered of his irony as milestones for this metaphilosophical concept. But in this article we will try to look to the times before Socrates and will try to find affinities of his philosophical irony with other types of irony that might have existed before him. It is our hypothesis that such a device existed before in other forms of verbal and even non-verbal manifestations, from the cult of Dionysus through ancient drama and even to philosophers such as Heraclitus, to be unnoticed by Socrates who used it in his dialogic exchanges with others and who gave irony a distinctive philosophical flavor. Taking the threefold of tragedy, Socratic oral discussion, and platonic dialogue as performative acts, we will try to show that irony is exemplified in all three due to their construction and ultimately to their genealogy.

2. Irony of Socrates and Tragedy

We will start the discussion of the threefold of tragedy, Socratic oral discussions and platonic dialogues with the obvious remark that in all three we are interested in verbal irony and not the situational kind. That is, the irony is conveyed through mostly verbal means⁵. So in all three cases a hearer, or even an audience⁶, is needed: an audience that can understand, or be subjected to, irony. To clarify, what we call here a Socratic oral discussion is not the same as the literary genre of Socratic conversations (Σωκρατικοὶ λόγοι) that Aristotle speaks about in his *Poetics*⁷. There he attests that there was a literary genre of this name that was brought together with tragedy and other literary forms, such as epic poetry, due to the fact that they all perform mimesis through language. But what we are interested in here is the oral substratum of all these Socratic conversations and also of the platonic dialogues. I think that we can safely assume that Socrates did hold oral discussions and that Plato, Xenophon and others, whose works are not saved at all or are just frag-

⁴ Nehamas, *The Art of Living: Socratic reflections from Plato to Foucault*, p. 98.

⁵ Although, and especially in the oral discussions Socrates held, irony can also be manifested with extralinguistic means as intonation, as is maintained by Grice.

⁶ Audience derives from the latin verb *Audire* = to listen, so it is not only to be understood as is commonly held today as a non-participatory body of persons.

⁷ W.K.C. Guthrie, *Socrates*, pp. 11-12.

mentary, used that material to advance both Socratic and private ends.

The common feature of all three parts of our threefold, then, is the existence of an audience, even if it is only an audience of one⁸. But irony can work even in this kind of setting since the interlocutor can be a friend and disciple of Socrates as in the *Phaedrus*, so he can, most of the time, perceive his teachers ironic tone, or a sophist like Hippias. Nevertheless all these cases came down to us through Plato. Nehamas has brilliantly shown how the Socratic irony of these dialogues can be used from Plato himself as an irony toward his own readers. Using as his example *Euthyphro*, another dialogue with only two interlocutors, he shows how the ironic stance of Socrates has not only Euthyphro as an aim and his hasty departure from the scene, but also the readers that too hastily read the dialogue and return back to their unexamined life⁹.

We shall not examine Plato and written irony here though¹⁰, so let us see how the audience functions in tragedy regarding tragic irony. Myth was the common ground of tragedies and, although there was also some degree of innovation, at the level of the fate of the tragic hero the audience already knew the ending¹¹. This knowledge provides the soil out of which irony can spring, because as the plot of the play advances, the hero, ignorant of the truth that both god and audience share, states further his own version of the unfolding events and so becomes more and more susceptible of committing hubris. It is interesting to note that the awakening of the participants in a tragedy to a certain truth of the matter at hand is partial: the audience knows beforehand (and the God in praise of whom the tragedy is performed is also part of the audience, the

⁸ In *Phaedrus*, for example, it is more than certain that the two interlocutors are alone, since they are in the countryside, away from the agora of Athens, where usually Socrates was to be found.

⁹ Nehamas, *The Art of Living: Socratic reflections from Plato to Foucault*, pp. 40-41.

¹⁰ The written form of irony is a special case that actually differentiates it from the other two, the Socratic dialogues and tragedy, due to its use of writing, although the typification of irony is preserved.

¹¹ Peter Burian, "Myth into muthos: the shaping of tragic plot". In *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy*, ed. P.E. Easterling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1997), p. 186.

supreme theatres¹²) that which the chorus usually understands after and finally the other characters and the tragic hero. Again this is a schema that functions at the level of fate and can have variations within the specific plot, since the poets had the opportunity to differentiate and innovate. But for our current purposes the function of knowledge with respect to irony suffices.

Furthermore, there is still another factor of Greek tragedy that allows for another level of irony. This has to do with the satirical plays and although we are lacking the vast majority of these (the only full satirical play that has survived is *Cyclops* by Euripides) we do know that they were presented alongside the tragedies of a poet and that they had a fixed chorus of satyrs, which links them closer to Dionysus and his rituals since satyrs were members of the God's entourage. The satirical plays used the same myth as the tragedies and the audience knew that they had to anticipate another take on the events that were to be presented to them¹³. So how is irony exemplified through the satirical play? According to one theory:

Tragedy poses fundamental questions about the relations between mortals and gods, or it reflects on such serious issues as sacrifice, war, marriage and law. Satyric drama, by contrast, plays with culture first by distancing it and then reconstructing it through its antitypes, the satyrs. It does not seek to settle a controversy, nor to bring man face to face with his fate, or the gods. It plays in a different key, with the displacement, distortion and reversal of what constitutes the world and the culture of men; it reintroduces distance and reinserts Dionysos in the center of the Theatre¹⁴.

This passage by Lissaraggue (1990) is very important, since it suggests that satirical drama was the last reversal of the knowledge that the audience possessed, or thought that they possessed, about the events depicted before: a reversal that has to do with bringing back god into the

¹² P.E. Easterling, "A Show for Dionysus". In *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy*, ed. P.E. Easterling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1997), p. 51, wherein it is stated that this role of the God suggests a certain degree of interactiveness between players and audience.

¹³ Ibid., p. 39.

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 41-42.

reigning position, so that he is the one that has the last say as far as it goes with knowledge. This is an interesting point of convergence with Socrates who thought that the Delphic maxim “Know thyself” points to knowledge of someone’s self-limitations¹⁵.

One of Socrates’ most well-known tenets is his disavowal of knowledge for himself, one position that Vlastos treats as a complex irony from his part. He cites the ‘Apology’, in particular the lines of 21B4-5; D5-6: “I am aware of being wise in nothing, great or small ... as in fact I have no knowledge, neither do I think I have any”¹⁶. Having pointed to at least 9 passages in the platonic dialogues where Socrates claims that he has some kind of knowledge and having dismissed the possibility that the tension between these and the disavowal of knowledge can be defused by assuming different kinds of knowledge in each case¹⁷, Vlastos refers to an even earlier passage of the Apology where Socrates claims knowledge is “human wisdom” and concludes that: “Socrates is avowing that “*human* wisdom”, which, he believes, may be claimed by a man determined to stay inside the limits of the “mortal thoughts” (θνητά φρονεῖν) which befit the human condition”¹⁸. This way of treating knowledge has striking similarities with the way knowledge is treated in Greek tragedy as we saw above. Moreover, Vlastos himself points out in the footnote that the formulation of “human wisdom” (κατ’ἄνθρωπον) that Socrates uses in the Apology is the same with the one Sophocles uses in Ajax¹⁹.

But Vlastos does not go all the way in making the analogy between tragedy and the Socratic disavowal of knowledge. On the contrary, he uses it to argue that the knowledge that Socrates has in mind and disavows is a kind of epistemic certainty that his elenctic method does not allow him to grasp²⁰. As for the domain of knowledge Socrates does claim to have a hold on, Vlastos says that it is only moral knowledge, and within this domain he has knowledge as a result of his elenchus,

¹⁵ Nehamas, *The Art of Living: Socratic reflections from Plato to Foucault*, p. 107.

¹⁶ Gregory Vlastos, *Socrates: ironist and moral philosopher* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 237.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 238.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 239.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 239. fn. 15

²⁰ Ibid., p. 114.

which means that the products of this method are always susceptible to falsity. He contrasts the ethical domain of Socrates with the ideas of the natural philosophers and the sophists that exceed human wisdom. Nehamas, on the other hand, argues that such a contrast is not convincing because philosophical knowledge of the kind Vlastos talks about did not exist during Socrates' time, but was a later development of Plato and Aristotle²¹. In contrast, Nehamas claims that Socrates checks his knowledge of virtue against the certain knowledge of the artisans and he finds himself lacking in the kind of certainty which would allow him to convey it to others. For Nehamas, Socrates was engaged in a lifelong elenchus concerning ἀρετῇ (virtue) and he was treated by Plato as the only person that, although lacking an epistemic certainty about virtue, nevertheless acted most virtually in all circumstances²².

Both thinkers, Vlastos and Nehamas, have contributed greatly to the fact that irony has again become central in studies of Socrates in recent years. Yet they both used irony to present a picture of Socrates either as a moral philosopher or as an artist of living. Although both of these interpretations contain many grains of truth, we need to examine Socratic irony in respect to its preceding dramatic form as exemplified in tragedy and Dionysiac cult and rituals. We first need to claim that Socrates' disavowal of knowledge and his method of elenchus are both indispensable parts of irony: the disavowal is the fundamental thesis that allows irony to exist in the first place, not least because it prompts Socrates' interlocutors to present their own views and beliefs on a certain matter, and to construct their own system of belief that the Socratic elenchus will scrutinize and eventually take down. And, as Thrasymachus complains in the Republic²³, he would not give answers of his own but rather leave the elenchus unconcluded and leaving virtue undefined. Elenchus is an open-ended "truth seeking device which cannot yield certainty"²⁴ constantly pushing for new reconstructions of arguments and definitions. Of course, we would not want necessarily to argue that Socrates was putting god back at the center of human wisdom, nor that he was pointing to a realm of meta-

²¹ Nehamas, *The Art of Living: Socratic reflections from Plato to Foucault*, p. 74.

²² Ibid., p. 85

²³ Quoted in Gregory Vlastos, "Socrates' Disavowal of Knowledge", *Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol.35, No. 138 (Jan. 1958), 4.

²⁴ Vlastos, *Socrates: ironist and moral philosopher*, p. 114.

physical certainties that human intellect was not able to reach. But the possibility that Socrates' philosophical use of irony was influenced by his perception of his contemporary theatrical performances of tragedy is too strong not to be taken into consideration.

There are many other clues that point to the possibility that Socratic irony might have been influenced by or retained some of the hue of tragedy. Socrates was known to be friends with many tragedians for one: the famous dialogue 'Symposium' takes place in Agathon's house, who is a friend of Socrates and also a tragic poet, to celebrate his victory in Lenaia of 416 BC. In that same dialogue Agathon, reacting to an ironic statement of Socrates, states that Dionysus himself will be called upon to be the judge of the two men's wisdom (Symp.175e). We are also informed that in the play 'Frogs' by Aristophanes Dionysus was also the judge of the wisdom of two tragedians, namely Aeschylus and Euripides²⁵. If we give too much importance to the fact that it appears in Aristophanes and take it as an amusing remark on the part of the Agathon, we might miss the point that a tragic poet and a philosopher, the particular philosopher I argue, since following Nehamas, there was not an established philosophical knowledge at the time so philosophizing was even a more personal enterprise, are going to be judged by the God of wine and tragedy. There is also an epigram saved in the Palatine anthology that puts together the names of Sophocles, Euripides and Socrates in terms of wisdom, although again that might be reminiscent of the virtue these famous men are taken to have in the time of the anthology²⁶. Finally, the symposium offers one of the most enduring pictures about Socrates, one that comes from Alcibiades, who likens him with the statue of Silenus²⁷ (Symp.215b). The analogy here is primarily used to point to the fact that Socrates always conceals something different from his external appearance, but it also takes a more literal interpretation concerning Socrates' physical appearance. But Silenus was a chief satyr and belonged to the entourage of Dionysus and this connotation

²⁵ Plato, *Symposium*, trans. Ioannis Sykoutris (Athens: Estia publications, 2000), p. 19. fn.7.

²⁶ Although for Nietzsche this putting of the name together is enough evidence for the kinship between Euripides and Socrates. See Friedrich Nietzsche, *Socrates and Greek Tragedy*, trans. Dimitris Ifantis (Athens: Roes 2018), p. 78.

²⁷ Plato, *Symposium*, p. 199.

should not be missed. It certainly is not missed when P.E. Easterling uses the figure of Silenus and his wisdom, which comes from the archaic era, to give an overall interpretation of the Dionysiac tragic thinking of constant change: the best thing is not to be born and the second best to go back where you came from as soon as possible²⁸.

3. Nietzsche's criticism of Socrates in respect to tragedy

At first glance, the above conclusion has an aura of the denial of life, and perhaps this is what prompted Nietzsche to think of Socrates as one of the major figures that contributed in the demise of the age of tragedy and the rise of the spirit of rationalism²⁹. In his small book entitled 'Socrates and the Greek Tragedy' (1871), which later was incorporated in his seminal book 'The Birth of Tragedy and the Spirit of Music'. Nietzsche blames both Euripides and Socrates for the death of Greek tragedy, because ultimately they were alien to the spirit of Dionysus which is the real spirit of tragedy. Why is Nietzsche's view of Socrates so different in respect to tragedy to the one sketched above?

One answer lies for sure in the fact that Nietzsche was more concerned in providing a theory of tragedy and its spirit, in the famous sense of the confluence of the Dionysian and the Apollonian spirits. In this sense he finds that Socrates and his poetical alter-ego, Euripides, were far to the one side of the two extremes, namely the Apollonian element. The principle of Socratic aestheticism (see above n.29) is what guides Euripides to become a tragic dialectician, and to make the dialogical scenes the center of his plays, taking the mind of his audience away from the musical parts of the chorus that are exemplifying par excellence the Dionysian spirit. This change of attention makes the pessimistic life view, the main characteristic of the tragic age of the Greeks, fades before the rational, optimistic age of Socrates. Nietzsche claims

²⁸ P.E. Easterling, "A Show for Dionysus". In *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy*, ed. P.E. Easterling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1997), pp. 52-53

²⁹ Nietzsche states the principle of Socratic Aestheticism, "Everything needs to be rational to be beautiful" as a parallel to his doctrine that the knowledgeable is the virtuous. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Socrates and Greek Tragedy*, trans. Dimitris Ifantis (Athens: Roes 2018), pp. 68.

that "...for the first time with Socrates appears this profound chimera, the unshaken faith that thinking, having causality as its guide, can penetrate in the deepest abyss of Being, that thinking not only is in a position to know Being, but also to correct it",³⁰

It is evident that Nietzsche's view, although powerful and plausible, exacerbates the connection between Socrates and Euripides and makes use of a specific image of Socrates which overlooks other aspects of him: a position towards him that is not exclusively Nietzschean. The exacerbation is well documented by Christian Wildberg (2006), where he presents various facts and evidence that point to the fact that, although the two contemporary Athenians must have known each other and had perhaps even been influenced by each other, Euripides was by no means a mouthpiece of Socratic philosophy. He states that there are instances that Euripides' plays are actually stating an opposite position from the Socratic one which maintained that people do harm only unknowingly³¹. But according to Wildberg the absence of core Socratic beliefs, such as the care for one's soul³², is more substantial proof about the independence of Euripidean tragedies from Socratic thinking, at least to the extent Nietzsche argues for.

However, also in the text concerning Socrates and tragedy, we can witness the complex relationship between the ancient philosopher and Nietzsche. This complexity is addressed by many authors and it is not always straightforwardly negative as in the specified text. On the contrary, Nietzsche acknowledges many other characteristics of Socrates, including his supreme irony and also "demonic, mad ("Socrates mainomenos"), Dionysian, music making"³³. Porter (2006) also makes the claim that Nietzsche's conception of Socrates as an anti-Dionysian element is undermined by his own claim that both Dionysicism and Socra-

³⁰ Ibid., p. 103.

³¹ References are made to the monologues of Medea, in the homonymous play, and Phaedra, in *Hippolytus*. Christian Wildberg, "Socrates and Euripides". In *A Companion to Socrates*, ed. Sara Ahbel-Rappe and Rachana Kamtekar (London: Blackwell, 2006), p. 28-30.

³² Ibid., p. 30.

³³ James I Porter, "Nietzsche and the 'Problem of Socrates'". In *A Companion to Socrates*, ed. Sara Ahbel-Rappe and Rachana Kamtekar (London: Blackwell, 2006), p. 412.

tism are rooted in "...a prototypical Greek idealism"³⁴. There is a famous note on Socrates from Nietzsche that reveals both the complexity of the former and the grasp of that complexity by the latter:

I believe that the magic of Socrates was this: that he had one soul, and behind that another, and behind that another. Xenophon lay down to sleep in the foremost one, Plato in the second, and then again in the third, only here Plato went to bed with his own, second soul. Plato is himself somebody with many recesses and foregrounds³⁵.

We can be certain that Nietzsche understood that complexity but also interpreted Socrates in ways that were more fitting to his own philosophical views, treating him perhaps as a 'semiotic' in the same way as Plato did³⁶.

There is a further point of congruence between the views of Nietzsche and Socrates which has to do with self-limiting reason. According to Günter Figal, Nietzsche finds in art generally and tragedy in particular a self-limiting kind of reason, because of the continuous interplay of Being and Becoming³⁷. In Nietzsche's thinking, art and the aesthetic are taken to be essential for life and lead to the anesthetization of life. Figal, though, claims that not everything needs to be under the heading of art, especially philosophical reason as self-limited reason can understand itself as a kind of presentation of life which always presents with it the other with which it is ultimately and necessarily connected: just as Being is thus connected with Becoming and the one cannot even be present without the other. For Figal, that philosophical reason that understands the conditions for its own existence can be called hermeneutic reason. It is thus interesting that the interplay between the Apollonian and the Dionysian elements, which is the basis of Nietzsche's model for analyzing tragedy, can be extended beyond art to the sphere of reason or thinking. This might also justify the move of Socrates to

³⁴ Ibid., p. 428.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 414.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 412.

³⁷ Günter Figal, "Aesthetically limited reason: on Nietzsche's Birth of Tragedy". In *Philosophy and Tragedy*, ed. Miguel de Bestigui and Simon Sparks (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 136-147.

point to a self-limited reason in order, through irony, to find the justifications and the conditions for its existence in a time that reason was taken to be all powerful, as is also the case in the modern era.

4. Conclusion

The connection between Socrates and tragedy is present and is one that we can perhaps document no further than our sources allow. The possibility that this connection can help us build a genealogy for irony is something that we tried to establish in this text. We maintain that the characteristic of irony which allows someone to build her own structure, be it as a theory or as a lifeform, is manifest both in tragedy and in Socratic thinking, as it is known to us from ancient sources and primarily from Plato. We would also like to maintain that Nietzsche's insistence on the relationship between Euripides and Socrates is intuitively strong and correct to some extent, but focuses on the wrong side of the equation: instead of pointing to the rationalism and dialectics that appeared in Euripides' tragedies to a fuller extent, we should focus on the more primordial feature of irony that Socrates derived from traditional tragedy and tried to save within his philosophy in an age of progressively ubiquitous rationalism and dominance of sophistic enlightenment ideas. We maintain that this synchronic part of the genealogy of Socratic irony complements the diachronical part sketched in this article and, taken together, they both can underline the pure philosophical significance of irony that is with us to this day.

The Philosophy of Sustainable Finance: Reflections through a Marxian Framework

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Abstract: This study draws upon the immanent progress of a specific domain of finance called Sustainable Finance, and claims that Sustainable Finance is inevitably linked to the sustainability of overall profit that serves for the accumulation of capital. Therefore, Sustainable Finance, as claimed by the proponents of the capitalist economy to be a main contributor of the overall world system for a green planet, is in fact represented as an illusion. This specific field, too, like the other components of the finance capital, is prone to be one of the constituents of crises pertaining to capitalism. Using the Hegelian dialectical logic and Marxian version of it, I claim that the essence of the Sustainable Finance is profit(ability), and this is how I maintain that Sustainable Finance does not ultimately aim for a sustainable planet but a sustainable and long-term, even theoretically perpetual hegemonic profitability for the sake of capitalism.

Keywords: Hegelian logic, Marx, sustainability, finance, Sustainable Finance, dialectical logic

Background and Purpose

Sustainability is a rising, trendy topic among policy makers, communities, activists, and academia. As our planet suffers ecological issues that stem from human intervention, this new era is also called Anthropocene; though, I tend to concur with the suggestion -and now make use of it - of Andreas Malm who coined the term Capitalocene¹ since it is obvious that all human beings do not bear the same responsibility for the environmental damages and social issues such as inequality, discrimination

¹ Donna Haraway, Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene: Making Kin. *Environmental Humanities* 2015; 6 (1): 159–165. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1215/22011919-3615934> p.163 endnote 6.

caused by a minority with much greater power gained through the accumulation of capital.

To create a sustainable planet, the proponents of Sustainability, among other components, relate this concept to the field of finance as well. For them, financial institutions, both public and private, should involve themselves in the financial side of such transformation to reach sustainability overall. It is true that such a huge and costly transformation cannot be achieved if the finance industry is excluded from it.

