

Course 10.12 Elements of cultural philosophy
Third year of philosophy 1998/1999
Higher institute for pedagogy - VII - Olympiadelaan 25
2020 Antwerp

..

Contents: see p. 59.

.....
Preface. We begin by defining ‘culture’: “If a task (given + demanded) - Usually called ‘nature’ - is both correctly understood and correctly solved (solution), then there is culture.

With Arn. Toynbee (1889/1975; *A Study of History* (1934/1961), one can also say: being able to meet a challenge is culture. The definitions of Blumenberg (02) and Kafka (03/04) are models.

Ontological Method.-- (05/13).

The GG and the GV are ‘being’, realities. The solution is ‘real’ (in the Hegelian sense), i.e., able to cope, appropriate to given and demanded realities. - Peirce emphasizes science (05/06). Sources are own experience and testimony (07).

Ontological reason targets identity (phenomenology) and seeks reason (logic) (08/09). Ontology, platonic especially, examines how (seemingly) real something is and how it is (seemingly) real. For example, culture (10).

Three main strands: realism (platonic and aristotelian) and nominalism. The latter typifies modern reason (11/13). This seeks to construct ontology- or metaphysics-free concepts.

Discussion of opinions.

The autonomous self, confronted with ever singular data and issues, expresses constructed concepts in discursive opinions.- (14/23) -- Discourse with a view to communicative action (14/15).

Consequence: undecidables (14/17) for the reason of “Thou neither art nor I prove strict.” Even concerning foundations or “fundamentals” (axiomata) (18/22). This involves criticism of reason that exposes the crisis of foundations.

Premodern/ modern/ postmodern.-- (23/37).-- Primitive (23/25). Modern (26/34). Postmodern (35/37).

Modern views on ethics (morality).-- (38/50). She tends toward anarchic living.

Modern reason viewed by destiny.-- (51/58).-- In summary, it may be asserted -- as an ‘opinion’ on the matter -- “Modern reason chooses but fate (that which it actually works out) disposes.” How a dime can roll is hereby confirmed (up to and including turning to the contrary).

'Culture' according to Hans Blumenberg.

Bibl. sample : Tr. De Ruytter, *Dodendans van metaforen (Hans Blumenbergs lezing van de westerse cultuurgeschiedenis)*, (Dance of death of metaphors (Hans Blumenberg's thee reading of Western cultural history), in: *The Owl v. Minerva* 11:4 (1995: Summer), 221/238.

Blumenberg (1920/1996) was a prof at the University of Munster. We dwell on his definition of culture

1. *The 'absolutism' (overwhelming supremacy) of reality built off.*

a. *The fact, what is given.*

Nature ('reality') is so overpowering that man in his powerlessness in the face of it does not control the conditions of existence in which he finds himself thrown, indeed, believes that he does not control them (a.c., 230).

b. *The demanded*

As soon as there is talk of man as man, as we know him, he is the designer of the dismantling, deconstruction, of the reality superiority. This is the meaning of his life. Blumenberg justifies this axiom on the basis of current biological theories concerning the origin and survival of man as a biological species.

From the time of the primitive forest man, instincts are not adapted to the environment and therefore man lives in fear, i.e. the feeling that reality is so powerful that it compels human powerlessness from all sides. Blumenberg also justifies his axiom in terms of the theory of Thomas Hobbes (1588/1679), a modern Cartesian.

From the "primordial state" there is "war of all against all" such that man does not survive this state of supremacy unless he comes to a contract that finds in the (modern) state one of its forms.

2. *Culture as "solution of a problem".*

O.c., 231.-- The whole question is, "What problem?" Answer: to make human impotence livable.

Metaphorology.

To attack the harsh reality frontally-directly is, as it were, impracticable. That is why impotent man resorts to 'metaphors', i.e. things situated between him and the 'absolutist' power position of nature. They disguise them.

Such symbols' (metaphors) are, to begin with, the primitive myths but also Greek philosophy, Christian theology, the modern sciences. If myth does not overcome the power of nature, neither do the other "disguises" - including modern science, the product of reason.

So that Blumenberg does not share the typically modern belief in progress from that point of view. The crushing supremacy of all that surrounds reality remains what it is: overwhelming.

Franz Kafka: The laws. The deviation from them as well as the feedback.

Pre-Socratics saw nature, the cosmos, steerage-wise: nature is;

- a. purposeful (lawful),
- b. at least partially deviant and
- c. thus as deviant in need of correction (feedback, restoration).

The Bible thinks analogously: paradise, fall, restoration by redemption.

According to H.J. Schoeps, *Over de mens (Beschouwingen van de moderne filosofen)*, (On man (Reflections of modern philosophers)), Utr./Antw., 1966, 119/121 (Franz Kafka: *het geloof in tragische positie* (the belief in tragic position), this cybernetic scheme dominates the work of Fr. Kafka (1883/1924), writer of world stature. We turn to its structure.

1. O.c., 123.-- *Zur Frage der Gesetze*, (On the question of laws), a little work by Kafka, talks about the -'laws' known in Jewish circles. Jewish theologians (including the Chassidim, in Kafka's eyes a kind of 'nobility') are full of it. Kafka himself knows himself to be an ignoramus (am ha-arez) who, typically of modern enlightenment, wonders whether "the laws" are not pseudo-legal.

After all, Kafka lives "in the constant impression that he is governed by laws he does not know" (o.c., 123). For what is immediately given to him, modern man, are not the laws but the theologians who proclaim and explain as a kind of theological-Biblical "nobility" for the benefit of "the people" (am ha-arez).

2. O.c., 124.-- The great mass of "the people" have departed from the laws in contrast to the lawgivers, the "nobility. (Psalm 1:13) -- At least that is the hypothesis that Kafka advances as still somewhat Jewish-believing.

3. O.c., 124.-- A deviation -- denoted in the Jewish Orthodox sense -- causes a divine judgment (gesera), i.e., an intervention of the lawgiver who is Yahweh who "avenges" (i.e., seeks to correct) the deviation.

Trackings of a dog.-- Kafka knows theology but is not a theologian, but a literary man who in his works of art 'visualizes' theology, depicts it in artistic models. For example, in *Nasporingen: a dog (Trackings of a dog)*, tells how "the people" (think of present-day humanity) of the dogs - already many generations back - went astray (deviation).

This error or sinfulness avenges itself and weighs heavily on the present canine genus which bears the burden of it but does not know the sufficient reason for it. This sufficient reason is the 'x', the weighing unknown, which gives Kafka's works the absurd atmosphere in which so many contemporaries recognize themselves.

Culture as law-based problem solving.

We refer again to H.-J. Schoeps, *Over de mens* (About the human being), Utr./Antw., 1966, where he says that Fr. Kafka, originally brought up as a Jew, and having become sceptical under the influence of modern rationalism, nevertheless keeps looking forward to “the law(s)”.

These are so much - in his view - the essence of all fortunate culture that the disaster of present-day humanity lies in the fact that it has become “deprived of the consciousness of being God’s creature so that individually it grows into a ‘thing’, a ‘lifeless thing’ and socially into a nameless mass (o.c., 131).”

Odradeck.

In Slavonic, ‘odradeck’ means something like “gone beyond the law(s).” -- The artist Kafka visualizes our cultural degeneration through a ghostly being, Odradeck, “deviated. Today’s man is more and more a “dog man” without an “I. He is rather an ‘it’. As are the objects of which - in our technological culture - he increasingly avails himself.

Thus he gives Odradeck among other things “the senseless (note: absurd, i.e. in this context: unexplained) form of a spool of thread” (o. c., 131).

The Process.

The title of a famous work published in 1925.-- In a descriptive-narrative image (visualization), *Der Prozess* (The process), typifies the ground structure of our degenerating culture that is less and less able to handle its assignments and is becoming ‘unreal’. Our culture is a. A riddle b. that calls for disentanglement. Disentanglement which, at least according to Kafka, does not find the ‘x’ and is stuck for the riddle.

Note .-- Thinking for a moment of a popular model, “Where did I earn that?”

Joseph K. is indicted by a mysterious and “higher” (Kafka indicates a residue of sacredness here) court. But the file is not accessible to either Joseph K. or his lawyers.

Behold the riddle.

Now the unravelling.-- Joseph K. attempts to trace the guilt for which he is being prosecuted. The role of his lawyers is immediately to essentially guess the offense. “To deduce from the interrogations the contents of the file that makes up the basis. That is very difficult”. (O.c., 130). “From the character and forms of the punishment one must try to find the ‘x’ of the sin (...).

From the nature of the punishment (note.: model) seek to determine the essence of the guilt (note : original).” (O.c., 129).-- This is how Kafka characterizes today’s rational man.

05.

Ontology.

Dwell again, very briefly, on the definition of ontology which is described as “theory of reality.

Bibl. sample : Kl. Oehler, Einl., Charles S. Peirce, “*Ueber die Klarheit unserer Gedanken* (How to Make our Ideas Clear), Frankf.a.M., 1968. Peirce speaks of “the subject of ‘logic’ and a concept very closely associated with logic, namely, ‘reality’” (o.c., 80). Indeed, logic invariably begins with a task, i.e., a given (GG) as well as a requested or sought (GV), i.e., something that presents itself as “being there” (“real”).

Four methods.-- Peirce briefly typifies four ways of dealing with reality.

I.a.1.-- Method of tenacity.—(the stubbornness method), A well-defined task is responded to by one and all with the same well-defined type of solution to the exclusion of any consideration of a possible different answer.-- Many people, including scientists, respond in this way.

I.a.2.-- Method of authority (authoritarian method).

A well-defined task is reacted to in a group under the direction of authoritative people with always the same solution to the exclusion of everyone paying attention to a possible other solution.-- Many people, including scientists, react in this way as well and not least people who belong to religious groups.

I.b.-- A priori method. (preferred method).

To a well-defined task one responds, in the name of ‘reason’ (reasoning), individually or in groups, with the same type of preferred solution but with the inclusion of consideration of possible other solutions (method of discussion), -- Many, especially scientifically trained people, practice this method.

II.-- Method of science (scientific method).

This pass is truly ontological.-- A well-defined task is responded to individually or in group with the same well-defined solution, i.e., testing against data independent of thought by anyone. “We may define ‘real’ as that whose features are independent of anyone’s (untested) thoughts about them” (o.c., 80).

This course of particular ontology (especially cultural ontology) stands or falls with the above. Sometimes the scientific method is labelled with the term “critical method” (a term which is, however, open to more than one interpretation).

Scientific and pseudoscientific speech.

Bibl. sample : H. Roelants, *In de marges van de wetenschap* (In the margins of science), in: Tijdschr.v. filos. 60 (1998):1 (March), 5/32.

The author very briefly takes up the ‘problem of demarcation’, which has been posed for years in order to arrive at a clear and definitive definition of ‘all that is science’. Immediately “pseudoscience” becomes demarcable. However: “Many demarcation criteria (including combinations) have been proposed, but none of them has turned out to be unproblematic”. (A.c., 6). K. Popper, Th. Kuhn, I. Lakatos, -- in between M. Bunge (the most developed physics is norm), P. Feyerabend are outlined very briefly.

As a pseudoscience, astrology is taken to task. Each of the cited theorists have their - their axiomatic - reasons for rejecting astrology, of course. Which in itself is cause for reservation. Then peripheral phenomena within the established sciences are dissected.

1. Marginal research.

The Gaia hypothesis, the hypothesis of morphogenetic fields (R. Sheldrake), the anthropic principle,--applied catastrophe theory, animal language, artificial-intelligence research, vitamin C and cancer etc. are situated within the sciences but meet with suspicion, yes, rejection.

Note-- Extremely dissenting opinions.-- ‘Endoheresies’ (Asimov). E.g. P. Duesberg ‘s hypothesis that aids is not caused by the hiv virus.

2. Pathological science.

Term originating from I. Langmuir (1881/1957), who defines ‘pathological’ science as “science concerning things that are not there”. Still within the sciences but rejected as “highly debatable” by most. Thus the N-rays of R. Blondlot. So also the so-called biological action of extremely dilute homeopathic medicines (J. Benveniste) et al.

Resistance to new insights.

Rarely do new insights find acceptance among scientists without problems. Think of B. McClintock, B. Belousov, LaBerge. They were first rejected as too unorthodox. Main reason: in the midst of a proliferation of real and unreal new ideas, established science must offer resistance in order not to lose itself in useless research.

Pseudoscience.

It is “radically flawed” (even in the absence of real criteria). Pseudoscience does not die out as “social institutions” that are essentially inert. -- or perhaps for other reasons!

Being is known by reason. Experience and above all testimony.

Western philosophy, ontology, begins with the Milesian school. This school originated with thinkers such as Thales (-624/-545), Anaximandros (-610/-547), Anaximenes (-588/-524) and others, who as fellow thinkers saw one and the same solution to all kinds of problems. Unfortunately, we now have only fragments. Fortunately, it is certain that Herodotus of Halicarnassus (-484/-425) and Thoukudides of Athens (-465/-395), both historians, however different, are situated in the Milesian tradition. Of them we do have extensive texts. They bear witness - or rather, they provide evidence - of the Milesian method.

Around-40, an unnamed Greek author writes: “Do you see, my thinker, how Herodotos takes hold of your soul when he leads it through the countries and turns your hearing into seeing? Still above the ‘historian’ (note : explorer, observer) stands the man Herodotus: with his sympathy for the material he treats, with his sympathy for everything that happens, driven by controlled passion. And of which he traces the prepositions.”

“That very thing makes up the totally personal magic that Herodotos exudes” (D.H. Teuffen, *Herodot.*, Wien/Munich: 1979, 20).

This text conveys the atmosphere of perception and thought of the first Greek thinkers. Their method, i.e. solution method.

Direct and indirect knowledge.-- How does Herodotos define method?

1.-- *What he saw himself* (opsis, seeing,-- sometimes gnomè) as an observing explorer (histor, Lat.: inquisitor, is explorer).

2.-- *What he knows thanks to witnesses*, informants, whom he chooses, by the way. This he calls ‘historiè: Lat. inquisitio, investigation. Focused on what is not immediately given.

That is the dual source of information. “I know (autoptès elthon), because I experienced it myself”. “I know (‘akoèi historion’), by virtue of hearsay”. Cfr. A. Rivier, *Etudes de littérature Grecque*, (Studies in Greek Literature), Geneva, 1975, 344ss..

The sources of this course.

