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# Pragmatism in Venice

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# Table of Contents


Introduction: Pragmatists in Venice
*Alexander Kremer* ..... 5

## I. Philosophy and human evolution

Persons as Natural Artifacts
*Joseph Margolis* ..... 8

## II. Cultural politics and democracy

Is Marx a Pragmatist?
*Tom Rockmore* ..... 24

The waxing and waning of democracy as a way of life (1916 – 2016):
Some of the economic underpinnings
*Jane Skinner* ..... 33

Redefining the Meaning of 'Morality': A Chapter in the Cultural Politics of Capitalism
*Kenneth W. Stikkers* ..... 42

Imperial Irony: Rorty, Richard Henry Pratt and the American Indian Genocide
*Scott L. Pratt* ..... 48

Bruno Latour, American Pragmatism, and the Idea of Non-Human Democracy
*Leszek Koczanowicz* ..... 59

Beyond culturalism: a Deweyan reading of the expansion of 'Ndrangheta
*Matteo Santarelli* ..... 66

Philosophy as Cultural Politics in Rorty, Shusterman, And Pragmatism
*Alexander Kremer* ..... 79

## III. Food, Semiotics, Society

John Dewey: A Culinary Perspective
*Dorota Koczanowicz* ..... 88

De-Subjectification in Semiotics:
Argumentations, Self-Defense and Signs of Opposing Forces
*Martin Svantner* ..... 95

## IV. Book Reviews

Democracy and Consensus: Review Essay of Leszek Koczanowicz's *Politics of Dialogue*
*John Ryder* ..... 111

Pragmatism Hotel. R. Calcaterra, G. Maddalena & G. marchetti (eds.) (2015):
Il pragmatismo. Dalle origini agli sviluppi contemporanei
*Brunella Antomarini* ..... 117

## INTRODUCTION: PRAGMATISTS IN VENICE

**Alexander Kremer**
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The Central European Pragmatist Forum (CEPF) organized its ninth international conference in Venice, Italy, on June 5-10th, 2016. The conference (organized by Roberta Dreon and John Ryder) took place in the University of Ca'Foscari, and "Cultural Politics" was its broad and interesting title.

We had a very diverse range of lectures, and I have collected here some of the best papers. Due to their very strong differences, I highlight here first of all Joseph Margolis' lecture on "Persons as Natural Artifacts." To the second set of papers belong those, which emphasize cultural politics in connection with society, politics, and democracy (Tom Rockmore, Jane Skinner, Kenneth Stikkers, Scott Pratt, Leszek Koczanowicz, Matteo Santarelli, Alexander Kremer). The third set of papers is connected to cultural politics in a more indirect way (Dorota Koczanowicz, Martin Sventner). At the end of the issue, the respected reader can find two interesting reviews.

Joseph Margolis' lecture, "Persons as Natural Artifacts" was not delivered within the frames of the conference, but it has belonged to his Venetian Lectures. We are grateful that we can publish this paper that is a shorter version of a text, which is forthcoming in a more extended form in Jospeh Margolis' book **Three Paradoxes of Personhood**, edited by Roberta Dreon. The book belongs to the series *Letture veneziane* (Venetian Lectures) directed by Luigi Perissinotto, published by Jouvence, Italy.

I think that one of Margolis' paragraphs summarizes well his main idea that none of the rationalist philosophical theories could correctly describe the continuity between the human primates and human beings: „Broadly speaking, any acceptable reconciliation of the opposed pairings I've begun with—mind and body, thought and world, law and history, and the rest—within the bounds of nature, without foundational or normative privilege of any kind, construing all such dualities coherently and consistently, preserving the continuum of animal and human powers, counts, in most of the idioms of the new millennium's philosophies, certainly in my own intrusive ideology, as thoroughly pragmatist in sweep, or at least as compatible or companionable with same. My thought is that this presumption may very well define the most promising, most arresting philosophical ventures of our age. In any event, I confess I start from this corner of the world and find myself entirely open to provisional, selective, and functional recruitments (in terms of pragmatist affinities) among initially alien or opposed figures and doctrinal proposals that would have seemed impossible to countenance a short while ago: for instance, regarding Descartes, Leibniz, Hume, Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche, Frege, Peirce, Russell, Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Carnap, Quine, Strawson, Davidson, Sellars, and Wittgenstein at the very least. By and large, these are the salient figures I find I must conjure with especially—that is, genealogically, *not* in any way to prejudge the merit or importance of any of their contributions. But then, to suggest that there may be pragmatist affinities between such figures and the classic pragmatists will no longer seem odd."

The thorough analysis of Marx's pragmatism by Tom Rockmore shows us that superficially looking at his philosophy it may seem that he was a pragmatist (practice-oriented and empiricism-based philosopher with meliorist strives, etc.). However, Rockmore justifies that: „This account of Marx's relation to pragmatism identifies forms of pragmatism associated most prominently with Peirce and Dewey, Marx's normative conception of theory, the outlines of Marx's theory, including the conditions of its realization in practice. In Marxian theory, a minimal view of changing the world is to bring about a transformation of capitalism, or a system of private ownership of the means of production, into communism, in which private property will by definition no longer exist, and above all men and women will be able to develop into fully individual human beings. Marx clearly intends his theory of the

transformation of the modern social world to succeed not only in theory but also in practice. It is in the latter respect, for reasons given above, that it seems that the Marxian theory is not traditional but rather genuinely pragmatic. Yet though it succeeds in theory, it has so far and will presumably in the future continue to fail in practice."

Jane Skinner's article sketches a „historical trajectory over the century since the publication of Dewey's *Democracy and Education* in 1916" to illustrate that „political economy" was replaced by an „Economics," which is understood as „a natural or 'hard' science, based on mathematical models." Skinner argues that this replacement has „serious negative consequences for democracy and, by implications, for international peace."

Kenneth Stikkers argues that "the rise of capitalism brought not merely new economic institutions, such as private property and free markets, but also a reconception of morality in accord with the demands of those institutions. Moreover, this new morality, as Scheler argued, was based on the very sort of *ressentiment* of which Friederich Nietzsche had accused Christianity. The paper identifies two places where the "transvaluation of values" entailed in such *ressentiment* is evident: in the bourgeois notion of "private property" and especially in the perversion of life and utility values."

Scott Pratt considers „the parallels between the liberal philosophy of Richard Henry Pratt (1840-1924), founder of the Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania whose views laid the foundation for the post-Civil War genocide of American Indian peoples, and the philosophy of Rorty's liberal ironist project. By looking closely at the implications of a philosophical project like Rorty's as it was applied in the large-scale experiment of late 19$^{th}$ century Indian policy, we can see that, rather than serving as a resource for ending cruelty, liberal irony can serve as an instrument for its perpetuation."

Leszek Koczanowicz examines "the concept of "phantom public" which originated in Walter Lippmann's political thought and was polemically discussed by John Dewey." In Koczanowicz's opinion "Latour uses extensively this concept for his own purpose and recently one has noticed a shift in his thought from Dewey's notion of public to Lippmann's concept of limited democracy." He interprets this shift in front of "the background of French political philosophy as well as Latour's growing interest in non-human factors of the democratic system."

Matteo Santarelli has focused on the expansion of the Calabrese mafia, the 'Ndrangheta in Northern Italy. He represents an anti-culturalist approach to this phenomenon since culturalist approaches explain the expansion of organized crime outside its original boundaries by understanding mafia only as a simple by-product of a certain cultural milieu. However, the culturalist hypothesis appears as one-sided and incomplete, and Santarelli sketches an alternative, Deweyan explanation.

Alexander Kremer is persuaded that philosophy as theoretical self-reflection of the human being always has an ideological content. Philosophers have to relate to this ideological dimension of philosophy, and they choose mostly from one of the three main positions. They become Ivory Tower Philosophers, Political Activist Philosophers or Cultural Politics Philosophers, and I claim that we have already chosen before our conscious decision.

Last but not least, the respected reader can discover two excellent reviews from John Ryder and Brunella Antomarini, and I hope that not only professional academics but everybody will find important reflections on pragmatism in the present issue.

# I. PHILOSOPHY AND HUMAN EVOLUTION

## PERSONS AS NATURAL ARTIFACTS[1]

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ABSTRACT: I take "modern" philosophy, which may be dated from the appearance of Kant's first *Critique,* to be dominated and informed, whether knowingly or not, in its late phase (dated from the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species*, 1859) by the novel evolutionary transformation of the human primate into a self or person, by the processes of inventing and mastering of natural language. The human person I take to be a hybrid artifactual transform of the natural-kind kind, *homo sapiens sapiens*. The notion is remarkably neglected in the history of thought; and yet it profoundly affects what it may be reasonable to say about the world and mankind's place in the world. I track some of the principal implications of this new way of orienting philosophy and science and practical life and the possibility of radically revising the perspectives of contemporary thought.

### I.

The hero of these lectures is the human primate: that's to say, the human infant, who, by its native, seemingly meager prelinguistic gifts, masters, easily and quickly, any and every natural language as a first language and, in doing that, transforms itself metaphysically (so to say) into the uniquely hybrid artifactual creature we name "person" or "self," signifying thereby the mastery of certain novel, utterly unmatched reflexive powers of thought and agency that mark the extraordinary career of the human race. We find ourselves confronted by a thoroughly naturalistic, encultured discontinuity within a palpable biological continuum of animal and human evolution, an anomaly that presages the all-too-hasty disjunctions of mind and body, thought and world, nature and spirit, law and history, invariance and flux, and the promise and limitations of the physical and human sciences that have bedeviled Western philosophy through the whole of its history.

In a word, philosophy and science—all truth-seeking disciplines—find themselves obliged to confirm their coherence and adequacy in terms of accommodating matters of fact akin to the judgment I've just tendered. I mean: philosophies of mind and enlanguaged culture must make sense of the evolutionary conditions under which what may be called the "external" and "internal" *Bildung* of the human race (the bridge roles, respectively, of successive species of the genus *Homo* and successive cohorts of the infant members of *Homo sapiens*); they must explain the original creation of language and the normal development of the human person. Academic philosophy is largely opposed to such inquiries. The enterprise remains conjectural, of course, even question-begging, once we confront the puzzles of the paleoanthropological evidence that informs us about the powers of the mature primate members of any of the species of *Homo* or of the cognitive import of the phased invention and mastery of language. Thus, one acknowledged authority on "the history of human thinking," Michael Tomasello, speculating on the unique distinctions of intelligence manifested by *Homo sapiens*, in accord with the views of "a small group of philosophers of action" (Tomasello's phrasing: intended to feature his agreement with familiar figures like John Searle), has recently affirmed that

> humans are able to coordinate with others, in a way that other primates seemingly are not, to form a "we" that acts as a kind of plural agent to create everything from a collaborative hunting party to a cultural institution.[2]

Tomasello, I suggest, has not thought carefully enough about the security concerns of elephant families committed to thwarting the affectionate kidnapping of baby elephants by rival families, or the coordinated hunting of lion sisters, or the deliberate sieges of African farms by baboon cohorts; and, of course, though oddly, he fails to feature the meaning of the achievement of

[1] This paper is a shorter version of a text, which is forthcoming in a more extended form in Jospeh Margolis' book **Three Paradoxes of Personhood**, edited by Roberta Dreon. The book belongs to the series *Letture veneziane* (Venetian Lectures) directed by Luigi Perissinotto, published by Jouvence, Italy.

[2] Michael Tomasello, *A Natural History of Human Thinking* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), p.
[3] Compare John Searle, *The Construction of Social Reality* (New York: Free Press, 1995).

language itself, which would have obliged him (and us) to justify the problematic demarcation between primate- and person-level skills.

By and large, this is a neglected matter among linguists and primatologists alike. Still, at least one small finding seems reasonably clear: Tomasello has too low an opinion of the "we" capacities of non-human mammals; he discounts too easily the intelligence of animals and he does not examine closely enough the meaning of the hard-won achievement of the human infant. The lesson I suggest we ponder is no more than this: natural language may be, at least on the sparest of evidence, an exclusively human achievement—an invention in some important measure (admittedly unexplained), not an original biological gift of any kind (*pace* Chomsky); it's a "mental" (say) biologically evolved or somehow suddenly contrived genetically achievement that, in the last analysis, is the *recto* side of the self-transformation of the primate members of *Homo sapiens* into persons (arguably, of *Neanderthalensis* and other barely glimpsed species as well); and, most important, its distinctive features answer always to the startling fact that, as cultural artifacts, persons can claim no natural niche or *telos* in the world they share with animals, compellingly fitted to some normatively enabling environment.

Their languages, I say, must be distinctly and conveniently flexible, in order to accommodate (as we discover) *whatever* continually invented novel ways of living in, and transforming, the world happens to mark the human career. My point is no more than that language and personhood defeat any chiefly biological model of evolution: man is a hybrid creature, mingling biologically and culturally acquired abilities, and the race itself must continually offset its penchant for fixity (both practical and theoretical) in a rapidly changing world. It seeks to preserve the functionality of ordinary language, by compromising with its seeming adequacy and precision, wherever its shortcuts and knowing inexactitudes appear benign enough and even advantageous. It tolerates a considerable measure of vagueness, error, indeterminacy, distortion, openness to diffuse usage, diversity, inconsistency, contradiction, inexactitude, vacuity, and sheer ignorance, at the same time it pursues all the forms of precision, accuracy, strict conditions of truth and validity that it can muster. The first of these functional competencies I name "mongrel language": I believe our survival requires its distinctive contribution, and therefore regard it as a profound mistake (memorably, Wittgenstein's, in the *Investigations*) to think that the rational progress of our form of life (and language) requires the gradual elimination of mongrel and philosophical intuition. (I shall come back to this concession.)

But is Tomasello speaking of the *primate* creature (*homo sapiens*)—as, explicitly, he seems to affirm—or the enlanguaged transform (of human primates) that we call a "person"? His own allies have no access to mature prelinguistic human primates of any kind—nor does he, nor do we. There *are* no such creatures to encounter now, even if we concede the familiar stalemate that accompanies speculations about "wild children." Tomasello does not answer: he cannot answer—on the strength of his own resources. There is no way to distinguish primate from person except by subtractive conjecture *from* whatever *we* now concede to be given by the acquisition of language. If we grant the conceptual and cognitive gap that Tomasello himself affirms, between the great apes and man (as we now encounter *Homo sapiens*—that is, ourselves), then it's entirely reasonable to concede *both* that language is decisive for the formation of persons as well as for the fully determinate self-referential competences uniquely confined to *Homo sapiens* (if indeed they *are* uniquely manifested by humans) *and* that prelinguistic man was undoubtedly gifted (beyond the considerable, though still prelinguistic, communicative powers of the great apes) in some way that favored the initial onset of the invention of language.

Nevertheless, the putative "we" agent of which Tomasello speaks—which Searle and Margaret Gilbert and Raimo Tuomela (and similar-minded philosophers of diverse convictions) casually endorse—appears on both

sides of the primate/person divide, though in very different guises. The fatal error appears already in George Mead's classic analysis. Hence, what Tomasello says is trivially true on the language side and importantly mistaken on the prelinguistic side. Mead, of course, was unable to decide whether his dialectical use of the "I"/"me" schema modeled the functioning of well-formed persons *or* modeled no more than the enabling primate conditions leading *to* the very formation of persons. It's an extraordinary fact that Mead's confusion has been elevated to the rank of an essential resolution of the definitional question; in Mead's hands, the engine of the transformation rests with the acquired ability of humans to adopt the role of the "generalized other"—the source of Tomasello's and Searle's "we." But languageless apes and monkeys already show an ability to cooperate meaningfully, applying what they have learned (societally, culturally) without, yet, becoming persons. They lack language, but they possess "perceptual concepts"; and if they use such concepts intelligently and cooperatively, I cannot see how they can be denied a capacity for *judgment*. I don't deny that we find it difficult to spell out the structure of animal judgment in a fine-grained way, though its general functionality tends to be clear enough. (We proceed here, of course, along anthropocentric lines. But that's a subaltern question.) I also believe that human infants must rely on perceptual concepts in learning discursive concepts (I shall come back to this later.[3])

Mead characteristically fails to mark the strong disjunction, within the career of the species, of the functionalities of primate and person (and the reason for their all but ineluctable evolutionary sequence). In this sense, as we shall see, the concept of "self" or "person" is something of a mystery—in a way that suggests the relativization of the "actuality" of persons at different levels or registers of mastering discourse.

This allows for a more charitable reading of Descartes's *Cogito* than Descartes himself provides—which is, also, more stubborn, conceptually, than anything canonical rationalism could possibly confirm. Hence, I regard the reception of rationality as entirely compatible with advanced animal life (viewed species-wise), though enlanguaged thought is, trivially, and momentously, confined to enlanguaged persons. Elephants, I suggest, are capable of elephantine rationality nevertheless, *in* cognition and understanding and conception and deed; they don't "think" as we think, though *we* ourselves are puzzled by our own ability as well as that of elephants.

You may protest that I've neglected animal "languages": the "language" of the honey bees, for instance, or that of dolphins or of whales. I acknowledge the disputed incipience, among chimpanzees and bonobos, of an elementary grasp of some dimension of human (natural) languages, as well as of proto-linguistic analogues of reference and predication among monkeys and apes. But I distinguish as forcefully as possible between linguistic and nonlinguistic communication, as with the semiotics of gestures (among wild dogs, that lack language) and humans (who have language). I'm prepared to yield ground wherever the evidence requires it. But, thus far, I see no need to yield much ground, and I mean to resist obscuring the theory of persons.

[3] McDowell's Kantianism has led him to make no more than some very tentative concessions in the direction of perceptual concepts; but he insists that animals are incapable of *judgment*—judgment, for McDowell, is thoroughly "discursive" (enlanguaged). I say rather that, although perception need not be perceptual judgment, concepts (of any kind) are plausibly and paradigmatically ascribed (in general and certainly Kantian terms) in contexts of operative judgment: hence, to admit (or not to deny explicitly) something of the nature of perceptual concepts to animals is to admit (or not to deny explicitly) something of the nature of operative judgment to animals. The evidence challenges McDowell's artful compromise. A considerable run of current analytic treatment of he concept/judgment divide (regarding languageless animals) is usefully addressed in Carl Sachs, "Resisting the Disenchantment of Nature: McDowell and the Question of Animal Minds," *Inquiry*, *55*, 131-147. I'm persuaded that McDowell stand in the Woodbridge Lectures is untenable—but then, so, too, is Kant, in the first *Critique*.

It's in this spirit that I claim that our best guess at an answer holds that, whatever incipiencies approaching the determinate reflexive awareness of "oneself" *qua* self may be thought to arise among unlanguaged animals, the determinacy of the paradigmatic self is assuredly inseparable from the mastery of language, is in fact an essential part of what, precisely, we master in mastering a fully developed natural language. I'm entirely willing, I should add, to concede that the very notion of a "self" may well have begun, theoretically, as a thin artifactual (even fictional—grammatically fictional) construct of an abstractly functional sort that only gradually acquires (through continual usage) the irresistibly practical sense and force of a thick and actual entitative identity. So that when Tomasello ventures his "shared intentionality hypothesis," which he characterizes as a sort of "we"-intentionality, he must be fudging (innocently, I would say, though not unlike Mead) between pre- and post-linguistic speculation.[4] In any case, the intentional nature of acts performed by the great apes do indeed approach, incipiently, the feats of persons, without entailing the reflexive conjectures of the self itself. That threatens to count as an insoluble paradox for rationalists who insist on the discursivity of concepts (John McDowell, for instance.)

Of course, the matter is profoundly contested. More than that, the strictly biological evidence seems to confirm the cognitional (nativist) gap between the human primate and the great apes: it cannot, as matters now stand, confirm the continuum of the human and the animal, without confirming as well the gap between the prelinguistic cognitive powers of ape and man that would explain (in some measure) both the absence of true language among the apes and the unique ability of the human infant to master any natural language at all from a languageless vantage. I leave room here, also, for the surmise (which I confess I find neither implausible nor unattractive), namely, that the linguistically exceptional bonobo Kanzi seems to have mastered—recognitionally, perhaps more than productively, but productively enough (so it has been claimed)—distinctly advanced linguistic skills, without explicit training: grammatically dependent clauses, for instance, and reference to the intentions and actions of other agents (whether bonobos or humans) not actually present (to ensure intended reference) in witnessed discursive episodes.[5] But if this be admitted—Tomasello is impressed, Chomsky is not—then Kanzi must be at least a-more-than-barely-incipient person; and, in conceding that much, we signal the ontologically contested nature of the self and the vagaries of linguistic incipience.

It's entirely reasonable to suppose that there are unique biological capabilities on the part of the human primate that provide a proper foundation for the infant's skill in mastering language, without supposing that the reflexive powers of selves or persons are themselves completely entailed in such capacities. Most discussants are reluctant to advocate the thesis that the posit of the self as the determinate site of speech acts and (other) deliberate or intended acts (enabled by language) may be the artifactual but substantialized minimal outcome of an originally practical (or grammatical) nominalization on our own part (in theorizing about the self). In any case, the matter inevitably challenges standard evolutionary theory, even where it exceeds or corrects the general lines of Darwin's original account: say, among the so-called "philosophical anthropologists" (Helmuth Plessner and his associates and allies), who

[4] See Tomasello, *A Natural History of Human Thinking*, Ch. 1.

[5] See Michael Tomasello and Josep Call, *Primate Cognition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997). My sense is that Tomasello has strengthened his impression of Kanzi's (and other apes') ability to discern the intentions of bonobos and familiar humans; we cannot be entirely sure that the seeming limitations in Kanzi's use of language may not be an artifact of the conditions of testing and training: the matter is not entirely clear. See, further, E.S. Savage-Rumbaugh, *Ape Language* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986); and E.S. Savage-Rumbaugh *et al.*, "Language Comprehension in Ape and Child," *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development*, 58 (3–4), no. 233; also, Michael Tomasello, *Origins of Human Communication*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2008), Chs. 6–7 (taken together).

were still inclined to conflate the conceptual difference between primate and person[6]—as does George Mead among the classic pragmatists, John Searle among the "we-intentionalists," and Tomasello among the primatologists. Because, if (as I'm persuaded) the self *is* the artifactual, though entirely naturalistic posit of the unified site of human thought and agency, then canonical evolutionary theory cannot possibly account for the standard forms of human development, without treating the evolution of the human being in hybrid, intertwined biological and enlanguaged (cultural) terms, that appear not to apply in the same way to other advanced animals. Viewed this way, it's as reasonable (possibly, more reasonable) to regard the most fundamental physical sciences as disciplines *abstracted* and *idealized from the prior space* of the *human* sciences and practical life, as (or, than) it is to regard the inquiries of the human sciences and practical life as *extensions* or modifications (of some sort) *of* the foundational inquiries and language of the physical sciences. (I draw your attention, in passing, to the important grammatical liberty, or trickery, involved in fixing the reference – is it a merely mongrel reference? – to selves, which I return to in my second lecture.)

Here, I emphasize two caveats: one, that there can be no doubt that the invention or achievement of a natural language, which I take to be essentially a cultural feat open to natively gifted creatures—rather than an entirely unlearned, possibly minor genetic modification of the lining of the brain, that somehow yields a "mental organ" whose functionality manifests itself instantly as "linguistic"—cannot possibly have been realized without enabling *prelinguistic* competences, either evolutionary in a strictly biological sense or in the form of socially learned, socially transmitted, *cultural* improvements of *Homo sapiens's* native powers, even if shared (up to a point) with the great apes themselves; and, the second caveat, that it is unquestionably true that the primate *preconditions* of *Homo sapiens's* gradual invention of language must include *pre*-personal, *proto*-personal, *ur*-personal stages of development that finally issue in paradigmatically person-level manifestations that may be difficult to distinguish clearly and determinately within the terms of a hybrid revision of the evolutionary continuum of the human primate and human person. My conjecture has it that *if* discursive concepts (problematically defined as "rational") are (or are largely) artifactual, then it is well-nigh impossible to deny the existence of perceptual and other nonlinguistic concepts.

The truth is, we are unable to sort these resemblant forms in an entirely explicit way, in good part because the theory of mind is still so remarkably primitive (whether psychologically or rationally described), spanning, say, Descartes's self-thwarting conjectures and those of current speculation. I do hold, however, that the enabled powers of normative ordering and of confirming the identity and reidentification of individuated things (*under different descriptions*) exceed any pre-personal primate competence. I see no reason to suppose we cannot gain a good deal of conceptual ground—in distinguishing between primate and person—by adding to such discoveries. True language itself, I urge, is inseparable from the formation of persons. My premise, you remember, is, precisely, that the societal invention of language and the individual mastery of language effectively constitute the same process that we reasonably characterize as the transformation of the human primate into a person; and that Darwinian models of evolution fail to account for the full emergence (and uniquely enlanguaged powers) of the human being: because they fail to acknowledge the inherent inadequacy of any merely biological theory to account for paradigmatic persons, and because they fail to interpolate the requisite capacities (call them intelligent, rational, [in a species-specific sense], and

[6] For a reasonable summary of the "philosophical anthropologists'" inability or unwillingness to define the difference between primate and person, see Marjorie Grene, "People and Other Animals," *The Understanding of Nature: Essays in the Philosophy of Biology* (Dordecht: D. Reidel, 1974), pp. 346–360, particularly p, 358.

conceptual [though nondiscursive] on the part of the human infant), adequate for "internal *Bildung*." We cannot, I submit, solve the puzzle of the human mode of being without conceding the depth of the conceptual revision of evolutionary theory that's still needed.

It's in this sense that I say the formation of persons is, effectively, a "metaphysical" change, a change of being, meaning (by that) a change so profound that we exceed the explanatory resources of the whole of material biology—in any sense confined to chemical or biochemical or genetic or epigenetic or standard explanations by purely physical or causal means. I suggest that the description and explanation of linguistic activity, however biologically enabled, cannot be given in biological or, for that matter, in languageless behavioral terms alone: what's required is, in fact, profoundly incommensurable (though not incompatible) with physicalist discourse. There's an important clue buried in this casual acknowledgement that I shall return to, bearing, of course, on the matter of "mongrel" language. But what I wish to emphasize particularly is the conjectural nature of the entire matter. My own intuition is committed to the thesis that personhood and natural language are radically novel developments, biologically and culturally inseperable "aspects" of the same "evolutionary" turn, that may well be unique to the human race (or to some small cluster of races that, except for ours, which seems to have been hybridized, have gone extinct). I begin with the entwinement of biology and culture (or "mind"); others—Chomsky, most notably, begin with genetics and the computational functionality of the brain. At the moment there's a democratic sparsity of strategically placed information adequate to discern the inevitability of any presently contribed theory. It's entirely possible that better answers will have to conjure (finally) with the mind/body problem: the meaning of "emergent" and the extension of the "physical." But that confirms again the naïve standing of the present state of play.

Let me say, by way of a provisional summary, that the infant's intelligence must include prelinguistic *conceptual* capacities (if discursive conceptual capacities are conceded to be socially acquired as well as essential in the successful mastery of language itself); and if that's true, then we must have reasonably strong grounds for conjecturing that languageless animals of high intelligence may be characterized as rational creatures (in the species-specific sense), as possessing perceptual and experiential concepts (akin to those of the human infant), in virtue of which we cannot fail to attribute to them (on empirical grounds)—however anthropomorphized—powers akin to consciousness, inference, thinking, judgment, knowledge, confirmation, commitment, decision, and the like.

The human infant must be uniquely endowed within the evolutionary continuum of animal and human nature; and a phenomenology of the mental must be applicable, analogically, in *theorizing* about primate and nonprimate perception and experience, as well as at the level of human reportage. There is no other way to explain the bridge role of the human infant in understanding the achievement of enlanguaged persons. I emphasize the conjectural liberty we avail ourselves of here, largely because of the nearly Cartesian nature of recent applications of the Kantian treatment of discursive rationality and discursive conception—notably in the extreme reading of Kant advocated by John McDowell—in his Woodbridge Lectures and in his seeming (still extreme rationalist) "correction" of the Woodbridge Lectures, in, for instance, his essay, "Avoiding the Myth of the Given" (2009).[7] But I must also mention in the same breath the effective omission of the *conceptual* powers of infants and animals in (to my mind) the more important, more fine-grained, more accurate and compelling account of the discursive treatment of rationality, conception, and consciousness (among enlanguaged persons) spelled out (along

[7] The Woodbridge Lectures appear in final form in John McDowell, *Having the World in View: Essays on Kant, Hegel, and Sellars* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), Pt. I, pp. 3–65; "Avoiding the Myth of the Given" appears in the same volume, at pp. 256–272.

Husserlian phenomenological lines) by, for instance, Dan Zahavi. Zahavi's argument appears in his "Mindedness, Mindlessness, and First-Person Authority" (2013), which convincingly exposes the excessive claims of both McDowell and Hubert Dreyfus (in their well-known "debate" on the nature of the mental).[8] I shall treat these discussions as symptoms of a residual Cartesianism (however innocently betrayed) that both McDowell and Zahavi (and nearly all contemporary discussants of the matter) share, as in the general use of the term "*non*conceptual" to signify (without disjunction) both (say) phrases like "nonconceptual content" (as in the Kantian sense of distinguishing "sensibility" and "thinking" discursively) and what (contrary to Kant's and Husserl's usage) might have been defended in terms of the distinction between linguistic or enlanguaged concepts and specifically perceptual and experiential concepts that are either entirely prelinguistic or are conjoined with, or integrated into, discursive concepts. I take what I've already said—about the bridge role of human infants and the intelligence of the most advanced animals—that it must be a mistake to claim that prelinguistic infants (*a fortiori*, unlanguaged animals) must lack altogether the use of nondiscursive concepts that appear to be essential to the abilities we cannot rightly deny them (on the empirical evidence). I'm persuaded that we cannot make sense of the abilities we attribute to humans who normally master speech, if we deny them the use of nondiscursive concepts. But, of course, the mere admission of nondiscursive concepts stalemates Kant's entire invention.

In any case, I see no way to explain discursive concepts if there are no perceptual or experiential concepts to build on. How could we possibly explain coming to understand the meanings of words and sentences? There's the strongest clue regarding the philosophical relevance of the Darwinian and post-Darwinian discoveries. McDowell's theory (in the Woodbridge Lectures) counts among the most uncompromisingly Kantian approaches to the conceptual issue that must be addressed. From the start, Zahavi's treatment is simply restricted to the discursive form of rationality, though he gives the impression that he's speaking of concepts in unrestrictedly universal terms: that cannot possibly be true.

**II.**

I find it entirely plausible to construe an infant's ability to point meaningfully (in contexts of societal instruction or rearing), as both intentional and communicative, while remaining entirely prelinguistic. Laboratory apes have been taught to master human pointing as well; but that alone does not *confirm* that apes engage in discourse or are already persons. Tomasello confirms that apes in the wild also point intentionally. If so, then he defeats his own conjecture. I have already conceded that the solidarity of elephant troupes, baboon sieges of South African farmhouses, female lions hunting together among antelope show definite signs of learned planning and cooperation ("we"-intentionality, as Tomasello has it), without inventing or mastering or even requiring language—and, of course, without functioning as selves. Hence, when an "evolutionary anthropologist" like Tomasello declares: "Language is the capstone of uniquely human thinking, not the foundation,"[9] I find it perfectly reasonable (though potentially confusing) to agree with him wherever he is able to demonstrate that there are (say) uniquely human biological gifts (or gifts modified by socially contrived *pre*linguistic learning) that we take to contribute to laying a proper ground for the invention and mastery of language (or something akin); but I believe Tomasello nonetheless fails to come to terms with the thesis of the artifactual nature of persons, *within* the bounds of the hybrid intertwining of biological

[8] See Dan Zahavi, "Mindedness, Mindlessness, and First-Person Authority," in Joseph K. Shear (ed.) *Mind, Reason, and Being-in-the-World: The McDowell-Dreyfus Debate* (London: Routledge, 2013), pp. 320–343.

[9] Tomasello, *A Natural History of Human Thinking*, p. 127.

and cultural forces that yield no more than *prelinguistic* (though still distinctly semiotic) gains: the gains of prelinguistic infants, for instance, approaching some first steps in learning a language. I'm persuaded that Tomasello's own thesis—"the so-called shared intentionality, or 'we' intentionality thesis" (his own expression), which, as I say, he appears to share with theorists like John Searle and Margaret Gilbert—takes the confused, or equivocal form of mingling primate- and person-level expressions. For his part, Searle tends to endow *his* human primates with nearly all the essential capacities of evolved persons: the invention and mastery of language is therefore not a problem for him. Tomasello does not go that far, but he fails to explain the difference nonetheless.

But if this much is true, then I, for one, am prepared to concede cognitive powers to advanced, though languageless, animals—including the "use" of nonlinguistic analogues of inference, judgment, evidentiary confirmation and the like. Nevertheless, the discursive modeling of such processes *cannot be more than heuristic*, as we now understand animal intelligence. If you acknowledge Kanzi's achievements, then the bonobos may occupy a range of functioning comparable to that of the transitional powers of very young children beginning to acquire a language. If you allow the argument, then, I daresay, Kanzi and the human infant bring us to the edge of defeating Darwin and Kant (*a fortiori*, contemporary Kantians and Husserlians like McDowell and Zahavi) in the same breath.

Broadly speaking, any acceptable reconciliation of the opposed pairings I've begun with—mind and body, thought and world, law and history, and the rest—within the bounds of nature, without foundational or normative privilege of any kind, construing all such dualities coherently and consistently, preserving the continuum of animal and human powers, counts, in most of the idioms of the new millennium's philosophies, certainly in my own intrusive ideology, as thoroughly pragmatist in sweep, or at least as compatible or companionable with same. My thought is that this presumption may very well define the most promising, most arresting philosophical ventures of our age. In any event, I confess I start from this corner of the world and find myself entirely open to provisional, selective, and functional recruitments (in terms of pragmatist affinities) among initially alien or opposed figures and doctrinal proposals that would have seemed impossible to countenance a short while ago: for instance, regarding Descartes, Leibniz, Hume, Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche, Frege, Peirce, Russell, Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Carnap, Quine, Strawson, Davidson, Sellars, and Wittgenstein at the very least. By and large, these are the salient figures I find I must conjure with especially—that is, genealogically, *not* in any way to prejudge the merit or importance of any of their contributions. But then, to suggest that there may be pragmatist affinities between such figures and the classic pragmatists will no longer seem odd.

Furthermore, *if* prelinguistic infants actually learn the remarkably complex languages that they do, then that already yields a more than plausible reason to think that language must preserve a relatively simplified channel of mongrel discourse (a kind of *lingua franca* or creole, within any home language), to ensure quotidian fluency—which, nevertheless, also enables progress in the direction of whatever complexities any viable home language is bound to introduce children, strangers (and others) to. It's my contention that the analysis of our quotidian world (the world of persons) is probably too difficult for man to fathom quickly or better than he fathoms any part of physical nature, to yield up the opportunistic instrumentalities of the verbal evasions, elisions, vacuities, compromises, doubtful nominalizations, even benign falsities of the mongrel discourse he learns to live with. Just try, for instance, to state clearly and simply what thinking is—supposing (always) that we do think! It seems we cannot function in ordinary life (as the rationalists suppose we can) if we must rely in some significant measure (as I suggest we must) on the admittedly risky resources of mongrel discourse—that's to say, with all the familiar

imperfections of ordinary language that we blithely accommodate. Cultural infancy surrounds us forever: I shall try to show, shortly (in the briefest way), that both Wittgenstein and Frege were profoundly mistaken at the very outset of their superb but irreconcilably opposed philosophical contributions regarding the adequacy of ordinary discourse.

Let me collect the summary force of the single premise I've begun with here, before proceeding further. I mean: the easy confirmation of the human infant's ability to master natural language and to take up its intended function as an apt member of a society of mature persons, who already share a language and a culture. To admit the human infant's empirical achievement—I call it empirical rather than innate or transcendental—is, I say, to implicate the impossibility of accounting for the emergence of the integral human being (as we characterize ourselves) in evolutionary terms wherever the story is strictly confined to biological processes alone (in effect, in accord with the defects and omissions of Darwin's original vision and neo-Darwinian achievements). But to admit that much reminds us of the strategic importance of perceptually and experientially grounded concepts (accessible to human infants and nonhuman animals alike, in their respective ways, *if* concepts are admitted at all, within the continuum of canonical evolution.

I add at once—opportunistically, though for good reason—that this single admission exposes a mortal weakness in Descartes's and Kant's (and, indeed, in all classical rationalist) theories of cognition, *of both* metaphysical and methodological sorts and reminds us (thereby) of the ultimate good sense of a cognate part of Aristotle's "metaphysics" of cognition (hence, of concepts laxer than the linguistic or discursive). For it may indeed be true—I take it to be true—that even the so-called mastery of "rational" (or enlanguaged) concepts (think, here, of "pure" and "applied" or "impure" arithmetic and geometric concepts, in the setting of Cartesian, Kantian, and Fregean speculation) may well depend on the enabling mastery of perceptual and agentive fluencies, even where putatively "pure" concepts appear to have no direct conceptual entanglement with perceptual concepts—granting, always, of course, that there *are* concepts and that many animal species are capable of high intelligence: as in inference, memory, learning, invention, skill, instruction of the young, judgment, purposive behavior—in effect, in forms of rationality "below" (as we say) the level of linguistic competence.

There is, in fact a remarkably instructive passage excerpted from Wilfrid Sellars's "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind," that Robert Brandom interprets along decidedly rationalist lines, that draws conviction, loosely, from jointly Kantian and Fregean sources, and that marks the resurgence (post-Rorty) of rationalism in our own time, as itself a form of pragmatism. I mean the somewhat muffled (various) rationalisms of the so-called "Pittsburgh School" (to include Brandom, Sellars, John McDowell, and, by courtesy, Richard Rorty), which, chiefly advanced by Brandom and Sellars, attempt to link in a fresh way Kantian and Fregean variants of the rationalist vision. That precise maneuver—which obliquely recalls Rudolf Carnap's (Frege's student's) related gesture during the positivist surge in the early decades of the twentieth century—is both alluring and difficult to isolate as genuinely autonomous in a way that might compare favorably with Frege's own treatment of mathematical reasoning in his *Begriffsschrift*: a matter more obscurely bruited in Sellars's early forays and reclaimed (never more than programmatically) by Brandom. (I'll come to the passage in a moment.)

But it's also meant to strengthen our sense of "discovering" laxer rational rigors of justified judgment regarding the normative "methodological framework" of reasoning, potentially among any and all inquiries, including the work of the human sciences and practical life, beyond any merely hit-or-miss search for first-order empirical evidence. I find a collision of motives here, that stamps the projects of these newly minted rationalists

(Kantians or Fregeans) of our own day, who envision a fusion or reorientation of pragmatism involving distinctly Fregean options. Their ventures need to be reappraised—though, frankly, I regard them, at best, as heuristic (when viewed as ideal possibilities) more than as evidentiarily reliable (if actually applied in the real world). The intended rationalist precision trails off into undeniable vagueness in Sellars's treatment and appears as something of a mongrel intrusion in Brandom's open admission that (as yet) we cannot support claims firmer than suggestive analogies (as with AI simulation).

Here, in a distinctly candid moment, Brandom goes to some lengths to qualify the would-be rationalist grounding of his own inferentialism—in particular, his version of "material inference" (Wilfrid Sellars's term). He says, for instance, that "autonomous discursive practices *essentially* and not just *accidentally* involve…at least some material [that is, 'nonlogical'—non-formal] inferences"; that they "must [also] have some vocabulary that can be used *observationally*, in reliably differentially elicited noninferential reports," that pertinently bear on the appraisal of "materially good and materially bad inferences" (Brandom's wording). Furthermore, and most important, Brandom concedes that, "material inference is in general *nonmonotonic*," that is, "*defeasible*, by [reference to] collateral circumstances that thereby count as special [disciplines, *not* actually algorithmic or rule-governed or nomological: medicine, law, the human sciences, say, contrasted with 'formal logical systems', mathematical reasoning, and thoroughly mathematized physics perhaps]."

Brandom speaks here of "special sciences" (medicine, say) because, although they are "defeasible," such disciplines are not completely determinate or closed in the way of rules or criteria or *ceteris paribus* clauses, by which their apparent claims, conjectures, and judgments may be reliably defeated. These, then, provide instances of "material inference" (in Sellars's sense, coopted by Brandom), that are firmer than the quotidian inferences of ordinary pragmatic situations: so much so, I'm inclined to believe, that the latter tend to dwindle into uncertain disputations. Here, speaking loosely, "defeasibility" is a consideration that applies improvisationally, case-by-case; but, if so, there may be no point in collecting such cases if what we want is a degree of rigor of at least the sort found among the "special sciences" or something akin. To put the point in the frankest way: the *Begriffsschrift* analogy loses persuasive force wherever our conception of what to count as material inference itself becomes quarrelsome, as, along observational and pragmatic lines, Brandom candidly concedes the point.

Roughly speaking, nonmonotonic inferences do not anwer to any "definite totality of possible defeasors"; so-called *ceteris paribus* clauses mark "an unavoidable feature of ordinary material inference" and cannot be expected to convert the nonmonotonic into the monotonic.[10] All such constraints point, inexorably, to the ineliminable influence of perceptual, experiential, intentional and other psychological factors in appraising the relatively unruly nature of Brandom's (and Sellars's) would-be inferentialism, as being in any way a reasonable and sufficiently convincing analogue of Frege's mathematical reasoning.[11] This explains, in part, Brandom's motive for merging (in some measure) Kant's and Frege's very different purposes.[12]

But then, having made these good-faith concessions, Brandom turns the tables on the loose empiricist impulse of classic pragmatism, by isolating, as well as possible,

[10] Robert B. Brandom, *From Empiricism to Expressivism: Brandom Reads Sellars* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015), pp. 163–164.

[11] Compare Danielle Macbeth, *Realizing Reason: A Narrative of Truth and Knowing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014). especially Ch. 7.