This article elaborates Sustainable Finance from a Marxian framework. The main method used, without fully replicating it, is the Grundrisse of Karl Marx in his relation to the Science of Logic of Hegel². In the Grundrisse, Marx employed Hegelian logic and its categories. Although discussions were made as to whether Marx followed Hegel's categories in their respective stages, or he went haphazardly to the Being from the Essence or vice-versa, the clear point is that he started from determined being instead of indeterminate -pure- being and built his analysis upon it. It is useful to mention that my method in this article is nearly the same as what Engels wrote to Conrad Schmidt in his letter for the consideration of the latter: "*You should try comparing the Marxian progression from commodity to capital with the Hegelian from being to essence*"³. The starting point, i.e., the determinate -immediate- Being in Hegel's Logic was commodity under a simple circulation in Marx's Grundrisse⁴. As such, in this article we will see the progression from simple transactions -credit and investment- (being) to profit (essence). I find this letter of Engels as a short but essential guide to the study of Grundrisse and Capital; nonetheless, it is hard to find any reference to it in the literature that is dedicated to the Hegel's logic in Marxian framework.

² Mark E. Meaney, *Capital as Organic Unity: The Role of Hegel's Science of Logic in Marx's Grundrisse* (Springer Science+Business Media Dordrecht, 2002). The study of Meaney shows in detail how Marx employed Hegelian dialectics and categories to his Grundrisse and provides a critique of Hiroshi Uchida's work. For a broader view, see also: Hiroshi Uchida, *Marx's Grundrisse and Hegel's Logic* (London: Routledge, 1988), Fred Moseley et al., *Marx's Capital and Hegel's Logic: A Reexamination* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

³ Friedrich Engels, *Karl Marx, Frederick Engels: Collected Works, Vol. 49, Engels: 1890-1892* (Lawrence & Wishart, 2010), 287.

⁴ Mark E. Meaney, *ibid.* 11.

This article, in a comparable way to how Marx did in his *Grundrisse*, starts with two scenarios where two Sustainable Finance transactions occur in their simplest appearances. In the first scenario, there is one creditor and one debtor that are parties to a Sustainable Finance transaction. The creditor is the bank, and the debtor is the firm. I will call this transaction “credit”. In the second one, there is an issuer of funds -a financial institution- and an investor -an individual or a firm-. I will call this “investment”. Both are different appearances of the Being, and both are unique while they pertain to the same being -Sustainable Finance-. From these scenarios onward, this article analyses further what these phenomena of the Being (Sustainable Finance) mean and elaborates further the essence (Profit) following and referring to the categories in Hegel’s Logic.

Sustainable Finance

Before starting the dialectical logic process, it would prove useful to provide a definition of Sustainable Finance. As is the case with almost all definitions, there is not an agreed-upon definition of Sustainable Finance. Although the culmination of the results shows that this is a type of financing made in consideration of environmental and social factors, I share below the definition made by the European Commission (EC):

Sustainable finance generally refers to the process of taking due account of environmental and social considerations in investment decision-making, leading to increased investments in longer-term and sustainable activities. More specifically, environmental considerations refer to climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as the environment more broadly and related risks (e.g., natural disasters). Social considerations may refer to issues of inequality, inclusiveness, labour relations, investment in human capital and communities. (UNEP FI 2016⁵)

The definition above presents Sustainable Finance as an investment in long-term, sustainable activities that take environmental and so-

⁵ United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). (2016, September). Definitions and concepts. Background note (Inquiry working paper 16/13). New York.

cial issues. ESG (Environment-Social-Governance), in that respect, is used interchangeably with Sustainability. Environment and Social are the major components, and to execute them, Governance is a must. Sustainable Finance is a medium that helps investments to fight climate change and social injustice, and the like. This is in line with the starting point of the dialectical logic of this article as it should start in the simplest version in line with a definition accepted by the mainstream proponents of Sustainable Finance.

Scenario 1: Debt Finance under Sustainable Finance

Let us suppose a firm that produces steel. The steel production, currently, is done through three means of production: a) Blast furnaces (BFs) or basic oxygen furnaces (BOFs), b) electric arc furnaces (EAFs), and c) Direct-reduced-iron electric arc furnaces (DRI EAFs). Blast furnaces, dependent on coal, emit highest volumes of carbon dioxide per ton⁶. EAFs are optimal today in terms of lower emission; nonetheless, almost all the production necessitates scrap steel since this production does not need iron ores, and therefore, it emits low quantities of carbon dioxide. DRI EAFs use hydrogen, a carbon-free element in-itself; however, to produce hydrogen producers mostly use natural gas that is a carbon dioxide emitter. Therefore, no production technique is carbon-free as of today except for so-called green hydrogen which can be produced at a limited quantity. In addition, to produce green hydrogen is not so economical due to the limits of current technologies.

It turns out that the bank of the firm recently defined a Sustainable Finance policy for Steel and engaged with some criteria. The Relationship Manager of the bank tells the firm that they can finance only if the firm uses either EAFs or DRI EAFs in its production, and they can also finance the firm long-term either to retrofit its BFs or to upgrade them either to EAFs or DRI EAFs.

Understandably, the purpose of the financing can be multiple/various if it qualifies as sustainable funding. For instance, the firm may already have EAFs or DRI EAFs and then need short- or mid-term

⁶ Li, Yin Jiao, Wenqing Xu, Tingyu Zhu, Feng Qi, Tie Bing Xu and Zhen Wang. "CO2 Emissions from BF-BOF and EAF Steelmaking Based on Material Flow Analysis." *Advanced Materials Research* 518-523 (2012): 5012 - 5015.

financing for already existing operations. Another purpose could be that the firm does not have adequate production technology under sustainable finance, and the bank will no longer provide funding if there is no upgrade. Therefore, the firm might want to retrofit or upgrade its BFs to EAFs.

Let us assume, the firm already has acceptable production modes for being able to be financed by the bank. The firm sells steel to a buyer abroad; however, the buyer and the firm agree on a deferred payment structure that allows the buyer to pay 120 days after the shipment of steel. Therefore, the firm needs financing of the bank that covers production costs from the beginning of the production process until 120 days after the shipment. To make the determination of financing period simpler, let us assume that the production process -time- takes another 60 days. Therefore, the financing period of the bank shall be 180 days (60 days production phase until shipment plus 120 days after shipment date). After the firm is paid by the buyer 180 days after the beginning of the production, the firm will repay the loan granted by the bank.

Scenario 2: Investment under Sustainable Finance

In this scenario, I follow again a Sustainable Finance activity in its simplest form. There is a financial institution that offers an investment product such as an investment fund, exchange-traded fund, a bond, etcetera; and all possible products are linked to ESG. The other party that invests -purchasing securities- is an individual or a firm. Here, in that scenario, an investor takes a decision to invest in an offered product which is normally a set of firms or a particular firm that is ESG-relevant, i.e., the offered security provides the comfort to the investor that the latter invests for a green future and sustainable planet by purchasing securities linked to the firms that are committed to sustainability.

At the end of the process, the bank will complete the sale of the security to its investor, and the firm or individual, as investor, will be the owner of the security until its maturity -or a perpetual owner if there is no maturity-.

Common points in both scenarios

Now that we have two scenarios in hand, we can analyze these Sustainable Finance transactions and provide some insights and definitions.

First, we can define the parties to the first scenario: credit. The parties are the bank and the firm. The bank provides financing, and the firm enjoys funds of the bank and produces steel and sells it to a buyer abroad.

The motives of both parties are different from one another. The bank advances funds with an aim to receive payment at the maturity date of the loan. As such, the firm wants to produce, but it needs financing so that it can: a) produce steel, b) sell, and c) repay the loan to the bank when paid by the buyer.

Both parties also follow some rules, but the rules of the financing bank in terms of sustainability. The bank imposes some financing requirements on the firm, and in addition to the traditional creditworthiness, the firm qualifies for the loan only if it matches the criteria imposed by the bank; in this scenario, to have required production technology and means.

The finance process starts with the financing of the bank and ends with the repayment of the seller firm at maturity of the loan. This is a typical Sustainable Finance transaction -credit- in its simple form. When the repayment is done, the process is over. The bank receives funds once advanced to its customer, and the firm repays the bank now that it received its funds from a buyer and no longer needs the money of the bank. The process is complete.

In the second scenario, the bank intermediates the purchases of securities -such as bonds, funds and the like- and the investor -be it a firm or an individual- purchases these securities. Particular to Sustainable Finance, these securities are labelled “green” or “ESG-linked” and the like. When the investor purchases them, the bank earns commissions -upfront and/or annual- while the investor carries the risk of securities as the new owner of them.

What is presented and analyzed here is a set of two scenarios of the theoretically infinite appearances of Sustainable Finance as a whole. However, appearance is a phenomenon; it is a part of the whole. The whole contains theoretically infinite appearances. Each appearance has something from the whole; however, it is not the whole. As Hegel puts it, “*Essence must appear. Its inward shining is the sublating of itself into immediacy*”⁷

⁷ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Encyclopaedia Logic* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1991), 199.

From these simple appearances, our analysis should expand further to reach the greater whole. For now, a) the creditor and the debtor and b) the issuer and the investor are represented as the actors of phenomena; they are not representing the whole Sustainable Finance. They are represented as though they are free parties that meet in a financing transaction. Nevertheless, what brings them together should be elaborated upon, and through these simple transactions, to grasp the whole is not possible. We need to know more -logically and historically- and determine what brought them together in such a transaction.

Credit rating as Measure

A simple Sustainable Finance transaction does not explain much. It only signifies e.g., a creditor and a debtor, and once the transaction is over, it vanishes (Scenario 1). As such, it vanishes again when an investor purchases a security from the issuer of the security (Scenario 2). Nonetheless, there is something more than these mere appearances. In finance, pricing is important and should be done as most appropriately as it can be. It requires a proper credit risk-taking decision. To provide a proper credit risk assessment, we need something quantitative. Quality-related methods are still crucial in some domains, but they need to be converted to quantitative means. This quantification is done through credit rating (rating). Rating is the measure that quantifies the quality of the risk. Therefore, risk is transformed from qualitative to quantitative through this measure.

Banks today follow Basel principles to manage their risks, including credit risk. Either they apply their internal methodology as defined by regulations applied in line with the Basel principles, or they employ ratings published by external credit agencies such as S&P, Moody's, or Fitch. Once the rating is done, the risk of a company is standardized; it is a quantum among many others. The firm is no longer unique; it is a quantum known as a rated company all around the world. Even externally non-rated companies shall be quantified because they will be rated by banks, and if banks cannot rate them (measure them), they will not have access to credit or will have an access as a bad company that will impact their creditworthiness and thus, funding.

What does rating provide? Ratings are used for several aspects used in risk management and investment. When a rating is bad, the capital reserve of a bank is high, and the pricing of the firm is also higher. As such, when the rating of a firm is good, it will benefit from cheaper credit.

Sustainable Finance is a sub-category of Finance. Financial system uses credit ratings for a long time. Sometimes, they do an awkward job as we have seen how sub-prime ratings were manipulated through so-called securitization and how this created a disaster in 2007-2009 financial crisis. We still remember how credit agencies assigned a very favourable rating to Iceland sovereign risk while the financial situation of the whole country was deteriorating. Financial engineering is prone to such disasters as the main aim is to render investable firms, even governments favorably investable financial assets. Even governments are assets in this system; to provide a rating to them makes them investable assets. The underlying fact, in simple terms, is that when a credit rating is so favorable, banks reserve much less capital, and then, their return of investments increases significantly. Therefore, there is an intrinsic tendency in the system in-itself to create favorable ratings so that financial institutions can reserve capital to benefit from the possible power of leveraging and investing more.

As is the case with financial systems, Sustainable Finance also needs this quantification and measure through ratings. Currently, qualitative approaches are still significant; however, sustainability ratings (ESG ratings) become more and more a standard, and through this process, quantitative approaches will dominate in a near future. There are already Sustainability rating providers among them are Sustainalytics, Vigeo Eiris, MSCI. Not only are ratings published used or referenced to by credit providers -banks-, but they are also taken into consideration by individual and institutional investors – it is an aspect also to consider from the perspective of financialization. Today, if an individual investor wants to invest in an exchange-traded fund (ETF), company stock and such -as is the case represented in Scenario 2-, she or he would visit the website of e.g., MorningStar, Sustainalytics, MSCI or any other information and rating provider to check whether there is an ESG-link to the security she or he wants to purchase and how the security is rated in terms of sustainability.

In Hegel, the doctrine of Being consists of three aspects: quality, quantity, and measure⁸. This article so far elaborated these aspects in their concrete forms. Nonetheless, I did not consider the indeterminate

⁸ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *ibid.*, 135-174.

Being, and started with the determinate being (Dasein). The reason is understandable, but to mention, it is not the purpose of this article to build a speculative system of Absolute. Although it benefits from dialectical logic, the method of this article is to apply the relevant categories of Hegelian logic to the concrete forms of finance, and to finish based on concrete findings in compliance with as above dialectical logic. Therefore, it starts with immediate being (Sustainable Finance transactions) and ends up with essence: profit.

To summarize, the quality is Sustainable Finance in its definition, the quantity (or quantum as determinate being) is a single credit -or investment-, and the measure is rating (credit assessment and classification). In a single transaction, once the firm repays the credit or the investor purchases the securities, the circulation vanishes. However, through the measure that is rating, we can observe alterations in quantities; some of them grow whilst some disappear due to the different ratings. This contradiction signifies the oscillation between growing and financially deteriorating firms.

Circularity is essential to financial systems. One-time transactions or relations do not provide a continuous system. Why do banks and their customers meet in the arena of financing? The answer requires more details for a holistic understanding. In these scenarios, the missing part is the adequate information that would clarify how circularity functions. When a bank grants a loan, it gains interest income. And when it issues and sells securities, it normally earns commissions. Both mean profit for the bank. As such, when a firm takes a credit, its aim is to sell its products at a higher price than its costs and to make profits. When both sides make profits through this financial relation, they will meet again, because they will meet each other to grow further and make profits. In fact, credit and production need and expand each other reciprocally⁹.

Profit as Essence

Profit is essential to financial systems including Sustainable Finance. Sustainable Finance proponents aim to convince their investors that the latter would expect as high ESG-related profitability as in other invest-

⁹ Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy Volume 3*, (London: Penguin Books, 1991), 612.

ments. This promotion clearly aims to emphasize profitability rather than to make the planet green. The aim is to continue to make long-term and sustainable profit. If banks or firms do not make profits in their activities, they will not care about sustainability.

The analysis of phenomenon in Sustainable Finance started with appearances that are parts of Being. Nonetheless, appearances, in their immediacy, cannot represent the Essence completely and are almost always illusory. Almost nothing is like it stands before our eyes. As Marx stated, “all science would be superfluous if the form of appearance of things directly coincided with their essence”¹⁰.

We need to investigate what are the other constituents of the subject-matter. Beyond simple transactions, we need to figure out and see what brings parties to transact with each other. When we elaborate these, we see that this is not a free transacting process, and some requirements should be met first. Firms are required to have a financial creditworthiness, and they should also demonstrate they have adequate investments and readiness for transformation toward a green planet.

Sustainable Finance is a sub-category of Finance. Therefore, it contains the requirements of the financial system such as creditworthiness and robust financial statements. Additionally, as the requirements of this sub-category, a firm should prove that it is committed toward the sustainability of the economy through ecological and social considerations through a well-established governance. Therefore, a firm should be measured to check whether it can enter the arena of Sustainable Finance. This measure is credit rating. Credit rating in general demonstrates the financial situation of a company while sustainability rating shows whether the company follows sustainability criteria. To be a player in the market, both ratings should be favourable; otherwise, any of them would impact the profitability of firms and prevent them from transacting and generating profits and growth. Without making profit, no firm can survive in the capitalist system. In fact, in both transactions, money capital is accumulated (as an interest-bearing capital in the first scenario and as a commission earning and free of risk-taking mechanism in the second one). What appeared now is that the bank provided loan to have a greater amount of money when it is repaid -the first scenario- and

¹⁰ Karl Marx, *ibid.*, 956.

intermediated the sale of Sustainable Finance securities for the accumulation of its money capital -the second scenario-. Therefore, the main aim of the bank is to accumulate money capital first, and this accumulation can be done through profit making.

Profit is the essence of Sustainable Finance, just like it is of Finance in general. It is the essential point to grasp about Sustainable Finance. Sustainable Finance, as a main function, feeds the capital owners and aims to render their firms sustainably profitable. Therefore, the analysis demonstrates that the main aim of Sustainability and Sustainable Finance is not a combat against the climate change; it is a combat that aims to save the hegemonic position of the capital during this transformation which is quite questionable now that we see this transformation is at the mercy of finance capital.

A Sidenote: The impact of financialization

In the second scenario, we should keep in mind that the investor is not a debtor or credit-taker. Instead, an individual or institution invests in a financial security. This is related to another trend called financialization. I will not delve into the financialization under the scope of this article, but it is important to note that unlike a creditor-debtor relationship, financialization is another crucial concept under contemporary capitalism to study for a better understanding of profitability gained beyond production. If the investor is an individual for instance, we can see how financialization helps financial institutions to penetrate households, mobilize small savings of individuals into the financial system¹¹.

In simple terms, financialization signifies how finance became, beyond its traditional role, a vehicle that increases profitability without any production and expands financial activities at a wider scale. Financialization – production dialectics oscillate with a high tension in our era and financialization poses a threat to production and to the exploitation of working classes through consumption-related savings side. In other words, small investors and working classes if they have a sum of savings they have. Even if they do not have savings, they assign their future wages and income for years when they buy a house through mortgage

¹¹ Costas Lapavitsas, Theorizing financialization, *Work, Employment and Society*, 25, no. 4, (2011): 611-626.

loans, use their credit cards, purchase cars to pay with instalments. It is a trap as David Harvey puts it¹². Hence, financialization should be elaborated further in its connection to the Capital while this is not covered by this article.

Concluding remarks

The method of this article followed a suggestion of Friedrich Engels's letter to Conrad Schmidt. Engels suggested Schmidt to work on examples about analyses that represent the transition from Being to Essence just like how Marx did in his *Capital* -and *Grundrisse*-. I do not see any information as to whether Schmidt followed these suggestions; however, these suggestions can be followed even in our era for philosophical and other scientific investigations since they reflect appropriate guidance for using dialectical logic.

In this article, I implemented categories in Hegel's Logic; quality and quantity from the Doctrine of Being, to provide a presentation of a greater whole concerning the domain of Sustainable Finance. In its simplest form, appearances of the determinate Being, Sustainable Finance poses an illusory aspect as though they are merely employed for the sustainability of our planet. To strengthen the position, I provided two different phenomenon -credit and investment- as simplest forms of the determinate Being to demonstrate that they relate to the same Being, but far from representing the Essence. We need to reach to the more detailed aspects of the Being through the employment of dialectical logic, and then to reach the Essence in Hegel's Logic. We can then conceptualize Sustainable Finance based on concrete findings.

As the analysis demonstrated, the category of measure unveiled what was hidden in the simplest appearances. Measure is rating. Through rating, the funding costs, investment risks and other relevant factors are defined. Through rating can some companies fail in their transition processes towards a sustainable economy, let alone the existing economy can never be sustainable due to the class-related inequalities immanent to capitalism.

As the measure represents the differentiation among quantities, a new quality occurs, and some companies fall behind the others as they

¹² David Harvey, *Universal Alienation*, *TripleC* 16, no.2 (2018): 424-439.

have no possibility to benefit from the same offers and opportunities. In its simplest form, if a firm follows the green finance rules of a financial institution, the bank grants the firm a loan, and the firm uses the funds for e.g., transformation needs. Nonetheless, based on the ratings that differentiate firms from one another, some firms will fail inevitably while others will enjoy profit and growth. Profit is the hidden aspect and the essence of any financial activity even in the domain of Sustainable Finance. Those that are not profitable will not be able to benefit from financing toward a sustainable planet.

Appearances are parts of the whole. Inevitably, there is a myriad of them. In this article, I showed through examples -appearances- how transition from quality to quantity and what measures the quantum and how the Essence is attained. Likewise, one can do similar exercises or investigations to figure out other means of quantification and measures. Nonetheless, none of those could harm processes from the Being to the Essence since the logical method I employed in this article does not restrict appearances or any other component; on the contrary, it encourages to elaborate other appearances for a broader, more comprehensive view. This encouragement aims to invite similar philosophical investigations that would show that the essence of both Finance and Sustainable Finance is profit. Sustainable Finance is a sub-category of Finance and the sub-category put tensions to the category -of Finance-. This oscillation is likely to get stronger based on the external pressure put on the financial industry by the European Commission, the Paris Agreement, UN Sustainable Development Goals, and the like. During this tension, banks and firms will do their best to preserve their profitability. It is a tension between deregulation and regulation.