“There is untold much that we accept on the basis of testimony of others both in daily life and in science” (R. van Woudenberg, *Kennis op basis van ervaring en kennis op basis van getuigenis*, (Knowledge based on experience and knowledge based on testimony), in: Tijdschr.v.Filos. 59 (1991):3, 416). This course is still Milesian in this sense.

Is pure reason what is governed by two and only two axioms.

Bibl. sample : H.J. Hampel, *Variabilität und Disziplinierung des Denkens*, (Variability and disciplining of thinking), Munich/ Basel, 1967,14,-- vrl. 17/21.

Indeed, when one limits oneself to classical or traditional logic, two axioms turn out to be “fundamental”:

1. The principle of identity and
2. the principle of reason (ground). Both were clearly recognized already in the earliest Greek antiquity (Parmenides (identity) and Platon (reason)).

1. Identity. - All that is, is.-- Can be focused on some non-transcendental fact: “All that is, is this”.

2. Reason (ground). - All that is has either within itself or outside itself its reason or ground.

Platon: “Nothing is without reason”. The author pauses to consider the justification (proof) of these two principles or premises. He refers to W. Dilthey (1833/1911), who, following A. Comte (1798/1857; founder of positivism), can be identified as the first theoretician of the human sciences, and to W. Wundt (1833/1920; experimental psychologist), who refer to the immediate or direct experience as the “source” of the insight regarding identity and reason.

The author cites E. May, *Am Abgrund des Relativismus*, (On the precipice of relativism) Berlin, 1941, in this regard. “When I experience ‘red’ and at the same time understand the meaning of ‘red’ in a living way, then I also understand in a living way that ‘red’ (as far as the lived meaning is concerned) is simply ‘red’, and that this ‘red’ is precisely ‘this’. Thus I see the principle of identity in its imperative validity”.

Note -- With May one can just as well assert: “When I experience something as red (‘experience’, ‘live through’, immediately grasp), then - if I understand the fact ‘red’ e.g. in the case of someone turning red (‘grasp’ in its meaning) - my mind, as a thinking spirit, is forced - not from without but from within - to look for the reason or ground of that turning red, respectively becoming red, as demanded by the given. In other words, “By what or why does that person turn red?”

Note--Why do Dilthey, Wundt, May et al. fall back again and again on instantaneous grasping of meaning? Because, if one wants to ‘prove’ the axioms (deduce them from propositions), both axioms must already be postulated as given.

Explanations.

One paid attention to the wording of the axioms': "All that is, is, and all that is, has a reason". All that is, is the object of ontology (metaphysics), core of classical or traditional philosophy. Indeed, it is in the confrontation -- 'encounter' -- with "all that is" -- being or being (in the language of the ancient Greeks) -- that both principles emerge in the thinking mind,-- are grasped. At least unexpressed.

1.-- Phenomenology.

"All that is." That which is given. That which is not sought,-- which is not asked for. The articulation of it is called "phenomenology" Why? Because the term 'fainomenon', lat. phaenomenum, showing with itself ('phenomenon', as part of 'phenomenology' points out that phenomenology is 'logos': bring up phenomenon.

The principle of identity governs, is 'archè', presupposition, of the fact that I, e.g., see something. And the fact that I, in intellectual conscience, am forced to acknowledge, to agree.

The demand (of me) is then to say that all that is, is. In phenomenology the demand is precisely to render the given as right - as it is -, -- as given.-- That is pure reason in its encounter with reality or being.

2.-- Logic.

"All that is." So e.g. someone becomes red in my presence.

a. I establish this (the given).

b. I ask myself why (psychological mechanism e.g.) or why (psychological motive) the person in question becomes red.

The questioned now is no longer the fact as fact or given but the reason for it.-- But then I enter the realm of reasoning. This is of logic: "If this person is shy and embarrassed, then the reddening is understandable, logical." That is the reductive reasoning which starts from a lemma, a hypothesis, and can be tested afterwards on the basis of new data.

Conclusion.-- That is the classical or traditional definition of reason. As soon as another axiom or fact is put forward, it is no longer pure reason but applied reason. If applied reason is interpreted as pure reason, we are in the realm of ideology, for then reason is invariably more than pure reason.

For example, if one claims that sacred data are not 'rational', then one adds a secularist axiom to pure reason. Fine. But then reason is no longer pure.

Metaphysics (ontology): what it really is.

Begin with a definition of philosophizing.

O. Willmann, *Die wichtigsten philosophischen Fachausdrücke in historischer Anordnung*, (The most important philosophical terms in historical order), Kempten/Munich, 1909, 20, says that according to the ancients the term ‘theoria’ (Lat.: *speculatio*, *contemplatio*), fathoming, descends from Pythagoras. A ‘theatis’, speculator:

a. observes, is sensed,

b. but not superficially but with depth. His phenomenology is logical reasoning through and through.

As for the Romans, the speculator, the soldier on guard or the peeper. Like an observer-correspondent for a modern daily newspaper who explores and interprets the facts he observes.

All that exists

Platon called ‘science’, “*theorètikikè tou ontos*”. fathoming what is real. To put it with Parmenides, the fathoming aims at “*to on kath’ heautou*”, being according to itself, not as it looks to us. In mid-century Latin: “*obiectum materiale*”, the material object, i.e. the given for any interpretation.

Or as Platon also says: “*to ontos on*”, that which is real, i.e. in a real way - *ontos* - real or his(de), is the actual object of philosophy. Cfr o.c., 33. Not the apparent.

Metaphysics (ontology).

Immediately we know that metaphysics is the work of philosophy, because metaphysics aims at the really real. This is twofold: it asks how something is real and how that something is real (what existence and essence are). The answer is the ontologic definition that articulates the identity of something.

Defining.-- There are at least two fundamental types of defining.

1.-- *The nominal.*-- The nominalists claim that we do not (cannot) know the really real. They limit themselves to the ‘nominal’ definition, i.e. that definition which - for the time being - is satisfied with a few features, sufficient to make something distinguishable from the rest.

2.-- *The real* - conceptual realists - claim that we possess a really real insight into the whole reality of something and are therefore capable of a real definition.

In reality, both theses are right: the nominalist cannot deny the overall reality (the ‘idea’ in platonic language because he says he is satisfied with a ‘part’ of it, where the realist finds he knows only parts).

Nominalism(s) versus realism(s).

Bibl. sample :

- J. Largeault, *Enquête sur le nominalisme*, (Investigation of nominalism), Paris/Louvain, 1971;
- Roll. Van Zandt, *The Metaphysical Foundations of American History*, The Hague, 1959.
- R. Jolivet, *Les sources de l'idéalisme*, (The sources of idealism), Paris, 1967;
- R. Jolivet: "Kant considers Cartesianism to be a problematic idealism while he labels Berkeley's system of thought as dogmatic idealism" (o.c., 7).

In other words: a good name for modern thinking is 'idealism'.

Nominalism(s).

The basic axiom of modern idealism reads, "Thinking reaches only itself and its thinking content immediately and immediately derives from it the exclusive valid-ness of mathematics" (ibid.). What exists in the "outside world" (understand: reality situated outside inner consciousness) is only indirectly - indirectly - given and thus known.-- Modern thinking literally turns around within the bubble of individual consciousness.

Modern idealism is a logical inference from nominalism. As Jolivet, o.c., 9, says.

With William of Ockham (Occam) (1290/1349), the "venerabilis inceptor," the venerable innovator, nominalism becomes the basis of modern thought. After all, within the bubble of intimate consciousness ("sens intime" (Descartes), what we think -- e.g., a concept -- is only a sign that refers to "the things" of an outside world,-- sign that we, -- very detached from reality, "construct" (constructionism) within our minds. -- this in response to sensory perceptions (including sensations) that elicit such "concepts" (conceptualism). Cfr. Largeault, o.c., v.

'Idea'

"The Platonic terms 'idea' and 'eidos', idea, denote an objective (note: present outside the interiority of individual consciousness) structure. Not to a representation in our mind (note: as the nominalists (idealists) claim". (...). If a good craftsman wants to do a good job - said Platon - , he should look at the idea (of what he is working out),-- it should float in his mind, -- it should be present in his mind.

Thus in the XVIth century one came to use the term "idea" for "an ideal proposal in the mind" and then for each "concept". -- This, however, has never been the case in antiquity". (E. De Strycker, *Beknopte geschiedenis van de antieke filosofie*. (Concise history of ancient philosophy), (95).

Empiricism.

Modern idealism or rationalism - for reason, modernly conceived, is the faculty of idealists - is - according to Jolivet - "a logical consequence of nominalist empiricism" (o.c.,9).

Indeed: empiricism or sensory experience is the starting point.

What is really given, after all, are the material 'things' of our sense perceptions, resp. sensations. To these our mental constructions (concepts etc.) refer from the interiority or 'bubble' of modern (self)-consciousness or I.

Idiography-- What the senses offer is strictly "this here and now" i.e. singular (idion).

Yet it is clear that our constructions situate that singularity both in collections and in systems. In other words: our constructions are general (universal) and overall (compact).

For the nominalist these relations are not present in the things themselves but constructed by our creative mind.

Put another way: our general and overall notions ('concepts') are just signs, -- not the things themselves with their relations (as the realists claim). Immediately, the nominalists argue that the general and overall are only constructs to which we assign nomina, names. They 'exist' only within the bubble of our conscious self. Nominalism.

One sees that Platon's idea, i.e., the singular insofar as it exists together with what is similar to it (collection) and with what is related to it (system), volatilizes into a mental construction. For Platon, things perceived and sensed are immediately present within our open minds. For him, the relations of likeness and of coherence, present in those given things, are also immediately present within our open mind.

These are not constructions (unless provisional as lemmata or provisional ideas) but realities. Realism is therefore the term given to them. Or theory of ideas -- not modern 'idealism' or rationalism.

Note -- Platon experiences (perceives, is sensed) things as bathing in the higher, divine world. Also Aristotle but clearly less so. The ideas therefore situate the things of experience in that higher world. The nominalists also isolate the things of experience from that sacred world: they "secularize" or make the things of experience worldly, which are experienced by them without higher relations.

Applicative model.

This Athenian thief here and now is for Platon one singular case (specimen, 'image') of the set 'man'. He is one singular part ('image') of the system (Athenian) 'humanity'. When he steals, he shows himself to be sophisticatedly 'knowledgeable' (technè) but in contradiction with the higher laws of conscience (conscience-less). This higher, yes, sacred dimension or relation he disregards.

He behaves as an individual, detached from his relations,-- egocentric, not--solidarity.

The nominalist, insofar as he is an extreme nominalist, can therefore also side with the thief as an expert but.

Three main lines.

J.K. Feibleman, *An Introduction to Peirce's Philosophy*, New York/ London, 445f., says: "The history of philosophy shows that, from one point of view, there are only three radically distinct metaphysical tenets which any one can put forward as his own wherever or whenever.

Of course there are more than three, but all are variants of the fundamental three". To which Van Zandt, o.c., 125, immediately adds, "These three are the two types of realism (note: Platonic and Aristotelian) and nominalism".

Modernity.

The sensory 'object' detached from all relations, insofar as constructed within the bubble of the modern, rational or idealistic subject (consciousness, I): such is the definition of modern thought! Where the mid-century scholastics thought realistically (basically platonic, over time aristotelianizing), modernity thinks nominalistically.

Feibleman, *An Introduction to Peirce's Philosophy* (171), cited by Van Zandt, *ibid.*, says: "Peirce says there was a tidal wave of nominalism(s). Descartes was a nominalist. Locke and all that followed him, viz. Berkeley, Hartley, Hume, were nominalists. Leibniz was extremely nominalist (...). Kant was a nominalist. Hegel was a nominalist with a nostalgia for realism".

As an aside: as Van Zandt notes, all connoisseurs on the subject agree. Just as they also broadly agree that the Anglo-Saxon mentality-Britain and the USA-is nominalist. Ockham's nominalism typifies Hobbes, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Hamilton, Mil and the Americans generally (not Peirce for he is "a scholastical realist") follow English philosophy.

Modern discussion regarding foundations is liberal.

“There can be no doubt that the emergence of liberal societies is linked to:

- a. the emergence of modernity and (...)
- b. the philosophical disagreement on metaphysical and, among other things, religious issues”. (A. Van de Putte, *Positieve vrijheid in een liberale samenleving* (Positive freedom in a liberal society), in: *De Uil van Minerva* 14: 1 (1997 : autumn), 13).

In other words: the premodern collective belief in:

- a. the objective being (essence) of things - object par excellence of traditional metaphysics - and especially
- b. the sacred (sacred) divine order of things - object of theology, part of traditional metaphysics - at the end of the Middle Ages, falls into a deep crisis: disagreement concerning the world and philosophy of life prevails and the clergy lose their vanguard.-
- This is the beginning of today’s multicultural.

The demand for new axioms.

These can be summed up in one term: the social contract, essence of liberalism. John Rawls (*A Theory of Justice*, Oxford, 1971; updated in *Political Liberalism*, New York, 1993) puts it this way: modern societies no longer set themselves up for truth, as metaphysics and theology claimed pre-modernly conceived, but for reasonableness, understand: rationality, which sets up axioms and their conclusion:, -- foremost after discussion by rationally reasoning individuals and groups.

I. Kant (1724/1804; top figure of the German Aufklärung) puts it as follows.

a. ***Individual.*** -- I, autonomous (i.e., freed from metaphysics and theology), find in myself reason (‘ratio’ in Latin) which gradually exposes all that is rationally feasible concerning reality, including the rules of conduct.

b. ***Social.***-- My reason recognizes that I share it with all other rational persons and so it reckons with all others as regards insights into reality and, among other things, as regards living together in society.

Behold the social contract in the name of which liberals think and live.

In other words: modern man is autonomous, i.e. determines for himself what is real and, among other things, what is rationally justifiable behavior,-- individual in the first place (individualism),-- social as well.

The theory of communicative action (J. Habermas).

Bibl. sample : M. Hunyadi, *Démocratie et communication*, (Democracy and communication), in: Journ.d.Gen./ Gazette de Laus. 10/11.05.1997, 36.

For as good as forty years J. Habermas (1929/... ; *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns*, (Theory of communicative action), 1/11) has been at the forefront of German practical philosophy. M. Heidegger he reproached for his impractical philosophizing. The Frankfurter Schule to which he belonged (and still does), he blamed for its “critical theory of modern society” lacking solid axioms (which M. Horkheimer(199S/1973) sought in vain).

Intention-- To build a practical philosophy (morality reaching into legal and political life) but on the basis of solid premises

Basic axiomatics.