[12] For the briefest evidence of Brandom's view of Carnap's role in linking Kant's and Frege's rationalisms, see Brandom, *From Empiricism to Expressivism*, pp. 22–24. Brandom's conjectures about the Fregean themes of both Sellars and Carnap appear to rest on very slim grounds. See, also, for some oblique references to Carnap's and Wittgenstein's responses to Frege's logic, Daniel Macbeth, *Frege's Logic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), pp. 182–184 nn6–7. Macbeth does not pursue the Carnap connection in her *Realizing Reason*.

the would-be *rationalist autonomy* of the inferentialism of the so-called "framework" of reasoning in *any* inquiry aspiring to scientific standing, that might compare favorably with the would-be autonomous (rational) rigor of mathematical thinking (largely *à la* Frege). There's the regressive impulse that I espy; for there's a world of difference (certainly, after Frege) between the autonomy of, say, arithmetic reasoning about "pure" numbers (or, better, about functions and higher-level law-like relations among functions), possibly even extending to parts of mathematized physics—though Brandom is dubious. What I say here (and mean to support, however obliquely, in closing this lecture and opening the second) is that our acknowledging that the human person is an artifactual transform of the human primate and that the invention of language is, whatever else it may have become, a *mongrel*, motley, multifunctional instrument for effective survival among the things the human being claims to perceive and manipulate for its own purposes: an insuperably limiting constraint on the would-be autonomy of rational thinking at any level of inferentialist construction. The conjectured inferential ("metaphilosophical") structure of the "framework" (the logical space, so to say, of any well-ordered rational inquiry) is bound to be, I daresay, a Fregean-like self-deception if (as with Brandom) material inference is already acknowledged to be thoroughly nonmonotonic,[13] by and large quarrelsomely defeated or justified, and likely to be explained ad hoc and individually.

I must apologize for the heavy language here. (It's not my choice.) Nevertheless, one begins to see that the revival of Fregean rationalism—*a fortiori*, the much-too-easy union of Kantian and Fregean rationalisms (Brandom's temptation, which he finds embedded in Sellars's conjectures)—is ultimately regressive, certainly anti-Darwinian, not at all interested in the artifactuality of the human person or of natural language itself. The issue may seem alien at first, until you recall that Brandom believes he's fashioning a rationalist version of pragmatism, the intended ground of his proposed inferentialism—an "analytic pragmatism," as he calls it, partly based on his reading of Rorty and Sellars—meant to displace the executive role of the continuum of the animal and the human and the primacy of "experience" (at once animal and human), as they appear in both John Dewey's and Charles Peirce's accounts of the classic phase of pragmatism.

Turn back, then, to Sellars: Sellars's sentences (the ones in question, which Brandom cites) run as follows: the first,

> In the dimension of describing and explaining the world, science is the measure of all things, of what is that it is and of what is not that it is not. (§41)

the second,

> [In] characterizing an episode or a state as that of *knowing*, we are not giving an empirical description of that episode or state, we are placing it in the logical space of reasons, of justifying and being able to justify what one says. (§36)

Brandom's gloss is instructive, even as it narrows the sense of what Sellars offers:

[13] The most up-to-date defense that Brandom offers appears in *From Empiricism to Expressivism*, Ch.4. on the significance of Frege's mature conception of his own *Begriffsschrift*—logically *and* philosophically. I'm very much in debt to Danielle Macbeth's *Realizing Reason* (already remarked) as well as her earlier, thoroughly convincing (more restricted) *Frege's Logic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), especially Chs. 2–3. Nevertheless, in acknowledging Frege's revolutionary conception of the "science of logic," I confess I'm not persuaded that there is a similar "pure" structure at the "metaphilosophical" level governing "material inference" among any familiar empirically or agentively (intentionally) qualified disciplines, such as Carnap, Sellars, Brandom, and (if I read her correctly) Macbeth are inclined to favor. I take the pros and cons of such extensions, however, to define one of the most strategically placed philosophical disputes of our age. If I understand the issue correctly, the question that remains asks whether there are Fregean "thoughts" that govern all truth-seeking inquiries. I suppose that there are not. (See *Frege's Logic*, §§4.5, 5.4). The upshot is that we remain constrained by the insuperable paradoxes of First Philosophy.

> The first passage [Brandom says], often called the "*scientia mensura*," expresses a kind of scientific naturalism. Its opening qualification is important: there are [he warns us] other discursive and cognitive activities besides describing and explaining. The second passage says that characterizing something as a knowing is one of them. And indeed, Sellars means that in characterizing something even as a believing or a believable, as conceptually contentful at all, one is doing something other than describing it. One is placing the item in a normative space articulated by relations of what is a reason for what. Meaning, for [Sellars] is a normative phenomenon that does not fall within the descriptive realm over which natural science is authoritative.[14]

There's the fateful—and futile—argument: the authority of the thoroughly "rationalist" treatment of the inferentialist structure of the "framework" of any inquiry that rightly counts as "knowing" is indeed normative and, therefore, *not* descriptive (as remarked by both Sellars and Brandom), in spite of the fact that it *applies* to the descriptive materials of natural and human sciences and practical life in the large, and even in more informal inquiries (say, art criticism and historical interpretation). I cannot see the force of Brandom's maneuver, which is well on its way to becoming a distinctly fashionable option in current philosophical circles. But is it really viable? I venture to say (without meaning to change the thrust of the question) that Brandom's account may be even more anti-pragmatist (and regressive) than Rorty's post-modernist rebuttal.

It's precisely here (§36) that Sellars permits us to glimpse the unmarked "Fregean" themes that Brandom adopts in his own inferentialism: the escape from the reflexive *a priori* of epistemology, the dependence of the empirical sciences on a rationalist "metaphilosophical" platform, and the "Fregeanizing" of Kantianism itself. Rorty's charge maintains that pragmatism utterly fails wherever philosophy fails utterly; Brandom's charge (which is partly Rortyan) argues that classic pragmatism's empiricist inclination must be subordinated to the reclamation of pragmatism's rightful rationalist ground (*à la* Kant, Frege, or what may still be recovered from Carnap, Wittgenstein, and Sellars—but not, at least not readily, from figures like C.I. Lewis, Quine, and Davidson, or, for that matter, McDowell). Brandom characterizes the project as "programmatic." But I think that means that it need never be recovered as more than heuristic—which is to say, it remains effectively unsecured.

In any event, I see no way to explain the construction of a plausible "framework" argument (which Brandom hardly means to be a primal or privileged "foundation"), that may be viewed (instead) as a quasi-Fregean posit that enables us to see just how the natural sciences and the whole of practical reasoning may be brought back to their rationalist paradigm, without disallowing the play of dependent, non-inferential, empirical resources that count in important ways toward the realist success of our cognitive claims. There's the plan Brandom believes he shares with Sellars. The "framework" applies to an empirical domain (however narrowly or generously construed) without the need for any equilibration between its rationalist and empiricist premises and powers.

Something analogous is said to obtain in mathematics, in spite of the fact that mathematical entities do not belong to the empirical world. Put more frontally: I take Brandom's gloss to be, at the very least, intended to be a proper analogue of Frege's mature reading of his own *Begriffsschrift*, applied (now) to the empirical and practical world (featuring the systematic primacy of material inference). I don't, however, find any compelling evidence that the analogy *works*! I marvel at the *Begriffsschrift's* achievement. I admit that theoretical physics is remarkably mathemat*i*z*ed*. I think we cannot refuse inferentialism an important place at the philosophical rostrum. I don't deny that the law of identity ($a=a$) is, "transparently," necessarily true. But

[14] The sentences cited from Sellars appear in Wilfrid Sellars, "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind," *Science, Perception, and Reality* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963), pp. 127–196. (The essay is published also as a separate volume, edited by Brandom, under the same title, with Harvard University Press, 1997.) Brandom's gloss appears in his *From Empiricism to Expressivism*, pp. 30–31.

the whole of the argument falls short of the mark in several decisive ways: for one thing, there's no real progress in demonstrating that pragmatic contexts must yield promisingly on the monotonicity matter; and, secondly, there seems to be no close-enough analogy between "metalinguistic" reasoning drawn (say) from physics and from arithmetic.

You must bear in mind that "*to place an item* in a normative space" (as Sellars has it) *is* to place *it* (consulting doxastic or cognitive attributions that characteristically trigger nonmonotonic complications) in a decidedly uncertain—possibly unmanageable—inferential space. (Sellars is cannily silent here: Brandom is bolder, decidedly more voluble, distinctly more adventurous and unguarded.) In any case, I find no satisfactory argument in either Brandom or Sellars, or among their champions. In fact, Brandom himself emphasizes the chronic nonmonotonicity of "framework" speculations; Sellars effectively ducks the question. I mean the question, whether "rational" constraints on the "framework" of inferences within one or another science or practice of pragmatic know-how can be convincingly treated as free of any perceptual or experiential or cognitionally qualified agentive considerations. Brandom's admission of the nonmonotonicity of such inferences would seem to belie any supposed such autonomy.

I therefore take the argument to fail, and with it the thesis of the would-be primacy of inferentialism itself: Brandom's doctrine cannot deliver the resource it promises: it puts in question pragmatism's animal grip on what has come to be called the realist "friction" of perception and experience. If you add to this the effect of the self-referential paradoxes of epistemology, the informal, fluxive, tacit, and abductive complexities of cognition, you become aware again of the completely unearned assurances of any would-be alliance between Kantian and Fregean rationalism. You must see that I'm combatting contemporary forms of rationalist regression in a post-Darwinian world. Hans Sluga pertinently reports that:

> Frege believed that arithmetic is necessary for the justification of scientific induction. It is also necessary [he claims] for the formulation of the more abstract empirical laws. To prove that arithmetic truths are *a priori* is therefore to prove not just that there are isolated pieces of *a priori* knowledge, but that *a priori* knowledge is fundamental to empirical knowledge.[15]

Nevertheless, we must ask ourselves: should Frege's conviction be dismissed in the same spirit in which Quine dismisses the comic futility of Peirce's effort to support his infinitist fallibilism by the arithmetic of infinitesimals? Does Thomas Kuhn's now more-or-less admired conception of discontinuous paradigm shifts among the natural sciences count as a decisive objection to the presumption of Fregean "Thoughts"? I believe it should. Bear in mind that, in a relatively late paper (1918–19), "The Thought: A Logical Inquiry," Frege offers the following extraordinary claim:

> All sciences have truth as their goal; but logic is concerned with it in a quite different way from this. It has much the same relation to truth as physics has to weight or heat. To discover truths is the task of all sciences: it falls to logic to discern the laws of truth.[16]

Extraordinary invention! What could possibly be said in support of, or in opposition to, the "extension" of the Fregean paradigm within ordinary science?

Of course, *if* Frege could have made the doctrine convincing, the *a priori* "ground" of science would have been confirmed. But is there any prospect of that? Here, the vulnerability of Frege's *a priori* more than matches the presumption of Kant's *a priori*. When, in *Making It Explicit*, Brandom qualifies his admiration for Wittgenstein's *Investigations*, by insisting that Wittgenstein was surely mistaken in denying that there *is* a "downtown" in a continually changing city—meaning

[15] Hans D. Sluga, *Gottlob Frege* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), p. 103.
[16] Gottlob Frege, "The Thought: A Logical Inquiry," trans. A.M. and M. Quinton, in E.D. Klemke (ed.) *Essays on Frege* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1968), pp. 507–535, at p. 507.

by that metaphor, as I conjecture, that Wittgenstein failed to grasp the *Fregean* import of his own figurative comparison with the analysis of language (particularly, the analysis of language games)—he rides roughshod over Wittgenstein's more than dissatisfaction with what he (Wittgenstein) takes to be both Russell's and Frege's conceptual distortions.

I should perhaps also mention that it is relatively easy to see that Brandom largely follows Sellars in the latter's well-known, very early paper, "Language, Rules, and Behavior," (1949), in which Sellars is thinking of Frege's doctrine, but pursues it in application to what he seems to treat as Kant's anticipation of something akin to Frege's rigor; and yet Sellars does not (if I remember correctly) actually mention Frege in the paper, or offer more than an enthusiastic affirmation of a doctrine (in good part) close to the Fregean notion I've cited. Sellars attempts there to explicate what he means (I conjecture), reading Frege, or Kant with Frege in mind, when he says:

> The mode of existence of a rule is as a generalization written in flesh and blood, or nerve and sinew, rather than pen and ink. A rule, existing in its proper element, has the logical form of a generalization. Yet a rule is not *merely* a generalization which is formulated in the language of intra-organic process…. What do [the] special features in the formulation of rules indicate [that is, terms like "correct," "proper," "right"]? They give expression to the fact that a rule is an embodied generalization, which, to speak loosely but suggestively, tends to make itself true. Better, it tends to inhibit the occurrence of such events as would falsify it.[17]

This may well be the most Fregean of Sellars's papers, though you sense its oblique indecision: what Sellars has in mind is the idea that, normatively, the laws of "thought" (Fregean "thoughts") are the necessary rules of truth, but that if we treat them only empirically, they may be denied or defied—which we may override only if we grasp the rational function of the linguistic symbols we use in thinking "about *this* world in *every rule-regulated respect*"[18]: that is, *a priori*, as necessarily true. As far as I can see, neither Sellars nor Brandom—nor Frege, nor Kant—fulfills the promise of the necessary laws of truth, which would yield something more than the hope that there must be an analogue of the main argument of the *Begriffsschrift* governing the sciences and ordinary discourse. I believe that that is simply a mistake—and that Sellars and Brandom have followed Frege over the philosophical cliff. The best advice seems to be to return at least to the final, more manageable, more rewarding empiricist informalities of Peirce (which I collect under the terms of abductive reasoning—or even within the terms of the mythic, the less than perspicuous exuberance of Dewey's and James's empiricisms). In any event, the connective argument is plainly missing. No one can point to the "metaphilosophical framework"—the analogue of the *Begriffsschrift* model—that may be shown to constrain all truth-seeking inquiries.

I reject the *scientia mensura* thesis as flatly false and unsupported by Sellars's own arguments. I have, elsewhere, shown that Sellars, effectively and fairly and against his own persuasion, undermines the likelihood that what he calls the "scientific image" will ever be able to replace (or eliminate) the conceptual vision of the so-called "manifest image"—in which such concepts as person, intentionality, normativity, language, and discursive cognition or judgment find their natural home.[19] We cannot do without these notions *and* they are obviously irreducible in their own right. (This single theme haunts all of my own arguments and begins to explain what, in the second lecture, I take up in the

[17] Wilfrid Sellars, "Language, Rules, and Behavior," *Pure Pragmatics and Possible Worlds: The Early Essays of Wilfrid Sellars*, ed, Jeffrey F. Sicha (Atascadero: Ridgeview, 1980, 2005), pp. 117–134, at p, 123.

[18] Sellars, "Language, Rules, and Behavior," pp. 123–124.

[19] See Sellars, "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind," p. 173. The argument appears in my "Reading Wilfrid Sellars's 'Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man', with Robert Brandom at One's Side," forthcoming in *Wilfrid Sellars: Idealism and Realism* ed. Patrick Reider, with Bloomsbury Press. I address Peirce's abductive alternative in my *Toward a Metaphysics of Culture* (London: Routledge, 2016), Ch. 3.

analysis of that all-important instrument we call ordinary discourse.)

If Sellars's argument favoring the "scientific image" over the "manifest image" fails, then Brandom's reading of the import of Sellars's "space of reasons" thesis also fails. There's a mortal gap in Brandom's brief, which, as far as I can see, Brandom nowhere fills successfully: it appears in different guises in Sellars and McDowell and haunts the whole of Western philosophy. The counter-consideration runs this way: that, although it's entirely reasonable to claim that normative disjunctions are not descriptive or explanatory, *their actual use* and application in the natural and human sciences and practical life characteristically require and presuppose the empirical world. (My own solution argues that if and when we place normativity within "the space of reasons," we *place* the space of reasons within the space of a "form of life"!)

In this sense, the extension of cognitive and rational abilities to languageless animals also warns us *not* to regard reason as a determinate cognitive "faculty" addressed, autonomously, to a "real" world (say, a world of numbers) *or* the "actual" world (*the* world we say we occupy and the sciences address—or, even more straitly, the actual world, completely enlanguaged). We must, therefore, make room, species-wise, for the rationality of animals.

My ultimate guess is that Kant was a less-than-secret member of the clan of rationalists he publicly opposed; that Frege was a reemboldened rationalist, with insufficient resources for extending the *Begriffsschrift* argument to broadly empirical or commonsense inquiries (as in the sciences and practical matters); that Sellars was a conflicted distant cousin of the rationalists, fashionably drawn to the Fregean option (perhaps by Carnap) but unable to confirm the common rationalism of Kant and Frege; that Brandom (somewhat poisoned by Rorty's destructive purism, but always his own man) simply commits himself heroically and impatiently to Frege, believing he will be able to provide a satisfactory premise in his own time—that is, so as to reinterpret the entire narrative of Western philosophy in accord with a suitable union of Fregean and Kantian rationalism that need not deny empiricism's diminished resources. Furthermore, I believe that what all this would require is likely to be much too much to believe possible—and, thus, to be ultimately regressive (not altogether unlike Kant's original strategy).

How, for instance, could the Fregean model, or the Kantian, be reconciled with the contingent artifactuality of the human person? Or, alternatively, what metaphilosophical necessities are we bound by that could possibly disallow our relying on the salient vagaries of consensual experience—in favor of rationalism? I find no contest here. Canonically, pragmatism and rationalism are irreducibly opposed. Still, one hears it said, in our own time, that pragmatism requires a metaphilosophical "framework" of argumentative premises cast quite strictly in terms of rationalist necessities akin to the necessities of Frege's model; and, alternatively, that Kant himself is best construed in terms of a thoroughly naturalized or pragmatized transcendentalism. I hold instead that the first option is no more than a conceptual masquerade and that the second yields no more than a false Kant.

# II. CULTURAL POLITICS AND DEMOCRACY

## IS MARX A PRAGMATIST?

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ABSTRACT: This paper revisits the relation between Marx and pragmatism in arguing that Marx tries but fails to be a pragmatist in a general sense of the term not tied to any particular interpretation of pragmatism. The paper identifies Marx's normative conception of theory, and the outlines of that theory, including the conditions of its realization in practice in not only interpreting but also changing the world. In Marxian theory, a minimal view of changing the world is to bring about a transformation of capitalism, or a system of private ownership of the means of production, into communism, in which private property will by definition no longer exist, and above all men and women will be able to develop into fully individual human beings. Marx clearly intends his theory of the transformation of the modern social world to succeed not only in theory but also in practice. The paper argues that Marx's theory of the transformation of the world succeeds in theory but fails as a means to change the world in bringing about a successful transition to communism as he understands it.

"Pragmatism" is understood in many different ways. This paper revisits the relation between Marx and pragmatism in arguing that in the process of formulating his position Marx tries but fails to be a pragmatist in a general sense of the term not tied to any particular interpretation of pragmatism.

The possible link between Marx and pragmatism has often been explored with differing results. Dewey and Hook were two of the pragmatists most interested in Marx and Marxism. Many words and not a little blood have been spilt in the effort to characterize Marx and Marxism. Suffice it to say that this is a politically-motivated amalgam that need not detain us here. Others have examined pragmatism as a possible alternative to Marxism and explored the theme of their possible compatibility (or incompatibility) on various grounds. Still others have rejected the interest of such an endeavor. Rorty, who liked to style himself as a so-called leftist, suggested "that it would be a good thing if the next generation of American leftists found as little resonance in the names of Karl Marx and Vladimir Ilyich Lenin as in those of Herbert Spencer and Benito Mussolini."[1] That is only slightly more favorable than Kolakowski's view of Marxism as the greatest nightmare of the twentieth century.

The relation of Marx to philosophy is routinely depicted in diverse ways. According to Kolakowski, Marx is a German philosopher. Since I believe Marx is a German idealist, I share a form of that view, which is certainly a minority opinion. Though Marx was trained in philosophy according to the standards of the day, for mainly political reasons few observers think philosophy played a lasting role in his position. Marxists of all kind routinely claim that Marx left philosophy for science, or again that he followed Feuerbach out of German idealism and philosophy to materialism.

Elsewhere I have suggested that pragmatism is one of the four main philosophical tendencies in the twentieth century.[2] I do not wish to repeat that argument here. Marx, who took a Ph. D. in philosophy in 1841, was professionally trained according to the standards of the day. Suffice it to say that I believe Marx is a philosopher committed to a generally pragmatic approach to practical problems. Through his concern with theory that changes the world, Marx was embarked on a generally pragmatic approach to concrete social themes well before pragmatism emerged as an identifiable philosophical doctrine.

### On Marx and "pragmatism"

We can start by considering "pragmatism" in order to discuss Marx's relation to it. Fundamental concepts are difficult to define and definitions proposed, which imply different views of a single philosophical theme, rarely gain anything approaching unanimous acceptance in the debate.

[1] Richard Rorty, *Achieving Our Country: Leftist Thought in America*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998, p. 51.
[2] See Tom Rockmore, *In Kant's Wake: Philosophy in the Twentieth Century*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Company, 2006.

"Phenomenology" might be an exception. Husserl, who did not know much about the history of philosophy, straightforwardly but naively claimed to invent phenomenology. His claim is widely accepted by his students. This improbable scenario is undermined by the fact that at different times he defended, with the same force, two highly dissimilar views of phenomenology: initially a descriptive view, and later an idealist view based on the transcendental reduction.

"Pragmatism" is, like other fundamental terms, understood in many different ways. Early in the twentieth century, Royce thought this term was the way that contemporary observers referred to German idealism.[3] At almost the same time, Lovejoy famously identified no less than thirteen pragmatisms.[4] This suggests there is no single overarching view of pragmatism, but rather a number of overlapping views.

There is no reason to think I can or even need to do better than Lovejoy in identifying still another way to describe pragmatism, a way that will or indeed even might create unity since, as in most philosophical tendencies, there is a large and in my view healthy measure of diversity. Though producing conceptual unity out of conceptual diversity might be worthwhile for some purposes, it seems unnecessary here. It will suffice at present to draw attention to the obvious link between Marx and pragmatism writ large, including the obviously pragmatic side of German idealism, without tying the sense in which the Marxian position is pragmatic to any single token of the type.

The early pragmatists, who had different, sometimes very different things in mind, arguably sometimes resemble selected German idealists more than other pragmatists. Peirce focused on a working definition of the real but Dewey was more concerned with the consequences of ideas. Marx is arguably closer in this respect to Dewey rather than to Peirce. Marx was unconcerned with such familiar philosophical themes as whether we can know mind-independent reality as it is beyond appearance, the kind of question that still interested Kant. He was rather concerned with the practical consequences of theory. He was above all interested in formulating a theory that would bring about basic social change. In that sense, he was following up on Hegel's insight that the role of philosophy consists in understanding what occurs from the perspective of the present since ideas are self-realizing.

The interest in pragmatism understood in the etymological sense as practice goes back to Greek philosophy. Everyone knows that pragmatism as an identifiable philosophical tendency suddenly sprang into existence in a series of seminal articles Peirce published in the 1870s. Peirce is concerned with inquiry understood as the struggle to overcome doubt through belief.[5] This is an obvious restatement of the cognitive view Hegel outlines early in the *Phenomenology*.

Peirce, who is interested in a practical definition of the meaning of the "real," settles for what is given in the long run in experience as the criterion. Marx is not otherwise than incidentally interested in capturing the real. His main concern in formulating a practically relevant theory is closer to Dewey than to Peirce, and closer to Hegel than Kant.

This Marxian view resembles Deweyan instrumentalism, or the effort to understand thought with respect to future consequences.[6] Dewey's insistence in his Logic on the pragmatic relation of theories to resolve specific problems[7] -- the view of ideas

[3] See Josiah Royce, *Lectures on Modern Idealism*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964, p. 85.
[4] See Arthur O. Lovejoy, "The Thirteen Pragmatisms," in *Journal of Psychology and Scientific Methods*, January 1908.
[5] See "The Fixation of Belief," in the *Essential Peirce*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, I, p. 111.
[6] John Dewey, "The Development of American Pragmatism" (1925), in *The Later Works*, v. 2, edited Jo Ann Boydston, Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984, p. 14. "Instrumentalism is an attempt to establish a precise logical theory of concepts, of judgments and inferences in their various forms, by considering primarily how thought functions in the experimental determinations of future consequences."
[7] John Dewey, *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry*, New York:

as instruments or tools that guide our actions and can anticipate future results in terms of which they can be tested and evaluated -- is very close to Marx's conception of a self-realizing theory that, by implication, can be evaluated through its results.

**Marx and self-realizing theory**

Marx's claim to be a pragmatist lies in his famous insistence on self-realizing theory. Marxists routinely claim that at some undetermined time Marx left philosophy behind. Since he took a Ph. D. in philosophy with a dissertation on ancient Greek philosophy of nature in 1841, one could normally anticipate his later writings would be at least partially philosophical. In general terms, his position is based on a normative conception of theory with strong philosophical and increasingly economic dimensions.

The practical utility of philosophy has interested philosophers throughout the Western tradition. Marx focuses on the distinction between two types of theory: the widely known, shopworn kind of traditional theory that leaves everything in place and a very different kind of theory that, in his terminology, changes the world. In reacting against traditional theory, Marx has in mind a certain view of philosophy, exemplified above all Kant, perhaps also Hegel. Kant draws attention to the difference between a scholastic conception of philosophy that is logically perfect but useless and a cosmopolitan concept that is intrinsically related to the ends of human reason.[8]

Kant can be read in two ways. He can be interpreted as suggesting that a certain kind of philosophy is intrinsically useful. Since he says it would be exaggerated to make such a claim about oneself, he can also be read as indicating that philosophy is finally not useful at all. Kant distinguishes between technically perfect, but practically useless systematic philosophy and cosmological philosophy that is intrinsically relevant to the so-called ends of human reason.

Later observers tend to deny Kant's cosmological view of philosophy as socially relevant as such. In different ways this Kantian view is denied by Fichte, who thinks, on the contrary, that socially relevant theory arises in and returns to practice; by Hegel, who thinks socially relevant philosophy must consider its own historical moment; and by Marx, who thinks theory must change the world.

Marx apparently holds a similar view about Hegel who supposedly uncritically approves what is as rational. He thinks Hegel is not part of the solution but rather part of the problem since he overlooks the Hegelian view that philosophy, as the conceptual grasp of the present, opens the way to a different future. This way of interpreting Hegel suggests philosophy seeks to change the world by realizing ideas. This insight is formulated in different ways, perhaps surprisingly by the French poet Victor Hugo as the claim that nothing is more powerful than an idea whose time as come.

The young Marx was centrally-concerned with the difference between practically- relevant and practically-irrelevant forms of theory. In the famous last or eleventh of the "Theses on Feuerbach," Marx alludes to a new kind of theory, which his position presumably illustrates, and which supposedly not only interprets but also and above all changes the world.

Marx's effort to rethink theory not as an end in itself but rather as a means to an end is anticipated in the ancient tradition by Aristotle and in German idealism by Fichte. The link between the Marxian and Aristotelian conceptions of practice is sometimes discussed.[9] Marx's focus on practice distantly follows Aristotle, who

Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1938, p. iv: "But in the proper interpretation of "pragmatic," namely the function of consequences as necessary tests of the validity of propositions, *provided* these consequences are operationally instituted and are such as to resolve the specific problem evoking the operations, the text that follows is thoroughly pragmatic."

[8] See Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 866-867, pp. 694-695.

[9] See Nicholas Lobkowicz, *Theory and Practice: History of a Concept from Aristotle to Marx*, Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1967.

considers the relation between theory and theory of practice as well as Fichte among the German idealists, and perhaps also Hegel.

Marx's rejection of theory that does not realize itself is perhaps more convincing as a criticism leveled against Kant than against either Fichte or Hegel. Unlike Kant, Fichte formulates a view of philosophy in which theory and practice are inextricably conjoined, hence inseparable. According to Fichte, theories, which are formulated to respond to practical problems, arise in practice to which they return. In other words, practice elicits theory, which, since it arises in response to practice, is intrinsically relevant.

Hegel makes a similar but more abstract argument in his view of ideas as self-realizing. Marx turns this conception against Hegel in suggesting that the latter, who does not criticize but rather celebrates what is, for instance the restoration of the monarchy as the supposed end of history, is politically complicit with the status quo. Though Marx clearly believes classical German philosophy and even philosophy itself prefers theory to practice, attention to practice, depending on how one understands "idealism," is central to at least some German idealist views of theory. The difference does not lie in the mere attention to practice, nor even in the link between theory and practice, but rather in the concern through self-realizing theory to change practice.

**Marx's position and pragmatism**

Any theory directed towards practice is at least in that sense distantly pragmatic. Marx's theory is arguably further pragmatic in a specifically Peircean sense. Peirce thinks a theory is pragmatic in his sense if it is meaningful, that is, if, to put the point informally, it makes a difference.

"Difference" can be interpreted in many different ways, for instance merely cognitively, as Hegel does in the *Differenzschrift*, his initial philosophical text. Marx can be read as rejecting any and all forms of theory that, in failing to change the world, fails in that sense to make a difference.

It is easy but not very interesting to evaluate theories against extrinsic criteria unrelated or even opposed to their supposed intentions. It is more interesting but also more difficult to evaluate theories against intrinsic criteria, or the aim for which they are supposedly formulated. The idea of making a difference suggests a practical way to evaluate Marx's theory. The criterion of practice, which Marx understands as changing the world, is intrinsic to a successful theory, including his own theory, as he understands it. We can measure the success (or failure) of Marx's position in not only intending on the theoretical level but in actually changing the world on the practical level.

The view that a theory can be evaluated against the background of its intrinsic intention, or the problem or set of problems for which it is formulated, is certainly not new. The difficulty lies in determining the aim of the theory. Kant, for instance, suggests authorial intent as the criterion of successful interpretation. He makes the supposition, which is obviously related to his important claim to know Plato's theory better than its author, that the intrinsic goal of a theory is unambiguously identifiable.

The plausibility of this assumption depends on the position in question. Kant, who features a holistic approach to interpretation, calls attention to the distinction between passages torn out of context that can lead to misunderstanding and, on the contrary, the idea of the whole.[10] Several centuries of concerted effort have so far failed to lead to agreement concerning the critical philosophy understood as a whole. Fortunately Marx, though a difficult thinker, is less difficult than Kant. There seems to be no difficulty in inferring that his normative conception of theory points toward a theory intended to produce practical social change.

[10] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Paul Guyer and Allen Wood, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998, B 44, p. 123.

**What is the intent of Marx's theory?**

I have suggested that Marx's theory is generally pragmatic, that it at least generally resembles aspects of Deweyan and Peircean forms of pragmatism, and that it should be evaluated through its basically pragmatic intent. In order to evaluate the practical success of Marxian social theory, it is indispensable to describe the theory.

I believe Marx focuses on a later version of an ancient problem, or human flourishing in society. This problem, which is restated by Rousseau in the middle of the eighteenth century, is later addressed by a number of thinkers concerned with modern industrial society, including Rousseau, Kant, Hegel, Marx and others. Rousseau's famous claim that human beings are born free but in fact in chains suggests that if not in theory at least in practice real human freedom still remains to be achieved in the modern social space.

Marx addresses this problem on the level of modern industrial society in different ways, initially through criticizing Hegel in a several of articles in the early 1840s, and thereafter increasingly through the formulation of an alternative theory of modern industrial society. Though he is concerned with a number of intractable difficulties in the modern world, for instance the inability to overcome poverty, Hegel holds that on the whole human beings flourish in modern industrial society. To put the point in other words, Hegel thinks that individuals recognize themselves, hence achieve meaningful social freedom, in recognizing themselves so to speak in the institutions of the modern world. Marx, who disagrees, objects that since human beings are alienated in capitalism, human flourishing requires a transition to what Marx calls "communism," a term he only infrequently uses, or again socialism.

If Hegel is a modernist with respect to human flourishing, then as concerns the same theme Marx can be said to be a postmodernist. Marxian postmodernism is unrelated to a short-lived, recent French aversion to general claims, including universals, meta-narratives, and generalities. This aversion, which flared up recently, seemed for a brief incandescent moment to be at the center of the philosophical universe before just as quickly flaring out. Marxian postmodernism is more obviously related to the practical social conditions of human self-development.

Marx considers the general problem of the concrete social conditions of human flourishing in modern industrial society in an enormous bibliography. His impact since the second half of the nineteenth century has waxed and waned. Now, in the wake of the great recession, that at the time of this writing is still with us, especially in Europe, it seems once again to be on the upswing. As concerns human flourishing in modern industrial society, Marxian theory centers on the problem of the transition between two stages in the development of human society, more precisely from capitalism, a phase in which human flourishing is supposedly limited to the happy few, in recent language the fortunate 1%, but denied to everyone else, to communism, in which everyone will supposedly be able to develop as a fully human individual. According to Marx, capitalism is identifiable by the institution of private property that will no longer hold sway nor even exist in communism.

In Marx's corpus we can discern four main suggestions for the proposed transition from capitalism to communism, suggestions that are linked to conceptions of the proletariat, economics, politics, or critique. In an early article on Hegel, Marx suggested that the proletariat is the heart and the philosophers are the brain of the coming proletarian revolution. This Platonic view of the proletariat as unable to think for itself relies on the Hegelian view of the relation of masters to slaves. This crucial social opposition, or the view that slave is the master of the master and the master is the slave of the slave, supposedly will later lead, or must later lead to the victory of the proletariat.

Marx never later returned to his view of the proletariat as the heart of the revolution, which Lenin transformed into his theory of the party as the vanguard

of the revolution, and which became central to the success of the Bolshevik Revolution. Marx also did not develop the basic distinction between cultural superstructure and economic base, which he mentions briefly in the Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859), but which was later developed by the Frankfurt School in the early twentieth century as the basis of so-called critical social theory.

Almost immediately after formulating his speculative theory of the proletariat as the motor of revolutionary change Marx began to formulate a second, very different, but still speculative account of the transition from capitalism to communism based on an alternative, non-standard conception of modern industrial society. In the very early theory of the proletariat as the motor of the revolution Marx relies on human intervention, more specifically the capacity of the philosophers to direct the workers in order to transform modern industrial society. In his alternative account of the economic component of modern industrial society Marx rather relies on the self-transformation of modern industrial society itself, that is, without human intervention either through influencing the the action of the proletariat or again through some version of the Leninist party. This is important since the Leninist view of the party, which is consistent with Marx's initial view of the proletariat as a revolutionary force is inconsistent with Marx's later turn to an economic analysis of modern capitalism.

Marx's economic model of modern industrial society is intended to identify a revolutionary moment independent of the proletariat but intrinsic to capitalism itself. Orthodox political economy is directed toward the view that the economic component of modern society is subject to periodic crises but on the whole stable in the long run. Marx views modern industrial society as subject to periodic crises in the short and middle term and terminally unstable in the long run. According to Marx, capitalism, which is prone to cyclical crises, will eventually be faced with an unmanageable crisis that in his picturesque phrase will burst its integument. "Centralization of the means of production and socialization of labor," Marx writes in a famous passage, "at last reach a point where they be- come incompatible with their capitalist integument. Thus integument is burst asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated."[11]

This calamitous event, whose necessity Marx deduces speculatively, will supposedly signify the death knell of private property, leading to the dictatorship of the proletariat, and finally through an unclear process to communism. Marx goes on to claim in various ways that the inevitable final economic crisis of modern industrial capitalism, which will occur with necessity, is merely a question of time.

Marx's theory of the economic destruction of capitalism depends on three mechanisms, including overproduction, underconsumption, in fact two versions of the same claim, and what Marx further awkwardly calls the law of the tendency of the decline of the rate of profit. Marx's central claim about the supposed tendency of the decline of the rate of profit, which is never formulated clearly, and which fails to take account of the increase in the rate of production, is that the need to increase investment results in a diminution of the rate of profit over time.

The controversial Marxian conception of the decline in the rate of profit has often been discussed. Certainly a reference to necessity [Notwendigkeit], which is a logical term, appears misplaced in a discussion of the long-term viability of an economic system like modern industrial capitalism. This latter view has been recently criticized by Piketty in a book that was an enormous worldwide publishing sensation but that I suspect is more often displayed on the coffee tables of the world than actually read, much less studied in detail. Piketty, who, perhaps strategically, claims not to have read Marx, points out there is so far no economic evidence for the decline in the rate of profit, hence, by extrapolation, no evidence

[11] Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, trans. Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling, edited by Frederick Engels, Progress Publishers, Moscow, Volume I, XXXV, p. 750.

for the economic inevitable self-destruction of modern industrial capitalism.[12] This confirms Croce's suggestion more than a century ago that Marx, who never worked out his view of the falling rate of profit in detail, fails to see that further investment increases rather than decreases the rate of profit.[13]

**On the likelihood of the speculative transition from capitalism to communism**

I have described Marx's conception of theory as inseparable from practice, his overall aim in the transformation of capitalism into communism as well as the two main mechanisms through which he, as opposed to his followers, seeks to bring about the proposed revolutionary transformation of modern industrial society. It remains now to discuss the likelihood of the success not only in theory but above all in practice of the Marxian effort, extending throughout his entire corpus over some four decades to bring about the revolutionary transformation of modern industrial capitalism to communism as he understands it.

Marx's position concerns a prediction based on his alternative conception of modern industrial society about the necessary or at least overwhelmingly likely evolution of the modern world. Yet since, unlike Laplace's demon, we do not and simply cannot know everything about the present, there will always be, as Hegel suggests, a certain cunning of reason that impedes or even prevents us from foreseeing the evolution of the modern industrial society.

Marx's theory of the modern world is economic as well as obviously philosophical. The economic and the philosophical elements of the Marxian position are very different. From the economic perspective Marx's position is more often formulated in anecdotal and moral terms than through reference to the data bases in vogue in the current version of economic science. From the philosophical perspective, as noted above, it is basically speculative. We recall that Kant speculatively deduces the cognitive subject, or in his terminology the transcendental unity of apperception, as the conceptual capstone of his theory of cognition.

Marx, who took a Ph. D. in philosophy in 1841, is often thought, especially by Marxists, to have rapidly left philosophy behind. This belief is the basis of the view, identified with Althusser, of an epistemic break in the development of his theory through the abandonment of an early philosophical for a later economic, hence scientific, or again materialist theoretical model. Yet though his position deepens and evolves, Marx continues to share the traditional philosophical interest in speculation, or the theoretical analysis of the supposed conditions under which a particular claim can be realized in practice. His main approaches to the transformation of capitalism into communism, that is, either through the revolutionary proletariat or the necessary failure of capitalism through an unmanageable economic crisis are both speculative deductions that presuppose the capacity to identify theoretically what must occur in practice.

As concerned the path leading from capitalism to communism, Marx's two main arguments are at best speculative, based more on the supposed conditions of the transformation of modern industrial society that he wishes to bring about than on solid economic data, rooted in his belief that, in virtue of what we think we know about modern industrial society, it is probable or even extremely probable that it will evolve in a certain direction. Though it is likely that modern capitalism will evolve, it appears less likely, if it is possible to learn from history, that it will evolve in the direction that Marx has in mind through either through the action of the revolutionary proletariat or through its auto-transformation into communism, hence less than likely that the rate of profit is or ever will decline to the extent as to force capitalism to its knees.

[12] See Thomas Piketty, *Capital in the Twenty First Century*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014.
[13] Benedetto Croce, *Historical Materialism and the Economics of Karl Marx*, translated by C.M. Meredith and with an introduction by A.D. Lindsay 1914, rpt. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1981.

Marx, who clearly sees the problem, apparently does not as clearly see the solution, and, to extend the point, perhaps does not see it at all. If Piketty is correct, despite the ever-increasing disparity of wealth, as well as the apparent inability of society to correct this phenomenon, and the related rise of social tensions of the most diverse kinds, there is currently neither any reason to believe that the institution of private property is likely to disappear into history, nor that capitalism will, in fact must, turn into communism. This did not happen in the Soviet Union and is not happening in China that currently features a form of state capitalism that has already produced almost as many billionaires as the US.

Both of the main ways that Marx suggests to transform capitalism into communism, hence to realize his theory in practice appear doubtful, unlikely, counterproductive, improbable as a means to reach its intended goal, or worse.

It is unlikely that the revolutionary proletariat will bring capitalism to an end for at least two reasons. On the one hand, when Marx was writing the proletariat, as he understood it through its projected role in his theory, did not yet exist. Marx's theoretical view of the proletariat is a quasi-philosophical speculative deduction, which corresponds to the need for a theoretical solution to a practical problem through a conception of the subject of social change, in this case the proletariat, that may or may not correspond to the practical situation as Marx perceived it in the 1840s and as it exists at present. It is unclear that the proletariat as Marx understands it for purposes of his theory ever existed. It is further likely that it no longer exists in the current version of modern industrial society. It is then not irrelevant that after his early references to the revolutionary potential of the proletariat Marx turned his attention in another direction.

Marx was arguably most concerned with the decline and fall of capitalism on strictly economic grounds. He devoted many years to the formulation of an alternative model of modern industrial capitalism that, unlike orthodox political economy, he regarded as intrinsically unstable in the long run. Here, too, his argument appears not only unlikely as well as speculative. It does not follow that if as Marx and many others believe capitalism is cyclically prone to economic crises, that at some indeterminate future time an unmanageable economic crisis will emerge to destroy the institution of private property and capitalism itself. It is easy to believe that, as the phrase goes, this time is different,[14] but more difficult to make a convincing argument. Though the great depression and the great recession have both wrought havoc in their wake, and though at the time of this writing the effects of the latter are still with us, more in Europe than in the US, capitalism as a whole seems unfazed, stable, unlikely on economic grounds to disappear any time soon. Further, the rise since Marx was active of an increasingly more important financial sector suggests that the Marxian model is increasingly out of date.

The alternatives to Marx's reliance on either the revolutionary proletariat or the necessary self-destruction of capitalism include the Leninist invention of the communist party and so-called critical social theory. The Leninist invention, anticipated in Marx, of the party as the vanguard of the revolution led to communist revolutions in the Soviet Union and in China. Yet neither revolution was successful in bringing about Marx's intended result of the full social development of people as individuals. Both Marxist revolutions relied, as Rosa Luxemburg brilliantly foresaw before the Bolshevik revolution, on a dictatorship of the party over the people as well as a dictatorship of one man over the party. The resultant stultification of individual liberty is not compatible with, but rather clearly incompatible with Marx's own theoretical vision of the liberation from capitalism, not as an end in itself, but rather as an indispensable means to realizing human beings in a future communist society.

[14] See Carmen Reinhardt and Kenneth Rogoff, *This Time Is Different: Eight Centuries of Financial Folly*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009.

Above I mentioned but did not discuss so-called critical theory also called critical social theory. There is apparently little if any practical potential for social change in critical social theory. Though it was initially inspired by the revolutionary Marxism of Lukács and Korsch, it has always relied in its successive iterations on the mere power of ideas.

In critical social theory this claim was weakened in at least three ways. To begin with, there is Pollock's suggestion that politics is not determined by economics but economics is determined by politics. This rejection of a fundamental pillar of the Marxian view of modern industrial society denies that Marxian theory correctly describes contemporary capitalism, hence turns away in theory, hence also in practice, from the practical possibility of basic social change. Second, there is the turn away from the economic dimension of society, most obvious in Habermas, but already clear in Horkheimer, Adorno and Marcuse, hence a turn away from the Marxian conception of the motor of social change. Finally there is the severing of the Marxian view of the connection between theory and practice in returning to the Kantian view that practice is in all cases contained within theory. This suggests the impossibility of succeeding in theory but not in practice. This view returns in Habermas' consensus theory of truth according to which unconstrained dialogue must, as he claims, result in truth. This neo-Kantian view is problematic for two reasons. On the one hand, there is no reason to think that if two or more individuals agree about a claim that it is true. On the other hand, agreement, which does not mandate social change, is in this respect irrelevant to the Marxian effort to bring about the transformation of capitalism into communism.

