FREEDOM AND HETERONOMY:

AN ESSAY ON THE LIBERAL SOCIETY

FREEDOM AND HETERONOMY:
AN ESSAY ON THE LIBERAL SOCIETY

Institute of International Politics and Economics, Belgrade
Centre for Security Studies, Belgrade

Reviewers:
Duško Dimitrijević, Ph.D.
Aleksandra Bulatović, M.A.

For the publisher:
Duško Dimitrijević, Ph.D.

ISBN: 978-86-7067-112-6

This book was pursued as part of a more general theme in the modern international relations, based on contract no. 149002 D, for research conducted by the Institute of International Politics and Economics, funded by the Serbian Ministry of Science and Tehnological Development.

To my daughter Ksenija, my inspiration

CONTENTS

I

SOLIDARITY IN THE CONSTITUTION OF PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY

In essence, the social pathology of a highly unequal society consists in the destructive effect that inequality has on social solidarity: the sense that those who live together share a common fate and should work together. Disregard for the interests of others becomes the norm. (...) The collective indifference to the welfare of others expressed to an increasingly pathological degree in public policy (...) has (...) been accompanied by this remarkable rise in the extent to which individuals showed a similar lack of care.

(Brian Barry)[1]

Economic reductionism in the perception of solidarity

In a 1986 paper published in *Ethics*, Ian Macneil discusses solidarity as a model of exchange of goods between the members of a community. His starting position is that much of the social and political philosophy is fundamentally useless, because it fails to take full account of the inherent duality of human nature, which is „inconsistently selfish and socially committed a the same time". By implication, this would mean that both the liberal and communitarian approaches to social analysis are partly correct, but inherently implausible, explanations of social behaviour. Macneil sees the root of this

[1] *Why Social Justice Matters*, Polity Press, 2005, p. 183.

inner inconsistency quite simply, in that „(...) men are individuals born and duying one by one, each suffering his or her own hunger pains and enjoying his or her own full stomach, yet each individual absolutely requiring other human beings even to exist physically and psychologically, much less to become an ordinary whole human being".[2] According to him, solidarity arises from a structure of exchange that both increases the individual utility of all members of the community, and at the same time satisfies certain conditions that lead to it being accepted by all. Thus, exchange is seen as always going beyond a mere distribution of utility, so that „no pattern of exchange merely enhances individual utility respecting the goods being exchanged, and all patterns of exchange accepted by all parties enhance social solidarity".[3]

Undoubtedly many of the social relationships can be described as „transactions" or „exchange", but there are things that this essentially economistic conceptualisation misses that reflect its basic inadequacy. One of these things is deliberate sacrifice without a view of any broader constellation of exchange. I shall argue here that deliberate sacrifice marks the doorway to proper solidarity and social morality, while the economistic calculations can at best serve as proxies to what we are traditionally, and rightly so, used to thinking of as morality. However, before proceeding any further, justice should be done to the concepts that the economistic explanation uses, and Macneil's paper is a good guide to go by.

By „goods" the exchange view, as I shall call it here, refers to „anything people want", both material and non-material, or, in Macneils own words: „(a)lthough most often 'goods' refers to material goods, the word can refer to relatively nonmaterial things such as a smile or a compliment".[4]

By „the exchange" the economistic theory refers to „any 'vice-versa movement' between or among individuals".[5]

Indeed, the domain in which the reduction of human relationships to „transactions" seems to work for theoretical purposes is much narrower than the above two definitions suggest. It is true that there is something fundamentally similar between exchanging services or favours and exchanging smiles and

---

2 Ian R. Macneil, "Exchange Revisited: Individual Utility and Social Solidarity", *Ethics*, vol. 96, no. 3, April 1986, pp. 567–93.

3 Macneil, "Exchange Revisited: Individual Utility and Social Solidarity", p. 568.

4 Macneil, "Exchange Revisited: Individual Utility and Social Solidarity", p. 570.

5 Loc. cit.

compliments: both include giving something to the other that the other is supposed to need, or at least like. Similarly, both pressupose at least a tacit reciprocity, because it would be hard to imagine long-term commitments to providing services or favours to someone who would never think of giving something back, either as compensation (payment) or as a return favour. It is similarly hard to imagine a situation where over a long time some people would courteously smile at others while the others would remain totally indifferent, or would react adversely. In some communities it is still common for people who do not know each other to greet each other in the street, but as communities grow and increasing numbers of strangers move in who do not reply to or are surprised by the greetings, the practice of greeting gradually disappears. Thus both the material and non-material things referred to indeed belong to the proper realm of exchange, not because exchange is the other name for all human relationships, but because it is a part of such relationships that is characterised by a tacit expectation of some degree of reciprocity. This is a general characteristic of any reductionism, including the economic reductionism: the fact that economic relationships, or relationships based on „individual utility" make up a considerable portion of the entire volume of human inter-relationships seems to allow the subsumption of most or all of human relationships under the rules governing economic relations; however, there are crucial, if not everyday, types of relationships that consistute the specifically human face of social interactions and that do not conform to the same rules, so they cannot be subject to economic reduction. In this context, we shall concentrate on the expectation of reciprocity as a relatively reliable indicator of the economic relationships, to explore the boundaries where some relationships escape the realm of transactions or "exchange" as described here.

Perhaps all things that people give to one another are indeed goods, in the sense that, where the giving is benevolent, they are supposed to be „good" for the recipient. However, the term „goods" used in the economic reductionist approach is not „goods" in this sense, but goods in the sense of commodities. If goods are anything that people want, then goods are fully describable as commodities, as the social system for the distribution of things people want is organised as a form of market. On the other hand, there are things that those who give them away may justifiably believe to be „good" for the recipients, where the recipients themselves are either indifferent to such goods (such as is often the case with good advice), or positively antagonistic to them (such

as punishments administered to children or deliberate frustrations of their desires that form part of any rational child-rearing process). As „goods" that „people want" are the goods that are on the market, and their relative price, or transaction cost, is largely determined by just how much people want them (even utility in obtaining such goods is measured by the amount of satisfaction that they provide, and this is reflected in their transaction price), they are commodities in the full sense. Even if you give a good of this type to someone without any transaction cost for the receiving party associated with it, it is still a commodity, because it is subject to economic-type transactions; it is a recognisably „wanted" good by most or at least some people in the community. The fact that I may give someone a cellular phone as a present does not „unmake" that telephone a commodity in broad circulation, nor do I receiving a bunch of flowers as a present render those flowers something else than a commodity. It is the expectation of reciprocity, that I would, or should, respond in due course by giving a present to the same or other person on some recognised occasion, such as a birthday or a family celebration, or that I should in certain situations be legitimately expected to give flowers, that makes these gifts transactions. At the same time, it is this reciprocity that makes them commodities. In short, anything people are known to want is subject to the civilisational expectations of reciprocity (even though these expectations may vary across cultures in their form and the conditions attached), and thus anything people generally want is a commodity, because by definition it is subject to *demand*. To the extent that we discuss these types of goods, the economic reductionist theory might command considerable plausibility.

Similar considerations apply to the concept of „exchange". The very term „exchange" pressuposes reciprocal actions, or active interaction. Exchanges occur where people give something away, and receive something else, perhaps not immediately, but as two inseparable parts of a process of interaction. In the street, people may exchange smiles, and in a neighbourhood on close social occasions they may exchange compliments. The structure of exchange is socially mediated, so that people will generally exchange smiles with those who smile back, and will give compliments to those who respond likewise. This is so much so that it has firmly established itself as part of the social ethiquette in some communities. Smiles and compliments are given in much the same way as hands are shaken, as a form of greeting. A hand is not extended to another person because one believes that it is good for that person to shake hands, nor are smiles and compliments ordinarily given because we believe

that others will truly benefit from them or that they need them. We simply believe that, like us, they find smiles and compliments pleasant and that, all things considered, given that smiles or compliments cost nothing and please everyone involved, everyone is better off exchaning smiles and compliments than not doing so. Smiles and compliments are also commodities, even though they are exchanged (for the most part) free of charge.

The argument advanced here is supported by the further distinction that the proponents of the economistic theory make, namely the one between specialised and non-specialised exchanges that arise from the division of labour. In a society characterised by a high degree of division of labour exchanges take place either in the respective goods, or in the monetary equivalent of each, while in industrially primitive societies exchanges may be in whatever goods one posseses.[6] Clearly the goods involved are commodities and the exchange is always voluntary, because it is based on an existing demand for certain goods by at least some parties. Macneil claims that all exchanges that are accepted by all the parties increase social solidarity; his concept of solidarity arises from a greater degree of satisfaction by all those involved, and is exchausted in what could be described as a state of mind arising from such satisfaction. Assuming that the goods individuals want reflect their future desires and life plans, the mutual satisfaction of wants through a voluntary exchange of commodities creates longer-term expectations of fruitful cooperation:

> Solidarity or social solidarity is a state of mind or, rather, a state of minds. It is a belief not only in future peace among those involved but also in future harmonious affirmative cooperation. (An equally good word for solidarity is „trust".) Solidarity by no means requires liking the one trusted nor is it dependent upon a belief that the other is altruistic; nor does solidarity necessarily imply friendship, although friendship often is a manifestation of solidarity. From the viewpoint of an individual, he may sacrifice solidarity, enhance it, or even, in theory, maximise it if he has no conflicting goals.[7]

If one's life in and expectations from the society are based on the „things one wants" and the likelihood that others will act predictably and predominantly favourably with regard to one's pursuit of these wants, then in such a scenario all human relations would be exhausted in the terms described

---

6 Marshall Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics*, Tavistock, London, 1974.

7 Macneil, "Exchange Revisited: Individual Utility and Social Solidarity", p. 572.

above. Solidarity would be a state of mind arising from the satisfaction (or expectation of satisfaction) of wants, and such mutual satisfactions would be entirely separate from the person-to-person relationships that would involve friendship or commitments that go beyond the described market of mutual satisfactions. If capitalist economics were indeed fully translatable into entirely capitalist human relationships, then the above analysis of solidarity might be correct. Fortunately this is not so, as I shall attempt to show in what follows.

Non-commodities

If commodities are goods that people want, then, tautologically, goods that people do not want or are indifferent to do not qualify as commodities, simply because there is no perceptible demand for them, and they automatically do not invoke expectations of reciprocation anytime in the future. Yet, I shall argue, it is possible to exhibit solidarity with someone by providing them with goods that are good for them, but which they do not consciously want. This is the first argument to be made here.

The second argument, and the second problem to be discussed, relates to the idea that solidarity is a state of mind (or minds) that includes the awareness of a possibility of future fruitful cooperation. I shall argue that solidarity is never a state of mind alone, and furthermore, that it is sometimes extended to those with whom there can be no rational expectation of cooperation or even benevolence.

The third argument, and the respective problem, has to do with the idea that solidarity does not necessarily involve any type of emotional reaching out such as in friendship, and that it is subject to rational calculations. An offshoot of this argument will relate to the idea, mentioned by Macneil, that friendship, where it accompanies solidarity, tends to be a manifestation of solidarity. I shall argue that friendship goes deeper than solidarity and that, rather than being a manifestation of solidarity, it is in fact a motivation for solidarity. This is related to the second argument that solidarity always includes some type of action, and is never a mere state of mind, which makes it possible to argue that friendship is a motivator for acting in solidarity, rather than a behavioural result of solidarity as a state of mind. While at this stage these two things, solidarity and friendship, seem blurred, they are quite distinct, as I hope will become clear shortly.

Unwanted or non-reciprocal solidarity

A discussion of showing solidarity with someone who does not want what we are trying to give them allows us to escape from the economistic framework of "exchange". If we can show solidarity without being part of an exchange, perhaps even without the person with whom we demonstrate solidarity knowing about it, then there is much more to solidarity than exchange, and the economic reductionism is automatically proven insufficient in explaining social interactions.

While most of the things that are subject to everyday transactions do become part of various transactions, this is so simply because these things are conceived as commodities, and the institutionalisation of social life rests on the principles of the market. If a good is a commodity, then the regularities needed for the control and social legitimacy of its distribution are there. However, human relationships sometimes go beyond such regularities, and this is obvious in cases where things that are good for us, or that somebody justifiably believes are good for us, are given to us without us knowing about it.

One example involves children, who are typically unaware of the good that their parents and relatives provide them with, and are often frustrated by the child-rearing process, which largely consists in a system of frustrations of desires aimed at creating certain behavioral patterns and internalising particular values. Children do not typically want to be disciplined or educated, so this is hardly a transaction-type process, yet undoubtedly what is done to the children is good for them. Perhaps some would object that children are not considered competent to be treated as potential participants in social exchanges, and that their lack of voluntary acceptance of the disciplining or educating practices results from their incompletely developed awareness of the social value of such practices.

Let us consider the example of religious people who pray for one another. It is one of the postulates of the Christian fate that one should extend courtesy to one's enemies, let alone friends, and that one should always pray for others. A Christian will pray for someone who is not a Christian and does not believe in the prayer. Often they will pray for people who have no idea that somebody is praying for them. This is particularly the case with monks, whose mission is to "pray for the whole world", and this does not apply only to Christian monks, but to most monastic communities in various religions. The Buddhist monk in Tibet who prays for his oppressors, given his faith, justifiably believes not only

that his prayer does good to the Chinese soldiers, but that it is the greatest good that could possibly be given to them. The Chinese soldiers do not know about this, and if they do, they probably do not care, although they would have a hard time proving it empirically that the prayer does not do them good.

A Christian monk will pray for the enemies and for those subject to the everyday temptations and pressures in ways not just removed from and unannounced to those who he prays for, but he will deliberately conceal his prayer so that he does not receive any recognition or return favour. The monk will also conceal his virtues, his restraint, empathy or other sacrifice for others, so that the effort is made, yet that those who should benefit from it do not know about it.

Large benefactors of poor communities sometimes demand that their identity is hidden from the public. Some people direct a part of their monthly income to charities on the condition that this is not revealed to anyone. Others risk their lives for others without asking for anything in return, even when this is outside their line of official duty. People who save drowning swimmers, victims of shark attacks or of various accidents often do so in situations where decisions are made instantly and there is no time for any conscious exchange to take place. Diving in the ocean to pull to the lonely shore the victim of a shark attack is a decision taken in a second, where the immediate prospect is only the immense risk to the rescuer, and the only benefit is saving a human life. No other calculations are a part of the situation, including the implicit expectation that one would receive the same favour in return, as the likelihood of the same situation repeating itself is minuscule.

People who donate organs while they are still alive to help others typically do not expect the same from others. This is true, for example, for donations of skin to burn victims, where the skin is taken from the donor's thies and back and is regenerated in due course. People do this as a sacrifice to others, without expecting a return favour, and while their skin typically regenerates, this is still an act of mercy distinct from the behavior of all the others who do not donate skin. People donate blood, and some donate kidneys and other organs while they are still alive, sometimes to unrelated patients whose plight strikes them as human beings.

Clearly the actions of the monks and practicing Christians, of the anonymous benefactors of the poor or of donors of organs to unknown victims of accidents and illnesses, as well as the bravery of those who save others from

the jaws of death qualify as supreme solidarity. Some of the goods given, such as salvation from mortal danger or financial assistance, are consciously wanted by the recipients, yet the sacrifices involved for those who provide them are so great that such actions cannot be a part of pre-conceived exchange. They are so extraordinary because people who dare give these goods to the others do things that are hardly imagineable to most of the other people, and thus cannot be reciprocated in expectations of exchange. Other goods, such as prayer, are given without being asked for, often without being consciously wanted, and almost always without letting the one who is prayed for know about it. These are all goods that are justifiably believed by those who provide them to enhance the interests of the recipients, and yet they do not easily fit in the framework of economic exchange. As exchange is a bilateral or multilateral relationship, unilateral actions involving sacrifice do not qualify as exchange in the reductionist sense. In all such cases, solidarity is a result of sharing the universal human condition as the benefactor sees it. The favours are not given to others as to participants in an economic process, but as human beings, and are a result of the benefactor's belief in self-sacrifice as an essential, even defining, element of humanity.

A final point that should be made here concerns the fact that, while monks do not participate in most social exchanges and occupy a partly isolated place in society, where most of what they actually do is sacrifice for others in one form of another, the typical occupants of all the other roles described above also engage in exchanges of the economic type in large parts of their lives. Donors of organs or financial benefactors are usually economically and socially active people who participate in as many or more daily transactions than the average member of their societies. Those who save others from accidents and danger are also usually ordinary people who risk their lives without a discernible calculation of return benefits. This means that the act of sacrifice goes along with living the daily transactions, and that it is part of quite a different „logic" in the same actors than is ordinary „exchange" Agents capable of exchange are also independently capable of sacrifice in the name of solidarity with others that begs the logic of exchange. Their mutually incompatible actions are also mutually irreducible. A car salesman jumping in the river to save a drowning child while walking by the river on a weekend will not on an average day give away a car for free, and will competently and taughly pursue the capitalist logic of trade. He is capable both of exercising routine utilitarian

calculations, and of risking everything to save the unknown child. Neither can his daily transactional behaviour be explained in terms of his heroism, nor can his willingness to sacrifice be reduced to the economic logic of his everyday life.

Solidarity as action

If solidarity does not fundamentally rest on the idea that giving people something that they want will contribute to the prospect of a future peaceful cooperation or something more than that, but is, as I have argued, quite a separate facet of the human disposition to each other, which can and often does exist parallel with the economic logic of calculations of giving and receiving things one wants, then this has corollaries for the idea that all exchanges accepted by all parties automatically contribute to the cummulative amount of solidarity.

Limiting solidarity to a psychological phenomenon, defininig it as "a state of mind" resulting from a greater satisfaction of wants in the company of others or owing to others allows precisely the economic reduction criticised in the previous subsection. For solidarity to be a state of mind, it requires that the goods exchanged be consciously wanted, and thus to be commodities, because if the "goods" are indeed good for the recipient but are not perceived as such by him, then they have no psychological value for him and this rules out the idea that solidarity as a resulting state of affairs can be a state of mind (which should be mutual). If it is possible, and I believe to have illustrated that it is, to exhibit solidarity with someone without that person even knowing about it, then solidarity cannot be a constellation of states of mind, but must be some type of action in the real world that does not presuppose any type of reciprocity on a conscious level.

A monk who prays for the world may well be incapable of effecting a state of mind in those he prays for that would result in an equilibrium of a sort between his state of mind and theirs, where the mutual belief in the prospect of future cooperation would be enhanced on a psychological level. In this, there is a difference between him merely empathising with others, and praying for them. In his world, prayer is action, and empathy is a mere sharing in the grief of fellow-men. While I may empathise with someone under a shark attack, this hardly qualifies as solidarity when compared to my jumping in the ocean to drag the victim to shore at an enormous risk to my own life and limb. Similarly,

a rich businessperson may sympathies with orphaned children, but this does not seem to be real solidarity until she makes a donation to an orphanage or does something of the kind. In real society, solidarity requires action, not mere feelings, and similarly, its effects are reflected in the intentions by those who exhibit solidarity with others as they are built into their actions, and not necessarily in the psychological consequences of such actions in the minds of the recipients. At least this seems intuitive, because if solidarity were to be confined to the level of perceptions alone, many of the valiant examples of what seems like the purest substance of human solidarity would simply become immaterial for the definition of solidarity.

Once solidarity is taken outside the realm of perceptions, or states of mind more broadly, it is at the same time narrowed-down, in the sense that only action qualifies as solidarity, not mere states of mind, and it is also broadened, in the sense that for an action to be an exhibition of solidarity it need not produce a belief in the other that some of their conscious wants are satisfied and that, thereby, prospects of future cooperation are enhanced. As I have now repeatedly mentioned, it is possible to act in solidarity without any prospect of future cooperation ever becoming consciously present in the recipient of solidarity.

The mentioned examples also illustrate that solidarity is not a binary relationship, but is in essence a unilateral action. As such, it derives directly from a broader concept of universal morality and does not require reciprocation. When acting on a categorical moral impulse, any expectation of mutual benevolence, while it may naturally follow, is not really required, and given the nature of the cases described, the practicalities of the situations usually do not allow such expectations to consciously develop. This might reluctantly be described as a "Kantian" type of morality, although Kant's own formulations too often involve references to mutualness and legitimate expectations, as in one of the formulations of his categorical moral imperative he specifically says that the maxim for action should derive from what one might wish to become a universal principle for action, meaning that one should act following the same guidelines one would naturally be disposed to want to be followed by everybody else.

While the wording used in this type of formulations seemingly suggests reciprocity, in fact the very idea of the categorical imperative implies that the world would be a better place if everybody acted in ways in which some heroic people act, and that, when deciding on which is the correct course

of action, one should consider what would make the world a morally better place if everybody acted in the same way, and that surely entails solidarity in the sense of being prepared to make sacrifices for others without expecting anything in return. In fact this basic reference to one's belonging to the realm of universal humanity as a precondition for the acceptance of the categorical imperative as that "ought to" which connects one's individual, (ontic) being with one's universal, human (ontological) being, is clear in Kant. This is visible in many places in his writings, including this one in the *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*:

> (…) I recognize myself as subject to the law of reason which contains in the Idea of freedom the law of the intelligible world, while at the same time I must acknowledge that I am a being which belongs to the world of sense. Therefore I must regard the laws of the intelligible world as imperatives for me, and actions in accord with this principle as duties.[8]

To avoid the controversies so often present in applying Kantian concepts, however, we need not subscribe to a Kantian ethics here, but can merely stay with the intuitive insights arising from the practical examples provided in order to realise that solidarity is neither a commodity in the economic reductionist sense of "goods", nor a mere state of mind involving mutually facilitated beliefs in a future peaceful relationship.

Solidarity as a set of emotions

It is undoubtedly true that, in order to cooperate with someone, one does not necessarily have to like that other person. Macneil argues that, although friendship can and often does result from actions that demonstrate deep solidarity, no personal dimension to "solidarity" is necessary, given that solidarity arises from the recognition of mutually beneficial and satisfying courses of action. If I know that another colleague wants the chairmanship of a board that I currently hold, and he knows that I need his support for the funding of a research project dear to me, then my resigning the chairmanship and thus opening a space for him to compete, with him supporting my project, will superficially mark our solidarity. Contrary to this mutually satisfactory course

[8] Immanuel Kant, *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* — "How is a Categorical Imperative Possible?", 454 — quoted per Lewis White Back (ed.), *Kant Selections*, translation by Lewis White Beck, Macimillan, New York, 1998, p. 291.

of action, I might try to hold on to my chairmanship whilst using pressure, blackmail or threats to make him support my project, while, conversely, he might obstruct my chairmanship by conniving to dismiss me, while at the same time refusing support to the project. Adopting the latter course of action would lead us to a variant of zero-sum game, where either of us who manages to damage the other and win the contest thus generated would "take all" with the other "losing it all". However, given the risks involved for both of us, the level of effort required and the unpleasantness of the whole business, rationally speaking, adopting the former course means optimising the situation in a way that allows both of us to win. If we both adopt the former course, we will, naturally, generate legitimate expectations in each other that we are both reasonable actors and that we might in the future have a mutually satisfactory and peaceful cooperation based on useful compromise.

To show this type of "solidarity" based on the exchange of interests, and that is precisely the type of utilitarian reception of solidarity argued for by Macneil, we need not like each other; in fact, we may as well utterly despise each other. Our actions are based on what we want and on what we know the other one wants, and our entire relationship is based on a rational judgement of what is more economical for both of us. If I despise the colleague as a person, I may still feel that I ought to act in professional "solidarity", which is a standard invented precisely to optimise situations of the described sort and preserve a relatively "civilised" tone and manner to professional life.

The described situation fits the pattern of Macneil's reductionist concept of solidarity in all salient respects, as the goods exchanged are commodities that are consciously wanted by both me and my collegue. If he does not know that I have resigned my chairmanship because I want him to take it, then he will not have cognitive reasons to believe in the prospects of a future fruitful cooperation, and he may not as readily support my project, and vice versa. The "solidarity" present here is fundamentally psychological, because without the psychological equivalents of the respective actions, it could easily disappear.

Much of what we consider to be civilised behaviour today conforms to exactly this criterion: rather than showing to people what we really feel about them, it pays to be civil and keep the relationship to a manageable level. This civility, which is by all means reasonable, however, should not be confused with solidarity, as should not mere cooperation. In fact, much of what the economistic line of reasoning suggests as solidarity is in fact *cooperation* as an optimising strategy to balance various individual and group goals and values.

It is a rational compromise that allows all the parties to cooperate rather than go to war over their differences, because, all things considered, they are all likely to end up better off cooperating than waging war. This is very far from genuine solidarity.

Imagine, however, a situation where my colleague were to find out that I, who have constantly obstructed his efforts for many years, am terminally ill, and that I desire this last project as a conclusion to my career or as a way to leave something to posterity, in my imagined egotistic mania of grandeur. He decides to sacrifice his pride and support my project in a meeting where I continue to abuse him. This would clearly require certain motivational presumptions that are quite different from the simplistic view of "prospects of peaceful cooperation". Supporting someone who is hostile and with whom no future cooperation can be expected would require an emotional reaching out to that person as a human being. It is just such emotions that make possible sacrifices as unilateral acts of solidarity with another person. Rationality does appear to be excluded from such acts, as one does not stand to gain anything apart from an emotional satisfaction generated by the sacrifice, while at the same time one might risk losing everything one holds dear.

One possible objection to this argument would be to claim that sacrifice also belongs to a less explicit, but no less real, framework of satisfaction, and that it serves the purposes of self-satisfaction or self-righteousness that contain intrinsic value for the beholder. In other words, this would imply that one gives up significant things for others (makes a sacrifice) without expecting any form of reciprocation, because one expects self-gratification arising from the deed itself. Such self-gratification of the type ("I am a good person") co-results both from the deed, and from a set of values that hold normative force for the person (to be a good person is partially defined as being prepared to make sacrifices for others). The objection would, thus, have it that people make sacrifices because they are normatively conditioned to desire moral self-gratification. Hence, their sacrifice could be explained away in a reductionist manner as a form of perverse hedonism.

This objection would be very unconvincing indeed, for at least two reasons. First, the context of my argument in the preceeding text was to show that solidarity goes beyond the framework of "exchange", which requires "goods" that are potentially subject to reciprocation, that are consciously "wanted", and thus belong to a market of commodities in a broad sense. Even if sacrifice did produce a form of satisfaction arising from the compliance

with deeply internalised moral norms, it would still be quite different from the framework of exchange outlined before. Namely, such satisfaction would not be subject to exchange, as it would be contained to the subject herself. Thus, structurally, this view of the sacrifice would remain within what is permitted by my argument.

Secondly, the temporal dimension of the sacrifice, and the supposed satisfaction arising from it, would not extend far enough in the future to allow for reasonable expectations of any type of future relationship with the beneficiary (if there is an identifiable one). The car salesman's jumping in the foaming river to save the drowning child generates a situation where his own survival is highly uncertain (the common element in sacrifice is that a key value, often one's existence, is potentially forgone), and thus the motivational ground for his decision to jump in the water cannot include prospective considerations for himself, at least not in a sufficiently articulate form to qualify as "expectations of a future peaceful cooperation".

Finally, let me point it out that the very concept of sacrifice in the sense of forgoing a fundamentally valued good (life or limb, rights, property, etc.) for the sake of another differs from the concept of exchange exactly in that sacrifice is not supposed to involve expectations of a return favour. The possibility of making a philosophical "naturalist mistake" in confusing the "is" with the "ought" would consist here in supposing that all people forgo things in situations that seem like sacrifices because they really want to make a sacrifice, whilst in reality many might in fact give up goods so that it looks like sacrifice while calculating the return benefits of having been perceived as someone who has made a sacrifice. In short, the naturalist mistake would consist in not counting on hypocrisy in some human beings. This is exactly the reason why I insist on extreme examples, where such calculations are ruled out. If, on the one hand, I forgo my position in the managing board of a major enterprise for the sake of another, this may seem like a sacrifice, but I might be a hypocrite who counts on the pitty of others and who in fact opts for appointment to another more lucrative position. On the other hand, if one jumps in a torrential river with no-one around to help him, this can hardly be hypocritical, and there is no chance of a naturalist mistake in qualifying such action as a sacrifice.

To say that sacrifice by definition rules out any exchange closes the circle of our argument and might present it as tautological at first sight: if sacrifice is defined in such a way, then using it as an argument to prove

that making sacrifices goes beyond the realm of economistic reasoning about solidarity might appear of little cognitive value. However, this would be a superficial conclusion only, as my thesis is not merely that sacrifice is broader than exchange, but rather that solidarity, intuitively, includes sacrifice more fundamentally than exchange, which makes it difficult to reduce it to economistic logic. Further, my argument is that solidarity, given that it involves sacrifice, is not explainable in terms of rational calculations, but presupposes an emotional reaching out to the other with whom one shows solidarity. I argue that solidarity is as much an emotional, as it is a rational relationship, and this, whether or not it is plausible, is a line of reasoning that goes considerably beyond the tautology that sacrifice is different from exchange or cooperation. The only way to prove my argument implausible, it seems to me, would be to somehow show that sacrifice does not belong to the notion of solidarity. This appears so far removed from our intuitive grasp of human solidarity that I shall not take it up any further here.