Counter model. - Typically modern life can no longer be controlled by an order based on the (abstract) nature of man or on a revelation of the deity. This is also called “post-metaphysical thinking,” because traditional metaphysics expounded nature and deity.

Model.- Modern practical life can be controlled and provided with rules only after communicative action.

Speaking and conversing with one's fellow man.

1. “If I speak, then - explicitly or not - I claim validity (‘truth’, ‘probability’)”.

2. If I speak, I am usually addressing a fellow human being and at the same time I claim validity on his part”. -- Behold the twofold axiom, which defines the concept of ‘communication’ (not without ‘interaction’), as well as the concept of ‘communicative action’.

Democracy.

Not a deity and its revelation, signified by sacred figures (priests, ayatollahs),--not even a human and cosmic nature set forth by metaphysicians. Rather, the citizens of the state themselves who discourse. That is the basis.-- What comes out after each individual or group has articulated its; interests is valid. Since no individual or group possesses “the truth,” it is only after the citizens have argued that “validity” (whatever that may be in reality) can be said to exist.

In other words: in modern Western democracy, the citizens - on the basis of human rights - are both the creators of their rules of conduct (authority) - and their executors (subjects).

Note -- In Peirce’s language it sounds: “the apriori method”, the preferred method, dominates in our present democracies.

Critical religious teaching.

It is certain that, in all Catholic countries, since the renewed ('post-conciliar') teaching of religion, parents have reacted with shock when they heard their children recount the ideas they had learned in the lessons on religion.

Indeed, not much remained of the old traditional lessons which imbibed the essential elements of dogma and morality, in the "critical" lessons which brought up "opinions" (concepts) in connection with religion(s) or atheism(s). Also, the here and there timidly breaking through "New Angel" classes that seek to "awaken" sacred experiences (revival religion(s), 'revivals') provoked reactions from some parents, especially the critically minded.

"Readers write."

We now cite a text, in a magazine (which we deliberately do not name so as not to cause misunderstanding), which assesses critical religion classes,--as "the great void" concerning religion. (...).

What the bishop has debated in your paper in terms of noncommittal platitudes draws the malaise that has permeated even the highest echelons of the Church.

This noncommittal attitude obliges us to do nothing and, above all, does not invite us to take a structured approach, where the bishops should take the lead. By their unclear attitude, however, the bishops leave the avenues open for:

- a. experimentation,
- b. "individual interpretation" or
- c. even denial of points of faith in Catholic schools.

They should go and have a look on the spot to see with their own eyes how the subject of "religion" has degenerated into cosy chats, full of:

- a. personal testimonies and
- b. 'I think' theories that often knock down the very essence: faith. Then we are not even talking about
- c. how the institute 'church' and its highest representative (the Pope) are treated by numerous horizontalist thinking teachers. (...)"

Note.-- 'Horizontalism' (as opposed to 'verticalism') means that one limits (reduces) oneself to the secular trappings of religion(s),-- neglecting what is truly sacred in it (and thus transcends "this earth"). So that the sacred, which constitutes the essence of the religion(s), is "left to individual interpretation", if not atheistically denied.

Reason. If only reason. Runs into undecidability.

“Only reason” means, in one parlance, “metaphysically free reason.” Typically modern reason falls under that term. Instead of the light of the mind (Gr.: nous; Lat.: intellectus) concerning the actual being - the idea (in the Platonic sense, of course) - of every possible given and demanded, reason, which wants to be only reason, puts individual or collective opinion first insofar as it has freed itself from “the yoke of metaphysics.”

The ancient model.

Karneades of Kurene (-214/-120; Third Academy) is notorious for his demonstration of the undecidability of pure reason.

In -156 he arrived in Rome as a Greek envoy. He held two lectures for young Romans. On “righteousness” (conscientiousness).

1. First he claims, with arguments starting from Platon, that justice is an objective reality (realism).

2. The next day he claims, with equal brio, that “justice” is only a name (a sound), -- among other things by underlining that everyone acts according to a utility criterion (as the Romans liked to do). Whereupon Cato, in the name of Roman tradition, saw to it that Karneades was removed from Rome as soon as possible as a danger to the young.

Eristics.

Eristics is one aspect of ancient logic. It bites down, critically, on the weaknesses of every opinion,--even of its metaphysical foundations. After all, as soon as morality (understand: conscientious living) comes up for discussion, pure reason can adhere to two things:

- a. the as good as always debatable of every given and demanded,
- b. the as good as always debatable of what metaphysicians claim.

That’s what Karneades did.

Consequence: undecidability! For every “for” there is a “against” (“dialectic” in Aristotelian language). “He who wants to beat a dog will always find a stick”. - Common sense expresses the boundless phenomenological-logical ‘flexibility’ of reason, which always finds a ‘reason’ (premise, axiomatics) to argue against any proposition or judgment, in this sense.

Take Nazi negationism as a model. Didn’t Voltaire say at the time, “Lie, lie. There will always be something left of it”. If what is true (given) does not bind metaphysically in conscience, why should one not advocate the untrue by means of “arguments”?

Rationality on pure reason and its foundations.

Bibl. sample : E. Oger, *Rationaliteit, haar grond en haar monsters* (Rationality, its ground and its monsters), in: *Journal of Philosophy* 54 (1992): 1 (March) 87/106.

The solid article deals with the principle of reason and “the other of” reason, two points strongly related to each other.

Note.-- The author relies on the fact that many of those quoted rely on the enlightenment (lumières, Aufklärung, enlightenment), i.e., the more recent, typically modern form of rationalism, as on a “final axiom” anyway.

“The reason of reason”.

The principle of reason says “If A (reason) then B (B is intelligible, justified)”.

With the identity axiom, the reason axiom is “foundation” of all rationality and rationalisms.

1. Critical rationalism.

K. Popper (1902/1994) - further W. Bartley, H. Albert, H. Lenk, J. Watkins, G. Radnitzky - claim that the presupposition of the reason axiom is “an irrational act of faith” (a.c., 105) that provides access to rational life and thought. This amounts to a kind of fideism, which “presupposes an irrational, understand: not rationally justifiable, faith in reason. “An act of faith.”

Which Bartley emphasizes with Popper and replaces with the axiom “A statement is rational only if it is open to criticism”. Otherwise, one falls into the axiom of Zenon of Elea (-500/...): “Thou, nor I prove what thou art claiming” (“Tu quoque”). If not, one may as well become an irrationalist as a rationalist: there is no overriding reason after all! Albert argues in this regard that the essence of reason or rationality’s reason is ultimately “an undoubted intuition”--“an evidentiality”(a.c., 92).

Note.-- Which leads us to Dilthey and Wundt e.g.-- Albert on a rational statement: “If criticizable, then it is rational”.

2. Critical theory.

With K.-O. Apel (1924/2017) the focus is on the act of language, i.e. communication with others. For him, in fact, in knowing, speaking and acting, reason, understand: the reason axiom, is always already put forward as an undoubted evidentially. To seek a reason is to fall back on that evidence. So that there is a “final ground or reason” of e.g. philosophical reason.

In other words: although Apel does not exclude the need for criticism, he believes in an undoubted “foundation”.

J. Habermas (°1929; Frankfurter Schule) puts communicative action at the center. When people confer among themselves, reason and, among other things, the reason axiom are presupposed. As with Apel.

But a final foundation - an axiom of reason - is not in Habermas's view: he is a fallibilist (comparable to Popper), i.e. all reason activity is essentially fallible. A. Wellmer, F. Kambartel, in criticizing Apel's last foundation, go even further: there is no fixed criterion that allows true of false judgments to be distinguished.

Note.-- Which amounts to saying that every phenomenology and every logic fail!

3. Deconstructionism.-- Central figure here is J. Derrida (°1930).-- He believes that the operation of the reason-axiom can be observed everywhere in our culture - also and especially in the universities.

If we "ground" the reason axiom, then either in vicious circular reasoning (in order to prove it, we have to put it first) or in "an abyss (which is to say, there is no ground or reason). "It is groundless and therefore abyssal" (a.c., 96). To oppose the reason axiom would amount to irrationality. But to simply put it first as traditional rationalism does not go either: reason (note: as Derrida interprets it) cannot "justify" itself.

In other words: for reason (as he understands it) there is a presupposition, an 'origin' (about which Derrida does not know much to tell us either).

Note.-- Derrida, a complicated writer, sometimes errs on the side of words and new terms that, on closer inspection, are not so new.

As an aside, he disagrees with Popper where he calls the 'ground' of reason 'irrational' belief. So the mysterious 'origin' of reason is still rational somewhere but no longer in the modern-enlightened sense.

"The otherness of reason".

Does one criticize reason in the name of that reason itself or "in the name of something other than reason". The latter is called "the other of reason."

For example, in M. Foucault, *Histoire de la folie*, (History of madness), (1961), the other of reason is called "madness. Practically the language of an insane person alone - not a rationally clear language about it - can speak of madness, - behind which lies Foucault's thought that an insane person does not know how to make himself at home in a rational world and, precisely because of this, "brings to light" the failure of that rational world in his insane behavior.

W.W. Bartley on commitment philosophy and theology.

Bibl. sample : W.W. Bartley, *Flucht ins Engagement (Versuch einer Theorie des offenen Geistes)*, (Escape into Commitment (Attempt at a Theory of the Open Mind)), Munich, 1962 (// The retreat to Commitment).

The book takes a stand against a Neo-Protestant streak in the person of K Barth (1886/1968), E. Brunner, R. Niebuhr, P. Tillich and others.

1.-- Rationalism Criticism.

Even reason with its sciences, so highly regarded by enlightened minds, is not without axiomata. I.e., the rationalist ideal of a bias-free, axiom-free, science lapses.

Well, those axiomata are themselves unprovable in an apodictic (absolutely irrefutable) way. Which is shown by the foundational research of reason and its sciences. Reason in the enlightened sense and its sciences do not present an absolute “rational” proof. One arrives only at ‘plausibility’, ‘probability’.

2.-- Neither art thou as I am.

Neither you, rationalist, nor I, Bible-believing Protestant, prove in an apodictic manner what you claim concerning foundations.

In other words: there is a dose of irrationality in the very core of enlightened rationalism. I, the Protestant, who hear the reproach from you, rationalist, that I believe on irrational - Biblical - foundations, note that you too do not prove your foundations strictly as you would like to as a rationalist.

Well, I, Bible-believing, make a commitment, i.e., a will, that without apodictic evidence nevertheless involves Biblical life and thought. In English: ‘commitment’; in French: ‘engagement’ i.e. a will decision or ‘leap’ without apodictic certainties,-but with probabilities. This is what you, rationalist, call ‘irrational’.

Well, since your reason and its sciences also do not supply an apodictic foundation, your rationalist conviction is also fundamentally a commitment with only probable reasons or grounds.

3. -- The difference.

The difference being that I, a Bible-believer, openly and honestly admit that, rationalistically speaking, I am making a wager, whereas you, fundamentally just as irrational, i.e. working only with plausibility, are making a rationalist wager but do not want to admit this openly and honestly. You talk of ‘rationality: supposedly apodictically proven rationality, where there is only probable rationality on which to base your leap or bet.

Note.-- We mention in passing K. Hübner, *Die Wahrheit des Mythos*, (The truth of the myth), Munich, 1985, whose thesis is: modern science is not the superior of myth neither as regards truthfulness nor rationality. For both science and myth have as their reason or ground radically distinct ontological and other axiomata which are both equally unprovable (understand: apodictic).

The myth is as logically coherent a worldview as the scientific worldview. The explanatory capacity of myth is even more comprehensive (holistic) than that of modern science, because myth can also explain accidental events (note: 'accidental' means that which does not - apparently - obey scientific laws) thanks to an appeal to a sacred event (note: think of a rite for example).

Hübner takes Greek mythology as the applicative model: Greek myths are governed by rationality just as much as science.

Note -- One sees that the same schema is at work as that of the Neo-Protestants: "Thou as well as I" am apodictically rational. I as well as thou art in earnest rational,-- not irrational without more".

Bartley.-- Following in the footsteps of his teacher K. Popper, Bartley seeks an appropriate response to Barth et al. -- He accuses commitment philosophy and commitment theology of a flight into the irrational. "Retreat to Commitment. At least if commitment:

a. Relativistically conceived (by claiming that all commitment is equivalent: a Nazi commits and a Biblical believer commits but rationally they differ).

b. Individualistically conceived (commitment can be interpreted as so individual that humanity is reduced to a bunch of atoms) -- Bartley: Even if the impetus from us rationalists is to some extent irrational, we are open to critical inquiry and discussion. Deployment, yes, but not without rational analysis of the -- perhaps only probable -- grounds for deployment.

Immediately Bartley notes that originally Protestants rejected reason as a "whore" (Luther), while trying to keep pace with enlightened rationalism. With the deployment Protestants, however, reason is only fully persevered as a whore, i.e., power impervious to the Bible.

Note.-- It should be noted that said Protestants like e.g. Barth were at least fundamentally open to criticism.

Critique of Reason.

Usually one talks about I. Kant (1724/1804) when one talks about criticism of reason. But this is only the modern, 'enlightened' form of it.

One reads e.g. Cl. Ramnoux, *Parménide et ses successeurs immédiats*, (Parmenides and his immediate successors), Ed. d. Rocher, 1979, especially o.c., 151ss., where she speaks about Zenon of Elea (-500/ ...), Parmenides' pupil. One can summarize the logical scheme of Zenon's reasoning in "Neither thou nor I prove radically what thou dost assert." Which amounts to saying that the reason of both positions does not prove apodictically (irrefutably, definitively).

Aristotle would later refer to such a situation in reasoning as "dialectical": both reasoning's are valid but not decisively valid.

Skepticism.

E.W. Beth, *De wijsbegeerte der wiskunde*, (The philosophy of mathematics), Antwerp/ Nijmegen, 1944, 87, says: "The contradictory views defended on certain questions by different practitioners of philosophy and positive science play scepticism off against each other."

In other words: the same reason as power comes to contradictory conclusions in the person of different reasoners.

Conclusion.-- To appeal to "reason" as rationalism in all its forms -- modern included -- does, is to appeal to "nothing," for one assertion (as contradictory to another) destroys. After all, is there any goddamned reality about which no contradictory opinions have been expressed in the course of our Western 'rational' (rationalist) history? Let us look at pluralism today: the Islamist reasons; the atheist reasons. All life and world views reason.