Having its essence as profit, the key role of the Sustainable Finance is not the creation of a sustainable economy or to provide sustainability of the planet. The key role is to preserve a long-term, stable profitability for the financial system. Sustainable Finance, therefore, means Sustainable Profitability. It is possible, through relevant writings, to extend this dialectical logic toward Capital overall since we defined in this article the basic categories of Sustainable Finance being a sub-category of Finance. To move on to e.g., finance -overall finance-, production, financialization and their interconnection would be a possible follow-up.

An important remark would be that I do not dismiss the good efforts done by financial institutions: in fact, many banks have phase-out

strategies from thermal coal financing, restrictions such as Arctic and deep-water drilling and the like. As such, they deal with plans to reduce their financing toward high-carbon-emitting industries. However, sustainability in that respect is for the owners of the Capital ultimately, and the relevant changes are at their mercy in that sense. For instance, as a consequence of the war between Russia and Ukraine, and due to the energy shortfall in Europe at the door, European Parliament accepted nuclear energy to be “green” after long decades of campaign and combat against it¹³. Therefore, Sustainable Finance, in its current version, is at the expense of the vast majority of the inhabitants of this planet. This should change. This should change through a framework that is for everyone in the planet.

How this change will take place, if any, for me is not a mere philosophical question. It is the part of theoretical sociology and critical theory of society that includes Marxian society analysis. Therefore, it is a further study which is already being done by many contributors from all around the world. I still follow the remarks of Hegel and Engels for an approach to philosophy. The former stated that “Philosophy in any case always comes on the scene too late to give it. As the thought of the world, it appears only when actuality has completed its process of formation and attained its finished state”¹⁴. *And the latter said*: “That which still survives of all earlier philosophy is the science of thought and its laws - formal logic and dialectics”¹⁵. Therefore, philosophy in a sense, brings the historical facts and analyzes them through dialectical logic. The future path is for critical theory and other sciences such as sociology that are not under the umbrella of philosophy as I see it.

¹³ Kate Abnett, “EU parliament backs labelling gas and nuclear investments as green, *Reuters*, July 6, 2022.

¹⁴ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right* (Oxford University Press, 2008), 16.

¹⁵ Friedrich Engels, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr & Company, 1908), 89.

Zygmunt Bauman and Ulrich Beck and the question of Identity in Postmodernity

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Abstract: According to psychologists, self-concept is a term used to refer to the way someone thinks, perceives or evaluates him/herself. To be self-aware is to have a self-concept. The development of a self-concept has two aspects. The first includes the existential self. This is the most basic part of the self-concept; a sense of being separate and distinct from others, from objects, and entities. Once we have existential self, then we can form categorical-self. This is the awareness that even though we are separate and distinct objects or entities, or beings we also exist in the world with other objects, beings and entities. And each of these objects has properties. Carl Roger believed that the self-concept had three different components. One of these is self-image: the view we have of ourselves. The second component is self-esteem (self-worth); and this is how much value we place on ourselves and how much we love ourselves. The third aspect is the ideal-self; which is what we wish to be.

Key words: Identity, elusiveness, elusiveness, Globalization, postmodernism, indeterminacy, disintegration, deconstruction, Postmodernity, “social saturation”, DIY individual identity, liquid, habitus, liquid Modernity, ‘corrosion of characters’, Identification, self-identity, disembedding, Individualization

In the epoch of Postmodernity, the problem of identity plays a tremendously important role. However, it remains largely discussed and not definitively answered. Postmodernism is known for its denial of meta-narratives. The definition of identity does not make an exception. The identity of the postmodern agent is largely determined by others and is always in a process. Let us mention some of the more familiar postmodern principles. To some critics, Postmodernity is still limited to certain areas of contemporary culture—usually to mass culture as mediated by television or to the more elitist life style promoted by designer magazines—or to certain sociologically definable groups within the western world. A key factor in this interpretation of postmodernism, as the superstructure of the current socio-

economic order, is the ever-increasing commodification of both the public and the private. The result is a massive confusion that has given important new impulses and opened new territories for intellectual exploration. The common denominator to postmodernism, if there is one at all, is that of a crisis in representation: a deeply felt loss of faith in our ability to represent the real, in the widest sense. This crisis in representation has far-reaching consequences and is in direct link to identity formation. Now that transcendent truth seems forever unreachable, hermeneutics must replace our former aspirations to objectivity. There are other effects which also have influence on identity. Postmodernism has for instance led to a spectacular upgrading of cultural studies. Culture, long seen by many as determined, either directly or indirectly, has now become a major constitutive power in its own right.

If there is a single word that we can use to describe Postmodernity, and in this context identity in that epoch, this should be – elusiveness. It gives the epoch the ability to accommodate a number of critico-political utopias and dystopias, varying from visions of liberation, emancipation, Globalization to sincere visions of the apocalypse. In 1981 Andreas Huyssen, in discussing postmodernism's affinities with the historical avant-garde, very perceptively spoke of 'the temporal imagination of postmodernism, the unshaken confidence of being at the edge of history which characterizes the whole trajectory of American postmodernism since the 1960s'.¹ In Huyssen's view being at the edge of history here, in 1981, implies a wholesale rejection of the past: "The problem with postmodernism is that it relegates history to the dustbin of an obsolete epistémè, arguing gleefully that history does not exist except as text, i.e., as historiography."²

The postmodern, writes Huyssen, is not simply a major cultural shift, it also involves a new relationship between humankind and their environment. He suggests that: "...we are witnessing a transformation of man more radical than anything Copernicus, Darwin, Marx, or Freud ever envisaged..." "Mind" is becoming "its own reality. Consciousness becomes all".³

¹ A. Huyssen, "The search for tradition: avant-garde and postmodernism in the 1970s," *New German Critique* 22, 23–40.

² *Ibid.*, 35.

³ I. Hassan, "The New Gnosticism: Speculations on an Aspect of the Postmodern Mind," *Boundary 2*, Vol. 1, No. 3, Spring, 546-570.

Regarding identity, the most important tendency that characterizes the age is that of indeterminacy. It is defined in the essay "Desire and dissent in the postmodern age" by I. Hassan: "compounded of subtendencies that the following words evoke: heterodoxy, pluralism, eclecticism, randomness, revolt, deformation. The latter alone subsumes a dozen current terms of unmaking: decreation, disintegration, deconstruction, decenterment, displacement, difference, discontinuity, disjunction, disappearance, decomposition, de-definition, demystification, detotalization, delegitimation."⁴

As mentioned, that subject of identity has not and is not resolved by postmodernism, and if there is a global crise of identity, this state or condition of society is the least capable doctrine to resolve it. That is why Amin Maalouf's in his book *In the name of Identity* calls for acceptance of multiple and dynamic identities, without prejudices of anyone. He rejects a single static, essential self "deep down inside", coercing other allegiances. Maalouf insists on respect, reciprocity, non-exclusiveness, in the exacerbated traffic fields of cultural force, anthropological zones, estates of personal being. This however is a dream vision of a plural Postmodernity.

It is worth mentioning Kenneth Gergen who writes about post-modern social-psychology and who maintains that the driving force behind the newly emerging way of thinking about 'self' is what he calls "social saturation". "Social saturation" is essentially a kind of dramatic expansion in the range of relationships that we can have, whether real, virtual, or even imaginable. In this case one can be many, many different selves with many, many different others in wide variety of places and contexts. The person you are in a face-to-face relationship with someone could be just one of your identities, one of yourselves.

"It is my central thesis that this immersion is propelling us toward a new self-consciousness: the postmodern. The emerging commonplaces of communication—such as those just cited—are critical to understanding the passing of both the romantic and modern views of self. What I call the technologies of social saturation are central to the contemporary erasure of individual self...However, we shall also see that as we become increasingly conjoined with our social surroundings, we come to

⁴ I. Hassan, "Desire and dissent in the postmodern age," *Kenyon Review*, 5, 1983:1–18.

reflect those surroundings. There is a populating of the self-reflecting the infusion of partial identities through social saturation. And there is the onset of a multiphreme condition, in which one begins to experience the vertigo of unlimited multiplicity. Both the populating of the self and the multiphrenic condition are significant preludes to postmodern consciousness.”⁵ Discussing the topic Kenneth Gergen also outlines: “Modern man is afflicted with a permanent identity crisis, a condition conducive to considerable nervousness.”⁶

If there is “a permanent identity crisis,” as Peter Berger, Brigitte Berger, and Hansfried Kellner have said, one may wonder what is the postmodern solution of this crises? Its solution is not to reclaim, emphasize or adhere to all already established identities, those very identities in favor of the novel and the expressive. Because of this, the postmodern legacy in more recent times has influenced the form of post-humanist thought with the advent of new technology and new forms media and communication.

1. Zygmunt Bauman and the problem of identity in a globalized world

Bauman thinks that the question of identity plays a tremendously important role in late Modernity. For him, a given person has to create his own identity. He does not inherit it. And the person in question needs to spend his life re-defining it, because of the lifestyle and what is considered to be good/bad for someone. According to his understanding, it is the supremacy of the individual self, whether self-identity, self-reliance, self-reference or self-transcendence, which emerges as the pivotal importance between the two, because he recognizes that liquid modern men and women are first and foremost individuals who are always guided by themselves rather than by the will of others. In his view, DIY (Do It Yourself) individual identity seeking is our fate in liquid Modernity. What Bauman is suggesting is that being modern in liquid society means living and believing differently, rather than version of the already existing reality.

If we go back to the Bourdieu’s idea of “habitus,” which was discuss in previous chapters, we will see that it cannot be taken in isolation

⁵ K. J. Gergen, *The Saturated Self* (Basic Books, 1991), 49.

⁶ Ibid., 73

from the subject of identity. Bauman, however, suggests that the concept of habitus is of limited efficacy for understanding individual identity formation in liquid Modernity. And the reason is that it fails to recognize that social actors today are hardly ever inhibited in their pursuit of their individual freedom.

Consequently, he replaces habitus with the concept of habitat: “a space of chaos and chronic indeterminacy, a territory subjected to rival and contradictory meaning-bestowing claims and hence perpetually ambivalent. All the states habitat may assume appear equally contingent (that is, they have no overwhelming reasons for being what they are, and they could be different if any of the participating agencies behaved differently) ... The existential modality of the agents is therefore one of insufficient determination, inconclusiveness, motility and rootlessness. The identity of the agent is neither given nor authoritatively confirmed. It has to be construed, yet no design for the construction can be taken as prescribed or foolproof.”⁷

Humans in the epoch of late Modernity have very different perceptions of identity. Identity is tied with the idea that one belongs everywhere and nowhere. Bauman suggests that “one can even begin to feel everywhere *chez soi*, ”at home” - but the price to be paid is to accept that nowhere will one be fully and truly at home.”⁸ Bauman continues to argue that “Identity is revealed to us only as something to be invented rather than discovered; as a target of an effort, ‘an objective’; as something one still needs to build from scratch or to choose from alternative offers and then to struggle for and then to protect through yet more struggle.”

The question of identity is in correlation with the breakdown of welfare state. As a result of this, insecurity grew enormously. Subsequently, insecurity and flexibility in the workplace produced “corrosion of characters.” That facilitated the hollowing out of democratic institutions and a privatization of the public sphere which led to injustice and lack of freedom in the modern world. The ‘corrosion of character’ that figures so prominently in Bauman’s works is the most striking manifestation of the profound anxiety that typifies the behavior, decision-making and life projects of men and women. Bauman explores the his-

⁷ Zygmunt Bauman, *Intimations of Postmodernity* (London: Routledge, 1992), 193.

⁸ Cf, Zygmunt Bauman, *Identity: Conversations with Benedetto Vecchi* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004).

torical roots of this problem. He argues that a wide variety of developments have cut a firm sense of identity. Some of these developments are global. They include the 'transport revolution' that brings constantly increasing number of people into contact with forms of life that questions their saliency of their existing sense of identity. This constituted slow process of disintegration and shrinking of the holding power of neighborhoods. The new modern state that faced the need to create an order no longer automatically reproduced by the well-settled and closely-knit societies annexed the question of identity and deployed it in its novel and unfamiliar legitimacy claims. Bauman writes:

"After all, asking "who you are" makes sense to you only once you believe that you can be someone other than you are; only if you have a choice, and only if it depends on you what you choose; only if you have to do something, that is, for the choice to be 'real' and to hold. But this is precisely what did not occur to the residents of the backwater villages and forest settlements - who never had a chance to think of moving places, let alone to seek, discover or invent something as nebulous (indeed, as unthinkable) as another identity. Their way of being-in-the-world stripped the question of identity of the meaning made obvious by other ways of life - ways that our linguistic usages prompt us to call modern."⁹

The idea of 'identity' and in particular 'national identity' did not occur 'naturally' out of experience as self-evident fact. Rather that idea was forced by the modern society on its citizens.

"The idea of 'identity' was born out of the crisis of belonging and out of the effort it triggered to bridge the gap between the 'ought' and the 'is' and to lift reality to the standards set by the idea - to remake the reality in the likeness of the idea. Identity could only enter the *Lebenswelt* (the world of lived experience) as a task, as an as-yet-unfulfilled, unfinished task, a clarification call, a duty and an urge to act - and the nascent modern state did whatever it took to make such a duty obligatory for all people inside its territorial sovereignty."¹⁰

National identity, unlike other identities, did not demand unequivocal allegiance and exclusive fidelity. It would not recognize competition, or opposition. Being the subject of a state was the sole feature

⁹ Ibid., 19.

¹⁰ Ibid., 27.

authoritatively confirmed in identity cards and passports. Whoever else you might have been or have aspired to become, the state's institutions were the ones that had the final word.

"Let me repeat: the 'naturalness' of the assumption that 'belonging-through-birth' meant, automatically and unequivocally, belonging to a nation was a laboriously construed convention; the appearance of 'naturalness' could be anything but 'natural'."¹¹

The problem of 'Identification' becomes ever more important for the individuals desperately seeking to be a part of a community. Bauman quotes a Scandinavian writer Lars Dencik regarding this:

"Social affiliations - more or less inherited - that are traditionally ascribed to individuals as a definition of identity: race ... gender, country or place of birth, family and social class, are now ... becoming less important, diluted and altered, in the most technologically and economically advanced countries. At the same time, there is a longing for, and attempts to find or establish new groups to which one experiences belonging and which can facilitate identity making. An increasing feeling of insecurity follows . . ."¹²

It is appropriate to add also a quote by Eric Hobsbawm from his article about identity "The cult of identity politic": "Men and women look for groups to which they can belong, certainly and forever, in a world in which all else is moving and shifting, in which nothing else is certain."¹³ Jock Young gives a very good summary to Hobsbawm's observation: "Just as community collapses, identity is invented."¹⁴

Young thinks that the desire for demonization of the other is based on ontological uncertainties of those inside. That communal world is complete in so far as all the rest is hostile, chaotic, and full of danger. This communal world has an inner harmony, which shines against the background of the obscure and tangled jungle outside. And while a few

¹¹ Ibid., 23

¹² Lars Dencik, "Transformation of identities in rapidly changing societies," *The Transformation of Modernity: Aspects of the Past, Present and Future of an Era*, ed. Mikael Carleheden and Michael Hviid Jacobsen (Ashgate, 2001), 194.

¹³ Eric Hobsbawm, "The cult of identity politics," *New Left Review*, 1/217-May/June 1996, 40.

¹⁴ Jock Young, *The Exclusive Society* (London: Sage, 1999), 164.

decades ago the subject of 'identity' was nowhere near the center of debates but just an object of philosophical discussions, today, identity is the burning issue. Martin Heidegger once considered vanishing things. That is, you tend to notice things and put them into the focus of your scrutiny and contemplation only when they vanish, go bust, start to behave oddly or otherwise let you down.

With the advancement of Globalization, the orthodox frames of reference tend to be nowadays electronically mediated, 'virtual totalities', easy to enter and easy to abandon. They are hardly a valid substitution for the 'solid ground', and even though may promise to be more solid forms of togetherness, promising that comfort of "we feeling." But chasing and clicking the 'join now!' offers flashing on computer screens which deprives us of the ability to enter into spontaneous interaction with real people. But these "virtual communities" give no substance to personal identity - the primary reason to seek them out. They make coming to terms with one's own self more difficult.

"In the words of Andy Hargreaves, professor of education and a uniquely perceptive observer of the contemporary cultural scene: "In airports and other public spaces, people with mobilephone headset attachments walk around, talking aloud and alone, like paranoid schizophrenics, oblivious to their immediate surroundings. Introspection is a disappearing act. Faced with moments alone in their cars, on the street or at the supermarket checkouts, more and more people do not collect their thoughts, but scan their mobile phone messages for shreds of evidence that someone, somewhere, may need or want them."¹⁵

Turning on the mobile, we turn off the street. Physical proximity no longer collides with spiritual remoteness. We seek and construct and keep together the communal references of our identities while on the move - struggling to match the similarly mobile, fast-moving groups we seek and construct and try to keep alive for a moment, but not much longer.

Globalization means that the state and the nation are not in a rock-solid relationship. The state ceded everything to the market; labor, capital, even patriotic fervor. Now people are proud to work for a multinational company. That's part of their identity. But these identities have no reas-

¹⁵ Zygmunt Bauman, *Identity: conversations with Benedetto Vecchi*, 25.

surance, or guarantees, because the markets have been thoroughly deregulated in free market neoliberal style, while social rights are replaced one by one by the individual duty of self-care. Of course, the state is nowhere near to monitor and protect its citizens – exposed to a free play of competitive forces. The main reasons for identities to be unambiguously defined by the state and retain the same recognizable shape over time, have vanished or lost much of their power. Identities were given a free run; and it is now up to individual men and women to catch them in flight, using their own wits and tools. “Longing for identity comes from the desire for security, itself an ambiguous feeling... On the other hand, a fixed position amidst the infinity of possibilities is not an attractive prospect either. In our liquid modern times, when the free-floating, unencumbered individual is the popular hero, 'being fixed' - being 'identified' inflexibly and without retreat - gets an increasingly bad press.”¹⁶

Locations where the feeling of belonging was traditionally invested (job, family, neighborhood) are either not available, or untrustworthy and they understandably placate the fear of loneliness and abandonment. In today's world of rampant 'individualization', identities are mixed blessings. They swing between a dream and a nightmare and one never knows when one will happen. “In a liquid modern setting of life, identities are perhaps the most common, most acute, most deeply felt and troublesome incarnations of ambivalence. This is, I would argue, why they are firmly placed at the very heart of liquid modern individuals' attention and perched at the top of their life agendas”¹⁷

In today's globalized world a large number of people are living from one project to another, and their life processes are sliced into a succession of projects, there is no time for diffuse discontents to condense into a bid for a better world. Such people would wish the day to be different for everyone, rather than better future for all. In the uncertainty of the liquid today, there is no place for thoughts of 'good society'. This idea of 'better society' was a collateral damage from the accelerated fragmentation of social dissent, a progressive disintegration of social conflict into a multitude of intergroup confrontations. Now the lack of this 'better world' is vindicated by current group-or category-

¹⁶ Ibid., 29

¹⁷ Ibid., 32.

related causes. It remained indifferent to other deprivations and is not offering a universal, comprehensive solution to human problems. The struggle for social justice has been substituted by a plethora of battles for recognition. This quite nebulous idea will remain nebulous as long as money is shunned as a topic of conversation. "The 'problem of capitalism', writes Bauman, is shifting in its present planetary stage from exploitation to exclusion. It is exclusion, rather than the exploitation suggested a century and a half ago by Marx, that today underlies the most conspicuous cases of social polarization, of deepening inequality, and of rising volumes of human poverty, misery and humiliation."¹⁸ In a world where disengagement is practiced as a common strategy of the power struggle and self-assertion, there are few if any firm points in life that can be safely predicted to last. "...the hard core of identity - the answer to the question "Who am I?" and even more importantly the continuing credibility of whatever answer might have been given to that question - cannot be formed unless in reference to the bonds connecting the self to other people and the assumption that such bonds are reliable and stable over time. We need relationships, and we need relationships in which we count for something, relationships to which we can refer in order to define ourselves."¹⁹

Bauman maintains that 'identity' is an ambiguous idea and a "a double-edged sword". It could be used as a strive of individuals or communities. But it could be turned against individuals and groups, accusing them of wish to devour or destroy other individuals and groups. When the card of 'identity' is played by a bigger and stronger side, usually differences between individuals and groups are played down, as not important enough to prevent allegiance to a larger totality which is always presented as ready to embrace and provide a 'home' for all, despite the differences.

2. Ulrich Beck and the problem of identity in Risk society

For Ulrich Beck, an obvious outcome of the industrial Modernity's success has been its wide spatial distribution and its ability to cross borders and infiltrate cultures. He maintains that the advent of Globalization

¹⁸ Ibid., 41.