Friendship

Everybody knows that it is easier to sacrifice oneself for people we love, because the emotions required for sacrifice are mobilised to a greater extent, and one is already emotionally "charged" and able to identify with the other person. Clearly it is easier to feel for someone who is close and well-known, than for someone totally unknown. This is why one will sooner risk one's life to save a drowning sibling than a drowning stranger, but it is also known that some people do risk their lives, and sometimes lose them, trying to save complete strangers. People are differently disposed to mobilise emotions, and while most will mobilise them relatively readily when the reference of the situation is to someone close, some will also be able to summon the universal human emotions in relation to any other human being. This set of universal human emotions that mobilise action, along with the actions themselves, are solidarity in the real sense.

If solidarity involves emotions, then the relationship between those who show solidarity to each other cannot be indifferent; they must be connected on a level deeper than mere accident, be it through their moral reference to the nomological order that is supposed to structure the concept of what it means to be human (as Kant thought), or through a sort of universal human affection postulated as a moral prescription by the Christian and other faiths.

The concept of "friendship" is interesting here, because it contains the familiar features of human affection that do not belong to the other types of "love" (such as love between sexes or "love" of aesthetic phenomena, such as sunsets, or of pets). Perhaps this is why Aristotle believed friendship to be "deeper than love", not in the form of an emotion, but in the form of a philosophically promising gateway for discussing universal human affection that is supposed to lie at the motivational root of solidarity as the force of social cohesion.

Let us consider the Biblical metaphor of the good Samaritan as a way to illustrate the relationship between solidarity and the respective emotions, which we might term "friendship" in a very broad sense.

> A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, ne took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him', he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have'.
>
> Which of these three do you think was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?
>
> Luke, 10:30–10:36

The Samaritan surely did not expect that the beaten man would reciprocate, nor did he, in the described situation, opt for a "future peaceful cooperation" with the victim. He was not a friend of the beaten man, nor did he know him when he saw him lying in wounds, but he "took pity on him". The universal human solidarity made him rescue the man, rather than utilitarian calculations. The Samaritans among us who commit acts of sacrifice and solidarity act likewise.

The question to be asked based on the above passage is what made the Samaritan a friend or "neighbour" to the beaten man? On one reading, he would have become the victim's friend by saving him, which, normally,

could result in a prospect of "peaceful cooperation". Still, the circumstances described are different. First, the two come from different tribes. Presumably, the first is a Jew, and the latter a Samaritan. The law of the Jewish people at the time was that "Jews do not mix with Samaritans". Thus, the savior in the story comes from an antagonistic tribe, as far removed from one's social connections as possible. Their paths cross accidentally and may never cross again. The Samaritan goes off on his way, leaving two silver coins to the innkeeper to care for the victim because he will probably not find him there when he returns. The entire passage is toned so as to suggest that the two may never meet again, and if they do, that this does not determine the motives of the Samaritan. The Samaritan has exhibited moral qualities that signal that he is a better friend or neighbour to the Jew than either a Jewish priest, or a fellow Jew from the tribe of Levi, because his reference to the human value of mercy, regardless of the ethnicity of the victim, is what the modern decision theorists would call "the strongest desire" or "the overriding motive" that make him assist the victimised Jew. The point is that the inner qualities are greater than the factual "neighbourliness" or belonging to the same nation or even religion. The Samaritan is the true "friend" or "neighbour" even before he assists the Jew, because his view of himself and others is broader and more generous than those of the passing priest or Levite; the Samaritan's universal human affection goes beyond the law that Jews and Samaritans not mix, let alone be neighbours. On the other hand, the everyday "neighbours", the Levite and the priest, are deprived of such affection. The affection itself is clearly presented in the passage as the conduit of moral qualities.

In situations where solidarity requires a sacrifice, and these are situations where no future prospect is factored in the calculation of action, and one acts solely on the basis of feeling, some type of positive emotional disposition towards others is indeed presupposed. It is this feeling of universal commonality of the human condition that touches the cords inside those who make major sacrifices for the unknown others, and this feeling is at the same time the basis of real solidarity. Perhaps this is not friendship in the colloquial sense of the word, where we know someone well and regularly spend time with them, but it is certainly a type of affection to the other human being that at least the Christian tradition has postulated as a goal for human society. Moral philosophy in at least this tradition has consistently sought to subdue the selfish, ontic and "worldly" side to the *nomos* of a different logic that arises from a morally postulated universal human affection.

The Samaritan would have been a better neighbour to the Jew even if the situation that demonstrated this had never occurred, because his values were such that they made him positively disposed to others in ways that contain noble reference to "the world of sense", thus making it clear to him that he "must regard the laws of the intelligible world as imperatives (…), and actions in accord with this principle as duties" — in the words of the Prussian philosopher of the 19th century.

Social solidarity as a concept

To say that the basis of solidarity is emotional, rather than rational, does not mean that society has no role in cultivating solidarity, or that solidarity does not produce direct reflections on the shape of society. It is well-known that people who grow up in different settings, such as families that readily show emotions versus those that suppress them, will be differently disposed to show emotions or to act upon them in later life. Similarly, society has a great role in cultivating the universal human emotions that give rise to actions vis-à-vis the other members of society. In other words, society has a crucial role in cultivating solidarity as an unbreakable synergy between socially constructive emotion and socially constructive action.

In the broadest sense, the social cultivation of positive emotions that found solidarity is conducted through the fostering of a sense of shared fate and the ability to identify with others across the social strata of one's society. Solidarity is thus built into the process of socialisation and conversely, deviant socialisation that insists on the individual's discreteness and the supposedly "inherent" opposition to and competition with others will suppress solidarity. In pronounced cases of such suppression, confrontation will become the prevalent social norm. The former type of socialisation, which attaches high value to solidarity and the capacity for empathy with a large number of others, broadly falls in the realm of communitarian and socialist political philosophies. The latter type is associated with liberal philosophy, although in its various modalities it has sought to escape the consequences of individual isolation, structural independence from collective effort, and the predominantly "negative liberty" defined as "freedom from" interference, as opposed to capacity for collective action as an indicator of freedom.

To argue against liberalism at length would be overly ambitious here, as the philosophical critique of liberalism is extremely voluminous, and I have

espoused some of my own views on this elsewhere.[9] What I shall do in the following text is discuss some of the very basic tenets of liberalism through their consequences for socialisation, along with discussing the role of solidarity as a value in the constitution of participatory democracy. This will in itself be quite an ambitious task that might excuse the lack of a more systematic exposition and critique of the liberal doctrine as a whole.

Liberal citizens

The process of socialising individuals into citizens fundamentally depends on the philosophical outlook the particular society favours. The vocabulary, the ideas and ways of relating to each other that the child is taught arise more or less directly from such outlook. This is why any type of social organisation and political ideology that has persisted for considerable time in a given space will create codes of values and behaviour that it will be very difficult to erase or substitute with others in the subsequent years and decades.

Societies that have emerged from the grip of communism, such as those in Eastern Europe, some 20 years after the beginning of a "transition" from half a century of communist rule, still suffer from the coded behaviour arising from communist upbringing and communist social relations. In many political parties 80 year-old former communists still preside over important decision-making bodies, now gowned as reformers and democrats, and, much more seriously, the habits of behaviour among the citizens, including the work ethic, relationship to the Church, and, most importantly, relationship to one's neighbour, remain clouded by an inheritance of authoritarianism and disregard for human dignity. Such inheritance has a direct bearing on the political life in the unfinished transitions: as the autocratic codes in the mentality of most people make decent life by an "ordinary person" difficult, and in fact the attributes of power are the only guarantee of human dignity in everyday relations, the struggle for political power, profile and connections is even more ferocious than in traditional democracies. This is compounded by the fact that the mentality of communist oligarchs has taken root in the general population, so that people who have become rich overnight by abusing their former party connections are seen as "successful" and are allowed an ever grater influence on the political system and the economy. The social *anomie*

[9] Aleksandar Fatić, "What has Happened to Firstborn Social Theory — The Social Contract", *South-East Europe Review*, vol. 10, no. 3, 2007, pp. 121–31.

that has arisen from the destruction of communist institutions, with the old value codes remaining firmly in sections of the collective consciousness, has resulted in the failure of many progressive policies supposed to be vigorously fostered by the political elites: in Serbia today, over 50% of the population have not even finished secondary school, and only about 7% of the citizens over 15 year of age have gained a university degree.[10] Such bizarre statistics clearly impact the culture, public taste and capacity to provide constructive political leadership.

Socialisation in liberal societies plays structurally the same role, albeit with different substantive outcomes, as the values of a liberal system are almost entirely opposed to those of a communist one. Liberal citizens are raised on the idea that merit is what determines their success in society, and that in "the most just of all systems" freedom is manifest in a guaranteed lack of interference by others, except in relatively extreme situations. By extreme situations I mean circumstances where the optimum functioning of the system is threatened, such as by seriously antisocial behaviour or crime. The colloquial wisdom that one has the "right" to do whatever one wishes as long as it is legal and does not threaten the liberty of others paints the picture of hundreds of thousands of lonely urban cowboys and cowgirls struggling to make it upwards from the social positions they were born into, whilst expecting social regulations such as legitimate competition and the rule of law to protect them against interfering others. The "peace" thus created, if this can be called a peace, is merely an absence of active hostility, and the civility that characterises everyday relations most of the time is merely a rational choice to minimise stress. The substance of life, however, is struggle and competition. People are raised to believe that wealth largely determines their "worth" and that it somehow, through the obscure prism of "personal responsibility", reflects their true qualities. It is believed that an extremely rich person "cannot be stupid", that greed is a natural moving force of society that should be channeled, but not suppressed, and that equality should be contained only to the opportunities that serve the satisfaction of basic needs.

Liberal socialisation produces numerous social pathologies, if not as great as the mental codes of behaviour cultivated in authoritarian systems, then certainly less conspicuous, yet more pervasive. If all is well with inequalities in the sense that they reflect differences in abilities, then it is acceptable for

[10] J. Lucić, D. Vukotić & A. Marković, "Svaki peti u Srbiji bez završene osnovne škole" *Politika*, Beograd, 19 April 2008, stable url: www.politika.co.yu.

a powerful country to assault the less powerful one, to project its interests far abroad through military occupations, to bomb those perceived as savages and dangerous, to oppress large parts of the world's population through the major international monetary and development institutions, to rig international law and the international judiciary, or to conduct global propagandistic operations through the technologically dominant electronic media. All these actions would not be possible if the country behind them were not more powerful and "able" than the other countries, and thus, indirectly, somehow "liberally" entitled to use its prerogatives of power and influence to its own advantage.

One part of the liberal socialisation is making sure that people accept their positions as a matter of their own responsibility. The emphasis on the "night watchman state" or "the invisible hand" of the state and economics, which has variously been factored in the liberal accounts, but is invariably and deeply entrenched in the very idea of liberal liberty, has it as a logical consequence that one's position in society is not to be blamed on the state, but on the faceless laws of the market and one's ability or inability to come to grips with them. As a result, the huge majority of people in the labour class take the disadvantages that they face compared to the extremely rich as their own fault, not that of the state. Exploitation, which is part of the ongoing corporatisation in most countries, includes, most recently, a style of management called "management by stress", where anxiety is deliberately induced in the employees to extract more from their workday. The advertisement published by a management consulting firm summarises the mission of management by stress: "We will show you how to screw your employees (before they screw you) — how to keep them smiling on low pay — how to maneuver them into low-pay jobs they are afraid to walk away from — how to hire and fire so you always make money".[11]

Barbara Ehrenreich summarises the framework of the liberal state of mind at work here in the following words:

> Any dictatorship takes a psychological toll on its subjects. If you are treated as an untrustworthy person — a potential slacker, drug addict, or thief — you may begin to feel less trustworthy yourself. If you are constantly reminded of your lowly position in the social hierarchy, whether by individual managers or by a plethora of impersonal rules, you begin to accept that unfortunate status.[12]

---

[11] Quoted as per Brian Barry, *Why Social Justice Matters*, p. 206.

[12] Barbara Ehrenreich, Nickel and Dimed: *On (not) Getting By in America*, Henry Holt, New York, 2001, p. 210; quoted as per Brian Barry, loc. cit.

Modern "polyarchic democracy" is conceived as a set of institutions that act as umbrellas for a consultation and negotiation process on policy between the various pressure groups. This idealistic view of liberal democracy in fact substitutes the dictatorship by the state (which is the initial trigger for the liberal critique of state interference) for a dictatorship by private groups over the large majority. The system of decision-making in any democracy is always limited, and the pressure groups or group-interest representatives with access to the institutions will be able to profit from such access, while many other groups, and most of the "constituents", will not be able to articulate their views institutionally. The various names used to brand a democracy that should take account of the broadest possible array of legitimate interests, including Habermas' term "participatory democracy", do little to change the fact that liberal democracy is a market where the strongest ones, both financially and politically, get to approach the decision-making table and "place their paper on it", while most of the others get to watch and get used to whatever the outcome might be at best, or to suffer the consequences of antagonistic policies that favours particular groups, at worst.

As long as the process that leads to any particular type of policy is procedurally correct and presumably agreed on, the culmination of that process, in the form of a substantive outcome, must be accepted by all as legitimate. Thus, the limited representation and the culture of accepting procedural rules of the game that bestow personal responsibility on outcomes with enormously unequal chances of success stabilise the structural inequalities through the above described process of internalisation of social status. If people are told many times that whoever wins elections should be in power and that elections should take place based on the set of electoral laws enacted by the existing political elites, then the shifting around of ministerial and other positions over decades between the same people who make up the elites will be taken as "normal" and legitimate. Even in situations where such political outcomes, or stability of the elites, leads to obvious plunges in public policy and cause long-term damage to society, as long as the procedure is legitimate, the outcome will not, in principle, be questionable.

In Great Britain, for example, during the past decades the leader of the Conservative Party registered a mandate as Home Secretary during which he became famous for advocating a public safety platform that, among other things, included plans to arrest the homeless people "and other dubious members of society" and thus clean the British streets, along with instituting

a highly restrictive immigration policy amid the imminent prospects of European expansion. Subsequently, under the Labour Government since 1997, British Rail has been privatised and the top marginal tax rates for the richest Britons have remained on the 40% level that had initially been instituted by Margaret Thatcher's conservative government, which had come to power in 1979. Blair's "New Labour" in fact went further in reducing the scope and applicability of the traditionally social-democratic policies. For example, it abolished the traditional universal cash benefits to everybody who fell in a certain category, such as the unemployed, the disabled people, the elderly or the parents. These benefits had been supposed to provide a compensation for the supposed inequalities between certain categories of the population. Supposedly an elderly person cannot earn as much as a young businessperson, nor can the mother of a small child earn as liberally as a single employed person. The cash benefits were thus both a real help and a token by the society to show appreciation of the more demanding circumstances in which certain groups of citizens live. Tony Blair's government decided that this was "a waste of money" and that funds should not be given to "those who do not need them", but only to the very poor. This was an important shift in policy, as it refocused not on equality and mending the deficiencies in ability to earn money, but on poverty defined in absolute terms. In other words, social assistance was no longer awarded so that pensioners or the disabled citizens, even if they are not below the poverty line, can afford things that others can, such as catering to their cultural and recreational needs; it was refocused to serve only the supposed satisfaction of "basic needs", or daily survival. This austerity programme was not the result of a lack of affluence of the British society, but of a policy to make the economy "more efficient". An economy is the most efficient if those able to produce and earn the most are encouraged, and if those who are a burden, including all the categories traditionally supported by the social security system, are eliminated. An ideally efficient economy would be one where those unable to work did not exist, or were not supported in any way, and only those able to contribute to the economy were encouraged. Arguably, in a perfectly efficient economy, among other things, the greatest earners would be additionally stimulated by low taxes, so that they might be motivated to earn even more and thus contribute more revenue to the state in absolute terms, while most of the taxes would be charged to the middle-level earners with stable levels of income, to keep the economy steady. The argument of an "efficient economy" is not humane, and has nothing to do with the social role of the state and with social solidarity.

Barbara Ehrenreich argues that any dictatorship takes a psychological toll on its subjects, but the same can be said of any political ideology, regardless of whether or not it manifests itself as an open dictatorship. If the political elite repeatedly tells people that they are responsible for their own fate whatever the social circumstances, people will start believing it, which means that they will be less likely to sympathise with the social misfortune of others. If the government repeatedly lies to the people that any welfare that they might hope for in the future can only come if business is taxed less and a greater privatisation of state-owned assets is fostered, then people will be less cautious about the injustices and enormous inequalities arising from the growth of the mega-rich, along with a growth in the numbers of the relatively and absolutely poor. If workers are repeatedly told that stress is the moving energy behind their desired work outputs, then people will be less inclined to protest against abusive managers and shrinking work rights such as paid sick-leave, lunch brakes during the work day, and holidays. The liberal citizen, who is raised in a value-system based on the cult of personal responsibility for one's social standing, on the idea of liberty as freedom from interference by others, and of economic liberty as freedom of the economy from interference by the state, will be less inclined to join social movements to challenge exploitative social arrangements and will be less able to perceive the injustice of those arrangements vis-à-vis one's own life prospects.

In 2007 in Serbia, after the police had uncovered a scam by the employees of the highway toll-collection to steel large amounts by counterfeiting toll cards for the transiting trucks through a specially designed software, the Serbian Minister for Infrastructure complained before journalists that the toll collectors had abused his trust because he had allowed them to "steal a little,[13] but they could't resist "stealing big time". While the minister was dragged through the critical media for months after this statement, what he said was merely typical of the socialisation through a system of what could be described as a "cleptocracy" in the former communist world, or more recently as "mafiocracy". A cleptocracy or mafiocracy breeds tolerance, even admiration, if through the decades those who "steal a little" are systematically tolerated and those who steal a lot are erected to political power and positions of social domination. In societies like this one, tycoons who have amassed enormous

[13] "In Serbian "da kraduckaju", which is an ungrammatical, but familiar construction that suggests that steeling a little is almost acceptable, more like "to help themselves with funds as they go".

riches by exploiting favourable exchange rates for foreign currency not offered on the open market, or have been given parts of the state budget or funds from the so-called "primary currency emission" (freshly printed money) to use under exclusive terms, traditionally enjoy protection and a high social status. Such societies clearly cannot expect that their citizens will be socialised in a way that values honesty, transparency and integrity. In short, "stealing a little" is truly the least that can be expected with such a social inheritance, and this is not entirely the fault of those who think in the way permissive of stealing, but mainly of the successive corrupt political elites that have perpetuated a system of cleptocracy.

Similarly, people who grow up in segregated neighbourhoods where their close relatives routinely end up in prison and where crime is a way of life can hardly be considered totally personally responsible for chosing a criminal career over a legitimate one. This is shown by the ill effects of penal policies towards such offenders, who typically re-offend within 3 years of release from prison, because they go back to the initial community and additionally face a series of virtually insurmountable obstacles arising from social exclusion and the offender's stigma. To argue that they are entirely responsible for the direction their life takes is a glaring nonsense, yet this is the classic assumption of the segregative policies of imprisonment and mistrust of particular groups.

The liberal ideology suffers from the socialising results of its emphasis on liberty as freedom from interference, and on personal merit in social promotion and "desert" in social penalisation. People raised on these values tend to be seriously impaired in their capacity for solidarity in the organic sense of grouping to change aspects of their society and in generating a constructive critique of the system in which they live. Liberal societies are stable not because they are just, but because they allow those with the greatest resources to accommodate themselves at the top of the social hierarchy, and they persuade those without resources that this is entirely their fault. As Barry puts it:

> The more materialistic a society — the more that it is generally believed that money is the only significant goal in life — the more that people with a lot of money will feel like winners and those with a little will feel like losers. This feeling will intensify if those who are better off than others believe that they are more virtuous and those who are worse off share this belief.[14]

[14] Brian Barry, *Why Social Justice Matters*, p. 78.

Due to this process of internalisation of values through socialisation, changes that tend to happen in a liberal society might lead to particular improvements of the system along the already established ideological lines; they might include some technical corrections, but they rarely involve questioning the very liberal system through the institutions. Dissidents within the liberal societies face marginalisation not incomparable to that faced by the dissidents in authoritarian societies, although the former usually encounter less draconian consequences for their own personal safety. The same regularity arising from socialisation applies to any system of beliefs and any society framed by that system.

Social solidarity in a democracy

If what was said until now is correct, then it follows that various political leaderships can create different social climates arising from differing foundation values, and solidarity in the participation in democratic projects will variously result from a range of different policies. A hardened liberal party at the top is likely to increase both the number of extremely rich and of the extremely poor, and if one looks at the social outcomes of the rule by such parties in various countries, with different levels of economic and social development, one sees relatively regular and predictable increases in social stratification along the described lines. In most postcommunist countries the initial "tycoonisation", which has been proverbially justified by the Marxist phrase "the initial accumulation of capital", has subsequently led to solidified monopolies by a few tycoons over ever enlarging parts of the national economy. This has especially been the case in countries where liberal or right-of-centre governments were in power. In societies of the North of Europe, where the tradition of egalitarianism has been translated into official policy, poverty has been almost eradicated, as has been homelessness, all of which has caused the rates of street crime to remain very low.[15]

[15] A good example is Finland, where all entrants in the PhD programmes receive a universal stipend of around € 2000, which is sufficient to cover the living expenses, while the top academic salaries rarely exceed € 8000. The ratio of lowest to highest income in a particular "industry" of 1:5, even 1:10, is extremely low compared to those of 1:50 to 1:200 in North America, the EU countries and the countries of Southern and Eastern Europe. On an official score, there are clear equivalents of the superiority of egalitarian income policies in controlling the level of poverty to liberal ones: in 1997 by the EU standards of poverty (with the threshold at 60% of the median income), Britain had 22% of the population under the poverty line, while Finland had only 10% — quoted as per Brian Barry, loc. cit, p. 213.

The economic logic of development is often framed by tireless references to the need for political and social stability, yet this stability can be achieved in two very different ways from the point of view of solidarity and social justice. One way is to solidify the class of the top earners and strengthen their synergy with the ruling elites in such a way that the institutions can never overcome *their* public policy. This is the way pursued by most liberal democratic elites, and by those in the post-authoritarian transitional societies. The mantra of making the economy more efficient translates into the adoption of policies that work against the interest of the most vulnerable parts of the population, who depend on the social programmes. At the same time, making the economies more globally interconnected allows the free flow of capital primarily between the richest 10% of the population of all countries, thus allowing an accelerated pace of their further enrichment, while leaving most of the people below these earning categories in much the same or deteriorating positions. The economic and social differences between the richest 10% in rich and in poor countries are very small, as are those between the poorest 10% in any country.[16] A black male born and brought up in the Harlem, in the US, is less likely to live to the age of 65 than one born and brought up in rural Bangladesh.[17] A rich person living in Nicaragua, the poorest country of Central America, does not differ in her way of life very much from one living in the wealthiest suburbs of Boston. The richest tenth of the population of any country can easily identify with the richest tenth in any other country, as their ways of life are so similar. Ted Honderich even argues that what allows this cross-society identification is the ability of each society's top tenth to profit from the work of the remaining 90% of the population.[18] In light of the globalisation of the economies, their fast and easy interconnectedness further solidifies this cross-identification, because, if Honderich's assertion is true, than globalisation allows the top tenth in each society to also profit from the work of the lower 90% in the other societies, as well as their own. Social stratification, not only on the level of factual wealth, but also in visions and perceptions, is thus further radicalised on a global level. In other words, inequalities become additionally structurally embedded in the fabric of society, and consequently more difficult to mend. Consequently,

[16] Ted Honderich, *After the Terror* (expanded, revised edition), Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2003, pp. 20–4. I have expanded on this with regard to the socially-conditioned security risks in my "Political violence as a value problem for security policy", *International Problems*, Beograd, vol. LVIII, no. 3, July 2006, pp. 1–17.

[17] Brian Barry, *Why Social Justice matters*, p. 3.

[18] Ted Honderich, *After the Terror*, throughout.

the distribution of factual power that comes with wealth becomes so deeply globally entrenched that it is *de facto* unchangeable. This is the way globalisation works to reinforce the prevalent way in which societies become politically stable.

Clearly this way of securing stability carries with it a dramatic human cost. While internationalised liberal economies increase inter-societal solidarity between the same strata in different societies, at least when those at the top are concerned, within the internal structure of societies they generate new and aggravate the existing social divisions. Economically and politically stable societies can exist with gaping social cleavages inside. In other words, countries can be desired destinations for international capital because they are extremely politically and economically stable, while at the same time being utterly socially unstable, riddled with animosities, divisions and marked by a total collapse of genuine social solidarity. Liberal democracy, in short, is not necessarily, and in fact not often, a participatory democracy.

Let us return to the concept of social solidarity. Barry speaks of it as of "the sense that those who live together share a common fate and should work together", and I have mentioned that generalised human solidarity involves a positive emotional disposition towards others as human beings. If social solidarity is subsumed under human solidarity, then it would naturally be defined as a positive emotion towards other members of one's society with whom one shares a common fate and prospects of cooperation. The political foundations of this positive emotional disposition, if there are such foundations, can be defined in different ways, depending on how one conceives membership in the society. Republican theorists, who claim descendancy of the liberals, see the basis of belonging to the community as administrative membership through citizenship (and, generously, through permanent residentship when need be), so that all citizens (and only the citizens) of a certain country are to be reckoned as full-fledged members of the respective society. Their political rights accordingly arise from the administrative confirmation of membership.

The republican insistence on citizenship is an attempt to reconcile the liberal perspective of individual rights with an easily definable political "commonness" through a relationship with the community that could straightforwardly serve as the source of political rights. If the commonness is citizenship, and citizenship is the source of rights (which is factually so in most existing democracies), then liberal rights have a *sui generis* connection with the community, and the objection to liberalism based on its making individuals

discrete and detached from the others through the negatively defined liberties is seemingly avoided. This account is highly controversial, for a number of reasons, of which at least two prima facie ones should be mentioned.

First, the idea that citizenship is a source of rights appears to be nonsense, because it conflicts with the universality of certain rights. Examples of obviously counter-intuitive moral justifications of discrimination based on a lack of citizenship illustrate just how dangerous it is to draw rights from administrative sources. Some countries with a strong republican sentiment for citizenship, such as the US and Australia, keep on their territory detention camps for illegal immigrants (read refugees), who are denied some of the basic human rights. Most of these people have only committed the infraction of entering the country without a visa, have no criminal record, and claim to be persecuted in their countries of origin. Ordinarily, a citizen accused of immigration violations, without a criminal record and in dire economic circumstances, if criminally prosecuted at all, would be set free until the courts determine their guilt. Non-citizen migrants, who are not criminals, and most of whom present no security risk at all, are kept behind barbed wire with armed guards, in conditions worse than prisons for convicted felons. The justification offered for this type of mistreatment is their lack of civil rights based on citizenship. Many women in this position end up giving birth to children behind the wire, who get to grow up to teen-age before the refugee status is determined, and many are sent home after the period of detention. Numerous detainees, especially children, develop serious physical and mental illnesses that will handicap them for the rest of their lives. While these people are kept at gunpoint, liberal societies that conduct such policies abound with theories of republican rights and pride themselves on creative nation-building policies. There are legion of examples with the same pattern of discrimination in some of the wealthiest liberal democracies today.

Secondly, citizenship does little to really avoid the objection based on negative liberty, because the republican theory insists on the privileges arising from citizenship in terms of protection from interference. Tracing the rights to negative liberty to a supposed administrative bridge with the community, and the respective commonality, by claiming that they derive from citizenship, does not matter for the real issue. The real problem is in the liberal idea that freedom is essentially the ability to preserve the solitary condition (whatever its legitimation and source), whereas solidarity seems to require an emotional relationship driven by a positive inclination to empathise, cooperate with, and

assist others. These are two directly contrary ways of thinking, and postulating citizenship as a solution does not reconcile them.[19]

What was said above does not, of course, mean that the republican sentiment cannot be expressed with a convincing emotional charge, so that it might seem to bridge the gap between commonalities and liberal rights. A recent and convincing example is the pre-election speech on race given by Barack Obama, the Democratic runner-up for the US presidential election, on 18 March 2008 at the Constitution Centre, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Part of it reads:

> I am the son of a black man from Kenya and a white woman from Kansas. I was raised with the help of a white grandfather who survived a Depression to serve in Patton's Army during World War II and a white grandmother who worked on a bomber assembly line at Fort Leavenworth while he was overseas. I've gone to some of the best schools in America and lived in one of the world's poorest nations. I am married to a black American who carries within her the blood of slaves and slaveowners — an inheritance we pass on to our two precious daughters. I have brothers, sisters, nieces, nephews, uncles and cousins, of every race and every hue, scattered across three continents, and for as long as I live, I will never forget that in no other country on Earth is my story even possible.