In which it appears that it is the axiomata that play the decisive role. As *la Logique de Port-Royal* made clear at the time: most of the time, people reason precisely but from ever-changing presuppositions which they put forward as fixed truths and which they try to make true with reason as a faculty.

If, therefore, it turns out that no subject can ever be stated without contradictory rational (reasoning) opinions, the appeal to reason on the part of the rationalists is an appeal to an undecidable premise. What can one do with an 'aporia', an undecidability, concerning the foundations of existence?

How modern are primitives and how are they modern?

We take an example from ethno-pharmaceuticals.

Bibl. sample : J. Raillion, *Alchimiste des plantes*, (Alchemist of plants), Paris, 1983, 64s. (Un exemple frappant).

1904.-- In Namibia, then German South-West Africa, a rebellion of “natives” is put down. After the battle a Khoi (in the language of the Boers ‘Hottentot’) was taken to a clinic in Nababes (Marienthal).

His injuries were numerous. The bullets were immediately removed but the wounds would not close: the external bleeding continued and the coagulants apparently did not work. It was decided that a desperate case was needed.

The terminal Khoi, however, realized that people were giving up on him: he asked that the magician of his tribe be allowed to take care of him. His “last wish” was granted.

The whites, doctors, nurses, were either amused or indifferent or curious. In their presence, the magician dusts the wounds with a grayish powder. He reveals that it is the pulverized root of “a plant” from the area but withholds the name. The skepticism around him was great.

But already the following day, the wounds closed and after a few days, the Khoi was able to walk around in the garden of the clinic. General amazement! As the healer adamantly refused to reveal the name, a white man used his police dog to follow the healer’s tracks and stumbled upon a plant the Khoi called “devil’s claw” (*harpagophytum procumbens*).

Immediately samples are sent to Germany. Scientific studies not only confirm the clotting healing powers of the plant, which only grows on the edge of the Namibian desert, but tests prove that it “works” as a painkiller and as a regulator of cholesterol and uric acid levels.

The link “cause/effect” (or at least “omen/sequel”) is supposedly a modern insight that premoderns lack. After this fact, who would dare to claim that “primitives” (“savages,” “nature people”) lack this typically modern insight?

Amidst a lot of premodern, sometimes bizarre rites, apparently truly modern insights are hidden. Thus, primitives are already modern where skeptical moderns display premodern ignorance.

How modern are ancient and mid-century medicines and how?

B.K. Holland is a member of the Medical School of Newark (N.J.). In an article published in *Nature* and reproduced in *Courrier International* 198 (13.08.1994, 30) he says what follows.

1. To methodically dissect an incalculable number of plants (...) is very expensive. For the scientific methods which depend on chance achieve virtually no results. For example, the National Cancer Institute had 114,000 plant extracts drawn from 35,000 plant species and did not find a single anti-cancer active ingredient.

2. There is another way out. The folk beliefs and healers of old have proven that they have much to teach us. Almost all the plant-based medicines used in the USA today, such as reserpine, quinine, digoxin, digitoxin, d-tubocurarine, morphine, codeine, were discovered through thorough scientific research of folk beliefs.

“Traditional medicine”.

This is the premodern western medicine known from texts of Greek and Latin antiquity, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Well, many works of traditional medicine describe numerous plants and other active substances that have not been studied methodically for a long time.

Among the Greeks and Romans, for example, silfion (Lat.: silphium), a ferula, was found in nature (...). Soranos, Lat.: Soranus, a physician (98/138) recommended silphion (by oral means) as an abortifacient. Recent experiments on rodents confirmed that extracts from plants related to silfion (silfion itself disappeared) prevented fertilization and nesting.

The same was true of mentha pulegium (pennyroyal) which was considered an abortifacient in antiquity and the Middle Ages. Recent studies prove that its active ingredient, pulegon, causes abortion in animals and women.

Conclusion. - Holland, a specialist in preventive medicine and social hygiene, proposes that pharmacologists and experts in traditional medicine work together: “From the old texts - tested using modern testing methods - new medicinal substances may emerge that, moreover, will not have cost much”.

How modern are the lunar religions and how are they modern?

A. Lefèvre, *La religion*, (Religion), Paris, 1921, 329/334, briefly but suggestively - although he is an atheist - explains how frequent lunar religions are all over the globe (he calls them one type of astrolatry, celestial body worship). He notes the strong beliefs of the primitives regarding the connection between the moon and its energies and plants.

Note.-- Mockingly, he notes how current folk wisdom on the subject still articulates the moon's influence in folk proverbs.

Bibl. sample : A. Crisinel, *Jardiner avec la Lune? (Les preuves se mettent à germer)*, (Gardening with the Moon? (The evidence begins to sprout)), in: *Le Temps* (Geneva) 28.04.1998.

Galileo who, out of prejudice against astrology, rabidly denied any influence of the moon on the tides (he wouldn't even investigate it), will now turn in his grave: the highly scientific journal *Nature* reports that, just like the oceans, the trees - according to very precise measurements - expand and contract a few hundredths of a millimeter in the course of 25 hours, with the moon.

A working group from the University of Trento (Italy) carried out measurements on the trunks of half a dozen trees (the common spruce (picea), the fir, the walnut e.g.) in Tuscany. Result: she noted the expansions and contractions but had no hypothesis (explanation) for them. Ernst Zürcher, a Swiss dendrologist, confirms this from his own research.

The scholar was intrigued by a number of "lunar sayings" that put farmers first. Indeed, he has already proven that the germination of plants is indeed influenced by the lunar phases. However, it should be noted that "although the moon, in its rising phase, favors the germination of most of the plant species that he studied, it can act as an inhibitor to other species" (a.c.). With the oceanographic service of the French Navy at Brest, he tested the figures of daily changes in Tuscany: "The correlation is perfect."

Note.-- Zürcher noted that even the felled logs still respond to the moon insofar as the cambium (growing tissue including the moisture channels) is still "alive. Which, of course, raises questions. Zürcher: "Perhaps the to-and-fro movements of water within the cells change with the moon.

Note -- This is of course grist to the mill of New Age!

The typically modern man: he can make himself.

Let us consider an extract from G. Pico della Mirandola (1463/1494), *Oratio de dignitate hominis* (literally: Speech on the dignity of man), quoted by B. Vedder, *De mens als "cusa sui" en de vraag naar zin*, (Man as "cusa sui" and the question of meaning), in: *De owl van Minerva* 9:1 (1992: Autumn, 3/18).

The text in question "at the beginning of the modern era can be called characteristic of the modern Western view of man" (according to Vedder).

De la Mirandola puts the words in the mouth of 'god' (who is certainly not the Biblical God)" - Behold the text.

We have given you, Adam, no particular dwelling place, no face of your own, no special task, that you may acquire and possess that dwelling place, that face, that task which you prefer, according to your own will and desire.

For all other beings, nature is fixed and limited within the laws prescribed by Us. -- thou shalt determine it for thyself: by no limits hindered, according to thy own free will to which I have entrusted thee.

I have set you in the midst of the universe so that from there you can more easily see everything around you that is in the world. Nor have we made you heavenly or earthly, mortal or immortal, so that, like a free and sovereign artist, you may mold and model yourself in the form that you choose.

You are free to degenerate to the lower - the animal kingdom - but you can also elevate to the higher - the divine kingdom - by your own will.

Note.-- What precisely makes Della Mirandola's interpretation of the creative God different from that of the traditional Bible? Because of the very clear shift in emphasis to the almost absolute freedom of the precisely because of this modern man. This is evidenced by the omission of the Decalogue (the ten commandments) in man's creation itself.

In the Bible, Yahweh does indeed create a radically free human being, but including from the outset, in the very definition of that freedom, the code of conduct with which that indeed radical freedom must reckon and to which its fate is attached: "That my spirit (note: God-given life force) may not be responsible for man without limit, since he is flesh (note: being earthly and without conscience)" (Gen. 6:3). In other words: the wild boundary freedom has a stake, namely whether or not God-given life force is available to it.

Freethinking (libertinism).

Bibl. sample :

-- A. Adam, *Les libertins au XVIIe siècle*, (The libertines in the 17th century), Paris, 1964;

-- J.-p. Dubost and others, *L'Enfer de la Bibliothèque nationale 7*, (The Hell of the National Library), Paris, 1988, dwells on Oeuvres érotiques du XVIIe siècle, among other things.

-- Cl. Reichler, *L'âge libertin*, Minuit, 1987.

Reichler defines the libertine era: from 1680 to 17897 - Nevertheless, it is certain that a typical mid-century libertinism existed (against which the ennobled 'minne (lyric)' reacted, among other things (cf. D. de Rougemont, *Amour et occident* (Love and the West), (1938) on the minne ('amour', 'love') among southern French troubadours).-

French libertinism has Italian origins, among others. Thus: Pietro Aretino (1492/1556).

1620.-- Adam, o.c., 7.-- "Around 1620, libertinage ('libertinage') grows into a running fire that carries away a good portion of the young nobility in Paris."

As an aside, Descartes is then 24, and Galileo gets his first trouble.-- That draws the atmosphere of detachment.

a. Th. Vilau, a poet, comes out openly. Consequence: on royal command he is imprisoned.

b. P. Bayle (*Dictionnaire historique et critique* (1696/1697; a first typically "modern" history of philosophy) hides behind the mask of "honnête homme" (honorable man).

c. XVIII- d ' century libertinism becomes theatrical. This in the midst of a culture that inhibited it.

Axiomatics.-- Adam, o.c., 12s. -- Libertinism is fundamentally a libertinism,-- enlightened-rationalist. It considers itself elevated as such above "the common people" who have been given away to the delusions of "common sense,"-- in the name of reason.

Thus Th. de Viau or G. d'Orléans (the latter: *les quatrains de déiste*) (the deist's quatrains), make up rationalism around 1624. A freethinker like la Mothe le Vayer (1588/1672), a radical septic "Christian," nevertheless became the "précepteur" (private educator) of Louis XIV (1661/1715), the Sun King.

Gassendi (1592/1655), Descartes' rival, was "ahead of his time" in his rationalism. In all of this, know that "reason" means the reason that detaches itself from "tradition" (= established Christianity (church) and spiritualism (belief in God and in soul)). God is dead and his Decalogue is becoming dead letter. This is, fundamentally, the root (basic axiom) of the freethinkers.

Epistemology.

Root is secular perception, resp. sensing and thinking : this visible and tangible earth and its cosmic environment are the biotope in which the freethinker, resp. freethinker lives.

Nature

Freethought is a naturalism, object of physics, is governed by “le destin”; fate, as a kind of supreme law. As the “first or primordial power” (one sees that the God of the Bible is replaced) - première puissance - fate has ordered nature and is constantly ordering that nature. It also orders our lives, programs them.

Life,

plants, animals, humans - has as its premise the presence and activity of “living principles” that move from one form of life to another. In an eternal movement.

Ethics.

The libertarian - freethinker is empiricist (relies on sensory perception resp. sensation), conceptualist (constructs “concepts” (notions) within his modern consciousness), experiments according to his concepts and perceptions or sensations.

Adam.-- One type of libertine behaves lustfully-violently, the other coldly - calculating.

As an aside.- Axiom in the field of behavior: the libertine freethinker knows himself to be so free, resp. liberated from every norm or institution, that he indulges in one of the two ways just mentioned (or alternately).

Central to this is the woman but then this is interpreted as an erotic body.

H. Herr, *Du scepticisme de Gassendi* (Of Gassendi’s skepticism), 14/15: one was more libertine by the type of life one led than by the type of thinking. To begin with, to be absorbed in enjoyments. After that: to hold floating axiomata.

Adam: “The exasperating libertine life of some, the erudite libertine life of others (note : ‘esprit fort’) and the elusive, quietly taking place libertine life throughout the century accomplished a real revolution in ethical values.

Note -- What we call “sex” today, especially since WW II (1939/1945), is the form of libertinism and freethinking that has blown over from the USA into Europe and the rest of the planet.

Cartesianism as modern thought and life.

Bibl. sample : U.P. Jauch, *Die Stärken einer Ethik der Schwäche (Descartes' Gedanke der "morale par provision")*, (The strengths of an ethics of weakness (Descartes' idea of "morale par provision"),), in: Neue Zürcher Zeitung 21.09.1996.

In the wake of Montaigne (1533/1592), R. Descartes (1596/1650) laid the "foundations" of typical modern thought and life.

1637.-- Discours de la méthode.

1647. -- In a Letter to l'abbé Picot, who translated Descartes *Principia philosophiae* into French, Descartes talks about the famous metaphor: his ideal of thought resembles a tree whose roots are metaphysics, its trunk physics, its branches all the other sciences (first and foremost mechanics, medicine and also morality). The moral philosophy honors Descartes as the highest and last stage of wisdom. for it puts the total knowledge of all other sciences first. In other words: it directs towards a strictly scientific and therefore rational science of behavior.

Note.- Given the basic role of physics at the time, Descartes' system can be labeled as physicalism.- Which is observed to this day - right up to the established medical sciences e.g.

The typical modern rationalism.

The tree is the work of reason. But then a revolutionary reason. For if one builds on what others - meaning the great tradition - did and thought, it is difficult to do anything "right" (understand: rationalistic). Thus, education which proceeds in this way - established in tradition - is building on what others did and thought and at the same time is a source of irrationality: one's own, individual research effort - as scientific as possible - is the real source of rational, -- understand: rationalistic - enlightened, living and thinking.

Replacing the "old" city with the "new" city.

Old cities are "usually badly built" crisscrossing each other ordering the buildings. Descartes proposes to let the engineer (concept as it then was) build the new city "in all freedom" (not hindered by tradition) according to the will of "a number of sensible people", -- "sensible", i.e. rationalistically-enlightened.

The historically grown gives way to the rationally-scientifically constructed.

Note.-- His *Discours de la méthode* (Discourse of the method), reflects what we just outlined as a typical Cartesian design of thought and life.

Toward a rationalist morality.

Descartes: “Will he also in the moral field ‘radically reject traditional education?’ For this is the fundamental tendency of his thought and life.

In anticipation of the realized ideal.

As Jauch very wittily says: “The tree of knowledge is - at the time of Descartes - not yet matured up to and including the fruit. Nevertheless, we cannot suspend action until the day arrives when the expected consummation of comprehensive science (note: the tree: from metaphysics to morality) is a fact.”

The radical-skeptical doubt of the tradition is situated: even Descartes lives in the midst of an outside world with its data and inquires that tolerate no delay in response.

Descartes’ metaphor.