**Conclusion: Is Marx A Pragmatist?**

This account of Marx's relation to pragmatism identifies forms of pragmatism associated most prominently with Peirce and Dewey, Marx's normative conception of theory, the outlines of Marx's theory, including the conditions of its realization in practice. In Marxian theory, a minimal view of changing the world is to bring about a transformation of capitalism, or a system of private ownership of the means of production, into communism, in which private property will by definition no longer exist, and above all men and women will be able to develop into fully individual human beings.

Marx clearly intends his theory of the transformation of the modern social world to succeed not only in theory but also in practice. It is in the latter respect, for reasons given above, that it seems that the Marxian theory is not traditional but rather genuinely pragmatic. Yet though it succeeds in theory, it has so far and will presumably in the future continue to fail in practice.

**THE WAXING AND WANING OF DEMOCRACY AS A WAY OF LIFE (1916 – 2016): SOME OF THE ECONOMIC UNDERPINNINGS**

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ABSTRACT: This article argues that John Dewey's concept of democracy as a way of life is either enabled or disabled depending upon the economic underpinnings of society, and the disparities which these cause or prevent. It sketches a historical trajectory over the century since the publication of Dewey's Democracy and Education in 1916 to illustrate this, and points to the serious implications of the current pretentions of Economics which, since the 1970s, have seen a move towards the discipline being understood as a natural or 'hard' science, based on mathematical models. The paper argues that this conception has replaced a more open understanding of the discipline as 'political economy' subject to democratic government and international controls, with serious negative consequences for democracy and, by implication, for international peace.

**Introduction**

Professor John Mc Dermott, when he was keynote speaker at an earlier Central European Pragmatist Forum meeting, said that he saw the essence of pragmatism as lying in the impossibility of divorcing theory from practice (Mc Dermott, 2002)[1]. In political terms I believe that theory can stand out against practice (that is against experience) for just so long and then either you have truth – or you have war.

The theory in question in this paper concerns the universal truth claims of the dominant discipline of Economics. I have argued against these in several places and for an alternative Deweyan understanding, which is I believe entirely compatible with the understanding of the great economist John Maynard Keynes[2] (Skinner, 2003, 2004, 2008, 2009, 2011). In this paper I sketch a historical trajectory over the past century where economic theories have fluctuated with consequent effects on politics. I then put a spotlight on the currently dominant, and quite distinct, theory of neo-classical economics and break it down into its constituent elements in order to argue for its distance from reality, and from Dewey, before focussing on a case study of Greece, cradle of democracy, where the stakes in this contest of ideas are particularly high. I examine the Greek crisis through the eyes of Yanis Varoufakis, the recent finance minister of that country and a significant champion of a (Deweyan) reality check on economics – also a champion of a return to a democratic and inclusive culture in Europe[3]. The article concludes with a brief consideration of the possible future dynamics of the truth claims already discussed. It is encouraged throughout by Dewey's objection to the fact, prevalent in his day and still today, that 'direct preoccupation with contemporary difficulties is left to literature and politics' rather than being appropriately the concern of philosophy (Dewey (C), *Essays*: 5).

[1] This statement was gleaned from notes taken by the author during Professor McDermott's speech. His published paper (McDermott, 2004) takes a slightly different line – but one no less pertinent to this article. There Dewey's concept of 'amelioration', of making things better for humanity, is explored. ['Morally, men are now concerned with the amelioration of the conditions of the common lot in this world' (Dewey C, *Essays in the Pragmatic Attitude*: 35)

[2] Keynes was never a professional philosopher but in his youth he was much influenced by G.E Moore and Bertrand Russell. His paper 'A Treatise on Probability' which was written in 1921, while he was a student at Cambridge, is, I believe, entirely compatible with pragmatic perceptions and with ideas that inspired his later economic theory (although this continuity is disputed by John B Davis in his book *Keynes's Philosophical Development* (Davis, 1994)). As a public figure and leading economist, when accused of inconsistency Keynes is famously said to have responded 'when the facts change, I change my mind'. Although the authenticity of this quotation is disputed, it does reflect a key aspect of his understanding of the links between theory and practice, and how his perceptions of these were considered important by the public at large. https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/John_Maynard_Keynes

[3] Varoufakis's' Democracy in Europe Movement (DiEM) was launched in 2016

**Cultural politics**

This paper accepts that the most helpful way to understand truth in a modern democracy is Dewey's dynamic, complex, experimental, forward looking, past encompassing, conception of experience (Dewey,(C) *Essays*: 5-15). It also accepts his argument that the wider the society encompassed, the deeper is the opportunity for truth and democracy to flourish.

> Democracy is more than a form of government. It is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicative experience. The extension in space of the number of individuals who participate in an interest so that each has to refer his own action to that of others and to consider the action of others to give point and direction to his own, is equivalent to the breaking down of those barriers of class, race and national territory which kept men from perceiving the full import of their activity (Dewey, 1964: 87)[4]

Thus, democracy involving 'communicative experience' allows for greater illumination of the implications of human activities and wider intercultural understandings, in short for a positive 'politics of culture'[5].

There are similarities between this vision and John Maynard Keynes's message at the close of the Bretton Woods conference in 1944[6]:

> We have shown that a concourse of 44 nations are actually able to work together at a constructive task in amity and unbroken concord. Few believed it possible. If we can continue in a larger task as we have begun in this limited task there is hope for the world. We have been learning to work together. If we can continue… the brotherhood of man will become more than a phrase (Keynes, in Harrod, 1972: 691).

This meeting at the close of the Second World War was a recognition that democratic culture of mutual trust and understanding cannot flourish in situations of extreme inequality and the Bretton Woods meeting was intended to be the foundation of a global economic system which would be flexible enough to last into the foreseeable future. The idea was not for a global financial regime, of which Keynes disapproved, but rather for a mutual system of economic support and balance. It is interesting to note that bankers (distrusted by Keynes since the 1920s) were specifically excluded from the meeting by President Roosevelt. Their time of power and influence was yet to come.

There was therefore an implicit understanding of the need for an economic bedrock of equal opportunity in a modern society, and specifically in a modern global society, which enables or disables a flourishing of cultures, of prosperity and of peace. But, if we move on sixty years, the scene becomes darker. Joseph Margolis explains his understanding of the context of 9/11 in this way:

> In a word, the reduction of extreme disparities in goods and rights affecting survival, quality of life and perceived injustice is no longer a matter of extraneous benevolence but rather one of war and peace and survival itself. *We can no longer live in peace if most of the world does not live nearly as well as its most privileged part* (emphasis in the original). (Margolis, 2005: 199)

This commentary by Margolis reaches also the economic bedrock of societies beyond, but encompassing, extraneous factors of race, religion or cultural differences. The reduction of 'extreme disparities in

[4] This argument is embedded in Dewey's discussion on education and recognises that an empowering education is the essential context for democratic success in the form he is envisaging

[5] This is a rather different interpretation from that of Richard Rorty whose book *Cultural Politics* provided the conference theme for this meeting.

[6] The United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference or the 'Bretton Woods Conference', brought together 730 delegates from the forty four allied nations in New Hampshire, USA, to regulate the international monetary and financial world order at the end of the Second World War. The conference was held from July 1–22, 1944. Agreements were signed which, after being legally ratified by the member governments, established the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (The World Bank) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

goods and rights' is, or should be, the primary role of economists as Keynes implicitly acknowledged in 1945 in a toast to the members of the Royal Economic Society. He offered the toast 'to economists – who are the trustees, not of civilisation, but of the possibility of civilisation' (Harrod, 1972: 227).

The grounds for my discussion therefore encompass not only assumptions of truth in economics but their relevance to truth and power in politics and culture.

**The historical swings**

There are recognisable swings in the development of western societies throughout the twentieth century and into our own, in which economics (and the economic players and business interests they represent), were either allowed a greater or a lesser measure of autonomy. However, until recent times there was a lot of leeway for each side to claim greater success and better policies. Theodore Roosevelt's 'Malefactors of great wealth' were recognised by this Republican president as a threat to democracy in a famous speech in 1907: 'I regard this contest as one to determine who shall rule this free country—the people through their governmental agents, or a few ruthless and domineering men whose wealth makes them peculiarly formidable because they hide behind the breastworks of corporate organization.'[7]

Twenty-three years later another Republican president, Herbert Hoover, after the Wall Street crash and at the onset of the Great Depression, actively supported the economy through a range of government agencies – but was unwilling to take more radical steps believing that Federal power over economics was inherently anti-democratic and a 'challenge to liberty'.

> Roosevelt's aides later admitted that most New Deal agencies, of the subsequent Democratic administration, were closely modeled on those that Hoover had attempted, but Roosevelt's plans differed in financing and scope …New Deal bills supported direct federal aid, tightened government control over many industries, and eschewed volunteerism in favor of deficit financing'[8].

Arguments between the supporters and detractors of the New Deal may never be resolved – but the socialism feared by its free market detractors was avoided, and the economy recovered. Demand, spurred by the crises in Europe and the consequent greater military spending, added to the upswing. In the 1940s command economies, necessitated by the war, were followed by *creating* demand artificially after it was over, in effect re-establishing the defeated powers and ushering in what Robert Reich has called 'the not quite golden age' of social democracy 1945 – 1975:

> Roughly between 1945 and 1975, America struck a remarkable accommodation between capitalism and democracy. It combined a hugely productive economic system with a broadly responsive and widely admired political system. America in those years achieved its highest degree of income equality (since measurements have been available') (Excerpt from Reich's *Supercapitalism* Chapter 1)[9]

The degrees of autonomy granted to free market economists, and the business interests they supported, thus varied with the prevailing economic and political climate. The difference was to come only with a new understanding of the nature of economics itself which allowed it an artificial independence from politics and thus from democracy.

[7] http://boatagainstthecurrent.blogspot.co.za/2008/10/quote-of-day-theodore-roosevelt-on.html

[8] http://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/new-deal/resources/herbert-hoover-great-depression-and-new-deal-1931%E2%80%931933

[9] http://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/21/books/chapters/21first-reich.html?_r=0

**Economics becomes a natural/ 'hard' science**

When I studied economics at the University of Edinburgh in 1959 in the middle of that 'not quite golden age' the course was still called 'political economy' – inherently a subject in which politics and economics shared a focus within the discipline, decisions between the production of 'guns or butter' being understood to rest upon the shoulders of the government in power. However, the seeds of the discipline's pretensions towards becoming a natural science, and so dropping any restraint of a democratic nature on its truth claims, were already being sown by the author of our new textbook, Paul Samuelson[10].

The balance in power between free marketers, and the democratic oversight afforded by government regulation, shifted significantly from the 1970s in favour of the former. The first major step came when banking was deregulated in the USA in 1971, followed shortly afterwards in other western countries. At this time the state controlled system of fixed exchange rates, established at Bretton Woods, was superseded by floating currencies. With the ending of capital controls banks were in essence allowed to print money, and with the ending of the Glass-Steagall Act in 1999 (the act was initiated in 1933 to regulate banking and was part of the New Deal) banks no longer had to separate investment banking from retail banking setting the scene for a situation where banks become 'too big to fail'. The increasing independence of Reserve Banks from political control added to this divorce from democratic oversight and control. Increasingly therefore democratic governments have come to accept the advice of economists, trained in the major universities, all of which teach neo-classical economics, and they are increasingly unable to challenge the decisions of national and international economic and financial institutions.

The unfettered power of global finance was thus unleashed, accompanied by a single vision of macroeconomic reality. Democratic institutions had diminished institutional autonomy in economic affairs, and, more significantly perhaps, they also had no conceptual autonomy on which to draw.

**'A sound philosophy of experience'[11] and its opposite**

A natural science, as opposed to a social science, needs no historical understanding as it assumes the role of the best current knowledge available. The study of its history would be of antiquarian interest at best and students do not now study economic history as part of any mainstream economics programme. A study of theoretical underpinnings or methodology, in the sense of awareness of alternative paradigms within the discipline, is also not required of a natural science: its status assumes that it has achieved the best and most logical paradigm, and Economics courses now will seldom examine their own assumptions of knowledge.

In social theory everything is unpredictable, starting with the units of analysis – human beings. Economics shares these units of analysis and this has caused some complicated adjustments in economic understanding, also involving various supporting disciplines, including philosophy. Natural scientific theories have to be predictable and in fact stand or fall on their powers of prediction and on their internal logic. Economists, in effect, have now to assume that human cognition and human behaviour *are* predictable. 'Cognitive science'

[10] Commentators will generally depict Samuelson as a mild Keynesian, responsible for the synthesis between free markets and government intervention, in contrast to his contemporary free market fundamentalist colleague, Milton Friedman. However, Samuelson's contribution to developing economics into a 'science' and to its methematicisation are now seen as more significant. 'Samuelson considered Mathematics to be the natural language for economists and contributed significantly to the mathematical foundations of economics with his book *Foundations of Economic Analysis'*.
http://www.biography.com/people/paul-samuelson-39034

[11] Dewey, *Experience and Education*: 90

makes just this assumption and its adherents include both prominent economists and philosophers[12], I believe, however, on very shaky grounds (Skinner, 2006, 2007).[13] Again currently dominant economic theories of general equilibrium, of efficient markets, of rational expectations, of the mutual gains and losses inherent in 'game theory', to be universally true, need not only to assume human predictability but also to assume a featureless context in which they operate. In their 'pure' form there is no time, no space, no disparities between players, no monopolies, no costs and no profit (e.g. Varoufakis, 2016 A)[14].

To escape from this rarified extraction from reality and allow these theories to make predictions in the real world requires a varied set of models, assumptions and theoretical additions. These are assisted by the fact that an economic model typically assumes that the expected value of a variable is equal to the expected value predicted by the model, thus negating a first principle of research method – the testing of hypotheses against dependent variables. The math required to link these models to the real economy is achieved through the recently developed discipline of 'econometrics' involving complex computer modelling: 'the application of statistical and mathematical theories to economics for the purpose of testing hypotheses and forecasting future trends'[15].

The two principal minds behind much of this new neo-classical economic science were John Nash and Kenneth (Ken) Arrow. The first was the subject of the film 'a Beautiful Mind' generally acclaimed as an inspiring and tragic human story – but perhaps more accurately seen as a disturbing allegory of the reality of current conceptions of economics. His attempt to find definitive solutions to human problems through mathematical modelling exacerbated the already disturbed mind of Professor Nash, and the most revealing illustrations of this in the film are Nash's manic attempts to prove the unprovable - covering walls with newspapers where he tries to find connections - the tragedy lying rather in the real world of political and economic players who were, and are, also convinced by the apparent rationality and universality of his 'game theory'.

Ken Arrow, also revealingly, replied to a questioner interested in potential applications of the theory he was discussing that 'we must not confuse what is interesting with what is useful. This (the theory he was demonstrating) is interesting.' (Arrow, reported by Varoufakis, 2016). Professor McDermott's injunction concerning the inseparability of theory and practice is neatly negated here while Dewey's understanding that: 'Any theory and set of practices is dogmatic which is not based upon critical examination of its own underlying principals' (Dewey, loc 182) also has clear resonance.

**The implications for economic policy in the real world**

The ground has therefore been set for the discipline of Economics to adhere to the ideas required by the theorists who set the agenda – and this has, in practice, been the monetarist policies favoured by powerful financiers and the economic theorists who share their

[12] For instance, John Ross, Professor of Economics at the University of Cape Town, is a prominent economic methodologist and cognitive scientist. Apparently these ideas have the implicit support also of Richard Rorty who believes that 'it would make for philosophical clarity if we just *gave* the notion of cognition to predictive science' (Rorty, 1989:360)

[13] Skinner, J.,2006. 'Beyond Materialism: Mental Capacity and Naturalism. A Consideration of Method' *Metaphilosophy*. Vol 37, No 1. January

[14] of course because human behaviour is not totally unpredictable either – some economic models, particularly in micro economics, can clearly be, and are, extremely useful

[15] This is a 21st century version of classic economic theory of which Keynes wrote that its characteristics 'happen not to be those of the economic society in which we actually live, with the result that its teaching is misleading and disastrous if we attempt to apply it to the facts of experience'
http://research.omicsgroup.org/index.php/The_General_Theory_of_Employment,_Interest_and_Money

political vision. This has encouraged the embedding of such significant normative statements in the discipline as 'minimum wages cause unemployment'. It is not expected that students delve further into the foundations of this statement and suggest that the more people earn, the more they have to spend and that, *only* in this way, can an economy eventually grow. Thus we have policies allowing for a logic of 'austerity' and the acceptance of 'flexible labour practices' – meaning that you can pay people what they (or the market) will take – which is, of course, almost anything in situations of severe unemployment. And stemming from *this* we have policies necessarily leading to the contraction of economies spoken of by economists and the mainstream media as 'necessary reforms'.

Economic policies devised largely by financiers are restricted to thinking primarily in terms of debt financing which can find solutions to stimulating growth only by cutting interest rates. One of Karl Marx's most prescient foresights concerning capitalism was an appreciation of the problems that would develop as a result of an over-accumulation of capital over time and its having no ready outlet in the real economy. Marx's determinist conceptions, which could easily be challenged in a Keynesian approach, are ironically reinforced when an artificial stimulus to the economy is understood as opposed to free market principles and potentially inflationary and thus untenable. The reality is, however, that in a weak economy where there is no demand for goods and an over-accumulation of capital, no manufacturer will borrow however low the interest rates (Keynes, 1972; Galbraith, 2004). This does not, however, prevent governments from cutting interest rates to zero and beyond. Marx could not, of course, envisage the current (short-term) answer – trading debt: debt offers a ready solution to the twin problems of over-accumulation and under-consumption. Financiers can make money out of trading debt, and workers can compensate for falling wages by borrowing against future earnings.

The almost universal acceptance of the current approaches to economics also reflects the value of Marx's insights in another of his key observations:

> "The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it." (Karl Marx, The German Ideology, 1845)

**The Greek Experience: 'In the end, not surprisingly, it's the reality that counts'[16] A case study.**

The contemporary tragedy of Greek poverty has been shown in the media and is expressed in shock by anybody who travels there. The state is bankrupt. How it initially came to be in such severe financial difficulties is complex and open to debate. How it has been treated by the European authorities is the issue here and a stark illustration of the unquestioned power of unaccountable authorities and financial institutions. A 'troika' consisting of the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund put pressure on Greece to accept a third bailout in July 2015 on the condition that ever more severe cuts in government spending would be implemented. If the government refused the banks would be closed. In a referendum the Greek people indicated their defiance by voting against this by 61% – but the government changed their stance and agreed to the conditions, and Yanis Varoufakis, the then finance minister, resigned. The reality is that the money cannot be paid back, the austerity measures are unsustainable and are counter to growth[17]. The only way

[16] Galbraith, J.K., 2004. *The Economics of Innocent Fraud* (Allen Lane: London) p9. This book, written in the author's 91st year, is a useful exposé of the illogic of current economics and a confirmation of the understanding of his old mentor and colleague, John Maynard Keynes.

[17] The European Commission's report on the likely impact of the third Greek bailout offers this bland

forward – in reality – is to write off Greek debt or a substantial part of it and this was discussed by the Troika in earlier conversations with Varoufakis, in conditions of extreme secrecy (Varoufakis, 2016). In his opinion the authorities know the realities but they have invested so much political capital in their theories that they cannot go back (Varoufakis in conversation with Noam Chomsky, 2016). With no viable, critical, democratic critique of their position the way forward is blocked.

**The question mark**

Varoufakis discusses some of this in his recent book *And the Weak Suffer what they Must?* (Varoufakis, 2016). He explains that the question mark represents the potential for a different economic paradigm and for a more democratic Europe. He is not hopeful, but remains idealistic.

Given a dynamic Deweyan understanding of current reality it is perhaps appropriate to conclude by seeking indications not only from the past and the present – but of possible future trends and divergent streams in economic thought that may portend alternative understandings and the weakening of current undemocratic power structures. This quest would seem to require that we consider at least three avenues of enquiry: (a) the teaching of Economics to current university students who will be our future economists; including any minority views within economic institutions and centres of learning which may cause a rift from within; (b) any significant political players who may challenge the hegemony of thinking where economic policy reforms can entail only greater or lesser measures of austerity; (c) any indications of lived experiences pertinent to a different reality closer to Dewey's and Keynes's visions.

(a) A survey of economics curricula of all leading universities will reveal a great sameness in the curricula with each undergraduate year composed of macroeconomics, microeconomics, math and econometrics, but without historical context or the study of theoretical underpinnings or methodology being a requirement. This has been accompanied by vocal complaints from students going back to a demonstration by economics students at the Sorbonne in Paris in 2002, followed by others at Harvard, Oxford and Cambridge and recently a powerful message from a postgraduate student at the University of Cape Town, who argues for the need for a wider economic vision particularly in a developing country context (Brassier, 2016). Key professorships in economics are, however, generally the preserve of the most orthodox thinkers and it would seem that there is currently no movement there. Other faculty members, who do not set the curriculum, may however be less orthodox in their views, as illustrated in the paragraph below.

(b) In political terms the phenomena of Jeremy Corbyn in the U K and Bernie Sanders in the USA must have some significance. Both have campaigned specifically on anti-austerity platforms. Sanders attracted the signatures of 170 leading financiers and economists from universities around the USA in support of his reduction in the powers of the banks and of Wall Street.[18] Both political leaders attracted the youth in large numbers while they themselves, and many of their supporters, are from an older generation. In response to an interviewer Corbyn

assessment typical of statements by authorities who do not have to justify their conclusions to any democratic critics: 'The Commission has published its assessment of the programme's social impact which concludes that, if implemented fully and timely, the measures foreseen in the programme will help Greece return to stability and growth in a financially and socially sustainable way, and will contribute to meet the most pressing social needs and challenges in Greece'.

[18] This indicates that within their own ranks the understanding of financiers and academics is often not aligned with orthodox thought in their discipline. These men and women wrote in their personal capacities – their views did not represent the views of their institutions.

said of his initial campaign: 'Our campaign was a combination of the young and the old, very little in between, the middle-aged weren't there.' The middle aged, of course, have known nothing other than the currently 'ruling ideas' – but the youth are perhaps natural rebels and Corbyn's older supporters were adults already in the 1960s. Only they have experienced, in some measure, Deweyan democracy 'as a way of life' where economics had not yet gained decision-making hegemony over democratic governments. (Corbyn's re-election to the Labour Party leadership with a large majority sees this counter-trend, or challenge to orthodoxy continuing).

(c) In 1963 I was the final speaker for the University of Edinburgh in a debate between Scottish Universities on the motion 'it is better to be Waiting for Leftie than Waiting for Godot', that is, it is better to be politically committed than to accept a political stalemate. I was on the opposing side. My conclusion denied the premise and argued that 'it may be better to travel hopefully than to arrive, but in the 1930s the left were travelling hopefully in a dangerous direction, while by the end of the fifties we had assuredly arrived' – arrived at a place where the poor were getting richer before our eyes, where the welfare state, if flawed, and particularly the National Health Service and free university education for all students who needed it, were achieving a better standard of living and greater equality than ever before.

**Conclusion**

Those economists who have power in the global political arena and who are, in Keynes's opinion, the guarantors of the *possibility* of civilisation appear to have little understanding that these possibilities are still available within democracies. The conflict so prevalent in the world at present, although tied to complex issues and deep divisions in spheres apparently other than economic – if traced back to their origins would doubtless reveal an underlying truth perceived by Margolis after 9/11 that *We can no longer live in peace if most of the world does not live nearly as well as its most privileged part.* War appears therefore more likely to gather momentum in the short to medium term, than that economic dogma be seriously re-examined, or that the amelioration of the human condition be recovered as the proper interpretation of morality, and the achievable end to be sought by political players and economic leaders.

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**REDEFINING THE MEANING OF 'MORALITY':**
**A CHAPTER IN THE CULTURAL POLITICS OF CAPITALISM**

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ABSTRACT: Taking its clue from Max Scheler's Ressentiment and Max Weber's work on the "spirit" of capitalism, this article argues that the rise of capitalism brought not merely new economic institutions, such as private property and free markets, but also a reconception of morality in accord with the demands of those institutions. Moreover, this new morality, as Scheler argued, was based in the very sort of ressentiment of which Friederich Nietzsche had accused Christianity. The paper identifies two places where the "transvaluation of values" entailed in such ressentiment is evident: in the bourgeois notion of "private property" and especially in the perversion of life and utility values. Life ceases to stand as its own value but must make itself useful for capitalist profit-making: it must be earned.

Friederich Nietzsche, in *The Genealogy of Morals*, unleashed the harshest indictment ever directed against Christianity: he accused it of a most profound perversion of values—what he termed the "transvaluation of values"—and diagnosed Western civilization, which had fallen under its sway, "sick." In perhaps that work's most poignant passage, Nietzsche described the genesis of Christian morality:

> they [the imagined inventors of Christian morality] are transmuting weakness into merit....
>
> Impotence, which cannot retaliate, into kindness; pusillanimity into humility; submission before those one hates into obedience to One of whom they say has commanded this submission—they call him God. The inoffensiveness of the weak, his cowardice, his ineluctable standing, and waiting at doors, are being given honorific titles such as patience; to be *unable* to avenge oneself—even forgiveness ("for they know not what *they* do—we alone know what *they* do). Also there's talk of loving one's enemy—accompanied by much sweat. .... Now they tell me that not only are they better than the mighty of this earth, whose spittle they must lick (not from fear—by no means—but because God commands us to honor our superiors), but they are even better off, or at least they will be better off someday. But I've had all I can stand. The smell is too much for me. This shop where they manufacture ideals seems to me to stink of lies.[1]

Christianity, according to Nietzsche, seethes with resentment: out of its own inner, vital-psychic sickness and envy for what it is too weak to claim for itself, Christianity has degraded strength into a disvalue, while elevating weakness into a positive value.

Max Scheler, in his *Ressentiment*, defended Christianity against Nietzsche's fierce assault, charging that Nietzsche badly misunderstood the Christian message, confusing the institutionalized church for the essence of Christianity. True Christian forgiveness and love of one's enemies do not stem from weakness, as Nietzsche claimed, but from strength—one has the power to retaliate but chooses not to do so—and only when based in strength do such Christian virtues have meaning. Nietzsche did, however, Scheler argued, have a proper insight into the fundamental value perversion of modernity, but such a perversion stems not from Christianity, as Nietzsche contended, but from what Scheler termed the "ethos of industrialism". Drawing from the investigations of classical German social scientists, such as Werner Sombart, Max Weber, Ferdinand Toennies, and Georg Simmel, into the history and psychology of modern industrial life, Scheler applied Nietzsche's notions of the "transvaluation of values" and "*ressentiment*" in a most poignant and unsettling critique of modern economic life. The aim of this paper is to extend Scheler's analysis and criticism, focusing upon two main areas where the perversion of values in modern economic life is highly apparent: 1) the notion of 'freedom' entailed in market theory and 2) the relationship of instrumental to life values.

**I. The Virtue of Economy and the 'Freedom' of Markets**

The virtue of economizing was captured in the Scholastic notion of *liberalitas*,[2] derived from the Aristotelian notion of moderation (*sophrosyne*) and designating behavior befitting a free person. To be sufficiently self-controlled to

[1] *The Birth of Tragedy and The Genealogy of Morals* (1887), trans. Francis Golffin (Garden City, 1956), pp. 180-81. Emphases in the original.

[2] Sombart, *The Quintessence of Capitalism: A Study of the History and Psychology of the Modern Business Man*, trans. and ed. M. Epstein (1915; New York, 1967), p. 240.

moderate one's expenditures according to one's true needs and income, not only results in fiscal responsibility but also *liberates* one from impulse and desire in order to pursue authentic fulfillment (*eudaimonia*). By contrast, what Aristotle described as the "natural slave" is unable to moderate his/her consumption, is bound to his/her desires, and is consequently unable to grow as a person toward his/her own proper ends, or *telos*. Indeed, only for the free person is economizing a virtue, for only s/he does so out of free choice and self-control, while the natural slave does so only from necessity.[3]

In the Christian tradition the virtue of economy has often been tied to the ideals of voluntary poverty and sacrifice. Meister Eckhart, for example, interpreted Jesus's proclamation, "Blessed are those who are poor in spirit" [Mt. 5:3], to mean, "he is a poor person who wills nothing and knows nothing, and has nothing."[4] Only through the emptying (*kenosis*) of oneself of all desire to possess "self and things", is one free to receive the fullness, the riches, of God's heaven. Indeed, Scripture is replete with warnings against attachments to material wealth, the most famous of which is found in Matthew (6: 19-21): "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart be also." Would-be followers of Jesus are unable to follow him precisely because they are unable to surrender their attachments to earthly possessions. Thus, the virtue of economy, in this Christian tradition, is the capacity, stemming from spiritual strength, not weakness, as Nietzsche claimed, to empty oneself of ego and its desires and wants so that one can thereby be *free* to follow one's conscience, i.e., to follow Christ, to turn toward the True and the Good—to turn toward God—and to serve Christ by serving one's neighbor. Correspondingly, authentic freedom comes only with self-control of one's desires. If I cannot control my desire for luxury, I am a slave to all those who can provide or deprive me of it, and if I am hungry and know not how to fast, my hunger might drive me to violate my own conscience. But if I desire nothing, not even my own life, then no power on earth can compel me to perform evil: I am radically free to seek the Good.

The rise of the bourgeoisie in Renaissance Italy brought the secularization of the virtue of economy: saving and thrift became valued as means to increased earthly, rather than spiritual, wealth. Sombart described the rise of what he sarcastically termed "Holy economy":

> Not enforced thrift, mind you, but thrift exercised willingly. Poor folk knew the first kind of thrift from bitter experience. But now rich men became thrifty, and this was the unheard thing. Before long, the original doctrine of not spending more than you were earning gave rise to its corollary of actually spending less than you were earning. The idea of saving thus came into the world; of saving not as a necessity but as a virtue. Thrifty management now became the ideal even of the rich, in so far as they had become "bourgeois." … Seigniorial conduct was no longer regarded as the ideal to aim at; a well-ordered economy was what mattered most. Thrift was loved; thrift was elevated to the position of being the one virtue of economic activities.[5]

Closely following monetary thrift was thrift in the use of time: "Time is money," as Benjamin Franklin proclaimed:

> In short, the way to wealth, if you desire it, is as plain as the way to market. It depends chiefly on two words, industry and frugality; that is, waste neither time nor money, but make the best use of both. Without industry and frugality nothing will do, and with them everything. He that gets all he can honestly, and saves all he gets, will certainly become rich ….[6]

[3] Sombart's analysis is supported by Michel Foucault, *The Care of the Self*, Vol. 3 of *The History of Sexuality* (New York, 1986), pp. 39-66, and "On the Genealogy of Ethics: an Overview of Work in Progress," interview in Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, 2nd ed. (Chicago, 1983), pp. 229-52.

[4] *Breakthrough* (Garden City, 1981), p. 213. See also Matthew Fox, O.P., Commentary on Eckhart, p. 219, and Erich Fromm, *To Have or To Be?* (New York, 1981), pp. 48-54.

[5] Ibid., p. 106. See also Scheler, p. 158.

[6] *The Writings of Benjamin Franklin*, ed. Albert Henry Smyth (1907), vol. 2, pp. 370, 372, as quoted by Sombart, p. 117.

The new bourgeois spirit, Sombart claimed, could be summarized in three words: "Frugality, Industry, Moderation"—that "was the motto that might have been observed hung in letters of gold in many a warehouse and shop."[7]

For what purpose, though, was this wealth, to which the virtues of economy lead, to be amassed? Franklin answered: "liberty"! Wealth enables one to be independent of others:

> think what you do when you run into Debt; *You give to another, Power over your liberty.... The Borrower is a Slave to the Lender, and the Debtor to the Creditor*, disdain the Chain, preserve your Freedom; and maintain your Independency: Be *industrious* and *free*; be *frugal* and *free*.[8]

Wealth is to be valued not in order to increase effectual demand for consumable goods—that comes later in the history of capitalism—but as a means to increased freedom. Implicit in Franklin's claim seems to be the assumption that the generation of wealth is an individual and not a social matter, that it does not require interdependence. What concerns us here, though, is the peculiar way in which the emerging bourgeois mind conceived the virtue of economy in terms of personal liberty and how such a notion of economy contrasts to that of an earlier time: economizing enables one to amass wealth, which in turn liberates one from dependencies upon others, but for ancient and medieval moralities the desire for and attachment to unlimited wealth posed one of the greatest threats to one's freedom! Here we see the beginning of the transvaluation of the values of economy and freedom. Let us look at its further development.

Both classical and neoclassical economics have held that the proper end of economic activity is consumption and the satisfaction of consumer demand, which the same theories hold to be unlimited. Adam Smith is most explicit:

> Consumption is the sole end and purpose of all production; and the interest of the producer ought to be attended to, only so far as it may be necessary for promoting that of the consumer. The maxim is so perfectly self-evident, that it would be absurd to attempt to prove it.[9]

John Maynard Keynes wholeheartedly concurs: "All production is for the purpose of ultimately satisfying a consumer."[10] 'Economy' is identified in bourgeois morality with 'efficiency', rather than with conservation, and is measured by hypostatized units of exchange value: it means getting the *most* consumption for one's money, even when that entails a proliferation of wants. But a notion of economy that looks to consumption, fueled by unlimited desires, as its ultimate end, is the direct antithesis of earlier notions that based economy in restraint, and even the nullification, of such desires and the *minimizing* of consumption.[11]

**II. Instrumental and Life Values**

According to Scheler, the transvaluation of values in modern life is most clearly visible in the perversion of the values of instrumentality and life:

> the *most profound* perversion of … values is the *subordination of vital values to utility values*, which gains force as modern morality develops. Since the victory of the industrial and commercial spirit … this principle has been penetrating ever more deeply, affecting the most concrete value judgments. Putting it briefly, we can say that the "*noble*" is being subordinated to the "*useful*"—"noble" standing for those qualities that constitute the value of life in living organisms.[12]

Indeed, this perversion, Scheler claims, is the very essence of

[7] Ibid., p. 121.
[8] Franklin, "The Way to Wealth" (1757), in *The Spirit of American Philosophy*, ed. Gerald E. Myers (New York, 1970), pp. 129-30. Emphases in the original.
[9] *An Inquiry into the Nature and Cause of the Wealth of Nations* (1776), ed. Edward Cannal (Chicago, 1976), II, 179.
[10] *The General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money* (New York, 1936), p. 46.
[11] Scheler, p. 159, and E. F. Schumacher, *Small Is Beautiful: Economics as is People Mattered* (New York, 1973), p. 5.
[12] Scheler, pp. 154-55. Emphases in the original.

> "the ruling *ethos of industrialism*: the exaltation of utility values and instrumental values over vital and organic values …. It is rooted in the *ressentiment* of the vitally unfit against the fit, of those who are partially dead against the living!"[13]

In short, Scheler accuses the modern bourgeoisie of the very resentment that Nietzsche ascribes to Christianity!

This resentment had grown steadily since the thirteenth century, when the bourgeoisie was still under the domination of the old aristocracy and the Church. Then suddenly, Scheler describes,

> This *ressentiment* exploded and its values spread and were victorious. As the merchants and representatives of industry came to dominate, especially in the Western countries, *their* judgments, tastes, and inclinations became the selective determinants of cultural production, even in its intellectual and spiritual aspects. Their symbols and conceptions of the ultimate nature of things … came to replace older religious symbols, and everywhere *their* type of valuation became the criterion of "morality" as such.
>
> ….
>
> [T]he merchant's and the industrialist's professional values, the qualities that enable this particular type of man to succeed and do business, are set up as *generally valid* (indeed the "highest") *moral values*.

What are these instrumental qualities that the industrial ethos has elevated to the status of the highest moral values? Scheler continues:

> Cleverness, quick adaptability, a calculating mind, a desire for "security" and for unhampered transactions in all directions (and the qualities that are fit to bring about these conditions), a sense for the "calculability" of all circumstances, a disposition for steadiness in work and industriousness, economy and accuracy in concluding and observing agreements: these are the cardinal virtues now.[14]

Sombart notes that for the early bourgeoisie, "Wealth was undoubtedly prized, and to obtain it was the passionate desire of every heart. But wealth was not an end in itself. Its only virtue lay in the creation or preservation of life-values."[15] In later bourgeois morality, though, life is made accountable to wealth and the efficient production that creates it, and the older notion of a 'right to life' gave way to 'earning a living':

> now life itself—the sheer *existence* of an individual, a race, a nation—must be justified by its *usefulness* for a *wider* community. It is not enough if this life contains higher values than usefulness can represent—its existence must be "earned." The right to live and exist, which the older preindustrial morality included among the "natural rights," is denied both in theory and in practice.[16]

The impersonal forces of the market—what Ludwig von Mises terms "the discipline of the market"—compel one to serve the abstract goals of maximal profits and gross domestic product, regardless of whether such activity is life-enhancing or life-destroying. Life ceases to exist for its own sake but must make itself economically accountable. Throughout bourgeois society there is much concern for the 'health' and 'growth' of businesses and economies but little concern for the health and growth of persons: indeed, the latter is willingly sacrificed for the former. Scheler writes: "*objects* have become *man's lord and master*, and the *machine* has come to dominate *life*. The 'objects' have progressively grown in vigor and intelligence, in size and beauty—while man, who created them, has more and more become a cog in his own machine."[17] Economist E. F. Schumacher made a similar point: "Call a thing immoral or ugly, soul-destroying or a degradation of man, a peril to the peace of the world or to the well being of future generations, as long as you have not shown it to be uneconomic you have not really questioned its right to exist, grow, and prosper."[18]

In the more advanced stages of the industrial ethos the transvaluation of instrumental and life values becomes internalized. That is, persons' own *self*-value is

[13] Ibid., p. 162.
[14] Ibid., pp. 155-56. Emphases in the original. See also Sombart, pp. 121-29.
[15] Scheler, p. 155.
[16] Ibid., p. 158. Emphases in the original.
[17] Ibid., p. 172. Emphases in the original.
[18] Ibid., p. 42.

tied to their marketability as economically productive machines: one 'sells oneself' in the labor market and packages and 'brands' oneself in whatever manner is necessary to make a sale. Posted on my university's bulletin boards were advertisements proclaiming, "*Your Future Depends on How You Market Yourself*." And on this recent "Made In America Tour" with Jay-Z, Kanye West urged young African Americans to learn how to "package, brand, and market" themselves, in order to, like him and Jay-Z, "make it in America." Moreover, in an age that values machines and gadgets over life, people increasingly see themselves as well-oiled, smoothly functioning machines and adopt mechanistic views of life in order to preserve their senses of self-worth: one strives to enhance one's productivity and efficiency by multi-tasking and implementing better time-management techniques. As Scheler writes, "'life' itself no longer is an original phenomenon, but merely a complex of mechanical and mental processes. The mechanistic view of life sees the living being itself as a 'machine,' its 'organization' as a sum of useful tools which differ only in degree from artificially produced tools."[19] Largely absent in the modern individual is an inner sense of intrinsic, irreducible worth as a person: one sees oneself as a relatively cheaply replaceable piece of capital—indeed, we often speak of '*human* capital' and '*human* resources' without any sense of having said anything oxymoronic—and is thus driven continuously to affirm one's value in terms of one's economic productivity and efficiency.

The perversion of instrumental and life values is manifest, too, in the bourgeois family. Economy's primordial rootedness in life-values, rather than in values of production, is shown in its original meaning as '***oikos***-*nomia*', namely, care of the human household, whose heart is the constellation of familial relations: the well-being of the family is the original measure of economy. Increasingly, though, as Scheler claimed, families adjust—relocate and restructure themselves—to industry's demands. Like individuals, families often see themselves mechanistically, e.g., in terms of their 'functionality' or 'dysfunctionality', and model themselves upon industrial standards of productivity and efficiency. Persons often see their family positions in terms of economic functions: economist Thorstein Veblen's description of the bourgeois wife as an expression of her husband's "conspicuous leisure" and "conspicuous consumption," illustrates such a tendency.[20] Children, too, are viewed as commodities or investments: Nobel laureate Gary Becker's *Treatise on the Family*[21] illustrates this point, and Edward Albee, in his play *The American Dream*, satirizes it. I think, though, especially of the father who loudly complained to me when his son changed his major from business to philosophy, "I expect a better return on my investment!"

Earlier social thinkers had already observed much of that to which Sombart and Scheler pointed. Max Weber, for example, already observed how, in its efforts to make the world wholly calculable, for the sake of increased efficiency in production and the unlimited amassment of wealth, the spirit of capitalism reduces what is spontaneous and alive into what is predictable and dead, viz., commodities. He summed up this 'spirit' in the words of Ferdinand Kuernberger: "They make tallow out of cattle and money out of men."[22] Ferdinand Toennies, too, observed that the positive science underlying modern business and technology "reduces the living to the dead" in order to maximize efficiency in production.[23] Scheler, however, following Nietzsche, extended Weber's and Toennies's analyses by identifying the fundamental value perversion underlying such modern tendencies. He wrote, "We see that everything living and vital is eliminated from this strange picture. This world is an accumulation of logicians

[19] Ibid., p. 160.

[20] *The Theory of the Leisure Class: A Study of Institutions* (1899; New York, 1953).
[21] (Cambridge, 1991).
[22] *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons (London, 1930), p. 51.
[23] *Community and Society*, trans. Charles P. Loomis (New York, 1963), p. 36.

standing in a huge engine room—bloodless, emotionless, without love or hatred."[24] And he closes his *Ressentiment* with this chilling indictment of modern bourgeois life:

> If we consider the transvaluation of the relation between tool and organ in its totality, we must conclude that the spirit of modern civilization does not constitute "progress" (as Spencer thought), but a *decline* in the evolution of mankind. It represents the rule of the weak over the strong, of the clever over the noble, the rule of mere quantity over quality. It is a phenomenon of decadence, as is proved by the fact that everywhere it implies a *weakening of man's central, guiding forces* as against the anarchy of his automatic impulses. The mere means are developed and the goals are forgotten. And that precisely is decadence![25]

Such is the transvaluation of instrumental and life values inherent in the "ethos of industrialism."