Everything Obama says here, up to the last sentence, sounds like a speech compatible with the ideals of universal human solidarity. Then he narrows it to belonging exclusively to a particular nation. He then continues to equip this nation- (or citizenship-) bound set of virtues and rights with a post-festum genetic record:

> It's a story that hasn't made me the most conventional candidate. But it is a story that has seared into my genetic makeup the idea that this nation is more than the sum of its parts — that out of many, we are truly one.[20]

The idea that one nation, or one country, can mysteriously, due to its inner „generosity and decency" allow a mixture of various identities and traditions to blend in a unique set of qualities contained in citizenship is appropriate to

---

[19] The critique of republicanism, however, is outside my main focus here, and I have discussed it at more length, albeit in a different context, elsewhere.

[20] www.huffingtonpost.com, 18 March 2008.

a political speech, yet it is also highly characteristic of the republican way of thinking about democracy. The solidarity based on the appreciation of the qualities of one's great country with such divergent inner identities, which is called republicanism in one place, gets the label of civic nationalism in another. It is in fact not a genuine solidarity, because upon a closer look, the fascination with the nationality defined by citizenship (not ethnicity) as a source of rights does not entail social concern and empathy within the society, thus making the story of „republican rights" a social policy chimera.

Social solidarity requires the respect for basic equalities between people, and an emotional disposition to contribute to that equality that derives from the sense that one shares a common fate and identity with the others. In other words, solidarity entails empathy with other members of the same community, and that goes considerably beyond rights conceived as offshoots of the administrative privilege of citizenship. To feel for the co-members of the community would mean providing for the common cause, and that would require what most liberal democratic elites see as the prime herecy: the substantial redistribution of wealth and income through singificantly higher taxation for the richest and the legitimate demand by certain sections of the population for the richest to give up some of their rights and privileges, which are quite compatible with their citizenship, in favour of those less fortunate. That is solidarity. If it gives rise to rights, then those rights must be based on individual circumstances, and must be allocated not as generalised „social resources", but right-by-right, which then requires sacrifices on the part of those who benefit from grossly unequal opportunities to enjoy the same rights. In Barry's words: „Those who have benefited most from the existing system of rights — the rich and powerful — are those who bear the heaviest responsibilities, because the way in which they use their advantages has such a large impact on the lives of everyone else".[21]

Solidarity described here involves readiness to make sacrifices for others based on the propensity to identify with them. This inclination is founded in the sense of a shared fate. Citizenship as a unifying thread does little to provide such an inclination, as societies where citizenship is emphasised as the source of liberties and rights are particularly adversely socially stratified from the inside. If talk of common identity is phrased through individual rights, and the social policy does not follow that rhetoric, with internal inequalities becoming progressively greater and the levels of taxation of the richest kept

[21] Brian Barry, *Why Social Justice Matters*, p. 144.

restrictive, then the values of such an ideology simply do not support solidarity. A political culture that does not motivate people to value equality and to keep inequalities at a tolerable level at least, cannot be considered generative of social solidarity. Republicanism certainly appears to belong to such political cultures.

It seems reasonable to see community-membership much more informally, as everyone with a de facto stake in the future of a community who can be said to share the fate of that community can, intuitively enough, be considered a member of the community. At least this is what is contained in Barry's informal definition of social solidarity. People do not have to hold the citizenship of a particular country in order to to feel a belonging to it, nor do they need citizenship to make sacrifices for others or vice versa. Those without citizenship are capable of contributing to common projects just the same as those with one, and communities where the distribution of wealth, privileges and services is based on an egalitarian culture will tend to generate less social deviance among both citizens and non-citizens.

Democratic participation is not exhausted in explaining away social differences and theorising about an alleged source of individual rights whose everyday manifestations are injustice and discrimination. Instead, it requires a motive to engage to make the community more cohesive and more active in the definition of collective goals. This intiative should permeat the entire political system, from local to central government, and it invariably grows from a bottom-to-top structure where ordinary people need to be taught to see themselves in light of a common fate with their naighbours. Values that should govern this learning process would be crystallised through a process of testing the limits of one's ability to emotionally reach out to the others; this would be a process of fighting social indifference as the source of most social ills.

Max Scheller once wrote of „sympathy" as the connecting tissue for social solidarity and for ethics more generally, and he was not the only philosopher to mention this; even David Hume, the empiricist, discussed sympathy as a source of ethics, and imagination as a source of cognition. In his seminal work on „human understanding" Hume described the way in which human emotions work towards those familiar to us, by interpreting how we react to literature:

> It is evident that, in a just composition, all the affections, excited by the different events, described and represented, add mutual force to each other; and that, while the heroes are all engaged in one

> common scene, and each action is strongly connected with the whole, the concern is continually awake, and the passions make an easy transition from one object to another. The strong connection of the events, as it facilitates the passage of the thought or imagination from one to another, facilitates also the transfusion of the passions, and preserves the affections still in the same channel and direction. Our sympathy and concern for Eve, prepares the way for a like sympathy with Adam. The affection is preserved almost entire in the transition; and the mind seizes immediately the new object as strongly related to that which formerly engaged its attention.[22]

Attachments are built between the reader and the characters in literature by fostering a sense of mutuality, a similar fate and through "the transfusion of the passions", which allows "the preservation of affections in the same channel and direction". The attention is focused on another, with a positive emotional charge, and if it is maintained sufficiently long and encouraged to continue it will be "preserved almost entire in the transition" to another person, and another situation. These "passions" determine relations between the reader and characters as members of a mini-community that constitutes a particular scene, and the introduction of new scenes, writes Hume, should be sufficiently smooth and connected with the events of the previous scene to allow for the transition of affection in an undiminished form.

The same could be said for the community, and similar dynamics of solidarity and sympathy exist between members of tightly-knit communities where strangers encounter difficulties unless the transition is well prepared and circumstances secured for the "transfusion of affection". In fact, affection is what keeps communities together; it gives rise to trust and loyalty, and it is the motivational well for solidarity, especially where solidarity requires sacrifice. In his *Treatise on Human Nature*, Hume is explicit in his idea that sympathy is the foundation of morals and the corresponding view that the motivation for moral action cannot be merely rational, even though he concedes that the origins of justice of social arrangements lie in the perception that self-interest is best served through a just organisation of society:

> No virtue is more esteemed than justice, and no vice more detested than injustice; nor are there any qualities, which go further to the

[22] David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Edited by Peter Milican, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2007, pp. 180–1.

> fixing of character, either as amiable or odious. Now justice is a moral virtue, merely because it has that tendency to the good of mankind; and, indeed, is nothing but an artificial invention to that purpose. The same may be said of allegiance, of the laws of nations, of modesty, and of good-manners. All these are mere human contrivances to the interest of society. And since there is a very strong sentiment of morals, which in all nations, and all ages, has attended them, we must allow, that the reflecting on the tendency of characters and mental qualities, is sufficient to give us the sentiments of approbation and blame. Now as the means to an end can only be agreeable, where the end is agreeable; and as the good of society, where our own interest is not concerned, or that of our friends, pleases only by sympathy: It follows, the sympathy is the source of esteem, which we pay to all the artificial virtues.
>
> Thus, it appears, that sympathy is a very powerful principle in human nature, that it has a great influence on our taste of beauty, and that it produces our sentiment of morals in all the artificial virtues.[23]

One might disagree that justice is an entirely rational relationship as long as it is seen as a moral quality, as moral judgements seem to inextricably involve moral sentiments, but Hume solves this by attaching separate moral valuations on the "artificial virtues" — in fact rational arrangements — through sympathy, which according to him is the foundation of all genuine moral sentiments.

It is worth noting that the emotional foundations of moral intersubjectivity in society have been well known and philosophically accounted for already by Hume. To argue that solidarity in society does not necessarily involve affection, but that it is based on a rational expectation of peaceful cooperation in the future, as well as that it is reducible to a form of exchange, where each exchange accepted by all parties automatically increases solidarity, because it increases legitimate expectations of future fruitful exchanges, is to ignore a tradition that is as relevant for the understanding of social mobilisation today as it was in the 18th century.

Social solidarity is a form of collective mobilisation, and the capacity for it will depend on the ability of members of the community to identify with a broad

[23] David Hume, *A Tratise on Human Nature*, Nuvision Publications, Sioux Falls, 2007, p. 409.

range of others across the various sections of society in ways marked by what Hume and others have called "sympathy". Such emotions need to be cultivated deliberately and systematically. Their foundation is the political ideology, which needs to emphasise an organic commonness arising from the sense of a shared fate. The methodology for the fostering of such positive emotional dispositions would necessarily involve a careful design of policy to encourage empathy with social movements, with the plight of others, and with collective needs that can only be catered for by socially aware collective action. This methodology would be much the same as the writer's methodology when he seeks to maintain the reader's attention and empathy, described by Hume and quoted above.

While social mobilisation has been in crisis in most modern democracies in areas such as voter turnout at elections, there are differences between societies that adopt differing ideologies. Liberal democracies particularly suffer from the negative consequences of increasing economic and social stratification and from the rise in antisocial behaviour, crime and violence, along with increasing differences in wealth. The realities in such societies make it almost ludicrous to appeal to sentiments such as mutual sympathy or to affection, because the social dynamics in them are more like constant warfare than solidarity.

It is possible to blame the lack of solidarity on the changed global circumstances or on the deterioration in human character, which could be seen as becoming progressively more selfish. A more convincing explanation, however, would derive from the policies conducted by the political elites. Where elites do not show that they care for the vulnerable, most people will gradually detach themselves from the plight of those in need. Where political leaders do not value solidarity and empathy for the distress of others, this will reflect on driving habits, hostility to others in streets, shops, impatience with the elderly and, ultimately, an increase in mental illness. Empirical studies have repeatedly shown that in societies where a high social value is placed on the possession of material wealth, overwork and debt are the norm, and they as generators of stress are attended by a lower emphasis on personal relationships, falling contributions to the community, social isolation, and finally mental illness.[24]

All of the ills mentioned above, from overvaluing material wealth to loneliness and high incidence of psychological problems, can be overcome by fostering the forgotten sentiments of mutual affection that give rise to solidarity.

[24] Tim Kasser, *The High Price of Materialism*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2002, p. 104; Brian Barry, *Why Social Justice Matters*, p. 183.

Perhaps concepts such as sympathy or solidarity, when seen as founded on mutual affection, seem hopelessly out of date in modern liberal democracy; yet when one considers what the modern formulation of "participatory democracy" stands for, one can hardly avoid the conclusion that it is a critique of contemporary liberal democracy as a rational construction of social justice based primarily on procedural criteria. Indeed, such liberal social justice does appear an "artificial virtue" when not attended by sympathy as the well of all morality, according to Hume, or by a "passion for justice" that factors emotions at least as much as reason in the very idea of justice, in the word of Robert Solomon.[25] In both cases where passion is involved (and Hume also explicitly speaks of sympathy as a passion), solidarity is possible and the traditional realm of rights falls from the pedestal of the prime issue for social philosophy.

[25] Robert Solomon, *A Passion for Justice: Emotions and the Origin of the Social Contract*, Addison-Wesley, Reading, Massachusetts, 1990.

II

THE SOCIAL AND COGNITIVE ROLES OF SYMPATHY: THE LEGACY OF MAX SCHELLER

Sympathy as a "social grammar"

Human relations, apart from being mediated by the various cognitive functions and causally explicable actions, including communications, exhibit in large part an immediacy that cannot be explained by rational reasoning. This is especially the case with the expressions of inner events in people, which more often than not meet with an intuitive recognition by others. Certain signs given away by others allow us to be immediately certain that the other person is sad, revolted, excited or optimistic about something.

> We have here, as it were, a universal grammar, valid for all languages of expression, and the ultimate basis of understanding for all forms of mime and pantomime among living creatures. Only so are we able to perceive the inadequacy of a person's gesture to his experience, and even the contradiction between what the gesture expresses and what it is meant to express.[1]

This immediacy of recognition can be explained in various ways, but in all cases it clearly includes a pre-programmed element, a case of pre-existing

[1] Max Scheller, *The Nature of Sympathy*, translated by Peter Heath, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1954, p. 11.

knowledge about certain structures of spontaneity in expression, even though we have never met with these gestures and signs before. Clearly the ability to understand other's inner dynamics requires a direct intuitive communication that begs the standards of rationality, as those who recognise others' indistinct and often inarticulate gestures will often not be able to rationally explain how or why they understand them. This type of „fellow feeling" (*Mitgefüll*) as Scheller calls it, or of sympathy, as we shall call it here, provides a high degree of transparency in communication and allows for a considerably greater intimacy between members of a community. Yet, the ability to feel sympathy cannot be construed rationally, nor can it be advanced by deliberate policies; it is simply a given in inter-subjective communication, and this gift is being lost gradually as communities become larger and individuals in them more driven by various solitary agendas that push them further apart from the others. Thus the exercise of sympathy is naturally more likely in small communities, rather than large cities, much in the same sense as Aristotle believed that true direct democracy is possible only in a small community of free people (the ancient Greek *polis*). The relative procedural sophistication of representative democracy as opposed to the direct one (exercised on the agoras in the ancient times) comes at a cost, namely the loss of immediacy in inter-subjective political communication and the rise of rule-based validation of substantive decisions, along with marketing as a tool for securing a representative role for political actors. In a sense, if the polis was a small community of free people, for most of the modern democracies it would be correct to say that they are large communities of people who are not free, but who believe that the system they live is the best possible.

Given that in large communities sympathy is more far-fetched than in small ones, and from what was argued in the previous chapter it is indeed a precondition of organic solidarity without which one can hardly conceive a truly inclusive democracy, the logical question to ask is to what extent large political communities can be reorganised so as to consist of clusters of smaller communities. Each of these would maintain a large amount of transparency and solidarity through the exercise of immediacy in inter-subjective relations, and would at the same time be so mutually connected to both preserve their internal integrity and provide for sufficient cohesion of the entire large political system. In short, what one must ask is whether or not the quality of democracy depends on its internal structure and size. The more difficult question that is directly connected with this one concerns the criteria that the sub-sets of

the political system that conform to the ideal of small community of free citizens would have to satisfy. Clearly not all small communities would be modern polises, as in some the divergence of traditions, values, ethnicities, and experiences between the various groups could generate even greater conflicts than are already evident in the broader political spectrums of the existing modern democracies. However, if sympathy is to determine the character of democratic relations in a society, then the basic building blocks of any democratic society would clearly have to be sufficiently small constitutive communities to be manageable and transparent, both institutionally and, significantly, emotionally. Perhaps people from community A may not be able to sympathise with those from community C in the same political system, but at least those within each of the communities should have sufficiently close understanding of each other to be able to present a unified and articulate common view. This idea is much along the lines of European federalism, which is based on the principles of regionalism and subsidiarity. The initial, today somewhat forgotten idea of "Europe of the regions" had envisaged it that in a European community of nations decisions would be made on the lowest possible level of the institutional hierarchy, because the lower the decision-making institution, the closer it is to the relevant community that is immediately affected by the issue. The structure of such a Europe would be regional, and regions would delineate communities with similar geographic, economic, cultural and historic features. The common political discourse about Europe has been much more focused on the issues of geographic enlargement and the principles of a single market and the supremacy of the European law, than on the very structural principles designed by the early European federalists.[2] This early regionalist theory encapsulates much of what is entailed by the philosophical idea that sympathy is the true functional principle of democratic discourse, and indeed, a participatory democracy in any feasible form.

Regionalism as a logical prerequisite for a functional social grammar?

The idea about small communities being the basic units of a truly participatory social organisation has not been received without controversies; perhaps the most concrete initiative that illustrates those has been the one to found the European integration on the idea of a "Europe of the regions".

[2] For an example of an overview of the evolution of the regionalist ideal, see Stephen George, *Politics and Policy in the European Community*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1985.

The very idea of "Europe of the regions" is well summed up by Susana Borras-Alomar, Thomas Christiansen and Andres Rodriguez-Pose, and this justifies a somewhat lengthy quote:

> In fact, behind the idea of a "Europe of the regions" lies the thought that subnational entities have little by little acquired greater protagonism in the political, economic, social and cultural arenas to the detriment of nation-states. The latter undergo a progressive erosion of their powers induced by two basic factors: on the one hand, the advances in European integration which limit the autonomous capacity of national governments to control their destinies independently, and, on the other hand, the greater dynamism of regional entities. (…) The regional dimension is (…) intended to reflect better the cultural and national divisions within Europe and, therefore, to tackle more adequately the problems left unsolved by the "obsolete" national structure. In this context, the nation-state would play only a secondary linking role between those two centres. And, since the ultimate function of this role is superfluous, the concept of the nation-state as it is conceived now is due to perish in Europe in the long run.[3]

In the same study, the authors conclude that, given regionalism's inherent challenge to the sovereignty of nation-states, it has decidedly failed to entrench itself in the politics and philosophy of the European Union. This outcome has been influenced by the widespread tendency by separatist movements to claim regionalist principles as a basis for their independent agendas and the questioning of the authority of the nation state. The debate has thus been focused on the relationship between a regional structure of decision making within a supra-national entity, such as the EU, and the ability of nation states within that entity to retain an optimum of jurisdiction on their territory. In this sense, the debate has decidedly veered off the trajectory along which the principled reasoning about regionalism as an element that facilitates participatory democracy ought to develop.

Regionalism as a contributing factor to sympathy as the social grammar of democratic societies is not in opposition to the sovereignty principle. Its focus is on local organisation that allows a transparent system of connecting the building blocks of a democratic society bottom-to-top, rather than on a

[3] Susana Borras-Alomar, Thomas Christiansen and Andres Rodriguez-Pose, "Towards a 'Europe of the Regions'? Visions and Reality from a Critical Perspective", *Regional Politics and Policy*, vol. 4, no. 2, 1994, pp. 1–27.

large amount of traditionally state-attached competencies being divulged to the local communities. In some European societies, such as in Belgium, regionalism indeed involves some of the traditional state competencies belonging to the regions (educational policy, ground transport, airports, entering into international agreements, etc.), but these are rather extreme cases that are by no means required for a functioning principle of regionalism within sovereign democracies.

The logic of regionalism is distinct from the logic of decentralisation of state authority, and these two principles are often confused. While decentralisation requires that regions are equipped with decision-making capacities that automatically reduce the power of the central state, regionalism as contributing to a functioning social grammar does not require decision-making powers. The latter is compatible with relatively centrally-conceived systems of institutions, because it is a structural principle that requires small communities where people can relate to each other to be the basic units in the social construction, but does not require that powerful institutions be associated with such communities. A federal structure can be built without being federalist in the sense advocated by the European post-World War Two utopians, with the views of the initial communities being gradually integrated through a fusing political process into outcomes that are articulated at the very top of the institutional hierarchy. As long as this process is transparent and fair, and no significant content arising from the local communities' input is lost, state-sovereignty is not under threat. This, after all, is the meaning of participatory democracy — it is not a democracy prone to fission through decentralisation, but one that is inclusive, and that conceives of the particular interests as connecting elements rather than seeds of destruction and dissipation.

The main problem with regionalism as a threat to state sovereignty arises from its abuse as a tool to strive for the establishment of new sovereign states, rather than perceiving it as a necessary procedural element for democracies to truly meet the needs and views of most of their citizens. If the structure of a democratic political system is modular, and the modules are communities where people have no difficulty relating to each other emotionally, sharing sufficient concerns to understand each others' views, the entire modular structure's role from the point of view of the sovereign state is to adequately inform the cumulative decisions taken at the centre. This, at the same time, does not preclude a degree of decentralisation of authority in the areas judged

consensually to be best served by local authorities; after all, the latter is traditional practice in most existing democracies, including the highly centralised ones.

The functionality of sympathy in small communities

The functional reason for the principle "small is beautiful" in the democratic context is in the fact that sympathy, which allows an immediacy in the perception and understanding of the other's viewpoint and basic interests, springs from a communal well of trust, and such trust requires a deeper set of commonalities than are those typically associated with citizenship. The sovereign state produces citizenship as a form of common identification of its constituents, whereas smaller, organic communities have more comprehensive sets of mutual identifications that arise from a shared experience and immediate prospects that characterise people who live close to each other. Modern nation states tend to be multicultural, which is a cognitive benefit, because various shared experiences can be exchanged and various traditions can benefit from each other, but this exchange in any case happens between communities, and much less so between individuals, because communities are the primary bearers of culture and tradition as manifestations of shared fundamental values.

One fundamental aspect of solidarity based on sympathy is the ability to identify with another throughout the political system, which allows the understanding of another's point of view and tolerance of it. Political mobilisation is always based on enthusing people to identify with a person (usually a leader) or a value (or goal). However, there is a fundamental difference between an amorphous mass of discrete individuals identifying with a Leader and a participatory input in collective decision making that is mediated by organic, small communities as the immediate political constituents of the decision-making institutions. Individuals can identify with the Leader in all sorts of inflammatory and pathological ways that Scheller calls "emotional infection". Essentially, this is common in mass-psychology, where the human group acts similarly to a group of animals. Just as a herd or a pack becomes "infected" by the suggestive moves made by several individuals, and can enter into a frenzy whereby the moves are internalised as their own panic, aggression, or fight-or-flight instinct, so does a crowd internalise the emotions of the leaders, be they "national emancipators", "freedom fighters" or "protesters for justice". Most cases of mass hysteria are induced by this type of pathological identification,

where direct contact between individuals and far-removed leaders proves particularly dangerous.[4]

Emotional infection is pathological, and is by no means the same as empathy, because it erases the boundary between the individual and another person. In emotional infection, one does not sympathise with the feelings and views of the other; one does not even share the feelings and views of another — emotional infection allows the masses to feel as though the moves made by the leader are their own, to be forced into the oblivion of believing that what the leader believes or says is exactly what *they* believe, and that what the leader proposes is in fact their own impulse. This can occur between a marginalised group of deprived people and a wealthy and powerful political leader, through the tendency to identify with the winners, even though there is practically no shared experience between the leader and the group. The reason is in the fact that shared experience, a relatively deep set of commonalities, is required for a true emotional communication, and emotional infection does not satisfy the criteria for communication — it is merely psychological contagion as the name says.[5] Ethical politics is very difficult where the possibility of exploiting mass-psychology exists; smaller communities with truly shared interests and legacies are the cure for such abuses, because they act as buffers on the way to populism, through the pre-articulation of the real interests and positions of true communities, prior to their becoming "ammunition" in the usual political process through the decision-making bodies. There are numerous other advantages to functional regionalism apart from avoiding emotional infection in politics, such as the ability to reduce the influence of big business on the democratic process, or a greater concern for the environment that can be longitudinally preserved in the political traffic once it is articulated by the organic communities.

---

4 Scheller, *The Nature of Sympathy*, p. 12.

5 In Scheller's words: "The process of infection is an involuntary one. Especially characteristic is its tendency to return to its point of departure, so that the feelings concerned *gather* momentum like an avalanche. The emotion caused by infection reproduces itself *again* by means of expression and imitation, so that the infectious emotion increases, again reproduces itself, and so on. In all mass-excitement, even in the formation of 'public opinion', it is above all this reciprocal effect of a self-generating infection which leads to the uprush of a common surge of emotion, and to the characteristic feature of a crowd in action, that it is so easily carried beyond the intentions of every one of its members, and does things for which no one acknowledges either the will or the responsibility. It is, in fact, the infective process itself, which generates purposes beyond the designs of any single individual" (Scheller, pp. 15–6).

Although small communities embody commonalities required for sympathy as a social grammar, the dynamic of sympathy does not require an excessive degree of inter-personal similarities within the small communities, and thus retains a large functionality in the context of a developed individuality in the modern world. This is evident from empirical observation of the functioning small communities, where both the individual similarities and differences, eccentricities included, are known to most people, but there is a fundamental "agreement to disagree" on certain things. In such communities there is usually a broadly accepted respect for non-essential, individual differences that is based on shared fundamental commonalities, such as immediate life prospects, social, economic, ecological and other circumstances that affect all in the same way, and more often than not a shared gene pool by the majority. Complemented by long-entrenched customs and a consensually-adopted micro-culture, these are powerful catalytic factors for social interaction and cooperation.

Clearly the small or organic community with authentic commonalities that supersede individual differences is a barrier to the use of mass-psychology in politics and a decisive contributor to a more transparent political process. In other words, all the mentioned facts about life in organic communities potentially add integrity in a political process where the organic community would be incorporated as an unavoidable link in the chain of decision-making, even if the decision-making itself occurs at the end of the hierarchically construed chain of institutions. It appears that this is one meaning of participatory democracy from a structural point of view.

Sympathy and related phenomena

While sympathy is but one of several closely related psychological phenomena that suggest some type of shared sentiments, it is essential to distinguish it from the other types. Something has been said in the previous section about *emotional infection*. In addition to this phenomenon, Scheller distinguishes between "*a community of feeling*", or shared feeling, and "emotional identification". The community of feeling implies that the same sentiment is shared by several individuals, who all genuinely feel the same thing. Perhaps the simplest examples include common grief over the loss of a loved one, where all members of the family tend to feel the same.

While the community of feeling is not particularly relevant to political dynamics, *emotional identification* is closely related to the described emotional

infection, and it can play an important role in collective mobilisation. Emotional identification implies that one's identity is either superimposed on another's, or overwhelmed by the other, in ways known historically from the phenomena where people identified themselves with totems, which could be specific individual animals, even rocks. Later the identification was translated to ancestors, before the beginning of the ancestor cult, which was a step out of a full identification with the ancestors, a sign of liberation from the identification as it were. Namely, identification with ancestors meant that individual members of a tribe really believed that they were their ancestors (the common theme in the doctrine of reincarnation), while the cult of the ancestors involved merely the veneration of ancestors as distinct from the venerating generation.

Emotional identification can take two forms, namely the *idiopathic* and *heteropathic*, where the idiopathic one takes place when the actor takes on the identity of something or someone else (as in all the above described examples), whereas the heteropathic occurs when the identity of the spectator, as it were, is "sucked in", or overwhelmed, by the identity of the observed object. Heteropathic identification is particularly close to emotional infection, and can in fact be a part of it, as the ability to be "infected" by another's emotion (or, more generally, intellectual or spiritual "motion") is consistent with the other's ability to "take over" our own identity.

The latter type of identification is well-known from the natural observation, particularly well illustrated in the examples of the rabbit or squirrel that meet the gaze of a hungry snake, rather than running away, becoming "hypnotised" or overwhelmed by the snake and moving towards it, sometimes even literally throwing themselves in the jaws. The prey thus identifies with the identity of the predator, and "establishes a corporeal identity" with the predator (in Scheller's own words) by throwing themselves to certain death. The rabbit or the squirrel should have no trouble escaping the snake from anything but the distance of imminent strike. Such a distance is clearly not at stake in the described examples, because if the snake was so close as to strike immediately, it would have no need to "hypnotise" the prey, nor would the prey have much room to move towards it before being grabbed. Thus the heteropathic identification must be a factor here, and perhaps the key dynamic force behind it is the snake's overwhelming projection of appetitive desire. Similar phenomena are known to exist in human relations, where the so-called "strong personalities" with prodigious political desires, able to impose their wishes on others, cause "weaker personalities", in fact most other people, to

conform with their desires, sometimes to the extent of becoming their victims. Dominant husbands who abuse their wives for decades without being abandoned by them, abusive politicians who cause tragedies and yet win popular elections by those who suffer most from their decisions, are perhaps equivalents to the rabbit or squirrel example. Presumably dominant personalities are also able to influence people to vote for them based on heteropathic identification, which, then, is a perversion of what the democratic process is intended for. Numerous long-term presidents, prime ministers and rulers of other kinds might have imposed their will on the voters in ways that did not rationally correspond to either the best interest of the voters or any type of rational reasoning. In some parts of the world, there is an anecdotal principle that people "will vote whoever is currently in power", until things become extreme in ways that truly necessitate change at almost any cost. This "electoral lethargy" has its psychological explanation, and it may have more to do with social pathology of the described sort than any type of "inherent voter conservatism". Resistance to change is natural to a degree, but in all extreme cases or those that clearly suggest oblivion for what seems as evident own interest, heteropathic identification should be considered as a strong possibility.

A special case of identification throughout the group is the so-called "*identification through coalescence*", which arises from the members of a community giving in to a certain common flow of feeling and instinctual sensibilities "whose pulse thereafter governs the behaviour of all its members, so that ideas and schemes are driven wildly before it, like leaves before a storm".[6] Perhaps this type of collective coalescence in each other's perceptions and feelings is responsible for the most radical types of domination over the masses by creating conditions wherein the group will simply be so predictable that it will always be outsmarted by those in positions of power. Propositions based on mythological prejudice or on fear-mongering are particularly potent tools to generate pervasive coalescence with the purpose of political domination.