It is not enough to raze the old house to the ground, while the new house (note: the totally elaborated scientific tree) is not yet there! According to Descartes himself. An interim shelter is urgently needed. In the moral field this interim accommodation is called “la morale par provision” (morality by provision), the interim - not yet radically rationalistically enlightened - code of conduct. We live by now on a “provision”, a “stock” concerning rules of conduct.

Descartes’ modesty.

At least that is how Jauch calls it.-- Very emphatically, Descartes is not talking about a binding theory of conscientious behavior in the form e.g. of fixed presuppositions or even commandments. “With a language game that remains vague (...)” he is concerned “only with three or four maxims, rules of conduct.

They are indicated in passing. For example, incorporating transmitted religion and laws into his life. Avoid extremes. Relying in any case on the actions - not the words - of the most special of fellow men.

Probabilism.

Whatever seems more probable than the rest in terms of behavior should be preferred “as if it were absolutely certain.” Since the environment is difficult to change, it is preferable to change one’s own wishes.

However, he ends up basing himself only on the evidence, after research, and not on what is not apparent personally (which is then taking back his starting point).

Conclusion.- With this intermediate morality Descartes seems still relevant today: rationalist mankind is still discussing the foundations of a “rational” morality. The new house is not yet there .

The consistent rationalism of le marquis de Sade.

It is about D.A.Fr. de Sade (1740/1814),-- the man of sadism.

Someone once wrote that, compared to him, the nihilism (reduction of higher values) of Fr. Nietzsche (1844/1900) comes across as the talk of an old lady. Indeed de Sade draws from the axiomata of enlightened thought extreme libertine consequences.

His library.-- A. Carter, *La femme sadienne*, (The sadian woman.), Veyrier, 1979, 65s, emphasizes his rationalism. The feminist points out:

a. Novels such as Cervantes, *Don Quichotte de la Manche* (1605-1), and Mad. de Lafayette, *La princesse de Clèves* (1678);

b. Rationalist works such as Voltaire, *Oeuvres complètes* (85 volumes) and J.-J. Rousseau, *Oeuvres complètes*, (Complete works).

Carter claims: de Sade subjects the world of “rationality” to a libertine critique, clothed in pornography. Indeed: *Les 120 jours de Sodome* (1787), *Justine ou les malheurs de la vertu* (1791), *La philosophie dans le boudoir* (1795) are porno which le *Petit Larousse* (1972) characterizes as “novels in which the heroes are possessed of the tendency to torture innocent souls (sadism), but important because they expose ‘le révolte d’ un homme libre contre Dieu et la société’“. In other words: they are philosophical novels.

Cynical self-knowledge.

Simone de Beauvoir (1908/1986; the well-known existentialist, in her *Faut-il brûler de Sade?*, (Should de Sade be burned?), quotes de Sade himself: “Authoritarian, hot-tempered, without measure or purpose. As for moral behavior: given over to a confused fantasy that has no equal. Atheist to the point of fanaticism. In short: this is how I am! Kill me or take me as I am, for I shall never change myself”.

Some facts. - His family manages to get him married at the age of 23. Dra circulates rumors: the minutes of the Arcueil trials (1768) mention that he “subjected a learner, Rose Keller, to eroticizing floggings”. With his chamberlain, de Sade “subjected a group of prostitutes to a number of perversions”. Which leads to the trials of Marseilles (1772).

In his castle La Coste (Provence, he founds a polygamous sex group with homosexual relations”. Indulgences with minors included.

Note.-- H. Leyser: *Rationaliteit in een perverse graad* (Rationality in a perverse degree). (in: Antaios II (1961): 6 (März), 515 ff.)

Note.-- Van de Sade's behavior demonstrates his nominalism that deconstructs all higher, sacred, inviolable realities ("ideas") as mere "names" hollow word sounds. Empirically, he does e.g. sexually- torturing impressions (sensation). Conceptually, he constructs concepts (conceptions) with which he 'justifies', 'founds' his behavior. In such a mindset (axiomatics) he experiments with his own and others' bodies. Like the free-thinking libertines.-- Like many among our fellow-wishers today. By virtue of free modernity.

Ontology.

R. Dasne, *Les matérialistes Français de 1750 à 1800*, (The French materialists from 1750 to 1800), Paris, 1965, 88s., quotes de Sade where he has la Durand, a materialist say to her friends, "My friends, the more nature is studied the more one steals her secrets,-- the more one knows her energy."

Behold the basic axiom: nature, only nature,--with its energy, only with its energy.

B. d' Astorg, *Introduction au monde de la terreur*, (Introduction to the world of terror), Paris, 1945, 30: "De Sade used the term energy throughout in the most modern sense of 'élan vital', i.e. the dynamism which propels mankind in the direction of brutal self-development and self-realization.

Atheism.

La Durand.-- "(The more one knows nature,) the more one becomes convinced of the uselessness of a god. The creation of that idol is among all chimeras the most hateful, the most ridiculous, the most despicable. This disgusting fable, originated in all people who are weighed down by the feeling of fear, is the utmost that human insanity can perform. I repeat: to ascribe to nature a creator is to disregard it. To assume that "cette première puissance" (this primordial power) is guided by another power is tantamount to blinding oneself to all that this primordial power - nature - can deviate from."

This is how Sadian women speak: they are radically subject to men's lusts but precisely because they want it with all their energy, they are "enchanting sex, free, living pleasure just like men," as de Sade herself puts it. She shatters her shackles as nature intended.

Which leads Angela Carter, o.c., 68, to say, "De Sade remains a monster of civility: at once monstrous and impressive in that he "perhaps put pornography at the service of women."

Energetic ethics.

A few models, viz. to demonstrate its permissive nature.-- De Sade, *Justine of de tegenspoed der deugdzaamheid* (Justine or the Adversity of Virtue), Amsterdam, 1978-11, 318 ff.. We quote excerpts. "At the same time that libertine pulled up my skirts"(o.c., 318). "Rocking like a dying man, this incorrigible libertine thereby uttered terrible blasphemies" (o.c., 321).

Note - One sees that de Sade is making propaganda for atheism.

Theft.

Theft is sign of energy: "The man who is so negligent as to allow himself to be robbed should be punished." As an aside, being charitable is to be condemned because "it accustoms the poor person to a series of reliefs that damage his energy (absolute resilience)"

Crime.

In *Les 120 jours de Sodome*, de Sade says: "Though it is true that crime does not possess the 'high' nobility found in virtue, yet is it not always the loftiest? Does not crime constantly display the trait of 'grandeur' (...)? Does it not thereby - and always will - surpass the monotonous and effeminate charm of virtue?"

Murder.

R. Dasne, o.c., 237.-- "Never will it occur to any sensible nation to condemn murder as a crime. For murder to be a crime, the destruction of a possibility would have to be put first in it. Well, just now we saw that this proposition is unacceptable." I repeat: murder is only a change of form in which neither the law - specific to the biological realms (plants, animals, human beings) - nor the law of nature lose anything.

On the contrary, both laws gain. So why punish a man just because he has given back a portion of matter to the elements of nature? In particular: by killing someone, the criminal speeds up the process of deterioration of his body. Materialistically speaking, even a human being - like all bodies of nature - is a portion of matter. Matter, nothing more.

What's more: this portion of matter returns to the elements of nature as a matter of necessity. These elements, once they have returned to them, use this portion of matter to create new forms. Is a fly worth more than a pasha or a Capuchin monk?"

Scholars and libertinism.

Bibl. sample : Claartje Hülsenbeck/ Jan Louman/ Anton Oskamp, *Het rode boekje voor scholieren*, (The little red book for schoolchildren), Utrecht, 1970-1, 1971-8.

‘Contemporary’ teachers who call themselves “critical teachers,” “in cooperation with their students” put forward a kind of anarchism. “In the name of greater justice in society.” - the basic axiom - they note that:

1. the parents manipulate the children,
2. the teachers manipulate the students,
3. the ‘bosses the workaholics,
4. the caretakers the elderly.

In other words, the established society is one network of ‘injustice’.

Sexual morality.

From this axiom one ‘critically’ deduces that e.g. every “critical school” should have a class for sex games.

The “justification”.

“If it says in the newspaper that someone “committed a sex crime”, it sounds worse than it is. It is about someone who can ‘only’ cum in a certain, unusual way”.

Note. -One sees nominalistic reductionism: sexual acts are reduced to empirical experiences which, on the basis of conceptual constructions (“Ejaculating only in a certain way” e.g.) are explained, thus becoming open to experimentation. Without the traditional, established taboos.

To continue.

1. If you read that someone has acted immorally, then he has usually opened his pants and shown his penis : he is then called an ‘exhibitionist’.

2. If you read that a man or a woman committed fornication with minors, then this person has masturbated in front of children.

3. If you read about a voyeur (peeping tom), then it is about a man or a woman who likes to watch how others do it: this one spies on making love couples who think they are alone.-- Occasionally it happens that these people are panicked. This is because of the way others react to their behavior. They then no longer know what they are doing and sometimes it comes to violence”. (O.c., 100).

Note.-- Now that we have lived since August 1996 in the climate that was partly determined by the Dutroux affair, misbehavior like that of a Dutroux comes across as “critically cultivated.”

The above texts simply confuse objective morality with “gracious explanations” of deviant behavior. Thus, one can understand’, i.e., condone anything.

From modern to postmodern : Georg Simmel.

Bibl. sample : J.-L. Vieillard-Baron, trad., G. Simmel, *Philosophie de la modernité (La femme, la ville, l'individualisme)*, (Philosophy of modernity (The woman, the city, individualism)), Paris, 1989.

The work is the translation of a number of separate articles.

G. Simmel (1858/1918) was a German sociologist-thinker. In Berlin, where he taught philosophy from 1900, his students included G. Lukacz, E. Bloeh, K. Mannheim. He wrote *Der Konflikt der modernen Kultur* (The Conflict of Modern Culture), (1918), among other works.

In Hegel's wake, Simmel was a purebred rationalist in the sense of strict methodical thinking. But among other things, he dwelt on themes that traditional rationalism did not consider amenable to rationalist-enlightened analysis: the modern city (the cultural landscape of modern man), women ("Will modernity affect women's being or not?") especially adventure (typical of modern individualism). In this sense, Simmel is already postmodern.-- We explain.

O.c.. 305/ 325 (l'aventure)

"Life in its totality can be lived through as an adventure".

a.-- A content lived in excitement.

Modern man, for example, survives something deadly, conquers a woman resulting in momentary happiness, plays with unknown elements and loses or wins. Such contents become adventurous only when the "vital" consciousness, the deeper soul, lives them through in an excitement that is lived through as the main thing.

b.-- History as adventure.

In what we, moderns, live through, we find so many things that simply "are there": i.e. as accidental circumstances, escaping our reason.

This proves rational when we interpret the totality of each event as meaningful and immediately rational and understandable for us moderns. This also turns out to be rational when we experience the totality of every event as ever by more and something else than what precedes it.

Note.-- Analyzing the omen rationally is insufficient to deduce the sequel, rationally.

Consequence.-- Simmel's historiology, i.e. philosophy of history, contains a dose of unpredictability. But unpredictables are invariably (rationally analyzed) irrational. In seeing this, Simmel, the thoroughly rationalist, becomes postmodern, for with rationalism as an axiom he comes to perceive the irrational that is "more and different" than what reason can predict. Reason contains adventure .

Postmodernism(s).

‘Premodern’ is all that is present “before modernity”. Postmodern’ is all that is present “after modernity”.

Do we dwell on one type of postmodern thinking, namely ‘differentialism’ (especially in the wake of J. Derrida (1930/...), the deconstructionist).

Bibl. sample : G. Lernout, *Wetenschap in oorlog*, (Science at war), in: *Nature and Technology* 66 (1998): 7(July), 89/93.

Note.-- Since P.C. Snow, *The Two Cultures*, the disagreement between alpha or human sciences and beta or natural sciences continues. Characterize - in this context - differentialism briefly mainly through its critique of the natural sciences.

After all, given its importance in the 70s and 80s (differential thinking was the main current in the human sciences), we must briefly go into it. in the USA, among others, the derridist influence is great.

1. -- Counter model.

Western (identity) thinking’ suppresses, resp. represses differences, resp. disputes between individuals and groups. Consequence: lower classes are oppressed by higher classes, women by men, non-Western cultures by Western ones, because they are pressed into one pattern of thinking, the Western, which secures its own (economic and social) interests precisely because of that.

2.-- Model.

That Western cultural pattern is in fact a construction”. In order to “make it true”, the differential thinkers attack in the first place modern physics, which is the masterpiece of the West.-- In place of the architectural model of physics (a pedestal on which science builds), postmodernism of that type posits the network model.

a. The “real,” understand: actual, world is not there.

b. Consequence: an objective ‘truth’, testable to a reality ‘present’ (‘présence’ (Derrida)) outside the indicating subject, does not exist.

There is only a variety of subjective opinions presented as ‘truths’ (rhetorically).

Behold the (otherwise nominalistic) ontology of that postmodernism. Mankind “floats in a network of words” detached from any per se existing ‘reality’.

Applied to the (natural) sciences.

Masterpiece of enlightened rationalism, physics in particular pretends that there was an objective reality, independent of the scientist as subject .

In other words: even physics, so ‘objectively’ oriented, is one big human construction which testifies of the subject, the scientists, not of a reality existing outside them. Especially theoretical physics is the target of many differentialists (such as many ‘creationists’ (who interpret the Bible too literally) or New Age (which starts from a radically different point of view)).

In other words: there is no difference or gap between the ‘truth’ of astrology and that of astronomy, between the origin myths of the Navajos and the explanation of the universe by modern physics. Because in all cases one constructs with letters (written) and words (spoken) - i.e. with mere ‘language’ - world- and life-views.

Behold the thesis of the Derridians, -- substantiated by what they call ‘the sociology of science’: instrument of ‘plural’ thinking, there is not one, (for all identical) absolutely valid science of Western type; there is a multitude of ‘truths’, among which is that Western type. What is called ‘knowledge relativism’.

Rationality.

It is, of course, about the typically modern reason.- Carl Sagan, *The Demon - Haunted World (Science as a Candle in the Dark)*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University, 1997, responds against the downsizing or ‘deconstruction’ of the professional sciences as follows. With a kind of dilemma.

a. If thou wilt argue against rationality, thou must consider carefully whether thou wilt carry through such a thing rationally or not.

b.1. If thou, rationality approach rationality, thou dost put as an axiom the rationality which thou dost want to phase out.

Note.-- “If thou dost so assert, it follows logically at least what thou dost refute”.

b.2. If thou dost address rationality non-rationally, then - as beyond any rationality - thou dost not deserve any rational counter-argument.

