Dan Corjescu, *The Global Ape: Between Extinction and Transcendence.* Stuttgart: ibidem – Verlag, 2022, 260 pp., €34.90, ISBN: 9783838216126.

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In his new book, Dan Corjescu explores a wide range of topics related to human society. These range from the emergence of the human species and the first form of communal organization, to issues of war and peace, the origin of language, the role of religion, science and technology, the drawbacks and advantages of modern and contemporary philosophy, and an elucidation of the history of genocide, including the twentieth-century Holocaust. The leading interpretive angle of the entire book is a philosophical rethinking of the entire history of humanity until today.

The author credits the first human communities with reaching a collective self-consciousness and viewing the world from the perspective of a kind of intersubjectivity. He gives arguments in support of the thesis that religion, in its origin, did not follow a pattern of anthropomorphism but rather a special animal-morphism. Corjescu sees in transhumanism and related trends a new form of millenarianism, and he assumes that the human opposition to universal entropy might lay the foundations for the religion of the future. He juxtaposes the idea of free will with that of enlightened fatalism, when one is rationally aware of various causal changes. In this way, his exposition transforms the status of the Kantian ethical concept of free will into an ontological and epistemological concept that obviously follows Hegel. Corjescu divides contemporary philosophy into two camps. One has developed on the European continent, in Germany in particular, and is permeated by an obscurantist anti-Enlightenment sentiment which leads to a dead-end of declinism and pessimism. The second flourishes in the Anglo-Saxon world and genuinely embodies Enlightenment rationalism. The latter secures a progressive world outlook, being a philosophy based on being respectful to traditional Western values: political liberalism and individual rights. The members of the first philosophical camp include Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, Spengler, Husserl, Heidegger, the Frankfurt School

thinkers, and, surprisingly, Zygmunt Bauman (for mostly blaming instrumental reason and bureaucracy for the Holocaust). In contrast , the second camp is predominantly represented by Thomas Hobbes and John Locke and the tradition they established. A special position is assigned to Hegel, who, in spite of his German ancestry, is in accord with true Enlightenment thinking; Hegel's advantage is explained by his dialectics of the progression of freedom in the course of human history.

There is no doubt that a sense of decline and pessimism characterizes most of the philosophers in the continental European tradition. It is certainly justified to state that the Frankfurt School theorists overemphasized culture (in the German sense of *Kultur*) at the expense of social and political matters, thus presenting a distorted picture of social life during and after World War II. However, it should be added that, by doing so, the Frankfurt School were far removed f rom Marxism, and it is very problematic to establish any links between the two. Additionally, it is also true that, before Levinas, all of Western philosophy, including progressive liberals, was egocentric. However, it does not reflect well on the book that a philosopher of so great a magnitude as Levinas is only referred to via secondary sources, while scholars of tertiary importance are presented through their own writings.

The same must be said of the treatment of Ernst Cassirer, whose fundamental works on symbolic forms are not included in the bibliography, even though Corjescu's discussion of thinking and language devotes attention to symbolization. Last, but not least, Marx, who is mentioned several times in the book, only appears in the bibliography through Peter Singer's *Marx: A Very Short Introduction*. Moreover, in spite of Corjescu's obvious competence in many subjects, his book leaves the impression that the main, if not the only, trend of Marxism in the twentieth century was Stalinism. Important Western Marxists, such as Antonio Gramsci, György Lukács, Louis Althusser, and Étienne Balibar, are omitted. The book also fails to mention the post-Stalinist dialectical and historical materialism, which was thoroughly non-Stalinist, disseminated from Stalin's death in 1953 up until 1989 and 1991.

From an author as familiar with Hegel's philosophy as Corjescu, one would not expect the characterization of the declinist and pessimistic trends in contemporary philosophy as "completely wrong," with the progressive and optimistic tendencies deemed "completely right." Such extremes are abstract, one-sided, and provide only a partial truth. A He-

gelian approach would require viewing them not as self-sufficient, separate parts, but as moments of the whole of contemporary philosophy, which seems to resemble an intellectual bipolar disorder. The declinist philosophy, with its hopelessness, seems to constitute the depressive pole, while liberal philosophy, with its optimism, fits the definition of the manic phase of the bipolar totality. Against this background, a concrete, genuine philosophy would be one where the above separate characteristics—pessimism and optimism— are present in a sublated form, the inseparable moments of a third form. Candidates for such a concrete whole include Christian trends in philosophy, with their inherent teaching of a sinful world and the hope for redemption, as well as versions of Marxism that acknowledge our predicament as one of exploitation, hegemony, and reification—leading to the deterministic appeal (very similar to Corjescu's enlightened fatalism and to Hegel's concept of sociopolitical freedom) for a struggle to abolish the economic and political conditions responsible for that social predicament.

Finally, I would like to stress this book's belief in the capacity of human imagination and reason to work "for a noble open-ended future of Man." It is my conviction that the book will attract the interest of numerous readers, and even those who disagree with the author's style and argument will be willing to read it, or at the very least, to engage with it due to the significance of the questions raised and the variety of answers provided or implied.