The last psychological phenomenon that needs to be distinguished from sympathy proper is the so-called *"anticipating identification*", which is a sort of in-born capacity that degenerates in proportion with civilisational development, namely the capacity to transgress the psychological and physical boundaries of an individual's integrity and anticipate previously completely unknown

6 Scheller, *The Nature of Sympathy*, p. 25.

structures and sensibilities of the other, often another species in the animal world, without ever having experienced such structures in the other. Examples of this phenomenon include the ability by wasps to sting other species, such as caterpillars, directly in the nerve centres that cause the caterpillar to become paralysed until it is fertilised by the wasp, without killing the caterpillar. The wasp has no way of knowing the inner nerve structure of the caterpillar, nor has it ever before stung the caterpillar, yet it unmistakably hits the right spot. This pre-programmed way of interacting between the species might mean that "(u)nquestionably, we must suppose the wasp to have some kind of primary 'knowledge' (in the widest sense of 'having') concerning the vital processes of the caterpillar"[7], and in the case of human interaction along this model one is tempted to speak of "instinct" or some reference to a supposed "prior community" that may not be present in the individual, ontogenic experience of either partners in the interaction, but might be philogenically reproduced. Scheller believes this primitive mutual connectedness between sensibilities, and in the human context of minds, to be culturally highly valuable:

> (…) to be aware of any organism as alive, to distinguish even the simplest animate movement from an inanimate one, a minimum of undifferentiated identification is necessary; we shall see how the simplest vicarious emotion, the most elementary fellow-feeling, and over and above these the capacity for understanding between minds, are built up on the basis of this primitive givenness of 'the other' (…).[8]

Scheller argues that if primitive organisms have this capacity, so much more must this be the case with different racial, ethnic and linguistic communities, each of which probably possesses its own fine instincts of identification and anticipation which, if properly arranged in a multicultural society, can immensely enhance the epistemological and generally cognitive capacity of that society to achieve its goals. However, Scheller did not recognise the link between instincts arising from such deeper-seated commonalities and intentionality as a presupposition for conscious human relations, which has been so potently analysed by John Searle. According to

---

7 Scheller, *The Nature of Sympathy*, p. 29.

8 Scheller, *The Nature of Sympathy*, p. 31.

Scheller, intentionality is limited strictly to the domain of cognition and is characteristic only of human beings.[9]

On the one hand, it is true that intentionality in communication is directed predominantly towards the cognitive realm of human activities. One of the most well-researched examples is the ability to understand mistaken utterances in their intended real meaning, even though in the literal meaning they may have quite a different object. Malapropisms, as they are called, are interpreted in various ways, many of which depend on the contextual considerations and analysis, and some arise from a sort of spontaneous, immediate recognition of the sort that suggests evolutionary roots reaching back before modern human development. Donald Davidson has been among the first to discuss the epistemological consequences of understanding malapropisms.[10] In particular he has pointed to the difference between conditions of understanding someone and the conditions of truthfulness of a proposition. While the truth-conditions for a statement might be clear and known to the listener as well as the speaker, a mistaken statement, which, by definition, does not satisfy the truth conditions for the intended statement, will often be understood correctly by the listener. This could be explained by postulating a certain immediacy between the speaker and the listener, where the listener is able to "coalesce" in the intentions of the speaker and understand his meaning regardless of what the utterance might actually turn out to be. In short, this is the problem of understanding malapropisms in its cognitive dimensions.

While we might or might not agree that intentionality in its essence is limited to conscious human relations (for why does it not apply to unconscious actions that might, in some cases, be quote compatible with conscious ones, or to the instincts of the wasp towards the spider or the caterpillar that are so perfectly pre-programmed so as to achieve a specific goal while allowing the victim to survive), our main interest here is in the realm of ethics of the political community, and thus the human interactions to which there is agreement that intentionality applies fully.

---

9 Scheller, *The Nature of Sympathy*, p. 32, footnote 2.

10 Donald Davidson, "A Nice Derangement of Epitaphs", in R. Grandy & R. Warner (eds), *Philosophical Grounds of Rationality: Intentions, Categories, Ends*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1986, pp. 157–75.

Scheller insists in his analysis of sympathy that it is not *and should not be* an ethical argument; his ambitions are to found a comprehensive behavioural explanation on the concept of sympathy, which could then have its offshoots with the various disciplines, with various forms being developed in great detail.[11] He argues that ethics does not exhaust the overall explanatory potential of sympathy, which, on his account, goes as far as Henry Bergson's attempts to explain nature by a more or less universal "vital instinct" or "vital force", (*Élan vital*) in his 1907 *Creative Evolution*. Scheller makes clear parallels with Bergson in his writing.[12] In this, he is quite cynical about instincts, arguing that the more one identifies with others, the more of an animal one becomes, and the more the individual is independent from the primal collectivities, the more of a human being one becomes. This is a common sentiment in the context of evolutionary theory, but this context is significantly different from that of collective action in politics, which is a narrower field with somewhat varied meanings of commonality and individuality than in evolutionary considerations. Individuation is a road of individual development from the amorphous evolutionary mass — at least this is how the evolution theory sees it — but assuming that the context is a relatively highly evolved human individual whose main problem is one's limited ability to influence political processes and make valid moral judgements within them, the values cast on the discussion tend to be different. This is especially so when intentionality is concerned, for intentionality, apart from possessing indubitable evolutionary and epistemological value, as is clear from the analysis of malapropisms, is also a well of ethical questions. What Scheller says about identification and the various forms of mutual pre-directness between individuals has much to do with the more contemporary discussions of intentionality in human communication, and Scheller's concept of sympathy as fellow-feeling that requires both a distinct identity between those with whom one sympathises and the ability to generate an emotional "bridge" towards them might be the key to unlocking the issues of intentionality in the inter-subjective, broadly speaking "political" realm. We shall thus devote some attention to intentionality as a feature of the political and social discourse.

---

[11] "We nevertheless reject from the outset an 'Ethics of Sympathy' *as such*, holding as we do, that the problem of sympathy in general has aspects and affinities which simply cannot be reached at all by a one-sided analysis and consideration from a purely ethical point of view" — Scheller's "Preface to the Second Edition" — p. xlvii.

[12] E.g. Scheller, p. 28–9.

Intentionality

"Intentionality" means a primary "directedness" of certain mental states and actions towards certain points of reference, namely the essential feature of some mental states that they are "about" or "of" something. Clearly all communication is by definition intentional in this sense. Intentionality does not necessarily involve an intention to do something, it merely involves thoughts, beliefs or other mental phenomena being defined as hinged to the object that they are about. Fear or hope are intentional, but they do not necessarily include intentions to do anything. According to Searle, there are mental states that are not intentional, because they are not defined by a specific object, such as nervousness or anxiety that do not relate to particular causes or reasons. Even within certain classes of mental phenomena, there are instances that are intentional, and those that are not.

> For example, just as there are forms of elation, depression and anxiety where one is simply elated, depressed, or anxious without being elated, depressed or anxious about anything, so, also, there are forms of these states where one is elated that such and such has occurred or depressed and anxious at the prospect of such and such. Undirected anxiety, depression and elation are not Intentional, the directed cases are Intentional.[13]

It is not at all obvious that Searle is correct in the assertion that some mental states are not intentional in the described sense, just because they appear not to be caused by or about a particular object. Unless the anxiety or depression are pathological, it is at least possible that they are caused by or referenced to a particular expectation, prospect or experience, but that the subject is not conscious of this causation or referential point, which results in the mental states appearing to be "about nothing". This is not essential for the characterisation of intentionality for our purposes here, but it is potentially important for the issue of whether the entire human mental activity is "social" or there is a part of it that seemingly serves no communicational purpose and does not arise from human relationships with objects, be they worldly or ideational. The issue itself is anthropologically crucial, and I shall return to it in the last chapter of the book.

---

[13] John Searle, *Intentionality*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1983, p. 2. All references to Searle are to this work.

Intentionality is clearly present in any discourse, and thus in any type of sociability or intersubjectivity, particularly in the political sociability. As communication is mediated by a language, whether it is conceived as a grammatical language consisting of words and utterances, a language of signs or some other type of symbolic communication, the relationship between language and rational symbolisation on the one hand, and intentionality on the other, comes up as the next issue. As has been mentioned in the earlier text, Scheller had protested against using the term "intentionality" to describe any features of intersubjectivity in the animal world, as he believed intentionality to be an exclusive feature of human rational inter-relationships. Searle has a more radical and seemingly more justified view of intentionality:

> By explaining Intentionality in terms of language I do not mean to imply that Intentionality is essentially and necessarily linguistic. On the contrary it seems to me obvious that infants and many animals that do not in any ordinary sense have a language or perform speech acts nonetheless have Intentional states. Only someone in the grip of a philosophical theory would deny that small babies can literally be said to want milk and that dogs want to be let out or believe that their master is at the door. There are, incidentally, two reasons why we find it irresistible to attribute Intentionality to animals even though they do not have a language. First, we can see that the causal basis of the animal's Intentionality is very much like our own, e.g., these are the dog's eyes, this is his skin, those are his ears, etc. Second, we can't make sense of his behaviour otherwise.[14]

Indeed, it seems irresistibly intuitive to attribute intentionality to animals as well as people, as it does to consider them capable of "believing", "fearing" or "wanting". The fact that a person wants a promotion does not appear to be structurally different from a dog's wanting to play in the garden, despite the human's rationality that is postulated as his *differentia specifica* from the dog. The wasp does not have the rationality of a human being, yet it appears as a clearly intentional, or "directed", behaviour, when it stings the spider or caterpillar so as to paralyse and then fertilise them. The snake is not rational, but its hungry gaze whilst hunting is so much intentional, that its brutal "appetitive force" overwhelms its prey to the extent of it willingly allowing to be caught and eaten. Intentionality as directedness, a fundamental partial determination

[14] Searle, p. 5.

of mental states by the object, is such a vital part of life generally that it comes close to Bergson's *Élan vital*. In this sense, it is compellingly intuitive to conclude, with Searle, that "(L)anguage is derived from Intentionality and not conversely", and perhaps more radically, that rationality might well spring from a more primal intentionality than vice versa.

For human beings, intentionality is undisputed as a feature of political and ethical life, and in fact all norms of both are premised on it. What is more controversial are the types of intentionality included in the intersubjective human relations. If mental states tend to be intentional (with or without certain exceptions mentioned by Searle), then the mental landscape of social discourse determines all the phenomena within the existing political systems. In other words, if the mental undercurrent of social and political life is overwhelmingly intentional and directed towards objects or ideas, then the way in which this intentionality is shaped (whether it is constructive or destructive, friendly or adverse to others, premised on acquisitive or contemplative views of material objects, etc.) fully determines politics among other types of human sociability. The question to be asked is what ways there are to influence intentionality as a fundamental feature of human relations and thought so as to enhance certain values and discourage others, to improve certain types of mental dispositions and block others — in short, whether and how the premise of intentionality can be used to morally guide and educate political communities.

If the wasp owes its ability to paralyse and exploit other insects in the way described to a primal intentionality, which may include certain types of innate know-how, it is more than just possible that other species also have capacities (in the human case considerably degraded by social evolution) for various, exploitative and other, relationships with other individuals and species. Unlike the wasp or the dog, the human being has a far greater ability to freely choose which of these capacities to develop, and which ones to sanction and block systematically. Social sentiments belong to a special class of intentional mental phenomena that may take wildly different directions, from social cooperation and cross-identification across a number of the other members of the community to exploitative or genocidal intentions. History provides a vivid enough illustration of particularly the latter type of mental dispositions.

Given this disproportionately high ability to control or cultivate intentionality — in fact this is what we call "rationality" — human beings

qualify as political subjects. Bees tend to exhibit mainly a constructive intentionality towards each other, but have no such freedom to control and direct it, and thus the talk of "bee societies" is merely biological language. Bees are no more rational than are wasps, although their mutual intentionality tends to be radically different and at least superficially infinitely more agreeable than that of the wasps. Neither species is aware of its own intentionality, and has no ability to cultivate particular streams and aspects of it.

Having said all this, liberal and communitarian social paradigms, as extremes, appear as clear examples of two alternative types of social intentionality that can be systematically cultivated by ideology, social instruments, intelligentsia, the media, and the political class. This cultivation is not merely institutional or a matter of tradition, as political philosophy in large part would like us to believe, but inherently deliberative and psychological; its bearers are those who wield influence on the structural and strategic development of societies, perhaps most of all the intellectual class, who provide both the ideological and moral guidance for political systems.

The reason for this particular responsibility of the ideologues for the shaping of social intentionality is again reflected in a distinction made by Searle, between the so-called "assertive", "commissive" and "directive" classes of speech acts, where the first includes propositions, descriptions or statements, which are characterised by truth or falsity, while the second includes vows, promises and the like, and the third involves orders, instructions, directions, commands. The latter two types of speech acts are characterised by the changes that they produce in the world, rather than by their truth or falsity. While the former is evaluated by what Searle calls "word-to-world direction of fit" (a statement is true, at least according to one theory of the truth, if the words match the reality in the world that they refer to), the latter are characterised by a "world-to-word direction of fit" (an order is not true or false, but either fulfilled — matched by a change in the world, or not). Similar features apply to intentional states, such as beliefs (belief-to-world direction of fit), desires or hopes (world-to desire/hope direction of fit). Beliefs can be true or false, but fears or wishes cannot; beliefs may or may not fit the world, but the world either fits or does not fit desires or hopes. One has not made a mistake by hoping for or fearing something that does not occur, but one does make a mistake in believing something to be the case that in fact is not. Although political

ideologies often refer to "beliefs" (and beliefs are typically expressed linguistically in propositions or statements), in fact they are permeated with value-judgements and dispositional intentional content that is expressed in directional and commissive language. This is so much so that it is more appropriate to ask about the prescriptive force and effects of ideologies than about their truth or falsity. The real question is not whether liberalism is more or less true than communitarianism, as both are prescriptive political doctrines, but whether their values and the changes they produce in the world are beneficial or not, as well as whether they are sufficiently capable of bringing about the changes that they envisage.

What Alfred Tarski has called truth-conditions for propositions, namely the objective conditions under which a statement can be considered to be true (correspondence with reality, coherence, or any other criterion envisaged by the various theories of truth, crudely speaking), is equivalent to what might be considered "conditions of effectivity" for ideologies seen as forms of directive and performative (according to Searle, "commissive") intentional content.[15] Such conditions of plausibility are different for liberalism and communitarianism, for example, in that liberalism is effective if the individual liberty, in politics, society and the economy, is adequately preserved by the institutions, whose main aim is to maintain the efficiency of social transactions in the broad sense, while at the same time keeping the state at bay in its inherent tendency to encroach individual liberties. Communitarianism is effective if the actual culture of a society is based on a primacy of collective goals and if individuals are raised and appraised in their social role primarily through the consideration of their capacity to contribute to collective projects. Republicanism, on the other hand, is effective if certain criteria, envisaged by the various branches of the republican doctrine (most recently citizenship), are actually the focus of the distribution of rights and privileges within a society. None of the political ideologies are true of false; they signify practical choices for coherent forms of social organisation and a set of cogent social values.

One particular issue to be addressed is the need to cauch ideologies in ethical prescriptions, for there appears to be few other possibilities to compare them, apart from their inherent ability to contribute to the efficiency of certain functional aspects of social life. As ideologies cannot be true or

[15] For Tarski's definition of the truth, see Alfred Tarski, *Introduction to Logic and to the Methodology of the Deductive Sciences*, Oxford University Press, 1994.

false, they must be able to be categorised as more or less morally justifiable and practically conducive to better performance. Their frame of validation in the context of conditions of effectiveness is a "world-to-ideology" fit; however, their conditions of moral justifiability are a kind of ideology-to-higher level value-fit. If ideologies are primary level discourses that bear on the world or reality with more or less effectivity, then moral values surely must be second-order judgements or discourses that allow an appraisal of the ideologies as directive or perfomative intentional content. This is similar to any other performative content; I may desire political power to such extent that it over-rides my loyalty to my family or the immediate neighbours, and whether or not my desire is effective will depend on the extent to which the world allows me to satisfy it. It is neither true, nor false. However, as a primary-order discourse, or "language", it may be judged as morally justified or unjustified. In such a case, it will be judged only through an outside reference, to moral values such as loyalty, modesty, respect for others, self-restraint, etc.

Intentionality, contrary to what Scheller held, is not exclusive to human beings, but only in human beings it becomes subject to moral judgements because of the freedom by humans to considerably (if not completely) control the intentional impulses and the intentional content. The snake's intentionality in projecting appetitive force to the rabbit or the squirrel does not fall under a moral meter, but a man's unrestrained appetitive desire for career advancement or political power does. Intersubjectivity is, as has been shown, intentional in the broad sense of directedness of mental states and acts, and as such it is wholly subject to moral judgements, except in some extraordinary cases where personal freedom to chose can be reasonably denied.

It should be quite uncontroversial that intentional content, coupled with human freedom, is subject to moral judgements, and that the way this judgement will unfold will depend on the sort of values selected for a particular type of morality. I have argued that sympathy may well be the emotional foundation of social interactions in a well-ordered society. This is a functional assertion. Scheller has shown quite convincingly that the various forms of "sympathy" also serve cognitive purposes, some of which, in the various species, are not conscious. This can be illustrated by numerous examples, but what is really interesting here is to examine sympathy's normative potential in the ethical field. Are there reasons to morally prefer certain types of normative languages

(including that of sympathy) to others in judging political ideologies? I shall devote the remainder of this chapter to that issue, focusing on the analysis of what normative languages, or normative grammars (the two terms used interchangeably here) imply for a social and political system.[16]

Intentionality and intersubjectivity

If it is true to say that various propositions or beliefs, which, according to Searle, have a word-to-world direction of fit (essentially conforming to the so-called "correspondence theory of truth", which implies that a proposition is true if and only if it corresponds with the real state of affairs in the world "out there"), are validated by certain truth-conditions, what, then, of intentional content, such as desires or orders? They do not express propositional content, and thus cannot have truth-conditions attached to them. My desire to own a Volvo truck is neither true, nor false — it is either realised in the world, or not. Intentional content thus has conditions of satisfaction, rather than truth-conditions, and they depend on a number of circumstances, at least some of which are beyond the control of the person whose intentional content it is.

When social relations are at stake, intentional content precedes the entire history of political changes in any country. The hopes, plans, intentions and dreams of those who have helped shape revolutions, modernisations or plunges into dictatorship over time have played a unique role in the actual unfolding of such developments. The directions of intentionality, or prevailing intentionality, of a particular time in a particular society are thus crucial for the nature of events in that society. The sort of culture fostered by popular education and by the unique role played by political and social elites in framing mindsets in the society is based on the conditioning and building of particular types of intentional content.

[16] "Social system" includes a set of norms, institutions and habits that constitute a particular culture in the development of mutual relations in a society. "Political system" is a set of institutions and customs that govern the distribution and exercise of political power. While in some cases it is justified to speak of, for instance, "a democratic social and political system", the two are not necessarily consistent, as there are institutional democracies with extremely exclusionary or authoritarian social systems and cultures, and there are quite cooperative and open social systems framed by particularly brutal and authoritarian political systems of the time. Social systems tend to be more longitudinally stable in their normative content than political systems.

Assuming that intentional content (such as intentions or hopes) consists of various representations that do not necessarily become realised, they are decidedly psychological phenomena. They depend not only on whether or not they are realised, but also on other representations, beliefs, knowledge or impressions with which they generate networks. In order to decide or intend to drive a Volvo truck, I must first know that there are such things as trucks, that Volvo is a Swedish manufacturer that makes particular trucks, and some at least very general facts about trucks in order to like them and to desire to own or drive one. If I was a medieval knight, I would hardly be able to desire to drive a Volvo truck, because the rest of my mental representational network would not give rise to such intentional content. In addition, I must have certain capacities, such as the ability to sit, move my feet and hands, see signals and obstacles, and perform a myriad of other small things involved in acts such as purchasing and driving a truck. Only against a background of such abilities, which I must be conscious of, alongside with the whole context of other representations, and other intentional content, can I form the desire to drive a truck, and more specifically, to drive a Volvo truck.[17]

If my intentional content is benevolence towards other members of my political community, sympathy towards them and the desire to assist them, then it depends on a complex set of other representations and abilities. This is where we arrive at the critical terrain that must be crossed to arrive at social solidarity and a non-liberal concept of political freedom.

The desire to drive a truck or ride a horse can only be formed if one is familiar with some of the features of either that one could like. One also needs to be aware that one would actually be able to perform the action one desires should one be given an opportunity to do so. This is clear enough. However, it is far less clear that for a political subject to desire to sympathise with other members of one's community, certain preconditions need to be fulfilled that are not unlike those for the desire to ride a horse. One needs at least to be familiar with what it would roughly be like to sympathise with others, and one must be aware that one is actually able to do so. In addition, one would need to be aware of certain good effects of sympathy that could translate into a desire to sympathise with others. In order for these preconditions to be fulfilled, in other words, a certain culture needs to pre-exist in society where one is raised,

[17] Searle simply refers to the contextual representations and intentional content described here as "The Network", and to the background abilities as "The Background" — Searle, pp. 20–5.

so that various options are actually available, both the liberal way of looking at social relations, and the more communitarian ways of appraising one's social roles.

It is often argued today that people brought up in contemporary America or in Britain do not actually have an experience of communitarian relations that would allow them to wish to demonstrate certain desirable attitudes to others, such as benevolence or sympathy. A child born into a cut-throat liberal society such as those two, with a strong rhetoric of meritocracy built into the selection and grading systems at school, in the political system and the way in which political campaigns are run, will simply not have a "fair go" at even being able to adopt different views on society. The pedagogical role of the political system is often severely underestimated. Just as the political elites essentially disseminate attitudes and values to the citizens (and I have discussed this elsewhere with special reference to penal policy), so does the political system raise citizens.[18] If this political system is ideologically crude and strongly favours one of the several competing political philosophies as their anchor, then naturally, the citizens born in that system are likely to be hard core liberals, whether they know this or not.

There is both a cognitive element in this pedagogy, and a volitional element that depends on the capacities of the sort described. On the one hand, for a liberal citizen, and by this I mean the citizen of a country where the everyday discourse, primarily relating to responsibility for success, is based on the notion of meritocracy, and on individual's relative freedom from interference from the state, to understand what it is to possess freedom that is not based on a lack of interference requires to have some prior knowledge and experience of communitarian communities. For example, a young American Jew who has spent time in an Israeli kibuc, will be able to appreciate communitarian relations to a considerably greater extent than someone without such experience. People tend to identify with the circumstances in which they live, and for them to be able to form a specific desire to live in different circumstances, or to form an attitude towards a political philosophy that is remote from that inherent in the political system they live in, they need considerable education. In addition to these cognitive requirements, they also need to be convinced that they would be actually able to fulfil different requirements arising from a different set of social relations, and that prospect naturally arouses fear in all of us.

[18] In my *Punishment and Restorative Crime-Handling: A Social Theory of Trust*, Ashgate, Aldershot, 1995.

In short, to fully understand essentially different types of social relations, one needs deliberate encouragement from the system, for which a certain in-built tolerance of differences is required. It is not at all sure that modern liberal systems are equipped with this "switch" that allows sufficient ideological differentiation.

The pedagogical role of the system can be appropriately compared to the role of language and to the learning of languages. If a language one speaks is very easy and sufficiently pervasive to get by with it without having to learn other languages, then an individual is likely to have low motivation to learn other languages. To have an attitude towards other languages, one must be able to appreciate their qualities. For an English speaker to like French, one needs to have heard French often enough to appreciate, for example, its melodic character, to grow to like its pronunciation, and to wander as to whether there are situations and contexts of meaning where French is able to structurally "catch" the meanings in more elegant or perhaps more precise ways than English. This is still not enough for someone to form a desire to learn French. To do so, one would need to both like the language, have a personal motive to invest time and energy, and also to be aware that one is most probably able to accomplish the task. If I have spoken Serbian all my life, it is by no means clear to me that I can, for example, learn Polish. For me to form a desire to learn Polish or French, I need to be fairly confident that, should I decide to do so and should there be an adequate opportunity (school, time to be spent in one or both of the respective countries), I would have sufficient capacities to accomplish the task.

The desire does not depend on the actual existence of the capacities. I need to be sure that I can learn Polish, for I can be confident that I can, and then, in the course of learning, discover that in fact I cannot learn it, because my cognitive, communicative, physical or intellectual capacities are insufficient for the task. However, in order to form the desire, I must be fairly confident that the capacities are there.

What are the social conditions for these cognitive and volitional preconditions to be met for me to learn a foreign language? First, learning foreign languages should be a desirable endeavour in the community, unlike learning the skill of picking locks, for example. Secondly, some people in the community should be able to speak other languages in a way that enthuses others to learn to do the same, similarly to athletes' performing to the peak being able to motivate thousands of others to try to pursue sports to the limit

of their abilities. Finally, the general intellectual abilities of the population should be sufficient to witness a substantial number of people successfully learning languages, which, again in turn, would encourage potential learners to embark upon the process.

It is, of course, possible for one to learn a foreign language even in a highly discouraging community, the same as it is possible for one to become a top runner in a community of the extremely obese, which does not invest in or encourage sports, but these are exceptions to the rule. Similarly, it is possible to be a socialist or a communitarian in a dominant liberal society, or to be a liberal free-market theorist in a communist dictatorship, and examples have been known, albeit only for the reason of being such stark exceptions to the rule. Normally, an encouraging environment, the existence of positive examples, and both tolerance and encouragement of intellectual diversity would produce better philosophers and freer choices of political ideologies among the lay public. The general culture and atmosphere in society, which is designed by the political and intellectual elites, largely determines the extent to which the constituents will be able to exhibit certain skills and diversity of intellectual outlook. The individual responsibility for the choices made is thus substantially curtailed by the limitation of factually, truly free choice. Whilst I may be able to make a procedurally free choice, the extent to which my choice is substantively free is much more difficult to determine, because it depends on an array of influences and normative restrictions in my community, many of which may be only implicit and thus not conscious at all times. In short, despite their ability to perceive causal relations and generate insights beyond the realities immediately presented to them, people are overwhelmingly susceptible to suggestion and conditioned by the various forms of social control, both formal and informal, with regard to both what is forbidden and, more importantly, to what is undesirable or at least considered less valuable than other avenues of action. The meaning of leadership and the responsibility of leaders is almost exhausted in this role of generating norms of what is and what is not desirable and influencing others in one's community with regard to how they ought to think about common dilemmas and what things they ought to value over other things.

The directive intentionality that is thus generated by the leaders concerns both things one should desire and relationships with others one should enter into. A leadership that fosters economic efficiency and deliberate breaks on sympathy with those who fall through the economic nets for the sake of

maintaining pace of development and speed of transactions will naturally generate a reluctance in the constituents to empathise with the unfortunate members of the community, and a propensity to explain economic and other related misfortune away as a necessary by-product of prosperity. Sympathy, on the other hand, thrives in communities that are drawn close together, either by the existence of a powerful outside threat (such as the Israeli or Palestinian communities in the Middle East today), or by a strong interweaving of values and personal relationships that overrides individual considerations of comparative advantage and competition. In either case, the elites are the ones who command the values of the community.

Discursive theories of political systems attempt to dissect their mechanisms by breaking them down into modes of communication. Their starting principle is that almost everything we do in public is intersubjective, and thus, that intentionality is essentially intersubjective in human society. Most of the things we do in the everyday public space is either deliberately directed towards others (such as my writing of this book), or at least counts on the existence of others as a background assumption (such as my crossing the street carefully in order not to be run over by a speeding car). In this broad sense, the socially relevant part of our intentionality may well be entirely intersubjective. However, intersubjectivity does not mean sociability, nor does it imply in any way that we will relate to others constructively. My intersubjectivity might be based on a primary awareness of the existence and activities of others around me, of their rights and social entitlements, but I may see them as potential sources of interference with my goals, envisaged as essentially solitary interest-driven projects, and my entire intersubjective activity might be directed at disabling those potential interferences. In other words, I can be fully intersubjective, while most of my intentional content might either arise from, or be directed at, broad projects to protect and distance myself from others. In doing so, I may use various strategies, including extreme friendliness or politeness, even forms of temporary cooperation, but the deciding criterion for the assessment of the character of my strategy, and the particular actions contained in it, will be the motivation and the values involved.

III

THE CULTURE OF WAR AND THE CULTURE OF PEACE

Culture as learning

"National culture", "social spirit" and "collective values" belong to a myriad of terms that essentially mean culture as a set of values that most members of a community have come to recognise as their own. They have learned to recognise such values in the same way as they learn a native language. Native language is learned in the same way as a foreign language, yet it is the dominant language that the individual is socially encouraged to recognise as one's own, and thus the structures of this language, unlike those of the other languages the person may know, will shape one's cognitive and expressive structures and processes.

Same languages are better suited to some purposes than to others. They also provide very different social avenues to their speakers: it is likely that a German, French or English speaker will be more productive in the initial years of pursuing a career in professional philosophy than will be a speaker of Swahili , simply because most of the classic philosophy is not available in Swahili. At the same time, as far as one's individual abilities and preferences go, the Swahili speaker may be more motivated and "able" to became a philosopher than any number of speakers of the three European languages. Still, the results she achieves are likely to lag considerably behind those of the English speaker, given the same level of effort. The level of achievement,

and indirectly the career choice likely to be made rationally, is thus largely pre-determined through the social and linguistic infrastructure available to a person.