¹⁹ Ibid., 68.

challenges the territoriality and sovereignty of the state, reduces the authority of a country and its citizens to act unilaterally or independently, and compromises economic autonomy by forcing national structures to act in ways and adopt policies broadly commensurate with the whims of highly mobile capital. Globalization de-nationalizes markets, creates international patterns of competition for foreign investment and forces the state to respond to an international rather than purely domestic constituency. "A universalization of hazards accompanies industrial production, independent of the place where they are produced: food chains connect practically everyone on earth to everyone else. They dip under borders... The Globalization tendency brings about afflictions, which are once again unspecific in their generality."²⁰

Thus, Globalization results in "a power-play between territorially fixed political actors (government, parliament, unions) and non-territorial economic actors (representatives of capital, finance, trade)" and consequences in the "political economics of uncertainty and risk". Bigger individualization is accompanied by greater individual risk. This is what Beck means by individualization, "the disintegration of the certainties of industrial society as well as the compulsion to find and invent new certainties for oneself"²¹.

Beck maintains that the reflexive modernization confronts and at one point try to accommodate the tension between human indeterminacy and inevitable tendency to objectify and naturalize institutions. Indeterminacy comes from an to renegotiate coherent narratives of identity. It will not be comprehensive to discuss Beck's reflections on identity issue without mentioning the parallel between his ideas and Anthony Giddens' ones in Giddens' "Modernity and Self-identity". Giddens has developed a number of themes around the distinctive form reflexivity takes in Modernity, and above all about the self-creation of identity in late Modernity through the reflexive shaping of our own biography. It is worth mentioning that reflexive Modernity for Giddens is very much based in his previous concept of 'double hermeneutics'. And his notions of risk and trust are grounded in his pre-

²⁰ Ulrich Beck, *Risk Society Towards a New Modernity* (London: SAGE Publications, 1992), 36.

²¹ Ulrich Beck, A. Giddens, and S. Lash, *Reflexive Modernization: Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994), 2.

viously developed notion of 'ontological security'. Beck's theory stems from experience as a sociologist of institutions, on which he has built a macro-sociology of social change. Beck, like Habermas, understands social change as a learning process.

He understands that the status-based social environment and life-style of class-culture have lost their significance. The tendency is towards the emergence of individualized forms and conditions of existence. This forces people, for the sake of material survival, to make themselves the center of their own life. Everyone has to choose between different options, including as to which group or subculture one wants to be identified with. In fact, one has to choose and change one's social identity as well and take the risks in doing so. Beck argues that while the bourgeoisie developed its social and political identity in the struggle against feudal structures of domination and authority, in late Modernity, by contrast, individualization is a product of the labor market and manifests itself in the acquisition, proffering, and application of a variety of work skills. The new forms of cultural and social identity often have politically provocative effects. Unstable alliance of community and market society has been partially transformed or even dissolved in the course of post-war developments. In this historical development, the identity of the social classes melts away. The conditions and the risk of wage labor become generalized and, as a result of that, class loses its subcultural basis. However, class does not disappear because the traditional way of life vanishes. For him, that is a new 'chapter in the history of classes'. Beck does not give any further qualifications of these classes as he thinks that they are still in a process of formation. But a new social life-style and new group identities begin to emerge. He maintains that the process of individualization deprives class distinctions of their social identity. As a result of the process social groups lose their distinctive traits in terms of self-understanding and in relation to other groups. Social mobility, which was of a considerable importance for social identity formation, pales into insignificance. The dynamic of individualization which removed people from class cultures reflects on the family structure as well. Beck focuses on the new diluted social relationships. In search for some form of stability and happiness people are driven into marriage and bonding, hoping to find shared inner life. But because of the individualization sooner rather than later these relationships bring indifference and isolation. In forms of male-female cohabitation "the

conflicts of the century break through. Here they always show their private, personal face.” “Divorce law and divorce reality, the lack of social protections, the closed doors of the labor market and the main burden of family work characterize some of the contradictions which the individualization process has brought into the female life context. Men's situations are quite different. While women have to loosen their old ascribed roles of an 'existence for others' and have to search for a new social identity, for reasons of economic security among others, for men, making a living independently and the old role identity coincide. In the stereotypical male gender role as 'career man', economic individualization and masculine role behavior are joined together.”²²

The new roles of men and women in relationships and marriage, have brought changes to their overall identity. According to Beck, “individualization strengthens masculine role behavior.” But at the same time, he also points out that on the one hand, men are freed by the greater participation of women in the labor force from the duty of being sole supporter of the family. On the other hand, 'family harmony' is becoming fragile. The female-determined side of male existence is getting out of balance, while at the same time men get a sense of their dependency in everyday matters and their emotional reliance on women. “In both areas, essential impulses are found to loosen identification with the dictates of the male role and to try new modes of life.”²³

The process of modernization, Beck thinks, does not just led to formation of centralized state power, concentration of capital and division of labor and market relationships etc. but also to a triple individualization. The first layer is so called “disembedding,” which is a removal of historically prescribed social forms and commitments. The second layer is loss of traditional security to practical knowledge, faith and norms. And the last one is a new type of social commitment. Beck looks very closely and thoroughly in the process of “individualization” because it is a change of life situation and biographical pattern and therefore directly linked to consciousness, identity, socialization and emancipation. Beck also maintains that differentiation of socio-biographical situations is accompanied at the same time by a high degree of stan-

²² U. Beck, *Risk Society Towards a New Modernity*, 112.

²³ *Ibid.*, 113.

dardization. "...the very same media which bring about an individualization also bring about a standardization. This applies to the market, money, law, mobility, education and so on, each in its own way."²⁴

Ulrich Beck's risk society, and indeed the theory of "reflexive modernization" is characterized by two theses: an environmental thesis or the "risk thesis" and an 'individualization theses'. According to Scott Lash, Individualism takes place in what Beck understands as "the first" or "simple Modernity", while the individualism at stake is a phenomenon of "the second," "reflexive" Modernity. At stake is a decidedly nonlinear notion of the individual and individualization. The reflexive individualization of the second Modernity presumes the existence of non-linear systems. "In this sense also the individual of the first Modernity is reflective while that of the second Modernity is reflexive. The idea of reflective belongs to the philosophy of consciousness of the first Modernity. To reflect is to somehow subsume the object under the subject of knowledge. Reflection presumes apodictic knowledge and certainty. It presumes a dualism, a scientific attitude in which the subject is in one realm, the object of knowledge in another...Beck often describes today's non-linear individual in terms of, not the "I think therefore I am," but instead in terms of "I am I." "I think, therefore I am" has to do with reflection. "I am I" has more to do with reflex. And Beck often indeed works from the contrast of "reflex" with reflection. Reflexive he argues has more to do with reflex than reflection. Reflexes are indeterminate. They are immediate."²⁵

Second-Modernity individuals do not have sufficient reflective distance on themselves to construct linear and narrative biographies. Everything is liquid, everything is moving and transforming. They may wish to be reflective but have neither the time nor the space to reflect. The non-linear individual puts together networks, constructs alliances, makes deals. He must live, is forced to live in an atmosphere of risk in which knowledge and life-changes are precarious.

Individualization consists in transforming human identity from a "given" into a "task" – and charging the actors with the responsibility for performing that task. As Zygmunt Bauman has put it in his forward

²⁴ Ibid., 130.

²⁵ U. Beck, and E. Beck-Gernsheim, *Individualization* (London: SAGE Publications, 2001), 9-10.

to the Becks' book *Individualization*, "individualization is a fate, not a choice; in the land of individual freedom of choice, the option to escape individualization and to refuse participation in the individualizing game is emphatically not on the agenda. That men and women have no one to blame for their frustrations and troubles."²⁶

The process of individualization does not annule class differences and family connections. They still continue to exist in the background of the biographical life. For example, people of the same "class" must choose between different lifestyles, subcultures, social ties and identities. One can no longer determine his or her personal outlook, relation, social and ideas or **identity**, from knowing his or her "class".

"Individualization in this sense means that each person's biography is removed from given determinations and placed in his or her own hands, open and dependent on decisions.... Individualization of life situations and processes thus means that biographies become self-reflexive; socially prescribed biography is transformed into biography that is self-produced and continues to be produced."²⁷

As a result of this process, today many events are considered "personal failure" than 'blow of fate.'" A person even has to choose one's own social identity and group membership to manage own self and change its image. But in this case, Beck writes: "In the individualized society, risks do not just increase quantitatively; qualitatively new types of personal risk arise, the risk of the chosen and changed personal identity."²⁸

In the industrial age, wage labor and occupation have become axes of living. The occupation also serves as mutual identification pattern which helps someone to assess personal needs and abilities as well as economic and social position. But today the situation is totally different:

"In this system (late modern industrial society, N.A), unemployment in the guise of various forms of underemployment is "integrated" into the employment system, but in exchange for a generalization of employment insecurity that was not known in the old uniform full-employment system of industrial society."²⁹

²⁶ Ibid., 15.

²⁷ U. Beck, *Risk Society Towards a New Modernity*, 135

²⁸ Ibid., 136.

²⁹ Ibid., 143-144.

Ulrich Beck puts it clearly and unambiguously what is the effect of the individualization in his essay “On the mortality of industrial society”:

“What emerges from the fading social norms is naked, frightened, aggressive ego in search of love and help. In the search for itself and for an affectionate sociality, it easily gets lost in the jungle of the self... Someone who is poking around in the fog of his or her own self is no longer capable of noticing that this isolation, this “solitary confinement of the ego,” is a mass sentence.”³⁰

³⁰ Cf. U. Beck, *Ecological Enlightenment: Essays on the Politics of the Risk Society* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press), 1995.

Martin Heidegger, Emmanuel Levinas, and Adriana Cavarero: from Acoustics to Vocal Expression

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Abstract: In recent years, we have witnessed a rewriting of the canon of accepted traditions from the perspective of absent voices. I consider the act of rewriting as itself part of the acoustic genealogy of thought. In it we can recognize not only an attempt to introduce an alternative historiography, but a theoretical mobilization to revise the power structures in existing narratives. The rewriting of canons cannot and should not be identified solely with the analysis of ideologies. Yet is that not exactly what we understand today as the task of criticism? That is, exposing the relations in representative functions, and to this extent an analysis of ideologies. Thinking is not merely unmasking ideologies, and we should not limit the voice to exposing ideologies. The gestures of rewriting the dominant canon were preceded by a general interest in the voice in both the performing arts and philosophy¹. The thematic of the voice appeared to be an invitation to re-engage a specific practice of thinking, one characterized by the return of the political after decades of general depoliticization and a crisis of political representation in democracy. The following pages will focus on the emergence of the acoustic dimension of thinking within the clashes of twentieth-century Western metaphysics. Often the pursuit of an intensely critical approach leads to an encounter between well-defined philosophical boundaries and disciplinary challenges, in which the elements of acoustics become central.

Keywords: general depoliticization, elements of acoustics, narratives, alternative historiography, rewriting of the canon

¹ See Sonia Boyce *OBE RA*, Great Britain, Golden Lion for Best National Participation, 2022, La Biennale di Venezia, Milk of Dreams. See also Mladen Dolar, *A Voice and Nothing More* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2006).

1. Thinking and Listening: Martin Heidegger's fundamental ontology

Heidegger's philosophy is characterized by poetic etymologies, the invention of a philosophical use of language that includes the very term *Da-sein* (being-there), which relocates semantically the root of the verb "to be" to indicate the temporal horizon for the intelligibility of Being-in-general. In these philosophical inventions we can discern the first feature of acousticity as primarily the poetic act of a philosophical lexicon, one that resounds in multiple acts of understanding. It is not simply in pronouncing those new concepts that meaning is formed; rather, thinking itself is invited to dwell in the acoustic. In his forceful distinction between Being and 'beings' Heidegger prevents ontology from being reduced to the categorization of existents. He states that the starting point of an inquiry into Being requires the establishment of a fundamental ontology and that the entity to take on the task of this inquiry is Dasein, "the being for whom Being is an issue." This is not circular reasoning but rather a "relatedness backward and forward" in which "what we are asking about Being bears to the inquiry itself as a mode of Being of an entity." I am 'thrown' into the world, and carry the burden of a certain facticity. I find myself already disposed as moods (*Stimmungen*) of anxiety, for example, as the authentic awakening of my condition as a being-towards-death.² Moods and mental states are not external or internal, objective or merely subjective. The first characteristic of these moods is the fact that we are thrown into circumstances which are beyond our control, from birth to death. We submit to pre-given conditions and, according to Heidegger, the very structure of human existence is determined by our thrownness into the world. The second characteristic is that "a mood assails us." A mood does not come from inside me but "arises out of being-in-the-world as a whole." We need to distinguish between a state of mind (disposedness) and the reflective apprehending of something 'within,' and think of states of mind in their characteristic of *disclosure*. A mood has a certain consistent 'tone' and discloses our being-in-the-world as a whole unifying the otherwise bewildering number of present features; it is this *submission to the world which allows*

² See Richard Kearney and Mara Rainwater, eds., *The Continental Philosophy Reader* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996).

*things to matter to us.*³ The fear, joy, and so forth in the situation into which we are thrown dictates the possibilities available to us and orients our action. A mood (in German, *Stimmung* originally meant *vibration* – the same term appears in Kierkegaard's masterpiece *Fear and Trembling*) is an 'attunement,' a way of being tuned to things in the world and tuned by situations in the world. Without this we do not have the basis for action. In his very concept of a fundamental ontology Heidegger decides to use an acoustic term. It is thus in the very basis of his existential analytic that we already have evidence of that transition to the acoustic that will become apparent in the second phase of his philosophical work.

Our existence is also described as a sort of interval inscribed in a temporal horizon as being-towards-death. A pre-reflective understanding of Being-in-general engenders the hermeneutic circle. The dynamic of a past-future projects the present as charged with potential. This situates, activates that pre-understanding as a form of 'interpretation,' and makes clear that the question of the meaning of Being cannot be formulated otherwise. The question of understanding is central to the structure of being-in-the world. *Understanding* for Heidegger is a key term in his radical criticism of the classical metaphysical mode of thinking (Descartes-Kant-Husserl) in which *what* we understand dominates over the question of how we understand. All attempts to reduce understanding to brain functions or mental representations are futile; understanding and interpretation ultimately are not brain states, they are ways of acting in the world.

The second phase of Heidegger's work, dedicated to the history of Being, pays particular attention to the question of language, poetry and the work of art. And it is only within the realm of language and art that we see the explicit use of acoustics, where thinking is described in terms of listening to Being. For Heidegger, truth in art does not reside in a correct representation. Thinking is the relation of Being to man, not the other way around. It is not a product, a consequence, or a cause. It is an offering which consists in the fact that in thinking Being comes to language; language is the house of Being, in it man dwells. Those who

³ Cf. Mark Wrathall, *How to Read Heidegger* (New York and London: W.W. Norton Company, 2005).

think and those who create with words are the guardians of this home.⁴ Thinking as a clearing of Being, envisioned by Heidegger in this last period, is an acoustic phenomenon. When thoughts fall silent Being returns as a resonance. Thought is a form of listening which involves effort, like speaking, yet it is as if the phenomenon called thought is both produced by effort and at the same time comes from somewhere outside, a realm of language that may or may not bestow on us the grace of presence; it could be said that thought is akin to poetry or perhaps that poetry is the protean form of what we call thought. Are phenomena that do not take place in language thought? Are they separable from language? Overcome by emotion, one chooses whether to call it joy or sorrow. This is a genuine question, when one despairs how does one know for sure that one is not, in reality, happy? There is thought and there is the feeling of thinking, defined by Heidegger as a mood. It is the return of thought as a resonance. It is possible to have the feeling of thinking without conceiving a thought; it is possible to have a thought without the feeling of thinking, in which case it is something like a dead thought, but a dead thought may be brought to life at any time, as the map of words we are born into contains headstones marking the place from which immortality might spring, or as a book might be inert in our hands for ten years and then one day we pick it up again, just to see, and it lights up for us. Are vibrations that we can't hear still to be counted as belonging to the realm of sound? Is the experience of hearing where there is no sound still acoustic? How separable are hearing and sound? What happens in the body, for instance, the roaring of the blood, the beating of the heart, or the sense of listening to thoughts that come from a realm into which we are as it were dropped but still detached from ... is it enough that something that is not human may hear these vibrations? Does thinking produce a tuning?

2. Thinking and the Other: Emmanuel Levinas' transition to ethics

In his seminal 1961 work *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, Levinas rejects the ontological framework prioritized by phenomenology and believes that only an ethically grounded philosophy can reveal the infinite transcendence contained in our relation to the Other. At the

⁴ Ibid., p. 217.

core of ontology is the totalization of being and the return to the same. In order to introduce the urgent question of refounding philosophy on the basis of the relation to the Other, and not as a refrain of the same, Levinas resorts to the violent image of war:

Not only modern war but every war employs arms that turn against those who wield them. It establishes an order from which no one can keep his *distance*; nothing henceforth is *exterior*. War does not manifest exteriority and the other as other; it destroys the identity of the same. [...] The visage of being that shows itself in war is fixed in the concept of totality, which dominates Western philosophy.⁵

Thinking implies a relation that takes exteriority as a primary consideration: a place able to welcome the encounter with the Other where individuals are not reduced to derivatives of totality and where unicity is not sacrificed to objective meaning. In order to overcome totality, Levinas introduces infinity as an eschatological notion outside of history, in which the very notion of time is displaced and located beyond historically or ontologically circular temporality. In the essay “Is Ontology Fundamental?”⁶ Levinas states that both Edmund Husserl’s phenomenology, with its discovery of the intentionality of consciousness, and Heidegger’s existential analytic of Dasein as ‘being thrown’ into the world contribute to the same understanding: in order to understand being as such we need always to link it to our existence in this world. Thus, it is not simply a theoretical attitude but concerns the whole of human behavior. The totalization of thinking resides in the fact that all knowledge is composed of relations between different beings, and that this implies an understanding that these beings and relations exist. “The whole man is ontology,” Levinas says: “His scientific work, his affective life, the satisfaction of his needs and his work, his social life and his death articulate, with a rigor that assigns a determined function for each of these

⁵ Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1991), p. 21; emphasis added.

⁶ Emmanuel Levinas, “Is Ontology Fundamental?,” in *Entre Nous: On Thinking-of-the-Other*, trans. Michael B. Smith and Barbara Harshav (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), pp. 1-11.

aspects the understanding of being, or truth.”⁷ Being is disclosed in each aspect, making the philosophical preoccupation the pressing and radical attention to everyday life.

The ambiguity of contemporary ontology lies in the fact that, even though Heidegger rejects the transformation of ontology into the philosophy of existence, such a possibility is nevertheless inscribed in his conception of ontology. Philosophy and life merge. To understand being is to exist, and this leaves us in the comic, or tragic, condition of finding ourselves on the terrain of the same, unable to orient our actions. There is something more fundamental in our understanding and desire to know that cannot be reduced to or caught in the circularity between existence and understanding. There is a need for exteriority, for difference, and for an irreducible relation to the Other. To understand a particular being is to place oneself outside of that being, and in keeping one’s relation to the particular there is always the horizon of Being to be disclosed, which is something that Levinas reads as universal, and is in that sense continuous with the history of Western philosophy. Levinas’ criticism of ontology presents instead an ethical conception of truth, one in which the relation to the Other is the fundamental condition both for subjectivity understood as a welcoming of the Other, or hospitality, and for an understanding of truth separate from Heidegger’s *aletheia* or clearing of Being.

The welcoming of the face and the work of justice, which condition the birth of truth itself, are not interpretable in terms of disclosure. Phenomenology is a method for philosophy, but phenomenology, the comprehension effected through a bringing to light, does not constitute the ultimate event of being itself.⁸ In order to break with totality, and with the reduction of the relation to being to the understanding of being, Levinas introduces infinity and the irreducible Other. Our relation to the Other is of such a kind that it cannot be reduced to our understanding of the Other. That relation does not affect us by the means of a concept: “The other is not first an object of understanding and then an interlocutor. The two relations are merged. In other words, addressing the other is inseparable from understanding the other.”⁹

The relation to the Other is irreducible; it is not a relation to a con-

⁷ Ibid., p. 2.

⁸ Ibid., p. 28.

⁹ Levinas, “Is Ontology Fundamental?,” p. 6.

cept or to an object, it is not the clearing of Being, and no pre-understanding precedes that relation. Levinas' task is to show, particularly, that the relation to the Other is irreducible to comprehension, in that it is not an ontological relation. In the concrete situation of speech in its various modes, such as speaking to the other, listening to the other, calling, prayer, and invocation, I do not reflect on the Other but actively engage with the relation to alterity first defined by Levinas, both theologically and philosophically, as an ethics based on the relation to the Other. Levinas asks questions which bring us to a new task confronting philosophy which ontology cannot perform. The irreducible encounter with the face of the Other is no longer a relation to Being or the condition for the disclosure of consciousness; instead, a more basic condition challenges the primacy of ontology. It is precisely on the terrain constituted by the primacy of ethics that the acousticity of thinking emerges as the passage from temporality to exteriority.