**Conclusion**

It is important to note before closing that Sombart's and Scheler's criticism are directed *not* at the *institutions* of capitalism but at the '*spirit*', in Weber's sense, that animates them, although historically the latter grew up with the former. Consequently, Scheler is quick to note that such a 'spirit', or 'ethos', is often as much alive in the institutions of various socialisms as it is in capitalist enterprises,[26] and socialists can embody bourgeois values as well as capitalists. Thus, the above discussion should by no means be interpreted as favoring one '-ism' over the other: both can and have a) bastardized the notions of economy and freedom and b) transvalued instrumental and life values in the wakes of their developments.

What is most called for, then, in response to these perversions of value is not the mere erection of economic institutions of one form or the other, or even of some third alternative. Rather, what is required is a radical rethinking of the value foundations for any future economic edifice, and such is an enormous task, as Nietzsche well recognized: "'What is this or that table of values really worth?' must be viewed under a variety of perspectives, for the question 'valuable to what end?' is one of extraordinary complexity." Surely "what is the proper end of economy?" is more than a strictly economic question. Indeed, mainstream economists claim that it is not an issue for economics at all, since economics is a science of *pure means*, the study of the efficient means for the attainment of ends already posited by individuals and social systems. We began this essay with Nietzsche's indictment of the "transvaluation of values" in the modern West, and while we saw, following Scheler, that he misplaced the cause of that perversion, it is nonetheless appropriate that we return to him for advice in curing the ills that have been described: "All sciences are now under the obligation to prepare the ground for the future task …, which is to solve the problem of value, to determine the true hierarchy of values."[27] Nietzsche's advice is sound, for surely such an enormous task is not the domain of any single discipline but of all disciplines together—indeed, of all humanity. Nothing, therefore, is more important for the science of economy than its joining hands with that larger humanity in rethinking what Nietzsche termed "the true hierarchy of values."

[24] Ibid., p. 164.
[25] Ibid., p. 174. Emphases in the original.
[26] Manfred S. Frings, "Max Scheler: Capitalism—Its Philosophical Foundations," *Philosophy Today* 30 (Spring 1986): 38.
[27] Ibid., p. 188.

# IMPERIAL IRONY: RORTY, RICHARD HENRY PRATT AND THE AMERICAN INDIAN GENOCIDE

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ABSTRACT: In this paper, I will consider the parallels between the liberal philosophy of Richard Henry Pratt (1840-1924), founder of the Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania whose views laid the foundation for the post-Civil War genocide of American Indian peoples, and the philosophy of Rorty's liberal ironist project. By looking closely at the implications of a philosophical project like Rorty's as it was applied in the large scale experiment of late 19th century Indian policy, we can see that, rather than serving as a resource for ending cruelty, liberal irony can serve as an instrument for its perpetuation. I first briefly review the place of Pratt's work in the history of American Indian policy. Next, I identify what I take to be relevant aspects of Rorty's position in relation to these concerns. I then argue that Pratt's project has strong parallel commitments and that those commitments led, not to the reduction of suffering and humiliation among American Indians, but rather their increase. Finally, I return to Rorty's project and consider whether Rorty can avoid the worst of Pratt's program by affirming a particular brand of ethnocentrism.

This is a cautionary tale. The work of Richard Rorty has been embraced by many as a liberating vision. In the present world of racial hatred (newly fomented in the US by the rise of the Republican candidate for President and in Europe by increasingly violent anti-immigration politics), such a vision seems both timely and necessary as a means of addressing the cruelty and suffering of those excluded from the successes and opportunities of western democracy. In *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity* Rorty affirmed his commitment to "the traditional liberal claim that the only way to avoid perpetuating cruelty within social institutions is by maximizing the quality of education, freedom of the press, educational opportunity, opportunities to exert political influence, and the like" (66-7). Yet closer examination of the ends and means of Rorty's liberal vision reveals potential danger. In this paper, I consider the parallels between the liberal philosophy of Richard Henry Pratt (1840-1924), founder of the Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania whose views laid the foundation for the post-Civil War genocide of American Indian peoples, and the philosophy of Rorty's liberal ironist project. By looking closely at the implications of a philosophical project like Rorty's as it was applied in the large scale experiment of late 19$^{th}$ century Indian policy, we can see that, rather than serving as a resource for ending cruelty, liberal irony can serve as an instrument for its perpetuation.

However, before considering the parallels between Pratt and Rorty, it is useful to begin by answering the obvious question: why the invidious comparison of Rorty to a character as hated as Pratt? As Rorty said of Kant, "Kant, acting from the best possible motives, sent moral philosophy off in a direction which has made it hard for moral philosophers to see the importance, for moral progress, of … detailed empirical descriptions" (CIS, 192). The result was centuries of misdirection that, Rorty claims, led to a profound misunderstanding of moral progress and a history that blocked practical efforts to diminish cruelty and humiliation. Earlier attention to the practical effects of Kant's moral project might have saved centuries of suffering.

If Pratt's project is properly a liberal ironist project, then it forms a case study of what can happen when such projects are carried out on a large scale over a long time. Despite the best motives, it is possible that both Pratt and Rorty sent moral philosophy the wrong way. The fact that this misdirection may have first emerged a century ago raises a further question about how philosophers engage such questions in the first place. The historical neglect by philosophers (not to mention politicians and strong poets) of Pratt's work and its place in the history of what Stannard called the "American Holocaust" risks allowing our philosophical and political projects to go forward with a comforting amnesia and, as a result, fail in our shared commitment to making things better. The comparison with Pratt is an effort to take Rorty's work seriously as a vision of social change in world characterized by diversity and conflict—Europe and America in the 21$^{st}$ century. It is also an attempt to hold Rorty's vision to the same sort of standard that he saw as important in his criticism of Kant: the need to

attend to "detailed empirical descriptions" that finally frame our moral progress.

As Rorty says in *Achieving Our Country*, the only reason for the liberal ironist project is that it reduces suffering and humiliation. The worry, in this discussion, is that in the political present, where the histories, present circumstances, and the future of indigenous peoples are recognized as an issue, the viability of liberal ironist projects may be challenged. I first briefly review the place of Pratt's work in the history of American Indian policy. Next, I identify what I take to be relevant aspects of Rorty's position in relation to these concerns. I then argue that Pratt's project has strong parallel commitments and that those commitments led, not to the reduction of suffering and humiliation among American Indians, but rather their increase. Finally, I return to Rorty's project and consider whether Rorty can avoid the worst of Pratt's program by affirming a particular brand of ethnocentrism. The argument is somewhat schematic in presentation thanks to its over-large scope and the constraints of space, but I hope it will open a discussion about the implications of Rorty's social vision in the context of diversity that includes the place of indigenous peoples.

**I.**

General Richard Henry Pratt (no relation to the author) proposed a vision of American democracy founded on equal opportunity and individual freedom, and which sought to prevent isolation and suffering among its least fortunate members. Pratt and his supporters helped to implement a national program to achieve such a country: the Indian boarding school movement, which set out to address the "forlorn conditions" of American Indians in the decades following the U.S Civil War (1917, 11). Pratt, a soldier in that war, reenlisted after the war and became an officer in the 10th Cavalry, one of the famous "Buffalo Soldier" regiments composed largely of ex-slaves and stationed in Kansas. The 10th Cavalry was assigned to protect new white settlements from interference by the Native people they had displaced, as well as to participate in campaigns against the Cheyenne, Arapahos, and Comanche. In 1875, Pratt was put in charge of a group of captured Indian warriors accused of leading attacks on settlers as they moved into the region. In order to keep these warriors from "causing trouble," Pratt and his prisoners were shipped to a prison at Fort Marion in St. Augustine, Florida. There, over the next several years, he experimented with various approaches to providing basic literacy and vocational training. Central to his program was a work release system—he called it the "outing system"—that allowed prisoners to take jobs in the city and keep their wages.

Pratt's program was considered a success and came to the attention of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (who administered treaty-protected lands and reservations). In 1876 Pratt was placed in charge of the American Indian school at the Hampton Institute in Virginia, which had been established as a school for freed slaves in 1868. As he refined his approach to Indian education, Pratt lobbied for the Indian Bureau to establish a separate school for Native people and, in 1879, he was given charge of a retired army barracks in Pennsylvania where he opened the first federal Indian boarding school. At the center of his educational theory, Pratt held that one's culture, behavior, and language were cultivated habits. "There is no 'heart language,'" he wrote, "There is no resistless clog placed upon us by birth. We are not born with language, nor are we born with ideas of either civilization or savagery. Language, savagery, and civilization are forced upon us entirely by our environment after birth" (1891, 3). The Carlisle educational program would provide an environment that freed its students from habits that had limited their opportunities and give them new habits adapted to the circumstances of the wider American culture. In establishing the school, Pratt directly challenged established policies that enforced segregation and denied Native people access to education and work. Over the next three decades, Pratt became well known

for his commitment to improving the conditions of American Indians and promoting their integration into the dominant cultural and economic systems of the time.

Despite the widespread support for the boarding school movement by liberal groups like the Indian Rights Association and the Lake Mohonk Conference of Friends of the Indian, and the apparent approval of many American Indians, a wider perspective on the history of boarding schools reveals that, rather than being liberatory, they were part of a new program of genocide that emerged in the wake of the Civil War (see S. L. Pratt 2015). This outcome of the liberal Indian education program was most famously captured in an 1892 address to the National Conferences of Charities and Corrections, in which Pratt concluded, "A great General has said that the only good Indian is a dead one, and that high sanction of his has been an enormous factor in promoting Indian massacres. In a sense," he continued, "I agree with the sentiment, but only in this: that all the Indian there is in the race should be dead. Kill the Indian in him, and save the man" (1892, 46). Pratt's stark statement reflected the developing liberal agenda to end military action against Native people and establish a new approach explicitly designed to address the increasingly bad conditions faced by those who had been forced onto reservations.

In 1881, Helen Hunt Jackson helped to mobilize liberal reformers across the country to take up the cause of improving the treatment of American Indians when she published *A Century of Dishonor*. Jackson offered detailed descriptions of treaty violations, the abuse of Native people supposedly protected by the US government, forced removals from traditional lands, and massacres. This history "convicts us," she wrote, of "having outraged the principles of justice; … having laid ourselves open to the accusations of both cruelty and perfidy; [and] of making ourselves liable to all punishments which follow upon such sins" (1885, 29). "There is," she concluded, "only one way of righting this wrong. It lies in appeals to the heart and conscience of the American people" (1885, 30). At issue for the activists Jackson inspired was the conviction that Native people would continue to suffer as long as they were held back by an Indian policy that emphasized reservations over education and economic opportunity.

The result of the efforts of these activists was a four-pronged approach to the so-called "Indian problem" implemented over the next 80 years. The first was the establishment of an Indian education system modeled on Pratt's school that would train Native students in English literacy and vocational skills. By 1902, there were 25 boarding schools enrolling nearly 18,000 students (Adams, 1995, 57-8). Second, in order to foster the development of a sense of individualism that would help Native people break free of their conditions, the activists worked with the US Congress to pass the General Allotment Act (also known as the Dawes Act) in 1887. The Dawes act divided up treaty-assigned reservation land and assigned parcels to each member of the tribe for them to cultivate and profit from, freeing them from their dependence on hunting, fishing, and government handouts from the Indian Bureau. If the Indian agent agreed, they could also sell the land and move away from the reservation, using the money to make a new start on their own. The "leftover" areas of reservation land after the allotment were sold to non-native settlers.

The third element of the liberal program was to see that American Indians were made citizens of the United States. Until 1924 when Congress passed the American Indian Citizenship Act, Native people could become citizens only if the government-appointed Indian agent decided that the person was qualified for citizenship. The activists argued that this practice both reinforced tribal membership (since agents often opposed making Indians citizens) and led to abuses (when tribal members sought citizenship in order to vote or have access to the court system). The Citizenship Act, they argued, would bring Indians into the American democratic system, give them a larger loyalty, and decrease the dependence of individual Native people on their tribal affiliations. The fourth prong of the program was the eventual

elimination of tribes as recognized entities. In 1953, Congress passed the first of a series of laws designed to eliminate tribes. The acts, taken together, are known as "Termination" and led to the elimination of more than 100 tribes in the 1950s and 1960s, freeing 2.5 million acres of tribal lands from treaty protection, and the disenrollment of 12,000 people from tribal membership.

In the end, these activist efforts to *better* the conditions of American Indians constituted a new program of genocide, understood in its original sense of "tribe killing" (Wolfe 2006). Whereas the pre-Civil War strategy sought the overt extermination of Native peoples, the policies and practices of post-Civil War America, under the guise of a "humanitarian" program aimed at establishing equal rights and opportunities, nevertheless became a systematic, intentional program aimed at destroying American Indian culture. To peoples whose very lives depended on their relations to others—human, non-human, collective, and placed—the program of the reformers was extermination in another form. The implications of this genocide are not often considered or well understood. Pratt's program, a central piece of this larger project, shows how it was carried out, not under the label of genocide, but as liberal reform, committed to ending suffering and promoting the development of a robust individualism in which people were free to choose some affiliations and leave others behind.

**II.**

In *Achieving Our Country*, Rorty presents Dewey and Whitman as offering "America" and "democracy" as "shorthand for a new conception of what it is to be human—a conception which has no room for obedience to a nonhuman authority, and in which nothing save freely achieved consensus among human beings has any authority at all" (1998, 18). Rather than imagining "God as the unconditional object of desire," Dewey and Whitman wanted "the struggle for social justice to be the country's animating principle, the nation's soul" (18). Rorty contrasts Dewey and Whitman with recent writers Leslie Marmon Silko, an American Indian novelist whose *Almanac of the Dead* (1991) conveys "the wholehearted, gut-wrenching disgust for white America," and James Baldwin, in *The Fire Next Time* (1962), an African American author who combines "a continued unwillingness to forgive [whites] with a continuing identification with the country that brought over his ancestors in chains" (12).

Silko's desperate vision provides little light and little hope. Baldwin's vision, on the contrary, leads to the hope consistent with Dewey and Whitman's vision where whites and blacks "must, like lovers, insist on, or create, the consciousness of others—do not falter in our duty now," Baldwin says, "… and achieve our country" (Baldwin, quoted in Rorty, 1998, 13). Such an attitude marks a pride in American possibility. Rorty concludes, such pride "is compatible with remembering that we expanded our boundaries by massacring the tribes which blocked our way, that we broke the word we had pledged in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, and that we caused the death of a million Vietnamese out of sheer macho arrogance" (32). Even though imperialism only makes a cameo appearance in Rorty's discussion, its presence suggests its relevance to the choice of one vision of America or another. The project proposed in *Achieving Our Country* expresses in concrete terms the conception of a liberal nation developed earlier in *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*.

In both works, Rorty's project is framed by three commitments: liberal ironism, a distinction between public and private, and secularism. As is well known, Rorty defines liberals as "people who think that cruelty is the worst thing we can do" so that among their "ungroundable desires" is the hope that "suffering will be diminished, that humiliation of human beings by other human beings may cease" (1989, xv). To be an ironist, he claimed, is to be one "who faces up to the contingency of his or her own most central beliefs and desires—someone sufficiently historicist and nominalist to have abandoned the idea that those central beliefs

and desires refer back to something beyond the reach of time and chance" (xv). A liberal ironist, then, is one who seeks to diminish cruelty but who also realizes that the ground for such conviction is not found in universal principles. From this perspective, there are "no non-circular theoretical" justifications for the "belief that cruelty is horrible," only convictions fostered by literature and art—by strong poets who can foster sensitivity and a "final vocabulary" that help frame the kind of persons we want to be and what we need to notice about others. The strength of the liberal ironist is two-fold. On one hand, a liberal ironist has an exit strategy both from debates about first principles that can bring reform to a halt and from efforts to persuade disbelievers by using reasoned argument to show that their first principles are mistaken or dangerous. On the other hand, the liberal ironist can begin by recognizing the pain and suffering of others and can take action without being troubled by arguments over whether the sufferer merits our attention.

But liberal irony does not stand alone; it rather sets the stage for social reform that will be taken up in a context that includes both the interests of individuals and the need to coordinate collective action. Since these interests are often at odds, Rorty proposes that balance can be found by recognizing a firm distinction between private projects of self-creation and public projects committed to shared purposes. The dominant view, Rorty observes, is one where the two kinds of projects must be justified in terms of the universal principles of truth, right, and good. Yet, self-creation—as Emerson argued—is not a shared project; it is the work of an individual achieving her or his own meaning and purpose, albeit with the aid of others. Public projects, on the other hand, are predicated on submitting individual interests to the shared interests of the community. Expecting that one set of universal truths will adequately frame both kinds of projects is a crucial mistake. "I want to replace this with a story of increasing willingness to live with plurality and to stop asking for universal validity," he wrote. Instead, common purposes should be the product of free agreement where the common purposes "are seen against the background of an increasing sense of the radical diversity of private purposes, of the radically poetic character of individual lives, and of the merely poetic foundations of the 'we-consciousness' which lies behind our social institutions" (1989, 67-8). The public/private split provides a means of assuring a pluralism of selves and projects of self-creation, even as it assures the possibility of common agreement.

While it may appear that the split "will not work," "that no one can divide herself up into a private self-creator and a public liberal" (1989, 85), Rorty argues that the split marks distinct projects that need not, in fact cannot, be resolved into a single one. The effort to engage in private self-creation and public efforts to reduce suffering, are approached through a process of description that uses what Rorty calls our "final vocabularies" composed of "the words in which we tell, sometimes prospectively and sometimes retrospectively, the story of our lives" (1989, 73). Such vocabularies can be used for different purposes, some private and some public. "For my private purposes," he says, "I may redescribe you and everybody else in terms which have nothing to do with my attitude toward your actual or possible suffering. My private purposes, and the part of my final vocabulary which is not relevant to my public actions, are none of your business" (1989, 91). As a liberal, however, "the part of my final vocabulary which is relevant to such actions requires me to become aware of all the various ways in which other human beings whom I might act upon can be humiliated" (1989, 92). The tension between private and public vocabularies does not mean that the distinction must be resolved in favor of one or the other. "On my account of ironist culture, such opposites can be combined in a life but not synthesized in a theory" (1989, 120). Practically, he concludes, "our responsibilities to others constitute *only* the public side of our lives, a side which competes with our private affections and our private attempts at self-creation, and which has no *automatic* priority over such

private motives" (1989, 194). A pluralism of individuals is maintained even as collective concerns and action remain a real possibility.

The third key commitment, secularism, in Rorty's vision was motivated, at least in part, as a means of escaping the limitations of a theologically constrained public. Rorty aims to replace what he sees as dogmatic commitment to inherited beliefs with an ironist perspective that acknowledges the contingency of such belief. The resulting commitment to secularism provides a kind of postmetaphysical stance that avoids universalism and anything but skeptical affirmation of what is "real." Writing about "German idealists, French revolutionaries, and romantic poets," he declares that "they no longer spoke of themselves as responsible to non-human powers" and so marked the beginning of a "new kind of human beings" (1989, 7). By rejecting theology and its attendant language of powers and interests beyond human experience, Rorty is able to refigure the relation of human beings to the world and transform the received notion of truth as a representation of something outside language to the recognition that truths are only within language and so are not available to serve as a standard for choosing one language or another.

The attitude of liberal irony prepares one to recognize the distinction between public and private, which, in turn, marks both the linguistic turn and the post-metaphysical stance rejecting the recognition of non-human others. The former recognizes private and public final vocabularies with which to frame our projects and describe our lives and circumstances. The latter marks the idea that "we no longer worship anything, … we treat nothing as a quasi divinity, … we treat everything…as a product of time and chance" (22). With the spread of the liberal ironic attitude, individuals and the collective nation will find ways to achieve an ongoing balance between private self creation and public efforts to reduce suffering. Through this vision, the liberal ironist may achieve an American nation that echoes Whitman's "By Blue Ontario's Shore," where

> All is eligible to all,
> All is for individuals—All is for you,
> No condition is prohibited—not God's, or any. …
> Produce great persons, the rest follows.

All that can be said in defense of this vision, Rorty concludes in *Achieving Our Country*, "is that it would produce less unnecessary suffering than any other, and that it is the best means to a certain end: the creation of greater diversity of individuals—larger, fuller, more imaginative and daring individuals" (1998, 30).

**III.**

At the 1917 Lake Mohonk Conference of the Friends of the Indian, Pratt offered "the remedy" to the problem of American Indian suffering. His answer anticipates the liberal vision offered some 70 years later by Rorty. What is the remedy? Pratt asked. "Simply that all Indians have the same individual chances for development into useful citizenship, in the same citizenship environment that every … other inhabitant of the United States receives and all segregating and bureaucratizing be abandoned" (1916, 12). "Citizenship," for Pratt, like citizenship in Rorty's America, marked the dual commitments of a private individual to self-creation and a public citizen committed to collective national efforts. For Pratt, this vision stood in opposition to the segregation demanded by the established Indian policy and the tribalism demanded by American Indian nations. Addressing a similar tension, Rorty writes, "To take pride in being black or gay is an entirely reasonable response to the sadistic humiliation to which one has been subjected. But insofar as this pride prevents someone from also taking pride in being an American citizen, from thinking of his or her country as capable of reform, or from being able to join with straights or whites in reformist initiatives, it is a political disaster" (1998, 100). Pratt put the point more starkly: "Carlisle has always planted treason to the tribe and loyalty to the nation at large. It has preached against colonizing Indians, and in favor of individualizing them. It has demanded the same multiplicity of chances which all others in the country

enjoy" (1892, 57). He continues: "[T]he Indian is no different from the white or the colored, that he has the inalienable right to liberty and opportunity that the white and negro have. Carlisle does not dictate to him what line of life he should fill, [just] so it is an honest one" (1892, 57).

Given his commitment to citizenship and collective action to improve the lot of American Indians, one might grant that Pratt was a liberal in the proper sense, and still argue that he was not an ironist. Even as US Indian policies began to reduce investment in boarding schools and establish more on-reservation day schools, Pratt remained committed to his approach, lobbying civic groups, churches, and the government long after he was asked to resign from his leadership of Carlisle in 1908. Could an ironist, committed to the contingency of his central beliefs, hold so tightly to his convictions? In fact, apart from his appeals to the evils faced by American Indians and his appeals to the benefits of their becoming part of wider American society in order to address the problems of poverty, hunger and illiteracy, Pratt rarely if ever claimed a commitment to some universal moral law.

It is useful to recognize two operative sorts of irony in Rorty's work. One is a kind of pervasive skepticism toward systematic solutions to problems and efforts to justify them in a principled way. The other is a more or less formal dismissal of foundations. The two are related in that the skeptical attitude that sets aside efforts to justify claims implies a rejection of the idea that claims have foundations that can play a role in their justification. In Rorty, skepticism and the formal rejection of foundations lead to a kind of overt attitude that dismisses some conversations and interests out of hand ("ironically"). Pratt, in contrast, was an earnest character, prone to seeking systematic answers and offering limited justifications for his plans. Although he rejected the received conceptions of Indian abilities and the general program of isolating Native peoples on reservations until they vanished, he does not seem to present his rejection as a matter of skepticism. At the same time, Pratt, unlike many of his contemporaries, rejected the need for foundations when simple recognition of Indian suffering was sufficient to mark both the reason for action and the measure of its success. So while not an ironist in the way he talked about his work, Pratt was an ironist in the way he carried it out.

For example, while he acknowledged the presence of churches in the system of Indian education and reservation management (the Indian Bureau assigned different regions of Indian country to different Christian denominations to establish reservation schools), he rejected the use of "creeds" as a means of fostering the development of individual Native people. "Church leaders," he said, "have largely led the Government, and are really, as I believe, much more at fault for the present condition of things then the Government is" because their system "compels" the interests of citizenship—that is, the interests of individualization—"to bow to creeds." (1891, 4). Rejecting the established system as a whole, Pratt concluded: "The dissipation, idleness, disease and crime which has reduced [Native peoples], … are all the direct result of our grossly injudicious system and mistaken liberality" (1909, 9). It was a system, he said, that ought to be judged by "the forlorn conditions it has engendered almost everywhere" (1917, 11).

Pratt's was a practical commitment, much like Rorty's, to addressing ongoing social problems. His educational vision was not one that sought conformity, but rather sought to empower Native students to develop their own purposes, to create their own individual sense of self and direction. This involved not dictating a "line of life" while breaking the hold of Native communities on their individual members. By leaving both the tribe and the church behind, Pratt concluded, Indians—especially Indian youth—would finally have a chance to be free: private ironists who sought their own projects of self-creation and public liberals working to help those who suffer.

The public/private split was central to the educational project at Carlisle and was perhaps best illustrated in the "outing" program. As David Adams observes, Pratt realized that the routines of the boarding school were an obstacle for realizing the goal of fostering individuals. Pratt wrote, "The order and system so necessary in an institution retards rather than develops habits of self-reliance and forethought; individuality is lost. They grow into mechanical routine" (quoted in Adams, p. 157). The outing system placed students, usually in the summer, in the nearby homes of non-native Pennsylvanians. The students would work as farmers or clerks, or help with household chores, receive modest wages and learn to be independent of both the school routine and the constraints of tribal culture. Private experience and interests were thereby fostered in tension with the public concerns of boarding school life and its project of addressing the conditions faced by Native people. Exposure to the lives of Americans already engaged in projects of self-creation provided students with models and opportunities to develop projects of their own. Rather than framing their interests in terms of tribal needs on one hand and the explicit directions of teachers on the other, Pratt was convinced that the outing program could help American Indians become true Americans, to become great individuals. His lectures were filled with the names and stories of Carlisle alumni who, in his view, successfully made the transition from tribal people to individuals. Stripped of Indian culture and its quasi-divinities, Native people would be at last free to achieve the best that American democracy could offer.

**IV.**

Despite Pratt's "best possible motives," his project is now universally regarded as a central pillar of the post-Civil War program of genocide carried out against American Indians. Despite its commitment to liberalism—or because of it—Pratt's project aimed to eliminate American Indian culture and, with it, American Indian individuals. While some may resist calling the program genocidal, from the perspective of many American Indian commentators, there is little question that the term is correctly applied. The question here is not whether the boarding school program had such effects, however, but whether, as a liberal ironist project, it diminished or failed to diminish suffering and humiliation of the people it engaged. Setting aside the larger question of the role of violation of treaty rights, the politics of the Indian Bureau, and the economics of land acquisition, can it be claimed that the elements of the program framed by Pratt as a liberal ironist contributed to the perpetuation and increase of the suffering of American Indians? I think that it did in at least two ways.

In 1933, Luther Standing Bear, who was a member of the first class of students to attend Carlisle, published his memoir, *Land of the Spotted Eagle*. Standing Bear was trained as a tinsmith and returned to the Pine Ridge Reservation where, unable to find work, he became a teacher and a farmer and eventually a member of the tribal council. After conflicts with representatives of the Indian Bureau, he left Pine Ridge to be an actor in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show and later an actor in early Hollywood westerns. Late in life he became a writer, publishing four books, including two children's books and an ethnography about the Lakota. In his memoir, he described the Carlisle experience. The process began, he said, "with the clothes." "The task before us was not only that of accepting new ideas and adopting new manners, but actual physical changes and discomfort [that had] to be borne uncomplainingly until the body adjusted itself to new tastes and habits" (232). Long hair was cut, diet was dramatically changed and each student was given a new name: not a translation of their given name, but a name chosen from a list of acceptable European names, like 'Luther.' The results of the transformation were often fatal. "The change in clothing, housing, food, and confinement combined with lonesomeness was too much," Standing Bear wrote, "and in three years nearly one half of the children from the Plains were dead and through with all earthly schools" (234).

Ultimately, subjecting students to such treatment can only be seen as cruel and clearly not an element Pratt should have embraced as a liberal ironist. Yet one element would, it seems, necessarily remain: the central demand for the construction of a new vocabulary in terms of which the Native children could tell a new story both of themselves as part of their efforts at self-creation and of their people as part of their public interest in addressing the suffering at home. If such a vocabulary was not already present to reframe the children's lives in democratic terms—and Pratt would have argued that it was not—acquiring such a vocabulary required a new language. "At Carlisle," Standing Bear wrote, "we had been ordered never to speak our own language and I now remembered how hard it had been for us to forego the consolation of speech" (242). Here the suffering of the Native children took on a particular character. Caught between languages, not only did the children suffer, their suffering was inexpressible. Only later was Standing Bear able to remember the character of his suffering, now framed as part of the process of becoming an individual, learning to self-create. In retrospect, in the language of mainstream America, Standing Bear could remember "how lonely we used to get and how we longed for the loved ones at home, and the taking away of speech at that time only added to our depression" (242). Even as Pratt's project found its success in transforming Standing Bear from a Lakota boy to an individual whose life was a model of self-creation, it also failed by creating a kind of suffering that could not be expressed.

Furthermore, Pratt's insistent secularism—its rejection of theological claims both Christian and indigenous—also calls the liberal ironist project into question. The educational goals of Carlisle set out to transform the lives of Native people by reconstructing their relationship to their tribal traditions and the dominant society. It was a humanist project that was not burdened by commitments to what Rorty calls a non-human, "personlike" world. "For as long as we think that 'the world' names something we ought to *respect* as well as cope with something *personlike* in that it has a preferred description of itself," Rorty said, "we shall insist that any philosophical account of truth save the 'intuition' that the 'truth is out there'" (emphasis added, 1989 21). Non-human persons, for Rorty, stood squarely in the way of the liberal ironist project because their recognition also required the recognition of foundations. Yet it was this narrowing of the human scope of concern by setting aside non-human persons that, for Standing Bear, directly contributed to the failure of the dominant culture's own projects of building a nation. "The white man does not understand the Indian for the reason that he does not understand America. The roots of his tree of life have not yet grasped rock and soil" (248). Rather than separating humans from the other agents present in America, successful public projects demanded surrender to or at least cooperation with a wide range of non-human powers on whom future life depended. "The man from Europe is still a foreigner and an alien," he said. "[I]n the Indian the spirit of the land is still vested … Men must be born and reborn to belong. Their bodies must be formed of the dust of their forefather's bones" (248). By undermining the Native connection to land and non-human others, Pratt's program undercut the ability of Native people to be at home in their places and to carry out public projects of social change. As Standing Bear makes clear, white efforts to create a sustainable national identity were bound to fail. In adopting a public vocabulary that redescribes America as a world of fungible lands, endless resources available for human use, and consequently, a land of endless human self-creation, the underlying loss becomes inexpressible. Like the suffering of boarding school students who lacked the consolation of speech, the suffering land lost its voice as well.

**V.**

Yet it is possible that, while Pratt's liberal ironist project failed, Rorty's vision may not. Writing in his 1985 response to Clifford Geertz's address, "The Uses of Diversity," Rorty argues "our bourgeois liberal culture … is a culture which prides itself on constantly adding more windows [to other cultures], constantly enlarging its sympathies" (204). For Rorty, its "sense of its own moral worth is founded on its tolerance for diversity" (204). The presence of diversity is in part a product of the effort of anthropologists like Geertz who, as sympathetic interpreters, make diversity apparent. In the 19th century, Rorty explains, Americans thought that "[t]he Indians, whether drunk or sober, were non-persons, without human dignity, means to our grandparents' ends" (206). Anthropology "made it hard for us to continue thinking of them this way and thereby made them into part of contemporary America." To be "part of society," he continues, is "to be taken as a possible conversational partner by those who shape society's self image" (206). Encouraged by intellectuals like Geertz, the "media … have been making such partners of the Indians."

The result of the efforts of anthropologists and others is to foster a kind of ethnocentrism that affirms differences and benefits from them. "We have to start from where we are," he concludes in *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*. The resulting ethnocentrism is not pernicious but beneficial: "it is the ethnocentrism of a 'we' ('we liberals') which is dedicated to enlarging itself, to creating an ever larger and more variegated *ethnos*" (198). But what fosters such enlargement is unclear, and what place impoverished reservation communities occupy remains problematic. Rorty describes his ethnocentrism as like a "Kuwaiti Bazaar," "surrounded by lots and lots of exclusive clubs" (209). But in the reality of a colonized land, such a model either violates the commitments of the liberal or the commitments of the ironist. The commitments of the liberal are violated because the suffering of colonized people is apparent and it is caused by the flourishing of the dominant liberal society. If it is the liberal's passion to diminish such suffering, "tolerating" such suffering as a private club is to forego this passion.

Such ethnocentrism also violates the commitments of the ironist because if colonized people are seen as "part of us," then their suffering is a present concern, here in "our club," and must be addressed by fostering projects of self-creation at the expense of whatever the traditions of the colonized people may have to offer or lose in the process. Pratt opted for the latter option by seeing Native people as part of the American "we." Rorty's ethnocentric strategy models the former option and points not to Pratt's project but to the project of Pratt's successor, Francis Leupp, who reformed Indian education in order to foster a pluralist toleration of difference. The result, however, was not an end to suffering but, have argued elsewhere, a new version of the project of genocide (Pratt 2015), that is, a new version of the project Raphael Lemkin defined as "*acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such*."

The comparison of the commitments shared by Pratt and Rorty suggests that the political projects of liberal ironists call for further consideration when taken up in the context of the 21st century world, where the history of colonization and genocide is clearly recognized. When the "detailed empirical description" of American imperialism is taken seriously, liberals must reconsider their commitments in that light. Rorty's social hope—as Richard Henry Pratt's before him—may inspire a new politics in Europe and America, but to do so now, by its own lights, requires that it engage its relation to a history of genocide, and seek conversation with those who are committed to decolonization.

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# BRUNO LATOUR, AMERICAN PRAGMATISM, AND THE IDEA OF NON-HUMAN DEMOCRACY

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ABSTRACT: The article is a venture into Bruno Latour's concept of politics especially into his idea of democracy. The author examines the concept of "phantom public" which originated in Walter Lippmann's political thought and was polemically discussed by John Dewey. Latour uses extensively this concept for his own purpose and recently one has noticed a shift in his thought from Dewey's notion of public to Lippmann's concept of limited democracy. This shift is interpreted against the background of French political philosophy as well as Latour's growing interest in non-human factors of democratic system.

## I.

A problem one might face discussing Latour's concepts is that, as one of his reviewers put it, his system is so broad and abundant that one may either try to specify its particular elements, or reject it wholesale and offer an alternative (Maniglier 2014). I am hardly capable of offering an alternative and even less willing to specify particular elements of his framework. What I want to do instead is advance a handful questions that arise when reading *An Inquiry into Modes of Existence*, with the fundamental one concerning the place of democracy in Latour's system of thought. Of course, it may be problematic in itself to compare Latour's concepts with political philosophies in the first place. The French thinker started his versatile career, admittedly, as a social anthropologist, but he crossed all disciplinary barriers to produce a coherent system, which in its latest incarnation could be called metaphysical.

In this way, Latour made real his dream, which he articulated already in a playful text produced in 2008 and published in 2010 (Latour 2010). In it, he announces that he has decided to come out as a philosopher, but, admittedly, perspicacious interpreters of his work, Peter Sloterdijk for one, have long suspected him of philosophical inclinations. He reveals that his philosophical method is founded on Rudolf Bultman's philosophical exegesis, which insists "that it was only in the long chain of continuous inventions that the *truth conditions* of the Gospel resided. Provided, that is, that those inventions were done, so to speak, in the *right key* (Latour 2010, p. 600)." Latour avers that the principle became a pillar of his own inquiries: "It was in this key, this way of discriminating between two opposite types of betrayal – betrayal by mere repetition and the absence of innovation, and betrayal by too many innovations and the loss of initial intent – that I wrote my PhD thesis: the subject matter was really the spirit of invention, or should I say, the Holy Spirit! (Latour 2010, p. 600)." Thus, Latour boldly ventures into the realm of philosophy though he winds up his argument with a tongue-in-cheek request: "A last wish with which to conclude: please, don't tell anyone, especially in the UK or the US, that such is my overall life project and that I am, in effect, a philosopher – worst of all, a philosopher with a system: they will never take me seriously again. Only under a German sky is one allowed to think that big! (Latour 2010, p. 607)."

This proclaimed affinity with German philosophy has not precluded, however, clear influences of American pragmatism on Latour' thinking. He is often counted among "pragmatist sociologists" together with Pierre Bourdieu, Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot (Lamla 2013). As commonly known, Latour relies on pragmatism in a variety of contexts: on the one hand, on the pragmatist pluralistic and relational ontology, particularly pronounced in William James's works, and, on the other, on John Dewey's social and political concepts. Latour's associations with the latter are evident in his democratic experimentalism and belief that democracy, rather than a system defined by rigid rules, is a vigorous organism that keeps mutating and adopting to new conditions. Given that, there is certainly a common ground between Dewey's ideas and those that Latour develops in his concept of the parliament of things. In his article juxtaposing two strategies of experimentation in democratic society, Jörn Lamla compares two models of democratic experimentation. In Dewey's model, the direct effects of social interactions

within the Great Society produce problems haunting social relations. This triggers the emergence of a new public which, as a democratic, experimental community, tries to solve the problems in line with the Deweyan logic of inquiry. Crisis resolution entails establishing a new state which represents collective interests of the great community and manages them. In Latour, in turn, the starting point is provided by a crisis in the actor-network hybrid, as a result of which a parliament of things is convened, which using (ethno)methods of science, politics, economy and morality generates finally a new collective to gradually head toward a cosmopolitan order for the common good (Lamla 2010, p.351).

My analysis of Latour's concept of politics revolves around these two aspects of his work. My intent is to approach the French scholar as a philosopher who puts forward his own concept of democracy, which meaningfully draws on American pragmatism. In my interpretation of Latour's concept of democracy, his notion of "the phantom public" will be my major touchstone. Of course, I have long been familiar with the notion of the phantom public as my interests lie, first of all, in American pragmatism and the history of American thought. The notion, as Latour himself scrupulously discusses, was coined by Walter Lippmann, whose book *Public Opinion* provoked John Dewey's polemic advanced in *The Public and Its Problems*, probably his only work on political philosophy (Dewey 1984). In *The Modes…* and also other writings, Latour repeatedly stresses the relevance of this polemic to his own work. Because the Lippmann-Dewey polemic concerned fundamental issues of democracy, the basic question is, evidently, which model of democracy Latour endorses, taking a position on the dispute. This is what I will address in my argument.

Yet before I go on to discuss the significance of "the phantom public" notion to Latour's whole framework, I would like to address his most immediate and obvious theoretical reference, that is, French philosophy. As one of the Latour book reviewers observes: "Like many French philosophers Latour counterposes his views to those of Descartes, but, like many French thinkers, he is heavily influenced by Descartes in the alternatives he poses. He rejects the notion of matter, which he several times identifies with Cartesian *res extensa*. Yet in discussing Beings of Reproduction (things as event sequences), Latour refers to lines of force as an alternative. This apparently novel treatment neglects that since the eighteenth century Kant, Roger Joseph Boscovich, and others have already presented a force theory of matter different from Descartes' *res extensa*. (Dusek 2014)"

In the context of my focal problem here, that is, democracy, Latour's reliance on political philosophy is, however, more pertinent. In this department, Latour's kinship with Jacques Rancière's has been frequently pointed out, yet, in my view, even more relevant is his complex relation to Alain Badiou. Already cited Patrice Maniglier notices: "Latour has delineated the conditions under which the question of being can be posed anew, tailored to our times. It is a doubly paradoxical ontology, indeed, because it makes not only *mediation* but also *equivocation* its native element. But perhaps it is more coherent, and, above all, more pertinent to the contemporary context, less separable from our lives and knowledge, than any of those proposed by the great metaphysicians of the twentieth century, from Heidegger to Badiou. It's to Badiou that we are tempted to compare and oppose Latour today: on the question of the universal and other subjects, they represent a decision that our times must take (Maniglier 2014, p. 43)." Magnilier explains that Latour's ontology is an experimental one, but in a different sense than Whitehead's or Bergson's ontology as: "We can still, if we like, speak of Being in general – but only to say this about it: Being isn't the Separate (what should be reached) but the Confused (what should be disintricated, contrasted). What ontology has to resolve are not the problems of access, but the problems of equivocation. Its supreme value is not adequation, but precision, as Bergson says. It is not just a matter of saying that 'being'

is said in many senses – which is what the entire doctrine of categories is about – but of showing that it is only in the disjunction of its senses that 'being' has sense at all. Nothing *is* except for what has been *confused* (Minglier 2014, pp. 41-42)." Such ontology is, of course, contrasted, as already mentioned, with the ontology entrenched in 20th-century tradition, which sought a reality that would be free from such confusion. If we accept Magnilier's line of reasoning, Badiou could be said to be a natural opposition because in his thought the event, a moment of truth, becomes such reality that could help reduce the pluralism of being and, thus, challenge Latour's concept of a multiplicity of modes of existence.

To appreciate the significance of this opposition, I would like to evoke briefly another French philosopher, Claude Lefort. Lefort may easily be contrasted with Latour based on the former's concept of "an empty place" around which democratic society is organized. Such an "empty place" is out of the question in Latour's framework since, by definition, it would have to elude the network of relationships. Still, it seems to me that despite this fundamental ontological difference, we could find a common ground, or at least some affinities, between the two in at least two points. One of them is separating politics as a distinct mode of existence, and the other is the perception of democratic society as being in constant flux, in a kind of less or more controlled chaos. Democracy is, then, a system whose possible dissolution is inscribed in its very essence, if "essence" is, at all, a legitimate term in the context of Lefort's thought. The elusive nature of democracy proceeds from its very definition – "rule by the people" – as the struggles over who is and who is not the people never cease. Of course, with such a definition in place, democratic politics, rather than a system, is a process whose liminal conditions are demarcated by totalitarianism and anarchy. This is where we touch upon Latour's fundamentally different approach to democratic politics. The difference may be encapsulated in the following question: To recognize democracy as a distinctive system do we need to identify and grasp as many of its constitutive relations as possible or do we rather need to open the system onto more or less consciously motivated changes?

Latour is probably right to conclude that the democratic ideal of autonomy, at least in its Moderns-propagated species, is bound up with a certain paradox: "Paradoxically, if no value is held in higher esteem than the autonomy permitted by democracy, no activity is held in greater scorn than politics. It is as if we wanted the end, once again, but not the *means* to reach it. A new paradox that the inquiry must address head on: how can these same Moderns simultaneously define themselves as 'political animals' and reduce the veridiction that is proper to politics to a bare minimum? (Latour 2012, pp. 330-331)." Casting autonomy as an end and an ideal of democracy unmistakably brings to mind the work of Cornelius Castoriadis, who judged the changing political forms of democracy based on how they went about making this ideal a reality. As commonly known and briefly speaking, Castoriadis views autonomy as implicated in a discovery made first by the ancient Athenians that the institution of society is an imaginary thing (as conveyed in the title of Castoriadis's best known book *L'Institution imaginaire de la société* (1999)). The capacity to self-reflect on the very institution of society is the foundation of autonomy, which, in turn, is a determinant of a democratic society. Such an approach to autonomy, however, casts democracy in a perspective other than Latour does. Again, as was the case with Lefort, Latour and Castoriadis join forces in condemning phantasms of rationality and determinism, but they will differ in their takes on democracy, which for Castoriadis is first and foremost a mode of reflecting on one's own society, reflecting, importantly, that triggers social change. Endorsing democratic experimentalism, Latour seems to approximate Castoriadis in this respect, but figuring the public as a phantom in his latest books seems to herald a departure from social activism.