The range of choices is restricted by outside circumstances, many of which are a matter of social and linguistic infrastructure, and the same is true of values and morals more specifically.

It is said that aesthetic values are peculiar to each individual, but they are also peculiar to each culture. Arhitecture, painting, music and literary style in each culture show distinctive differences, and in their most salient aspects these differences will cause the respective differences between individual tastes. While it is not completely inconceivable for a traditional Indian person to obsess over Ikea furniture, this is as unlikely as it is for a traditional Norwegian woman to consider wearing a veil beautiful. While an individual may develop a taste outside one's own culture, this requires either a rebellion against the culture, or an experience with another culture. Values are learned, and in this sense moral values or political views are no different from aesthetic ones.

If learning has a distinctive neural basis — and a broad variety of experts, ranging from psychologists and neurologists to sports trainers agree that it does — than some fundamental neural processes may well be common to all types of learning.

Let us consider the learning of motor skills. Each new motor skill, such as those peculiar to particular sports, involves a complex coordination of brain activities, or coordinated electric "firing" of various neural centres. The first few times a skill is attempted, there will be frequent misfiring of neural impulses, and the skill will tend to be erratic, difficult, and incorrect. After a number of repetitions, the complex motor movements will "slot together" smoothly, and with time the practitioner will be able to perform them perfectly, on assumption that one's physiological and neurological health is intact. The neurological explanation for this type of learning is that the cognitive creation of a motor skill starts as the imitation of a visual image (thus the importance of correct demonstration at the beginning), and proceeds through the creation of complex clusters of new links among neurons, which serve as connectors for the execution of new constellations of movements. With each repetition, the skill becomes smoother because of a fatty protein called "myelin", which is secreted onto the new neural connection. The more "myelinated" the new

neural structure is, the smoother and more deeply cognitively embedded the skill is. For some skills, it is believed that after 25 repetitions they are successifully ”myelinated“, or “downloaded into the neural system” for the practitioner to perform them competently. In short, a choice of moderately complex motor skills can be mastered by most people exclusively through a clear visual imaging at the beginning and a sufficient member of repetitions to myelinate the skill to automatic execution without thinking. This is how modern day combat professionals (soldiers and the police) are trained — the threat stimulus characteristic of certain missions is associated with particular motor skills. After a number of repetitions, the execution becomes automatic. The practitioner responds to a threat adequately without having to think. A soldier searching closed premises during a mission will automatically clear the nearest corner, move to a position of control in the room and fire at any threatening movements without having to consider his options. A boxer will automatically execute a typical series of punches, and will also automatically duck when facing a typical series that includes certain punches in a certain order. A basketball player will automatically jump high above an opponent who has just received the ball under the basket, to block his shot.

Does learning in the field of symbolic communication or value-judgements function so differently from that of motor skills? By no means. Competent speakers of a language will often be able to understand each other’s mistaken utterances (malapropisms) based on the circumstances and logical chains of expression as though they were correct. The more they use the language, the more they will be able to bridge linguistic gaps (guess the meaning of colloquial words they are unfamiliar with or respond to questions parts of which they have not heard). The more one is socially integrated into a value-community (such as a religious community), the more one will automatically respond to value-provocative situations in value-embedded ways — avoid arguments, refrain from judging others for common faults, use cooperative rather than confrontational language. The phenomenological regularities in all types of learning, from learning how to fight to playing the piano, appreciating art or adopting a morality are the same. In every learning, individual determination and a discretionary decision to invest time and energy are required. In this sense, individual agency with a degree of autonomy is present. However, the choice of things to be learned, or culture in the broadest possible sense, is largely heteronomous to any individual. The social availability in the broad sense, and the social acceptability or preferability of values, in the most narrow

sense, are external to the individual. Until the 1950s, it was virtually impossible for a young European to be a Buddhist, because Buddhism and its values were unknown, thus socially unavailable in Europe. While the ontological dimension of humanity may be universal, and thus potentially entirely autonomous, in the sense that a person can internalise any values one chooses, the ontic, existential aspect is fundamentally heteronomous, culture-relative and conditioned by the social availability and social receptivity of values. The theme of culture-relativity of values is generally accepted to the degree of seeming triviality. However, more specific forms of social conditioning of learning are less trivial and lead us towards the question of autonomy in moral judgements in typical everyday circumstances. If it proves that the Kantian assumption of moral autonomy cannot survive the realities of everyday cultural and subcultural conditioning of values and behaviour, what does this mean for the very concept of morality?

The specifics of social and sub-cultural conditioning of learning

Perhaps it seems trivial that aesthetic taste or moral values in general are created by culture in the sense that people belonging to an "Eastern" or "ancient" culture may look at the same things very differently from those belonging to a "Western" or "contemporary" culture. There is clearly a causal relationship between culture-specific aesthetic upbringing and the substantive aesthetic taste in a grown individual, even though the precise extent of this causation may be debatable. The same, although not necessarily to the same extent, is the case with moral, and all other values.

Even in a narrower sense, it may appear obvious that contemporary Islamic cultures, such as those in societies with Sheriah law, form different social attitudes in their members than do modern western democracies. But the idea that governments can create nationalist, hateful or war-mongering generations of human misfits, unappreciative of the more universal human values, or that cities can bread social deviance, crime or dangerous drivers, is by no means trivial. If it is known that large cities can create their own climate, how far-fetched is the idea that they can create their own (im)morality where social conditioning contains a "breaking point" for each individual which, once surpassed by the social pressure, makes conforming inevitable?

In fact, is conforming inevitable in principle? This question is often conveniently substituted with that of what our moral duties are and how to

secure our conformity with them. However, they are two completely different questions. The former asks about the very sensibility of the assumption of autonomy of social agency. The latter asks about what morality is, and how to secure its fulfilment in society, assuming that there is moral autonomy (or otherwise it would make no sense to ask how to prevent non-conformity). Arguably, the plausibility of the latter question seems to imply that there is moral autonomy, but again, this is simply because the latter question is itself formulated directly on the assumption that there is such autonomy. To use the question as an argument to prove that there is autonomy would thus clearly be circular reasoning. The fact that there are certain moral duties that require a degree of effort from those who consider themselves bound by them does not come anywhere near empirically proving that there is moral autonomy, either, because moral autonomy requires a relatively free choice in deciding whether or not to consider oneself bound by moral (and other social) norms and the values that those norms are based on. In other words, it is not controversial whether or not I should finish this book in time as per the contract (whether this is the right thing to do), but from the point of view of value-autonomy the question is whether or not I am autonomous in choosing this obligation and the corresponding values as binding for me, or am I merely "caught up" in the web of socially pre-defined values that I have come to regard as my own through social conditioning and unconscious internalisation.

Communities generate values in the same way as they generate laws. While laws can be changed administratively, and values cannot, and while laws have a shorter life-span than values, both are ultimately founded in what political scientists like to call "social consensus". This is a deceitful concept, for "consensus" is merely a convergence of learned attitudes. The more efficient a learning process in society, the more consensus on "fundamental values" there will be. The learning process tends to be orchestrated and planned by social elites; it is not random, even in the most disorganised of societies. "Social consensus" is thus a deliberate construct of the learning of values that are presented as socially preferable to others. Social consensus, in other words, results from the exercise of power. It is not a "bottom-to-top", "grassroots"-based convergence of social and political processes as it is sometimes presented. Social consensus is the result of an efficient teaching of values by the social elites to the society at large. It is the ultimate stage in non-repressive social control.

Perhaps the best way to illustrate this conclusion is to point out the existence of consensual irrationality where, through a masterful exercise of power to convince the constituents, political elites lead the masses to euphoria over trivial, or even damaging policies. One poignant example has occurred during the writing of this chapter, and I shall use it here, although there are doubtless many others that could illustrate my conclusion equally well.

In October 2008, after two years of unsuccessful negotiations by the Serbian government over the status of Serbia's renegade province of Kosovo, the subsequent declaration of independence by Kosovo and its recognition by 50 states, including the USA, Britain, France, Germany and all other major countries except Russia and China, the Serbian government proposed a resolution to the UN General Assembly whereby an advisory opinion would be sought from the International Court of Justice as to whether Kosovo's secession was contrary to international law. This move came amid a Serbian policy that singularly focused on joining the European Union, some of whose members had already hinted that any further EU integration of Serbia might well be conditional upon Serbia's own recognition of the state of Kosovo.

The proposed resolution was accepted by a small margin in the UN General Assembly, and this has been interpreted by the government and the Serbian media as a true "diplomatic triumph".

The move is, in fact, potentially damaging, because should the Court decide that Kosovo's secession was based on valid legal premises (the right of peoples to self-determination, especially where persecution is present), Serbia is likely to face a wall in its further European integrations with an explicit demand that it recognises Kosovo. On the other hand, should the judgement be favourable to the Serbian position, no change in the status of Kosovo can realistically be expected, because the judgement is non-binding, and the major powers had already said that in such a case they would not change their policies. Only a day after the General Assembly adopted this resolution and asked the Court for an opinion, two Serbia's small neighbours, both of whom had voted for the adoption of the resolution at the UN, bilaterally recognised Kosovo, leading to a nervous reaction by the Serbian government, which expelled their ambassadors from Belgrade. Thus, the government took a damaging move, effectively shooting itself in the foot, and proceeded to present this as a "diplomatic triumph". All the media and almost the entire public applauded and there was euphoria following this decision at the UN. This shows that there can be consensus on bad policies, and that the control

of the media and the public sphere more generally (supportive intelligencia) can allow the authorities to exercise power through consensus, while this has absolutely nothing to do with the real interests of the community.

The creation of consensus as a form of social control is at the same time a manifestation of structural violence, which I discuss in more detail later in this chapter. The described exercise of power through the formation of consensus by the Serbian political elite fits particularly well in what in 1974 Steven Lukes called three main forms of social power, namely (i) the ability to achieve one's subjective interests as opposed to others', (ii) the ability to prevent an issue from becoming part of the agenda (surpressing the issue from being discussed in the first place), and (iii) keeping the powerless unaware of their "real interests".[1] The third form of power is a perfect framework to conceptualise the generation of consensus as a form of structural violence. If the media and social elites repeat certain evaluations or judgements forcefully and frequently, the population at large will be inclined to adopt those judgements whether or not they are correct. Even though asking for an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice can only hurt the perceived interests of the Serbian society vis-à-vis Kosovo, it has been almost unequivocally presented as a triumph, by using the third avenue of exercising social power, making the constituents unaware of their real interests, or of the true ways in which the policy impacts those interest that they do recognise as their own. In fact Lukes illustratively calls the two latter forms of power "domination", as they are exercised by manipulating the institutional and political avenues of governance, thus allowing their protagonists to achieve a superior position to that of the society at large and to violate the ideal political process (which ought to be participatory bottom-to-top) so that it becomes warped and generative of unrepresentative and selective, distorted outcomes. In short, these are ways of exercising power in a democracy that threaten the very rights embedded in the concept of democracy, thus perverting the system. Unfortunately, they have come to be rightly regarded as inevitable structural adhesions to any existing democratic society. While this may portray human nature in general as corrupt, it does not help the claim that there is any substantial autonomy in value-formation by ordinary citizens anywhere.

---

[1] Steven Lukes, *Power: A Radical View,* Palgrave, New York, 2005. See also Amit Ron, "Power: A Pragmatist, Deliberative (and Radical) View" *The Journal of Political Philosophy*, vol. 16, no. 3, September 2008, pp. 272–92.

A particular aspect of social control, and the generation of consensus as its ultimate form, is that it occurs at any level of social organisation. Where the degrees or directions of social control differ at different levels of social organisation, from local communities to nations, this indicates fairly precisely the differences in efficiency between the models and strategies of social management by the elites at various levels. If we remember the hypothesis that social control is always a value-impregnated form of learning, it becomes clear that both restrictive social controls and those based on an apparent "plunge into collective spontaneity" (some would say "chaos") result in learned values and skills. This is how subcultures are created.

Imagine two towns, a hundred miles apart, in the same country. One is a lakeside community based on modest tourism and vine production, with a flourishing artistic community. The other is a large land-locked city, seat of government and business, with a major problem of pollution and urban violence. Clearly the learned models of behaviour between the two communities will be considerably different. The cut-throat competitive mentality of the capital will be at sharp odds with the more peaceful and hospitable, more sparsely populated lakeside community. However, the learning process in both communities is controlled by the elites, the most powerful of which is the political elite. If the elite so decides, the capital may be "plunged into spontaneity" by restricting social nets and protective mechanisms for the vulnerable, which will in time bring about the disappearance of any remaining social solidarity and create an "each to one's own devides" atmosphere. In addition, the elite may decide to unleash inequalities on all levels and foster the appearance of a newly enriched cleptocracy through an obscure policy of privatisations. In fact, this has been the prevalent scenario in the post-communist communities of Eastern Europe. Such policies naturally generate extremely savage communal relations by destroying mutual trust and any remaining legacy of communal solidarity. The enriched class of our imagined capital city will soon reach towards the lakeside community and "develop" it economically so that it turns into a construction site, with skyrocketing statistics of tourist visits and average income (as well as consumer prices for everyone), alongside with job insecurity, economic inequality, communal divisions, rising existential stress levels and, inevitably, rising violence and deteriorating solidarity.

All this can be perceived as economic progress, with its social toll, and couched comfortably in the legitimate values of a liberal society. There may exist a wide-ranging consensus that this is the course events had to take. Still,

with differing policies, and correspondingly different learned values, the government could create quite a different, more socially friendly and benevolent situation in both cities. Any substantial autonomy in the choice of values is in the hands of social, and first of all political, elites. If sufficiently long-lived, elites can create monster-citizens as well as ideal neighbours. They can do so equally on national and super-national levels (cultures), and on sub-national, local and even group-levels (subcultures). In all these cases any substantial (though not absolute) autonomy in the choice of values to be fostered in society belongs to elites only, not to individual citizens or non-dominant groups. Most individuals or groups will adopt the socially acceptable values. Others will be repressed and, in time, perish. Value-formation and choice is the most complete and comprehensive manner of social control, whether or not it climaxes in social consensus, because the consensus generated through value-formation rules out disagreement in beliefs, namely a lasting substantive disagreement with socially acceptable values is generally not feasible.

Belief-systems

During the 1991-1995 wars of dissipation of the former Yugoslavia, many Serbs believed that "fighting earnestly" (which usually meant some other people fighting on their behalf and without mercy against Muslims, for example) was both the only patriotic, and at the same time the only moral thing to do. Victims on the other side caused by such "earnest" fighting, including the merciless use of artillery, were shunned as either "inevitable products of war" or as false presentation by the unsympathetic media. People were told by the elites that their national survival was under threat, and they believed this even as they spent their summer holidays at the Montenegrin seaside, a hundred miles or less away from where some of their less fortunate compatriots waged a bloody artillery-backed infantry warfare against their former Muslim or Croat neighbours.

Bosnian Muslims during the same period believed that the only way to "sustain their national identity" was to subject their poorly armed population to decimation by the Serbs and Croats, all with the aim of creating an independent Bosnia and Herzegovina — a state whose viability is in question even today, 14 years after the war, while it is still an international protectorate. Tens of thousands of lives were sacrificed for a state of affairs where most are worse off than before the war, with totally unclear goals, and an even more

obscure strategic rationale. People were told by the political elites that this was necessary, and they believed it.

Many working class Australians today believe that theirs is "the best country on Earth" falling not too far short of a "paradise on Earth", although most Australians have never been abroad, their living standards are lower than in neighbouring Singapore or Malaysia, and Australia has one of the highest suicide rates in the world. Every day, they are told by the media that Australia is the potential dream destination of every inhabitant of the planet, and most believe it.

Until the shocking footage of the war crimes committed by the U.S. National Guard, illegally deployed overseas, at the Abbhu Ghraib prison in Iraq, was shown on television, most Americans shared the belief that their army's frequent invasions of other countries had all been Samaritan missions of liberating other nations from the repugnant dictatorships they had been subjected to. Even though the numbers of civilian lives cut short by American interventions exceeds those destroyed by Nazi Germany or Stallin's USSR, most people actually believe that this has been done with essentially good and humane intentions. They genuinely disbelieve the proposition that the interventions are part of a ruthless policy of globally projecting national interests that in reality comes down to energy, natural resources and enhancing a global military and cultural domination. People are told differently by their political elites and by the part of the intellectual elite that has an interest in supporting the government.

In a short seminal paper in modern epistemology, Edmund Gettier defined knowledge as "true justified belief".[2] In order for mental content to qualify as knowledge, it must be (i) intentional (directed to a presupposed object or reality (a "state of affairs")) in the form of belief (ii) be acquired through a credible procedure (such as a weather forecast rather than the next door neighbour being unusually nervous before a rainy day), and (iii) be true. Gettier's point is that it is not enough for a belief to be true to qualify as knowledge; rather it must be acquired through a qualified process. On this account, true beliefs based on dreams cannot be considered "knowledge", nor can "hunches" or "gut feelings", even if they prove true. The point relevant to popular belief-formation elucidated by Gettier is different for our purposes here — it is that in circumstances where the nature of the belief makes it impossible to ascertain its truth-conditions, let alone its actual truth or falsity (such as claims to "the

[2] Edmund Gettier, "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge", *Analysis*, vol. 23, 1963, pp. 121–3.

necessity" of creating a new state, the status of "the best country on Earth", a policy of "merciful interventions", etc.) *the authoritativeness* of the belief is accepted as sufficient. Social elites in themselves play a normative role; the fact that they propose something as true tends to *replace* the truth-conditions.

In complex social circumstances, such as those in modern democracies, and in mass-communications, it is often impossible to clarify the truth conditions of statements. In the speed of public campaigns (and in modern societies public information tends to exhaust itself in "media campaigns", which is quite a different activity from providing for balanced information), the very question of truth-conditions (what it takes a statement to be true or false) is omitted. There is an acute deficit of time — propositions made authoritatively by the elites, be they political elites, "experts", cultural or other elites, are accepted as true until found demonstrably false. Demonstrably false they are almost never found to be, for the same reason that they are accepted in the first place, namely the unavailability or obscurity of truth-conditions and a testing procedure. This means that *socially* justified beliefs are considered (although not known to be) true, where social justifiability usually amounts to being proposed by a democratically elected government or an authoritative voice that supports it, such as a prominent intellectual or artist. The structure of popular beliefs thus mirrors the fundamental structures of the perceivedly legitimate distribution of power in society. In other words *power* acts instead of the truth-conditions.

When proposed by someone who wields legitimate power in society, a belief is held justifiable in most cases. When the truth-conditions of a belief are far-fetched or impractical, *power* is treated as a truth-condition. In this way, popular belief-formation is merely a projection of power (and often a deliberate exercise of power), and only rarely an epistemic process. The ultimate paradox in this constellation is that in modern democracy it is entirely normal that increasing numbers of ignorant citizens hold (and act upon) an increasing number of justified false beliefs that direct the process of value-selection and collective action. Iraq is a good, though minuscule, example of this reality in popular democracies. When the military and political elites decided to overthrow Saddam Hussein and take Iraq by force, the chosen excuse was that Iraq was allegedly producing weapons of mass destruction. Doctored intelligence reports and "expert findings", combined with corruption attempts at the United Nations were all used to first convince countries to support an invasion, and, when this failed, to persuade the domestic public

in the US and Britain that these countries ought to assault Iraq essentially on their own and outside of the legal framework that would have been generated by a UN Security Council resolution.[3] The engineered public opinion was later difficult to turn around, when the invading forces and the monitoring agencies "discovered" that there was nothing in the way of WMDs on Iraqi soil.

Learning violence

Each society must work with the natural, material and human resources that it owns. Even where the governing elites (not just the political, but also sports, cultural or intellectual elites) are benevolent and truly willing to foster transparent and constructive collective goals through the placement of socially preferred values, resources will have an impact on the choice of the values. Societies rich in intellectual and cultural tradition, with a developed economy and social policy, will likely offer the citizens a variety of values and life styles to chose from. Other societies, more backward in development and poorer in true intellectual or cultural traditions, are likely to offer the more "basic" values such as "patriotism", living up to the expectations of a clan; such values typically do not suffice to substitute the positive qualities of freedom and a productive life, and are regularly supplemented by the construction of enemies and the deepening of inter-communal divisions. The pursuit of primitive values, disconnected from the philosophical concept of "a good life", tends to lead to the negative construction of own identity — through the opposition to the identity of another. In this way, the less developed, value-poorer societies become immersed in cultures of violence and the concomitant social antagonisms. This is also why societies that can offer fewer quality-of-life-related values are more violent than those with more fulfilling lifestyle avenues. When the cultures or subcultures of violence are embedded in the high echelons of social organisation (national elites), they usually involve a potential for large-scale violence (deep and protracted social divisions with revolutionary aspirations, national animosities, possibly civil or regional warfare). However, where the culture of violence is contained on a lower level in social organisation (e.g. large cities in both rich and poor countries), they

[3] Corruption athempts were witnessed in spin-off cases such as that of Katharine Gunn in the UK, where a British intelligence translator had stumbled across an email instructing the British intelligence to illegally eavesdrop on the private headquarters of certain countries' delegations to the UN with a view of blackmailing them to vote for a resolution authorising the military assault on Iraq.

take the form of law-intensity conflicts, such as rampaging crime and deviance (inclusive of locally-contained inter-racial or national issues). It appears that the propensity for violence is a reliable indicator of faults in the fabric of quality-of-life-related values. On a phenomenological level, this is how a culture of violence *attends* the poverty of quality-of-life-related values that is usually associated with a poverty of tradition.[4] What remains to be done is to establish a *causal* relationship between deprivation and cultural violence — a relationship that goes beyond concomitance. This is an argument founded on the concept of a good life, so a definition of the good life is in order here.

Contemporary philosophers inclined to socialism have been fruitful in defining the good life with its universally desired features. Most recently, Ted Honderich argued persuasively that there is such a thing as morally justified terrorism, on account that systematically and structurally denying to a group key and universally recognised attributes of the good life entitles that group to seek redress by means normally outside of the realm of recognised legitimacy.[5] In other words, actions that are ordinarily morally unjustifiable may become justifiable where the ordinarily legitimate avenues for achieving values characteristic of the good life are systematically blocked. If it is true that marginalised Islamic or apatrid groups are structurally prevented from addressing poverty, long-term political submission or cultural repression, then, according to Honderich, their resorting to violence and, if no other way is available, in particular to terrorism, may be morally justifiable. (This does not, of course, mean that it can or will ever actually be politically justified or officially proclaimed legitimate.) Even more recently, Brian Barry provided an influential explanatory paradigm connecting societal antagonisms in developed, stable democracies with a crisis of fundamental policies of equality with regard to an optimum of attributes of the good life that are legitimately expected by all members of society.

Barry successfully captures the idea that increasing inequalities in a society lead directly to an escalated propensity for violence and rule-breaking

---

4 The term "poverty of tradition" refers to a lack of productive endeavours and results in a collective's history, not necessarily to a lack of "history" in terms of conflict, war and deprivation. Many countries boast an extremely rich deprivatory history, while at the same time being poor in tradition conceived as satisfaction-related.

5 Ted Honderich, *After the Terror* (expanded, revised edition), Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2003, throughout.

by increasing social stress for those on the receiving side of the inequalities.[6] Both Honderich's and Barry's arguments rest squarely on a universally defined idea of the good life as an optimum of the goods everyone strives for. This optimum carries a moral charge in that at least its realistic *potential* availability to everyone is a *moral* requirement. Freedom from grinding poverty must not be systematically blocked for anyone; neither may healthy life-styles, adequate leisure, a non-hazardous environment, social participation in the broad sense. The list of things constituting a good life goes on, and at some finer point of differentiation some people may differ from others on what is the good life. The beginning of the list, with the most fundamental attributes, however, tends to be a self-understandable part that yields universal agreement. While not all people possess even these basic attributes of the good life (in fact, a vast majority do not), from a moral point of view, all should have a realistic opportunity to strive to achieve them. If some do not have this opportunity, one justifiably speaks of systemic marginalisation and morally intolerable exclusivity, which pushes the ordinary limits of legitimate redress to more extreme forms, typically including more violence qualifying as legitimate. Honderich's view is that the illegitimate marginalisation of entire geographic areas (e.g. parts of the Middle East), or of subcultures, expands the bubble of legitimate redress to include even terrorism. This is a stark, though persuasive view, but let us look at what happens when the attributes of the good life are systematically denied in less extreme and more ordinary circumstances.

By virtue of urban planning, key aspects of the good life are denied to large sections of the populations of some modern cities. In areas with uneven urban-rural development the inhabitants of large cities are factually *forced* to live in urban environments: there is no sewage and regular water supplies elsewhere, to mention just the basic utilities, so the choice of living outside the cities is not realistic. In the poorly organised cities, on the other hand, they face rampant diseases from aerial polution, a lack of living space (small apartments), difficulties in moving (traffic jams), and high prices associated with the population pressure on the housing, hospitality, utilities and the supply markets in general. These deprivations directly threaten the quality of life on a fairly basic level, and they carry a moral charge, because they are systematic and are not associated with a reasonable expectation of change. People who are squeezed in by government policy (containment in the cities and the creation of

[6] Brian Barry, *Why Social Justice Matters*, throughout.

depraved urban populations, easy to manipulate politically, can be deliberate government policy) will have to fight for room to move, to park their cars, for less polluted air by trying to enter the higher-priced housing market, for rest (freedom from noise), for work, for adequate medical attention.

The less well-organised the cities are, the graver these problems become. Each of the mentioned deprivations relates to an attribute of the good life from the undisputed bottom of the list. These deprivations are not contained in the phenomenon of "relative deprivation" (such as my not owning a swimming pool in a neighbourhood where everybody else owns one may create a sense of deprivation that wouldn't be there if I lived in a different neighbourhood), which also plays a part in the left political theory. What is at stake in large cities is *deprivation in the absolute sense*: people get ill and die from long-term exposure to it. Squeezed by a systemic denial of basic aspects of the good life, inhabitants of disorganised large cities are invariably more prone to violence — the social and existential circumstances they face teach them to be violent. Is this violence, bred by structural deprivations of the good life, more legitimate by virtue of the circumstances? Is the high violent crime rate in large disorganised cities morally justifiable?

The lack of realistic fallback options (for someone living in a tight two-bedroom apartment, with a professional career, and with school-going children in Mexico City, moving to the countryside to grow corn can hardly be a reasonable fallback option) goes at least some way towards making the person's propensity to violence morally justifiable in a way that does not justify the same character trait in an inhabitant of an idyllic English country town.

Experience suggests that violence is present as a structural phenomenon in circumstances of deprivation of fundamental aspects of the good life. Disorganised large cities are an example of such circumstances, but they by no means exhaust the list. Systemic deprivation that causes actual violence is thus appropriately called "structural violence". By manipulating the deprivatory circumstances (by exerting "violence by social structures"), social elites are able to teach or train people in adopting violence as legitimate behaviour.

Structural violence

I have mentioned already that according to Lukes two particular forms of manipulating structural violence include using power to block an issue from becoming a part of the institutional agenda, and disallowing the constituents

to recognise their real interests. These types of manipulative governance are called "domination" because they allow the powerful few to superimpose their interests upon the powerless many, all within the procedural bounds of democracy, thus allowing the manipulative elites to avoid the need to do anything illegal or procedurally improper. This is how political corruption becomes a part of "normal" democratic power games. The fact that an immorality does not seem to be able to be effectively countered leads us to assume that it is simply a fact of life and to consider it part of the normal political process. However, if domination is clearly discriminating and abusive, even though it is hard to single it out in the hustle-and-bustle of everyday decision-making in any democracy, what is structural violence? Domination is doubtless a form of structural violence, but what is then the underlying phenomenon?

Structural violence is the oppression exerted by any institutional system against most constitutents; it is the sort of violence that prevents people from formulating the public agenda according to their needs without the consent of the mediating institutions; it is the violence that disallows the constituents to have a direct input in the parliamentary decision-making without the consent of the political parties whose members represent them in the legislature; it is the sort of violence that forces us to pay taxes, obey the authorities even when they are corrupt and incompetent, or to pay the bills for social security even when all we get for it is total insecurity. In short, structural violence is characteristic of any ideology, any system of norms and type of social organisation. As such, it is not peculiar to modern democracies.[7]

Problems with structural violence arise when it suppresses the legitimate needs of many. The imposition of the payment of taxes, even when the incompetent authorities squander them to the detriment of public interest, is part of the organisation of the state and belongs to the structural problems of actually having a state. This type of structural violence is largely inevitable. However, there are more extreme types of structural violence that are both theoretically ad politically more conspicuous. For example, an institutionalisation of the public unwillingness in some communities to recognise the rights of the homeless or structurally unemployed involves the deliberate and systematic breaching of the human and civil rights of a social stratum. The concept of

[7] I am thankful to Vladimir Vuletić for a useful discussion on this point during my lecture entitled "Political and structural violence in the transitional Serbia and the projections of guilt", held at the Institute of European Studies in Belgrade, on 2 October 2008 (www.ies.ac.yu).

a social stratum needs to be treated very liberally in modern democracies, because they are so polarised and internally polycentric societies that virtually any consistently structured group within them ought to receive the status of a social stratum, or else it cannot claim its vital rights as social entitlements. For example, the structurally unemployed are not traditionally included in the description of social strata, yet they have such distinct interests and problems, such a particular position within the social system and constellation of interests, that they project their own legitimate needs and choices to the institutional environment and they need to be considered a class of policy constituents themselves.