In order to make this transition from time to relation, and in order for the voice to appear on the philosophical stage, the notion of space also needs to be present. Space appears both as a relation between myself and a Third (Levinas) or as a gap (Arendt) in the reversals of Western metaphysics. And both of those ideas, the one introduced by Levinas, the other by Hannah Arendt, are important for the vocalization of the logos. The question of thinking cannot be posed within the framework of an ontology that necessarily ends up as a totality. Both Arendt and Levinas deploy the notion of totalization in the realm of the history of thought in which its procedures are historically grounded in Western metaphysics, and thereafter entangled in the relation to politics. Response becomes the first language, according to Levinas, and our responsibility consists in being 'for-the-other.' In his analysis of interpersonal relations where we need 'to not forget' irreducible otherness, and to be aware of the presence of a Third (which is very different from universal objectified relations), Levinas provides an intersection of the ethical and the political which he explains in terms of the 'third party.' The 'third party' is: 1.) different from the Other; 2.) also present in the Other; 3.) and 'he,' 'she,' 'they' – is also the other of the Other. This is where Levinas' ethics makes its final transition, introducing space instead of time as the condition of an authentic process of thinking. The irreducible encounter with the Other is necessarily plural. Levinas affirms the personal responsibility of preserving the awareness of the irreducibility of the encounter with the Other; at the same time, he introduces a third party which

cannot be forgotten or ignored, and takes great care that the account of this relation avoids universalization. He introduces the relation to a third party – She/He/They – as a moment of justice and as a corrective moment. I can fail in my recognition of the encounter with the Other, but I cannot be oblivious to it, or ignore it without committing injustice. Justice here is a corrective, that is, an engagement with a plurality which justice itself cannot ensure or make us forget: that first language, that response to the origin of right or the uniqueness of the Other.¹⁰

The question of uniqueness will also become a fundamental term in Adriana Cavarero's *For More than One Voice: Toward a Philosophy of Vocal Expression*. As she writes, the theme of uniqueness is decisive in what she perceives as the attack on Western metaphysics by Levinas and Arendt. Nevertheless, for Cavarero, their philosophical thinking remains oblivious to the voice. Language and thinking, even if placed in a spatial relation as acousticity, are still bound to the visual. She explains that the place of speech in Levinas is different from the place of interlocutors and that difference has the status of transcendence:

uniqueness transcends speech and the verbal system of signification. This “being in front of” is defined by Levinas as the face of the other—an expression that designates the irreducible uniqueness of every human being as a face that regards me; indeed, as the “face of the one who regards *me* par excellence.” The horizon is therefore visual.¹¹

3. Thinking and the Voice: Adriana Cavarero's philosophy as vocal expression

Exteriority remains confined to a visual horizon. The history of metaphysics should in fact finally be told as the strange history of the devocalization of logos.¹² The exclusion of voice has been central to the history of logic. According to Adriana Cavarero, that exclusion played an

¹⁰ See Maria Dimitrova, *Sociality and Justice: Towards Social Phenomenology* (Ibidem: Stuttgart, 2016).

¹¹ Adriana Cavarero, *For More than One Voice: Toward a Philosophy of Vocal Expression*, trans. Paul A. Kottman (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), p. 27.

¹² Ibid., p. 40.

important role in the definition of truth in videocentric terms. Voice appears from the very beginning as a term associated with the animal and non-rational aspects of life. In her philosophy, Cavarero traces the fundamental difference between the Hebrew tradition and the Greek tradition in relation to the voice. She observes that in the classical era, *phone*, the Greek word for voice, applied not only to the animal and the human but also to other sounds. And all these sonic phenomena were distinct from speech: “This confusion of voice and sound [...] seems to require the vocal to be measured first of all against the whole realm of sounds instead of depending right away on the system of speech.”¹³

The separation of voice from speech is later modulated and definitively compromised by the Aristotelian definition of *logos* as ‘*phone semantike*.’ Voice is included in thinking under the specific difference of signification. In this way, it is only the signifying voice, in its capacity as a bearer of meaning, that is inscribed in thinking; it does not figure as a corporeal element. Voice is captured in speech only as a signifying voice, which means that voice is equated to the pronouncing of words with meaning. Although the suggestion might look a little bizarre, it is basically that equivalence between the voice and words first pronounced and later kept in the mind that will dissolve the voice into the mental activity of thinking. And, according to Cavarero, there is an inherent ambiguity in the term ‘*logos*’ that oscillates between speech and thinking. Quoting Levinas, “*logos* as discourse is completely confused with *logos* as reason”¹⁴, she underlines that the logocentrism he had already denounced concentrates on those aspects which etymologically refer to “speaking” and “binding,” where “in its ordinary meaning, *logos* refers to the activity of the one who speaks, of the one who links nouns to verbs and to other parts of speech. *Logos* consists essentially in a joining together of words.”¹⁵ The oscillation between discourse (language) and reason (thinking) in some manner assigns to language the qualification of being primarily a semantic organization. As Cavarero notes, this relates directly to Aristotle, who, in the *Poetics*, speaks of *logos* as ‘*phone semantike*’ (signifying voice) and the understanding of language as a system of signification.¹⁶ Of primary importance, as Cavarero

¹³ Ibid., p. 19.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 33.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

astutely observes, is the interaction of that construction with another fundamental definition of Western philosophy provided by Aristotle, one that characterizes the human's difference from other living beings on the basis of language – as *zoon logos echon*, which literally means “the living creature who has *logos*.”¹⁷ This brings us to the consequence that the rationality of man is deeply connected to his signifying voice. But it is exactly the ‘signifying’ that marks his difference and separates man from the other animals; their voices are only a *semeion*, a sign of pleasure or pain:

The voice as prior to speech or independent of speech is therefore simply an animal voice—an *a-logic* and *a-semantic* phonation. And yet, even in the animal, it is already ‘sign’ or *semeion*, almost as if the voice could be nothing but a sign, nothing but the function of a nonvocal reality.¹⁸

It is in referring to a passage of the *Sophist* that Cavarero shows that, for Plato, thinking and *logos* are the same and are described both as dialogue (*dialogos*) and *dianoia*. Thinking (*dianoia*) is silent inner speech, a dialogue (*dialogos*) “without voice that the soul makes with itself.”¹⁹ The second movement of thought corresponds “to the flux of the soul that comes out of the mouth together with the voice.”²⁰ Cavarero maintains that this is not simply a descriptive or metaphorical play in which “thought appears as devocalized *logos* and *logos* appears as vocalized thought.”²¹ It is the conceptualization of thinking as devocalized *logos* that describes thinking as something internal, a movement ‘from the soul to the mouth’ that establishes thinking as prior to voice, as an externalization of the silent dialogue of the soul with itself: a sort of Narcissistic procedure that excludes the vocal and arrives at vocalization not through vocal and bodily experience but rather as speculation. Voice is presented here within a speculative function that “flows outward through the mouth and takes a voice, or is vocalized.”²² This brings us to Cavarero’s fourth point regarding devocalization, which she

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 34.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 44; Cavarero is quoting the *Sophist*.

²⁰ Ibid.; again quoting the *Sophist*.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

describes as a prevarication of the visual and the subordination of the vocal inscribed in Western metaphysics.

Something counterintuitive is at work here that we need to take into account, and it is precisely the fact that devocalization takes place in the act of vocalization, of utterance. It is by assigning to the voice a mere function of utterance that it becomes basically philosophically insignificant; the real place of signification is voiceless. The battle of knowledge will not take place in the realm of the voice. The word that is meaningful, which says something about something, that is, the predicate, is here to be understood as the final stage of devocalization which takes place in the act of vocalization. This is also the where the written confirms its importance as a stable, eternal, unchangeable substance, whereas the voice is invisible and permeable. What is important, in Platonic terms, is the otherworldly idea, which in Aristotelian terms can be viewed as the incipient concept, a function operative in a discourse to which we can apply rules and whose truth can be established. But in every transition from the word to the concept, or vice versa, philosophically we pay the price of a lost, if not simply excluded, corporeal vocal experience; that is, then, the importance of communication and its delivery: it is the loss of ourselves, of the very uniqueness imprinted in our voices.

Conclusion

Cavarero considers the devocalization of logos as a loss, not strictly in terms of the dichotomy of the oral and the written, but because it fundamentally excludes what is unique in us. It is the cancellation of what is unique in communication. In the communication of the *phone semantike* we communicate our uniqueness in the form of the foundation of all that is communicable. In that universalization, there is the loss of the corporeal, and Cavarero proposes a vocal ontology of uniqueness in which it is not attention to the vocalization of thinking that we need to restore; a new clear path opens before philosophy understood as vocal expression but also as a presence of the corporeal and the political. There are many possible ways of walking that path. And I am proposing one possible course, which connects philosophy with performance. Cavarero asks: In what manner can the effects of the devocalization of the logos, this silencing, be contested? She advances a method that is “faithful to the vocal phenomenology of uniqueness, and it consists in listening to speech as it resounds in the plurality of voices who—each

time and always addressing themselves to one another—speak.”²³

The suggestion is clear: to think of philosophical practice as both something deeply rooted in the matrix of life and as a collective practice that includes plurality in its very core. Both lines of inquiry connect philosophy to a live performance. A thinking that connects to the body and manifests itself in listening as a relation already inscribed in thinking, one given as what Luisa Muraro, another leading Italian philosopher, calls the matrix of life.²⁴ It is in this sense that we must look in more detail at the question of the symbolic order of the voice, and especially of the symbolic order of the mother, introduced by Muraro, to whom Cavarero indirectly refers in one passage:

During the first crucial months of life ... vocalic relationality takes its time and its pleasure before handing itself over to the system of language. The maternal tongue is not only the language that we speak because we learned it from our mothers. It is also, before this, the wordless language of vocalizations that the mother exchanges with the infant.²⁵

The second step will be to look at how philosophy as a vocal expression indicates thinking as a collective practice. What voice contributes to philosophy is the basis that allows a maturing of philosophy as a collective practice of thinking, which does not mean simply an assemblage of subjects, or speaking voices, but a complex procedure of the embodiment of thinking that includes relation, uniqueness, and responsibility in its very core. It is what, in the Hebrew tradition, transpired as a generative principle which is in some manner present in the question that Hannah Arendt brings to philosophy: are we able to think something new, and is there a way of thinking that is not a totalizing procedure?

What I am contending is that the intuition of philosophy as a process of vocalization of the logos, and the rewriting of the traditional canon so as to include absent voices, is deeply related to the practice of the feminist movement and of *Rivolta Femminile* in the late 1960s and

²³ Ibid., p. 14.

²⁴ See Luisa Muraro, *L'ordine simbolico della madre* (Roma: Editori Riuniti, 2006).

²⁵ Cavarero, *For More than One Voice*, p. 170.

1970s in Italy, and to the practices of *Autocoscenza*.²⁶ Mine may be perhaps another of those attempts at rewriting canons, or simply, perhaps, a way of scrutinizing experiences that have been registered as failures or disruptions. But the voice is not simply a philosophical turn. It is mainly a practice that connects thinking to bodies: in their uniqueness, politics and the realization of having a voice. “Speech, understood as speech that emits from someone’s mouth, is not simply the verbal sphere of expression; it is also the point of tension between the uniqueness of the voice and the system of language.”²⁷ It is exactly at that point that thinking bonds to performativity: to its transformational capacity rooted in the voice. “The task of the voice is therefore to be a pathway, or better, a pivotal joint between body and speech.”²⁸ But from all this another way of thinking about philosophy emerges, and above all another way of practicing it.

²⁶ See *Non credere di avere diritti. La generazione della libertà femminile nell’idea e nelle vicende di un gruppo di donne*, Libreria delle Donne di Milano (Torino: Rosenberg & Sellier, 1977).

²⁷ Cavarero, *For More than One Voice*, p. 14.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 15

The Approach to the Philosophy of Religious Asceticism

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Abstract: Asceticism is a lifestyle characterized by willingly abstaining from various worldly pleasures to reach a level of spiritual or religious fulfillment. Asceticism justifies the thought that the realization of spiritual and religious goals is hampered by indulging in the pleasures of the flesh, although it does not hold that the enjoyment of life itself is a negative thing. Therefore, asceticism is not virtuous but merely a means of purifying the body and allowing a divine connection that brings inner peace. Asceticism aims at achieving freedom from temptations and obligations, thereby bringing about peace of mind and clarity and power in thought.

Keywords: Religion, Asceticism, Ascetics, Renunciation, Philosophy, self-limiting, Abstinence

1. Introduction

Ascetics live a life of abstention willingly, deciding to self-deny themselves to explore spiritual benefits such as an increase in their faith, atonement of their sins, and also choosing salvation. Asceticism can be traced back to the early theology whereby it was practiced for spiritual development and for the ascetics to achieve higher religious sanctity. Asceticism is not a practice found in all ancient faiths¹. Some were in favor of hedonism, like the Egyptian mythology, Dionysian Mysteries, and Zoroastrianism. Asceticism is mostly pronounced in Christianity and Judaism, but it is noted that each religion has a unique perspective on it as it is observed in both faiths. The difference in the perspectives in the different faiths concerning asceticism results in different ascetic disciplines. However, the underlying philosophy and motivation of asceticism and motivation are similar in these religions.

¹ Giselle Bader, "Paula and Jerome: towards a theology of Late Antique pilgrimage." *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 18, no. 4 (2018): 344-353.

Asceticism is a multiplex of beliefs and practices in which different religions engage for a particular purpose, such as self-sanctification or veneration of God². So, it can rightly be viewed as a form of sacrifice from ascetics and clearly defined parameters for implementing it. We could take the case of Catholicism, whereby they practice celibacy, total denouncement from sexual pleasure, in exchange for totally surrendering to God and his will, among other reasons. Asceticism can be said to be a conscious motive of a group or an individual to denounce self, for instance, the vital psychological needs to achieve ecclesiastical goals and ultimate salvation of the soul. Ascetics disconnect themselves from the world with its temptations, which could be seen as an escape from material wealth, and instead contemplate the hidden truths and hope of a spiritual reward at a level of life that is higher.

Ascetics practically denounce material possession and even social titles and spend their lives in seclusion, fasting and spending most of their time attending and reflecting on spiritual matters. Historically, asceticism was practiced by Christian and Judaic religions³. There exists a belief by denominations on God's metaphysical character of relating with humans who lead a good life by following certain ascetic disciplines.

An analysis of the concept further shows it is a way of life whereby the ascetics willingly denounce self and worldly pleasures for spiritual virtues that are at odds with typical ways of life. It has also been argued that asceticism was practiced by religions as a deliberate form of punishment to oneself for a given religious course, as seen in the case of self-inflicting pain to the body.

2. Theoretical framework

The models of tradition, religious doctrines, and frameworks of philosophy are put together to hold up the underlying ideologies and concepts in the religious asceticism practices for realizing spiritual divinity and religious sanctity. Charles Darwin, in his theory of behavioral evolution, showed the crucial role of fundamental beliefs of human behavior and

² Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Treasures old and new: essays in the theology of the Pentateuch* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2004).

³ Cf. Oliver Freiberger, ed. *Asceticism and its Critics: historical accounts and comparative perspective* (Oxford University Press, 2006).

existence: inheritance, variation, natural selection, and the struggle for existence⁴. As explained in the behavioral theory of evolution, the main facet of enculturation shows that the sociocultural beliefs of human society are carried from one generation to the next through social learning.

The patterns of thought and action are further put into shape by the natural inclination, desires, and passion of human evolution that, in a large way, accounts for human behavior. From a broader point of view, asceticism scrutinizes the behavioral practice of persons seeking to deny natural impulses, desires, and passions, as an individual lives a systematic life that is self-limiting to achieve greater spiritual results⁵.

Retrospectively, the theory developed by Charles Darwin on behavioral evolution identified that the thought and actions among individuals are triggered by desires and natural impulses, which are coordinated to serve the ultimate purpose of struggle and survival for existence. When we look at the behavioral characteristics of people, we could see a challenge to the ascetic practice of the denial of physical or psychological desires for achieving a spiritual ideal or goal by the human behavioral impulses, desires, and tendencies⁶.

The Monasticism traditional framework of religious asceticism holds that a different physical and social structure is made and practiced, seeking to do away with the consumption of material things, activities of pleasure, and desires in return for spiritual divinity. For instance, the Christian monks dress differently, separating themselves from the rest of the community. Socially, the monks are different in how they behave through self-limitation. The monks are formally attached to the guardianship of other monks; it could be argued that they are gathered in order to establish a formalized guidance framework.

⁴ John Langton, "Darwinism and the behavioral theory of sociocultural evolution: an analysis." *American Journal of Sociology* 85, no. 2 (1979): 288-309.

⁵ Carl Thoresen, "Spirituality and health: Is there a relationship?" *Journal of health psychology* 4, no. 3 (1999): 291-300.

⁶ Cf. William Irvine, *B. A guide to the good life: The ancient art of Stoic joy* (Oxford University Press, 2008).

3. Forms of Religious Asceticism

Asceticism is an imperative element in spiritual development. Different religions propose different types of such austerity. They include abstinence from sexual pleasure, fasting, solitude from societal structure, renunciation of belongings or limitations, and even self-inflicted punishment, among many others. Asceticism, when looked at from a wider perspective, develops from the daily life demands that are driven by basic wants⁷. Hence by limiting themselves from these basic daily wants and desires, ascetics feel they are fulfilling their spiritual meaning in life. A number of these ascetic practices will be discussed in length.

3.1. Fasting

Fasting is denying oneself food or drinks for a period of time or restricting their intake and is often associated with religious customs. Fasting varies in length, degree, and even in its purpose, in which a resolute individual denies themselves all types of food and drinks. In Christianity, fasting often takes place in the lent period. In Judaism, fasting is practiced from sunrise to sunset, and there is total abstinence from all kinds of drinks and foods⁸. Fasting can be considered as an act of detaching oneself from the material (food and beverages) and all its pleasures hence aiding ascetics in fulfilling their spiritual goals.

3.2. Celibacy

This is yet another form of asceticism practiced through abstinence from sexual activities and related bodily pleasures for religious goals. It is concerned with ascetics detaching themselves from the secular environment or disentangling themselves from what they view as unclean. Celibacy acts as a service to the development of higher spiritual divinity and

⁷ Ann Swidler, "Culture in action: Symbols and strategies." *American sociological review* (1986): 273-286.

⁸ Carla Venegas-Borsellino and Robert G. Martindale. "From religion to secularism: the benefits of fasting." *Current nutrition reports* 7, no. 3 (2018): 131-138.

connection by establishing self-discipline and moral principles⁹. In the spiritual realm, celibacy is one of the most important aspects of asceticism. Therefore, it involves several disciplines that include a renunciation of chastity and societal vows. Celibacy and renunciation, in particular, are a goal for the monastic (ascetic) life by living a pure life without shame in the spirit and the body.

In the Christian holy book, the Bible, Paul encourages celibacy as a good way to lead a life as he said it made people free from the worries of the world such as sexual intercourse and having children, thus endorsing the connection of believers to the Christian way of life. By the above narrative, ascetics go beyond their psychological rights with the hope of attaining total freedom of the self for the service of evangelism. This kind of evaluation provokes the parenting role and the sense of child upbringing, which is considered to be a sacrifice made by ascetics considering that family building is one of the normal missions of human life. This brings in the factor of renouncing both the psychological and material things and, in turn, committing oneself to the pursuit of religious and personal salvation.

3.3. *Solitude*

Ascetics withdraw from society and go to mountains, deserts, and other remote places for religion's sake. They seek to have mental and physical seclusion from the normal daily encounter with society at large. By withdrawing oneself from society, the incentive to sin is removed, and the odds of group sin are reduced. Solitude is type of social renunciation by embracing a way of life that is atypical. Ascetics, through social renunciation, get away from social interference, thus endorsing minimal or no social pressures and routines. Asceticism is not only about material renunciation but also the adoption of a new social spectrum driven and guided by religious pursuits.

⁹ Cf. Heshmat Fawzy Keroloss, "Virginity in the early Church: The meanings and motives of sexual renunciation in the first four centuries." PhD diss., Fordham University, 1996.

3.4. *Nocturnal Vigils*

In this form of asceticism, there is willful self-denial of sleep for a specific time of the night or even the whole night. Ascetics at this time pray, contemplate and offer sacrifices for a particular spiritual fulfillment. Sleep signifies resting, and when an ascetic renounces sleep they deny themselves a would-be bodily pleasure. Arguably, it is a worthy sacrifice in achieving a fulfilled religious end. Willful renunciation of sleep is a challenging activity that influences spiritual development among individuals practicing asceticism.

3.5. *Asceticism pain*

Painful workouts like castration, self-laceration, and flagellation are among the kinds of pain practiced in asceticism for religious purposes. It teaches individuals to fully surrender, and to embrace self-transcendent, ecstasy experience, and other forms of consciousness. Ascetic pain is considered an expression of sacrifice and the price offered for spiritual nourishment for individuals willing to undertake it¹⁰.

4. **Asceticism in Christianity and Judaism**

Christian and Judaic faith religions practice diverse rituals due to their differing religious doctrines. They are also involved in asceticism at different levels, some being similar to both faiths, while others completely differ.