**II.**

The public is, as the 1920s came to realize, the foundation of democratic society, if there is any at all. Latour frequently addresses the first significant dispute on the nature of the public, which was, of course, a dispute on the nature of democracy. The groundbreaking development was the Lippmann-Dewey dispute. As it was highly pertinent to Latour's thought, I will recount it in some detail, thereby drawing on Robert Westerbrook's excellent study of John Dewey, which outlines the political background of the dispute, its course and consequences for understanding democracy (Westbrook 1991). The starting point of the argument was a dramatic clash over the shape of democratic society in the aftermath of World War One. It bred the conviction that democracy needed a thorough reconstruction, which should be directed and managed chiefly by the vigorously developing social sciences. Rapidly, however, optimism was ousted by pessimism about possibilities of developing a democratic society as the social sciences were harnessed in the service of democratic realist ideologies, offering a seemingly objective analysis of democratic functioning. Freudians and behaviorists, though opting for entirely different methodological approaches, united forces in what scholars of the period see as highlighting the irrational factors as the rootstock of social life. This, obviously, affected their concept of democracy, which eschewed rational discussion as a foundation of democracy, foregrounding at the same time the natural or learned, but anyway basically unchangeable, habits as determinants of political life. The best known psychologist of politics of the time, Harold Lasswell insisted that political, public activity was motivated by the projection of private emotions onto public life (Westbrook1991, p. 284).

In response to these claims, Dewey wrote what turned out to be his likely best known psychological book: *Human Nature and Conduct* (1922), in which he put forward the concept of habit as an intelligent way of facing up to the environment's challenges. In the book's conclusion, democratic reformers were encouraged to promote in society capacities of rational deliberation, which were within the reach of most people. Such intelligent habits should be fostered and developed.

In two of his books, *Public Opinion* (1922) and *The Phantom Public* (1925), Walter Lippmann, one of the most commonly read authors and a very influential journalist, offered an incisive critique of democracy, which Dewey shared, to a large extent, repudiating at the same time, equally incisively, the solutions Lippmann proposed. Lippmann's starting point was a simple epistemological assertion that "men did not know their environment directly but through the 'fictions' or representations they made to themselves of this environment (Westbrook 1991, p. 294)." Having thoroughly analyzed the sources of this condition, Lippmann concluded that democrats and democracy had never been able to cope with the problem posed by the citizens' limited knowledge. His response was simple: he postulated elitist politics, in which a small group of well informed experts would play a decisive role, advising politicians. The broader public would be left with the role of observers of principles of procedure. In *The Phantom Public* published three years later, Lippmann's position was even more radical. The problems that plagued democracy could not be resolved by means of democratic methods. Given this, the people's participation in governance should be limited to a minimum, and the public should focus on the principles of procedure rather than on its content, that is, on the very fact that some principles do exist. As Westbrook emphasizes, "behind Lippmann's elitism lay an ethical position that was common to many democratic realists. Self-determination, he argued, was only one of the many interests of a human being, and not a particularly strong one (Westbrook 1991, p. 300)."

Dewey's response to Lippmann's books, which he highly appreciated, was highly complex. Summarizing *The Public and Its Problems* in a few sentences is nearly impossible, so I will tackle only the crucial points,

starting from Dewey's key notion of transactions. Transactions refer to all natural entities, but human transactions are distinct in that they are intelligent, which means that possible outcomes of actions are anticipated and, based on these predictions, human conduct is shaped. Human transactions are divided into private and public ones, though the line dividing the two is by no means clear-cut. They are distinguished on the basis of how far their consequences reach. The public is thus defined as "all those who are affected by the indirect consequences of transaction to such an extent that it is deemed necessary to have those consequences systematically cared for (Westbrook 1991, p. 302)." In this perspective, as Westbrook observes, the public is always a plural noun; the publics or rather constellations of various publics emerge again and again in response to new types of transaction. The state, an incarnation of the movement of the public, is continually re-constructed and re-shaped. Dewey contends even that whenever a newly organized public appears, a new state is created.

In his 2011 article, Latour nearly uncritically recapitulates Dewey's ideas of the public as the best formula of a new concept of politics: "Instead of a politics established as far as possible on unified nature, on the matter of fact, it should now be carefully balanced on 'states of affairs,' on the perilous notion of what Dewey […] has called the 'public (Latour 2011, p.10).'" Moreover, Latour highlights the salience of Dewey's book in confrontation with Lippmann's "democracy of experts." "Dewey's book today is as fresh as in 1927, and the fact that for over eighty years Dewey has lost a battle against the appeal to experts made by his opponents, such as Walter Lippmann, renders the book even more fascinating […]. While the second Tower of Babel was being built, Dewey quietly explained why it would never work out, why the State, as he said, 'has always to be reinvented;' why nature, and especially the so-called 'natural laws' of economics, could not possibly be used to frame collective action. Only we, now, from the vantage point of the end of nature, after the closure of the modernist parenthesis, can read with profit this book written for us (Latour 2011, p. 11)."

In *An Inquiry into Modes*… a significant shift takes place. Dewey disappears while Lippmann is showered with praises. In a passage on the phantom public, Latour writes: "[phantom] is an exact definition of the form created by the incessant reshaping of the Circle, provided that the process is not stopped (…). Here is the particular alterity that the political extracts from being-as-other, an alteration, an alienation, that no other mode has ever attempted: producing oneness with multiplicity, oneness with all, but doing so *phantomatically*, provisionally, by a continual *reprise* and without ever being undergirded by a substance, a durable body, an organism, an organization, an identity. It is for just this reason – Walter Lippmann may be the only person who really got it – that one can respect the ontological dignity of the political mode only by grasping it in the form of a PHANTOM PUBLIC to be invoked and convoked. Neither the public, nor the common, nor the 'we' exists; they must be brought into being. If the word PERFORMATION has a meaning, this is it. If there are invisibles that one must take special care not to embody too quickly – for example in the State, that other cold monster – this particular phantom is one of them (Latour 2013, p. 352)." The last sentence may, and certainly does, allude to Dewey's ideas, and in particular to his concept of the constant reconstruction of the state by the publics. As noted above, a similar tendency has been discerned in the work of Latour, who underscores the role of permanent reconstruction in democratic politics. The cited passages from the French thinker's writings seem to confirm that he perceives a threat not only in stagnation, but also in such reconstruction which finds its embodiment in the political institution of the state. Whenever reconstruction is halted by bringing a phantom into life, democracy finds itself in jeopardy if it cannot annihilate the phantom. The Deweyan, non-phantom public, which creates the state anew, be it even for a fleeting moment, poses a hazard to reconstruction and, consequently, to democracy –

democracy so inclusive that it comprises the notion of the people which, as Lefort insisted, is the most elusive facet of democracy as well as nonhuman elements of the political system. Lefort's scheme of democracy as an empty place and a constant struggle for what may be called "the people" becomes radicalized, but it is not negated.

**III.**

After Latour, to include nonhuman elements into politics seems entirely obvious. As Jane Bennet argues: "Latour figures politics as a series of call-and-response engagements between humans and nonhumans (Bennet 2005, p. 143)." Such a relationship finds its vivid exemplification in the catastrophe as a social and political event. As it has been shown they can refract the trajectories of politics. The harsh winter of 1978/79 exposed the weakness of the socialist state and paved the way for attempts to undermine its legitimacy (Koczanowicz 2007). The active impact of nonhuman factors is even more dramatically embodied in the Polish presidential aircraft crash at Smolensk on 10 April, 2010 (Koczanowicz 2012). The ceaseless discussions on the Smolensk fog or the Smolensk birch tree leave no doubt that they are full-fledged participants in the tragic event, entangled in all its relations. Therefore, we must concur with the French thinker when he insists that we should listen carefully to the voices of nonhuman agents even if, or perhaps preeminently if, we find them difficult to interpret. In fact, the complexity of relationships enmeshing the contemporary world makes inclusion of the nonhuman factors in the democratic process a necessity rather than a choice.

The basic issue is what status the nonhuman factors are given in theory of democracy or, in broader terms, political theory. Latour is one of those thinkers who challenge us to revise the classic notion of democracy underpinned by the vision of activity of the people who fight for governance. Latour seems to denounce the belief that political action is intentional and, as Bennet insists, proposes rather that action itself carries, inscribed in it, the relationships among all elements of the democratic process.[1] The process of democratization would thus unfold not through expansion of the areas in which the decisive role belongs to intentional actions and sundry civic initiatives (at this point we should recall that Latour warned against the illusions of autonomy), but rather through deepening the relations and elaborating the connections among factors that emerge in action. The public does not act, it does not reinvent the state, but it is rather a phantom brought into life as a moment of democratic action which vanishes as easily as it is summoned.

[1] J. Bennet, "In Parliament…," *op. cit.*, p. 144.

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**BEYOND CULTURALISM:**
**A DEWEYAN READING OF THE EXPANSION OF 'NDRANGHETA**

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ABSTRACT: In this paper, I focus on the expansion of 'Ndrangheta's power and influence in central and northern Italy. The Calabrese mafia has been in expanding its activities beyond the relatively poor societies and economies of Southern Italy in many region of central and northern Italy. The key question is then: how has 'Ndrangheta achieved such an astonishing success in exporting its activities to Northern Italian societies?

In this paper, I would like to endorse an anti-culturalist approach to this phenomenon. Culturalist approaches explain the expansion of organized crime outside its original boundaries by understanding mafia as a simple by-product of a certain cultural milieu. Since the culturalist hypothesis appears as one sided and incomplete, I would like to sketch an alternative explanation by leaning on Sciarrone's (2009, 2014) and Varese's (2011) critical stance against culturalism.

In the first part, I discuss culturalist interpretations of 'Ndrangheta, and more generally of mafias, trying to show their weaknesses. In the second part, I propose to deal with the expansion of 'Ndrangheta by articulating John Dewey's concept of interest. In the third part, I discuss the criticism according to which Dewey's approach is unable to account for power asymmetrical relations. In the conclusion, I point at some further issues which this approach will have to consider.

In the recent decades 'Ndrangheta, the mafia from Calabria (southern Italy), has become the most powerful, rich and important criminal organization in Italy. Despite its rise to power, 'Ndrangheta is not very well known, even within Italy. Until a few years ago, it was considered a poor relative of the terrifying Sicilian Mafia, more correctly named *Cosa Nostra,* whose escalation starting from the 80's culminated in a total war against Italian state, in the early 90's. Camorra as well has had their share of attention, thanks in part to popular semi-fictional novels such as *Gomorra,* the worldwide success by Roberto Saviano, which dramatizes the criminal activities of this Naples-based criminal organization (Dickie, 2013).

This did not happen with 'Ndrangheta. For many years and to a certain extent still today, 'Ndrangheta has maintained a low profile despite its constant growth as an important and powerful international criminal organization. 'Ndrangheta comes from Calabria (Southern Italy), the poorest Italian region according to national statistics. (Istat, 2015) It is perhaps due to its poverty as well as other political and cultural factors that Calabria has often been neglected by the Italian government. This institutional indifference has been exploited by 'Ndrangheta leaders and the lack of government presence in the region has been crucial in helping them to avoid attention.

In this paper, I focus on the expansion of 'Ndrangheta's power and influence in central and northern Italy. While Calabria is officially the poorest region in Italy, central and northern regions are consistently ranked highest in the areas of income, quality of life and social capital (Varese, 2011). These differences have led institutions, political parties and theorists to rule out the possibility that mafia groups could even exist outside the confines of southern Italy. After having been ignored for so long, the staggering importance of 'Ndrangheta's undeniable expansion is finally being acknowledged. Numerous studies and governmental sources show how successful the Calabrese mafia has been in expanding its activities beyond the relatively poor societies and economies of Southern Italy (DNA, 2012; Ciconte, 2011; Gratteri-Nicasio, 2009; Sciarrone, 2009, 2014; Varese, 2011.) All these studies confirm the presence of 'Ndrangheta criminal activities in many region of central and northern Italy. This presence can be classified according to varying degrees of importance: from sporadic episodes, to infiltrations of local government, and finally to radical colonization and transplantation (Varese, 2011).

It is finally becoming clear how widespread these problems are. However, there is still room for discussion about the nature of this expansion. These discussions involve not only scientific discussion, but also commonsensical, cultural and political representations. The key question is then: how has 'Ndrangheta achieved such astonishing success in exporting its activities to Northern Italian societies?[1]

[1] This question could be also extended to all the places where 'Ndrangheta succeeded in exporting its activities: Canada, Australia, Switzerland, Germany among others.

In this paper, I would like to endorse an anti-culturalist approach to this phenomenon. Beginning with Hess (1970), Mafia has been understood as a kind of behavior, stemming from the codes of a certain sub-culture. Mafia appears then as a specific kind of social action, which is both produced and kept active thanks to certain crucial values (the code of silence, respect, honor) and means (violence) which structure the culture of Southern Italian regions. In its more radical versions, culturalism functions like a sort of biological reductionism: cultural belonging is a kind of DNA, structuring and determining individual and group behaviors. If someone wants to grasp the meaning of a certain behavior, it is necessary to read the brand that culture has stamped on it.

The weaknesses of culturalism dramatically emerge when we attempt to explain the expansion of organized crime outside its original boundaries. If mafia is the simple by-product of a certain cultural milieu, then how is it possible to explain the success of mafia clans in Northern Italian and foreign societies, whose culture is apparently different from that of southern Italy? In order to solve this riddle, some culturalist theorists have adopted the "contagion metaphor" (Sciarrone, 2009). Mafia expands itself like a bacterium. Its existence and proliferation is made possible by a specific and welcoming environment – i.e. southern Italian mentality. Therefore, in order to infect another body, the mafia bacterium needs to reproduce its safe environment outside its original territory. This strategy has been made possible by emigration. Emigration allows the mafia bacillus to grow in a safe and hospitable environment. Once it is has become strong enough, the bacterium can contaminate the new, and previously healthy, society.

The culturalist hypothesis, and particularly the contagion hypothesis, appears-one sided and incomplete. One-sided, because it splits the process of expansion of Mafia into an active role, played by "criminal" immigrants, and a passive one, represented by the Northern Italian societies. Incomplete insomuch as it downplays the complexity of this phenomenon concentrating exclusively on the cultural aspects of the expansion. This approach then is clearly insufficient to explain the complex web of interactions, transactions and negotiations which have made the expansion possible and which are themselves the manifestation of its success.

During the last twenty years, authors such as Sciarrone and Varese have taken a critical stance against culturalism. Despite moving from different perspectives, their work aims at constructing dynamic models, which attempt to understand the expansion of mafia by focusing on the interactive exchanges between criminal groups and northern Italian social actors. Without denying the importance of cultural factors, they aim to single out the process-like nature of this expansion and its interactive grounds.

In this paper, I take the side of these anti-culturalist approaches to the understanding of contemporary crime organizations and their expansion. In the first part, I discuss culturalist interpretations of 'Ndrangheta, and more generally of mafias, trying to show their weaknesses. In the second part, I argue that some of the dynamics constituting the expansion of 'Ndrangheta outside its original territory could be dealt with by articulating John Dewey's thought. The key concept here is interest. Despite being underdeveloped and sketchy, Dewey's reflections on interest included in *Democracy and Education, Theory of Valuation* and *Lectures in Social and Political Philosophy* could help in understanding the expansion of 'Ndrangheta as a transactive, reciprocal and dynamic process, rather than as the side effect of the massive spread of a cultural disease, imported by southern Italian immigrants. In the third part, I discuss the criticism according to which this Deweyan interest-based approach is unable to account for power relations. By analyzing a specific episode taken from Sciarrone (2009), I try to answer this criticism by showing the interactive and processual character of a typical power

However, in this paper the focus will be restricted to the expansion of 'Ndrangheta in Northern Italy.

interaction such as extortion. In the conclusion, I point at some further issues – e.g. the role of emotions in power interactions – which this approach will have to consider.

**1. Culturalism**

During the last two decades, 'Ndrangheta clans emerged as important actors in the Italian, European and even international criminal context. This growth was achieved thanks to several factors: their prominent role in intercontinental drug trade – especially cocaine import, due to privileged relationships with drug exporters in Central and South America (Calderoni, 2012; Gratteri & Nicasio, 2015) -; the presence of 'Ndrangheta clans in many countries, such as Canada, Australia and Germany among others (Sciarrone 2014, Sergi 2014); their ability to control Calabrese territory, sometimes nearly completely supplanting public institutions (Ciconte 2011); their investment in a variety of business interests – drug trade, construction, money laundering, illegal appropriation of European funding, illegal storage of toxic wastes -; the pervasive relationships with legal, political and economic figures; their capacity to deal with different social contexts, by mixing autoplastic adaptation – i.e. the capacity of changing themselves when interacting with a new environment – and alloplastic adaptation – the capacity of changing the environment to fit their needs (Sciarrone 2009).

How should we interpret the 'Ndrangheta phenomenon and explain its success? Generally speaking, both in common sense and in scientific inquiries on Italian organized crime, much weight is placed on culturalist hypotheses. In a deeply influential work, Hess (1970) defined mafia as a particular kind of behavior, shaped by a particular social subculture. Given its strong dependency on a given culture, this kind of behavior is deeply rooted in the ruling norms characteristic to that particular subculture – above all, the code of silence (*omertà*). As underlined by Paoli (2003), this great interest on the cultural aspects of mafia is shared by many among the authors involved in the first empirical field studies on mafia during the sixties (Hess, 1970; Block, 1974; Schneider & Schneider, 1986).

Few scholars would be inclined to deny the role that culture and history have played in the genesis and in the development of mafias in Italy. However, there are equally valid reasons to be wary about culturalist tendencies. We could define culturalism as the tendency to assume cultural factors as the sole and exclusive causal grounds in the explanation of social phenomena. While the acknowledgment of the importance of culture-laden factors such as values, norms and habits appear to be a necessary theoretical move, culturalism undermines the understanding of phenomena in their complexity. In the case of mafia, the reduction of criminal activities to cultural mentality may cause us to overlook the importance of economic and organizational factors in the success of Italian organized crime.

These difficulties become dramatic as the theoretical focus shifts from the activities of mafias in their original territories, to the expansion of organized crime outside these narrow boundaries. If Mafia is purely a culturally based phenomenon, how could criminal clans export their activities in other regions, characterized by a different culture and mentality?

An easy way out of this dilemma consists of denying this very possibility, effectively asserting that mafia is a non-exportable activity. In the past, this hypothesis has been held even by authors sensitive to cultural factors, but not endorsing a culturalist approach (see Paoli, 2003), and also by authors explicitly at odds with culturalism (Gambetta, 1993). But this hypothesis is hard to defend in present times. Suffice to say that several central and northern Italian local governments have been removed from power by the Italian national government due to Mafia infiltrations. Such measures are evidence of the existence of a steady presence of organized crime in these territories, or at the very least, a demonstration of their capacity to heavily influence the activity of local democratic institutions, even at great distances from 'Ndrangheta's home territory.

Therefore, the expansion of 'Ndrangheta is something that will have to be explained. But how could it be explained from a culturalist point of view? As brilliantly pointed out by Sciarrone (2009), culturalism often leads to the so-called metaphor of contagion: the small but resistant and pervasive bacterium permeates the healthy organism, and destroys it from within. The evil comes from outward, and it is unwittingly and involuntarily interiorized.

An instance of this culturalist approach is Ada Becchi's interpretation of the expansion of Mafia outside its original boundaries. The first explicative element underlined is emigration: Mafia works when it is able to reproduce its original environment, that is, the cultural milieu of southern Italian societies. Once emigrations soak the social milieu of northern or foreign societies with a mafia-friendly culture, imported by means of massive emigration, then organized crime can reproduce itself outside its original boundaries. The mafia bacillus can be cultivated in a friendly niche, constructed by means of emigration. The community of migrants functions then as protection in the hostile environment of the new society. Once the bacillus has grown strong enough, it is finally able to contaminate even the previously healthy sectors of the host society. In many cases the emigrated clans initially perform their activities – for instance, extortion and racketeering – only to the detriment of other Calabrese emigrants.[2] According to Becchi, the immigrant community support to Mafia members is somehow spontaneous. Similarly, governmental activity against Mafia has been undermined by the fact that many members of the repressive State structure were themselves natives of Southern Italy as well and therefore were "soaked" with Mafia sub-culture, and consequently unable to fight against it. (Becchi, 2000, p. 22) Similarly, Servadio Mostyn-Owen claimed that the transplantation of Mafia in the Northern Italian region has been made possible by the fact that in recent times the "calling" to dishonesty, fraud and swindle has permeated the entire nation, becoming an "Italian common good" (Servadio Mostyn-Owen, 1983, p. 121).[3]

This culturalist approach is not just an academic hypothesis. It is a widespread approach also in common sense discussion, in political discourse and also in legal debate. Francesco D'Onofrio, the suspected boss of 'Ndrangheta in Torino, has been recently accused by an informer to be the owner of an entire arsenal, and to be engaged in massive weapons smuggling with East European criminal societies. D'Onofrio has contested these accusations, by stressing the "enormous cultural differences" separating himself from 'Ndrangheta. (Legato, 2016) In this way, cultural belonging works as a sort of behavioral DNA: if you are "culturally different" from someone, then your behaviors and your actions will be in principle incompatible. Conversely, culturalism has been also employed as an excuse for victimization. Romeo, relative of the powerful homonymous clan from Reggio Calabria, has been the object of a dossier by the anti-mafia organization Libera. Libera denounced the presence of 'Ndrangheta in Liguria, a region in northwestern Italy. Romeo reacted by blaming Libera of racist prejudices, and by asserting that Calabrese immigrants living in Liguria should abstain from voting in the next election as a sign of protest (Antonelli, 2014).

On the other side of the bar, culturalist arguments have been employed by judicial power in order to downplay the risk of the expansion of Mafia beyond its original boundaries. During the nineties, the judge Ignazio De Francisci contested the idea according to which Sicilian mafia had undergone a technological update. "Cosa Nostra" – he maintained – "still smells of stable and of sheep. The "men of honor " basic DNA is that of the shepherd's, and, partially, the peasant (…) they reason like shepherds, because they were born shepherds" (Paoli, 2003, pp. 217-218).

[2] Mete (2015).

[3] All these examples have been taken from Sciarrone (2009).

In relation to the expansion of 'Ndrangheta, critics of the "contagion hypothesis" can raise at least two objections. Firstly, as noted by Sciarrone (2009) and Varese (2011), the massive presence of emigrants from Calabria is often not related to the presence of 'Ndrangheta, or of mafias more in general. In fact, the contagion culturalist hypothesis is not able to explain why 'Ndrangheta is deeply rooted in some regions of Australia and Canada, and not in Argentina, where the Calabrese community is massively represented. Furthermore, Cosa Nostra failed to achieve transplantation in Rosario, Argentina, and succeeded in New York. In both cases, an important Sicilian community was present in both cities. The same goes for 'Ndrangheta in Piemonte (success) and Verona (failure). Therefore, emigration is not a sufficient condition to explain the success of the expansion of mafia (Varese, 2011).[4]

Secondly, the culturalist approach does not explain why 'Ndrangheta's leaders are sometimes able to achieve respect, recognition and prestige outside the immigrant community, infiltrating themselves into many social milieu of northern Italian societies. These deep social interactions between criminal subjects and Nothern Italian social actors are hard to account for using the approach of cultural reductionism.

In order to show these difficulties in action, I would like to discuss a specific example. In the last several months, public authorities have performed two operations against the Grande Aracri clan, confiscating money and property valued respectively at 3 and 2.5 million euros. Their expansion in the region of Emilia Romagna had begun in the seventies. In the following years, the Grande Aracri clan started to export its activities in this rich part of Italy by creating a criminal system supported through intimidation and violence – when needed – but principally based on the entanglement between illegal activities – such as drug smuggling – and perfectly legal commercial and financial activities. The entanglement and the complicity between 'Ndrangheta and local administrations and businesses has in some cases been publicly acknowledged. (Mete, 2015) For example, the small town of Brescello had its local government removed from power by the Italian state due to mafia infiltrations in April 2016.

As a result of an important police investigation, logs of an interesting wiretapped telephone call have been published. During this telephone conversation, financial consultant Roberta Tattini from Bologna, Northern Italy, describes the visit she received from Nicolino Grande Aracri, boss of the homonymous clan. In a very excited voice, she refers to Grande Aracri as "The Boss, the Great.. the bloody". She says she feels "honored" by this unexpected visit. Also, she says to the other party that she made it clear to the Mafia members that in case of need she wants "their" lawyers. The affair they are settling is indeed extremely remunerative, but at the same time very dangerous from a legal point of view. However, given their receptive attitudes towards her requests, she concludes that she felt "very important" after this conversation.[5]

In this case, the mafia actor is not simply a client. Rather, he is both the object and the source of prestige and esteem. Tattini is not just excited by the economic gain which the interaction with the boss is supposed to produce. She also feels "important", after receiving his visit.

The culturalist contagion metaphor is apparently unable to explain a case like this – which is far from being an isolated case - unless we postulate this contagion as a sort of mesmerizing and hypnotic identification, by means of which professionals from northern Italy immediately incorporate the values and the mentality of the Mafia. Honestly, this does not look like a very convincing and rigorous hypothesis for several

[4] Of course, as explicitly acknowledged by Sciarrone and Varese, this does not mean that emigration cannot be a factor of success in the expansion of mafia. In this regard, see Sergi's account of the expansion of 'Ndrangheta in Australia (Sergi, 2010).

[5] Alberti (2015).

reasons. Firstly, because of its paranormal flavor – we could recall here Sigmund Freud's (1922) brilliant criticisms of the vagueness of Gustave Le Bon's conception of "emotional contagion". Secondly, because it presupposes a sort of one-sided causal arrow. 'Ndrangheta members contaminate healthy societies, which passively receive the disease and fall sick.

But such a facile explanation is not sufficient. During the last forty years, the variety of 'Ndrangheta relationships and interactions has grown and developed in surprising ways. A large percentage of the profits gathered by means of drug dealing are being laundered through legal activities such as construction enterprises, restaurants, and so on. More and more often, these activities are not just a cover. Rather, they become enterprises pursued also for their own sake. This entrepreneurial skill is often recognized by the community after 'ndrangheta clans have begun to operate, and it becomes a source of social esteem. For instance, the Moscatos – the members of a Calabrese family transplanted to the outskirts of Milan, with deep ties to the Iamonte clan – are considered by their fellow citizens as "respectable good workers" (Storti, Dagnes, Pellegrino, Sciarrone, 2014). This is likely to be true, at least according to a "separatist" conception of professional ethics, just as Roberta Tattini was probably a "good" financial consultant. Social esteem is a precious thing, and undoubtedly helps to increase the opportunities for contact and communication with other social actors. [6]

Culturalist perspectives are then unable to cope with these dynamic developments. They prove insufficient to deal with the complex net of relationships and interests which is making the expansion of 'Ndrangheta possible.

[6] For more on the ambiguity of the social esteem strategies pursued by 'Ndrangheta, see Santarelli (2016).

**3. Dewey's concept of interests**

The difficulties encountered by culturalist approaches have already been pointed out by authors such as Sciarrone and Varese. Despite the differences between their respective points of view,[7] they both understand the expansion of mafias in interactive and dynamic terms. While culturalism endorses a one-sided causal approach, and consequently the polarization of an active agent – the criminal organization – and a passive environment – northern Italian societies -, Sciarrone and Varese seem to be interested in the kinds of reciprocal and mutual transactions which determine the success or failure of criminal expansion.

In this paragraph, I will attempt to show that this interactive anti-culturalist approach could be further developed by discussing John Dewey's theory of interests. Indeed, culturalism presupposes a fixed conception of interests, which then coincides with the symbolic, material and moral survival and reproduction of the community. As already pointed out, such rigidity becomes an obstacle in the understanding of social practices, as it is unable to explain the mutual and reciprocal interactions between actors embedded into different cultures. How can these apparently heterogeneous actors and groups pursue, negotiate and sometimes integrate their interests? In order to sketch an answer to this question, I propose to integrate concepts from Dewey.

The concept of interest plays a crucial role in some of Dewey's most important works: from *The Public and its Problems,* to *Democracy and Education* and *Theory of*

[7] In his impressive work *Mafias on the Move*, Varese stresses the importance of the demand for private protection as a key – but not exclusive – factor in the expansion of mafia. In this regard, he is somehow close to Gambetta's definition of mafia as an "industry of private protection" (Gambetta 1993). At the same time, he explicitly refuses Gambetta's postulate of the non-exportability of mafia. While acknowledging the importance of the demand for private protection, Sciarrone disagrees in conceiving it as privileged explanatory factor in mafia, leaning more explicitly on a multiple causation approach (Sciarrone, 2009, 2014).

*Valuation,* and finally in the recently edited *Lectures in Social and Political Philosophy*[8]. However, the definition of "interests" is only roughly sketched by Dewey,[9] and it has never been the object of a detailed and painstaking analysis, neither in Dewey's writings, nor in secondary literature.[10] Although sufficient treatment of this issue would require an entire paper, I will nonetheless attempt to reconstruct some specific features which connote Dewey's original understanding of interests, and which could help us in clarifying some aspects of the 'Ndrangheta expansion in Northern Italy.

First of all, according to Dewey, interests represent a motivational embodied component of human behavior; they select opportunities in the environment and they direct attention and practice – for instance, he defines interests as "organizations of desires" (Dewey, 1939, p. 240). However, they are not purely subjective. As witnessed by their Latin etymology, they take place "between" people, and not simply in the actor's brain:

The word 'interest' suggests in a forcible way the active connection between personal activity and the conditions that must be taken into account in the theory of valuation. Even in etymology it indicates something in which both a person and surrounding conditions participate in intimate connection with one another. In naming this something that occurs between them it names a transaction. It points to an activity which takes effect through the mediation of external conditions. (Dewey, 1939, pp. 205- 206)

Secondly, Dewey refers to interests both in a "psychological" sense – interests as "attention", as "being interested in"– and in a sociological sense – group interests, economic interests, political interests, and so on. But what is interesting – no pun intended – is that he sometimes employs the two meanings in the same context. Again, in *Theory of Valuation,* after defining interests as the active connection between personal activity and surrounding conditions, he suddenly refers to interests in the economic and sociological sense:

When we think, for example, of the interest of any particular group, say the bankers' interest, the trade-union interest, or the interest of a political machine, we think not of mere states of mind but of the group as a pressure group having organized channels in which it directs action to obtain and make secure conditions that will produce specified consequences (Dewey, 1939, pp. 206).

We see the same reasoning at work in *Democracy and Education,* in which the existence of a common interest in a democratic society consists in the fact that individuals are "interested, and chiefly interested upon the whole, in entering into the activities of others and taking part in conjoint and cooperative doings" (Dewey, 1916, p. 29).

The coexistence of the two meanings does not necessarily imply a contradiction. Rather, it would seem to indicate that the sociological dimension of interest is deeply entangled with the psychological one: there can be no self/group/private/public interests, unless people are interested, are attentive, are captured by some activity. In this sense, Dewey may represent a sort of third way , beyond the utilitarian reduction of interest to self-interest, and the objectivist conception of class interests advanced by Marxism. On the one hand, it allows us to criticize the utilitarian idea, according to which individuals are moved by a set of undisputable subjective psychological preferences, which constitute their self-interest.[11] On the other hand, Dewey can help us understand that group interests[12] – e.g. class interests – become objective, only insofar as they are incorporated into the flesh and mind of people. In this way, Dewey's theory of interest seems compatible with Thompson's analysis of the formation of

[8] For a general introduction to these lectures, see Frega & Gronda (2015).
[9] It is fair to note that the concept of interest is often sketched and underdeveloped. In fact it often works as a sort of "proto concept". See Swedborg (2005).
[10] As a matter of fact, some aspects of the deweyan notion of interests have already been explicitly discussed. See Jonas (2011) on the pedagogic concept of interest in Dewey, and Ryder (2013) on Dewey and common interests.
[11] Dewey (2015). On the history of interest an self-interest, see Hirschman (1977).
[12] On Dewey's theory of groups, see Frega (2016).

the English working class: there is no working class, and there are no class interests, unless a group of social actors contribute actively to the formation and the definition of their identity as class, and of their collective interests (Thompson 1963).

Thirdly, interests entertain a dialectical and ongoing relationship with evaluations. Specifically, interests can be questioned and reshaped by evaluation in the face of problems. When something gets broken between people and their environment, people and other people, and between a person and herself, interests can be reshaped and re-discussed by means of evaluation. This re-shaping is by definition neither merely affective, nor merely cognitive. It is a synthetic gesture, as Giovanni Maddalena (2015) would say, condensing the emotional, the practical and the cognitive dimension.

From this point of view, it becomes clear that interests are not static and predetermined, as presupposed by culturalist approaches. Rather, they emerge from – and are reshaped by – mutual and intersubjective interactions and evaluations. This resphaping is not only quantitative re-negotiation –every actor renounces a part of her interest– but also qualitative: it can cause new interests to arise. In Mary Park Follett's terms: The exchange of interests is not always a matter of domination or compromise. It can also become an opportunity for integration. I will come back to Follett's position in the next paragraph.

Given their programmatic underestimation of this pragmatic dimension, culturalist approaches are forced to rely on mysterious mechanisms – such as "contagion". Conversely, if we apply this perspective to the case of the expansion of 'Ndrangheta into northern Italy, we can grasp the interactive character of this processes in a more articulated way. This escalation has been made possible, as suggested by the example we proposed before, by means of a series of interactions and transactions which cannot be accounted for by postulating the total passivity of one or more of these agents.

**4. Interest, reconstruction, asymmetry**

However, the application of this deweyan conception of interest to organized crime seems to be problematic. In fact, Dewey's use of the concept of interest explicitly stresses the intersubjective, reciprocal and cooperative dimension of human action. But could it also take into account asymmetrical relationships, such as relationships of power, which are of course a crucial dimension in criminal activities? Does this approach simply ignore power, violence and intimidation, in favor of an over pacific interpretation of mafia?

We touch here upon a delicate point, namely the capacity of a deweyan approach — or more generally of pragmatism — to deal with asymmetrical[13] relationships of power. In this regard, Dewey's underestimation of this kind of relationship has often been underlined. According to Richard Bernstein, "at times in his reliance on metaphors of harmony and organic unity, Dewey underestimates the conflict, dissonance, and asymmetrical power relations that disrupt the 'harmonious whole' "(Bernstein, 1998, p. 149). I consider this to be a reasonable criticism to pragmatism. Pragmatist authors were perfectly aware of the conflicting nature of social life. At the same time, they decided to focus on cooperation, reconstruction and continuity, rather than on violence, destruction and domination. This legitimate meliorist choice clearly implies the risk of leaving the big picture of society incomplete.

That said, the ubiquity of interaction cannot be simply considered as the naïve consequence of the alleged over-optimism of a Dewey-inspired approach. This aspect has also been stressed by celebrated and heterogeneous perspectives in social theory. Both Anthony Giddens' concept of the "dialectic of domination" (Giddens, 1984) and Michel Foucault's analyses of the coexisting processes of *assujettissement* – that is, of subjection - and *subjectivation* – e.g. the

[13] On asymmetry, see Scillitani (2011).

creation of a new resisting identity of the dominated – (Foucault, 1982) show that even relationships of power cannot be conceived without presupposing a certain degree of mutual interaction. More specifically, and returning to the issue at hand, the emergence of a new interest by means of a mutual interactive relationship seems to be possible even in a deeply asymmetrical relationship. I would like to test this possibility by discussing an empirical case of extortion, that is, an explicit power relation.

In Milan, near the San Siro stadium, there are some food kiosks. The owner of one of these kiosks is approached by some men connected to Pepé Flachi, an important criminal hailing from Reggio Calabria. These men ask the kiosk owner for a payoff--that is, money in exchange for 'protection'. This man "agrees", so to speak, and thus begins a relationship with these criminal subjects. Later, a new kiosk opens nearby – this is a false one, opened by policemen as cover for an investigation. The man under extortion, the "passive victim", goes to the new competitor, claiming he has a monopoly in that part of the city, and that the new kiosk must close. When the fake sandwich seller – in fact, a policeman – refuses to close, the kiosk owner threatens him: if he doesn't close his kiosk, than his mafia colleagues will come, and will close the kiosk using their own methods.[14]

How should we interpret this episode? According to a culturalist perspective, the kiosk owner appears to be the victim of a sort of Stockholm syndrome. Subjected to the bullying and arrogant behavior of the mafia members, the kiosk's owner becomes one of them. The contagious mafia habit spreads by means of asymmetrical relationships, in which the weak actor identifies himself with the strong one.

However, there is something more going on. If we confine our attention to identification or imitation processes, we risk missing some parts of the bigger picture. When the kiosk's owner claims his monopoly in that territory, he is not simply identifying himself with mafia actors. In fact, the opening of the new kiosk does not necessarily go against mafia interests. For instance, a new kiosk could also represent a new source of extortion, and then of income. Therefore, the kiosk owner has not identified himself with the gang's interests. On the contrary, he expresses a new interest, and asks for it to be respected both by the new – fake – sandwich seller, and by the mafia clan. In virtue of the relationships they have created, the criminals must help him in realizing and protecting this interest. Therefore, there is not just a simple identification: the criminal gang and the kiosk owner are involved in a an asymmetrical but somehow reciprocal transaction.

The interest in the monopoly emerges then from this interaction. But is it an "interest" in Dewey's sense? Does this episode match with the three features of a deweyan conception of interest that have been singled out before?

First of all, there is a motivational factor and a factor of attention at work. This new interest pushes the kiosk owner to act in a specific direction, to select certain aspects of the situation instead of others, it captures his attention, it pushes him to go and discuss with other social actors in order to achieve his goal.

But the interest of monopoly is not purely a psychological one. In fact – and here comes the second point – monopoly is also a socially defined and organized practice. Monopoly means the exclusive control of a commodity or service in a particular market, and thus implies the absence of competition in this regard. It is a social institution, provided with a socially shared meaning. Therefore, the interest of monopoly is here pursued by means of a deep entanglement between the psychological and the sociological dimension. There is no socially instituted monopoly, unless someone is "interested", motivated, in realizing and protecting this monopoly. At the same time, this motivation and attention is shaped by the consolidated social meaning of "monopoly".

[14] The episode is taken from Storti, Dagnes, Pellegrino & Sciarrone (2014).

Thirdly, this new interest is the upshot of an evaluative process. It is a reflective reconstruction of the means-ends relationship when confronting a new situation. It is an interest which can be realistically pursued given the means provided by the ongoing new transaction with mafia actors. Conversely, the availability of new means makes possible the emergence of new ends. As shown by Joas, Dewey radically overcomes the mainstream dualistic version of the means-ends relation, which is shared by both individualistic utilitarian approaches, and ultra-culturalist ones. Neither purely instrumental means nor fixed and indisputable ends exist. The configuration of ends and means can be reconstructed by means of evaluation (Joas, 1996).

I would like to open a brief parenthesis to imagine how something similar to the means/ends entanglement could also be applied to the relation between demand and supply. The kiosk owner´s case could be understood indeed as a typical instance of demand for private protection, which is according to Varese a typical activity characterizing the expansion of mafia beyond its original boundaries. In regard to the example under discussion, Varese´s approach is not at all incompatible with the approach here proposed, provided that we refuse to interpret the relation between demand and supply in dichotomic terms. We can paraphrase Dewey (1896), by saying that in many cases the supply is not a mere answer to the demand. The two poles are not two completely separated entities, accidentally connected by a one-sided causal relation. Rather, it often happens that the demand is "into" the supply, as long as the supply is "into" the demand.

This entanglement is clearly evident in the example under discussion. On the one hand, the demand for protection does not emerge spontaneously. Rather, it is prompted by a threatening offering of violence — the demand is "into" the supply. On the other hand, the kiosk owner has changed his request from that of personal protection to the protection of his monopoly, thus modifying what is being supplied — the supply is "into" the demand. Of course, there can be cases in which the demand is causally predominant over the supply, and vice versa. However, these cases should neither be generalized nor substantialized. As shown in the case of the kiosk owner, these preponderances might qualify a certain phase in the developing transaction, rather than representing the static identifying label of the interaction "in itself". Likewise means and ends, demand and supply often appear as two phases of the same, wider "coordination".[15]

But let's return to the thread of the discussion. The new interest of the monopoly appears then to be the result of an evaluative process. Of course, from a deweyan point of view we could criticize the quality of the kiosk owner's evaluation; its short-sightedness; its incapacity to clearly foresee all the import of the consequences produced by the attempt of realizing this interest – these consequences are negative both for society, and for the kiosk's owner, who will be incriminated by the fake newcomer, who is in fact a policeman; its incompatibility with "common interest". I am quite sure that Dewey would consider this as a bad evaluation. However, a bad evaluation is still an evaluation, and not necessarily a totally unintelligent, purely instinctive, purely irrational judgment or attitude, completely devoid of cognitive and rational content.

To sum up, this episode is enlightening: the kiosk's owner advances a claim, an interest in monopoly, which did not exist before the interaction with the mafia men. This interaction is of course asymmetrical, it is a power relationship where roles and legal and moral responsibilities can be clearly defined. But still, there is room for some kind of interaction, and for the emerging of a new interest from the development of this relationship.

Of course, this does not imply that every social interaction involves an equal degree and quality of reciprocity and cooperation. In this regard, a distinction

[15] Dewey (1896). For a brilliant discussion of the origin of this idea of coordination in Dewey's thought, see Garrison (2003).

may be shaped after Mary Parker Follett´s theory of conflict. According to Follett, one of the key purposes of democracy consists in dealing with conflicts. Conflict is here conceived "as the appearance of difference, difference of opinions, of interests" (Follett, 2003, p. 1). Conflictual differences of interests may be dealt with according to three different strategies: domination, compromise/negotiation and integration. Both domination and negotiation take for granted the nature of the existing interests, and presuppose the background of a 0 sum situation: the gain from one part presupposes the loss on the other, and vice versa. In the case of domination, one interest suppresses the other by means of violence; in the case of negotiation, a compromise is achieved, by means of a distribution of losses between the two parts (Frega, 2016, p. 89). Differently from domination and negotiation, integration involves an experimental and creative process, whose results are in principle unpredictable. Integration causes something new to emerge: a new situation, a new interaction, a new interest.