A particularly clear form of structural violence of this type is systematic exclusion. While it is true that any political order and system of governance exerts a degree of structural violence upon those who could be considered relatively powerless, typically the ordinary subjects, there are degrees of structural violence that may determine what responses the social elites will encounter from below. Domination is in principle controversial. When the level is reached where virtually no other interests but those of the financial and political elites can earn a place at the decision-making table, the legitimacy of the government is questioned on the grounds of hijaching the public agenda through the practices of domination. Similarly, manipulating the public at large by controlling the media is in principle unacceptable, although, especially in the new democracies, with political power closely intertwining with financial oligarchies, this is a regular occurrence. When the political authorities engage in a number of such controversial forms of structural violence, such as political party-dominated repression (arrests and intimidation of opponents), open control of media-reporting, or synergies with private financiers to acquire ownership of the media, alongside the more traditional ways of blocking the gates of power to ordinary citizens' interests, they cast a cloud over their own democratic legitimacy, even though the electoral results that back them might be impressive. Structural violence, while perhaps inevitable, is always a matter of degree, and the more of it there is, the less political legitimacy the authorities tend to retain.

The issue of structural violence is related to the classical sociological distinction between power and authority, known at least since Emil Durhkeim. The mere exercise of political power involves the ability to impose one's will over that of the others (as well as the two forms of domination, if we accept Lukes' conclusions). Such forms of power remain fundamentally different

from an exercise of authority, which is the sort of aura that causes people to follow their leaders of their own will; they follow those with organic authority in society because they believe it to be the best course of action, and because they trust that the leaders see the events clearer and further in the future than most members of the group. Authority does not require a threat by repression, while the exercise of power does, even if only an implicit one. Authority is a sign of ideal legitimacy, while structural violence, especially domination, is a sign of failing legitimacy. If a government needs to guard the gates of power, or the gates of its decision-making institutions, against the entrance of interests at large, if it needs to control the media and use the repressive apparatus as an instrument of keeping the challenges of power within the society at bay, then clearly the legitimacy of such a government is severely undermined. The fact that some of these manifestations of structural violence do not require a direct instruction by the political authorities (such as in a climate of self-censorship), does not change the essential features of domination that are at stake.

The repositioning of values

In the political realm, if the values of the good life that command universal acceptance can be considered constructive, productive and benevolent, and if they are subject to structural violence, then their substitution in the social hierarchy of values by other values is also a type of structural violence. Such a repositioning of values is the exclusive domain of social elites, and occurs in all areas of social life and with all types of values, those politically relevant and those less so. As we saw earlier, this is the case with aesthetic taste and moral principles. This is the sense in which any substantial autonomy of agency belongs only to the elites, and only exceptionally to individuals. In this sense, life in a community is fundamentally heteronomous for any individual or non-dominant group. There remains only one way in which individuals or groups might be able to increase their autonomy of agency, and that is by controlling or influencing the social elites.

The main problem here, of course, consists in the fact that, if governments generally foster or discourage the acceptance of certain values as opposed to others, thus contributing decidedly to the value-makeup of society, and if they use domination as a form of structural violence, individuals and groups cannot exert any in-depth influence on the political establishment. If the governments are the only relatively value-autonomous agents in society (though even

they are not entirely autonomous, because they too are constrained by the environments, historically inherited values, and various pressures between the elites), and if they use domination to maintain their positions of power, then the ordinary constituents have no chance to impact the realm of values in any significant way, and they remain totally heteronomous. Domination creates cracks in government legitimacy because it cuts off the only theoretically viable way of controlling or influencing the otherwise sweeping social powers of the elites.

Unfortunately, the liberal genesis of the modern democracy, which is relatively precisely reflected in the current emergence of new democracies through the so-called "transitions" in Eastern Europe, in its structure and main dynamic features, tends to invite domination-related structural violence. The process of social and political transformation by definition involves the dismantling of certain structures, and the creation of new ones. For example, after the bringing down of the ideological and social foundatious of the communist states, the former opposition parties or democratic revolutionaries were faced with the task of building functional and ordered states, which required considerable resources. In this process, the owners of wealth play a key role. They are an unavoidable ingredient to any "transition", and as a rule, the payback they receive for playing a "pro-democratic" role in the political system is the tacit legalisation of their wealth.

Russia is probably the most obvious example of how the newly enriched class has arisen from the ashes of the old communist system. Within a few short years, thousands of people have amassed riches of the scale that makes them a problem for traditional liberal economies, because they are able to acquire majority share packages in western companies and thus assume substantial control over parts of western economies almost overnight. These are often people who met the Perestroika as government apparatchiki or middle-ranking state company officials. After as little as a couple of years they turned out to own billions. There is simply no way to profit so much so quickly within a legitimate economy, especially one only emerging into the liberal market system. Yet, they are the new business-political class in Russia. The situation is the same in all other post-communist countries, where yesteryear's criminals are the ruling business-security-political elite of today. Finally, the situation was exactly the same when the now traditional democracies were developing their democratic credentials, especially in those that had started their liberal economics after periods of crisis, wars, often attended by very high crime

rates and a general societal insecurity. This appears to be a structural problem with democracy, at least when the development of the existing democracies is traced back empirically.

The issue the newly enriched class poses for the consideration of structural violence, and especially domination, is obvious. If the illegitimate wealth is infiltrated in the structures of political elites, and it almost regularly is, given the role of wealth in the modern democratic processes (this, again, is especially relevant in the new democracies), and if the government uses domination, then the problem has at least three distinct faces. First, as I have mentioned repeatedly, the government controls the value-fabric of society and bears primary responsibility for the choice of values by the constituents. Secondly, its propensity to use domination deprives the constituents from what little avenues they have to influence or control the government, thus relieving them entirely of moral agency and moral responsibility for collective outcomes, because this deprives them of any autonomy and ability to actually change things. Thirdly, this situation consolidates an increasingly illegitimate government, which, by using domination, manipulates the political process to remain in power, whilst it is devoid of any organic societal authority. When this last fact is compounded by the involvement of illegitimate wealth and the inclusion of its owners in the political and social elites, what one gets is a semi-criminal state that operates according to the democratic procedural "manual", has all the machinery in place to pretend to be a democracy, yet in it an essentially criminal business element controls the deeper level of decision-making. This I call a hijacked democracy. In it, the constituents are deprived of any autonomy, the choice of social elites is not by merit or by birth, but by accident of wealth or opportunity, and the social structure is cemented in the long term, because the seemingly legitimate democratic mechanisms are used in deeply authoritarian ways. Unlike open dictatorships, such societies do not come under external scrutiny easily; in fact, because they are corrupt from the inside, and yet present a superficially acceptable face on the surface, they are easy to deal with in terms of achieving political compromises and financial agreements, so there is no incentive for their critique from the broader community of states. Like all corrupt systems, they are easy to control from the outside, but from the inside they are fortresses of unearned privilege within which the legitimate avenues of change are mostly blocked.

While such structures, founded on corruption, mark all democracies in their formative stages, the passage of time, provided that there is sufficient

institutional stability, allows the avenues for political participation to become looser, the wealth to legitimise itself through the successive generations, and a certain tolerant democratic culture to colour the ways in which at least some of the new members of the social elites develop. For example, this means that after several generations, the succession of ownership of wealth that might originally have been the result of covert plunder bestows a degree of legitimacy on the latest owners (assuming that the chain of succession is not controversial itself, and that the plunder does not continue). In other words, the wealth becomes successfully integrated into the legitimate economic system. As both political and economic elites develop more diffuse interests, they are able to recruit new members in procedurally impeccable ways, based on merit, ability, or social prestige. Perhaps the Swiss wealth of today is partially derived from mass deposits made by the Nazis during the Second World War, as some critics claim, but today the Swiss elites are not recruited on the basis of corrupt synergies between dodgy bankers and dodgy politicians: members of the Swiss intellectual, media or political elites are recruited at least in good part based on their education, talent, hard work and political fortune. In other words, with time, the irregularities in the constitution of the democratic systems tend to wane away. The problem with new democracies is that it is impossible to tell whether they will eventually overcome the hurdles posed by corruption and political criminalisation, cronyism and domination, and become stable political systems, or they will assume the guise of stability whilst in fact perpertuating systemic corruption in the long run. It is probably fair to say that the more domination and criminalisation there is, the less legitimacy remains, and the more likely it is that such societies will turn into hijacked democracies. Conversely, the less domination there is, the more room remains for the grassroots influence on the choice of values, and in time, when the tensions of structural transformations relax, perhaps the values will become partially repositioned so that the society can develop as a normal, transparent democratic system. If this is true (and I cannot develop an entire theory here that would test this seemingly intuitive assumption), then the key to distinguishing promising democracies from the likely hijacked ones is the degree of domination.

Grassroots initiative

Democratic politics is based on the idea that popular initiative, including discontent, is articulated upwards through the institutions, to reach resolution at an appropriate level of government, from local to central. Modern accounts

of "polyarchic" (Robert Dahl) or "participative" (Jürgen Habermas) democracy insist on a limited role of public institutions, which serve as "arches" or a market under which various popular interests are articulated. Supposedly, such interests interact and result in policy much like an interaction of vectors in physics generates a resultant vector of projection of force. A key problem in the modern democratic theory is how grassroots interests are represented, given that they are widely dissipated through the society at large. The common solution is that they are articulated and advocated by "representative groups" (popular elites), which strive to gain access to the decision-making table (the actual institutions) by making it past the "gatekeepers" (institutional elites: public servants, advisors and top level politicians' confidants). In short, the participatory process is again couched in the concept of elites, without which there can be no grassroots-input into the institutional decision making. In practice, this means that popular elites (trade union leaders or the political parties, mostly) act *on behalf of* the supposed grassroots interests, while interacting with the institutional elites (those in actual positions of government authority or acting on behalf of the government). In democratic political systems, this process always goes beyond mere representation in a polyarchic institutional ideal: it is always also a power struggle, which variously results in the popular elites' assuming the position of institutional elites, and vice versa. Again, the real agency in the representative or participatory process belongs to elites, and only indirectly, and quite marginally, to individual citizens. As elites play value-positioning roles, they influence and direct the grassroots at least as much as they reflect a supposed "authentic" grassroots voice. This is why the newest policy rhetoric of "governance" (which appropriately, though gradually, replaces the rhetoric of democratic decision-making) often refers to "leadership" instead of "representation". Leaders lead in the sense that they set values and precedents, and masses follow. Leaders do not really "represent" — they are supported through an electoral system that is envisaged as representative, but once they are elected, they lead, and at the next election ideally they should receive a public assessment of that leadership. This assessment is based much more on the results achieved and the fears and expectations of the future, than on a representative quality of the leadership.

Leadership — a seemingly progressive quality — is potentially deeply morally problematic. As leadership is the individual's or group's potential to impose goals, values and directions on others, but also to achieve them (only a results-oriented, effective leadership will win democratic support, even if it is

highly unrepresentative of the community's own views — even if it is factually despotic), it is essentially dependent on resources, including human ones. The social infrastructure of modern societies makes it necessary to mediate the use and availability of any resources though financial ones.

Leadership requires money, large quantities of it. As I mentioned in the previous section, this means that effective leaders will either be rich, or will have to keep close company of the rich, who will *necessarily* exert a dominant influence on the leaders, the more so the less representative the governance is.

The pursuit of a risky foreign policy, for example one that is not supported by the majority, if at least superficially successful in the realisation of a short-term goal whose value, in the long term, might in fact be detrimental to national interests, will in all likelihood result in electoral approval**.** However**,** if it fails, it will likely be penalised at the next election. On the other hand, governance that is characterised by more representation and less leadership will result in a foreign policy based on views shared by most members of the community (not necessarily by the leader), which will reduce the electoral backlash in case of failure. This is a key feature of democratic representation, which illustrates why the rhetoric of leadership reflects a democratic deficit per se. The successful pursuit of the former policy (leadership), with little public support, depends mainly on the resources the leader is personally able to muster, and this comes down to one's ability to mobilise money and power (party financiers, investors, foreign politicians' support). For this reason, in political systems characterised by leadership, the rich are treated exceptionally well. "Our societies have became ones in which your standing among your peers (the very rich) is unaffected by evidence of greed, corruption, illegality and knowingly ruining thousands or hundreds of thousands of people — just a long as you stay rich."[8] This is not just an accident, but a structural necessity in democracies, once they are viewed through the prism of distribution of power.

The influence of morally unquestioned wealth in cultures of leadership also has a dynamic aspect. The rich will influence leaders in policy-making, which will shift the avenues of generation of wealth further towards the rich, who will become richer still. Even if this does not affect the absolute wealth of the majority, it will degrade their social positions. Barry points it out that "(t)here is a commonplace view (accepted without question, for example, by Rawls)

[8] Barry, *Why Social Justice Matters*, p.145.

that, as long as you stay in the same place materially, you cannot be made worse off by falling further and further behind fellow citizens. Against this, I maintain that becoming relatively worse off can make you absolutely worse off, in terms of opportunities and social standing."[9] The point Barry makes here is especially relevant for emerging democracies, because within the spirit of "progress" and pragmatism that typically colours social transformations from authoritarian to liberal social order, issues of justice (including the distribution of wealth) tend to be neglected as opposed to other, more practical goals (investment, economic growth, statistical parameters of "development", etc). In such pragmatic value-contexts, the changing constellations of wealth (including the speedy enrichment of the political oligarchy) can and often do dramatically change the relative positions of many people, yet if their wealth status in the absolute sense is not degraded (nothing is directly taken away from them), they tend to be considered as well off as before. Clearly the owner of an income X (whether it is the income from rent or from work) will fare very differenty at point A, where 80% of the community have an income X-y, and at point B, where 60% of the community will have an income X+y. The same person may have the same resources in the absolute sense at point A and at point B, but her relative position will be considerably weaker at point B. If the income X comes from, qualified work, while the income of X+y by the relatively numerous others at point B comes from economic restructuring, then there is something to be said about the relative injustice of the latter arrangement. The owner of income X may not be any worse off in absolute terms, but her position is definitely degraded through a dubious redistribution of wealth around her, a redistribution that is not based on merit or work, but on the abuse of privilege.

The moral qualification of wealth, judged by the legitimacy of origin and justice of distribution, has at least two distinct sides. First, there is a long tradition of philosophy that sees justice as the cardinal value for the justification of society.[10] Robert Goodin argues that there are other things that come before the distributive justice of social arrangements, such as the (increase of) aggregate levels of opportunity, on both the individual and community levels. In other

[9] Barry, *Why Social Justice Matters*, p. 173.

[10] Barry himself is a proponent of this view, alongside with John Rawls. A recent critique of the pre-eminence of justice in this context can be found in Robert Goodin, "Why Social Justice Is Not All That Matters: Justice as the First Virtue", *Ethics*, vol. 117, 2007, pp. 413–32.

words, he argues that it may be more important to people what opportunities in the absolute sense they may have, than how they fare relative to other members of the community. Secondly, Goodin suggests that there is an intrinsic value in pursuing social ideals, such as ideologies, regardless of the considerations of social justice. While these two proposals cannot be discussed here in great detail, suffice it to say that further thought is warranted as to whether either of the two proposed alternatives can really work without the component of distributive justice. This certainly applies to social ideals, for there can hardly exist sufficiently broadly appealing social ideals that would not accommodate the intuitions of distributive justice in one way or another (a distributively unjust society can hardly command an ideologically pivotal place). Similarly, it is doubtful whether considerations of aggregate opportunity can really survive if separate from those of distributive justice, given the limitations of resources in modern democracies that highlight the structures of distribution of wealth. Finally, justice plays a regulatory role with regard to the influence that wealth wields on political decision-making. It is by no means irrelevant whether or not dirty money funds political parties, buys off large chunks of the economy, or founds new banks and the media in a volatile democratic structure. Asking questions about the justice of distribution means questioning the structures of influence of particular sections of the society on political decision-making, and this is a key question to ask in the context of checking democracy. Distributive justice is thus not just a sentimental traditional "first value", but a deeply entrenched criterion of social regulation of power that commands moral authority.

Barry sees an escape from the existing distributive injustices in modern liberal democracies in "shifting money around on a serious scale"[11], and one way to achieve this is introducing the category of "basic income" for every member of society, employed or unemployed, which would be an optimum income as a social right, rather than a minimum or subsistence income as social charity. "But to get basic income on the political agenda would require that the abuse of the principle of personal responsibility must be ranquished."[12] Introducing an optimum income as a social right for everyone would shift wealth massively away from the rich, creating a dramatically more egalitarian society, not only by empowering the formerly desperate and marginalised people, but also by *proportionally disempowering* the richest.

---

[11] Barry, *Why Social Justice Matters*, p. 213.

[12] Barry, loc. cit.

On a governance level, such a substantial redistribution of wealth would automatically mean far less "leadership" and much more representative governance. Equality is good for democracy; it is essentially tied to representative governance. Leadership, on the other hand, is inherently a threat to democratic representation, and is usually a prelude to various forms of "enlightened" and not so enlightened authoritarianism. In addition, leadership as opposed to representation shows that in modern, leadership-impregnated democracies, the idea of individual autonomy based on constitutionally stated equalities in rights and responsibilities is implausible. One major reason for this is that an unequal system, with the richest surrounding the leaders, means that "(t)hose who have benefited most from the existing system of rights — the rich and powerful — are those who bear the heaviest responsibility, because the way in which they use their advantages has such a large impact on the lives of everyone else."[13] In the context of pronounced political leadership, wealth, which mediates the availability of all other resources for the leaders, not only legitimises and cleanses itself, even when its origins are doubtful, but also "jumps" the division of roles between the value-setters (social elites) and value-followers (ordinary citizens). In cultures of leadership the rich automatically become social elites, whether visible or invisible ones, and this generates structural problems with the question of who imposes social values and based on what legitimacy. The rich in society play the role of elites either in the soft sense, whereby they make the decisions by the formal leaders possible, or in the hard sense, where they make those decisions directly. The factual difference between the two extremes is very small, for the rich in any case end up setting values. Again, this applies to values of war and of peace, of polities, but also to aesthetic, ethical values or those constitutive of "the good life".

Finally, let me say something positive and optimistic about the setting of values and its controversies. The critical role of representation in democracy arises from the fact that the cleavage between value-setters and value-followers is more shallow where governance is more representative, because the value-followers retain a degree of influence on the value-setters through the very political institutions. At same time, in a strongly representative institutional setting and political culture the political role of wealth tends to be less pronounced, but there is a lurking circular argument here. Namely, the precondition for any substantial participative governance is a major redistribution of wealth to achieve more overall equality in society. Without

[13] Barry, *Why Social Justice Matters*, p. 144.

substantial equality, there cannot be substantial representation, because representation is always a reflection of *power relations* in society. Thus, to say that in representative democracies with a marginal role of individual leadership the political role of wealth is smaller is merely to refer back to the fact that the role of wealth must have been curbed as a pre-cursor to any such stable functioning representative institutional setting. Power-relations must first be brought under control before all sections of society can gain a reasonable say in the institutions; conversely, rampaging power struggles arising from the influence of wealth on politics do not easily coexist with social justice and comprehensive access by all legitimate groups to the decision-making table. This is simply a fact of life, and many people will probably say that taking account of it in this way is contrary to liberal ideology. Whether or not this is so is a separate question. My main interest here is a functioning democracy and the limits to which one can reasonably claim autonomy of agency within it; if the exploration of the dynamics of autonomy and heteronomy militates against the liberal principles, even if its conclusions go contrary to the interests of any existing social elites, this may create problems for the actual reception of the conclusions themselves, but will not impart on their truth or falsity.

Any type of "redistribution on a massive scale" that Barry advocates is certainly a far-fetched, if not revolutionary prospect in the modern democratic world. It may be an unattainable goal given the political and social costs it would generate. Revolutions aimed at redistribution have so far generated a defeating historical record of crime, plunder and social deterioration. I thus decidedly do not support any practical call for redistribution on a mass scale, although some of Barry's ideas, such as increasing taxes for the richest, do seem desirable. However, my main point here, which I hope has become obvious already, is that, given all the realities of injustice in distribution and the resultant dysproportionalities in the projections of political power, further resulting in major distortions of the political systems and of the ideals of democratic participation, without the prior resolution of the issues of redistribution and control of the origin and exercise of power in society there can be no cult of individual responsibility. Equally, there can be no substantial autonomy of individual agency.

Perhaps modern democracy has structurally evolved (as opposed to just having temporarily "veered") in the direction of leadership and the resulting hidden social divisions (in most cases the value-followers, and in some the value-setters as well, are unconscious of their roles). Perhaps this evolution

has progressed so far that any ambitious socialist redistributive solutions are entirely unrealistic. In fact, this is most probably so. Nevertheless, what certainly remains the duty of philosophers is to point to the consequences of this division of roles in the areas of autonomy and responsibility.

The more tightly solidified the social elites and structures of leadership are, the less room there is for the individual responsibility of the ordinary citizen, which is proportionate to one's autonomy in the choice of values. At the extreme, this means that people cannot be individually responsible for individual or collective violence; for their moral or aesthetic choices; for their lives.

In modern democratic cultures of leadership the factual individual responsibility is minuscule. On the other hand, the legal and normative encapsulations of individual responsibility, couched in liberal terminology, present it as enormous. This discrepancy is the root of modern tyranny.

IV

EMOTIONS, VALUES, AND THE SOCIAL STATUS

> Justice is not, as the tradition presumes rather than argues, an ideal to which our society (or any other) more or less badly conforms. Justice is first of all a function of personal character, a matter of ordinary, everyday feeling rather than grand theory. Thought naturally tends to celebrate thought, but sometimes thought ought to do obeisance to feeling. (…) We have over-intellectualised our feelings about justice, with the result that our feelings have become as confused as our theories, if indeed they have not been eclipsed by them.[1]

The emotional sources of morality

Perhaps the best way to start this part of the discussion of heteronomy, specifically dealing with emotions, is to posit emotions in a functional perspective. Admittedly, they play a number of roles, including the semantic role that arises from their intentionality and essential inter-subjectivity. However, the functional aspect of emotions is key to understanding the emotional grounding of morality and to being able to explore the extent to which the contemporary discourse on the "oughts" of social life has indeed over-rationalised itself.

---

[1] Robert C. Solomon, *A Passion for Justice: Emotions and the Origin of the Social Contract*, Addison-Wesley, Reading, Massachusetts, 1990, p. 3.

The relationship between the rational and emotional sides of justice is well exhibited in the issue of the rationale of punishment, and it is somewhat less obvious in the area of distributive justice. Most criminal laws tend to rationalise the aim of punishment through its stipulated instrumental value in preventing further offences (the so-called "general prevention" doctrine of punishment, which assumes that punishment will deter other potential offenders and thus reduce the future crime rate). Some accounts rationalise punishment differently, by stipulating its "reformatory" effect on the offender (this means that those subjected to punishment are somehow supposed to change, so that once they are again in a position to commit a crime they should not wish to do so). Empirical research, alongside with theoretical accounts, so far has led to a widespread conclusion that neither of the two rationalisations is correct, as general prevention does not work for most types of punishment (the rates of re-offending even rise in countries that increase the severity of punishments), while the actual effects of punishment on the character of the offender tend to be directly opposed to the reformation theory. People penalised by the state tend to be further antagonised by the penalties, and those who serve prison sentences are widely believed to have increased their capacity for a criminal career, so much so that prisons are called "schools of crime". In short, there are good reasons to be extremely skeptical about the existence of any instrumental value of punishments in terms of social control, at least as far as the offences for which the most severe penalties are passed are concerned (mostly violent crime).[2]

Quite a separate line of justifications of punishment reaches far back into the history of ethics, and is known as "the retributive theory". This account is based on the assumption that an offence generates an injury to others, whether to another person, or to society at large, and that this injury morally requires an adverse response to the offender, whether or not this creates any positive results for social control. In other words, the retributive theory (of which there are many variations, and whose detailed discussion is by no means within the perimeter of my consideration here) maintains that there is something "inherently right" in inflicting punishment as a "deserved pain" to the offender. The very concept of retribution is close to institutional vengeance. Retribution, if not motivated by instrumental considerations, may well be rationalised as "desert", but it is certainly in essence a response based on an emotional

[2] I have discussed this at more length in my *Punishment and Restorative Crime-Handling: A Social Theory of Trust*, Avebury, Ashgate Publishing, Aldersthot, 1995.

perception of the offence. The injury generated by the offence involves the rise of emotions, mainly fear and anger. This anger is collectively articulated through the socially mediated penalty, and is supposed to contribute to social stability and peace by making sure the societal response to the offence precedes and substitutes any private claim to vengeance. Thus the most intuitive grasp of retribution is that of some kind of institutionalised and measured vengeance for the crime.[3] The emotional content, though channeled through collective procedures and subjected to checks, is irreducible in punishment.

One of the discussions often led about the retributive goals of punishment relates to capital punishment. Typically, it is meted out for the gravest violations of others' rights, and is special in the sense that there is neither the possibility of correction, if the innocent person is condemned, nor is there any prospect of reformation of the offender. The only rational goal of the death penalty might be the incapacitation of the concrete offender, but this is such a crude goal that it can hardly be a proper justification for any policy of capital punishment, because if such a justification were to be accepted, then war would be an equally justifiable means of dealing with security threats, because it would lead to the incapacitation of those who present potential threats. Surely, the current climate in the civilised world where the death penalty is abolished must have something to do with the insight that mere "incapacitation" is both inhumane and undeserving of the name of a policy of social control. Still, capital punishment continues to be used in some countries, and public pressures for its continuation in some communities are pronounced, because it is such a potent conduit of public anger and condemnation of the most heinous crimes.

The death penalty is no longer passed on the offenders who inflict the most damage on society: grand treason, hi-level political corruption, which, in some cases, can lead to a country losing considerable chunks of its territory or people, including major threats to national security. I would submit that the main reason for this is in the fact that such offences, which clearly damage the society more than any violent crimes, are both typically committed by privileged offenders, far removed from the realm of the ordinary societal relations, and are in themselves less intimately familiar to the average citizens, because they take place in the high echelons of political power. Thus the opportunities for the accumulation of anger and fear are

[3] Loc. cit.

much smaller than with violent crime, whose immediate victim can, in principle, be any ordinary person. One does not often hear public calls for the execution of corrupt politicians who have ruined their countries' economies or have caused major suffering, loss of life and warfare, or who have sold out the natural resources of their countries to adversaries. However, one does on occasion hear very loud voices calling for the execution of underprivileged local bullies who in an episode of rage had killed an entire local family. There is no rational reason for this discrepancy, but there is good psychological reason. The death penalty articulates public fears, which are so much greater and more immediate, the closer and more transparent to the community a grave crime is. This is at the same time the reason why most people who are executed come from the ranks of "ordinary people", while those privileged enough to commit crimes arising from public office remain privileged to avoid the capital punishment however much more serious their crimes might be.

Similar considerations apply to issues of distributive justice. Essentially, social arrangements appear justifiable or unjustifiable per se depending on how appealing the plight of those on their receiving end is to the average person. Social justice typically involves fundamental references to some sort of equality, whether of starting positions in a race for privilege and status, or absolute equality in the sense that inequalities above a certain degree are morally unacceptable. Empirically, it appears that societies with more dramatic inequalities are less peaceful and stable, while those more egalitarian in the overall perspective tend to be more peaceful. Inequalities, married with comprehensive competition, generate aggression and disregard for the needs of others that almost invariably result in more social deviance and less care for the vulnerable. It thus appears intuitively unavoidable to relate distributive justice to equality, if for no other reason than because any major inequality between people seems to require a specific moral justification. If there are no compelling reasons to accept major inequalities, there is room to argue that such inequalities arise from morally dubious forms of domination of the privileged over the underprivileged.

The division of contemporary societies into the privileged and underprivileged groups is arguably the greatest problem for social stability and moral justification of social arrangements today. Social justice is thus defined as primarily distributive in the sense that it sets limits to inequalities and explores the legitimate grounds for those inequalities that do survive

various moral tests. For example, major differences in wealth are considered justifiable if they are a result of ability or merit (with certain limitations related to the social responsibilities of the wealthiest members of society, including being subjected to higher taxes). Such differences are considered unacceptable if they arise from cronyism, nepotism, corruption or political affiliation. Major inequalities are not accepted *prima facie*; they present moral problems of justifiability in themselves, which reflects the fact that equality is intuitively a part of social justice.