4.1. *Christian religious asceticism*

Christians define asceticism as a spiritual discipline that does not emphasize the acquisition of pleasures of the world but allows believers to be focused on improving and developing their spiritual lives¹¹. Christian asceticism involves extreme abstinence or renunciation from bodily and earthly pleasure to gain spiritual fulfillment. The self-limitation is designed such that its practices result in the development of morality and

¹⁰ Cf. Glucklich, Ariel. *Sacred pain: Hurting the body for the sake of the soul* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

¹¹ Cf. Lawrence Cunningham and Keith J. Egan. *Christian spirituality: themes from the tradition* (Paulist Press), 1996.

self-discipline, which are facilitators of acquiring greater religious piety.

In other cases, asceticism has been alleged to be similar to monasteries in that monasticism necessitated withdrawing from society to execute religious obligations. Studies have brought out the idea that being ascetic is a typical habit among religious leaders and monks in the Christian faith, but this does not imply that all ascetics are religious leaders or monks. Practices of asceticism do not necessarily mean that the flesh is sinful. Rather, they show 'the meat is stronger than the spirit', which is why they go to such lengths to refuse the fleshly or earthly delights to refresh their brain or 'liberate' the spirit. Material transcendence is the basis and measure of asceticism for Christians, so it is equated to common practices such as fasting and recollection of the soul for eschatological perfection or reward.

Contemporary Christians justify their activities of asceticism by drawing on passages from the Bible, including 1 Peter 2:11 and 1 Corinthians 9: 27, where their austerity was demonstrated in various ways. The ways included night vigils, fasting, contemplating, and giving offerings and sacrifices. Fundamentally, Christian asceticism drew extensively from Judaism, citing the Essenes, a mystical Judaic sect whose simple rituals were comparable to that of monks.

Christians are said to have learnt and imitated their asceticism from the teachings of Christ; hence it is not a spontaneous arrangement. The Christian ascetic ideals have roots in their fundamental source, which is Jesus Christ and his teachings. By following the teachings, Christians engage in anti-worldly behaviors, which to them guarantee the attainment of spiritual perfection and purification.

Constantine's era was faced with challenges and restrictions that affected the religious society members in how they practiced religion and cultural activities as mediated by laws endorsed by the contemporary administrations¹². In this period, asceticism and monasticism came about due to the endorsement of Christianity by the government, which was earlier forbidden by the Roman and Jewish administrations. The prior restrictions forced people to turn their back on culture, escaping to the desert in a bid to isolate themselves from societies and crowded

¹² Cf. Brian Z. Tamanaha, *On the rule of law: History, politics, theory* (Cambridge University Press, 2004).

places to undertake ritual practice and nourishment via monasticism and asceticism. Families and individuals in Roman Catholicism, the world's foremost Christian Church, are encouraged to live collectively while adhering to their distinct ascetic traditions by Protestant Christians.

4.2. Judaic religious asceticism

Judaism's practice of asceticism is based on the belief that denial of the desires of the flesh and self-mortification can bring man to a higher spiritual state. Judaism did not believe in the freeing of the soul through the subjugation of the flesh, as was the belief in religions based on anthropological dualism. Restrictions were voluntary and involved self-communion, with the religion comprising many groups including the Rechabites. The Rechabites were abstainers who did not drink wine.

Historical events and personal motivation were the main driving forces of asceticism in Judaism. The importance of asceticism among the Rabbis lies in the end which they proposed to achieve and not in the pains and privations a man subjected himself to.

A scholar by the name of Ephraim E. Urbach concluded that the true ascetic practices in ancient Judaism were very brief, narrow, and syncretistic. He believed that Philo, Hellenism, and the Church Fathers practiced real asceticism. These three groups practiced abstinence which is seen as an opposition of two forces: the soul and the body. The Rabbinic teachings are completely different from these as the teachings are motivated by a fear of sin, a need to avoid doing evil, and a need for acts of making amends for repentance. These were acts of worship in Rabbinic teachings which contained no asceticism.

The Biblical narrative, Genesis 1:29, shows Jews abstaining from eating meat and, later on, the eating of meat was allowed to continue, Genesis 9:2. After the temple in Jerusalem was destroyed, there was a wave of asceticism. It resulted in many people avoiding meat and wine as a sign of mourning. Later the practice was dropped as it was not accepted as a permanent practice. Jews, especially the Nazarites, carried on with the practice of abstinence from drinking wine and cutting off their hair as to them it was an expression of holiness.

In practicing asceticism, the Biblical Jews resorted to fasting when in distress while commemorating historical tragedies. At the time the Jerusalem temple was destroyed, four annual days were set aside for its commemoration. The people had the belief that anyone who would not

share in distress would have no part in the consolation of the people. There is also the communal fast of Esther which has survived to the present day. It follows the ancient fasting patterns, so is not considered an expression of asceticism. It involves preparation for eating the sacrificial or festive meal. This act varied with the main intention of fasting being a form of repentance for personal sins as is widely attested in the Bible.

5. Importance of Asceticism

The main purpose of asceticism revolves around the establishment of a higher spiritual divinity, religious piety, and moral behavior through practices that are self-limiting and the renouncing of pleasurable worldly activities. Asceticism allows for spiritual growth through the acquisition and cultivation of ideas and perception of the truth in correspondence with the fundamental desire for genuine reality.

Asceticism, through its many activities, facilitates the assimilation of an individual into society. Asceticism serves the cultural purpose of orientating individuals or a community to their cultural surroundings and the unsaid¹³. Ascetics see and interpret the world differently in accordance with their ascetic practices. At its most fundamental level, asceticism preserves the ascetic's perceptions and senses; preservation is predicated on the theological tradition and its stated purposes. Asceticism, however, does not have any political, social, or economic intentions, but is purely for religious and spiritual nourishment. In some instances, asceticism could function as a rehabilitative process for character development and molding of the entire personality to attain virtue for the good of society.

¹³ Burabari Sunday Deezia, "Asceticism: A match towards the absolute." *IAFOR Journal of Ethics, Religion and Philosophy*, 3, no. 2 (2017).

Gadamer's Hermeneutical Notion of Mental Health

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Abstract: Poor mental health is increasingly becoming a socio-economic burden as the number of people affected continues to rise. The effectiveness of dealing with this health issue has been hampered by reliance on traditional explanations for the problem. Religion and supernatural powers have been used to explain the causes of mental illnesses. However, these explanations have not been adequate, considering that other causes do not fall under these two categories. Hard economic times have been identified as the leading cause of mental illnesses as people cannot cope with the high cost of living. Without a proper diagnosis of the problem, it is unlikely that a solution will be found. Mental healthcare providers should shift to Gadamerian Hermeneutics, which advocates for consideration of new causes of the problem.

Keywords: Gadamerian Hermeneutics, mental health, psychiatric disorders, mental disorders, mental healthcare professionals

Poor mental health causes individual suffering and a significant increase in socio-economic burdens, leading to a reduction in per capita real income growth. The adverse implications of mental health issues on the economy and individuals have forced governments to focus on improving health facilities and care. However, the healthcare sector currently lacks a clear understanding of the concept of mental health. The situation could hinder governments' efforts in addressing the increasing cases of costly mental health issues. The article holds that a comprehensive analysis of Gadamer's philosophical work could help healthcare professionals develop new philosophical interpretation dimensions. Gadamer's philosophical work recommends the adoption of reflective metapraxis, which could help to guide significant efforts to interpret human experiences. Notably, the proposed philosophical approach presents insights on hermeneutic reflection, which can guide health care professionals in interpreting mental health situations, mainly when dealing with and interacting with patients. One of the main goals of mental health care pro-

professionals, including psychiatrists and psychologists, is to listen and gain an understanding or make sense of patients' experiences, such as mood and suicidality. By understanding the philosophical groundings and hermeneutic approaches to characteristics of effective mental health practices, psychiatrists and mental health care providers will better understand the patient's issues and develop practical solutions.

Current patterns of mental disorders

Mental disorders are increasingly causing reduced quality of life and suffering for the victims. In addition, the growing cases of mental disorders are associated with significant economic burdens globally. Recent estimates reveal that 20% of the population in industrialized economies is suffering from mental disorders.¹ Current forecasts estimate that the economic burden caused by mental disorders will continue to grow significantly in the coming years. As a result, governments and societies recognize that the reduction of mental distress and disorders are priority health areas of concern. Historically, religious aspects and supernatural powers have been used to explain the causes of mental disorders. However, such interpretations remained unconvincing and were surrounded by controversies. The situation led to continued efforts in research, mainly to provide more alternative ways of examining and addressing psychiatric disorders. Recent developments include technological advancements and the improved neurological position of psychiatric disorders, which has helped to demonstrate a clear link between the human brain, psychiatric disorders, and biological causes. However, the existing data indicates growing cases of mental disorders. Such findings demonstrate that recent technological developments have not helped adequately address the societal challenges of mental disorders. In addition, such findings demonstrate that overreliance on technological and biological interpretations of mental disorders does not produce the desired outcomes. The article proposes that developing a practical philosophical stance on psychiatric disorders could address the current issues

¹ Gerhard Müller et al., "Socio-Economic Consequences of Mental Distress: Quantifying the Impact of Self-Reported Mental Distress on the Days of Incapacity to Work and Medical Costs in Two Years: A Longitudinal Study in Germany," *BMC Public Health* 21, no. 1 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-021-10637-8>.

and provide psychiatrists with better psychotherapeutic options in handling patients with mental health disorders.

Traditional frameworks dealing with psychotherapy

The philosophical accounts of Plato, Sigmund Freud, and Alfred Adler provide insights into the development of the human mind and its relationship with mental disorders. Plato held that the mind and the body are separate entities and should be treated as such. Plato proved that the mind and the body operate differently.² However, he noted that the physical body could help reveal vital signs and symptoms of a dysfunctional mind. It was Plato who argued that immorality is to the soul what disease is to the body, thus recommending that individuals maintain a proper balance between a healthy body and a healthy soul. He believed that immoral behaviors were contrary to nature but treatable.

Sigmund Freud believed that psychotherapy sciences are based on the process where causal factors influence human conditions following the cause and effect pattern. Alfred Adler explained inferiority feelings as sources of human striving. An individual who develops or experiences an inferiority complex will likely become helpless and fail to cope with actual life demands. Further analysis of Freud's and Adler's hypotheses demonstrates the recognition of individuals as social beings shaped by their environment. While Freud emphasizes unconscious drives, Adler demonstrates each person's uniqueness as a critical element in establishing and redirecting their experiences. However, a philosophical view different from Plato, Freud, and other traditional frameworks on psychotherapy is needed to enhance understanding of human behaviors and incorporate other unique features of human existence, such as self-relatedness and creativity. The new approach would include, simultaneously, views from various disciplines and fields to analyze the nature of mental illnesses.

Gadamer's Hermeneutics

Gadamer's Hermeneutics presents an alternative and practical dimension

² Marke Ahonen, "Ancient Philosophers on Mental Illness," *History of Psychiatry* 30, no. 1 (September 2018): 3-18, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0957154x18803508>.

of interpreting mental health. Gadamer's Hermeneutics encourages psychiatrists to take a broader view of life and the causal reasons when examining psychiatric disorders. Gadamer, in the hermeneutics, identifies humans as beings restrained through their vantage points introduced through the horizon concept.³ The concept's importance is that it improves our understanding or interpretation of our world and others' world. Gadamer emphasizes that individuals should have horizons that allow them to open to the larger picture of understanding. Relevant to the provision of mental health care is an observation that the horizon context encourages conversations as part of relentless efforts to understand the situation of others' experiences. For instance, a health care provider can initiate a conversation or session of constant conversations to promote their understanding of others' self-identity or to avoid restricted judgments based on first impressions of others. The horizon is a range of visions, including everything observable from a given vantage point. The horizon is critical and is a first step towards opening up to an individual's more comprehensive picture of understanding.

Gadamer reiterates the idea of transposing oneself to others to maximize the idea of openness to others' horizons. However, this transposing of oneself idea does not imply that individuals leave their horizons to join others'. It encourages a higher form of particularity when dealing with or transposing oneself in regards to others. The idea of openness to others' horizons encourages individuals to put themselves in the shoes of others to help understand their situation and become conscious of others. Gadamer's line of thought recounts how individuals are affected, in hope and fear, by that which is close to them. Gadamer uses hermeneutical grounds to present a philosophy that encourages individuals to make efforts to understand the incomprehensible. In such cases, the proposed philosophical grounds would reduce the overall time required by psychiatrists and psychotherapists to decipher mental health issues facing their clients. More clearly, Gadamer's hermeneutic approach requires mental health care providers to withdraw from the point of view which forces them to diagnose patients as individuals who lack something. Instead, medical practitioners identify mental disorder pa-

³ Tanya Sue D. Barayuga, "Gadamer and Healing," *International Journal of Science and Research (IJSR)* 10, no. 6 (2021): 78-83, <https://doi.org/10.21275/SR21528134417>.

tients as individuals who view themselves as unwell and that undergoing such conditions is normal and acceptable. The hermeneutic approach encourages medical practitioners to remain open to changing negative images associated with an individual's past to help provide high-quality care and support the mentally ill patient.

Hermeneutics refers to the art of interpretation that presents critical grounds for philosophical thinking relevant to human and social sciences. Hermeneutic studies primarily associate this art of understanding with the interpretation of texts. However, hermeneutics includes the process of interpretation and understanding in the entire life experience process in which aspects of human reality are expressed through written texts as well as spoken and symbolic languages. The Gadamerian hermeneutical ontology considers the being and seeks to understand through experiences.⁴ Therefore, a hermeneutic perspective can enable health care providers dealing with mental health patients to examine the practical meaning of their experiences. As a result, the practitioners would orientate their clinical practices and situations towards helping such patients heal. In addition, practitioners adopting hermeneutic perspectives can evoke and interpret the implied moral experiences necessary in providing mental health care. Notably, applying the hermeneutic approach enables practitioners dealing with mental health patients to consider several contexts, including the patient's social, personal, and political contexts in order to decipher meaning⁵. The ability to bring a patient's situation into various perspectives creates a space where practitioners can establish new views and develop practices that could significantly improve patient outcomes.

Gadamer's hermeneutics emphasizes the concept of ontological presence in dialogue. The philosopher uses the hermeneutic circle to express the ontological underpinnings critical to the interpretation and understanding processes. In addition, Gadamer uses the concepts of his-

⁴ Roya Haghiri-Vijeh and Carol McDonald, "Gadamerian Hermeneutics with Intersectionality as an Analytical Lens," *Journal of Applied Hermeneutics*, 2022, 1-19, <https://doi.org/10.11575/jah.v2022i2022.74902>.

⁵ Michael TH Wong. "Values, Meanings, Hermeneutics and Mental Health." In *International Perspectives in Values-Based Mental Health Practice*, (Springer, Cham, 2021), 341-349.

toricity and prejudices to inform his ontological hermeneutics.⁶ Such concepts make significant contributions to the ontological perspective in Gadamerian hermeneutics. As such, practitioners relying on such perspectives are able to develop the capacity to illuminate the currently evolving, changing, and multiple realities that affect patients' and practitioners' performances. Gadamerian hermeneutics identifies the hermeneutic circle as a critical ontological understanding element. The perspective describes the circle's movement as a spiral, which is a practical description of how the practitioners or users of the perspective achieve the necessary understanding. The spiral or circular movement is critical since most factors requiring interpretation cannot be understood at once. As interpreters make significant reflections on workplace prejudices, the hermeneutic circle is set in a perpetual movement. Therefore, these movements allow the interpreters to visit and revisit understandings throughout the hermeneutic project.

The philosophical comprehension of mental illness using Gadamer's hermeneutics

Mental health issues remain a critical area of concern for global healthcare systems. However, most practitioners and mental health care experts rely on brain treatment and external signs and systems since such conditions are treated as brain problems. Notably, the growing cases of mental illness reveal a further need to explore various philosophical dimensions that could improve the interpretation of mental health and improve practitioners' performances. These philosophical approaches would help enhance mental health interpretations and create a new path for dialogue and reasoning. Gadamer's hermeneutics is one such philosophical approach that places greater emphasis on dialogue. The recommended approach is aligned with the philosophy of psychiatric disorders, which encourages engagements that enhance the interpretation of human experiences while at the same time taking a broader view of life. The philosophical approach requires psychiatrists to improve patient dialogue and involvement in health care decisions⁷. Other fundamental tenets of the proposed philosophical approach include empathy, passion, and caring, all of which are

⁶ Roya Haghiri-Vijeh and Carol McDonald, *Ontological Presence in Dialogue*, 5.

⁷ Roya Haghiri-Vijeh and Carol McDonald, *Ontological Presence in Dialogue*, p. 5.

critical for the mentally-ill patient's healing process.

Gadamer's hermeneutics presents an advancement of philosophical and social variants suggested by several scholars on hermeneutic theories. Gadamer held that hermeneutics, as the study of interpretations, should focus on human understanding of the social environment. However, this would require a specific focus on generating meaningful interpretations from such texts. Therefore, the hermeneutic process involves readers encountering texts to construct meaningful explanations and observations. Consequently, the concept of prejudices, critical in understanding mental health issues, unavoidably becomes a central focus point in Gadamer's hermeneutics. Gadamer identifies prejudice as the reader's assumptions concerning the provided texts, truth, and realities.⁸ Gadamer's hermeneutics is based on foundational insights that such prejudices make understanding more possible rather than obstructing it. In addition, prejudice presents a critical precondition that facilitates the achievement of the desired understanding. Importantly, Gadamer argues against an observation commonly held today that prejudice equals animus towards specific groups of people. Instead, the philosopher conceptualized prejudice as an ontological preconception based on an individual's unique situation. Such circumstances could include significant life events, social locations, or even historical situatedness. The interpretation implies that all forms of prejudice highlight critical aspects of texts or social worlds that ultimately facilitate understanding. Such understanding is achieved through the formation of the conceptual lens, identified as horizons that enable the organization of information relating to the social world and the drawing of informative conclusions. Overall, the philosophical perspectives from Gadamer's hermeneutics demonstrate that personal experiences form the basis of preconceived ideas and are necessary for initiating an understanding process.

Apart from prejudice, Gadamer also explains how historicity shapes readers' understanding. He argued that the presence of the hermeneutic circle relies on the rediscovery process; that is, making what has once occurred in the past reappear in a new shape. Although hermeneutics are ontological per se, the philosopher adds that each inter-

⁸ Reed T. DeAngelis, John P. Bartkowski, and Xiaohe Xu, "Scriptural Coping: An Empirical Test of Hermeneutic Theory," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 2018, 175-191, <https://doi.org/10.1111/jssr.12576>, 176.

preter's historicity, universality, and fluidity play a crucial role in shaping hermeneutics⁹. In dealing with mentally ill patients, such arguments imply that patients are not merely situated in their historical past; rather, their social past influences how they conceive themselves and their future possibilities.

The Importance of Understanding Mental Disorders

A clear understanding of the underlying causes of mental disorders should always be the first step when dealing with mental illnesses¹⁰. Healthcare institutions have invested a lot of time and resources to determine the causes of most mental disorders affecting people. These studies aim to determine the real reasons why people suffer from mental disorders in an attempt to determine the most appropriate solution. Healthcare professionals and researchers have moved from the traditional neurological and biological approaches that explain these illnesses' causes. These researchers are now able to interpret concepts beyond what was previously understood¹¹. Neurological causes relate to the interrupted transmission of important messages to the brain due to malfunctioning neurons responsible for making these communications. Biological causes concern pathogens' role as disease-causing agents. However, healthcare professionals and researchers have realized that the causes of some of these disorders are neither biological nor neurological. The challenging economic times that characterize modern society have also been blamed for this situation. People face problems they had not anticipated, leading to a mental shutdown. Understanding these alternative causes will help healthcare professionals to make an accurate diagnosis and recommend the appropriate treatment. Failing to include these alternative causes will lead to instances of misdiagnosis and, consequently, the wrong treatment.

These efforts, however, are not complemented by equal dedication from authors who write publications related to mental health disorders.

⁹ Kenneth R. Westphal, "Kant, Hegel and the Historicity of Pure Reason." *The Palgrave Hegel Handbook* (2020), 45-64.

¹⁰ Anthony Vincent Fernandez, "From Phenomenological Psychopathology to Neurodiversity and Mad Pride: Reflections on Prejudice," *Journal of Critical Phenomenology* 3, no. 2 (2020): 19-22.

¹¹ Nina Elisabeth Blegen, Katie Eriksson, and Terese Bondas, "Through the Depths and Heights of Darkness; Mothers as Patients in Psychiatric Care." *Scandinavian Journal of Caring Sciences* 28, no. 4 (2014): 852-860.

In most cases, such authors have concentrated on the traditional causes of mental diseases while ignoring emerging knowledge on other possible causes. Migration challenges, for example, have been found to be a major cause of mental illness issues among immigrants¹². Reading such publications can be misleading as they show incomplete and outdated information. Healthcare professionals who rely on such publications limit themselves to the few options provided. As a result, they will not adopt a holistic approach to diagnosing and treating mental disorders. Authors who are unwilling to accept the changes that have taken place in the healthcare sector will continue to be a significant setback to efforts to combat mental disorders.