Follett´s useful distinction is compatible with the Dewey-inspired approach we have developed under two conditions. First, these differences have to be understood as differences of degree. There is nothing like a pure relation of domination, a pure compromise, a pure integration. In this regard, hybrids represent the rule, rather than the exception. This idea is the corollary of the previously mentioned assumption that reciprocity and interaction are ubiquitous. Second, these distinctions often represent different phases of the same interactive process. Following our example, the interaction between the ´Ndrangheta clan and the kiosk owner starts as a domination strategy: protection is imposed under the threat of violence. Successively, a new interest emerges from the interaction: the interest in monopoly. This novelty requires a sort of integration into the exchange of interests. Of course, it is not a fully developed and rich integrative process: the shadow of violence always involves a limitation of possibilities. However, as we have seen, something novel has occurred, and novelty necessarily involves a certain degree of integration.

**Conclusions**

A deweyan conception of interest appears to be a flexible and suitable conceptual tool, which allows us to overcome the rigidities and tendency towards over-simplification of culturalist approaches to organized crime, and specifically in our case, to the expansion of 'Ndrangheta. Of course, this is not an attempt to deny the import of cultural factors, which are at the core of 'Ndrangheta's identity. But the role played by cultural factors can only be understood by examining their impact on the social interaction actually occurring, rather than considering it as a sort of genetic programming. Even in the embryonic version here proposed, a Deweyan conception of interests seems to do justice to the fact that the snake of interaction and transaction, to paraphrase William James, can be observed everywhere, even within power relationships. Following this approach, it seems productive to deal with the 'Ndrangheta expansion by singling out and understanding which interactions and transactions make their activities possible, instead of leaning on one-sided, and sometimes exoteric explanations.

Of course, some aspects of this approach will need to be further developed. For instance, it could be contested that this approach provides an excessively intellectualist understanding of criminal activities such as extortion. Whereas a similar exchange of interests could account for interactions between criminal actors and resourceful economic and political actors, it does not work in the case of extortion perpetrated against weaker subjects. In the latter case, a crucial role seems to be played by emotions such as fear and angst, rather than by reflexive evaluation. [16]

[16] I would like to thank Carlin Romano for making this remark.

I fully recognize the value of this criticism. The role of emotions in the interactions characterizing mafia activities is, to my knowledge, a totally unexplored issue, ripe for discussion and analysis.

However, I tend to consider this issue as a completion, rather than as an alternative to the approach here proposed. Rather than postulating the opposition between evaluation and emotion, it is more promising to analyze the mutual influences between these two dimensions. In which way is the interaction between different interests influenced by emotions? Is evaluation the simple result of an emotion-prompting behavior — e.g. threatening —, or is it a way of managing emotional behaviors? Do criminal threats prompt the same emotional reactions in different cultural milieus? Is the production of a certain emotion — fear, anxiety, uncertainty, paranoia — a service that mafia could offer to economic and political actors all around the world? These are the questions that can only be sketched here, and they will have to be explored in a further work.

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**PHILOSOPHY AS CULTURAL POLITICS**
**IN RORTY, SHUSTERMAN, AND PRAGMATISM**

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ABSTRACT: In this paper, I will focus on the broader sense of *cultural politics*. First I will offer a theoretical background to the topic in the form of a short summary of my social philosophy. Secondly, I will examine Rorty's usage of philosophy as cultural politics. Thirdly I will show Shusterman's criticism on Rorty and his own interpretation of philosophy as cultural politics. In the end, I will examine the relationship between pragmatism and cultural politics in general.

What is *cultural politics*? There are several possibilities to define the concept. I am focusing here only on two of them: a narrow one and a broad one. According to the *narrow*, possible definition, cultural politics is a territory within politics, where professionals intentionally direct, influence and shape culture with political and (with politically saturated) cultural tools and methods.

Cultural politics has not always been on the stage. It is a historical product. Even the so called modern states started to influence the cultural field only in the 20th century. From a historical point of view, it seems to me, that Hitler's empire, "Das Dritte Reich" recognized first that it is worth establishing an official institution for the political direction of culture, including the whole media. As Richard Shusterman wrote it in his book, *Thinking through the Body* (2015): "In 2009, France proudly celebrated fifty years of establishing what they regard as the first ministry of culture in Europe (founded by Andre Malraux), although they should perhaps be reminded of Nazi Germany's ministry of Volksaufklärung und Propaganda, which effectively controlled and deployed all of the arts and culture to glorify that state and promote its ideology and fierce loyalty to it." (TTB 168)

We need only a short check in the biggest library of the world, and the internet proves this fact. One of the several German websites says that:

> "Das Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda nannte man schlicht Propaganda-ministerium. Es war sehr wichtig und wurde schon Mitte März 1933 - also kurz nach der Machtübernahme durch die Nationalsozialisten - errichtet. Das Propagandaministerium steuerte die öffentliche Meinung. Es stand unter der Leitung von Joseph Goebbels, der zum Reichsleiter für Propaganda ernannt wurde. Was waren die Aufgaben des Propaganda-ministeriums? Es legte fest, welche Nachrichten im Radio gesendet wurden, welche Informationen in der Zeitung zu lesen waren oder welche Filme gezeigt und Bücher veröffentlicht wurden. Damit lenkte das Propagandaministerium die öffentliche Meinung und beeinflusste das Denken und Handeln vieler Menschen. Nicht nur Presse, Rundfunk, Film und Theater wurden kontrolliert, der gesamte Bereich der Kunst unterstand dem Propagandaministerium. Auch Feiertage und Staatsfeiern wurden durch das Propaganda-ministerium geplant."[1]

The *broad* definition of cultural politics starts at the concept of "culture." If we understand "culture" (on the basis of a wide meaning of cultural studies) *as the whole of the material and intellectual values*, then we can say that every creation, occupation, and interpretation of these values belongs to cultural politics. These activities, namely, are connected to the community power, which is the essential part of politics. *Every significant element of culture is saturated with politics that is it belongs to cultural politics.*

In my paper, I will focus on the broader sense of cultural politics. First I will offer a theoretical background to the topic in the form of a short summary of my social philosophy. Secondly, I will examine Rorty's usage of philosophy as cultural politics. Thirdly I will show Shusterman's criticism on Rorty and his own interpretation of philosophy as cultural politics. In the end, I will examine the relationship between pragmatism and cultural politics in general.

[1] http://www.zeitklicks.de/nationalsozialismus/zeitklicks/zeit/propaganda/die-institutionen/reichsministerium-fuer-volksaufklaerung-und-propaganda/
- Downloaded on April 9th, 2016. (What is more, you can read similar explanation in Horkheimer-Adorno: *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2002, 115-121 and 150.)

**I. The Socio-Philosophical Background of Cultural Politics**

Plenty of different social philosophies were created during the long history of philosophy from Plato (or even from Socrates) to Rorty and further. My approach is based mostly on pragmatism and systems theory, for I handle as an evident claim that everything is relational and exists as a system in our world. Not only the solar system and the health-care or educational systems but the simplest things like a table, a chair or a car. A car has, for example, its main parts (engine, running gear, bodywork, electronic system) and its elements, which are also systems with further parts and elements. *The system is an organized whole of relations and components (parts, elements), where the whole has always new quality comparing to its parts and elements.* When a system emerges, it means that a new entity was born. There is a correlative conceptual triad here, which is made up of the system, part, and element, where the analysis (concepts, perspective, etc.) of every detail depends on the system we have chosen as our starting point.

If we focus now on society, which is one of the two main systems of our experienced world (the other one is obviously nature), then it seems to be evident that it develops and changes historically and has a structural and a dynamic dimension as every system. According to my minimalist definition, *society is always a whole of relations made up of rationally acting people and their reifications*. If we concentrate now on the structural side, we can say that its parts are the – historically emerging and changing – social subsystems and its elements are the human individuals, who still have social features. *Social subsystems* (economy, politics, law, morals, arts and sciences, philosophy, religion and everyday life – nine systems in the modern societies) *are those, relatively separated parts of the society. In the social subsystems, usually groups of professionally trained people satisfy special social needs with their special social activities, tools, and technologies.* A social subsystem emerges, when a new social need is born. In the spirit of Thoreau's simplicity-principle, we can say that there are four main rules related to the general connections of these subsystems:

– *Every subsystem affects all the other ones in some way, but the economy is primus inter pares (first among equals)* because economy and politics together determine the type, that is the particular structures and features of the actual social formation.

– *Social subsystems do not determine each other directly but through their particular functional laws.* Every social subsystem has namely its special reifications and functions, its special structure and dynamic. As systems, they have their special quality and laws of function.

– These features give the basis of their *relative autonomy*. Social subsystems have relative autonomy, and *the more indirectly a social subsystem is connected to the economy, the greater relative autonomy it has.* The most direct connections we can find in the economy-politics, economy-law and economy-everyday life relationships and the most indirect connections are in the economy-arts and economy-philosophy relationships.

– *The principle of unequal development follows from the different strength and type of this autonomy.* For example, this is one of the reasons for the excellence of the so-called German Idealism in the 19$^{th}$ century, when England and France were much more developed countries, than the German territories. We can also mention the avant-garde art movements within the framework of the Soviet-Russian civil war between the years of 1917-1922.

I skip here the analysis of the society's dynamic side and focus now on the topic of social consciousness. *Social consciousness is a consciousness shared by individuals of a society, and it is the intellectual side of a social*

*subsystem.* There is an abundance of articles and books, where you can find a detailed description of this topic, but we need to know here and now only the simplest features of social consciousness. That is why I emphasize only two things:

– firstly, social consciousness has at least two levels: an everyday-life level and a theoretical level (see e. g. everyday life political knowledge and political science; everyday life moral sense and thinking and ethics, etc.); and

– secondly, every social subsystem has its social consciousness on both levels, except economy and everyday life, because they do not have their social consciousness on the theoretical level, but other forms of social consciousness analyze them (economics, sociology, philosophy, psychology, ethics, etc.).

Nevertheless, the most important social phenomenon for us is *ideology*, which is a special form of social consciousness. *Ideology (including its political type) can be defined as such a form of social consciousness, which is always achieving particular community interests since social groups can pursue their goals much more effectively if they posit them in a conscious form.* However, ideology does not have its social subsystem (this is its special feature), as the other forms of social consciousness do. (For example, a scientific theory presupposes the scientific laboratories, institutions, networks, etc. that is *science* as its own social subsystem; theology has the churches, different scriptures, rites, etc. that is *religion* as its own social subsystem, and we could continue…). *Ideology battens rather on the other forms of the social consciousness.* That is why almost every form of the social consciousness (art, religion, law, etc.) has ideological, political content. (It is worth emphasizing here that *scientific activity in itself* is an exception because it must be truth-oriented, but ideology is always interest-oriented.)

Philosophy as one of the constitutive parts of culture is also predetermined by the possibility of having ideological and political contents because it has the ability to bear such kind of contents. Ideology battens on philosophy, and in most cases, it is really filled up with ideological, political contents. It means that artworks, theology, law, ethics, etc. and even philosophy always have some kind of ideological dimension. *It follows from this that if we speak about philosophy as cultural politics, we only use and apply consciously that feature of philosophy, which already belongs to it inherently.*

**II. Rorty understood philosophy as cultural politics**

It is well-known that Richard Rorty has started his career as an analytic philosopher. However, in my opinion, he has realized not only a *pragmatist turn* but a little bit later a *political turn* as well. Rorty's pragmatist turn happened with his *Mirror* book in 1979, but his political turn took place ten years later with his *Contingency* book (1989).

What is the essence of his political turn? Rorty has changed not simply his philosophical focus from the analytic problems to the pragmatist problems, but his whole textualist neopragmatism became saturated with politics. As we know, he was not only an academic professor but also a left-wing, American patriot, who has regarded *liberal democracy* as his most important goal in his late philosophy. No doubt that his late neopragmatism became more and more aestheticized (intellectual history as the history of metaphors, self as self-creation, etc.), but this change did not destroy the dominance of the political dimension in his late works.

If we examine the whole story from this angle, then *Rorty's interpretation of philosophy as cultural politics is not simply an interesting evaluation of philosophy, but it is rather an obvious conclusion of his consequent political and philosophical standpoint.* Although Dewey took part in different political organizations, movements, and protests, Rorty was the first pragmatist philosopher, who has interpreted philosophy as cultural politics *officially*

that is in his philosophical texts. I am persuaded that there are several proofs of Rorty's steadfast political-philosophical views in his late philosophy, but I want to mention here only five of them. On the basis of the above-mentioned conclusion, *these proofs* are *Rorty's reasons at the same time, why he has used and interpreted philosophy as cultural politics*. Let us see them in chronological order:

– Firstly we have to look at his *Contingency* book (CIS, 1989). It is beyond question (as I have mentioned) that the late Rorty's philosophy was saturated with politics. His main political goal was to support the realization of his liberal utopia. This liberal democracy was not identical with any of the existing democratic societies, and Rorty believed that liberal ironists (a new type of people created by Rorty) could only realize this society, which was mentioned by him as one the future possibilities of humanity;

– Secondly (ORT, 1991), Rorty published already in 1991 an article, and its title speaks already for itself: "The Priority of Democracy to Philosophy." Rorty has mentioned here Dewey's opinion, and he has agreed to it:

> *„For Dewey, communal and public disenchantment is the price we pay for individual and private spiritual liberation*, the kind of liberation that Emerson thought characteristically American. *Dewey was as well aware as Weber that there is a price to be paid, but he thought it well worth paying*. He assumed that no good achieved by earlier societies would be worth recapturing *if the price were a diminution in our ability to leave people alone*, to let them try out their private visions of perfection in peace. He (Dewey) admired the American habit of giving democracy priority over philosophy..." (ORT 194, Emphasis added: Kremer.).

– Thirdly (AOC, 1998), Rorty published his political testament in 1998: it is *Achieving Our Country*. Here Rorty has defended the old, Reformist Left (Dewey was part of it, too) and criticized the new, Cultural Left, plus defined democracy as social justice and human liberty (cf. AOC, 45).

– Fourthly (PSH, 1999), he has understood the usefulness of philosophy exclusively in its social usage. In his touching biography, "Trotsky and the Wild Orchids" he wrote (in 1993) the next sentences:

> "Since that initial disillusion (which climaxed about the time I left Chicago to get a Ph.D. in philosophy at Yale), *I have spent 40 years looking for a coherent and convincing way of formulating my worries about what, if anything, philosophy is good for*. My starting point was the discovery of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, a book which I read as saying: granted that philosophy is just a matter of out-redescribing the last philosopher, the cunning of reason can make use even of this sort of competition. It can use it to weave the conceptual fabric of a freer, better, more just society. If philosophy can be, at best, only what Hegel called 'it's time held in thought,' still, that might be enough. *For by thus holding one's time, one might do what Marx wanted done – change the world. So even if there were no such thing as 'understanding the world' in the Platonic sense – an understanding from a position outside of time and history – perhaps there was still a social use for my talents, and for the study of philosophy."* (PSH, 10-11; this biography was written in 1993. Emphasis added: Kremer.)

– Fifthly (PCP, 2007), Rorty has given a more detailed explanation of his standpoint of 1993 in his posthumous volume (published in 2007), where already the volume's title expresses his opinion: *Philosophy as Cultural Politics* (2007). What is more, Rorty put an article first, which title has only strengthened his view: "Cultural politics and the question of the existence of God" (2002). In this article Rorty wrote that:

> *„I want to argue that cultural politics should replace ontology, and also that whether it should or not is itself a matter of cultural politics*. Before turning to the defense of these theses, however, I want to underline the importance of such issues for philosophers who, like myself, are sympathetic to William James' pragmatism. James agreed with John Stuart Mill that the right thing to do, and a fortiori the right belief to acquire, is always the one that will do most for *human happiness*. So he advocated a utilitarian ethics of belief. James often comes close to saying *that all questions, including questions about what exists, boil down to questions about what will help create a better world*". (PCP 5; Emphasis added: Kremer.)

Rorty has integrated very well his two main standpoints (public and private) in the position of cultural politics. It has offered a good middle position for him.

**III. Shusterman and Cultural Politics**

Richard Shusterman has distinguished three different types of cultural politics. In his paper on Rorty, "Pragmatism and Cultural Politics: From Textualism to Somaesthetics" (TTB, 2012, 166-198) Shusterman speaks about: (a) state cultural politics; (b) cultural politics as identity politics; (c) and cultural politics on the level of mankind.

Cultural politics as (a) state cultural politics means what we have already mentioned above. It "concerns the politics that a government pursues with respect to culture in the social field over which it excercises political or institutional control" (TTB 167).

The second form of cultural politics (b) is identity politics, which "dominates American discussion of this concept (especially since the 1990s), where such terms as "identity politics," "multiculturalism," and the "culture wars" have played a significant role. Here, specific (most frequently subordinate) cultural groups engage in political activities of a distinctly cultural form in order to advance not only their cultural aims but also their political and social status. *Greater cultural recognition is sought as an effective means to achieve higher social standing or increased political power*" (TTB 168-169; Emphasis added: Kremer.).

The third form of cultural politics (c) „may be distinguished that is not a matter of official government policy, nor is it narrowly focused on issues of identity politics and the advancement of specific, identifiable groups within society. Instead, it aims more generally to improve humankind's ongoing conversation about how to improve our lives and practices. It does this by criticizing and reconstructing established ways of living, talking, acting, and thinking, but also by proposing new ways of life; new practices and disciplines for improved experience or performance; new ideas of social life and community; new vocabularies, techniques, and roles for self-realization and ethical practice." (TTB 169)

As Shusterman wrote, Rorty refused the first interpretation of cultural politics, and formulated his texts on the third level: "I now turn to Richard Rorty (1931-2007), who essentially ignores the first notion, while criticizing the second and advocating the third." (TTB 169)

Shusterman has always criticized Rorty since he did not want to establish a philosophical movement and institution for promoting his philosophical goals,[2] as we can see it for example in the case of the Frankfurt School (*Institut für Sozialforschung*, 1929). Or, we can mention even our case that is the case of pragmatism (the *Center for Dewey Studies*; the *Central European Pragmatist Forum*, the *Nordic Pragmatism Network*, the *European Pragmatism Association*, etc.). Being a consequent person, Shusterman has established an institution (the *Center for Body, Mind, and Culture* at Florida Atlantic University) and organizes a movement continuously for promoting his somaesthetics.

If we focus now on Shusterman's own version of cultural politics, we can say that it is nothing else, but his *somaesthetics as cultural politics*. This can be proved easily by some sentences taken from his *Pragmatist Aesthetics* (published in 1992) or from his recent book, *Thinking Through The Body* (2012). Shusterman's general theoretical standpoint can be described as a philosophical aestheticism saturated with democratic political intentions. He obviously uses his philosophy (as Rorty also did) for supporting those political ideas, attitudes, and activities, which are present and dominant in liberal democracies. Cultural politics is manifested in his case in a naturalistic somaesthetics, which is colored by a meliorist strive of pragmatism to democratize society as much as possible (cf. PA, Ch 7.). Shusterman defines the essence of his somaesthetics as follows:

[2] As we can see it, for example, in chapter 8th of his TTB: "Pragmatism and Cultural Politics: From Textualism to Somaesthetics" (TTB, 2012, 166-198)

> *„The same meliorist orientation shapes my project of somaesthetics*, which (…) can be briefly defined as *the critical meliorative study of the experience and use of one's body as a locus of sensory-aesthetic appreciation (aesthesis) and creative self-fashioning*. In examining the forms of knowledge and disciplines of practice that structure such somatic care or can improve it, *somaesthetics involves the critical study of society's somatic values and comportment*, so as to redirect our body consciousness and practice away from the oppressively narrow and injurious stereotypes of somatic success that pervade our advertising culture and to focus instead on exploring more rewarding visions of somatic value and fulfillment and better methods for attaining them." (R. Shusterman: "Pragmatism and Cultural Politics: From Textualism to Somaesthetics," in: *Thinking through the Body. Essays in Somaesthetics.* Cambridge University Press: New York, 2012, p. 182-183. Emphasis added: Kremer.)

Nevertheless, Shusterman does not want to use philosophy, especially his somaesthetics in explicit political discussions, since he likes to emphasize the beauty in our life much more than power. What is more, he does not even want to use *the therapeutic function* of philosophy as Wittgenstein did. Shusterman does not want namely to interpret philosophy as therapy, that is as a cure of our manipulated everyday life since he believes (as he mentioned it to me in Wroclaw in 2014) that people like much more to see the beauties of life and to hear about the good phenomena.

*Summarizing his view, we can say that Shusterman uses philosophy also as cultural politics, but he does this in the field of aesthetics and by the help of a professional institution and a somaesthetic movement.* It follows from this that Shusterman's own interpretation of cultural politics (cf. TTB, chapter 8th; and PA, chapter 7th) is very similar to Rorty's one (cultural politics, which has a strong ethical and aesthetic dimension). However, there are also some differences: the institution, the movement, and first of all Shusterman's somaesthetics, plus he does not take part directly in political, ideological discussions.

**IV. Philosophy as Cultural Politics and Pragmatism**

What is the broader context if we speak about "philosophy as cultural politics"? For we do not have a provable, absolute, metaphysical framework, we have to set up a narrative framework.

What is the narrative framework like? Narrative frameworks can be very different, since they may come from a subjective approach to the problem; they may also come from political, ideological or even from artistic approaches. For I do not want to write a poem, drama or a novel, I have to choose a logically provable approach, and this is *interpretation*. Every narration is an interpretation, which has its own rules.

What kind of rules are these? I do not want to go into the very details of the theory of interpretation, but it is obvious and logical (Gadamer wrote the same) that we have to see and always sketch *the interpretive horizon* of the particular problem, which is to be interpreted. What is *the broader context* in our case? It is nothing but the interpretive triangle of culture, politics and philosophy.

What is culture? What is politics? What is philosophy? Obviously, we look at them now on the most general level.

*Culture, as I have already mentioned, is a whole of the material and intellectual values.* Its etymological root is the Latin word "colo," "colere" with the original meanings of "till" and "cultivate." Its meaning developed through complicated paths of the intellectual history, and in the 18$^{th}$-19$^{th}$ centuries it ("culture") became a "buzzword" together with the word "society." Nevertheless, I have to remark that "society" is a broader concept than "culture," because the latter one also contains those human activities and their reifications, which are *not* values. These are the activities and happenings that *do not create value*: f. e. war, murder, social results of natural disasters (tsunami, earthquake, forest fire, etc.), disease, poverty, etc.

Politics is essentially connected to power. *Politics is namely such an interest-directed, voluntary activity, which aims at taking, keeping or influencing community power*. I have to emphasize that politics is *not* identical to the political system of society. "Politics" is a broader concept than "the political system." Politics was born together with mankind, but the political system is much younger since it emerged only in the bourgeois revolutions of the 17th-19th centuries.

Last but not least, we have to define philosophy. *Philosophy is the human being's theoretical self-reflection, which is always historically determined.* That is we always want to understand ourselves as human beings in the world (not as individuals, because it happens in our world-view), and this theoretical self-reflection always contains something from our actual socio-historical circumstances. *That is why I have already mentioned that philosophy has some ideological content in every form.* (There are, of course, several different and possible definitions of philosophy, but I am convinced that this summary of philosophical thinking is acceptable as a minimalist definition.)

It is important to remark that "philosophy" is the variable part of the expression ("philosophy as cultural politics") since we could also speak about "art as cultural politics," "religion as cultural politics" or "morale as cultural politics". The reason for this possibility is the above-mentioned phenomenon that every form of the social consciousness (except the scientific activity in itself) not only can, but usually really bears ideological content. These are parts of our culture and can function as cultural politics because of their ideological content.

If we look at the relationship between philosophy and politics from the point of view of the latter one, we can speak about two main alternatives:

*1. Philosophy as an ivory tower.* Mostly metaphysicians and some analytic philosophers (f. e. Carnap and his followers, etc.) belong to this group. The Ivory Tower Philosophers do not want to deal with the actual political questions and historical problems. They are interested in the metaphysical substance of the world, or/and in the theological, logical, epistemological problems and do not think that history can change this substance (which can also be imagined as the ultimate structure of the universe).

*2. Philosophy as political activism.* (Marx and the Marxists, Dewey, Lenin, some of the Frankfurt School's philosophers, Sartre, Foucault, etc.) The Political Activist Philosopher takes part in the real politics as a philosopher and formulates clear standpoints in actual political debates.

Nevertheless, we can guess that there is also *a middle position between these extreme poles, and this is philosophy as cultural politics.* Positivists, pragmatists – usually those philosophers belong to here that are practice-oriented. The Cultural Politics Philosopher participates in ideological and social philosophical debates with his or her philosophical lectures, papers, and books, but not with his or her actions in direct political debates!

Before I apply this interpretive framework to pragmatism, I have to summarize those features of this form of philosophical thinking, which are decisive from our topic's point of view. These features are that *pragmatism* is

– always a form of *naturalism* and
– a *practice-oriented* (not theory-oriented) philosophical approach,
– which is also *melioristic*,
– and (in most cases) *democracy-oriented*.

*These features of pragmatism make possible to draw the conclusion that pragmatists usually cannot take the position of the Ivory Tower Philosopher. That is why most of the pragmatists choose the Political Activist Philosopher's or the Cultural Politics Philosopher's position.* Those who have more interest and energy in taking part in the real politics, evaluate philosophy as

part of their political activism. What's more, they write papers directly about particular political questions and take part in political debates. Those who do not like the noise of political battles so much usually write rather philosophical essays and leave these battles on the politicians and the people.

However it should be mentioned that the Political Activist Philosophers write mostly cultural political philosophy when they write more than political articles, and sometimes Cultural Politics Philosophers also take part in special political actions. The latter case does not often happen since the Cultural Politics Philosopher enjoys the advantages of this middle position, but *we will never have a clear-cut separation of these two types of philosophers.*

My position is cultural politics because it is a good middle position between the two extremes if somebody does not want to take part actively in direct political debates.

*Ultimately, we can say that everybody has to decide individually, what is the best for his or her personality in an existential sense.* However, although this is a question of personal decision, it is obvious that it is much easier to perform cultural politics within pragmatism, than for example in the analytic tradition.

What is more, with a final twist of my train of thought, I have to emphasize, that usually *we had already chosen a philosophical tradition for ourselves on the basis of our intentions, on the basis of our personality, before we decided on our particular philosophical behavior.*

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# I. FOOD, SEMIOTICS, SOCIETY

## JOHN DEWEY: A CULINARY PERSPECTIVE[1]

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ABSTRACT: Although John Dewey is not commonly associated with food studies, his writings are punctuated with reflection on cooking and sharing food as well as references to gastronomical experience. The American pragmatist believed that food cooking and sharing could be productively integrated into educational processes. Evern more interesting are passages of Art as Experience which refer to cooking and eating food. Examples borrowed from the realm of gastronomy often usefully illustrate Dewey's philosophical considerations and serve as models of central aesthetic categories. The paper analyses the contexts in which culinary examples are used and their consequences for the Deweyan concept of experience and perceptions of the function and status of dietary practices in culture.

*'The kitchen is not just the place where survival and pleasure are planned.*
*It is also an ideal place for training the mind.'*

Massimo Montanari,
*Let the Meatballs Rest, and Other Stories about Food and Culture*

### Teaching by cooking

Soon after moving to Chicago in 1894, thirty-five-year-old John Dewey had an opportunity to apply his theoretical insights in practice. A school whose didactic priority was learning by doing came to serve as a unique laboratory of his theories.[2]

Cooking took a pronounced position in the curriculum of Dewey's school, one reason for this being that it offered an easy way to integrate diverse disciplines of knowledge. Cooking together helped acquire, for example, knowledge of chemistry, history, botany, physics and arts.

Children of all age groups were involved in cooking. The curriculum kept changing adaptively as they grew and developed new needs. The youngest kids helped prepare lunch each week. It gave the youngsters an opportunity to work on their own, display initiative and learn independence. Older kids were eager to continue cooking together. While some of them laid the table, others prepared cocoa, for example. Still another group would write stories to be read out during the meal. The children's responsibilities included also serving the food and cleaning the table. Both girls and boys were involved in all these chores.

Cooking stimulated the children's creativity, in a broad sense of the term, and taught them planning ahead and team work. It is splendidly exemplified in a picture in which the kids stand behind each other in a row and tie each other's aprons up. Responsibility for one's particular task, the proper execution of which contributed to the success of the whole enterprise, turned into responsibility for the whole group; in this way team work promoted the immediate aim, i.e., the meal.[3] Cooking connected the public sphere (school) and the private sphere (home). It offered an opportunity to merge the two, usually separated, orders, which was Dewey's fond preoccupation. Given Dewey's famous dictum that democracy is "the idea of community life itself,"[4] it is evident that the division into the private and public spheres is only relative, and, consequently, any barriers artificially erected between the two thwart the progress of democratic processes. The same activities may belong in each of the two spheres, and associating them with one is determined not by nature, but by the totality of circumstances in which they are embedded. School, which Dewey viewed as a laboratory of democracy, should offer opportunities to cross the borderline between the private and the public. And cooking was for the American pragmatist a prototypical activity to naturally integrated the two realms.[5]

[1] The work this text was supported by the NCN grant: *Aesthetic value of food. Pragmatist Perspective*, No. 2013/11 / B / HS1 / 04176.

[2] If separated from activity, as was the case in the traditional education system, wisdom is stripped of the embodied meaning life gives to it. It becomes then an abstraction difficult to integrate with one's needs.

[3] Cf. Katherine Camp Mayhew and Anna Camp Edwards, *The Dewey School* (New York: Atherton Press, 1966), p. 299.

[4] John Dewey, *The Public and its Problems,* Athens, Ohio, Ohio University Press, 191, pp. 148.

[5] Luis Menand lists Dewey's educational experiments among the practices that have permanently transformed

Dewey's belief in the utmost importance of cooking and sharing food is reflected not only in his design of educational processes. Examples borrowed from the realm of gastronomy often usefully illustrate his philosophical considerations and serve as models of central aesthetic categories. Several passages of *Art as Experience* refer to cooking and eating food.

**The everyday and art**

The idea behind *Art as Experience* was to produce an account of how works of art are brought into being under everyday human conditions.[6] In other words, Dewey sought to develop a theory which could explain how works of art refine and intensify experience.[7] Experience is not something that merely emerges in contact with art; rather, it can be said to co-create art. The American pragmatist sets himself against the tradition which sees the subject and the object of experience as two dichotomously opposed entities. In his framework, the subject is not a passive recipient of aesthetic feelings since experience is an interaction of two parties on equal footing. Moreover, what Dewey refers to as a work of art is an outcome of this interaction rather than the starting point of the process, that is, the physical presence of an "expressive object."[8] To highlight his position, Dewey evokes culinary experiences: "As with cooking, overt, skillful action is on the side of the cook who prepares, while taste is on the side of the consumer. … The cook prepares food for the consumer and the measure of the value of what is prepared is found in consumption."[9] Art construed as experience is an outcome of interactions and mutual interdependence of action and sensation.

Our lives unfold in ongoing transmutations of our relations with the environment. They are dynamic interactions in which both parties – the human and the environment – are active agents: "All interactions that effect stability and order in the whirling flux of change are rhythms. There is ebb and flow, systole and diastole: ordered change."[10] Ordering and stabilizing are, however, only momentary. Life produces new tasks, new problems to solve, and there is no room for enduring stability in experience: "There are rhythmic beats of want and fulfillment, pulses of doing and being withheld from doing."[11] Dewey describes our lives as reiterations of loss and recovery of unity with the environment. They abound in tensions that can be alleviated, yet not by passive acceptance, but rather by development-promoting activity. Emphatically, the reinstatement of unity never entails restoring the situation from before the loss: "[I]n a growing life, the recovery is never mere return to a prior state, for it is enriched by the state of disparity and resistance through which it has successfully passed."[12] The consecutive rhythms of life lead us to successive stages of existence, where return is impossible since "[c]hanges interlock and sustain one another."[13] Nature finds itself in constant motion, permanently confronting a threat of potentially lethal chaos as "living creatures can go on living only by taking advantage of whatever order exists about them, incorporating it into themselves."[14]

**An experience/a culinary experience**

In art, life turns unexpectedly vivid and colorful while in life to transform the ordinary into the extraordinary poses a serious challenge. "Pleasures may come about through chance contact and stimulation; such pleasures

America. Cf. Luis Menand, *The Metaphysical Club. A story of Ideas in America* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2001), pp. 285-337.

[6] John Dewey, *Art as Experience*, in John Dewey, *The Later Works, 1925-1953*, vol. 10, ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2008), p. 9.

[7] J. Dewey, *Art as Experience*, p. 9.

[8] J. Dewey, *Art as Experience*, p. 96.

[9] J. Dewey, *Art as Experience*, p. 54.

[10] J. Dewey, *Art as Experience*, p. 22.

[11] J. Dewey, *Art as Experience*, p. 22.

[12] J. Dewey, *Art as Experience*, p. 19.

[13] J. Dewey, *Art as Experience*, p. 19.

[14] J. Dewey, *Art as Experience*, p. 19.

are not to be despised in a world full of pain,"[15] insists Dewey. And then, he adds: "But happiness and delight are a different sort of thing. They come to be through a fulfillment that reaches to the depths of our being – one that is an adjustment of our whole being with the conditions of existence."[16] This adjustment, while not being a subordination, is an effect of a momentary order, of attunement of the human and the environment in the process of "active and alert commerce with the world."[17]

Experience is a continuous process, but its composition and intensity vary. The moment when a new order is forged, when a culmination and amalgamation of all elements of experience is effected, is the most intense moment of existence. It is in such moments that the aesthetic may emerge. The American pragmatist believes that "the esthetic is no intruder in experience from without, whether by way of idle luxury or transcendent ideality, but that it is the clarified and intensified development of traits that belong to every normally complete experience."[18]

Aesthetic experience is a unique pattern of all other experiences; it is pure experience "freed from the forces that impede and confuse its development as experience."[19] What brings everyday experience closer to aesthetic experience is the aesthetic – aesthetic properties which function to produce "connectedness" and "closure" in experience. When experience matures, when it is given a harmonious closure, it makes room for the following, surging waves of experience, which is an uninterrupted process just like life itself. "Because of continuous merging, there are no holes, mechanical junctions, and dead centers when we have an experience. There are pauses, places of rest, but they punctuate and define the quality of movement."[20] Movement that leads toward consummation is organized and orderly; it imbues experience with inner cohesion. Elsewhere, Dewey adds that despite integration of the subsequent stages of experience, which proceed one from another, these parts never forfeit their distinct character: "As one part leads into another and as one part carries on what went before, each gains distinctness in itself."[21]

Dewey does not exempt any sphere of life from this principle. For example, the difference between a merely correct mathematical formula and a brilliant one lies in the latter's aesthetic component, elegance of equations, neatness and beauty of reasoning. As we can see, aesthetic experience as continuation of, improvement on and intensification of "common" experiences is by no means confined to so-called fine arts as it can emerge in any human pursuit, from mathematics, to angling, sports and sex,[22] to cooking and sharing a meal. Discussing this issue, Hans Joas writes: "the contrast is not between art and everyday life, but between rounded versus fragmented experience. Every kind of practical action can have the aesthetic quality of being 'rounded out'… 'Roundness' is not meant to be a formal quality, but rather implies that each partial action is comprehensively laden with meaning for the actor."[23] In his account of Dewey's concept of action, the German sociologist observes that the concept's core idea is that every action has a creative component to it. In this sense, action does not involve adjusting means to goals set in advance, but entails the means and ends mutually implying each other: "Human action is therefore characterized not simply by the interplay of values and impulses, but by the creative concretization of values as well as the constructive satisfaction of impulses. No creative action would be possible without the bedrock of pre-reflective aspirations towards which the reflection

[15] J. Dewey, *Art as Experience*, p. 16.
[16] J. Dewey, *Art as Experience*, p. 16.
[17] J. Dewey, *Art as Experience*, p. 23.
[18] J. Dewey, *Art as Experience*, pp. 52-53.
[19] J. Dewey, *Art as Experience*, p. 290.
[20] J. Dewey, *Art as Experience*, p. 43.
[21] J. Dewey, *Art as Experience*, p. 43.
22 See, *Ibid,* p. 41. For aesthetics of sex, see, for example. R. Shusterman, "Aesthetic Experience: From Analysis to Eros," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 2, 2006.
[23] H. Joas, *Creativity of Action*, trans. J. Gaines, and P. Keast (Chicago: Polity Press, 1997), p. 140.

on the concretization of values is oriented. Thus corporeality shows itself to be the constitutive precondition for creativity not only in perception but also in action itself."[24] In this concept, the aesthetic component is accorded an essential role as it is through it that the subject is capable of grasping the creative character of his/her own action.

As Dewey emphasizes, an experience may come to pass if sensory impressions, cognition, will and emotions are fully merged. It is an exceptional state attained only with the greatest difficulty. It requires special attention and care for all components of experience, feelings, actions and meanings. It is distinct for its intensity and tend to be well remembered. Still, most of our experiences remain "incomplete." We embark upon various actions, and then abandon them unfinished because of distractions, forgetfulness or slouching; "what we observe and what we think, what we desire and what we get, are at odds with each other."[25] Because they grossly outnumber successful experiences, all kinds of defective experiences accustom us to their standards, which we come to accept and regard as a norm. Consequently, the common belief that there is a gap between imperfect everyday experiences and perfect art only gets entrenched and reinforced, which makes experience continue as paltry and shallow.

Experience reaches its closure when its material is perfectly integrated and, in becoming *an* experience, it becomes a source of exceptional satisfaction, which leads one to recognize the essence of certain phenomena or relationships. As such, *an* experience may change one's life trajectory. The integration of experiential material may result from dedicated, sustained work on experience or from attentive striving for consummation, but it may also paradoxically unfold all of a sudden, and take one by surprise, so to speak. One example Dewey provides of such an experience is an exceptional meal: "There is that meal in a Paris restaurant of which one says 'that was an experience.' It stands out as enduring memorial of what food may be."[26] Having gone through such an experience, one will never perceive things in the same way as a new perspective on this particular portion of reality opens up for one. Dewey's statements about an experience might be viewed as corresponding to William James's reflections on religious conversion, which, for James, involves a shift in which notions once peripheral in a person's consciousness become central to it.[27] If we do not doubt that conversion brings about a total mental change, most of us would not consider eating-related experiences to be so thorough. However, it seems there are testimonies asserting that an exquisite meal may indeed be life-transforming. For Julia Child, a famous American chef who taught her compatriots to love French cuisine, this extraordinary quality was attached to the first meal she had after arriving in France in 1948. At a restaurant in La Couronne she had *sole meunière*, a dish she called an epiphany. The perfectly cooked fish, pan-fried in butter, not only gave her exceptional gustatory satisfaction but also stirred her interest in and, later, fascination with French cuisine. It was only the beginning of a domino effect. That *Sole meunière* made Child a reformer of American culinary tradition and an icon of popular culture.

Eating is a common element of our everyday lives, but, necessary as it is, it may be performed in a variety of forms and ways. Sometimes, eating is treated as a very trivial activity to which hardly any attention is devoted. If we approach eating as merely a stage in the metabolic transformations going on in our bodies, we certainly deny cooking a chance to reach the elevated heights of culinary art. That requires effort and thoughtfulness in selecting the ingredients, cooking the dish and then serving it in style. For a meal to become an extraordinary, intensified experience, it takes a skillful combination of knowledge about products and

[24] H. Joas, Creativity of Action, trans. J. Gaines and P. Keast (Chicago: Polity Press, 1997), p. 163.
[25] J. Dewey, *Art as Experience*, p. 41.
[26] J. Dewey, *Art as Experience*, p. 42.
[27] *Cf*. William James, *Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York: Cosimo Publications, 2007) pp. 193-219.

processing techniques, dedicated work and emotions invested in cooking. Eating which transcends the level of biological needs is addressed by Child in her memories of France: "In Paris in the 1950s, I had the supreme good fortune to study with a remarkably able group of chefs. From them I learned why good French food is an art, and why it makes such sublime eating: nothing is too much trouble if it turns out the way it should. Good results require that one take *time* and *care.* If one doesn't use the freshest ingredients or read the whole recipe before starting, and if one rushes through the cooking, the result will be an inferior taste and texture – a gummy beef Wellington, say. But a careful approach will result in a magnificent burst of flavor, a thoroughly satisfying meal, perhaps even a life-enhancing experience."[28] What else is this passage but a perfect exemplification of Deweyan notion of *an* experience? The time and care enumerated by Child as necessary conditions of successful cooking are highlighted also by Dewey as two essential factors in an experience: "Zeal for doing, lust for action leaves many a person, especially in this hurried and impatient human environment in which we live, with experience of an almost incredible paucity, all on the surface."[29] The problem is that, living in a hurry, we face a risk of distraction and preclude any closure of experience. Before it fully crystallizes, we abandon it for something new. Dewey warns against collecting as many impressions as possible as they often are hardly "more than a flitting and a sipping,"[30] passing and vanishing before any sense is made of them. An experience requires linking impressions to facts; it demands engagement which helps one make conscious, informed choices. Otherwise, „[t]here are beginnings and cessations, but no genuine initiations and concludings. One thing replaces another, but does not absorb it and carry it on. There is experience, but so slack and discursive that it is not *an* experience."[31] Such pathologies are outcomes of a lack of balance between action and perception, the interaction of which founds experience.

Besides haste and a desire to do as much as possible in as short a time as possible, another threat to experience pointed out by Dewey is mechanical action. Automatism forestalls emotion and eliminates any personal investment in the tasks, activities and objects associated with them. When "[o]bstacles are overcome by shrewd skill, but they do not feed experience"[32]; a conscious, meaningful engagement is lacking as is also the case with actions undertaken without belief or certainty. This is counterbalanced by activities which proceed toward an end in a sequence of steps, whereby they foster a sense of growing relevance, which culminates at the moment of fulfillment. In his article on emotion in *Art as Experience*, P. G. Whitehouse observes that the artist is guided and advised first and foremost by emotion, instead of by reason or practical aim.[33] Such attitude is what distinguishes the artist, but it is also relevant to other practices. Dewey insists: "Craftsmanship to be artistic in the final sense must be 'loving'; it must care deeply for the subject matter upon which skill is exercised."[34] He is certainly right. It is because they lack this "loving" factor, food industry products will never match hand-made foods, and are not discussed in the context of culinary art. Art materializes with the touch of the hand collaboratively coordinated with the eye – "instruments through which the entire live creature, moved and active throughout, operates."[35]

To conclude, we could evoke the contrast between the ideas of *fast food* and *slow food*; standardized, assembly-line-produced hamburgers, which look and taste the same irrespective of the season of the year and

[28] J. Child, and A. Prud'homme, *My Life in France* (New York: Anchor Books, 2007), pp. 332-333.
[29] J. Dewey, *Art as Experience*, p. 51.
[30] J. Dewey, *Art as Experience,* p. 51.
[31] J. Dewey, *Art as Experience*, p. 46.
[32] J. Dewey, *Art as Experience*, p. 45.
[33] P. G. Whitehouse, "The Meaning of 'Emotion' in Dewey's Art as Experience," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 37/2 (Winter, 1978), p. 154.
[34] J. Dewey, *Art as Experience*, p. 54.
[35] J. Dewey, *Art as Experience*, p. 56.

the geographical coordinates of their serving venue, on the one hand, and, on the other, foods that convey the character of the area where they were cooked and the person who devoted his/her time and talent to cooking them.