Distributive justice is concerned with the *social* distribution of resources and opportunities, and is thus also considered a part of social justice. This makes it seemingly removed from the personal emotions that colour retributive justice. It appears more natural to conceive of the demand to pay someone back for one's crimes as an institutionalisation of vengeance on the part of the victims, their families and communities, than to ascribe emotional content to issues of social justice. While in retributive justice "payback" is negative (it is the retribution visited upon those who have wronged or injured others), in social justice the distribution of resources is essentially positive; it is concerned with the awarding of social rewards to people, from remuneration to public office to leisure. However, the emotional undercurrent in the debate over social justice is no less present than in retributive rhetoric. Just the same as Hugo Grotius spoke of the just and unjust wars, primarily including defensive warfare in the first category, and conquests in the latter, social arrangements are classified into the just and unjust ones, often described more technically as "legitimate" and "illegitimate". It is assumed that democracies, with a division between the executive, the legislative and the judicial powers, are the legitimate type of societies, while autocracies of any type are inherently illegitimate. In other words, this means that democracies are considered just, and autocracies unjust. The emotional background of this evaluation may well lie in the *prima facie* inequality between the decision-makers and the subjects in autocracies, namely in the fact that the subjects are unlikely to ever switch roles with the decision-makers. In democracies, the procedural rules for the assumption of power allow everyone to theoretically become part of the political elite. This general theoretical picture, however removed from the reality of political life in any democracy, makes democracies more emotionally appealing, because they allow at least a theoretical space for a change in the privileged elites. Again, equality plays the pivotal role.

Democracies, however, do not in reality operate in the same way as the democratic theory depicts them. In fact, in modern democracies, the technologies of power are so effective that the subjects are in fact quite likely to remain in that role for the rest of their lives, while a few political parties essentially change places in the government, all the time cooperating as parts of a single political elite, whether they are the government or the opposition at any particular moment in time. The cleavage between the political elite and the constituents is highly pronounced, and this opens up the question of a "democratic deficit" and the attendant lack of legitimacy, again connected with jeopardy done to the perspective of equality. The more inequality is structurally embedded in a society, the less legitimacy it is perceived to have. At the same time, the better the embedded inequalities are disguised by the procedures and rules, the more likely it is that they will survive in the long run by making themselves sufficiently democratically presentable.

The very effort at making the democratic deficit less obvious shows that what the elites fear most is an emotional backlash from the public. Such a backlash can lead to a moral disqualification of the government and its policies. Moral disqualification of social arrangements, and I mean here the sort of moral disqualification that may produce social consequences (such as public resentment and the consequent delegitimisation of the government), does not arise from the government's not fulfilling the pre-election promises or acting disproportionately to them, or from any other structurally simple or logically cogent reason. A democratic government is delegitimised when the people become sufficiently angry with it, whatever the reason for this anger might be. The government will survive, and will be able to claim an acceptable degree of social justice in its policies, if the anger is low and controlled, and further on, the anger is controlled by the management of impressions and perceptions. The entire rhetoric of democratic legitimacy is based on the issue of justice as defined almost entirely in terms of public emotions. This fact is not obvious in the complex democratic procedures and norms, but it is well recognised by the political elites in situations where communities are emotionally intransparent (whether because they are too large, or because they are manipulated to obscure the real flow of emotions about policy or the government). The intransparency of emotions in a society is made possible by their over-rationalisation, which, in brief, means that people are led to consider what they *ought to feel* given certain rational arguments and counter-arguments, rather than what they do feel given the circumstances. Somebody might feel considerable discomfort

with the high prices and monopolies in one's community, alongside with a high corruption rate amongst the state officials and the resulting disorder in the cities and at work, but one might well be led to rationalise the discomfort not as a legitimate response to governmental abuse and incompetence, but rather as "a price to be paid for progress". Whenever political elites used the political system to enrich and empower the few by impoverishing and disempowering the many, the rhetoric of social policy was that of progress for which there was a price to pay. The problem here is two-fold. First, progress might not be worth the price if the price in human misery is greater than the benefits of progress to all (and this is typically the case). Second, if there is a legitimate, proportional "price" for substantial "progress" the issue of social justice goes beyond merely taking note of that fact: the questions to be asked here are who and on what basis determines the costs and how the payment of these costs is allocated throughout the society. If the payments are to be carried out by the community at large, whilst the benefits are to go predominantly to the elite, even if the particular project of "progress" is indeed proportionately worth the overall price for a community, its internal distribution is a par excellance matter of social justice. Any over-rationalisation of emotions is thus a potential well of intransparency, given the emotional roots of morality. If emotions are truly the source of morality (or "moral feelings" as Scheller calls them), over-rationalising (and thus trying to over-ride) them goes to the core of compromising the morality itself in its dynamic aspects.

One of the major historical forms in which the over-rationalisation of emotions in social relations has occurred is the conceptualisation of human society in terms of interest. This is a form of reductionism that ignores the fact that both interest and other factors form the social fabric, and it has been most influentially formulated as social contract theory. Roughly, the theory assumes that sovereign interests are traded between individuals in an imaginary process of creation of society, whereby trade-offs are made between the forfeiture of certain natural individual rights on the one hand, and benefits or protections generated by the emergent community, on the other. Typically, sacrifices are made in individual liberties, and benefits are factored in terms of economic efficiency, division of labour, security. It was the social contract paradigm that played a key role in the development of the modern liberal ideology, which insists variously on a minimalist role for the state (minimum forfeiture of individual rights in exchange for only the vital functions played by the community, mainly relating to security), on the mechanisms for the protection

of individual liberties from an overly zealous state (checks on the possibility of abuse of the forfeiture of rights, disproportionate to what is gained from the community), etc. The rational calculations of the pros and cons of society (as though there was actually ever a realistic alternative, such as a permanent solitary condition), as well as of the various proportions in the sacrifices and gains made in this process, basically make up much of the mosaic of the problems of liberal political theory.[4]

The highly theoretical rationalisation of what is legitimate and what is not in the presumed process of formation of society, which in itself is at least partly pre-social, may be a basis for a rational projection of what happens in society onto an abstract level of contractual justification. In other words, if we assume that certain things form parts of a contract that is human society, then certain other things that we see occurring within society will be able to be explained by reference to the terms of the contract, and thus either justified, or not. However, this does not help us very much in the conduct of social affairs, as these affairs tend to have a dynamic of their own. The events that the social contract view may or may not justify unfold according to perceptions of morality and justice that have a much more subjective and often varied tone in various communities, even amongst the members of the same community. This dynamic is closer to the second historically well known perspective on legitimacy and justice, and that is the prescriptive moral philosophy of virtues, typically associated in its origins to Plato, and especially Aristotle. Moral values are perceived in this perspective as qualities, as characteristics of individuals and groups, so it is said that justice, for example, is the virtue that defines one's whole life. This latter concept of justice is what plays a dynamic role in society. Clearly, the concept of justice as a virtue (and the same equally applies to most other commonly accepted moral values) cannot rule out emotions. The history of the concept of justice as one of the strongest moral values in society has not been harmonious throughout history (the Christian connotation of justice, including mercy, is partly based on a mission to tame the pagan vision of justice as retaliation). Compassion is part of the composite concept of justice as virtue, especially when justice is seen in the Platonic sense as a composite quality that defines one's character. Compassion, solidarity, sympathy, mercy, are all qualities that require a degree of empathy or emotional identification with another

[4] I have discussed this in some detail in "What has Happened to Firstborn Social Theory: The Social Contract?", *South-East Europe Review*, vol. 10, no. 3, 2007, pp. 121–31.

person. In fact, it is impossible to possess justice as a personal quality without emotions; justice as a rational projection is devoid of virtue and any personal element, thus also being deprived of any individual merit.

The dialectic of social contract is in principle opposed to the perception of moral values as qualities. The social contract as a rational construction is based on interest, and any particular interests or their constellation in whatever form do not contribute to personal moral merit: assuming that the pre-existing contract defines social roles for everyone, as well as certain social arrangements and principles that govern them, such as respect for the legitimate interests of others, the individual's fitting into such legitimate frameworks does not make that individual particularly virtuous. If the contract, presumably, requires the payment of taxes or respecting traffic rules, then obedience of these terms does not constitute personal merit, but duty. This is seen from the fact that people who pay taxes and respect traffic rules are not rewarded, but those who evade taxes and break rules are penalised (at least in the well-ordered societies). However, the contract does not require us to be considerate to each other, to show sympathy outside the socially required self-restraint in the pursuit of our own interest. Those who do show sympathy, mercy and benevolence are accordingly considered to deserve particular social rewards (including praise or thanks), because of their virtues. From this it follows that it is possible to fit well into a social contract framework whilst not being particularly virtuous. In the former case, justice does not belong to the individual, but to a presumed social arrangement, and the guarantor of the implementation of such contractual "justice" is the state with its regulatory mechanisms. In the latter case, justice is a personal quality, "a virtue that defines one's entire life", as Plato puts it in *The Republic*. In the former case, the motivation to fit in the social framework is presumed to be rational: certain requirements of civility must be met as legitimate social expectations, or otherwise one risks adverse transaction costs, such as penalisation, condemnation, isolation, or some other type of negative treatment by society. In the latter case, the motivation must be partially emotional, as there is nothing to compel the person to go beyond the legitimate social requirements apart from one's emotional reaching to another person (or, in some cases, against another person).

The practical aspects of criminal justice also pay heed to emotions in the constitution of legitimate social relationships, as the retributive theory, but not only it, requires a certain emotional payback, a type of catharsis on behalf

of those injured by the crime, the relief supposedly being achieved through the punishment of the offender. It has been mentioned much less often that alternative dispute resolution, thought to be the most peaceful institutionalised way of settling conflicts arising from crime, pays equal respect to emotions. Out-of-court settlements of criminal as well as of civil matters, where they are provided for by the law, require the offender and the victim or representatives of the victim to come to terms with the offence and establish an agreement that would, essentially, allow for at least a degree of restoration of trust between them. This restoration does not have to be complete, but it must be sufficient to allow the injured party to agree to the offender making gestures of repentance in order to be set free. The emotions on the part of the victim, and more often than not also on the part of the offender, play a key role here. People would hardly ever be reconciled strictly based on rationalisations. Rationally, if the offender deserves punishment, or if the meaning of social rules arising from the contract is such that it requires all offenders to be punished, then the emotions of any specific victim should have no role to play in the process of sanctioning. However, increasingly (usually for the practical reasons of overcrowding of the prisons and a clogging up of the criminal justice system as a whole, including the criminal courts), factual relationships between the willing and unwilling participants in victimisation are sought, where emotions are in fact used as tools to resolve the conflict outside of the courts.

In this process, the presence and key role of emotions is illustrated even by the difficulties and obstacles to success. First, reconciliation of criminal matters outside the court is much less frequently pursued than out-of-court settlements of civil matters, because different people will have different levels of emotions, and will thus react differently to the same gestures offered by the offenders. This leads to the reconciliation process yielding different outcomes in cases that are similar when viewed from aside, and such discrepancies violate our basic intuitions of justice, which require that like cases out to be treated similarly.

Secondly, emotions can vary, and what people may agree upon at one time might change later on, depending on numerous circumstances, such as the future behaviour of the offender (not necessarily directly related to the offence or the reconciliation agreement itself), events in the life of the injured party, or facts that might not have been known at the time when the reconciliation agreement was concluded. Thus, decisions made at one time might be sought

to be revised at a later time, which can produce real quagmires for any criminal justice administration and all others involved in the process.

Thirdly, any process that rests on emotions also rests on the presumption of sincerity of both parties, and in cases where an offender is able to con the injured party into a reconciliation agreement whilst not really making any structural changes to one's behaviour, injustice appears to be even greater, because the victim is victimised twice.

Fourthly, the emotions of the broader community, those who feel indirectly victimised or angered by the crime and who are not the victim or close to her, are not necessarily addressed by a reconciliation agreement between the victim and the offender, and cries for vengeance, so to say, even if they are very implicit, might continue on behalf of the society at large once the victim has forgiven.

Fifthly and finally, it is difficult to establish an institutional and theoretical justification for some cases being processed through the criminal justice system (such as cases where victimless crimes are concerned, with no individual identifiable victim, as in cases of money laundering or some cases of white collar crime, as well as ones where there appears to be no will or opportunity, or jurisdictional possibility, for cases to go through the alternative dispute resolution process), and some being allowed to be resolved by reconciliation agreements. Again, the emotional side of justice is upset by such dysproportionalities.

All the difficulties enumerated here arise from the community's emotional problem with alternative dispute resolution. Rationally, anything that is allowed by the law in a certain state, and upon which the offender and the injured party (where there is one) agree, can be accepted. In jurisdictions where no alternatives exist to criminal justice, both the rational and emotional views of the crime and the attendant penalty are articulated only through legal provisions and penal policy. In cases where the conflict generated by the crime is between the offender and society (victimless crimes), the society can be considered a victim, and its will to have the offender processed through the criminal justice system can be treated as an outcome of the adverse relationship established by the crime. In principle, there should be no problem with the rationalisation of any of these difficulties, but when emotions are involved as they are, all five problems do gain considerable theoretical weight; injustice that is *felt* hurts much more than a rational "injustice" that can be explained away rationally.

The role of moral emotions

The hurdles we encounter with our moral projections, moral evaluations and intentions, as well as with responding to morally controversial actions by others, reflect the irreducible emotional character of moral values. As in aesthetic values, their strength and meaning lie largely in their appeal and ability to move us in certain directions. While in aesthetic perception there may be little room for rational explanation of why something is perceived as beautiful or ugly, sublime or profane until it is actually more or less commonly judged so, in moral judgements the appeal of certain values and the "gut" reactions to offensive behaviour will command the social definition of what is morally acceptable and what is not.

To say that it is difficult to rationally explain why something will appear as beautiful, however, is not the same as to say that once there are established, and relatively common, reactions to it as beautiful, it will be particularly difficult to then construct rational explanations of why this is so. The prescriptive rationalisation is less feasible with emotionally laden values than is the retrospective rationalisation. Aesthetic theories are constructed largely based on why certain cultures at least perceive certain qualities as possessing certain aesthetic values, such as beauty. In the moral realm, the emphasis is on the prescriptive nature of the moral statements, and thus ethics is theoretically more forward-looking in its evaluations than aesthetics. However, this is so partially because moral reactions and emotions are less individual and more predictable than is aesthetic taste; arguably this is so also because moral reactions are far more important for society than aesthetic ones. Without a "moral taste" society would soon perish; without an aesthetic taste it would only be delayed in its development as a civilisation. Thus the moral values are more core values for social theory, and this is why the moral emotions are under such severe theoretical scrutiny, with a view of turning them into invariable and universally obligatory rational statements that aspire to a validity not far away from that of logical truths.

Codification of ethical norms

The particular importance of moral values arises from the fact that they are directly involved in the regulation of human relations, unlike aesthetic values. In the same way that aesthetic values convey meanings and symbolism, moral

values convey their own messages, but the difference lies in the nature of the two types of messages. An aesthetic message is essentially information, a statement attaching a certain meaning to a certain symbol. An ethical message is essentially a requirement, a legitimate expectation, a social demand, whether explicit or implicit. In cases where it takes the form of praise of a particularly commendable action, the demand that everybody acts the same way is implicit and not categorical; not everybody can perform extraordinary acts of bravery to save others, for example, but the implicit message is there that this would be desirable, if it was possible. The diffuse nature of social norms in general accounts for the need to try to systematise and shorten them through codification, and thus also the impulse to shape the moral sentiments (at least those commonly shared) into sets of moral normative systems.

Clearly one highly indicative form of codification of our perceptions of morality is the law and the culture of legalism that has characterised at least the past three centuries of development of western civilisation. The law is supposed to reflect the basic principles and intuitions of justice in a community, and thus function as a reliable normative "summary" of morality. Here one encounters two immediate and not entirely complementary perspectives. From a procedural point of view, including the issues faced in the everyday work of government departments, local government offices or public institutions in general, appeals are routinely made to the law as the referential standard for what is right (assuming that this also presupposes that "right" is "just" and, in the broader sense, "morally justified"). However, from a moral point of view, what is lawful is not necessarily "right", and is certainly not automatically "just" or "moral". Trivially, there is no contradiction in saying that there are laws that are immoral and unjust. The fact that something has been agreed upon (and law is always an expression of a collective will, which is supposed to arise from the intuitions, reasons and sentiments about justice, but does not necessarily and always do so) does not imply that the agreement is motivated by moral concerns, and even if it is, that the moral standards are captured well in the legislative formulation. Legalism is, thus, not necessarily a moral stance. It is only a procedural standard.

The same applies to ethical codes in the professions, public administration or various guilds. While they attempt to capture the most challenging issues for the particular group (accepting presents, using privileges unnecessarily, making rash decisions that waste public resources, etc.), and as such contain an explicit or implicit reference to ethical values (often also to legal provisions),

as codifications they may or may not conform to deeper-seated moral principles. Undoubtedly such ethical codes tend to be much more aligned with concrete moral issues than do most laws, but their range of consequences, and the group-specific nature of ethical issues addressed, often limit them considerably as ethical tools to advance the integrity of society more generally.

One particularly obvious aspect of this limitation is the fact that, for example, the "work" or "business" ethic of a particular profession, or large company, which is engrained in the minds of its employees and codified in the respective ethical rules, might involve principles such as loyalty to the employer, team work with colleagues, honesty in balancing one's own interests with those of the company (or guild), keeping industrial secrets, not working for other competing companies within certain limits, etc. However, the keeping of such ethical principles does not necessarily make the person more ethical in general. An ideally ethical employee in a company, who never thinks of breaching her professional integrity and loyalty to the firm and the colleagues, might be quite a merciless person to one's family, pets, neighbours, highly judgemental about other people, totally unsympathetic to the needs of the vulnerable. Such unethical qualities, the opposite of what utilitarians have called generalised benevolence, which is in fact a pre-requisite for the development of an overall positive moral character, might make someone an ideal, highly ethically integrated professional, while allowing the same person to be a moral monster in everyday life outside one's job.[5]

The main problem with the codifications of ethical principles is that they fail to encompass generalised benevolence as a desirable character trait, because the realities of social life often militate against such benevolence, and this is the more concretely the case the more group- or activity-specific an ethical code is. The nature of our society has systematically underestimated generalised benevolence in favour of merit and competition (quite in the spirit of liberalism), thus also disparaging the emotional content that is required for generalised benevolence, as it is only a burden when competition is concerned.

Emotions and sacrifice

While the codifications of morality have consistently encountered very systematic and by no means accidental difficulties and variations between

[5] For a useful utilitarian account of generalised benevolence see Jack J.C. Smart, *Essays Metaphysical and Moral: Selected Philosophical Papers*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1987.

various cultures, with various predominant public sentiments, as well as diachronic temporal variations within the same cultures, this is not to say that they do not have their own semantics that is liable to theorising. While the concepts of what is moral and what is immoral vary enormously between historical periods, geographical areas and cultural contexts, the practicalities of life in society have necessitated certain common elements, desirable almost anywhere. One such element of morality is readiness to make personal sacrifices for others.

Moral norms, and the underlying moral values, can plausibly be conceived as restrictions on spontaneity: where one would act selfishly, moral norms require one to show a degree of fellow-feeling and consideration; where one would rather flee the danger, moral norms require him to fight for the right cause (often related to general interest). Ethics is in good part opposed to spontaneity. Ideally, ethical principles should be so ingrained in one's social consciousness that ethical action becomes automatic and spontaneous, but as we all know from experience, this is rarely the case. Thus the best we can contend with is that ethics is a sort of fence that keeps us on the right side of things, the right being decided upon by a social consensus in our culture or group.

If human community is viewed as a rational construct based on interest (social contract), then the making of sacrifices, the common element of so many ethical and religious systems, is probably the least spontaneous of the ethically desirable actions, as it is directly opposed to self-interest. However, sacrifice does come with a degree of spontaneity and even satisfaction, and is not always a product of Spartan self-discipline against one's better interest. In certain situations, reactions that involve sacrifice will be so automatic and uncalculated, so definitive and resolute — and so passionate — that their very phenomenology refutes any possibility of rational motivation. In order to act ethically on rational grounds, against one's presumed selfish rationality, one needs to think; when sacrifices are made without time to think, they are based on spontaneous reactions arising from feeling. In other words, experience proves that moral action can be the result of feeling alone, which means that there is at least a problem with the idea that morality is by definition rational.

In fact, when one considers the active making of sacrifices, one often finds that the less calculated and more immediate the sacrifice is, the more moral approval it tends to earn. There is something of an implicit expectation that sacrifices should be made "full-heartedly", without calculation, in order

to merit a positive evaluation of character. Clearly if morality as such is seen as restrictive for the pursuit of one's selfish interests (and this is not contradictory to saying that one can act morally based on pure emotions and intuitions, without having to force oneself to do so rationally), many moral actions include discomfort of various kinds. True, they also often generate a degree of "moral satisfaction", which may or may not offset the discomfort fully or in part. However, few people would disagree that acting ethically tends to be generally more likely to cause personal discomfort than acting selfishly.

Legalistic and strictly rationalistic ways of conceptualising human relations often result in illustrative paradoxes. People's passionate responses to actions by others, if irrational, are indispensable, but they tend to be factored out of the legal formulae that regulate certain aspects of social life. Look at the legal regulations that apply to the right of self-defence in some jurisdictions, where "minimum necessary force" is only allowed to defend oneself against an attack. This means that if one is attacked by an assailant wielding a knife and threatening to inflict serious injuries, and one manages to subdue the assailant, one is not allowed to go any further any punish him for the grievous intent, for trying to take one's life. If somebody slaps you on the face in the street, then turns away from you, in some jurisdictions it is illegal to counterattack and follow that person — something almost everybody would do instinctively. Such a reaction is considered revenge and is subject to penalisation. As long as there is a "viable escape route" one is not within one's legal rights to defend oneself, contrary to what our biological nature warrants as a basic instinct. Rationally, the person who has just slapped you on the face and then turned away is no longer a threat, and you have no rational grounds to fight him, thus you are expected to peacefully go on about your business. This illustrates the relationship between the emotionally-laden reality of human interactions and their dry and abstract rationalisations along the interest matrix.

Emotional engagement clearly makes it more likely to accept discomfort, which explains why we are more prepared to make sacrifices for those who are close to us than for distant individuals. The emotional potential that triggers the action is present in greater volume in relation to someone who is close and known; the motivation and energy to make a sacrifice are thus more readily mobilised. The more one knows about the circumstances and identity of another person, the more likely it is that one will be able to empathise and

act benevolently towards that person. Similarly, the more one's character traits, life circumstances and a particular predicament are known to us, the more information we have to empathise with the person. Without empathy, any decision to take a sacrifice, from giving a token amount to charity to donating a kidney, may well be far fetched. The question of empathy, thus, remains central to our discussion of morality.

Empathic disturbance

In his *Empathy and moral development,* Martin L. Hoffman argues that the instilment of empathy in children is associated with an "empathic disturbance" or distress, which, in small children, is usually confused with the child's own suffering, but in older children the distinction between their own and the distress of the victim is clearly grasped. This is a similar theme to Scheller, who makes a principled distinction between shared feelings where one mistakes one's identity for another's, and thus also becomes "emotionally infected" by taking on the emotions of others, and a proper fellow-feeling, where one is fully aware than another's suffering is not his own, but nevertheless commiserates with the person in distress. Hoffman's research places this distinction in a genetic perspective, as it shows that children learn to feel empathy by first confusing the suffering of another with their own, only later to develop an understanding that their own distress is in fact distinct from, though directed at, the suffering of another. The two are therefore not principally different types of empathy, but rather stages in the development of empathy. While proper empathy clearly requires the awareness that we empathise with others over their distress, clearly what we feel is not the same as what they feel, yet it is connected with what they feel.

The term Hoffman uses for this distress over another's distress, which I think can be taken over here usefully, is "empathic disturbance".[6] This type of discomfort is fundamentally directed at the distress of others, but it is also self-referential, and includes a degree of expectations from oneself. Namely, empathic disturbance is successfully addressed by assisting the victim, and

[6] Martin L.Hoffman, *Empathy and Moral Development*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2000. I have used the Serbian translation of the book by Tatjana Šešum, published by Dereta, Belgrade, 2003. To make the quotes useful to the reader of the original text, references to section titles are provided instead of page references, the latter obviously not corresponding between the original and the translation.

it is fully removed only when both the victim's suffering ends, and one's actions that one expects from oneself, given the moral norms one feels as one's own, are taken to remove the suffering. My empathic disturbance may be substantially reduced if someone being assaulted under my window is suddenly rescued by the police, but it will be most fully resolved if I have done something about this, called the police myself, or intervened directly to assist the victim. The level of disturbance remaining after the victim is rescued tells about the way I feel about my own role in the event. If I was watching television at the time, noting that somebody was being assaulted with an intent to kill them, and I did nothing but hope that somebody would call the police, which somebody did and the affair ended happily, I would not feel as relieved as if I had taken some kind of action. Emotional disturbance is thus a reaching out feeling, but doubly reaching out: to those in need, and to the expectations of a higher self. This duality constitutes the conventional everyday morality in most situations we find ourselves in. As the definition of empathy here is given in terms of emotions, or the distress of the one who feels empathy, an empirical test is available for the structure of that distress by means of finding out what relieves the distress and to what extent. Clearly the scenario that relieves the stress fully exhausts the directional moral references involved in it, and from a methodological point of view this is a way of arguing that is not available when morality, justice or "legitimate expectations" are discussed removed from the emotional realities, as strictly rational constructs.

The concept of empathic disturbance is illustrative of a key feature of emotional responses to morally-charged issues, namely the fact that such emotions are not entirely irrational. While psychology distinguishes between the various "faculties", emotions being studied as separate from cognition, in practice emotions are closely intertwined with rational responses, and in fact one can cause the other and vice versa. A small baby may not have developed rational capacities and thus may not be able to distinguish the pain of another baby from her own, and will react by crying to another baby's crying. As it grows up, however, it will gradually establish the difference between self and others that is not emotional, but cognitive; knowing about self and others is concerned with orientation in space and in time, and with the recognition of signs that somebody else experiences something that is familiar to us from our own experience. An older baby will thus know that another baby is in distress, and it will empathise with the other baby by

crying. It will not be able to empathise without knowing that somebody else is in pain; in other words, empathy as an emotion is necessarily connected with cognition, with the rational recognition that something painful is happening to another person. Empathy, like so many other emotions, is by no means irrational.

People commiserate with others, share in their joy, or empathise with their current suffering based on their knowledge of the circumstances of others, on the information they have on the lives of others. Any sensible empathic reaction can be rationally analysed and traced back through causal chains of events, the same as any rational reaction can. If I empathise with my dentist's pain in having hurt his shoulder and not being able to work while having to support his family, this is no less rational than my decision to have my car painted over a newly acquired scratch to prevent it from rusting in the winter. The only *prima facie* difference is that the former reaction is also emotional, while the latter is (usually) not. There is, however, a less obvious difference: reactions that involve emotions also involve an additional dynamic element that prompts us to act where, without emotions, we may not do so. I may realise, for example, that many burn victims need skin donations to heal, but I will normally brush the thought aside in the daily exchanges. However, if my close relative is severely burnt, I will not just know that she needs skin, but will feel the emotional urge to assist, and will be far more likely to donate skin. Moral action appears directly related to emotions, and a large part of everyday morality that has to do with assisting others seems inextricably connected with empathic disturbance. As everybody knows from experience, where this disturbance is greater, the likelihood of moral action is greater.

The rational extension of this insight is in the issue of how moral sentiments, specifically empathy, can be developed culturally, how they can be ingrained more effectively, or how people can be socialised into such sentiments, or taught to feel them more strongly and more often. This is what developmental psychology studies as moral development, which is directly linked to the learning of emotions. The very process of emotional learning rules out any idea that emotions are irrational and contradictory to reason — the idea that so much traditional philosophy has taken for granted through the division of "faculties", perhaps due to the influence of the Carthesian tradition on the western thought. Descartes' *cogito* can be viewed as a Husserlian "phenomenological reduction" of the attributes and appearances of existence,

or self-existence, to a basic, irrefutable truth of me thinking, thus, necessarily, existing, without having to consider anything else to prove the fact of existence. However, it is also a celebration of thought and rationality, and this latter meaning of it has caused the largest part of the western philosophical tradition to assume that the "I think" is somehow fundamentally different from, and superior to, the "I feel" of everyday life.

Autonomy in emotionally transparent communities

Developmental psychology has established it that moral development can be traced by marking the development of empathic distress and the learned response to address it by reaching out to assist the victim. This is the motivational matrix for cooperative behaviour that is alternative to rational choice theory. Our everyday morality shows that the individual is morally helpless without empathy, but the emotional foundations of empathy, and, by extension, moral action in the everyday context, are a matter of cultural nourishing and individual and group learning. Again, individual autonomy is limited in the responsibility for one's ability to feel empathy.