Note.-- The latter is true if one forgoes:

a. the fact that there are phenomena which physics does not explain and

b. the fact that the method of physics also has its (axiomatically defined) limits.

Reference should be made to, among others, A. Sokal/ J. Bricmont, *Impostures intellectuelles*, (Intellectual impostures), Paris, Od. Jacob, 1997, which points out the radical ignorance of physics of top postmodernist figures (Lacan, Kristeva, Irigata, Latour, Baudrillard, Deleuze, Guattari, Virilio).

Consider Lacan who defines the penis “physicistically” as $V-1$. (root -1). Which gave the physicists a fit of laughter!

Civil-liberal morality.

Bibl. sample : K. Klop, *De blinde vlek van het liberalisme* (The blind spot of liberalism), in: *Strive* 63 (1996): 9 (oct.), 844 / 847.-- The author first defines what traditional liberalism is.

1.1. Government leaves “the good life” to the free, equal and economically independent few.

1.2. These individuals may not harm each other in the experience of point 1.1.

2. The relations between these individuals proceed optimally in a market system

1.-- *The narrow morality.*

In themselves these principles also constitute “a morality”. But it is deliberately a narrow morality, i.e. the minimum type of public behavior necessary in the eyes of liberals to ensure that people who may differ philosophically (strongly or not) can still live together in peace.

As an aside, this is liberal pluralism. The government only creates space for the free, independent, economically self-reliant individual, who makes his or her own way through life while competing and decides for oneself which standards and values are important to him or her and which groups to join and which to leave.

Values’ which the individual decides freely are then other than the basic values defined by liberalism (1.1., 1.2. and 2).

In other words, ‘values’ in that perspective have no objective and thus universally valid reality. They are not metaphysical. When one presents this, one runs up against the skeptical irony that easily dismisses such a thing as ‘moralizing’. Values may be indicated but not presented as generally valid.

2. *The recent broader morality.*

Thought through, narrow morality leads to anarchy (‘misarchy’, contempt for values). Or to fundamentalist attitudes. “By choice.”

Bourgeois liberalism recognizes this danger and recently - according to Klop - they have been proposing, without irony, values such as respect for rules, taking up one’s own responsibility, self-reliance but also caring for one’s fellow man, commitment to the public cause, decency, tolerance.

But - according to Klop - this does not go beyond conditions that guarantee the functioning of the free market economy. So economy too cannot do without (respect for) values. Which one does not treat with irony, .

Value theory as axiomatics.

‘Axia’, lat.: valor, value. Axiology is theory of value.

Bibl. sample : P. Schotsmans, *De waardeleer als uitweg uit onze beschavingscrisis* (The theory of value as a way out of our crisis of civilization), in: our Alma Mater 1986 : 2, 107/120.

The crisis of metaphysics.

At the end of the Middle Ages, there was no longer any agreement about the ontology as it had been since the Ancient Greeks and partly under church influence;

- a. an objective being (essence) of things and
- b. deity, equally objectively existing, were brought up.

Consequence: all that is valuable in itself (objectively) became the object of critical reason which henceforth decided for itself what value is.

The cultural crisis.

Schotsmans.-- The profound cultural crisis in which we all live, leads to the fact that young people today have no more grip on values that exist in themselves and are inviolable. Young people immediately become “rudderless as they are in a pluralistic multiculture; beings who can no longer determine their own values”.

Values Clarification Movement.-- This is the title of a book subtitled *Values and Teaching (Working with Values in the Classroom)*, by L. Raths/ S. Simon (Columbus, 1966-1, 1978-2). This pedagogy introduces values into the educational system itself: the value of the human person, the personality and its value-based development.

A view that is gaining ground everywhere. For without an axiomatics, a system of presupposed inviolable data, modern reason is at the mercy of itself and the whims of the subject.

1. In practical psychology (about which Schotsmans mainly speaks) authoritarianism prevails: American psychiatrists, for example, control their patients in an all too authoritative way. The submission that is demanded kills the uniqueness in the person and his “human potentialities”.

2. In practical psychology anarchism reigns supreme: any attachment to objective data and authority is dismissed as ‘authoritarianism’.

So that this second tendency lent itself by necessity, though purely psychological, nevertheless introduced a doctrine of value: truth,-- versatility and totality (holism),-- justice, goodness, simplicity, -- beauty are presented as ideals which bind an unrestrained freedom without authoritarianism.

Morality socio-biologically.

Bibl. sample : L. Ferry, *Les racines de la morale*, (The roots of morality), in: Le Point 21.02.1998, 92s .

In passing: Ferry is an atheist “Christian. In this article he discusses Jean-Pierre Changeux/ Paul Ricoeur, *Ce qui nous fait penser* (La nature et la règle), Paris, Ode Jacob. To the word two thinkers.

1. J.P. Changeux (1936) is a professor at the Collège de France. In his *L’homme neuronal* (The neuronal man), (1983), he gives an overview of contemporary biology against the background of his materialism, which attempts to justify a general human morality.

2. P. Ricoeur (1913/2005)) is Protestant thinker of world renown. For years professor at the universities of Nanterre (Paris) and Chicago. Is phenomenologist in German style.

Theme.

Given: humanity lives according to ethical values. Asked: do these ethical values have as their presuppositions merely our material infrastructure (especially our neurons) as biology is beginning to uncover, or do they have as their presuppositions “the heaven of ideas” (which Ferry interprets as “abstract principles”, peculiar to religions and philosophies).

Note - When, like Ferry, one interprets the foundations of morality purely as “abstract principles”, one misses one of the main tenets of our Western tradition, Platonism, for whom ideas are something else than human abstract conceptions.

Ferry is comprehensive on Changeux but all too brief on Ricoeur. So far. We hear him specify Changeux.

1.- The rise of the biological sciences.

Since +/-1965, genetics and brain science have experienced an unprecedented progress. The visible signs: cloning, medically assisted pregnancy, genetically based medical treatments, predictive medicine.

2.- Sociology as ethics.

Biology is beginning to discover how - albeit not without the life center (which Ferry does not address) - our genes determine some of our either normal or pathological behaviors.

While sociobiology is achieving great success in the USA, in France, for example, a number of intellectuals are putting a big question mark over it.

Note -- Ferry is fair enough to mention this disagreement briefly.

Ethics.

Some sóciobiologists pretend to explain in terms of natural selection man's preference for certain moral precepts - sympathy, solidarity, cooperation, altruism - which favor both the survival and the evolution of humanity.

Changeux on the subject.

a. -- *Paradise.*

Central to this is human nature, especially the brain, in which Changeux considers a number of moral predestinations - present in all individuals - to be present. This is called Ferry: moral universalism.

Thus, for example, concerning the capacity to discover ideas in one's fellow man so that one can understand him and feel sympathy for him. Likewise, inhibitions that prevent violence (the self-destruction of mankind) or the desire to alleviate suffering.

b.-- *The Fall.*

The differences, indeed the disputes -- called moral relativism by Ferry -- are socio-biologically like a Fall. Two causes:

a. the religions for they disregard the autonomy of man by introducing values that have a higher origin than man ("the heaven of (divine) ideas");

b. the communitarisms which needlessly split people up and create tensions on the basis of group connections (identities).

Note - Here the (socio)-biologists admit that the influence of religions and of communitarianism, at least as they must see it (they are elements of life), must penetrate deeply into the biology of human beings to the point that the genes suffer from it and thus help to determine behavior.

c.-- *The redemption.*

"Après la chute la rédemption" (sic, a.c., 93). Science with its universalism. Here Changeux no longer argues socio-biologically but clearly adopts non-biological theses of J. Rawls (*A Theory of Justice* (1971-1), a liberal, thinker, and J. Habermas (of the second Frankfurt Formula; *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns* (Theory of communicative action), I and II (1981)). Which amounts to an ethics that forms discussive opinions.

In which, with Ricoeur, one fails to see clearly how precisely the genes are at work. Ricoeur admits the positive facts of biology but reproaches Changeux c.s. with extrapolating from mere biology to metaphysics. Extrapolation' here means a logical leap for which he is still waiting for the strict proofs.

Which is the fellow human being: me - again or not-me?

A. Schopenhauer (1788/1860) is known, apart from his pessimism for his morality as based on compassion ('Mitleid'). In his *Aphorismen zur Lebensweisheit* (Aphorisms on the wisdom of life), he refers to the modes of insight and explains as follows.

1. *The good character.*

The good character lives in a world unified with his being: others are for him not "not-me" but "me-again." Consequence: his attitude toward everyone is one of friendliness. It feels an inner kinship with all beings, sympathizes with their ups and downs and trusts in the same sympathy in all beings. From this springs its deep inner peace and its comforted, reassured, contented mood which makes everyone near it feel good.

The good character will call upon the assistance of others with as much confidence as it is conscious of the willingness to render that assistance to his own.-- The magnanimous one who pardons the enemy, treats the wicked with kindness, is exalted ('erhaben') (...) since he still acknowledges his own being even where it has decisively denied itself.

2. *The bad character.*

The evil character encounters everywhere a strong wall of separation between himself and everything outside himself: the world is for him an absolute non-I. His attitude toward it is hostile from the outset. As a result, the keynote of his mood becomes hatefulness, suspicion, envy, gloating.

The evil character does not rely on assistance from others when in need. If it appeals to them, it does so without confidence. Does it receive assistance, then without real gratitude. Assistance from others is to him hardly anything else than the effect of foolishness from others.

For it is not able to find its own being in the foreign being, even after such a thing has shown itself through a clear series of signs. Herein rests the vexation of all ingratitude.

This moral isolation in which it essentially and inevitably finds itself makes it easily the prey of despair.

For one, the world of men is a non-me, for another, that same world is me-again.

The reason of the modern bourgeoisie according to K. Marx / Fr. Engels.

Bibl. sample : M. Bodlaender, ed., *Politeia (Grote mannen over staat en maatschappij)*, (Great men on state and society), II (From Napoleon to Roosevelt), Amsterdam, 1947, 151ff..

This is an extract from the Communist Manifesto (London, February 1848), pedestal for decades of all social democrats. The bourgeoisie has played a highly revolutionary role in history.

Where it has come to power, it has disturbed all mid-century, archaic relations. The bourgeois has unmercifully torn the multicolored ties which in the middle ages bound man to his natural chiefs. He has left no other bond between man and man but pure self-interest, than cash cold payment. This cold cash payment has drowned the sacred emotion of pious bigotry, chivalrous fervor, petty-bourgeois melancholy in the icy waters of selfish calculation. It has made personal dignity disappear in the exchange value. In place of the innumerable guaranteed and hard-won 'freedoms' she has established the one unscrupulous freedom to trade.

In one word.

It has replaced exploitation shrouded in religious and political imagination with open, shameless, direct, arid exploitation. The bourgeoisie has robbed all operations formerly surrounded with reverent diffidence of their sacred appearance.

Note.-- Marx and Engels are saying two things here.

1. The history of all coexistence is so far a history of class struggle through exploitation by the powerful of the powerless. Slaves, plebeians, serfs, companions, -- proletarians have experienced this.

2. The great difference between ancient (Greek, Roman, mid-century,-- premodern systems of exploitation is in the desecration, desacralization, secularization of exploitation. Modern reason is revolutionary reason. "All fixed, ingrained relations - with their corollary of considerations venerable through age - change before they can stiffen. All that is permanent and fixed evaporates. All that is sacred is desecrated.

In other words, by desacralizing, i.e., by interpreting outside of God and his moral law, things, the actions of men, become transient, without eternal metaphysical content.

In other words, modern reason can, may manipulate them according to its own, freely chosen axioms.

The pure rational man.

Bibl. sample : Luke 18:2/5.-- The title traditionally reads “the unjust judge.” After reading, it will become apparent that it would better read “the cynical judge”. Jesus told them a parable (...) .

There was in a city a judge who did not fear God and did not bother the people. In the same city there was a widow who sought him out, “Grant me my right against my adversary.” For a long time the judge did not respond to this. But afterwards he said: “Even though I do not fear God and people are nothing to me, since this widow is a burden to me I will give her justice so that she will not be a burden to me forever”.

The speech of the judge.

Two of his axioms are clearly stated by Jesus

a. God is dead (so he does not respect him), -- which Biblically represents the first three of the Ten Commandments;

b. fellow man is “nothing” which Biblically represents the last seven of the Decalogue.

Remainder that he holds as axiom: his convenience. That is his ‘hèdonè’, lust(feeling). Unless men - God does not interfere after all because he is transcendent in such a way that he respects the very far-reaching autonomy of the (spiritually gifted) creatures (until the last judgment, when, according to Ps. 75(74):3, he foresees the moment when he will create a conscientious order) - unless therefore men disturb his ‘hèdonè’ his lust(feeling), the rational judge e.g. sees no real reason to give someone who is in his right his right.

After all, the reason of such a cynical judge simply ‘sees’ the situation of injustice somewhere, but not in such a way that that situation stirs his conscience. He unconsciously or consciously represses that situation because it does not touch his lustful life.

Jesus teaches us the structure of the desacralization that such a speech commits:

a. God “is dead”,

b. the neighbor “is nothing”.

Sum: the Decalogue is “dead letter”. Ultimately, if there is no higher, i.e. even the inviolability of lust to what lust is, value, i.e. inviolable holiness, such behavior is “reasonable,” rational.

For it deduces from a hedonistic axiom what can and may be deduced from such an axiom: God is dead and his law is dead letter. After all, the “basis” (“foundation”) is “my lust first.

That’s Jesus’ lesson on rational behavior in one of its variants.

The moral question according to Vladimir Soloviev.

VI. Soloviev (1853/1900), perhaps the greatest first thinker of traditional Realist-Christian Russia, was raised Orthodox as a child, lost his faith (through his studies of Western rationalism) and regained it. In this sense he is postmodern. See how he defines morality, proper, conscientious behavior.

Bibl. sample : VI. Soloviev; *La justification du bien (Essai de philosophie morale)*, (The Justification of the Good (Essay in Moral Philosophy)), Paris, 1939.

1. Ground feelings.

Shame (sense of morality), compassion (pity), reverence. They are the threefold nature-given prelude to conscientious behavior.

a. Mastery of the material-biological sensuousness within and around us,

b. solidarity with all living beings, fellow man first of all,

c. reverent submission to a higher being out of free will, are the unchanging characteristics of proper behavior. In the course of cultural history they have been interpreted and experienced (sometimes very differently) but, insofar as there is real morality, they are at least minimally there. That is the issue.