**Educating taste**

The painter, the architect, and the cook alike orient their actions to the perceiving recipient and, the other way round, the aesthetic experience is "inherently connected with the experience of making."[36] Perception is a creative task. Perception is understood as "a process consisting of a series of responsive acts that accumulate toward objective fulfillment,"[37] which brings appreciation and making closer together. "The artist selected, simplified, clarified, abridged and condensed according to his interest. The beholder must go through these operations according to his point of view and interest."[38] A work of art comes into being according to a certain intent, with the artist performing the subsequent stages, having in mind all along his plan of arriving at a particular end, which corresponds to the pattern of a complete experience.[39] That is why if sensory satisfaction is to be complete, it must to a degree follow the artist's intent, for "it does not stand by itself but is linked to the activity of which it is the consequence."[40] This principle holds also in the relationship between the cook and the eater. Dewey entertains no doubts about it: "Even the pleasures of the palate are different in quality to an epicure than in one who merely 'likes' his food as he eats it. The difference is not of mere intensity. The epicure is conscious of much more than the taste of the food. Rather, there enter into the taste, as directly experienced, qualities that depend upon reference to its source and its manner of production in connection with criteria of excellence."[41] These words clearly insist that, first, to be complete, experience requires following the maker's intent and, second, the capacity and pleasure of joining the maker's world must be preceded by effort and learning, both necessary to supplement a purely sensory sensation and explore, in this case, gustatory excellence. Few realize that aesthetic perception demands skill, and probably even fewer would not be surprised by a postulate to educate taste. After all, the common opinion holds that we like what we do, end of story. Dewey, however, avers that it is not enough to simply look at a work of art to really see it, and, likewise, it is not enough to just eat, to appreciate gustatory perfection: "seeing, hearing tasting, become esthetic when relation to a distinct manner of activity qualifies what is perceived."[42] Many contemporary chefs propose new versions of and innovative takes on classic cuisine. To appreciate the mastery of interpretation, one must know tradition first.

Outstanding culinary talents are, similarly, a rarity. Many people cook, but the skill of perfect harmonization of flavors is an exceptional gift. Danièle Mazet-Delpeuch, a personal chef of the French President François Mitterrand, distinguishes between a gift, an inborn predisposition, and a talent that requires patient honing. In the kitchen, she says, "two things are important – a gift and a talent. A gift lies beyond our control, just like the color of our eyes or hair. A talent is different – it needs developing. You must keep training; a talent simply requires sustained practice. Slowly, step by step, you can attain excellence."[43] What emphatically surfaces here is time it takes for experience to achieve fullness. Mazet-Delpeuch herself learned by watching her female kin, and used a similar instruction method of imitation in her own cooking courses. One can teach the mechanisms of the entire universe by teaching cooking, as Dewey's School vividly demonstrates.

[36] J. Dewey, *Art as Experience*, p. 55.
[37] J. Dewey, *Art as Experience*, p. 59.
[38] J. Dewey, *Art as Experience*, p. 62.
[39] J. Dewey, *Art as Experience*, p. 59.
[40] J. Dewey, *Art as Experience*, p. 55.
[41] J. Dewey, *Art as Experience,* p. 55.
[42] J. Dewey, *Art as Experience*, p. 55.
[43] Łukasz Modelski, *Piąty smak. Rozmowy przy jedzeniu* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2014), p. 251.

**Conclusion**

Food is a message that conveys intellectual, emotional and sensory content, and may have an aesthetic quality. Can food and eating be thus seen as an art? Drawing on Dewey's writings, one cannot answer this question conclusively in the affirmative. Although a clear affinity between culinary experience (and any other experience in fact) and art is highlighted in *Art and Experience,* and Dewey frequently resorts to culinary examples in describing aesthetic experience, he does not identify art with culinary art. For art is a realm in which only aesthetic values are realized. Cooking can indeed be granted the status of culinary art only within what Dewey calls *an* experience, where aesthetic qualities are an indispensable condition, but the very fact that aesthetic qualities appear does not in and by itself make soup, be it impeccably delicious, an artwork.

Still, approaching everyday meals as exceptionally important components of the order of life that both require and deserve attention, care, and patience will certainly be beneficial, for every experience, if it is *an* experience, augments our lives and makes them simply better.

# De-Subjectification in Semiotics: Argumentations, Self-Defense and Signs of Opposing Forces

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Abstract: In this reflection I would like to consider some effects of selected semiologic and semiotic perspectives on persuasion and subjectivity interconnected to general semiotics and theoretical rhetorics. I will argue that there are two possible ways how to "unravel the tangled skein" of some of these interconnections (between semiotic and rhetorical structure of the subject). We can find them inside two basic paradigms of semiotics: first (i) in semiology and (mostly Foucauldian) structuralism and the second (ii) in (mostly Peircean) semiotic. These two methodological viewpoints take as their point of departure general relation which is sign, but in completely different manner: as (i) dyadic relation of two ideas and as (ii) triadic relation of object, sign and idea which is by this sign determined. First perspective emphasizes the socio-cultural construction of subject and is rooted in the view of sign as language/system unit, second one emphasizes the necessary effects of "reality" in the actions and productions of signs. Despite the impossibility of translation between structuralism and semiotic, these two standpoints has in common the desubjectification of self and I would like to explore some consequences of this challenging schism.

## 1. Semiosis of Rhetorical existence: Twofold Articulation of Subject and Persuasion in Semiology and Semiotic

This text first arose out of a passage in Philip Roth's novel *Dying Animal,* where one of Roth's alter egos, aging professor of comparative literature David Kepesh, reassesses his broken relationship with a young student:

> *„Was she persuaded?* I don't know. I don't think so. Aren't you? Why, why are you *laughing?* What's so hilarious? My *didacticism?* I agree: *one's absurd side is never unimpressive.* But what can be done about it? I'm a critic, I'm a teacher—didacticism is my destiny. *Argument and counterargument is what history's made of. One either imposes one's ideas or one is imposed on. Like it or not, that's the predicament. There are always opposing forces, and so, unless one is inordinately fond of subordination, one is always at war.* " (Roth 2001, 40. Emphasis added: Svantner.)

In this reflection I would like to consider some effects of selected semiologic and semiotic perspectives on persuasion and subjectivity. Persuasion taken seriously often had the same fate in the history of philosophy as rhetoric considered as a specific knowledge. There is a strong tradition (since Plato's attack on sophistic rhetoric in *Gorgias)* considering persuasion as something "dirty" on the face of pure philosophy.[1] Since Nietzsche, Saussure and Peirce many of the 20th and 21st century philosophers considered it important to say that philosophy has to live inside the medium of figurative, metaphorical, persuasive and "emotional" language and has to reflect this basic fact but without any sort of naive subjectivism or psychologism. These semiologic and semiotic perspectives are connected with:

a) The specifics of philosophical didacticism. Saussure's semiology had a strong impact on philosophical consideration of subjectivity and language; this so called movement of structuralism brought the wide criticism of traditional ontologies which were built on the idea of "neutral language". Peirce semiotics and philosophy of pragmaticism and also his viewpoints on persuasion, rhetoric and subjectivity are rooted in four main grounds: in (i) the semiotic revision of Aristotelian and Latin logic; (ii) in the works of I. Kant; (iii) in the inspiration of German idealism; (iv) and in the tradition of American transcendentalism.

b) Opposing forces in the frame of historical wars of arguments. I would like to analyze some consequences of our capacities to talk about "persuasive self in often opposing terms of semiology/structuralism and semiotics.

[1] E. g. since Parmenides to Hegel or Sartre many philosophers consider themselves as the translators and amplifiers of universal and eternal truths. We can find another traditions, living in the shadows for a long time (cf. Vitanza 1997) -we can find its sources e. g. in sophistic rhetoric or radically in early F. Nietzsche (and his lectures on language and music), in so called French structuralism and its analysis of discourse practices and also in pragmatism and general semiotics (cf. Eco 1976, 13-14).

These two positions emphasized different features of analysis which determines different questions and different analysis of meaning of "conceptions" and "realities" as "subject", "self and "persuasion". The general question is: How does process of meaning-making determine the success of communication and how can this success, or the effect, be described? From a standpoint of semiology: what are the cultural and sociohistorical (systemic) layers of these phenomena? From a point of semiotics: what are the syntactical, semantical and pragmatic layers of persuasive discourse?

**1.1. Terminology**

I completely agree with (Kennedy 1999, 1-2) that "rhetoric in the sense of techniques of persuasion is a phenomenon of all human cultures, and analogies to it are also found in animal communication. All communication involves rhetoric. A speaker or writer has some kind of purpose, and rhetoric includes the ways of accomplishing, or attempting to accomplish, that purpose within a given culture." By subjectivity I mean general term which contains process of subjectivation (in quasi-Foucauldian sense, cf. Balibar 1996) through cultural-semiologic operations, which can also be analyzed as forms of inter-inferences (in quasi-Peircean sense). By "self or "subject" I mean possible or concrete result of these operations. In the language of general semiotics, "the subject (without any qualifying adjective) normally denotes a narrative function (actant) in the actantial structure of an utterance. In this context, the subject is defined on the one hand by and opposite the object of value that is being pursued; on the other, it exists in relation to the sender (source of values and mandator of the quest)" (Bronwen - Ringham 2000, 126). In my point of view, we can move these distinction further if we look inside concrete traditions of structuralism and semiotic. Therefore I argue for and compare three positions: a) semiology (cultural) b) semiotic (inferential) and c) semiotics (general). Finally, I would like to avoid the general and very discussed topic of discursive construction of alter ego or the construction of "quasi-mind" as one of the most popular strategies of the "defense of the self in literature (see Galow 2011; cf. CP 4.6): e. g. F. Kafka wrote that he felt liberated when he could say "he" instead of "I".[2] I would like to follow the slightly different way of reasoning which is inherited in Roth's novel, where author's self (and self in general) is primarily constructed through rhetorical figures and is forced to live inside and through constant dialogue and/or struggle of argumentation. If we take this quasi-Nietzschean[3] view on the history and the self seriously we can see these two phenomena as constant rhetorical (ergo semiosic) reaction and invention. Roth opens broad but important question for human conduct: why and how someone wants to be (and sometime is) persuasive? And we can ask further: how instruments taken from general semiotics and general rhetoric can be helpful in understanding this matter?

**1.2. Two Ways of Understanding Signs and Its Consequences for Understanding Persuasion and Subjectivity**

I will argue that there are two possible ways how to approach these problems. We can find them inside two basic paradigms of semiotics: the first in the semiology and (mostly Foucauldian) structuralism and the second in (mostly Peircean) semiotic.

[2] Cf. P. Roth's another novel THE COUNTERLIFE (2013) where an overwhelming game is played with multiplicity of the egos constructed in the space of literature. We will not follow famous discussion about the death of Author presented in the works of e. g. M. Blanchot, M. Foucault, R. Barthes and M. Kundera (cf. Ceska 2014; Burke 1998) here.

[3] Cf. Nietzsche's criticism on atomic subject vs. subject-multiplicity: "That man is a multiplicity of forces which stand in an order of rank, so that there are those which command, but what commands, too, must provide for those which obey everything they need to preserve themselves, and is thus itself conditioned by their existence. All these living beings must be related in kind, otherwise they could not serve and obey one another like this. "(Nietzsche KSA 11.461).

**1.2.1. Saussure**

The first one is rooted in the heritage of F. de Saussure, who suggested that his approach to linguistics might be generalized into a study of all the sign systems embedded in social behavior. Saussure and later so called structuralism emphasized social/quasi psychological (later called semiologic or discursive) construction of the self as determined through anonymous language-based systems (with the unexceptionable notion on power considered as non-subjective force). Persuasion in this view is a cultural unit which has in general a language *(langue)* structure and therefore can be analyzed in the perspective of semiology, in a perspective considering a sign as a purely mental unit which consists of a dyadic relation of signifier and signified. In other words, sign is considered as an idea of acoustic image and an idea of concept. Persuasion and subjectivity in this perspective are subject to paradigmatic and syntactic principles, stemming in principle from various systemic relations (such as the binary oppositions and permutations of elements, their differences and interdependencies inside analyzed cultural systems etc.). This perspective was criticized[4] for partially neglecting the concrete manifestations of these systems in specific speech acts, in the sphere of *parole* (cf. Short 2007, 18-20).

**1.2.2. Peirce**

Second perspective offers the instruments for analysis of the interconnections between thought, signs and (mind-dependent and mind-independent) objects (CP 6.347; 8.332; W 1:303), which can be applied from radically different perspective on persuasive language and its manifestations in informal and formal forces. This perspective is rooted in Peirce's pragmaticism, which is nothing more or less than "maxim for attaining clearness of apprehension"(CP 5.2). This maxim is interconnected with two basic conceptions:

a) First is Peirce's semiotic as the doctrine analyzing triadic process of semiosis (the processes of signs being signs, the process of signs in their forceful actions and the process of understanding signs[5]). Semiotic is then divided through the prism of Peirce's postulated categories to its speculative part (what can be formally considered as a sign, how can we classify signs and what is general structure of the sign), critical logic (which is the theory of conditions of truth) and speculative rhetoric (how can be effects of signs on mind formally analyzed).

b) Second is Peirce's belief that this process of semiosis is teleological, which is sometimes described as Peirce's objective (or semiotic) idealism (and has completely different connotations than "later" pragmatism of Peirce's students, colleagues or misinterprets).

Peircean semiotic then can be the tool for description of semiosic structures of arguments and also can be useful in the formal analysis of "situationality" of arguments (considered as specific signs). Peirce's *semiotic* position can be considered as a theory offering theoretical instruments for analysis of qualitative possibilities, concrete realizations, and general laws of persuasive discourse as basic correlates of "rhetorical existence" (or semiosis) of human life.[6] It is necessary to emphasize,

[4]Mostly thanks to misunderstanding the „dialectics" of LANGUE and PAROLE, despite of Saussure's warnings, many semioticians refer to these two terms as if they were denoting two distinct realities.

[5] Cf. (CP 5.484) "By "semiosis" I mean, (...), an action, or influence, which is, or involves, a cooperation of three subjects, such as a sign, its object, and its interpretant, this tri-relative influence not being in any way resolvable into actions between pairs." This statement, in my point of view, is not cancelling the fact that sign in semiosis can be seen from phaneroscopy as firstness of thirdness, secondness of thirdness and the thirdness of thirdness..

[6] Moreover Peircean point of view brings the accent on semiotic structure of cognitive/perceptive processes (EP2:368, cf. CP 5.492; 6.268; 6.174; 7.539-52) and presents a way out from the traditional rationalistic and dualistic schemes of thought.

and make things more complicated, that there are at least "two Peirces" in the matter of Peircean corpus:

a) Through the prism of Peirce's objective idealism, "thought" as the form of semiosis in general is not necessarily connected to human brain (e. g. in spheres of biosemiosis)[7] and therefore Peirce-oriented position brings the notion on non-human agents in the process of communication (which can determine the effects of persuasion).

b) On the other hand, for Peirce, thought considered as action and development of signs is in another ("anthroposemiosic") plane[8], necessary connected to the social or communal dimension - in common and individual life.

There is Peirce who believes that "man is a sign", which means that man is a sign of reflection or recognition of consistency of thought (cf. CP 5.313) but also Peirce who "believes that if isolationism and arrogance became a rule, science would became impossible" (Oleksy 2012, 207). For Peirce's rhetoric rooted in semiotic (pragmaticist and objective-idealist) point of view is characterized by the tension between formal statements on one side and strong ethical postulates on the other. That is why he accented, in Aristotelian fashion, the normative side of persuasion, which is rooted in the logic, ethics and esthetics[9] of terminology. Peirce's semiotic can be viewed as normative science of theoretical rhetoric and common oratory. Ethics of argumentation (cf. CP 1.219; EP 2:338) is essentially connected to self-control (CP 5.493) and in general to the maxim of the *summum bonum* and positive development of scientific community.[10]

I would like to explore later how these divergent points converge in the third branch of semiotic, the speculative rhetoric, which "is the doctrine of the general conditions of the reference of Symbols and other Signs to the Interpretants which they aim to determine" (CP 2.93).

**1.2.3. Some Consequences for Subjectivity**

We can see that there are two general forms of analysis of the self (or in a broader term "subjectivity") which have nothing to do with "personality". What these radically different perspectives have in common is the notion on "desubjectification" of theory that is speaking about subject or self. On the other hand, semiotic and semiology claim the right to speak about human conduct in both its generality and its particularity. Self is dispersed in different formal structures: language-immanent structures on the one side and post-Kantian (with the important touch of scholastic realism) on the other. In the case of semiology this dispersion of the self

[7] See (CP. 4.551), cf. (Colapietro 1988, 19).

[8] Cf. (Deely 1990, 28): The highest level of semiosis so far as our experience goes is also the one closest to us: ANTHROPOSEMIOSIS. Looked at one way, anthroposemiosis includes all of the sign processes that human beings are directly involved in, and, looked at another way, names those sign processes which are species-specifically human. From the latter point of view, anthroposemiosis includes first of all language, and secondly those sign systems that come after language and further structure perception and modify the environment even for species of animals other than human, although the understanding of these postlinguistic changes in what is proper to them is possible only in and through language."

[9] Cf. (CP 1.191): "Esthetics is the science of ideals, or of that which is objectively admirable without any ulterior reason. I am not well acquainted with this science; but it ought to repose on phenomenology. Ethics, or the science of right and wrong, must appeal to Esthetics for aid in determining the SUMMUM BONUM. It is the theory of self-controlled, or deliberate, conduct. Logic is the theory of self-controlled, or deliberate, thought; and as such, must appeal to ethics for its principles. It also depends upon phenomenology and upon mathematics. All thought being performed by means of signs, logic may be regarded as the science of the general laws of signs."

[10] From the global perspective Peirce's notion on development of thought is connected with the development of the self and can be taken as the base for semioethics. For the comprehensive volume discussing semioethics, see (Petrilli, Deely 2010; cf. Petrilli 2004).

is based on the conception of sign as a dyadic transcendental unit and in the case of semiotic on the conception of sign mediating an ontological relation of object and interpretant. I would like to show some advantages and possible disadvantages of these two different perspectives, which take the concept of sign as a formal relation as the very basic element of their viewpoints.

**2. Some Incapacities of Semiology: Paradox of Neutral Languages**

The first tradition was articulated mostly as a critique of Sartre's and Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology and existential humanism[11] in the context of so called French structuralism and poststructuralism[12]. It is characterized by synthetizing Nietzsche's accent on power (as a purely a subjective structure of will, cf. Deleuze 1962) and some reduced or reinterpreted thoughts of Saussure's (and of Prague and Moscow schools[13] of) linguistics.[14] The common point for various concepts of that time was, that there is nothing like ahistorical, essential, original and always true Self (of the Author or in general) that we can find behind or under all superimposed (historical, social, cultural) layers: this identical "Self cannot exist in the social sciences in the neighborhood, especially with the language analyzed from the position of semiology (where "I speak" shatters "I think"). This theoretical world is analogical to the fictional world of Witold Gombrowicz's novel *Ferdydurke:* there is only another mask behind the mask (Klossowski 1958) and these masks/faces are constructed and exercised through divergent socio-discursive practices. When "someone" understands himself/herself (e. g. as the object of desire or desiring subject), he/she can understand himself/herself only through specific historical/rhetorical/discursive instruments, through the complex of technologies of self.[15] Again in the Nietzschean viewpoint: to be the "true self means to give up the concept of will to truth as something "personal". The most important quest for philosophy as a form of structural analysis of systems of thought is to discover quasi-linguistic/semiologic structures inherent in our culture, forming our opinions, behavior, acting or every possible knowledge of given historical era or cultural order.[16] Strategies and technologies that creates self, have to be on the one side discovered through semiologic instruments of structuralism as purely non-essentialist, have to be shown and de-composed as different sociocultural and/or historical forms (we used to consider as "natural"[17]). On the other side, it is

[11] "Which has started perhaps with works of G. Canguilhem, as is apparent at the ending of Foucault's THE ORDER OF THINGS. See (Eribon 1991, 157).
[12] See e. g. (Descombes 1980), (Daix 1967).
[13] Which was brought into the French discourse mostly through works and influence of R. Jakobson, see (Jakobson - Daix, 1966).
[14] Cf. (Descombes 1980, 47): „More generally, structuralism is associated with various attempts to apply semiotic models of analysis to various cultural phenomena using concepts like code and message, signifier and signified, statement and utterance. (...) Although it made constant reference to linguistics, structural anthropology remained far removed from the real problems of linguistic analysis. At the same time, it elaborated a method for the analysis of institutions that presupposes a particular philosophy of mind. Moreover, Lévi-Strauss has never stopped insisting that the object of ethnological and mythological study is nothing other than the human mind."

[15] We can find this position strongly articulated in M. Foucault's HISTORY OF SEXUALITY: USING PLEASURES (cf. Foucault 2010) or in N. Luhmann LOVE AS PASSION: THE CODIFICATION OF INTIMACY. Cf. (Deleuze 2004, 184): „Beyond the history of men, and the history of ideas, Michel Foucault discovers a deeper, subterranean ground that forms the object of what he calls the archaeology of thought. Behind real men and their real relations, behind ideologies and their imaginary relations, Louis Althusser discovers a deeper domain as object of science and of philosophy."
[16] That is why semiology was the main theoretical tool for authors as e. g. R. Barthes (in the sphere of culture), M. Foucault (in the sphere of historiography and social philosophy), M. Serres (in epistemology), C. Lévi-Strauss (in anthropology) and J. Lacan (in psychoanalysis).
[17] Cf. (Deleuze 2004, 171): „There is a structure of the unconscious only to the extent that the unconscious speaks and is language. There is a structure of bodies only to the extent that bodies are supposed to speak with a language which is one of the symptoms. Even things possess a structure only in so far as they maintain a silent discourse, which is the language of signs."

important to say that this position does not necessary lead to the forms of radical defeatism or ethic nihilism.[18] Structuralism brought in its radical "program" positive political philosophy and specific ethic, which was diagnosed by Foucault and Deleuze as reversed Platonism: philosopher's task is no more to investigate ahistorical, atemporal and eternal forms of humanity and culture, but to uncover them as semiologic constructions and in other plane to find "minorities" that are excluded and oppressed by them. On the "personal level", this ethic goes hand in hand with the challenge to give up the total, definitive and authoritative Selves.[19] So what is the self and how can be self persuasively performed in this (Nietzschean/structural) discourse? One could say that only through the way of disintegration of total Self. But there is "nothing" to disintegrate: if we want to defend "our selves" we have to invent and question "them" every time, when we regard "them". This position has two important consequences: for the ethics of "democratic subjectivity" and politics and also for the general epistemology. We can illustrate the first dimension of this position in contemporary "social reality" of the so called immigration crisis. Structuralism, which considers self as structured, but constantly created, gives a chance to draw a blind but instructive map for argumentation in the space of democratic systems. We have to admit that our "values" are specific products of semiologic processes between socially constructed systems, their realizations and re-interpretations (in the mentioned medium of history made of arguments and counterarguments). We have to admit that this trivial fact is of the most important value for the basis of the reasonable argumentation (which philosophy and social sciences helped to articulate in the 20th Century). This constant criticism rooted in semiology shows that culture and self are not something eternal and ideal but something which is enacted, something that correlates with the toolbox of arguments against divergent forms of (as U. Eco said) *Ur-fascisms* and "brown" *Mythologies* that nowadays arises in different cultural forms through the Europe.

One answer to the questions at the very beginning of this text stems from the tradition sketched above and would be in Roth's (Nietzsche's) radical style: dispersion of the self in socially deliberated structures is not an apocalyptic problem but an important value for contemporary democratic political discourse. The main problem and interest of structural analysis of culture here is common violent act, authoritative construction of "differentiating" or "essential difference": the case when someone is excluding (mostly through various *ad populum* or *ad hominem* or other fallacies) others from a "battlefield" just before the struggle (of arguments) begins; i. e. when someone denies the law for free speech in the name of speech itself.[20] "Structuralism in various analyses showed the misery of ideology of self-predictive/productive discourse, showed that there is nothing as "speech itself". Theoretical and practical rhetoric based on semiology (as the critical discursive analysis) are nowadays facing an important challenge, which has its source in the aforementioned Nietzchean philosophical criticism and "didacticism" and which is not based on pseudo-Platonic/Hegelian perspective of King/Philosopher/Totalself who is evocating eternal truths (through completely pure method of dialectics).

[18] Cf. (Hay 2011, 243): "Nietzsche's analysis of tragedy cannot be understood as a tragic or a pessimistic interpretation, but as one that emerges from the experience of the comic, which, in its turn, must be understood as a form or a result of overcoming the utter absurdness of human life. This will lead us to a further analysis concerning the function of laughter (both as a concept and as a rhetorical method) in Nietzsche's philosophy as a whole. "

[19] We can find this trend, articulated from different positions in other so called post or late modern systems of thought, e. g. in the works of P. Sloterdijk's CRITIQUE or in neopragmatism of R. Rorty and his skepticism. Cf. (Rorty 1999, 202).

[20] Cf. (Barthes 1972, 46): "We are all potential Dominicis, not as murderers but as accused, deprived of language, or worse, rigged out in that of our accusers, humiliated and condemned by it. To rob a man of his language in the very name of language: this is the first step in all legal murders."

The reason is the experience that most of former, contemporary and future ideologists are arguing from these pseudo-platonic perspectives (there is "Nation", "Self and "People"). The practical result of this semiologic standpoint is that normative sciences of argumentation have to adopt the *optique* of deconstructive (not "strictly" in Derrida's sense) position; i. e. leave out the dream of neutrality of philosophical discourse and through formal, structural analysis and mostly through critical semiology uncover seemingly natural and eternal arguments and show them as constructed from various ideological fields and also *teach* how to defend against these fallacies which are spreading through mass and social media.[21]

**1.4. Limits of Semiology: the Trap of Super-Structures**

The consequence of this position for philosophy of science or epistemology of social sciences is that structuralism in its various forms has paradoxically articulated the idea of quasi-neutral, immanent, deductive "empty" space, from where the scholar can speak (as Foucault noted: classic philosophers connected their names in very grandiose gesture with the Truth, structuralism did the same, but has connected its name with the idea of desubjectification). It has appeared that the structure envelops a wholly paradoxical object or element, which G. Deleuze conceived as "empty square" *(La Case Vide)*. As Deleuze noted:

> "...Even Levi-Strauss, who in certain respects is the most positivist among the structuralists, the least romantic, the least inclined to welcome an elusive element, recognized in the "mana" or its equivalents the existence of a "floating signifier," with a symbolic zero value circulating in the structure. In so doing, he connects with Jakobson's zero phoneme which does not by itself entail any differential character or phonetic value, but in relation to which all the phonemes are situated in their own differential relations. If it is true that structural criticism has as its object the determination of "virtualities" in language which pre-exist the work, the work is itself structural when it sets out to express its own virtualities." (Deleuze 2004, 186)

This "hidden" tendency in structuralism opens the way for various forms of criticism from the standpoint of radical social constructivism, which has its source in so called poststructuralism. It can be described in this way: structuralists changed the platonic forms and philosophical *a priori* for seemingly neutral forms, structuring structures, that were the guarantors not for rejecting rationalisms but for building of a new form of super-rationalism (e. g. as the idea of historical *a priori).* Poststructuralism and also neopragmatism (especially in the works of J. Derrida's and R. Rorty[22]) leaves out the idea of the meaning generated by suprarational entities and immanent methods which emanates from them[23].

Second problem lies in the core of semiology and its conception of the sign which can be interpreted as disembodied, constructed only through immanent codes of culture, i. e. that signs are considered only as mentioned transcendental relations[24] This perspective works as analytical tool for studying culture and history but is not functional when someone want to understand

[21] It was Roland Barthes who said that rhetorics made the world of language intelligible. Especially in the twentieth century with its vast development of new forms of communication, resulting from the technological advances, rhetoric was in the center of interest. "The development of this ''secondary orality,'' as it is sometimes called, has been accompanied by the creation of new theory to describe communication to mass audiences, within organizations and small groups, and across cultural lines, often dealing with issues of politics, propaganda, marketing, gender, and other social phenomena. Parallel to this has been the emergence of new linguistic, semiotic, literary, and cultural criticism and theory, some of which can be said to be seeking a general theory of rhetoric. Classical rhetoric, as a theory of discourse, has sometimes directly contributed to these developments, sometimes been an unacknowledged substratum in them, and sometimes been a foil against which writers of new approaches are reacting." (Kennedy 1999, 291-292).

[22] *Cf.* (Jonas et al *2003).*

[23] Which was for many authors Saussurean semiology or Hjelmslev's glossematics

[24] Which is a mind-mind relation; sign is the psychological unit coupling the idea of acoustic image and the concept. See (Deely 2001, 563); cf. (Bains 2014, 18).

e. g. physical effects of the signs, or their connection to the "reality" or "world".[25] We can clearly trace the development of this criticism of problem of signs "without bodies" in late French semiology, e. g. in the concept of structural semantics of J. A. Greimas (Greimas 1996), or in linguistics of discourse of J. Fontanille[26], or in the "ontological turn" of symmetrical anthropology of B. Latour *et cie.*

When we want to "fully" understand the importance of "embodied" signs, we have to switch to C. S. Peirce and to the semiotic which investigates "the general secret of rendering signs effective" (EP 2:326).

The radical difference between semiology and semiotic standpoint in the field of analysis of phenomena as persuasion is:

a) For semiology, "value" is determined only in the set of relations in given system (as Saussure illustrated in his famous example of Chess set) and has no "essence", only "form".

b) From semiotic standpoint of sign as triadic, "values" can be represented on one side as legisigns (general law, types) and as concrete realizations of this law (as sinsigns, tokens) but also necessary as the signs of qualities (tones).

In the broader context of political rhetoric, values are "iconic" and therefore "worthy of following" because values as signs share specific qualities with objects they represent; values are "indexical" and have "concrete" effects; and are "symbolic" because values can be seen as particular expressions of laws.[27]

From the view of Peircean semiotic, we are approaching the main limit of application of semiology in social sciences here, especially in the case of theory of argumentation and analysis of persuasion. From the Peircean standpoint, if we omit the notion that "idea" has no "real", "physical" effect on our acts, we are omitting perhaps most important property of signs and most important property of persuasive discourse: i. e. "pragmatic side of language has no meaning without pragmaticism."

## 2. Normative Semiotics of Persuasive Semiosis: Peircean Outlooks

We can glimpse other adventures through Roth's kaleidoscope. What does it mean when we speak about language not necessarily in the perspective of structuralism - what does it mean that some speech is persuasive in its "emotional", "energetic" or "habitual" dimension? This opens in another plane the question of the specific aspects of human (and non-human) language that can be an important part of semiotic analysis (CP 2.256) of argumentation - why we are (often spontaneously) laughing, shouting or crying (when we are asserting propositions[28])? These topics can lead us to the broader view on sign and persuasion than we roughly analyzed in mentioned position of heterogeneous forms of structuralism. If we distort some Peirce's ideas (CP 1.444), we can ask: What are the general conditions of signs being persuasive signs? Does

[25] We can see this movement from description to deconstruction (as Descombes emphasized), in concrete way e. g. in Foucault's move from pure method of "archaeology" to "genealogy".

[26] See (Klinkenberg 2001): „Car rien ne nous est dit de la manière dont on peut atteindre l'adéquation recherchée. Bien au contraire, la doctrine reste fondée sur une rationalité abstraite et 'décorporalisée' (DISEMBODIED), pour reprendre un terme courant en sémantique cognitive. La sémiotique européenne reste définitivement soucieuse avant tout de la pureté de ses modèles, qu'elle veut mettre à l'abri de toute 'contamination référentielle'".

[27] Cf. Peirce's notion on rationally persuasive signs - SUADISIGNS (CP 2.309).

[28] See (Redondo 2012, 218) who describes Peirce's concept of proposition as "the possible general content of a speech-act, that is something susceptible of being affirmed, denied, judged, doubted... without becoming different proposition", cf. (EP 2:312) and also cf. the problem of the indexicality of assertion, which has "powerful indexical constraints" (Pietarinen 2004, 296), analogous to brute action of secondness. This shows the importance of the work of U. Eco, who, in my point of view, tried in his THEORY OF SEMIOTICS to connect instruments of structuralism and pragmatics.

there exist any kind of law in the evolution of thought which can be described as the law of necessary conditions of the transmission of persuasive meaning by signs from mind to mind, and from one state of mind to another? Is there a law of force of symbols, or their power of appealing to a mind? Finally, what are the formal conditions of persuasive signs in the relation to truth?

**2.1. Semiotic and degrees of persuasion**

As U. Eco has emphasized, the only person who made these problems "the very foundation of his theory—semiotic, cognitive, and metaphysical all at the same time—was Peirce. A Dynamical Object drives us to produce a representamen, in a quasi-mind this produces an Immediate Object, which in turn is translatable into a potentially infinite series of interpretants and sometimes, through the habit formed in the course of the interpretative process, we come back to the Dynamical Object, and we make something of it" (Eco 2000, 13; cf. Short 2007, 172).

We can illustrate this notion with Peirce's famous example with the soldier who "grounds arms" (CP 8. 315), which can be considered as the analysis of specific layers of persuasive communication based on Peirce's conception of intepretant, where the term "interpretant" refers to an effect produced in the interpreter by a sign, or is the result of determination by sign in interpreter's (not necessary human) mind.[29]

We will follow the basic fact that "every communication is rhetorical because it uses some technique to affect the beliefs, actions, or emotions of an audience. The simplest verbal techniques are pitch, volume, and repetition, as in ''help, Help, HELP!'' (Kennedy 1999, 12; cf. Romano 2012, 142). If every communication is rhetorical, we can say: it is rhetorical because it is composed of signs which can "be" persuasive power, which can "have" persuasive power and which can be "recognized" as persuasive. Interpretants are not potentially infinite only as immediate objects and are not potentially determined only by dynamic object (and its "primary iconism") but are also potentially determined by the potentially infinite forms of dynamic interpretant (and their "primary indexicalism") and potentially could be determined by general immediate (and final) interpretants.

If we follow G. A. Kennedy here, we find that he opens interesting question of "degrees of persuasion" - the question of intensity of a persuasive act, the question of effects that a persuasive act could have.[30] This leads us to another dimension of analysis of basic modes of persuasive discourse. Persuasion can be accomplished by direct means, such as force, threats, or bribes, or it can be done "symbolically" by the use of signs, of which those most important are spoken and written words, images or gestures.

The persuasion can be practiced directly through more or less violent techniques (in the mechanical way

[29] Cf. (Short 2007, 171): "Consider an example. Jones pokes Smith in the back so as to call attention to himself, for the further purpose of asking for a loan. The attention - an interpretant of the poke - is therefore elicited as a means to an end. But it is not the sign - the poke - that elicits its interpretant as a means. It was Jones, the poker, who poked for that purpose. The poke, itself, compels attention mechanically. Our possessing the mechanism by which attention can thus be directed exists and operates for a purpose. Furthermore, its operation is not utterly mechanical: for example, we can ignore the insistent poking by a child when more important business is on hand. Regardless of whether Jones poked on purpose, Smith has a purpose in taking notice. And it is only thus that we can account for Smith's reaction as being not merely an effect of the poke but an interpretant of the poke, attention being directed not to the poke especially but to its cause."

[30] "The white pages of the telephone directory show a relatively low degree of rhetoric. Their main rhetorical technique is alphabetization, which accomplishes the purpose of allowing a reader to find a particular name easily, and except for occasional flashes of bold type their author does not seek to influence a reader to call one number rather than another. The yellow pages are distinctly more rhetorical, seeking to make an effect upon the reader and using visualization of products and other typographical devices to influence a decision." (Kennedy 1999, 2).

presented in the secondness of thirdness) but also can be exerted through the punishment of the soul: the most striking feature of Peirce's semiotic is the fact that in semiotic both of these dimensions can inhere. In these systems violence is gradually translated from direct influence on the body to the "symbolic" violence - i. e. concrete violence is translated into general law, as in the case of penal system, i. e. translated "through" and "in" to the ideological, rhetorical, semiosic process.[31] These processes then have different modes of persuasion, which can be considered in the most abstract and general plane (of Peirce's most developed semiotic theory, CP 8.342) as dynamic (effect actually produced on the mind by the sign) and immediate (the possible interpretability represented in the sign) intepretants, and from other perspectives, which can be more useful as the tool for analysis of communicative situation, as forms of emotional, energetic and emotional intepretant[32] (MS 318). The normal interpretant (effect that would be produced on the mind by the sign after sufficient development of thought) can be seen as the function unifying both of these planes through teleological time of semiosis[33] (e. g. in the case of development of scientific research in open-ended community or in the sense of catching someone's idea[34]).

**2.2. Modes of persuasion**

What are then modes of persuasion Peirce himself has used? As V. Colapietro pointed out, Peirce "is anything but indifferent to the manner in which he expresses himself; his rhetorical models are, however, found among the medieval scholastics rather than the Renaissance humanists and their progeny" (Colapietro 2012, 16), which is the same in the case of Peirce's many philosophical positions that are often evidently stemming from two streams, from nominalism on the one hand and realism and its criticism on the other (CP 4.68; 5.101).[35] On the other side, we don't need to fully accept Peirce's somewhat radical scholastic "classification" of philosophy in two dimensions of

[31] These procedures and strategies were in the field of social philosophy and history described in detail in famous works of M. Foucault, N. Elias, J. Galtung and P. Bourdieu, in the field of cultural semiology and semiotics were analyzed e. g. in the works of R. Barthes and U. Eco. In my point of view, this development of studies of persuasion on the field of philosophy of language, semiotics and other studies of discourses, goes hand in hand with the aforementioned revitalized interest in the marginalized philosophies as were e. g. the sophists. - we can see it clearly in the works of M. Foucault, G. Deleuze or P. Sloterdijk, but also in pragmatism (as is the interpretation of Sophist as humanistic political thinkers in Dewey and especially in works of Schiller) and neopragmatism (S. Mailloux). The interest in the question of practices of persuasion discourse lies in the basis of our culture.

[32] Where the emotional interpretants are feelings, energetic interpretants actions and logical interpretants are thoughts (and habits) that I see as layers of interpreting a sign (cf. Short 2007, 181). Moreover Peirce specified that "not all signs have logical interpretants, but only intellectual concepts and the like" (EP 2:410). Then the logical interpretant, which can be considered as most important for analysis of argumentation, is a concept, it is the only interpretant "properly denominated a concept" (CP 5.467), and it is the concept "upon the structure of which arguments concerning objective fact may hinge" (Ibid.). Cf. (Rosenthal 1994, 29): "Thus far, then, it would seem that the logical interpretant is a concept in the interpreter that can have reference to objective fact. And, ultimately, the concept must be understood in terms of a habit of response. To say, however, that a meaning or a concept is a habit of response in an interpreter seems somewhat inadequate for a position that places so much stress on both the interrelation of meaning and logic as well as the dissociation of meaning and psychology. Peirce held that conceptual meaning must include within itself the emotional, energetic, and logical interpretants or, in other terms, the elements of Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness found, in some form, in all analyses; in this case: Firstness as feeling core or sensuous content; Secondness as response or set of acts; and Thirdness as structure or resultant image." See (Bergmann 2009, 119; Liszka, 1996).

[33] Cf. (W 2:241), CP 2.334), (Short 2007, 171, 182): "The normal interpretant goes beyond what is required for the immediate interpretant: it is 'all' that would be revealed to a 'sufficiently penetrating' mind..."

[34] See (CP 3.424; 5.425; 5.479);

[35] Peirce called himself a realist of "extreme stripe" (CP 5.470), which can be questionable, see (Short 2007, 48n12);
cf. (CP 6.24-5).

nominalism and realism[36]. There is still Peirce from who we cannot eliminate the "...sense of sacred, the spirit of playfulness, and a contrite consciousness of iradicable fallibility, [which] are woven into the very fabric of Peirce's texts" (Colapietro 2012, 16). Analogical tension was described by Matts Bergman (Bergman 2012) who has shown that one of Peirce's normative, political and (according to his synechism) scientific principles was meliorism, the belief that there is an inherent tendency toward progress or improvement in the human condition. Peirce's philosophy has melioristic aspirations in abstract and general plane, which is his critical common-sensism and the "reconstruction of normative disciplines in terms of criticism of habits" (Bergman 2012, 125). Peirce was on the one side exponent of radical freedom in science (CP 1.662), but in the political sphere, moral and social thinking, he was "sentimental conservative"[37] and, in contrast to Dewey and Rorty, he was manifestly skeptical to attempts to apply philosophy to concrete human affairs ... In his Cambridge Conferences Lectures (1898), Peirce notoriously not only seems to advocate a rather sharp distinction between theory and practice as two incompatible forms of life, but also to disparage melioristic conception of the philosopher's task. In his expressed view, philosophy is a theoretical science that should not be compromised by concerns with concrete applicability or societal relevance (Bergman 2012, 125). Although "this" Peirce was in general sceptic in applicability of philosophy in human affairs, "other" Peirce "applied" philosophical (logical/semiotic) concepts and on these bases developed a strong theory of norms in human conduct, quasi-sociological view on scientific community.[38] His pragmaticism can be taken as an inspiration for normative theory of rhetoric and argumentation. If we follow Roth's illustration here, we can say, that from a Peircean point of view, the struggle of arguments does not necessary lead on one side to war and on the other to submission, but can be the way for cultivation (and change) of the self (in personal and in general in the context of scientific community).

This complex theory has its sources in semiotic (at least in the case of Peirce's "mature philosophy" guided by phaneroscopy), which is the base for the analysis of habit (CP 2.292) and habitual change: habit is "acquired law", therefore it is acquired sign, type of integrated legisign. Logical/semiotical self-control is essentially connected to the cultivation of the habit (or the highest kind of habit, the "cerebral habit" which is belief).[39] The semiotic cultivation of the self is executed through methods of pragmaticism and so called critical common-sensism and in general leads to the (semio)ethics of communication (cf. Pape 2012, 151). If habits are many-world entities that inhabit not only our actual world but also connect possible situations and scenarios with acting according to, or being guided by, the habit[40], then the semiotic analysis is critical discipline which helps us to understand the range of possible communicative situations[41] and also the tool for "melioristic" cultivation of the self[42].