Mental health diseases rank high amongst the most prevalent healthcare issues globally. The World Health Organization reports that mental health issues are more common than other forms of chronic illnesses. The organization estimates that more than 87% of the global population has at some point suffered from a mental issue caused by pressure and stress. In addition, it shows that mental illnesses have life-long complications, and patients will have to cope with treatment approaches for life. However, despite these statistics showing that mental illness is an issue requiring prompt action, there has been a slow uptake of the emerging trends in managing this health issue.

Although these conditions are highly prevalent, psychiatry has a conflict on the best way to manage health issues. The causative factors of these conditions are numerous but form areas of critical concern¹³. For instance, life has changed, and economic demands have made people strive to earn a living. There has been increased work-related pressure, which has seen the rise of psychotic disorders as people are unable to meet their personal needs and that of their families. Therefore, it has become essential for psychiatry to tighten its grip on the best interventional approaches to limit such conditions. Professional bodies in healthcare should come together and devise ways to integrate new knowledge into medical practice to ensure that patients do not lose out on effective medical treatment of their disorders.

¹² Haghiri-Vijeh, Roya, and Carol McDonald. "Gadamerian Hermeneutics with Intersectionality as an Analytical Lens," 1–19.

¹³ Anton-Hermann Chroust, "The Organization of the Corpus Platonicum in antiquity." *Hermes* 93, no. H. 1 (1965): 34–46.

Several modern theories can be used to enrich the field of medicine concerning the treatment of mental disorders. Gadamer's hermeneutics proposes utilizing the theory of the mind as a strategy to deal with this problem. According to this theory, three critical factors determine mental health issues. The first is a dialogue where the patient and the caregiver engage in a conversation to raise the issues of concern. During this dialogue, the patient is diagnosed based on what they present to the doctor. Through the dialogue, the doctor will be able to tell whether factors such as religion have an influence on their perception towards their mental issues. The patient is required to be truthful in order to enable the healthcare professional to make the right diagnosis. Healthcare professionals, on their part, are required to be highly qualified to be in a position to handle all cases from the patients. They are also required to be open to the possibility of alternative treatment approaches. The second element in this theory is apprehension, where there is a large amount of tension during the diagnosis process. The final component of this theory is an interpretation where the doctor considers all the facts presented by the patient and relates them to known causes.

The relevance of this study cannot be overstated, considering that it came at a time when the world was dealing with the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic brought about a lot of pressure, leading some people to reach their breaking point. Critically, the pandemic resulted in job loss for millions of people who had nothing else to depend on after losing their sole source of livelihood. When such people cannot meet the needs of their families and dependents due to lost income, they can quickly become stressed and eventually develop mental disorders such as depression. Such a situation occurs when the socio-economic burden becomes too much for them to bear¹⁴. The situation has led to an increase in the number of people seeking mental health services in most hospitals. The increased cases of mental health problems have no relationship to the traditional factors that have for a long time been associated with mental health problems. Healthcare experts

¹⁴ Gerhard Müller include all authors., "Socio-Economic Consequences of Mental Distress: Quantifying the Impact of Self-Reported Mental Distress on the Days of Incapacity to Work and Medical Costs in a Two-Year Period: A Longitudinal Study in Germany." *BMC Public Health* 21, no. 1 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-021-10637-8>.

dealing with these patients must change their approach and consider the circumstances in which these cases arise. This is the only way that they can respond to the emerging healthcare needs for mentally ill patients. They must admit that neurological issues neither cause these cases nor are they a result of biological factors. They must be aware that these cases may also result from changes in the social environment, such as job loss or the breaking apart of families. These new causes should form the basis of any medical intervention if positive outcomes are to be achieved.

The Individual Consequences of Hate Speech: A Comparison of Defamation and Hate Speech/Group Libel

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Abstract: There is a general consensus on the importance of having laws against individual-related defamation (usually called defamation) while at the same time there is an ongoing discussion about whether to hold on to the laws against group-related defamation (usually called hate speech or group libel). In Europe the discussion concerns whether to abrogate the hate speech laws that have been enforced for decades, while in the USA the question is rather about whether one should pass laws against hate speech at all (since the USA has never had such a law). The main difference between defamation against individuals and defamation against groups is that in the first case the defamation is targeted against one named individual, while in the second case it is targeted against multiple unnamed individuals who belong to the same minority group. I hold that the consequences of defamatory speech are very similar in both cases and that the speech likewise is harmful in both cases. Thus, I argue that if one passes laws against defamation, it should logically follow that one also passes laws against hate speech.

Keywords: Defamation, Hate Speech/Group Libel, Harm, Consequences, USA, Europe

1. Introduction

The discussion about freedom of speech and whether there should be any boundaries on speech is an ongoing debate, which is very closely related to the debate about democracy.¹ Prominent voices are opposing the laws against hate speech, claiming that they are a hindrance to the essen-

¹ Freedom of speech characterizes democracies after the Enlightenment as well as the democracies in ancient Greece. At the same time, other political systems such as dictatorships are characterized by their censorship.

tial democratic right of freedom of speech. However, it is rare to hear those same voices opposing the laws against defamation with the same arguments.

There are originally two main reasons for passing laws against defamation:

- 1) The prevention of injury/harm to individuals.
- 2) The prevention of instability in society.

The first reason is clearly reflected in various contemporary formulations of laws against defamation. Some formulations are primarily focused on injury or harm to a target's reputation, others on personal harm in general. Harm to a reputation, however, does also undoubtedly have harmful effects on other aspects of a person's life. The second reason is one that originates from the older term 'breach of the peace'; a formulation we do not find in contemporary laws against defamation.² Nowadays we do, however, find the formulation 'public order' in a number of laws and acts, e.g. the British Public Order Act from 1986, which includes the act against hate speech.³

In this article, I exclusively focus on the first of the two above mentioned reasons for passing laws against hate speech/group libel, namely the harm that defamatory speech causes its targets. My focus is not on discussing whether laws against defamation are grounded on valid and just foundations (i.e. that it is rational to pass laws against defamation), but solely on arguing that *if* one supports the laws against defamation on a harm-based principle, *then* one should likewise support the laws against hate speech/group libel.⁴ I shall discuss this further in the fourth section of this article.

In order to underline my points, I shall present two hypothetical cases, depicting two different individuals exposed to defamation: the former to individual defamation, the latter to hate speech/ group libel. Although the cases are mere illustrations, I consider them to have argumentative value since they are, I maintain, based on what one could call 'typical' experiences of targets of, respectively, individual defamation and hate speech/group libel; they may also help us in envisaging the harmful con-

² The term is, however, still present in a few other laws.

³ "Public Order Act 1986," accessed September 18, 2022, <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1986/64/contents>.

⁴ Group defamation (as well as group libel) is an older term for hate speech.

sequences that targets of hate speech/group libel often encounter. In addition to this, they can highlight the similar forms of harm that defamation and hate speech/group libel often cause their victims. In the second section, I shall define the concepts of defamation, group libel and hate speech, whilst in the third section I shall elaborate on harm-based arguments seen from different ethical perspectives. In the fifth section, I take a close look at one of the most widespread arguments of opponents of hate speech laws, namely the argument from political speech.

The discussion in this paper is primarily based on philosophical argumentation and hence does not evaluate legal systems in any depth. Although the paper is about the passing of certain laws, legal systems do not play any important role in it, since the main point of the paper is to emphasize the similar consequences that targets of defamation and targets of hate speech/group libel experience. These consequences, which in many cases include harm to victims, are not affected by particular legal systems per se, but they may be lessened if a state has passed laws against defamation and hate speech.

Importantly, this argument is based on the fact that theorists in general agree that hate speech causes harm to its targets. Both deontologists and consequentialists recognize that there are circumstances in which hate speech violates basic rights of its targets; that is, something which is harmful to the targets and which is therefore reason for prohibiting (some forms of) hate speech by law. Even though deontologists and consequentialists disagree on other circumstances around hate speech, the agreement they express about the harm that hate speech *in some cases* causes its targets is essential to the argument of this paper.

2. The Concepts of Defamation, Hate Speech and Group Libel

Defamation is generally defined in terms such as *the act of communicating false statements about a person that injure the reputation of that person and bring him/her into disrepute*.⁵ As already indicated, the formulations of defamation laws vary slightly among different countries (as well as among different states in the USA), but they all emphasize the injury or harm of which targets of defamation are victims of.

⁵ Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, s.v. “defamation,” accessed September 18, 2022, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/defamation>.

Hate speech is generally defined in terms such as *speech expressing hatred towards a particular group of people based on religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation* etc.⁶ Laws against hate speech also vary in their formulation according to the legislature in the countries that have passed such laws. As with the defamation laws, the variations are moderate. It is interesting, however, to recognize the differences that do emerge when one takes a closer look at the formulations. In some countries, such as England and France, the term “hatred” is mentioned in the laws against hate speech whereas in others, Denmark and New Zealand, for instance, the term is absent. When formulated in the laws, the term *hate* mostly occurs in the formulation ‘incitement to hatred’⁷ rather than ‘hate speech’. However, the term *hate speech* is generally used when referring to the laws prohibiting defamation against (minority) groups; further, one speaks of *hate speech laws* when one refers to these laws, regardless of the explicit and particular formulations of each respective law.

Another variation is that in some of the laws against hate speech, for instance, the Danish Law and the Swedish law, only hate speech against (minority) *groups* is explicitly criminalized, whereas in other laws, such the Norwegian law and the French law, hate speech against *individuals* who belong to certain minority groups, is explicitly criminalized as well.

The term, *hate speech* was first introduced by the American lawyer and activist, Mari Matsuda⁸ in the late 1980s. She was one of the leading figures of Critical Race Theory and used the term in an article in order to describe the coarse racist utterances that were (and still are) often uttered in US society. The term has since expanded in terms of content and meaning as well as becoming the accepted term when referring to defamation against groups in general.⁹ Unfortunately, by the same token, it has more or less replaced the older terms *group libel* and *group defamation* that used to cover defamation targeted at (minority) groups.

⁶ Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, s.v. “hate speech,” accessed September 18, 2022, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/hate%20speech>.

⁷ For example, in Norway, Russia and France.

⁸ Mary J. Matsuda (1956-), American lawyer, activist and law professor.

⁹ One often hears reference to ‘hate speech’ about speech which in principle would not fit under any of the hate speech/group libel laws.

I am of the conviction that the term *hate speech* has played a part in people choosing to reject the laws against the defamation of groups. The focus on feelings of hatred has led to arguments that one cannot pass laws against *feelings*, as these are both unmeasurable and subjective.¹⁰

The old term group libel is a far better description of what is at stake when talking about the defamation of certain groups: it is exactly the same as defamation against individuals, namely *exposure to libel*; only it is targeted towards a group with certain characteristics, be it ethnicity, colour, sexual orientation or something else. What this truly means is that it is targeted towards every individual who shares these characteristics. This also liberates the discussion from whether it is rational to pass laws against feelings or not, as well as whether the speaker was, in fact, expressing hatred or not.

The Dictionary of American History defines group libel laws with these words: “[...]group libel laws penalize speech or other communication that attacks or defames a particular group on the basis of its race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or other such characteristic.[...]”. There is a significant difference between focusing on the *defamation* of certain groups of people as opposed to focusing on *hatred* towards these groups. The two terms lead to different associations, and the motives for passing laws against *hate speech* or *group libel* respectively may consequently differ depending on what definition our discussions are based on.

When we pass laws against *hate speech*, our motivation tends to be founded on our duty to protect minority groups from *hateful* expressions. The laws are hence passed in order to keep *hateful expressions* against groups of people out of the public domain. When we pass laws against *defamation* against minority groups, however, or what used to be called *group libel*, it appears that our motivation for passing the laws is founded on *defamatory speech* rather than on *hatred* directed against minority groups. Hence, the focus is not on the feeling or even the motivation of the speaker, but exclusively on the *content* of the expressions. What is more interesting is that the definitions formulated in the laws will have a substantial effect on the judgements of possible law cases.

¹⁰ Cf. Mark Slagle, *An Ethical Exploration of Free Expression and the Problem of Hate Speech* (Taylor and Francis, 2009).

The prosecutors must look for different arguments and the courts for different types of evidence depending on what formulations (*hate* or *defamation*) are phrased in these laws.

In some countries and in a number of states in the USA, defamation laws belong under civil law, while in other countries and states they belong under criminal law. Hate Speech laws, however, belong under criminal law in all countries where they are implemented. This, inevitably, has an impact on the procedures of the different lawsuits, both in terms of differences between defamation laws according to which country or state one looks at, as well as in terms of the differences between defamation laws (when they belong under civil law) and hate speech laws in general. These differences do not, however, have any significant relevance in relation to the problem raised in this paper, namely whether it is rational to pass defamation laws founded on harm-based arguments while at the same time arguing against the passing of hate speech laws.

3. Harm, Welfare, and Dignity

In this section, I shall present the most essential harm-based arguments in the discussion about freedom of speech versus hate speech. Some of the oldest arguments for passing laws against defamation as well as group libel are: 1.) The protection of human dignity 2.) The right to equality (being treated equally with respect and having equal rights as a citizen) 3.) The right to a reputation.

These arguments are all related to one another, as equal respect for any human being will reflect a respect for that person's dignity and reputation. If one goes back to ancient Greece, equality among citizens was one of democracy's cornerstones next to personal and political freedom and freedom of speech. In fact, one also finds a law which resembles contemporary laws against hate speech/group libel in ancient Greek legislation.¹¹

The above mentioned arguments are right-based and deontological arguments, which proponents of hate speech laws still present in contemporary discussions. The rights at stake are moral rights as opposed to

¹¹ This law concerned merchants and craftsmen (who were often not citizens). Mogens Herman Hansen, *Demokratiets historie og vores*, (København: Museum Tusculanum Forlag, 2010).

legal rights, although one could, indeed, claim that legal rights are founded on moral rights. With this claim, however, follows an entirely different discussion, which is not evaluated in this paper.

Rights, whether ‘natural rights’, ‘human rights’ or any other rights, are always instrumental as they represent the protection of certain values, such as freedom and equality. Thus, right-based arguments are first and foremost rooted in a deontological perspective: the values that the rights protect are perceived as inviolable and essential to human life. However, the protection of certain values through rights can also be viewed from a utilitarian perspective. In that case the justification of upholding the rights of, for instance, freedom and equality is based on the consequences that the protection of people’s rights in general lead to. Hence, right-based arguments can be justified by both utilitarian and deontological principles, and only from different perspectives, namely the perspective of utility and the perspective of dignity.

Utilitarian arguments concerning freedom of speech and its possible boundaries are often associated with a Millian perspective. The rationale of Mill’s harm principle is based on the value theory *welfarism*, meaning that the overall aim of the principle is to maximize welfare in general.¹² However, Mill’s harm principle is, in fact based on a combination of utilitarian and deontological points of view. The harm principle itself, “the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others”¹³, is founded on the ethical theory of utilitarianism. When it comes to the judgment of each particular case, however, the cases should be judged on a deontological foundation according to Mill. This means that the harm principle is developed as a guideline to secure the liberty of the most people possible in the widest sense possible. Nonetheless, it does also mean that *if* a citizen’s basic right is violated by another citizen, through speech, for instance, then the target’s right shall be protected even if this leads to a possible setback in welfare in a large number of citizens’ lives.

L.W. Sumner operates with a cost-benefit analysis in his interpre-

¹² According to Mill, welfare is first and foremost measured by personal freedom.

¹³ John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* (London: John W. Parker and Son, 1859).

tation of Mill.¹⁴ He argues that if the cost, that is, the setback in welfare of targets of hate speech is greater than the benefits of the speaker's expression on the whole, then the speech should be prevented/have consequences for the speaker. The cost-benefit-approach aims at balancing people's basic rights, such as the individual right to equality, with the freest possible form of (political) speech. As Sumner points out, referring to and citing Mill:

Mill returns to this theme a number of times, arguing that encroachment on others' rights is a fit object of 'moral reprobation, and, in grave cases, of moral retribution and punishment'.

The right of free expression can therefore be justifiably restricted when its exercise threatens to violate the rights of others.¹⁵

There are other harm-based arguments that emphasize the harm that hate speech causes *per se*. The rationale of these arguments is that hate speech harms the targets' very selves: their self-image and self-respect as well as their feelings of self-worth and identity; in short, their *dignities*. This prevents them from being equal citizens in any given society, which according to deontologists is unacceptable as well as inconsistent with the idea of Democracy.

Some theorists, such as Jeremy Waldron¹⁶ and Stephen Heyman¹⁷, emphasize the loss of equal citizenship and the loss of equal status in society as the main cause of the harm inflicted on the dignities of victims of hate speech. They stress that hate speech which is targeted towards specific minority groups in society causes the members of these groups to lose (or perhaps never gain) recognition as equal citizens who hold equal status as members of society. The loss of recognition harms the targets' dignities both directly and indirectly. First, the targets may lose self-respect and self-worth by personally hearing and facing the

¹⁴ Leonard Wayne Sumner, *The hateful and the obscene: Studies in the limits of free expression* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015).

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 28.

¹⁶ Jeremy Waldron, *The Harm in Hate Speech* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2012).

¹⁷ Stephen Heyman, *Free Speech and Human Dignity* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008).

hate speech. Second, they may experience discrimination and stigmatization by a society influenced by, on the one hand, particular incidents of hateful expressions and, on the other hand, hateful rhetoric in general.

Waldron explicitly points out that the importance of obtaining equal status as citizens justifies legislation against hate speech:

Affirmatively, what hate speech legislation stands for is the dignity of equal citizenship (for all members of all groups), and it does what it can to put a stop to group defamation when group defamation (of the members of a particular group) threatens to undermine that status for a whole class of citizens.¹⁸

This is one of many examples where Waldron emphasizes *the dignity of equal citizenship*, meaning that if one is not met with the same respect, opportunities and obligations as other citizens, one's dignity is not being upheld, and hence one suffers harm. Characteristically, Waldron also reminds us that the defamatory speech affects *every member* of a targeted group.

To summarize, both utilitarian/consequentialist and deontological arguments about freedom of speech and its potential boundaries are harm-based. Even though the arguments differ in their ethical perspectives and rationalizations, they do have in common the focus on *harmful speech*: they agree that some forms of speech cause harm and should therefore be prohibited/have consequences for the speaker.

4. The Individual Consequences of Defamation and Hate Speech

In this section, I shall illustrate, through thought experiments, the similarities and differences in consequences that targets of defamation and hate speech respectively may face. The prohibition to purposely harm a fellow human is well known throughout history and cultures as an essential principle to keep any society functioning. In modern society, however, we usually go back to the Enlightenment when arguing for: 1.) the freedom of speech, and 2.) the right to be protected against harm and injury.

When one enforces defamation laws, the interpretation of harm usually rests on the fact that the target has had his or her reputation ruined by the spreading of lies that have caused serious consequences for

¹⁸ Waldron, *The Harm in Hate Speech*, p. 61.

him/her. A typical example of this would be the target losing his/her job as a result of these lies and rumours. The consequences mirror the gravity of the rumours well; they often contain something about the target having acted criminally, for instance, having committed a sexual assault. Hence losing one's job may, in fact, not even be the worst of the consequences for the target of the defamation if one compares it to the condemning glances in the streets, and perhaps even the distancing or loss of esteem from his/her dearest ones.

I shall now present two hypothetical cases in order to shed light on, respectively, defamation against a named individual and hate speech/group libel against a minority group. The aim is to illustrate the harmful consequences that defamatory speech has on its victims in general as well as to point out how similar the consequences are independently of the speech being targeted against one, single individual, or against all the members of a minority group. After the presentation of the cases, I shall discuss the harmful consequences that the targets face and evaluate whether these consequences, both in similarity and in difference, can clarify the importance of passing laws against hate speech/group libel.

Case I (individual defamation)

Mr. Smith is working as a teacher in a secondary school. He has been teaching for some years, and as a whole, the years have passed more or less smoothly. One day, however, when he turns up at work, his colleagues are acting strangely towards him, and the next thing he knows, he is called to the principle's office. Here he learns that there are rumours spreading accusing him of being a rapist. The rumours are false, and Mr. Smith is naturally in shock. Now follows a long period where Mr. Smith is first formally accused of rape, then loses his job, and finally must struggle to prove his innocence through a legal case. After several months, Mr. Smith has cleared his name, and he is working again, only in a new school (as he doesn't want to be reminded of the case). His family, friends and colleagues support him, and his life (almost) turns back to normal.

Case II (hate speech/group libel)

An established politician in the USA is expressing that male refugees are rapists, claiming that this has been proven. The politician mentions a couple of different cases where male refugees have been accused and convicted of rape in different refugee camps. The politician utters his words orally, but they are part of a recorded interview which is very quickly shared and spread on social media.