2. The virtues.

These are the deliberate enactment of the three natural ethically valuable feelings. They are oriented toward values, the good in its variants.

O.c., 43/61: the ascetic axiom (self-control); 62/79: the altruistic axiom (compassion); 80/93: the religious or sacred axiom (reverence).-- Such are the three basic attitudes of every decent human being.

The fundamental structure.

O.c., 98.-- The virtuous man is as he ought to be in relation to all that is. This relation is threefold. For either something -being- is naturally below our level of being or something -being- is essentially similar to us or something -being- is higher than us.-- That is the ontological structure (network of relations).

Logical conclusion.

What is below us (e.g., a biological tendency), we should not interpret as something higher than us (e.g., a God-given higher reality). To treat a being like us - a human being - as if it were lower than us, as if it were an inanimate thing e.g., is 'unreal'; i.e., disregards its reality, and thus unseemly. Ethically or morally irresponsible.

Behold how Soloviev outlines the ethical issue that 'cancels' the entire history of culture.

Kierkegaard's critique of reason.

Bibl. sample : S. Kierkegaard, *Kritik der Gegenwart*, (Critique of the present,), (Basel, 1946.

Sören Kierkegaard (1813/1855), forerunner of the philosophy of existence, publishes a booklet in 1846 from which we extract some passages related to rationality today.

The opening words.

Our time is essentially the time that uses reason, the thoughtful, the passionless, the fleetingly buzzing in enthusiasm and cunningly resting in slowness.

What else.

Not even the suicide bomber puts an end to himself out of desperation. No: he deliberates the step so long and so circumspectly until he is suffocated by rationality . Kierkegaard concludes: the question arises whether such a person can still really be called a suicide, namely insofar as it was primarily reason that took his life. This recalls what once Thoudkudides of Athens (-465/-395) labelled malakia, i.e. lack of energy in the sense of characterlessness. To what was discussed in our earlier catechisms as inertia, i.e. indecision (on morals and religion admittedly). Is after all moral-religious 'sluggishness' what can only be set in motion from outside. Not from within.-This was once the seventh capital sin.

Conscience(lessness).

O.c., 20.-- Morality (note: in the sense of conscientious-actual living) is having character. Well, 'charakter' in ancient Greek, is the engrained. Just as the sea has no character as well as the sand, so abstract rationality has none. Character, after all, is the inwardness (note: to take an active stand, to commit oneself.

Conscientiousness, too, insofar as energy is at work, is character. Unconscience, on the other hand, is when one prefers neither one thing nor the other.

Note: neither conscience nor unscrupulousness possesses.

And undecidability it is concerning existentialism when the qualitative distinction is weakened by a gnawing reflection.

The distinction between good and evil is undone by a light-hearted, presumptuous, theoretical knowledge of evil. By a haughty cunning that knows that the good in the world is unappreciated and not worthwhile. So that the good is stupidity to begin with.

Note-- That's pretty much what today's cynics establish and/or advocate.

Sex; sexual revolution and so on..

Bibl. sample : M. Van Nierop, *Nieuwe woorden* (New words), Hasselt, 195, 243/245 - The moral problem cannot be brought up without at least one word about the "sexual revolution."

Sex.

Ultimately from Latin: "sexus virilis" and "sexus muliebris" (literally: male and female body parts). The old Dutch word reads "kunne."

Sex-appeal.

It begins 1920+ with the term "sex-appeal" blown over from the USA, which means "seductive female appearance." The sex-idols - actresses and pin-ups (up to and including our current top models) - radiate an attraction that is unashamedly discussed in the twenties. In taboo language: one broke a hitherto prevailing "taboo."

Sexual revolution.

With the beatnik's (1950 +) and the hippies/ yppies (1960 +) the term 'sex' becomes generally accepted in the sense of "morality-free and openly practiced sexuality." Sex books circulate in porn stores and are just about 'accepted' Sex boutiques draw people, -also the older generation who -- shocked and attracted -- discover a new world.

Both aspects of the moral revolution in this area come through first in the Scandinavian countries (rather via Hamburg) and then to us.

By the way: words that were once without erotic connotations have since been given a sexy - exciting - content. E.g. 'boyfriend' and 'girlfriend': children are taught that they must have a "boyfriend/girlfriend" as early as possible (on pain of not being normal). Europe imposes mixed schools. And suchlike more.

"Is perversion normal?"

X, Psychology (*Ist pervers normal?*), in: Petra (Hamburg) 1991: September.-- "Sex fantasies involving overpowering and perversion (note: what was rejected as perverse, depraved before the sexual revolution) are much more frequent than previously assumed. Also in women. Most people often live through sex fantasies. Some are so extravagant that they prefer to keep them quiet". (Dr. D. Barlow, Director of Program for Sexual Research (State University of New York)).

This raises the question: does the sexual revolution provoke these fantasies (which is certain) or did they exist before (which is also certain)? And: Is sex with animals and with children also "normal"?

Moral-free eros.

We now turn to a literary masterpiece by Vlad Nabokov (1899/1977), who became a professor of Russian literature at Cornell University 1948/1959. He passes as **a.** an extraordinary descriptor and storyteller and **b.** a virtuoso of words. Critics say that the theme hidden in depth in all his works is obsession. This is: something accompanies someone to such an extent that they are controlled by it. Immediately, he passes as “an essential top figure of literary postmodernism” (D. Coussy et al., *Les littératures de langue anglaise depuis 1945*, (English-language literature since 194), Paris, 1988, 167s.)

Lolita.

Lolita has been topical in Belgium since 15.08.1996, when M. Dutroux, the pedophile with several girls - called ‘lolitas’ - on his conscience, was arrested. An event that gave the healthy part of the population an earthquake of an ethical nature.

The scenario.

Professor Humbert Humbert arrives in the USA in 1940. There he meets Lolita, a girl, five thousand three hundred days old (at fifteen). He recognizes in her - he is thirty years older than her - his first “love” of adolescence. To remain in her environment he marries the mother. The latter finds out the true intentions of the marriage but is killed in an accident. This opens all the floodgates for the prof, of course. He sets out with her on the roads of the USA. Among other things, to protect himself from his neighbors.

The young Dolores Haze - Lolita’s name - is, to the point of vulgarity, an ordinary girl who, for example, dreams of Hollywood when browsing through women’s magazines. Yet to her “Mac Fatum, old baboon of a father-in-law,” she is like a glamorous diva. But the erosion with him does not satisfy the naive and daring Lolita. Humbert searches for them for long months: he finds them married and pregnant. At the sight of such a “disaster” he becomes drunk with grief and decides to kill his rival.

The reception.

Four publishers refused the manuscript. But it became a blockbuster.

One can look at the work from two contradictory angles. For not a single coarse word or depraved allusion can be found in the text. Which “elevates” the exasperating content into a lofty but purely aesthetic atmosphere .

As a result, some, exonerate Lolita from any taint while others - often called “Philistines (narrow-minded) and candidates for scandal reading” by the former - dismiss it as a book free of shame.

The artery of Lolita is that morality is interpreted by Nabokov as a non-essential element of eros. In other words: ethics is put in parentheses. To surrender to e.g. eros, free from conscience. This allows Nabokov to play with phantasms (imagination).

Critics.

Note that we quote from *Magazine littéraire* 233 (1981 Sept.), i.e. ten years before Dutroux and its world scandal.

Philippe Sollers

A masterpiece like Lolita is still far from its true place - one of the first - in the XXth century novel. Why? Nabokov touched on two American sensibilities: mental health and the girl.

Gilles Berbedette.

The precocious genius of Nabokov shows itself in parodying our most absurd flirtations with “history” the utopias, the love novels either with our great taboos. The lack of reverence for the great ideas is only an elementary component of Nabokov’s writerly genius.

Note.-- Berbedette emphasizes the typical postmodern, namely, disbelief, indeed, the lighthearted mockery of all that is higher values. Which amounts to nihilism: all higher values as higher are nil, nothing (unless utopias or taboo’ s).

The onset.

This one literally throws the reader(s) in the middle. - “Lolita light of my life, fire of my loins. My sin, my soul. Lo-li-ta: the tip of my tongue performs three leaps along the palate to collide with your teeth in three turns. Lo-li-ta. She was Lo in the morning. La without more, a meter forty-eight in socks, standing straight on one foot. She was Lola in her pants. She was Dolly at school. She was Dolares on the dotted lines of her form. But in my arms she was invariably Lolita. (...).

“Actually, there might never have been a Lolita if I had not loved a previous girl in the course of a summer “in a kingdom by the sea.” When? About as many years before Lolita’s birth as I was old that summer -- A style full of images is the mark of a good slayer.”

Note -- Humbert’s existence would have been called S. Kierkegaard ‘aesthetic’ life. This is morality-free living.

Pia Pera, Diary of Lo.

Bibl. sample : J. Douwes, *Een strijdlustig weerwoord op Lolita* (A combative rebuttal to Lolita), in: Trouw 07.09.1996,2

Pera (40) is an Italian writer, “who can therefore ‘only’ make her audience aware of abuses of which children are the victims.” Around the age of eighteen she read Nabokov’s *Lolita* first in English, then in Russian and then in Italian. She was bowled over by the literary achievement but was immensely annoyed by the hero Humbert as yet another character guided by lust-and-passion but this time deflected onto a child.

Empathizing with Lolita’s writing.

Her disappointment was mainly that she could not empathize with *Lolita*: “How did she look at herself? How did she see the man who married her mother to get her?”-The story Pera provides is at odds with Nabokov’s work, if only because she presents the same story in the language of a child. At Harvard University, she read diaries of girls for this purpose: “Some were childish. Others pretentious or very wise.”-This is how Pera’s work begins when the I-person is left with her mother after the death of her father. As an only child.

Pera’s Lolita.

Her *Lolita* is a spoiled bitch. She is disgusted by ugly men. -- *Lolita* fights a fierce battle with her mother to get the attention of new tenant Humbert. In *Lolita*’s eyes, her mother acts so sullen that at one point she says, “Now I’m taking this Humbert for myself.”

Sexual offense.

Is there, in such a case, still sexual crime because of Humbert? “I think so. All children attempt to seduce and manipulate. But as adults one knows that. So one has to give them room for that. However, when one responds with one’s own sexual desire, one inhibits them. One may never ‘use’ children for one’s own sexual pleasure. I am very strict about that. Thus Pera in the interview.

Note -- Pera speaks as if she personally expresses an opinion. But the question arises “What is your sufficient reason for speaking so sternly?” As long as our culture holds to individual opinions, it lacks any ontological basis. If pedophilia is not essentially, by definition, unconscionable behavior, why should a pedophile be censurable?

Lot analysis.

Peirce once said, “One knows what a concept means in so far as one works with it and knows the result.”

One of the definitions of ‘fate’ is: “actual course of ‘events’“: with the emphasis on ‘actual’, because it is understood to be “independent of human will”, unpredictable: “to be awaited”. In other words: reason as a deliberate ability to work reaches its limits here.

Bibl. sample :

- R. Guardini, *Vrijheid, genade, lot*, (Liberty, grace, destiny), Antwerp, 1950;
- Daniel-Rops, *Eléments de notre destin* (Essai), Paris, 1934 (a work of cultural criticism);
- L. Foldes, *Léopold Szondi et l'énigme du destin*, (Leopold Szondi and the enigma of destiny), in: *Sélection* (Zurich) 1985: Juillet, 98/104.

One can define ‘destiny’ as “the dynamic system of destiny”. Sometimes one emphasizes being disposed: ‘destiny’ is then “what is disposed” and even “the mysterious power that disposes destiny”.

In the background, an ontological insight is present: ‘being’ is namely “all that was, is now, will ever be” (definition already mentioned by Homer and Hesiod when they refer to the object of the muses and its leader Mnèmosunè, literally: remembrance (expanded consciousness)). In that ontological whole all destinies are situated.

Time-boundness.

Being’, reality, as we experience it, is a totality of temporary, passing, moments: from the past (which reflects, yes, reflects), in which we are thrown, we live in the very narrow ‘now’ or ‘present’, towards the future which we co-design.

Factors.

The elements - factors, parameters - which act as determinants in the past, present and future, are for our earthly mind so complex and numerous that we must limit ourselves to samples (to generalize and generalize).

As an aside. This is the real reason why religious people pray. They start from the premise that at least “higher,” “holy” -- “divine beings” know the factors.

Of the past -- as far as we are concerned -- we forget very much (through suppression or repression e.g.); of the present much escapes us; of the future our knowing and predicting is waiting. Our destiny reveals our ignorance.

Destiny science.

Bibl. sample : P. Van Tongeren, ed., *Het lot in eigen hand? (Reflecties op de betekenis van het (nood)lot in onze cultuur)*, (Destiny in our own hands? (Reflections on the meaning of (fate) in our culture)), Baarn, 1994.

We know: Leopold Szondi (1893/1986) developed an analysis of fate (*Schicksalsanalyse*) (1944). "Szondi gave to the until him hidden concept of 'human destiny' a medical and psychoanalytic basis" (Marvin Webb).

Pedigree fate particularly caught his attention: the genes we received from our parents and ancestors also determine our inclinations,-- the choices regarding marriage partner(s), friend(s), profession,-- even illness.

Destiny in our own hands?

Van Tongeren defines fate as "a scandal for human freedom~ fate (the strong degree of destiny) as "the extreme form of that scandal." -- Some sixteen writers set forth in the work their conceptions of the uncontrollable and its possible control.

Narrative.-- Narratology or storytelling is a part of all historiography: what happens is open to telling.

The basic structure of history - an occurrence, a happening or event, an incident, a fate - is always the "omen/continuity" couple, i.e. a first event is followed in time by a second event (whether or not the latter has any causal connection with the former). The following inherent to all that is "temporal," i.e., proceeding in time, time-bound, is the only ascertainable link.

Reason.

Whether the connection is more than the after-ness of time, is revealed by rational investigation. Thus we have the causal connection which has attracted particular attention since the modern sciences.

The recent (but actually very old) chaology within contemporary physics exposes one aspect: although essentially determined, still much in nature (matter) remains uncontrollable and thus unpredictable. It is then called 'chaos', because it is over-complicated and thus rationally confused.

However, as soon as one goes beyond physics, e.g. into the living world (plants, animals, people), so many factors come into play besides the purely physical factors of an event that our poor reason has to deal again and again with the more and other than physical 'chaos'. So that e.g. the causal connection remains lost. With this we are in the realm of destiny.