[36] As e. g. did J. Deely in a radical/Peircean way, especially when we consider the depth and width of interpretations of Saussure in structuralism.
[37] Cf. (Bergman 2012, 126); (CP 1.50; 6.292). Of course there is the question of Peirce's personal ETHOS (cf. Colapietro 2014), his personal life...
[38] As (Redondo 2012, 220) showed we can consider logic as "rooted in the social principle" of open-ended community (W 3:284; cf. CP 1.588) and "the social principle is rooted intrinsically in logic." (W 2:271)

[39] See (CP 3.160), cf. (Bergman 2012, 136): "Peirce pragmatistic method is primarily a tool for clarifying the habitual nature of beliefs (...) Interestingly, in his pragmatic analyses, Peirce does not tend to introduce any principled division between habits transmitted by tradition and habits acquired as the consequence of scientific experimentation." Cf. notion on "anti-pragmatistic Platonism" in Peirce in (Bergman 2009, 55).
[40] "More precisely, what corresponds to such habit is a mapping from possible worlds or situations to actions. The range of those mappings is defined by the acts that are permitted (or determined) by the habits in whatever kind of world situation." (Pietarinen 2012, 176)
[41] Especially if we consider that semiosis can be seen as communication oriented to a purpose.
[42] Cf. (CP. 8112).

In Peirce's philosophy is evident a strong connection between logic and ethics, the belief that meaning, and also meaning of the habit, is rule governed and that these rules can be analyzed from a semiotic perspective, where semiotic is considered as meta-logic growing from phaneroscopy and can be also useful as normative science of communication in most general sense. The power of self-control grows from "semiosic" consciousness[43] and consists: "first, in comparing one's past deeds with standards, second, in rational deliberation concerning how one will act in the future, in itself a highly complicated operation, third, in the formation of a resolve, fourth, in the creation, on the basis of the resolve, of a strong determination, or modification of habit. This operation of self-control is a process in which logical sequence is converted into mechanical sequence or something of the sort. How this happens, we are in my opinion as yet entirely ignorant. There is a class of signs in which the logical sequence is at the same time a mechanical sequence and very likely this fact enters into the explanation" (CP 8.320; cf. 3.160).

We can interpret (with the awareness on some parts of Peirce's philosophical roots in German idealism and scholastic logic) this perspective as "hermeneutic"[44]: if one can acquire cerebral habit/belief, he/she/it has to "understand" it: thought[45] always has a virtual character, in the sense that it always refers to its future development into further interpretants (W 2:241, CP 2.334). For Peirce this understanding has deeper roots than traditional logic offers[46], i. e. understanding that the law is composed of signs (CP 5.594) and of various interpretants and contains, as every phaneron does, universal and observational categories, which means that understanding of the law/habit/belief is processual and is "dialogical" (cf. Brock 1975); a knowing mind deliberates, with past deeds and common standards, i. e. tries to see different possibilities from a modification of given habit through the sets of hypothetical inferences[47]. As Peirce emphasized, thinking always proceeds as dialogue between different phases of ego and is composed of signs (R 298:67). Thought has dialogical and inherently assertoric character (W 2:172; cf. Hilpinen 1982) and also has its social dimension. Peirce considered the dialogue as social fact subjected to social (and in specific cases scientific) norms (CP 2.315, cf. Bertilsson 2009, 30), i. e. "...for Peirce an assertion is a kind of action, and as such it has some consequences one is responsible for. Peirce conceived logic as being dependent on ethics, and this is the one of the foundations of the moral dimension of dialogue" (Redondo 2012, 19). As Peirce has asserted (CP 8.112), "we must not begin by talking of pure ideas, - vagabond thoughts that tramp the public roads without any human habitation, - but must begin with men and their conversation. We are familiar with the phenomenon of a man's expressing an opinion, sometimes decidedly, often otherwise. Perhaps it will be a mere suggestion, a mere question. Any such suggestion that may be expressed and understood relates to some common experience of the

[43] Cf. (Uexkiill 1982); (Deely 2010, 32n10); (Redondo 2012, 220): "... This is due to our fallibilistic awareness - i. e., that we can never be absolutely sure we have reached a final and definitive belief. It is this semiotic consciousness that comps us to adopt habits of self-control and self-criticism. But the most important point is that in being deliberate, reasoning becomes a kind of action, for it shares the same self-controlled character of deliberative conduct." Cf. (CP 8.191; EP 2:337).

[44] And we can see the development of these Peirce's ideas in German sociological thought (in works of K.O. Apel and J. Habermas) concerning critical-normative standards of social and collective action (Bertilson 2009, 30). Cf. (Daube-Schackat 1996), (Riemer 1996).

[45] Cf. "Thought, says Plato, is silent speech of the soul with itself. If this be admitted immense consequences follow; quite unrecognized, I believe, hitherto. . . . From this proposition that every thought is a sign it follows that every thought must address itself to some other, must determine some other, since that is the essence of a sign" (W2:172-3; cf. Bergmann).

[46] Cf. (Redondo 2012, 220): "...The most important turning point in history of sign is the point to at which deliberate critical appraisal of the norms themselves begin (Savan 1988, 63). This is the very task of logic, which Peirce identified with semeiotic." Cf. (EP 2:376-377)

[47] Cf. (CP 1.46): "When a man desires ardently to know the truth, his first effort will be to imagine what that truth can be." Cf. (2.444).

interlocutors, or, if there is a misunderstanding, they may think they refer to some common experience when, in fact, they refer to quite different experiences. A man reasoning with himself is liable to just such a misunderstanding. About this common experience the speaker has something to suggest which is supposed to be new to his auditor"[48]. Then the liberal interpretation of speculative rhetoric (the third branch of semiotic as not understood as pure methodeutic[49], but as the framework for studying concrete instantiations of reasonableness in contexts of utterance and interpretation), "provides us with a standpoint from which to search for normative roots of communication trough concrete instantiations of reasonableness in situated contexts of utterance and interpretation" (Redondo 2012, 215). If we want to "fully grasp the social and communicative nature of assertion, it may be helpful to recall that Peirce envisioned thought as essentially communicative, as a sort of dialogue between two or more quasi-minds" (Redondo 2012, 216; cf. CP 5.546). The difficult and complex question which is, in my point of view, in the true core of semiotic is: What are habits of these quasi-minds and how can we analyze these formal habits? Semiotic and its sign taxonomy based on the conception of sign as triadic ontological relation, classified thanks to phaneroscopy, is an attempt to "enumerate" possible habits of quasi-mind, i. e. to show effects that specific sign relations have (interpretants) and how are these relations structured (in the relation to themselves, to the object and to the interpretant and later, e.g. in *Lady Welby,* to other habits of mind). That is why semiotic (at least as speculative grammars but also as speculative rhetoric) is "formal" or "quasi-necessary" doctrine of signs (CP. 227).

[48] In Peirce's pragmaticistic picture, ideals are not dead abstractions but living forms that aim to be expressed in reasonable conduct (Parker 1998, 204).

[49] Methodeutic, part of semiotic which studies which signs used to effectively communicate the outcomes of scientific investigation within community of inquires (Liszka 1996, 10); i.e. the scientific rhetoric. Cf. (Bergman 2009, 63; EP 2:329).

**Concluding Remarks**

This reflection attempted to explore the challenge presented in Roth's novel on the base of two main semiotic paradigms which constitute two realms of theories of sign and which are not fully translatable into each other: semiology and so called structuralism, and the tradition of Peircean semiotics, with the focus on the two core philosophical themes, which are articulated in these traditions: subject, considered as semiosic, semiotic or semiologic self, and persuasion as the basic fact of human conduct composed of signs. The common ground for these two realms is (persuasive/acting) language, considered again from two positions: (i) as an abstract system composed of socio-psychical dyadic relations of signifier and signified, which is on the one side practice and basic human experience (connecting in unity selected elements from amorphous continuum of contents and expressions) and on the other side a model for our understanding of our culture and its artefacts; (ii) as the system composed of ontological triadic relation of object, representamen and interpretant which leads us to understand human conduct as the constant semiosic "struggle", where the self is implicated in the open-ended action containing the reality of qualities, brute force and continuity, which can be considered from the viewpoint of speculative rhetoric as a field of study for general rhetoric and are also main modes of the existence of persuasive language. One has to defend the Self in the field of cultural politics in the most abstract sense against myriads of vague and/or concrete arguments based on competing values, against sometimes forcefully and aggressive asserted statements and laws that are acquired or are presented as laws that have to be acquired. The highest importance of semiotic (as critical science) is the fact that these forms of struggles, which are sometimes presented as "natural and eternal", can be taken as necessary composed from signs, which means that the only natural and eternal thing is fallibilism and possibility of critique. Furthermore, the second point of view (Peircean)

extends the notion to non-human (or to quasi-minds) aspects in language in general. Language is not "only" an "arbitrary system of dyadic signs" (despite the results which this position can achieve) but it is also a tool which is not conceivable without the action of nonhuman agents (or actors and actants), affectivity and power (in Foucauldian sense).

That is why we are still at "war" - we are living in the basic conflict that has its source in this conflictual "structure" of language. This structure stems from the fact that we are communal individuals - we are living in various forms of semiosis, we are facing the fact that we have to build our identities through various conflicts, but we also strongly believe that this semiosis could be in various senses teleological.

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# IV. BOOK REVIEWS

# DEMOCRACY AND CONSENSUS: REVIEW ESSAY OF LESZEK KOCZANOWICZ'S *POLITICS OF DIALOGUE*

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In his 2015 book, the full title of which is *Politics of Dialogue: Non-Consensual Democracy and Critical Community*, Leszek Koczanowicz deals with a question that is critically important for democratic theory, a question that has to do with how democracy may properly accommodate the individual and the community. This question invariably raises other issues, specifically the liberalism/communitarianism divide, the question whether to understand democracy as a formal procedure or as a substantive form of life, and the split between deliberative and consensus building on the one hand and the management of inevitable conflict on the other.

These questions are, at least at the theoretical level, as close to the heart of the matter as one can get. Koczanowicz addresses these questions in a novel way, which is one of the reasons that this book is as important as it is for dealing with the philosophical issues surrounding democratic theory. Specifically, he draws on pragmatism, Mead and Dewey primarily, largely in that the pragmatists give us a way to cut through the liberal/communitarian, and individual/community, divide. They are not quite as helpful with respect to the question of deliberation and consensus versus the prevalence of antagonistic interests as definitive of the democratic situation. To fill out the picture, then, Koczanowicz turns to the Russian philologist, philosopher of language, and literary theorist of the 1920s through the early 1970s, Mikhail Bakhtin. The appeal to Bakhtin is the most original aspect of the book's approach to democracy and its problems, and the thorough and creative analysis that Koczanowicz applies to these intellectual sources constitutes the book's significant philosophical value.

I would like first to provide a brief and necessarily inadequate overview of the argument of the book, and then raise some questions that we might consider as we think through it all.

**The Problem**

There are three common ways of thinking about democracy:

- A system for distributing political power and authority, and for enabling the making of decisions and the exercise of power;
- A form of social and political life that rests on and requires communication. This does not require consensus, but yet leans in that direction in that communication leads to community, which is characterized by common interests, which suggests ever-greater consensus. This is the pragmatist approach, and Dewey and Mead are the most important sources. The emphasis is on the inherent sociality of the individual and the centrality of communication for individual and social life;
- A way of living characterized by antagonisms that can be managed without needing to be eliminated, primarily because they cannot be eliminated. The theoretical source for this approach is Chantal Mouffe.

For the purpose of this review let us simply stipulate that Mead and Dewey's conception is of democracy as a form of life that rests on communication and community, and that they understand the individual as informed by that context, and I will simply assume that we can all imagine how that account goes. Even those familiar with Dewey and Mead, however, are likely to be less familiar with Bakhtin and the other sources on which Koczanowicz draws, so I will focus the description on those.

Koczanowicz wants to develop the pragmatist approach through the lens of dialogue, especially as understood by Bakhtin, about whom a few biographical words are in order. Bakhtin was born in 1895 in Oryol,

Russia, and died in 1975 in Moscow. He early ran afoul of Stalin and spent some years in internal exile in Kazakhstan before returning to Moscow during the war. He later moved back to Kazakhstan for some years before returning to Moscow. He was active throughout these decades, though many of his works were published only in the later years of Soviet times. Though there were small groups of scholars around him, what were called 'Bakhtin Circles", from the 1920s, the depth of his intellectual accomplishments did not become widely apparent until the 1960s. Many of his works have been available in English and in other languages for quite a few years now, so he has entered into the world's intellectual milieu in ways that we are still only beginning to explore. This book is a significant step in that process.

Bakhtin and his circle developed a dialectical theory of language and linguistic meaning, dialectical in the sense that an utterance is a complex constituted by its elements in relation to one another. The elements include semantic theme, general social and linguistic context, speaker's intentions, etc. This approach constitutes a break in linguistic theory from some approaches that rely heavily on rule following as the source of linguistic meaning. Koczanowicz says that something like Bakhtin's dialogical approach allows us to accommodate the pragmatist concept of democracy as rooted in social interaction, and he says explicitly that "I am going to reconstruct his (Bakhtin's) concept of language and dialogue as the foundation of a social theory of democracy." (p. 44)[1] Part of what enables this is the idea that verbal utterance is always a result of complex social interactions, so that consciousness itself is a consequence of social interactions, a very pragmatist-sounding proposition.

Neither Bakhtin nor Koczanowicz put it this way, but one could say that language is ordinally structured in the sense that its elements prevail as elements of utterance and linguistic meaning only in their relations with one another. This means that their relations are constitutive, which is the basic idea of ordinality. This feature of Bakhtin's view is, one might say, the very thing that points in the direction of Dewey and Mead, because they also worked with the idea of constitutive relations.

For Bakhtin and the people influenced by him, one of whom discussed by Koczanowicz was Valentin Voloshinov, one important ingredient or element in the social generation of language and linguistic meaning is ideology, for the simple reason that ideology in one or more senses is inevitably an element of social life. This idea gave Bakhtin' thought a Marxist hue and facilitated a dialogue with Marxism. (pp 46-48) There was also, Koczanowicz points out in some detail, a similar connection with Soviet psychology of the time, especially Lev Vygotsky, a brilliant psychologist who died at aged 37 in 1934.

The importance of ideology in the construction of meaning is, as Bakhtin saw it, one of the respects in which language, meaning, and context are social phenomena and social constructions. Another sense in which this is the case is in Bakhtin's account of utterance, as opposed to sentence. Here Bakhtin comes close to Mead's idea of 'taking the role of the other', though Bakhtin is more interested in meaning, while Mead more in the construction of shared action. (p 50) In the end Koczanowicz is interested in Bakhtin's idea of 'hybridization', by which he means mixing different social languages in one dialect. Specifically, he is interested in how it is "a means of creating a new social language...which fits a new social situation through the resolution of conflicting tendencies already residing in the language." (p 60) He refers here to a strategy he will need to deploy in his treatment later on of non-consensual democracy.

One other concept for which Bakhtin is justly well known is his idea of 'carnival'. He developed this idea in a work on Rabelais, for which he received his Candidate degree at the Institute of World Literature in Moscow in

[1] All page references in the text are to Leszek Koczanowicz, *Politics of Dialogue: Non-consensual Democracy and Critical Community*, Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press, 2015.

1949, after some controversy. His idea, as I understand it, is that while we can expect ideology and other features of the social landscape to influence meaning, and therefore consciousness, it does not follow that meaning and consciousness necessarily conform to prevailing social ideology and mores. Bakhtin's account of how meaning as resistance is possible is through the idea of carnival. As Koczanowicz puts it:

> …a carnevalesque potential can be regarded as incorporated in human relations – i.e. in dialogical relations. Carnival is a perfect incarnation of one of the moments of human existence, with its capacity to build authentic bonds, despite the prevailing social and political obstacles (p 78)

Another way to put this, we might say, is that carnival represents the condition in which the various aspects and dimensions of language and the communicative context generally enable the generation of meaning, individually and communally, that is capable of breaking through dominant forms of meaning and constituting creative expressiveness. As Koczanowicz puts it, "Carnival comprises all the features of free communication. Heteroglossia, hybridization, mixing languages of different social origins – all phenomena so thoroughly explored by Bakhtin – find their embodiment in carnival…Thus, carnival and communication are inextricably intertwined, as carnival demarcates the borders of a free and equal dialogue." (pp 84-85)

Koczanowicz worries about the split or duality between "individualized existence and objectified culture", or between "language as system and language as action." (pp 66-67) The reason this concerns him is that these 'splits' have to be understood properly if we are to develop a workable and valuable understanding of democratic politics. Bakhtin's ideas provide a way, he argues, to understand how various aspects of our social, communicative, and political environments hang together in mutually constitutive ways, so that a theory of democracy may be developed that does justice to our circumstances without requiring unrealistic expectations:

> First, Bakhtin's notion of dialogue gives us the possibility to build a non-consensual model of democratic society. In such a model, democracy does not require a consensus, but rather a certain kind of understanding...Second, his concept of dialogue assumes that there is a continuation between everyday life and politics...Third, Bakhtin's concept of carnival entails that democratic society is an activation of the potential embedded in all human relations. (p 85)

**Individual and Community**

With Mead, Dewey, and Bakhtin in the background, Koczanowicz can turn directly to the issues in political theory and the theory of democracy that concern him. The main issue is that societies and polities consist of individuals and communities. Individuals can be expected to have diverse ideas, values, commitments, etc., while a community requires common principles, law, and institutions. Liberalism has handled this divergence by relegating the diversity to the private sphere, and by creating institutions that are intended to manage individual diversity and produce a common public or community life.

The problem is that liberalism's way of handling the issue is not adequate. First, it removes the richness of individual life from politics, by making the content of social life and meaning irrelevant to the political process, and this appears unsustainable. Second, as Dewey and Mead have it, democracy is anyway a form of life, in the Wittgensteinian sense, in which case the shared commitments of the community cannot be divorced from the diversity of individual values because to do so would be to divorce the form of life from people's lives, an evident absurdity.

If the traditional liberal solution to the problem of the individual and the community is in the end no solution at all, what do we do? As Koczanowicz puts it, there is a right wing and a left wing alternative to liberalism. The traditional right wing is rooted in romanticism and in the reaction to the enlightenment and the French Revolution, which is that the individual has her identity and defining traits by virtue of the

community, and that community is grounded in nation and ethnicity. The nation state on this view constructs the individual. The 20th century right wing alternative is best expressed in Carl Schmitt, who dispenses with the romantic grounding in blood and soil and emphasizes instead the exercise of power in a perpetual friend/enemy conflict.

On the left wing side, the traditional view is Marx's, according to which the economic structure of a society frames an individual's identity and general character. Thus class divisions and class struggle define both community and individual life. The 20th century left wing alternative is best expressed in Gramsci, specifically in his idea of hegemony. Hegemony is ideological, and therefore cultural, and the emphasis on culture moves Gramsci away from the more economically determinist directions in which some Marxism developed. Its upshot, though, is that individuals are rooted in the hegemonic power of culture and ideology as articulated by those with the power to do so.

If the romantics are wrong, and Koczanowicz thinks they are, and if community formation is not an automatic function of nation and ethnicity, or 'blood and soil' as it has been put, then we have to look at the actual mechanisms of community formation, and this involves the state.

Neither of the two most prominent forms of recent and current political theory and practice, totalitarianism and liberalism, can handle community. The totalitarian state attempts to build community on ideologically framed values, and to the extent that it succeeds, it subsumes the individual into the state. The liberal state, by contrast, cannot accept any developed sense of community because it prioritizes the individual, which is the reason that liberal democracy tends to divorce procedure from substance so that democracy becomes a set of rules to determine the exercise of state power. (p 104)

And the question of freedom folds into this discussion. On the liberal side freedom is an individual achievement and condition. On the other side, freedom can be realized only in community. This dispute played out in the 20th century struggles among fascism, communism, and liberalism, and, I might add, it continues to play out in what some describe as an east-west divide, or a struggle between religious fundamentalism and secularism. We may be able to avoid those two unhappy dichotomies if we can accept Koczanowicz's argument that at bottom this is a debate about the political dimension of social life.

Koczanowicz works through several different generally communitarian approaches to the problem - Sandel, MacIntyre, Taylor, Nancy, and Agamben - but finds none of them satisfactory. (pp 108 - 118) Traditional approaches to community, like much other philosophy, have tended to divorce our understanding of it from its material and socio-historical constitutive elements. Because of this, the standard concepts of community tend to run up against the lived realities of both individuals and communities. So one feature of our conception of community has to be its materiality. The pragmatists have been good on this, and Shusterman has been indispensable. There are also important connections with other figures who understand the complexity, including the materiality, of individuals and communities, specifically Helmuth Plessner and Pierre Bourdieu. (pp 118-130) Rorty and Habermas have also tried to deal with this question, but their ideas tend to make a public/private split, which in the end is untenable.

Koczanowicz says that there are four criteria that an adequate conception of community requires:

1) bringing together the public and private spheres;
2) promoting critical identification with tradition and, at the same time, fostering openness to other traditions so that particularist identities can always be negated;
3) providing a basis for democracy and reacting flexibly to democratic transformations; and
4) combining universal regulatory principles with specific ways of realizing them through reliance on emotions and bodiliness. (p 136)

To meet these criteria he proposes the concept of 'critical community', drawing on Bakhtin, Dewey, and Mead. The pragmatists are important because of their understanding of how interaction and communication shape individuals, and through Mead's idea of taking the perspective of the other. They are supplemented by Bakhtin because of his account of how language acts to enable social relations. In particular there are four reasons Bakhtin is important: 1) language is language in action, 2) dialogue is an ongoing effort to achieve understanding, not consensus, 3) the communicative context is one characterized by ideological struggle, and 4) language and traditions undergo continual revision. (pp 137-138) Moreover, critical community requires critical dialogue, and the possibility of successful critical dialogue depends on three factors: 1) the size of the community, 2) the form of political institutions that shape dialogue, for example the nation state, or 'supra-nations' like the EU, and 3) immediacy, i.e. direct dialogue.

**Community and Democracy**

In the book's final chapter Koczanowicz poses the question how we should understand community? A more specific question we may ask is whether there are such things as political communities? Koczanowicz's answer is 'yes', and they are, he says, "a system of habits or forms of life that make up a structure superimposed over a critical community." (p 150) What, we may further ask, is the mechanism that ensures the functioning of the political community? There are, he says, two possible approaches: the first is that conflict is inherent in politics, and the second is that compromise is possible, and pursuing compromise distinguishes democratic polity from other sorts. In the end, he argues, "the political form of critical community is provided by non-consensual democracy." (p 153)

Chantal Mouffe is the foil here. She presents two senses of democratic politics. The first is dialogic, deliberative, and consensual, which treats democracy as a way of reconciling competing interests, and the second is agonistic, which holds that conflict is inherent, and so consensus is illusory, and therefore democratic politics looks to establish hegemony rather than consensus. (p 156) Koczanowicz's view is that non-consensual democracy is a third way between Mouffe's two alternatives because it allows for the achievement of understanding without necessarily agreement and consensus. His 'critical community' "adopts a critical and reflexive attitude to its own tradition, whereby a self emerging within the community is a dialogic self..." (p 158) This dialogical understanding of the self and community requires not shared identity formation, as for example would communitarianism, but merely similarities, and it contributes to the formation of similarities. (p 160)

This is the alternative to liberalism, communitarianism, totalitarianism, and antagonism, and it is made possible by the philosophical conceptions of self, society, meaning, action, language, and dialogue of, above all, Dewey, Mead, and Bakhtin.

**Comment**

That, in an overview, is the position of the book and the argument for it. As it happens I tend to think that Koczanowicz is pretty much on the mark here, for several reasons:

1) The constitutive relationality that he locates in Dewey, Mead, and in Bakhtin, is, I would argue and have argued elsewhere,[2] the approach to things that is more fruitful than the alternatives;

2) He is right to argue that traditional liberalism does not properly account for the sociality of individuals, and traditional communitarianism cannot adequately take account of the fact that meaning and consciousness

[2] See for example John Ryder, *The Things in Heaven and Earth: An Essay in Pragmatic Naturalism*, New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2013.

are socially constructed in the interaction of individuals, and not simply socially grounded;

3) Traditional liberal conceptions of democracy indefensibly cut political processes off from the lived circumstances of individual and social life by treating them as merely procedural;

4) Many attempts to understand democracy by taking seriously the social context of political relations and the construction of meaning have tended to overplay the possibility of consensus;

5) Attempts like Chantal Mouffe's, and more radically Carl Schmitt's, to emphasize the inherent antagonisms in political life are not acceptable alternatives to theories of deliberative consensus because they underestimate the possibility of building community on partial agreement rather than on consensus.

6) Drawing Bakhtin into the conversation is immensely valuable.

At the Central European Pragmatist Forum meeting in Turda, Romania, in 2012, Koczanowicz and I discussed some of these issues in one of the sessions. I made a couple points then that I would be inclined to repeat here. One of them is that another way of positing the contrast to Mouffe's emphasis on the inherent antagonism of interests is to bring to bear Dewey's emphasis on common interests, and the pursuit of common interests across community borders, as a defining characteristic of a democratic polity. As an empirical matter both Dewey and Mouffe are right, up to a point. Dewey is right that members of any given community have some interests in common, and I am convinced that Mouffe is right that in any healthy society, and certainly in any democratic society if such a society is characterized at least by free expression, there will invariably be a plurality of views, some of which will be antagonistic. As a speculative matter, Mouffe is probably also right that there is no good reason to think that any amount of dialogue and deliberation will overcome the plurality of opinion and points of view, including some that are antagonistic. In other words, she is probably right that consensus is an unlikely result of political dialogue. So we may conclude that if democracy is possible, it must be able to accommodate the fact of common interests and the fact of pluralism and antagonism.

We might understand Koczanowicz as arguing that avoiding an insistence on consensus in favor of the idea of a critical community, through the exercise of the construction of meaning *a la* Bakhtin, provides the account of how a democratic polity can have it both ways. My approach has been, following Dewey more directly, to say that a non-consensual democratic polity can be built around the fact of common interests. We do not even need to agree on a theory of anything else, for example a theory of the self, or of society, or of language, or of community, or even of democracy. The simple facts that we have interests in common, and that we tend to favor the fulfillment of our interests, are the social conditions that enable us to develop a society that can legitimately be called 'democratic'. More is required, as Dewey also pointed out, which specifically is the need to pursue common interests across community borders. If he is right, then to the extent that we do that our social conditions will better meet the conditions of democracy.

As a theoretical matter, it remains an interesting question whether in the end Koczanowicz and I are saying basically the same thing, or whether there may be better reason to talk one way or the other. In either case, his analysis has enriched our understanding of the issues considerably.

# PRAGMATISM HOTEL

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**R. CALCATERRA, G. MADDALENA AND G. MARCHETTI (EDS.) (2015): *IL PRAGMATISMO. DALLE ORIGINI AGLI SVILUPPI CONTEMPORANEI***
**CAROCCI EDITORE, ROMA 2015.**

A metaphoric definition of pragmatism that many people know was given is writer Giovanni Papini's; according to it pragmatism is like a hotel corridor, on which many different rooms open up but through which it is inevitable to pass (p.89).

What is at stake in the essays collected in this much needed book is the pleasant discovery that pragmatism is not just the 'American' philosophy par excellence, but that it is rather an inevitable crossroad of so many different philosophical currents and orientations, that its deployments over more than one century involve in equal measure European and overseas contexts.

This book, edited with extreme precision and care, felicitously recognizes an osmosis between the two 'worlds', an osmosis that is comparable to the one occurred in the arts in the same years, when the European avant-garde met with the American abstraction and fueled in feedback all the subsequent artistic expressions in the Western world. In a similar spirit historical encounters such as James with Bergson, Bergson with the members of the Italian journal 'Leonardo', the 'Leonardo' and James; or, more subtly, the virtual intertwining between the philosophies of Peirce, James and Husserl, show how much richer and rhyzomatic the Western philosophical milieus of the late XIX and the XX centuries must have been than our historical accounts have ever presented. Reading this book is like discovering, within the scope of Western philosophical ideas, a historical paradigm that has been concealed or belittled or even distorted for a long time and for reasons that must be quite complex and imponderable to be even brought up; though one of the reasons might very likely be the factitious distinction between Europe and America, between a 'classical' ancient heritage and a 'new' challenge to it.

Fundamental concepts of the XX-century turn such as: world-of-life, action, givenness, 'things', phenomena, appear to emerge simultaneously both in Europe and the United States, like 'memes' moving from one continent to another one via influential personalities's journeys, meetings, publications, conferences.

This 'pragmatism hotel' opens its doors with Ralph Waldo Emerson's transcendentalism, which, being an inspiration to Nietzsche, introduces the individual's force of invention as basis for all thinking and intellectual commitment. America is mature enough to speak a native language after being hostage to the old world (as was D.H. Lawrence's assumption in his seminal book about American writers: *Studies in American Literature*, 1923). We could say that those intellectuals were 'making' America through the attempt to get rid of the old European rhetoric that was losing its grip on the *concrete* reality of a *concrete* environment, based on the rationalistic claim of the capability to know the actual world independently of its flowing, that is, evolutionary, potential and creative, character. Author A.M. Nieddu reminds us how Emersonian suggestions , far from being obsolete, are retrieved in different forms by Martha Nussbaum and Stanley Cavell in their respective concerns about a language that overcomes any distinction between genres and linguistic styles, through Emerson's notion of 'poetic judgment' and Romantic tradition (p.31).

The pragmatistic adventure is furtherly analyzed by A. Parravicini in the contribution the 'Metaphysical Club' gave to its development, a short-lived but crucial context offered to young philosophers such as James and Peirce, who, thanks to regular meetings probably occurred within 1872, elaborated their first intuitions. The club allowed for a free environment, not being jeopardized by the authority principle and academic power that had governed in Europe since the Middle Ages! Being active in a wide range of disciplines, from mathematics to astronomy, to evolutionary theories

and ethics, they had the ease to re-invent a philosophical language under the guidance of mathematician Chauncey Wright (wonderfully re-discovered by Louis Menand in *The Metaphysical Club*, 2001), who, although dying only three years after the end of the Club, laid the building blocks of pragmatism: the evolutionary theory expounded by Darwin, the paradigm shift that passed form the concern with causes to the cognitive projection on effects.

That events can be better explained by observing their *actual*, or predicting their *possible* effects, rather than by hypothesizing their causes, introduced the value of the empirical test, without falling into the abstractions of Anglo-Saxon empiricism, or the fetish of the data. An original insight by Chauncey Wright was the notion of 'exaptation': the ability of the human species to apply an ability in one field to other fields of cognition and action (recently cognitive scientist Merlin Donald has developed and experimentally corroborated a similar notion of generativity) (M. Donald, *The Origin of the Modern Mind*, 1991).

The ground for the pragmatist anti-idealism and anti-monocausalism was laid. Peirce and James were ready to take up the baton.

As G. Maddalena explains in his perspicuous analysis and pleasant narrative way, the extravagant attitudes of the members of the Metphysical Club deeply influenced Peirce's impetuous style of thinking that accounts for both his freedom from academic requirements and his difficulty in being recognized by peer academics. Peirce was able to metabolize European Kantianism and to give a new account of it in the light of the emergent Darwinism: the way to know things is an activity that absorbs the object to be known, ontology and epistemology coincide; a Kantian conclusion counterbalanced by the necessary consequence (already tackled by Hegel with opposed results) that representation, from both a logical and semiological perspective, doesn't leave any remainder of an unknown object: Peirce introduces the idea of phenomenology that Husserl was elaborating in the same years. Though it is unlikely for Husserl to have known Peirce, Peirce may have known Husserl through James. A new discipline like semiotics enters the scene, later developed by Charles Morris: representations are signs that turn even logic into a bio-social phenomenon (p. 148).

From these complex interactions it is easy to imagine the osmotic dynamics that was going on among the young philosophers of the early XX century on both sides of the ocean.

If we can easily find a Kantian, even a Hegelian legacy in Peirce's over-abundance of sources, also some intimations of an anti-scientist attitude - in the name of a defense of science - are present in some of his writings: the current revisitation today of the issue of 'objectivity' – we think of the Speculative Realism or the OOO philosophies – might find an original and strong issue in what he called the 'scientific method', which far from following rationalistim, didn't rely upon the over-confidence of the given existence of an object, but on the fact that different representations of the world, though necessarily mediated by sign systems, would converge 'in the long run' (p. 53).

To which, in the feedback we hinted at before, John Maynard Keynes – who employed Peirce way before his rediscovery – ironically replied: 'In the long run we are all dead' (J.M.Keynes, *A Treatise on Probability*).

Against the now obsolete ideology of verificationism, Peirce proposed a version of it that does not exclude the vitality of doubt, uneasiness and even error (p.52). Fallibilism is therefore introduced as an antidote to both scientific foundationalism and the anti-scientific attitude.

In focusing on the actual concrete inferential work of the mind (especially in the logic of abduction (re-discovered in Italy by U. Eco in the Seventies), Peirce shows to be a path-finder in the recent development of the cognitive sciences that, dismissing the rigidity of cognitivism, are more inclined to describe thinking as a flexible activity: by way of example, Peirce may have anticipated the neurological research of McClelland's *Parallel Distributed Processing*, or Damasio's *somatic markers*.

Finding connections where there seemed to be none, Massimo Ferrari shows that, if the exchanges between the two continents were steady and effective, it was certainly due to William James, whose academic position allowed him to travel and function as a relay: he met Bergson and Husserl and had them meet – however virtually – the American philosophers of his time. Probably following the Metaphysical Club inspiration, James, like Peirce, imparts logic a psychological direction: the real work of the mind brings in itself a *concrete* logical activity: any inferential activity is accompanied by a physiological modification (p. 78).

The psychological perspective, probably mutated from Wundt, introduces the phenomenological ideas of correlation, intentionality, projection. The tenacity of 'belief' replaces the comfort of rational a priori ideas, and the openness of possibilities overpowers the claim of a dead totality (p.86) and it is within the scope of possibilities, that is, effects and projections, that we name anything as the 'truth'.

And it was Josiah Royce who shared the issue with James: there might be a risk of a weaker version of pragmatism, that can be mistaken as relativism, if the emphasis is on the truth as a temporary and subjective conviction (p.99): a solution may be that every truth be tested by data that are not conceived as 'external objects' but as modes of action (p. 105), as R. Fabbrichesi's essay shows.

It is in fact by virtue of an emphasis on the experimental method, both in science and in pedagogy, that John Dewey orientates his own development of the previous generation's intuitions. His convergence with the notions of 'lived experience' and 'embodied mind' is made quite apparent here (pp. 115). Especially today we can look at his didactic method - called 'Dewey's Schools' (one example is the 'New School of Social Research', co-founded with Veblen and others, in New York in 1919) - as an incredibly update model for an education that implies the active and interactive role of students and professors, and a complete independence from criteria that are not strictly intellectual.

Concepts like inquiry, exploration, environment, problem-solving, radical democracy seem to be absolutely suitable for any current discussion about politics, ethics, education, or even aesthetics, discussion that are free from and do not undergo the economic-political pressure of education as is exerted in our Universities today (R. Calcaterra and R. Frega, p.121 and ff).

As Dewey's stance on ethics finds a further advancement in Sidney Hook and Morton White (the naturalization of ethics and politics described by A. Boncompagni), his idea of the dynamic, exploratory value of philosophical thinking is inherited by Mead: their common work on functionalism in psychology – as opposed to structuralism – may recall the general systems theory, in its issue on interactive, non-linear and non-causalistic, teleological strategies among systems.

A line of thought becomes clear that involves James, Dewey, Mead and concerns the relationship between aim and environment (p.142).

Particularly interesting is the space given to the Italian pragmatists Giovanni Papini and Giuseppe Prezzolini, young intellectual who, deeply fascinated by pragmatism as a philosophy that was "viva, vissuta, eccitatrice di vita!" (p.177) in early XX century wanted to meet Bergson in Paris and James in Rome, inviting them to contribute to the philosophical journal 'Leonardo' (1903-1907) that they had founded. American pragmatism was welcomed as a counterbalance to the outdated idealism that governed Italian intellectuals of the time and it is not by chance that Papini was a writer and a poet, who by vocation needed a 'live' philosophy both in the form of thinking and in the style of expression. And it is not by chance that we feel, through Maddalena's analysis, both Nietzsche's influence (Maddalena calls them 'existential pragmatists) and the futurists' style, also present in minor thinkers like Vailati and Calderoni, who expanded the scope of reflection to science and law: experimenting, testing and finding evidence are not only means of verification but the very creative core of knowledge (p.186).

The second part of the book, which focuses on the successive branching off of the historical group of philosophers, shows how much the latest productions in different philosophical fields owe to that first source, and singles out a wide range of current arguments such as the reformulation of the a priori notion: according to R. Calcaterra, Clarence Irving Lewis (p. 161) reconfigures the a priori as a creative disposition of the mind to regulate and classify; an argument quite similar to Josiah Royce's (p.105): even when we deny classification, we do it by classifying (incidentally, one of Royce's students happened to be the father of cybernetics, Norbert Wiener). This is a non-prescriptive a priori, but one purely and freely chosen to give nature an order. Actually it was Peirce who said that when we talk about the 'order of nature' we can't demonstrate it, but a nature that is not ordered is inconceivable. The existence of an independent 'law' that accounts for anything we call 'nature' is a necessary part of the structure of the mind.

Defending the a priori is to defend the dynamic (and not eternal) value of the human mind, as Calcaterra states (p. 162), against the basic verificationism of the experimental sciences. What is at stake here is a form of thinking and knowing that relies upon an inevitable but dynamic structure, in the sense that it is open to possible in-progress meanings, though (and here we find the anti-relativist stance of the pragmatists) not all meanings are possible, due to the constant test of the effects.

In fact, concerning the role of the 'effects' in knowledge, it is interesting to be reminded how Quine himself recognized his debt to pragmatism: his critique of pure a priori or a posteriori judgements rests uopn the premise that they depend without exception on cultural postulates, on their 'use', on the continuum of experience, in one word, on the resistance that 'effects' oppose to contradictions, and not on their causes.

Concerning anti-relativism, Donald Davidson's principle charity recalls the pragmatistic idea (particularly Peircian, lately shared by Joseph Margolis' constructivism, p. 276) that experience is a complex activity, which includes among its conditions *presuppositions* of truth and justice. If that is the case, the very micro-relativity of any individual 'truth' overcomes relativism, being itself based on a wider picture that is collectively stated and shared (p. 215); what we call 'mind' is not an entity but a collective activity.

In this light we can read Habermas' and Apel's notion of intersubjectivity as a ground for a new kind of universalism, as shown by M. Failla to be the legacy of Peirce's argument of continuity, in close connection with 'Habermas' transcendental community. Real – as Failla argues about Apel – is one and the same as knowable (p. 229).

It is Wilfrid Sellars's critique of an allegedly bare 'given' to be scientifically verified that casts light on the role of the effect in knowledge: any 'data' are caught in the dynamics of the consequences (though these are not to be seen in a utilitarian perspective), a dynamics that protects human experience from being possibly overpowered by the 'scientific image'. As a peculiar way to humanism, Sellars's pragmatic stance retrieves the concept of 'truth' as a matter of creativity, intentionality, responsibility (p. 205).

'Consequence' becomes a complex epistemological factor: an intertwining of sensorial response, production of facts, inference of future effects in behaviors, evolutionary values.

It is exactly due to the case of absence of causes that we construct our in-progress convictions.

G. Marchetti, in analyzing the adventures of Putnam's internal realism shows how much the variants and turns that the concept undergoes over time in Putnam's philosophy, show how 'realism' is as necessary as limited: epistemological conclusions are not justified by testing *data* but by a continuous re-elaboration of *theories*, that keeps them in a condition of being *acceptable* (we like to recall that 'acceptability' has the same etimological origin of the term 'probability', from: probation, 'approve'). But on the

other hand, if the proof of the truth is always temporary as always grounded upon effects, and any relationship between observation and effect undermines the distinction facts/values, as facts must be necessarily related to the selective perception that observation is, Putnam accepts none the less the anti-relativist suggestion (that the notion of 'theory-laden facts' may have provided) of pragmatism by considering the element of contingency as an indubitable 'independence' of facts from the mind (p.295-7).

This book rounds off its analyses with the greatest contribution to a revival of pragmatism: Calcaterra's essay deeply analyzes Richard Rorty's intellectual path, whose pragmatistic legacy is quite explicit and complex: his departure from the analytic philosophers' milieu, probably due to contacts with intellectual figures like Thomas Kuhn or Quentin Skinner, imparted a pragmatistic orientation to his successive and most influential philosophy.

Going back to Dewey, Rorty shifts the focus from the 'eternal to the future' (p.311): the task of philosophy passes from the analytic tool for truth definitions to the pragmatic force of transformation, both ethical and political. Any representationalism is over, if thinking cannot ignore the challenges of contingency: to the claim of an alleged independence of the 'real', Rorty's adamantine writing responds through the reformulations of knowledge as an 'art', and with an ethics of solidarity as the true necessity of the human 'condition'.

In the final but open-ended conclusion of the book, S. Marchetti selects the still to come complex legacy and development of pragmatism, including figures like Susan Haack, Cornel West, Robert Brandom and Richard Schusterman.

Definitely this synthetic and complete history of pragmatism shows for the first time the force of clarification (beyond the hyper-complexity of the European legacy) of the task of philosophy but also and especially a force of freedom and invention in authentic philosophical thinking. What Russell ironically called 'transatlantic truth' was actually the cradle of real intellectuals, who claimed for themselves a social, moral and educational role, so much forgotten today in times of the 'professional' philosophers (as explicitly argued by John McDermott, p.271).

The intellectual adventures of philosophy are to be found in personalities and their communities, rather than in academies. (An ideally related book might be *The Last Intellectuals*, Russell Jacoby, 1987, NY, which analyses the transformation of American intellectuals into professionals from the 60s to the 90s).

As a tentative conclusion, after the paradoxes of relativism, the scholastics of analytic philosophies, and even *after* the conservative and dead-ended attempts to retrieve 'objectivity', on the part of currents like Speculative Realism and Object-Oriented-Ontologies, pragmatism contributes with a new language to these ongoing discussions. This book makes it necessary to re-write the history of philosophical ideas in a non-Eurocentered way, and to recreate epistemological and intellectual connections and affiliations, that spread out like 'memes' transmitted by brilliant minds and living beings, through friendship, intellectual exchange and engagement, new interpretations and paradigm shifts.

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