Now, Mr. Abdul is a 28-year-old refugee who has just gained a residence and work permit after a couple of years in the USA. Mr. Abdul goes looking for a job a few days after the politician's utterances about refugees, but no matter how polite and friendly he is, and however much he emphasizes his qualifications, he is turned down everywhere. Mr. Abdul knows that the politician's words, which have been spread out online over the previous days, have had a strong effect on the public and thereby on potential employers of his. Abdul can clearly sense the different atmosphere and the strong contempt that has emerged lately, and he also hears from some of his refugee friends who are employed that the situation as a refugee has become worse ever since the aforesaid politician's utterances.

Looking at the two different cases, there are clearly some distinct differences between them. Mr. Smith is falsely accused of having raped someone. He loses his job and has to go through a long and challenging legal case. Luckily, his name is cleared, and he (more or less) goes back to his old life. He must live with the feeling of not being found innocent by everyone, though. Mr. Abdul, on the other hand, is not personally accused of having committed rape. However, it has publicly been uttered by an influential public figure that all male refugees are rapists. Hence, indirectly, he is accused of being a rapist.

Mr. Smith may be said to be worse off, because he is personally accused and he actually loses his job and good reputation because of the defamation of which he is a target. Mr. Abdul, on the other hand, could also be said to be the one worse off, because he cannot prove that the politician's defamatory speech is the reason that he remains unemployed as well as the reason that he is a victim of a damaged reputation.

Mr. Smith has the option to run a legal case and prove his innocence. He can clear his name (almost) completely. Mr. Abdul has the option to prove by his behaviour that even though he belongs to the

group that the politician has defamed, he is not a rapist, and he has not personally been accused or convicted as such. However, it is impossible for him to clear his name completely since there is no concrete case to take to court, and his personal name has not been dishonoured. He is only indirectly being accused and only subtly being turned down by every potential employer, but the consequences are still very real in Abdul's life.

Even if there are some basic differences in the cases of Mr. Smith and Mr. Abdul, one can easily point out the similarities, which in terms of consequences far outweigh the differences:

Mr. Smith and Mr. Abdul are both victims of a severely injured reputation, they are both under false accusations of serious crimes, and they are both unemployed. The first two factors are obvious in both cases, whilst it may be difficult for Mr. Abdul to prove that he is unemployed due to the politician's defamation of refugees. Nevertheless, common sense tells us that it most definitely makes it harder for Mr. Abdul to be employed after such accusations even though it may not be impossible (as it is for Mr. Smith until he has proven the accusations to be false). The bottom-line is that, in these thought experiments, the basic consequences and the injury that Mr. Smith and Mr. Abdul suffer are quite similar as both cases clearly carry serious injury to the targets' reputations and qualities of life. The main difference lies in Abdul's challenge of proving his case.

What is of utter importance to emphasize, looking at these two cases is, of course, that the USA does not have any laws against hate speech and, hence, that the politician cannot be charged for his defamatory expression about male refugees. Had he been a European politician, someone (whether a male refugee or another inhabitant in the respective country) could have charged him and he would probably have had to face the consequences for his defamatory and generalizing expression. This may also have led to a 'victory' for the male refugees who in turn would most likely not have had to face the same challenges in terms of job seeking, for instance, since their names (as a group) would have been cleared.¹⁹

¹⁹ Cases like these are, of course, never simple and it is difficult to predict exactly what would have happened if this were a real case. However, it is not unlikely that if the politician was charged, the media would have covered the

In this hypothetical case, the challenges and consequences following the politician's expression are, of course, discussed from a short-term perspective. In many other cases, there will be long-term consequences which are a result of many defamatory expressions during a longer period of time.²⁰

If one looks at the cases from a consequentialist perspective, one could claim that in Mr. Smith's case the defamation should be illegal, since firstly, it does not add happiness or positive consequences to anyone (except perhaps a gleeful person who spreads rumours and lies) and secondly, it is not to be counted as political speech, since it only addresses Mr. Smith's personal life. In Mr. Abdul's case, however, the question about whether the defamatory speech should be legal is an open question where the conclusion would depend on circumstances such as, for example, a cost-benefit approach and whether the politician's comment should be interpreted as political speech or not. Therefore, one of several possible conclusions could be that the politician should be free to express any opinion, since hindering his (political) opinion will: 1.) cause a setback in the politician's welfare by limiting his freedom, and 2.) have serious consequences for the public by hindering them from being informed by the politician (or at least hearing his opinion, which they are then free to interpret and challenge as they like).

If one takes Mill, for example, the question of whether the defamatory speech in Mr. Abdul's case should be legal or not would also be open. According to Sumner's interpretations of Mill's harm principle, Mill is a proponent of a so-called indirect consequentialism. This means that Mill proposes that one looks at the general consequences of regulating people's social acts, such as speech, with right-based arguments. Hence, from this point of view, one could claim that Mill would probably hold that the defamatory speech in Abdul's case should be illegal since the protection of Abdul's rights, for instance, to be treated equally,

case and it would have turned out in favour of the male refugees.

²⁰ A lot of discrimination against minority groups will be based on ongoing hateful expressions which have been expressed by many different people over decades. Hence, sometimes when a member of a minority is discriminated against, in job searching for instance, this can be based on hate speech which one cannot track or point to specifically. In these cases there is not, of course, only one person that you can charge of hate speech.

would have better consequences in general than the acceptance of the politician's defamatory speech would. However, this would be viewed from a broader perspective where the specific case of Abdul would serve as an example of numerous similar cases in society.

From Waldron's point of view, and hence a deontological point of view, it is reasonable to claim that both Mr. Smith and Mr. Abdul are victims of harmful consequences due to the defamatory speech, and that the speech should be prohibited in both cases. From a deontological perspective, one would claim that Mr. Abdul (presumably along with many fellow men) has suffered a harmed dignity as a consequence of the politician's public expression about male refugees. First, Mr. Abdul's dignity is harmed by not being treated as an equal citizen and second, his right to equality is harmed when he is turned down by employers, solely based on the fact that he is a male refugee. This also exemplifies the affinity between deontological and right-based arguments as well.

The hypothetical examples of Mr. Smith and Mr. Abdul are, of course, mere illustrations that are meant to show how similar the consequences of defamation and hate speech/group libel *can* be. They are meant to be reflections of countless similar cases, which truly go on. In addition to this, they are meant to shed light on how hate speech/group libel has an effect on *individuals* belonging to a targeted group and not just a faceless mass as we sometimes tend to perceive groups of people.

Waldron also points out this important element:

How does one libel a group? What aspects of group reputation are we trying to protect with laws against racial or religious defamation? The first thing to note is that it is not the group as such that we are ultimately concerned about – as one might be concerned about a community, a nation, or a culture. The concern, in the end, is individualistic.²¹

Some opponents of hate speech laws seem to be ignorant of the fact that a group of certain characteristics always consists of individuals who individually have to face the reactions of the defamatory speech expressed about them among the public. These reactions are, of course, diverse, and while some of them will take the form of minor distrustfulness, others will

²¹ Waldron, *The Harm in Hate Speech*, p. 56.

come in more serious forms, such as employers firing (or not wanting to employ) the targets of the hate speech/ group libel. In the worst-case scenarios, of course, targets are also victims of hate crimes.²²

The interesting thing is that when one realizes how hate speech harms individuals on a personal level and not just ‘arbitrary’ groups on an abstract level, the similarities between defamation and hate speech/group libel become so much clearer. This supports, as already mentioned, one of the reasons why group libel is also a better term to use than hate speech, because the term group libel so clearly expresses the similarity between defamatory speech targeted against single individuals and defamatory speech targeted against many individuals who belong to the same, particular group.

5. The Argument from Political Speech

In this section, I shall present one of the most essential arguments of the opponents of hate speech laws, namely *the argument from political speech*. There are, of course, a number of different arguments against the passing of hate speech laws. Some of these arguments focus primarily on the connection between freedom of speech and democracy, for instance, Dworkin’s argument of legitimacy;²³ others view absolute freedom of speech as a prerequisite for upholding people’s autonomy.²⁴ The ‘chilling effect’ argument is also interesting; it focuses on the self-censorship that laws against hate speech may cause. The defenders of this argument claim that the mere knowledge of there being a law against hate speech causes some people to hold back their true (and legal) political opinions in fear of being accused and convicted.

I shall, however exclusively concentrate on the argument from political speech, as this argument is one of the most widespread arguments among opponents of hate speech laws and as it is of great relevance to

²² Results from a number of studies have shown a causality between hate speech and hate crimes.

²³ In order to have a legitimate democracy, all citizens must have the opportunity to utter freely on any (political) subject. Dworkin is also a defender of the argument from political speech.

²⁴ These scholars, such as Cass Sunstein and Eric Barendt, view limits on (political) speech as a violation of individual autonomy.

the discussion about whether to pass hate speech laws. The argument from political speech highlights the importance of protecting speech that can be labelled as political opinion in a very broad perspective. The argument stresses that freedom of political speech is of pivotal importance to the practice of democracy; that it is, indeed, one of the most essential elements in the upholding of democracy.

Most defenders of the argument from political speech point to this argument as a valid reason for opposing laws against hate speech. The rationale is that most (or perhaps all) expressions which are categorized as hate speech, are, in fact, also political speech, and should therefore be protected. Further, the defenders of the argument from political speech hold that there is a relevant difference between the laws against defamation and the laws against hate speech. The difference that they point to is that defamatory speech targeted against individuals rarely is to be counted as political speech, while defamatory speech targeted against groups often (if not always) is to be counted as political speech.

Definitions of political speech are relatively rare; this is something which Katharine Gelber²⁵ points to in her article “Freedom of political speech, hate speech and the argument from democracy: The transformative contribution of capabilities theory”. Among the scholars who have defined political speech are the legal scholars, Cass Sunstein and Eric Barendt. Sunstein defines political speech as speech that “is both intended and received as a contribution to public deliberation about some issue”.²⁶ This immediately raises the question of what is to be considered “a contribution” and whether all issues are of equal relevance. Barendt²⁷, on the other hand, characterizes political speech as speech “in the political sphere” as well as “political and social discussion”, which, of course, raises the question of which matters (and thereby, also expressions) are to be considered as belonging under “political” and “social” discussion. Barendt underlines that expressions against and about

²⁵ Katharine Gelber, “Freedom of political speech, hate speech and the argument from democracy: The transformative contribution of capability theory,” *Contemporary Political Theory*, 9 (2010), p. 304–324.

²⁶ Cass Sunstein, *Democracy and the problem of free speech* (New York: The Free Press, 1995), p. 130.

²⁷ Eric Barendt, *Freedom of speech* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp 154–155.

the government, even revealing government secrets and verbally “attacking” the government, are expressions that belong under political speech.²⁸ Barendt, however, also explicitly points to expressions of racial hatred as belonging under political speech.

The freedom to criticize governments is non-controversial in liberal democracies. In fact, it is a prerequisite of functioning liberal democracies. Hence, self-governance is a well-known principle in liberal democracies, and it likewise plays an important role in the argument from political speech. As Gelber puts it: “[...] it is argued that political speech warrants the very highest standards of protection because of its centrality to self-governance”.²⁹ Whether this self-governance applies to the governance of (all of) the citizens of a democratic society in general (i.e. through democratic decision-making) or to each individual’s self-governance (in the meaning of autonomy), they both apply to foundational democratic principles and they can both apply to the defence of political speech in a broad sense.

Thus, the importance of self-governance and the possibility to criticize governments are two central reasons for defending the argument from political speech. I hold that although there are examples of speech that can be categorized as *both* political speech *and* hate speech, there are, in fact, also many examples of hate speech that do not fit under the label of ‘political speech’. An archetypical example of hate speech is: ‘All x people are rats’. This is plainly coarse, degrading and dehumanizing speech, which is the essence of what the laws against hate speech are meant to protect groups of people (first and foremost, minorities) against.

If the definition of political speech, as in Barendt’s case, is meant to include ‘all’ forms of speech, then the argument dissolves itself: the term simply becomes a shield for the approval of *all* expressions, including hate speech. The term ‘political’ hence loses its meaning. There are, as already mentioned, examples of expressions that may not be easy to define as being *either* political speech *or* hate speech. Sometimes these expressions take the form of a more indirect criticism of a government, for instance, criticizing the government’s acceptance of controversial,

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Gelber, *Freedom of political speech*, p. 305.

perhaps even anti-democratic, norms in minority communities. If one looks at expressions like: *Muslim men suppress their wives* or: *Muslim men do not consider women as equal human beings*, these are expressions that generalize a large group of people (Muslim men) and which may be perceived as strongly offensive and even defamatory speech. These kinds of expressions, however, cannot solely be categorized as hate speech, since they are clearly also a political criticism of: 1.) a minority group which, according to the speaker, refuse women's access to basic rights, and 2.) the government for accepting these particular circumstances.

The above mentioned expressions are, of course, controversial, since not all Muslim men, nor communities, suppress women. The expressions may lead to conflicts and growing resentment towards Muslims among the population which may be harmful to Muslim individuals, Muslim communities, and society in general. However, the expressions are of a political character, and hence, in the case of such expressions, it is not an easy task to categorize the expressions as *either* hate speech *or* political speech. First, in cases like these, it is a question of interpretation based on the respective hate speech legislation and whether one categorizes these expressions as hate speech or not.³⁰ Second, these expressions are examples of statements that can be categorized as *both* political speech *and* hate speech at the same time. The question then is whether the fact that an expression can be labelled as political speech is a valid reason for it not to be illegal/have consequences, even though it may also be labelled as hate speech.

As already stated, the defenders of the argument from political speech point to crucial foundations of democracy, namely the right to criticize any government as well as the right to self-governance. These are invaluable rights which should obviously be upheld. However, these rights do not justify the dismissal of hate speech legislation since *firstly*, not all hate speech is also political speech, and *secondly*, hate speech that is also considered political speech may in some cases be sanctioned by the law, for instance, if the harm that the speech leads to outweighs the importance of the political speech. *Thirdly*, political speech that is

³⁰ If someone sues the speaker of expressions like these (in a country with implemented hate speech laws), and a case is raised, the respective judge must interpret whether these expressions are to be regarded as hate speech or not.

also considered hate speech may in some cases be accepted as legal speech, for instance, if the political importance of the expression outweighs the potential harm of it. The bottom line is that although the argument from political speech is an argument of great relevance and importance in any liberal democracy, it does not reach as far as to validate the dismissal of hate speech legislation.

6. Conclusion

Defamation laws are primarily founded on harm-based arguments and if one compares defamation against single individuals to defamation against numerous individuals who belong to certain groups, the harm they suffer from the defamatory speech is in many ways similar. From a deontological point of view, laws against hate speech are defended mainly because of the harm they are said to cause to victims' dignities. Waldron, as we have seen, emphasizes that the harm done to the victims' dignities is by virtue of the victims not being met with respect as equal citizens in a given society. From a consequentialist point of view, the passing of laws against hate speech is also defended, although to a lesser extent. Inspired by Mill, Sumner, as we have also seen, points to the importance of balancing people's personal rights, which in some cases may justify setting limits on speech.

Although hate speech laws can be defended from a consequentialist perspective, there are also consequentialists who oppose these laws. Their criticism is firstly directed against the lack of evidence that defamatory speech is, in fact, harmful (as they question studies that have concluded so); and secondly, it is directed against the censorship of political speech, which they argue is more harmful than the hate speech performed against groups.

One of the main arguments against the passing of hate speech laws is *the argument from political speech*. The defenders of this argument claim that the importance of political expression is so vital that one cannot compromise with it under any circumstances. Furthermore, defenders of the argument from political speech often interpret hate speech as political speech, and hence they are against any form of legislation against hate speech. This interpretation is, however overly simplified, since there are, indeed, expressions that do express hate with no true political message included. Further, in some cases where political speech and hate speech do overlap, there may be valid reasons, based on democratic principles, for protecting targets from

the hate speech (meaning criminalizing it), even though the speech may also contain a political message.

When one is a proponent of defamation laws founded on harm-based arguments, it appears to be a contradiction to simultaneously be an opponent of hate speech/group libel laws. The rationale is that the harm-based arguments apply as much to passing hate speech/group libel laws as they do to passing defamation laws. Although there are differences in the two cases, for instance, that the individual defamation sometimes may be more personalized than hate speech/group libel, there are, in general, essential similarities to be found: both the defamatory speech itself as well as its consequences are often very similar in the cases of defamation and of hate speech/group libel. Advocating for defamation laws should, therefore, logically lead to advocating for hate speech laws, whereas opposing hate speech laws should lead to the opposing of defamation laws.

III. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Master's Program in Philosophy Taught in English at the University of Sofia "St. Kliment Ohridski"

General Information

Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" was founded in 1888 following the best patterns of European higher education. Sofia is the capital city of the Republic of Bulgaria, which is a member of the European Union (EU). Sofia University is the highest-ranking university in Bulgaria. The MA Program in Philosophy taught in English at the University of Sofia provides instruction in all major areas of Western Philosophy, but the Master's thesis can also be written on a topic from Eastern Philosophy. The program consists of 10 mandatory courses and 2 electives, so it leaves enough leeway for the student's own preferences. The degree is recognized worldwide including in the EU/EEA and Switzerland, the USA, Canada, Russia, Turkey, China, the 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 of Culture, Logic in the Continental Tradition, Theories of Truth, Existential Dialectics, Philosophy of Subjective Action, Phenomenology.

Faculty Members

All faculty members 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. There are also opportunities for distance learning.

Requirements

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

Tuition Fee

- 1) For citizens of the EU/EEA and Switzerland: €850 per school year.
- 2) For international students: €3850 per school year.

Financial Aid

- 1) EU/EEA and Swiss citizens are eligible for state scholarships carrying a 60% tuition waiver plus a monthly stipend beginning from the second semester.
- 2) American citizens are eligible for Fulbright Graduate Grants. For more information, see www.fulbright.bg. It is possible for American citizens to use sources of governmental financial assistance (please contact the Program Director for details).
- 3) Canadian students are eligible for financial aid in the form of governmental student loans from the province where they are permanent residents.
- 4) Turkish students are eligible for financial aid within the Erasmus+ Student Exchange Program.
- 5) Chinese students are eligible for financial aid within the bilateral Chinese-Bulgarian Cultural Agreement. For more information, contact the Chinese Ministry of Education.
- 6) Russian students are eligible for financial aid within the bilateral Russian-Bulgarian Cultural Agreement. For more information, contact the Russian Ministry of Education.
- 7) 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's 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 Deadlines

To start in October: July 31.

To start in February: November 30.

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, except those from the EU/EEA and Switzerland.

Cultural Life and Recreation

The city of Sofia is the most ancient European capital after Athens. The cost of living there is one of the lowest in Europe. As the capital of Bulgaria, Sofia features a rich cultural life. There are a number of concert halls, museums, dozens of art galleries, and many national and international cultural centers. The streets of Sofia are populated by cozy cafés and high-quality inexpensive restaurants offering Bulgarian, European, and international cuisine. Sofia is a favorable place for summer and winter sports including skiing on the nearby mountain of Vitosha. More about Sofia can be found at <http://www.sofia-life.com/culture/culture.php>. You can also follow Sofianite and Bulgarian news at <http://www.novinite.com/lastx.php>.

Contact Person

Dr. Alexander L. Gungov, Program Director

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Doctoral Program in Philosophy Taught in English at the University of Sofia “St. Kliment Ohridski”

General Information

Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” was founded in 1888 following the best patterns of European higher education. Sofia is the capital city of the Republic of Bulgaria, which is a member of the European Union (EU). Sofia University is the highest-ranking university in Bulgaria. The PhD Program in Philosophy taught in English at the University of Sofia provides instruction in all major areas of Western Philosophy, but the PhD thesis can also be written on a topic from Eastern Philosophy. The program consists of 6 mandatory courses and 2 electives, so it leaves enough leeway for the student’s own preferences. The degree is recognized worldwide including in the EU/EEA and Switzerland, the USA, Canada, Russia, Turkey, China, the Indian Sub-Continent, Latin America, and the Middle East.

Courses Offered

Psychoanalysis and Philosophy, Applied Ethics, Epistemology, Philosophy of Science, Social Philosophy, Philosophy of Projectivity, Philosophy of Intercultural Relations, Epistemology, Continental Philosophy, Philosophy of Language, Philosophy of Culture, Time and History.

Requirements

Master’s degree in any field. No previous degree in philosophy is required.

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) For EU/EEA & Swiss students: | in residence: €1450 per school year. |
| | extramural: €2440 per school year. |

Application Deadlines

To start in October: July 31.

To start in February: November 30.

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

The city of Sofia is the most ancient European capital after Athens. The cost of living there is one of the lowest in Europe. As the capital of Bulgaria, Sofia features a rich cultural life. There are a number of concert halls, museums, dozens of art galleries, and many national and international cultural centers. The streets of Sofia are populated by cozy cafés and high-quality inexpensive restaurants offering Bulgarian, European, and international cuisine. Sofia is a favorable place for summer and winter sports including skiing on the nearby mountain of Vitosha. More about Sofia can be found at <http://www.sofia-life.com/culture/culture.php>. You can also follow Sofianite and Bulgarian news at <http://www.novinite.com/lastx.php>.

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IV. INFORMATION ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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