Reason chooses but fate arranges (the reversal of fortune).

The ancient cultures, following in the footsteps of the primitive ones, knew, because of the unpredictability of the deities, the axiom that expresses the reversal of the opposite: “the harmony (mean: union) of opposites.”

-- J. Elster, *Ulysses and the Sirens (Studies in Rationality and Irrationality)*, Cambridge / Paris, 1979-1, 1984-2, and

-- J. Elster, *Sour Grapes (Studies in the Subversion of Rationality)*, Cambridge / Paris, 1983, from the alpha or human sciences (“social sciences”), defines rationality as the human ability to deliberately (“intentionally”) take into account the future.

1. Biologically, one can speak of purposefulness (life forms adapt ‘functionally’ to situations)

2. Human science, however, becomes purposeful heroism (intentionalism) in the adaptation to circumstances.

Note.-- Platon sees it as two aspects in cosmos, man and society: ‘nous’ (Lat.: intellectus, mind) and ‘ananke’, necessity, better: destiny. Our mind is rational. Fate is often irrational. ‘Fate’ is what is incomprehensible to our mind (intellect/ reason, spirit, will). What makes the mind miscalculate. Hence anankè, destiny-necessity, appears unpredictable, disorderly.

William Van Ockham (Occam) (1295/1350),

the nominalist who directly prepared the modern mentality, was, with his revolutionary action, aimed at renewing the Catholic Church. Purposefully. However, however well he meant it, his purification movement ended in the shaking off by the laity (especially a number of German and other princes) of “the yoke of Christian Rome.” Thus writes A. Weber (Protestant), *Histoire de la philosophie européenne*, Paris, 1914-8, 234.

Martin Luther (1483/1546)

He was a deeply religious nature who was inadvertently removed from the Catholic Church. “Nothing was further removed from Luther than the founding of a new ideology. Even the splintering of the Roman church was not in his intent. His success was fueled by other forces: they lay in him and in the structure of his time.” (Dr G. Deschner, *Luther (Eine Bilanz nach 500 Jahren)* (A conclusion after 500 years), in: *Bunte* 10.11.1983, 126).

One sees it in both cases: purposeful action that, once placed in situations, causes the opposite of what was intended. Fate decides!

Descartes and Hegel wiggle but fate disposes.

R. Descartes (1596/1650) founded modern philosophy.

“Cartesianism” as a system was abandoned rather quickly. Nevertheless, Descartes continued to influence both modern philosophies and modern sciences no less as a result.” (C. Forest, *Le cartésianisme et l’orientation de la science moderne*, (Cartesianism and the orientation of modern science), Liège / Paris, 1938, 3).

“It is not the intention to impute to Descartes the materialist interpretation of science (...). He remained a believer to the end of his life, and his spiritualism is not questioned.--but the conceptions circulated by men go beyond what they foresaw. With unrelenting logic they pursue their way through the thinking minds”. (O.c., 4).

In other words, Descartes became a prematerialist, a pioneer of materialism - the aggressive materialism of the French materialists of the 18th century.

G.Fr. Hegel (1770/1831)

He can safely be called the top figure of typical modern philosophy. He stood for a “Philosophie der Idee”. Idea’ is, with him, “all that was, is now, will be”.

Yet he did not hide his deep sympathy for the “Philosophes” (the XVIII-d’ century rationalists). Even those among them who most vehemently contested the cause of Christianity and that of spiritualism (i.e., the presupposition of an immortal human soul, whether or not without belief in a deity).

In other words, just as Descartes was dualistic, on the one hand very spiritualistic (consciousness) and on the other very materialistic (the body as a machine), so too, in his way, was Hegel. What do we see? Hegel had disciples. Many thinkers. He dominated German thought to a great extent until the First World War (1914/1918). But they split into “rightists” and “leftists. Among the leftists included K. Marx (1818/1883) and Fr. Engels (1820/1895), the founders of scientific socialism (communism). They turned Hegel “upside down” and instead of the “idea” they put matter first as the principle of all that was, is and shall be.

Cfr. R. Serreau, *Hegel et l’hégélianisme*, Paris, 1965-2, esp. 26s. (*Spiritualism et matérialisme*).

Conclusion.-- Descartes and Hegel are two top figures on rationality. Both believe in a universal reason in all people. Yet this modern reason diverged into contradictory views.

Revolutionary reason wiels. The revolution disposes.

K. Löwith (1897/1973), in his *Weltgeschichte und Heilsgeschehen*, (World History and Salvation), in: W. Otto u.a., *Anteile (Martin Heidegger zum 60. Geburtstag)*, (Martin Heidegger on his 60th birthday), Frankf.a.M. 1950, 150, says:

“However inconceivable it may seem to begin with, namely the fact that in a religious ‘Entweltlichung’ (note: to turn away from this world) the radical secularization (note: to be totally absorbed in this world) had its origin, yet this would only confirm a general rule of history: in the process of history something different always emerges than what was intended at the beginning of a movement (...).”

The great innovators of history prepare for others the paths which they themselves do not tread.” -- Löwith mentions three models.

1. J.-J. Rousseau (1712/1778).

He prepared the French Revolution (1789/1799). Yet he would not have recognized himself in Max. de Robespierre (1758/1794) who played a leading role in “la Terreur”(the reign of terror). Such a brutal dictatorship was not deliberately envisioned in Rousseau’s mind. Quite the contrary, in fact.

2.1. K. Marx (1818/1883)

He prepared the Russian revolution (February/October 1917). The Bolsheviks, the majority, took power because they had outflanked the Mensheviks, the minority, at the 1903 congress in Brussels and London. Vladimir Lenin (1870/1924), founder of Bolshevik Marxism, continued a brutal repression that lasted for years. But Marx, who intended the constitutional system of the then Switzerland or of the then USA as an ideal, would not have recognized himself in Lenin.

2.2. Fr. Nietzsche (1844/1900),

He was an aristocratic nihilist, prepared the fascist (1922) and Nazi (1933) revolutions. In 1942, A. Hitler (1889/1945) donated Nietzsche’s works to his ally B. Mussolini (1883/1945), who like him favored a (brutal) dictatorial system, a totalitarian regime, in the Brenner Pass where they met. But Nietzsche certainly would not have recognized himself in Hitler.

After all this, in this and the previous chapters, it is clear why critical minds have called modern reason “revolutionary reason. One knows the tree by its fruits” said Jesus.

The ecological question.

Bibl. sample : R. Etware and others /*Info Sud, Ecology (Véritable pépinière d'emploi l'industrie verte est en Europe un secteur très florissant)*, ((The green industry is a veritable breeding ground for jobs and is a very flourishing sector in Europ), in: *Le Temps* (Geneva) 28 08.1998, 45.

Man and the environment go hand in hand, for while man cares for his environment, he also pollutes it! Throughout history one sees it.

The disaster.

Modernity has as its fate - destiny - to modernize the environment but not without turning it into the opposite: "The forests die. The deserts are increasing. The soils become poisoned. The air is tainted.-- The climate heats.-- The wastes pile up".

The typical modern reaction.

If modern reason is the cause of the disaster, it is also zee resourceful regarding recovery.-- "All this - says the author - provokes new techniques and thus new jobs. These concern countless fields: water purification, air purification, energy conservation, waste-to-energy incineration or recovery, measuring techniques that make standards respected.

Add to this the restoration of biodiversity. Add to this the measures that prevent catastrophes: solar panels, organic arable and livestock farming (agriculture), landscape maintenance, management of forests and woodlands.

Economic policy.

J. Beishuizen and others, *De magische vijfhoek (Economische politiek in kort bestek)*, (The magic pentagon (Economic policy in brief), Utr./Antw., 1976, 9ff., says that economic policy of governments honors five objectives:

- a. balance of the labor market,
- b. balance of economic growth,
- c. stable price level,
- d. balanced balance of payments,
- e. equitable distribution of income.

Proponents question whether a healthy environment is a sixth objective. They propose broadening the concept of economic growth to include not only material prosperity but also general well-being. Which includes environmental care.

The world market for environmental care is approaching \$300 billion.

This alone indicates that environmentalism has become a serious component of the whole system of our culture -- governments, businesses, administrations, banks, insurance companies are involved. Not to mention the various professional sciences that underpin the "green sector" industry.

Ecology (biblically interpreted).

‘Ecology’ talks about the relationship “living being / environment”-- All religions (except the rationalist ones) talk about the relationship “religious man / biotope”. So does the Bible.

Now we read Rom. 8:19ff. “The creation waits tensely for the revelation (note : the becoming visible) of the sons of God (note : god friends). Even if it is subjected to vanity - not because it wanted to be so, but because of the one who subjected it - it is with the hope of one day being freed from the bondage of corruption itself, in order to experience the freedom of the glory of the sons of God.

We realize it indeed: the whole of creation to this day groans in “labor pains”. By the way: not only they! We ourselves, who possess the ‘first fruits’ (note: an initial stage) of the spirit (note: God’s life force), groan inwardly in the expectation of the redemption of our bodies.”

Interpretation.

Axiom: Gen. 6:3, where it is said that God’s “spirit” (life-force that establishes happiness) is ultimately reserved for those who are not “flesh (and blood)” (displaying unscrupulous-weak behavior).

Axiom.

In God’s eyes, ‘creation’ (here: the biotope) is in solidarity with man in terms of its fate. It shares in his fate. Thus Gen. 6:13, where a causal connection is made between man’s unscrupulousness and the ecological disaster called the flood.-- Cf. Deut. 32:12/14 (positive model). Cf. Osee 2:20 (future covenant).

Upon the earth (and the universe), since the unscrupulousness of the serpent, Eve and Adam (Gen. 3:17ff.), weighs a curse (doom).

This shows itself in vanity, i.e. moral evil based on delusion, and destruction, i.e. material evil. With man’s groaning, the biotope groans too. However, thanks to God’s compassion in the midst of his omnipotence, which closes its eyes to unscrupulousness (Wis. 11:23), our material part, our body, already now shares in holy spirit (God’s life force), which in time will mean full redemption. In solidarity with this, already now, secretly, the biotope shares in it with the expectation of full redemption (“glory”).

Yes, the universe will share in it as 2 Cor. 5:17 e.g. says. One sees that, with the cosmic religions, the Bible too involves the whole cosmos in the drama of salvation of sacred history.

The “intellectuals” in modern discussion.

Bibl. sample : M. Terpstra, Panajotis Kondylis (*Slechts intellectuelen menen dat intellectuelen de wereld beter begrijpen*), (Only intellectuals think that intellectuals understand the world better), in: *The Owl of Minerva* (Tijdschr. v. History and Philosophy of Culture) 11:2 (winter 1994/1995), 99/120.

One knows that from the modern era onward, the mid-century clergy was replaced by the “intelligentsia,” “the modern vanguard” composed of scientists, thinkers, and artists.-- Kondylis is a Marxist Greek-German thinker.

I.-- The collapse of the three axioms.

Kondylis calls them, with K, Marx, “ideologies” (unreal constructions of thought). From the Renaissance (1450/1640), on the one hand, conservatism (premodern tradition, with us especially the Christian Middle Ages) and on the other hand, modern liberalism (free market economy) and socialism (command economy) dominate our Western democracies in a life-and-death struggle.

The new era.

Especially the collapse of the communist systems (from the USSR to Cuba) has proven “once more” that the familiar “ideologies”, typical products of “intellectuals” have become unreal. They do not (any more) solve the tasks of today. Only now, after the cold war, are the deeper motivations that will determine the coming planetary politics surfacing.

In the course of the stormy years 1975/1995 they have accumulated to a gigantic potential - explosive. This will lead not to war but to tremendous conflicts amidst a state of unbridled lawlessness.-- In particular, the deadly fight over the (just) distribution of life’s necessities may well be imminent. And on a planetary scale at that.

II.-- The role of the intellectuals in the discussion.

The modern world is an argumentative, debating world in which “the intellectuals” are given a leading role.

Kondylis “thinking” in our dramatic situation of survival seems useless. Yet there will always be intellectuals who will offer their ideological services “for the good of the cause” In the view that “they know better than others.”

Typically Marxist, Kondylis says, “Intellectuals do not generate anything more than life-altering thought constructs.”

Note: So what is Kondylis’ thinking constructs?

Contents.

01. Preface.
01. Ontological method.-- (05/13).
02. 'Culture' according to Hans Blumenberg.
03. Franz Kafka: the laws. The deviation from them as well as the feedback.
04. Culture as law-based problem solving.
05. Ontology.
06. Scientific and pseudoscientific reason.
07. Being is known by reason. Experience and especially testimony.
08. Is pure reason which is governed by two and only two axioms.
09. Explanations.
10. Metaphysics (ontology): what it really is.
11. Nominalism(s) versus realism(s).
12. Empiricism.
13. Applicative model.
14. Modern discussion regarding foundations is liberal.
15. The theory of communicative action (J. Habermas).
16. Critical theory of religion.
17. Reason. If only reason. Runs into undecidability.
18. Rationality concerning pure reason and its foundations.
19. J. Habermas
20. W.W. Bartley on commitment philosophy and theology.
21. Noted.
22. Editorial criticism.
23. How modern are primitives and how are they modern?
24. How modern are antique and mid-century medicines and how?
25. How modern are lunar religions and how are they modern?
26. The typically modern man: he can make himself.
27. Free-spiritedness (libertinism).
28. Epistemology.
29. Cartesianism as modern thought and life.
30. Towards a rationalist morality.
31. The consistent rationalism of le marquis de Sade.
32. Note.
33. Energetic ethics.
34. Scholars and libertinism.
35. From modern to postmodern : Georg Simmel.
36. Postmodernism(n).
37. In other words...:
38. Civil-liberal morality.
39. Value theory as axiomatics.
40. -Morality socio-biologically speaking.
41. Ethics.
42. What is the fellow human being: me - again or not-me?
43. The reason of the modern bourgeoisie according to K. Marx / Fr. Engels.

44. The pure rational man.
45. The moral question according to Vladimir Soloviev.
46. Kierkegaard's critique of reason.
47. Sex: sexual revolution and so on.
48. Moral-free eros.
49. The consequence
50. Pia Pera, diary of Lo.
51. Lot analysis.
52. Fate analysis.
53. Reason chooses but fate arranges (the turning to the contrary).
54. Descartes and Hegel wield but fate disposes.
55. Revolutionary reason sees fit. The revolution disposes.
56. The ecological question.
57. Ecology (biblically interpreted).
58. The "intellectuals" in the modern discussion.