Criminal law typically allows for diminished criminal responsibility in cases where certain deficiencies in cognition or feeling are established in the offender. The most general formulation of a "full" criminal responsibility, or culpability, involves the satisfaction of a cognitive criterion (the offender must have "known" that what he did was wrong and disallowed, including his ability to be aware of what he was doing in the first place), and a volitional criterion (the offender must have "been able to have done otherwise", or he must have been free from compulsion, external or internal, to a sufficient degree to have been able to decide to act otherwise). Where the offender is mentally ill, and the internal compulsion to commit a crime is established to have been sufficiently strong, he is treated more leniently or is absolved from penalty altogether. However, there is a special class of offenders whose treatment is a matter of debate today, namely the so-called "psychopaths" or "sociopaths", people who are said to suffer from a "personality disorder". Such people do not exhibit signs of mental illness that render them obviously mentally incompetent (hallucinations, obvious compulsive behaviour, dramatic alterations of mood, etc.), but they are said to have failed to develop sufficient awareness of and feelings for the other people to be able to be properly emotionally socialised, of "fit in". They usually lead normal lives without major excesses in behaviour,

but when they commit a crime, they often demonstrate an uncanny lack of remorse or of ability to empathise with the victims or their families.[7]

There is some controversy over the treatment of psychopathic offenders by the criminal justice system. Conservative systems treat them as fully responsible, mainly for the practical reason that treatment for their condition has not proven effective, and it appears intuitive to ascribe their defects to their "morally defective personalities", which, at least verbally, suggests some degree of personal responsibility. However, in some systems their responsibility is reduced substantially, as it is recognised that their internalisation of emotional dispositions for feelings for others and their learning of social relations are not their responsibility; most psychopaths have developed their traits through the particular aspects of upbringing, through defective family surroundings, or might have inherited them genetically. Thus a debate goes on as to whether they should be treated similarly as psychotic offenders, by being partially or wholly excused from criminal responsibility, especially in light of the newer findings that suggest that behavioural therapy might stimulate improvement.[8] The bottom line of the argument here is that people can be considered responsible only where they have substantial autonomy in freely deciding on the course of action, free from either external or internal compulsion. Wherever the freedom of choice is obstructed, autonomy is diminished. In psychopaths, compulsion, if strong enough to cause them to commit a crime, is also significant enough to substantially reduce their autonomy, thus calling for a revision of the traditional view of their responsibility.

Psychopaths are the extreme case of individuals being prevented from developing certain emotions (primarily empathy) that are treated as pre-conditions for a proper socialisation and, consequently, for adequate moral judgement and action. In less extreme cases, the development of socially instrumental emotions is equally the result of cultural influences, the family,

---

[7] I have dealt with this in detail in my "Psychopathy: Cognitive aspects and criminal responsibility", *The Criminologist*, vol. XXI, no. 2, 1997, pp. 66–75, and "Criminal responsibility and personality disorder", *Arhiv za pravne i društvene nauke* (*Archive of Law and Social Sciences*), Belgrade, vol. LXXXIII, no. 2, 1997, pp. 279–90. A psychological overview of the crime-related risk factors for psychopathy can be fund in Heather Burke & Stephen D. Hart, "Personality Disordered Offenders: Conceptualization, Assessment and Diagnosis of Personality Disorder", in Sheilagh Hodgins & Rüdiger Müller-Isberner (eds), *Violence, Crime and Mentally Disordered Offenders*, Wiley, Chichester, 2001, pp. 63–85.

[8] Burke & Hart, loc. cit.

or individual experiences that the person often has no control of. This can be illustrated by comparing the influences that emotionally transparent, close-knit communities exert on their members, as opposed to those of life in large and structurally opaque cities. While any such comparison may seem at first to indulge in nostalgic overtures on why traditional morality is no longer possible, I shall argue that it is in fact possible, but only where a deliberate policy of fostering common identities marked by a culture of fellow-feeling is in place, even in non-transparent communities.

One of the urban legends in large modern cities when personal security is concerned is that a psychological key to increasing the chances that an attacker might take pity on his victim is to make him perceive the victim as a person: to know her name, age, whether she has siblings and living parents, what she does for a living, etc. Police negotiation in such situations, as well as training for cases of kidnapping, includes making the offender aware that the person being victimised is a human being with a specific identity, whose features cannot but contain at least some common elements with the identity of the attacker himself — at least with his identity as a human being. What this narrative presupposes, of course, is that in situations of violence in modern urban communities many episodes unfold against the backdrop of the assailant *not viewing the victim as a human being*, and not understanding that there are any commonalities between himself and the victim. This is a simple form of what Marxists call "alienation": a mutual estrangement of members of the same community that allows them to treat fellow individuals as things, not persons. At the same time, this is the scenario that is capable of fully neutralising any empathy, and thus enabling people to commit grave violence against others.

Assuming that this approach is effective (and experience has proven it considerably so), clearly it goes against the opposite direction of liberal socialisation prior to the offence. People first grow apart from each other, sufficiently so to be able to view each other as things rather than persons, and the manifestations of such estrangement are only later addressed, at advanced stages of social learning, when they are sensitised to the others' existential similarities and proximity. The same is the case with the structure of neighbourhoods: in traditional communities people did not live as close to each other physically as they do now in large apartment buildings, but in villages neighbours were familiar with each other, while in large apartment complexes immediate neighbours often do not know each other's name, sometimes do not say hello when they meet. The next neighbour beating his wife with the other

people living on the other side of a common wall doing nothing, and not calling the police, is a phenomenon of such proportions that entire public campaigns and policies are being devised to raise awareness of the need for basic solidarity with the victims. The estrangement is extremely successful, and with it the numbing of emotions that represent the root of everyday morality, including the actions of solidarity and assistance when one is in distress. In communities where their members are closer together, there is less crime and it is easier to organise joint projects, such as infrastructural repairs and improvements with contributions by everyone. In particular, in such communities there is informal mutual oversight that arises from the common morality shared by all members: people take care not to embarrass themselves in front of the others by acting in ways that they know would not meet with the approval of the community. They refrain from shouting at family members because they are afraid that the neighbours will hear and think worse of them — which means that they actually care about the opinion of the neighbours, something most residents of a modern city's sky-skraper would not even think of. They take care how they conduct themselves in the street on the way from work, because they *know* that they will meet many people they know. They fulfil their community obligations because they would be ashamed if everybody else did and they did not, regardless of any sanctions that they might encounter from the state.

While all these reactions and relationships can be, and routinely are, ascribed to what is called the mentality of the small town, they do reveal an inner sanction that motivates people to live up to the moral standard of their group; this sanction is neutralised or anesthetised by increasing the psychological distance between members of the group. Such distancing, however, comes alongside with changes in the quality of community membership. With larger communities, consisting of more people from more different backgrounds, common identity is often sought, or defined, in administrative ways: one fully "belongs" to one's community when one has a maximum of formal rights available in that community. For example, membership in large communities with relatively little binding common experience may be defined as citizenship, so that people who "fully belong" have voting rights, as well as the other civil rights, some of which are also granted to permanent residents, who enjoy a lower level of membership in the community. Temporary residents are on an even lower level of membership, while visitors are on the low ebb. In neither of the categories, however, there need not be any substantial commonness: citizens living close to each other might celebrate different religious holidays,

have different daily routines, belong to different subcultures, have totally different values, and be bound only by a minimum of tolerance so that they do not directly and dramatically endanger each other by their lifestyles. In short, they live next to each other, but they do not live together; the communities, whether geographical — within large cities, or cities themselves, or regions within the country, are not created in organic ways, so that people share key aspects of their lives, such as working in the same branch of the industry, or harvesting the same crop, or producing wine, writing philosophy or training to be soldiers. With the information age, they live next to each other, but can have interests and aspirations that are totally unrelated to those of the others; such communities, when sufficiently large and marred by the spirit of competition instead of solidarity and empathy, become mere aggregations of persons who are not neighbours, but merely co-exist by virtue of accident or indifference.

Some would say that estrangement and non-transparent communities are a product of modernisation and technological progress, which makes people less functionally dependent on those close to them. They no longer need to go anywhere physically in order to engage in social transactions. Rather than calling someone on the telephone or meeting with them, they have the convenience of sending an email or a mobile telephone message; rather than going to the grocery shop, they can order over the internet and have the food delivered from a supermarket; rather than going to the bank to pay the bills, they will do it from their home computer. I suspect that things are not as simple as this interpretation would have us believe: Aristotle felt it so acutely that man is a social and political animal that he defined humanity in social terms. At least part of the reason for the use of email instead of meetings and telephone conversations lies in the fact that telephoning is more expensive, and the pressure of aggregate living in quasi-communities with increasing administrative and work obligations does not allow time for social calls and relaxed talks person-to-person. Email chats and phone messages are the best one can do while attending to the myriad of other obligations during an urban day. People do not have the time to go to the bank or the grocery shop, because streets are clogged up with traffic and it is much more physically difficult to cater for one's household personally in large cities than it is in small towns. The very organisation of life, the cities, and the way in which settlement policies and public policies in general are conceived and conducted, causes these changes in behaviour. All of them, however, contribute to estrangement, almost as much as do the media, which increasingly use a technological and administrative

vocabulary to refer to others: in America, foreigners are sometimes called "aliens", and are divided in media language into "legal" and "illegal aliens". Husband and wife used to be "spouses" until relatively recently, and today they are referred to as "partners". There are many such linguistic changes that indicate a growing distance between people that is encouraged by public discourse. The down side of modernisation and aggregation in large settlements is well known and voluminously discussed in public debates and in literature. There is, however, a brighter side to the issue.

There is no reason in principle why large communities, or technologically equipped ones, should be less empathic and less permeated with positive emotions than smaller communities. To be sure, there are practical circumstances that make such estrangement easy, but there is no obligatory, principled reason for large communities not to be empathic. If there is a will to foster common identities, whether through urban planning depending on the collective identities of their occupants, or simply by constructing public policies and public discourse that will encourage people to think about others and about commonalities rather than about discrete and separate individualities, this is what moral education comes down to — an emotional reaching out coupled with a deliberate awareness of others and their circumstances. Things are very easy here: people who live on the different sides of the same wall in their apartments never think of each other, and are not encouraged to. If they did, whether it is when they turn on their blender or hair drier late at night, or when they organise a party, at least, they would be more likely to know each other's name, job and at least some everyday problems. They would also be far more likely to react when they hear domestic violence from across the wall, or to ask for a neighbour's help when they are sick and need to go to hospital. These are things that are taken for granted in many small communities, yet ones that are almost unthinkable of in large cities. The reason cannot be the size of the city and the sheer number of people, although it is easier to hide one's moral deficiencies in a crowd than in a transparent community.

When professional soldiers are being readied for battle, they typically build upon a constant mental attitude that they are likely to face battle during their military career. They think about this all the time, and when the time comes they don't ask questions and are generally far more ready to engage than are drafted soldiers who spend their lives as civilians, never expecting to fight in a war. The mindscape of a professional soldier is dramatically different from that of an accountant drafted into the army at wartime, although admittedly

some accountants tend to do exceptionally well as soldiers. Soldiers are taught to expect battle; accountants are taught not to, it is as simple as that. People tend to do things they are taught to do, including feeling in certain ways, even perceiving things they would otherwise miss. The inhabitants of a small socially transparent town are taught by the circumstances of living in a small community that they should always contribute to common projects (which most, though not all, do), that they need to act decently in public because they will be seen, and that their prospects in the community largely depend on the opinion people have of them. This benefit to traditional morality, true, does not exist in megacities, where "being seen" has quite a different meaning. However, it is possible to amend social policies, especially cultural policies and the models of public communication to teach people to think more communitarian and less libertarian: there is nothing illiberal about encouraging solidarity and sympathy, about fostering empathy and other forms of fellow-feeling as positive values in a large community. It may take longer for the message to penetrate a large community, but with determination by the social elites it will get through.

Such communities, when permeated with empathy, would yield at least two distinct types of benefits. First, they will be more functional, because the resulting solidarity will increase mutual mobilisation and ability to resolve any problems or provide any assistance in the immediate environment, on the lowest possible level of social engagement. A neighbour's intervention when someone has a ruptured appendix will see that person in hospital sooner and with fewer resources than when an ambulance is involved; the locally negotiated resolution of a passageway dispute in a large building will be far more efficient than a court case, etc. This is one particularly utilitarian side of solidarity that is often neglected.

Another advantage to the fostering of empathic perceptions in public discourse is philosophical, more specifically ethical: people who are motivated to act morally out of internal reasons, not necessarily related to their own interest, are more autonomous in moral action than those who calculate what they are obliged to do in terms of interest. Acting morally against a background of interest-based social philosophy requires self-compulsion, sometimes compulsion by formal outside expectations, norms or institutions. Such action is the less ethically inspired the more compulsion is involved. However, acting constructively towards the others out of the emotion of empathy is independent of external compulsion and thus takes place in a fully autonomous moral realm.

People who are taught to think about others in empathic terms receive the gift of an increased realm of agency-autonomy: formally they, too, can still refuse to act constructively, but when they do act constructively, they do so because of a felt need to assist others and a felt disturbance at the distress of others, which is a perfect moral motive.

Let us make this even clearer. The basic definition of autonomous action is the one of acting of one's own will, by free choice. Obviously, any such action will be caused by certain motivational reasons, including the values one holds as one's own, but the external description of autonomous action is roughly one of a person deciding to assist others, fulfil one's duty to one's community, or even make a sacrifice (or act contrary to those descriptions) *without a visible external constraining factor*. If I have a duty, say moral duty, to return a favour, I will be socially conditioned to do so even in situations where I feel no authentic internal desire or motivation to do so. Somebody has done me a favour, now there is an opportunity to return it and that person clearly expects it to be returned. However, meanwhile, I have come not to have a particularly high opinion of the person, despite the favour received from her, I do not believe that she needs what I am expected to do, or even worse, I am convinced that what I must do will generate more damage or injury to others than it will benefit my benefactor. If I am sufficiently socially conditioned, I will return the favour, but this will not make me feel gratified; in fact, by doing so I might generate more discomfort for myself over the dire consequences my return action might have caused to others. On the other hand, where there is no compulsion, legal or social, and I do a favour to someone because I feel for her and sympathise with her situation, I am in the position of a free agent — I act obviously autonomously. My action is motivated primarily by my own reasoning and emotions, rather than external conditions. This is at least superficially a scenario of autonomous moral action (if what I do has a moral dimension to it, which not all favours do). My socialisation, or being taught to empathise with others, will proliferate instances where at least superficially I will tend to act as an autonomous moral agent, while my socialisation through constraint and the concept of abstract duty (such as that arising from reciprocity) will, observed from the outside, limit my autonomy. The encouragement of feelings, in other words, increases autonomy, because acting based on feelings, especially the constructive feelings towards others (fellow-feeling), is the most removed motivation from any outside conditionalities. Pavlov's dog that salivates at the ringing sound to announce dinner is the primitive example

of behavioural conditioning, but such conditioning is the primary form of social control in most modern societies, not always in much more subtle forms. Such controls militate very openly against agency autonomy, while emotional motivations fulfil cooperative social goals without the need for social control, and thus preserve autonomy. This is the philosophical, and to a considerable extent psychological, benefit of fostering empathy in modern urban societies.

I have argued earlier on that people cannot be responsible for the values that they take up from heritage or the environment, because they are never autonomous agents with regard to the availability, social presentation and desirability of such values. This is so in principle, and it also applies to a culture that fosters fellow-feeling, because individuals have a limited influence on policy that over-arches them and socialises them into certain values. However, a degree of autonomy in moral matters exists on the micro-level where the contextual policy is based on encouraging internal incentives through emotional education, rather the external constraints in the form of social controls. The anarchist will argue here that however subtle the overarching policy might be, and however decisively directed at encouraging emotional rather than external and constraining motivations, it remains a form of social control, as its goal is the achievement of socially desirable behaviour. This may be so, but within degrees: assuming that standards of socially desirable behaviour are in place on a grand scale, it is not insignificant whether policy is to encourage people to share the values the standards are rooted in, or to constrain them to obey at a minimum level of cooperation regardless of their values. In fact, this makes all the difference between any feasible realm of individual autonomy in modern society and a total imposition by society. Any larger autonomy than that, as I have argued, simply does not exist in modern society.

Empathic cultures or subcultures, then, tend to be more cooperative, with more pronounced solidarity; this is trivially so, given that empathy as a motive is a socially constructive emotion. Something will be said about the socially potentially destructive emotions and their role in this picture in the next section. However, the nurturing of empathy and related forms of fellow-feeling in a community does not mean that there will never be any "ruptures" in the fabric of positive intentionality. Conflicts will occur occasionally, but they will not generally be malignant; they will not saw the seeds of long-term animosities, structural violence or resentment. These are all consequences that can only take root in a sufficiently antagonistic culture, and they thus take the

character of aberrations within an emphatic culture. It is important that violence and antagonism are an aberration rather than a normal structural component of a culture. This is obvious in some intensely empathic communities today, such as Christian church communities. Because of the Christian values, in such communities conflicts between members, even though they occur occasionally, rarely turn nasty or become protracted personal animosities, simply because of the culture of forgiveness and the feeling of guilt that sets in if one departs from the deeply ingrained values. It is far more likely that long-term conflicts, systemic exclusion or obstruction will exist in the long term in a political party (or a philosophy department) than in a churchgoing community. Similarly, it is far more likely that structural violence and confrontations will be a lasting mark of a competitive liberal economy with a strong public policy and vocabulary of merit and desert, than in a tolerant society sensitive to social needs that puts people first and achievement second, where the policy and public discourse encourage a collective identity based on fellow-feeling. These differences are simple and clear in examples to be found in all aspects of social organisation and dynamics.

In an emphatic environment, extreme violence, even if carried over through historic or other narratives, is seen as an inevitable recourse in situations that are in principle different from those that the society ordinarily fosters. Thus the positive inter-subjective intentionality, which is the norm in everyday relations, is seen as different in kind from violence. The educational "script" of empathy and a positive disposition to others is a different one from the "reserve" or "alternative" script for extreme situations. Psychologists attribute the ability to form "scripts" to children from three years of age onwards, and according to Jean Piaget, scripts arise from repetitive emotional experiences with regard to relationships with others (educational inductions to make the child aware of the feelings of others). Such emotional reactions do not just occur once and then wither away — they are stacked in memory and form emotional structures that predispose action and inter-subjective behavior in the long term.

Negative emotions

Something has been said so far in the book on the role of what I call "positive intentionality" with an emotional component, namely the constructive mutual intentions between members of a community, alongside with a culture that

encourages the development of a heightened awareness of the presence and needs of others, as well as of positive emotions towards them. This all sounds fine and idealistic, of course. However, when emotions are brought to the forefront of social policy (as in any other context in life), they are usually not contained to certain emotions rather than others, at least not all of the time. Thus, we have to face the issue of what happens when emotions get their deserved place in social policy, in the justification of such policies, such as the policies of employment, taxation, punishment, etc, and when these emotions are negative: resentment, hatred, revolt, anger. The answer to this question suggested in the previous section may be seen by some as too weak: it reads roughly that in communities based on positive emotions, when negative emotions arise, they will not be able to entrench themselves in the long term. I believe this argument to be a valid one; however, more needs to be said about the role of negative emotions as legitimate expressions of one's attitudes, for negative emotions, like positive ones, are not entirely irrational, and they arise from, or contribute to, the formation of attitudes. In other words, negative emotions are as cognitively informed (and thus, at least indirectly, "rational") as the positive ones. To be angry with someone or with a social phenomenon, I must first be acquainted with the event or phenomenon that makes me angry, and must understand it in a certain way. My anger is my attitude; it reflects my position towards something, depicting me as an intentional subject towards a reality that confronts me.

In transparent communities, and these I have described as ideal settings for the proper functioning of an emotionally-charged exchange and discourse within any society (such communities can be subcultures, or smaller urban centres, or whatever organisational unit within a large community) negative emotions are likely to be linked to positive emotions and the values the communities accept. For example, not all interactions will take place based on mutual benevolence and the awareness that everybody needs to contribute to common projects. There will be people who reject the commonly accepted values, and they will break the rules. This is a simple scenario: the others will then likely react by negative emotions. In fact, perhaps the entire realm of positive emotions in social interactions can be very crudely subsumed under a category called "approval" (including all empathic relationships that give rise to mutual assistance and understanding), and "disapproval" or "reproach" (including the extremes such as animosity, hatred, emotions that give rise to violence). Where there is approval, there is always a possibility

of disapproval, and vice versa. Thus, if we argue that emotions are the inseparable companions of thought in the conduct of all social affairs and all human affairs generally, then hatred will have to have a place as well as love or sympathy.

At the moment, the way to deal with negative emotions is to try to "mediate" them through social institutions, and this too is done quite shyly. The mentioned example of punishment is a good illustration: rather than admitting that punishment is inflicted as retribution, and that the theory of retribution, however rationally subtle, in reality boils down to the satisfaction of vengeful feelings generated by the offence, we flounder between various relatively unconvincing explanations of why it is good to punish offenders regardless of how we might feel about this (the deterrence and other utilitarian theories). Hurts inflicted outside the criminal realm are addressed in civil proceedings, but they are not devoid of emotions either, and the same vengeful emotions are appeased by compensation for the wrongs suffered. On one level, pain is used in the form of punishment (but mediated by the state, not inflicted directly by those injured by the crime); on another level, compensation in payments serves as a substitute for the damage or injury caused by the infraction. In both cases, the relationship between those who generate negative feelings (offenders or other breakers of rules) and those who are hurt is taken away from their hands and handled by the state as an intermediary. This is the traditional way the society tries to keep negative feelings, at least the most extreme of them, under some type of control. In some informal social contexts, vendetta served the same purpose, but it was conducted through generations directly by the families whose members were involved in the offender-victim relationship.

Keeping a lid on the negative emotions in society is in fact the whole point of social control, and the theoretical side of it is the attempt to amputate emotions from the realm of legitimate social interactions by rationalist social theory, especially the one based on the grand imaginary paradigm of social contract. As logicians sometimes say, this is, of course, theoretically possible just as anything is possible in theory, but the question remains: at what price? We can construct neat theories denying the relevance of emotions in legitimate social relationships and insisting that the society is a rational contract, and theories can stand beaming with logical beauty, yet the price will be their divergence with experiential reality. One key aspect of the functioning of society is the election of its leadership: if there is a rational-choice based

process in a social contract paradigm of society, elections are definitely one; yet, when one considers people's factual motives for voting for this or that president or candidate in parliamentary elections, more than occasionally one will hear reasons such as "he is handsome", "I fell proud that such a polite man might represent us abroad", or "she makes me feel good when I see her". These are not entirely rational motives, and sometimes, quite often in fact, people vote based on someone's "charisma" even though that person is obviously not qualified for the job. In short, in supposedly rational societies irrational choices are made all the time. The entire industry of marketing is based on the analysis of the so-called subliminal messaging, namely on manipulating the people's implicit and emotional reactions to stimuli to cause them to buy things. In other words, the recognition of the role of emotions and irrationality is everywhere in society, in all aspects of practical life, yet for some reason theory does not follow and maintain the paradigm of a rational agreement devoid of passions.

Negative emotions are a problem, and there is no simple solution for them; in fact, there is no solution if we continue to view a functioning society as an idyllic one. The question to ask here is what place belongs to conflicts in a functional society — not to muted or "transformed" conflicts, but to authentic, full-fledged ones. If one has the right to, and in fact if it is desirable that one cultivates one's positive emotions and sympathy for others, then one has an almost equal right to cultivate one's conflicts up to the point of resolution. Namely, a conflict has no meaning without at least a theoretical reference to a resolution, although to say this is not the same as to claim that a resolution to every conflict is always achievable. People tend to strive for peaceful relationships, while conflicts arise from infringements of expectations that generate tension, and this tension needs to be released through a resolution. One way of trying to diffuse the conflict is to reconcile the parties by using various technical de-escalation mechanisms. Another way, one that is more natural and that I argue should be part of an emotionally transparent community, is allowing conflicts to unfold (while controlling violence) up to a point of resolution. The resolution itself, however, is the most interesting part in the conflict.

Truth-seeking by conflict

If conflicts are not "transformed" as the recent commercial philosophy of conflict and reconciliation purports to do, or taken away by the state, as other

philosophers complain, then conflicts simply need to run their curse, save the part where they might cause violence. This partial control of the conflicts will indeed have to remain in the hands of the state, but the nature of the resolutions sought will most likely have something to do with the truth: the difficult and sometimes impalatable questions of who is right and who is wrong. The course of the conflict will thus, at least theoretically, take the trajectory of a debate over rights and wrongs, and this debate in itself might elucidate many of our pre-conceived concepts and values that motivate us to act in one way or another in our regular social interactions.

At first sight, the idea that pursuing a conflict, or a negative emotion, until a "resolution" is achieved might seem excessively dangerous and uneconomical in energy, and the idea that it might lead to a truth might seem far-fetched and vague. I believe that these are only superficial impressions, and that negative emotions can be cognitively beneficial in ways structurally similar to positive emotions. For example, positive emotions can teach us the unexpected good qualities of others by stimulating others to respond in a like way; negative emotions, on the other hand, might just force us to establish rights and wrongs in specific situations, and to learn, on both sides of the conflict, to deal with the facts of rights and wrongs without accusations. There are at least two levels at which this is possible.

One level is a discussion of rights or wrongs that, while maintaining some tension and usually leading to one side being in the right, and other in the wrong, eventually reaches forgiveness. Forgiveness is a positive value, but we often forget that it is only possible where the right and wrong have been established. If a conflict is "transformed" or hijacked in some other way, so that the rights and wrongs are evaded rather than being addressed, the issue of fault is also evaded, and thus there is no meaningful possibility for the moral action of forgiveness. I am able to forgive someone only if it is established that the person concerned is at some kind of fault with regard to my interests or feelings; if my conflict with another person is described or "analysed" in structural terms, and then translated to another, less confrontational level, the conflict might have been parried, so to say, but I may continue to harbour feelings of hurt, and will most definitely not be able to forgive the hurt. Forgiveness as an indisputably moral action, and a corresponding virtue, require conflict as a pre-cursor. The fault established in the end, ideally, needs to be acknowledged by the parties to the conflict, however sometimes this will not be possible, and it will have to be acknowledged by reasonable observes, the society, its

institutions, onlookers, mutual friends, colleagues, or just by one, more rational and objective party to the conflict. Even in such cases forgiveness is possible. It is possible to forgive someone who does not ask for forgiveness, or who does not recognise her fault, as long as there is a process whereby the injured party is somehow able to rationally establish that the fault indeed lies on the other side. As a human being, I am theoretically able to forgive someone who hates me for having assaulted me or for having stolen my work, but I can only do this when I am convinced that the person is at fault. This other person might be unaware of his hatred, and might be convinced, in his passion, that in fact I am the one who has stolen his (say intellectual) work. The situation might be a touch-and-go one, where it is not immediately clear who has stolen whose work. We might have worked together on a research project, and he might have jumped the gun procedurally, released some findings to the public prior to some other things being completed, or consultations conducted, and he might be convinced that he is being accused of something he did not do. If this conflict is "transformed" through the methods applied today by the conflict-resolution industry, both my colleague and I might be deprived of the conclusion as to who has actually stolen from whom. If I have doubts as to the truth of things, I can try to forgive him if he is at fault, but at the same time I will feel pangs of conscience in case that I am the one at fault. The conflict will be obscured, with the hope of being forgotten. The cognitive function of the conflict, and the negative emotions involved, will be lost.

This level of contribution of negative emotions is similar to aspects of the court process. There are theorists who argue that the criminal trial, for example, is not a search for the truth, but rather a regulated game between the prosecution and the defence, where respect of the rules is the only thing that matters, and the outcome that arises from the game need not be viewed through the prism of truth.[9] One practical aspect of this dilemma is the issue of whether attorneys should be obligated to tell the truth; in most legal systems they are not, as they are protected by the attorney-client privilege. In drastic cases, this means that a lawyer defending an indictee for murder who knows that her client is guilty, and even knows of things (other murders, where the bodies are, that people whose families consider them missing and hope to find them are in fact dead and where they are buried) that open serious ethical

[9] Kenneth Kipnis, "Professional Responsibility and the Distribution of Legal Services", in Kenneth Kipnis & Diana T. Meyers (eds), *Economic Justice: Private Rights and Public Resposibilities*, Rowman & Allanheld, Totowa, New Jersey, 1985, pp. 130–42.

questions vis-à-vis the others involved, can remain silent in the interest of her client.[10]

Truth as a purpose of the criminal trial is treated in practice as a secondary goal, where criminal lawyers typically advise their clients not to make statements; a judge in the Escobedo vs. the State of Illinois, in 1984, went on record stating that any lawyer worth his name would immediately and openly advise his client that is under any kind of suspicion not to make any statements to the police under any circumstances.[11]

Despite these particularities that generate considerable moral controversy in adversarial systems of criminal law, there is a widespread intuition, recognised by most courts, and most juries, that the purpose of a criminal trial is to establish the truth. The acquittal of American rugby star O.J. Simpson after 134 days of a televised "trial of the century" for the murder of his wife in 1995, amid world-wide controversy and disbelief of the verdict, was one of the glaring examples of how the adversarial system heavily depends on one's ability to afford high quality legal representation, and how the resources one brings to the trial, conceived as a game, bear tremendously upon its outcome. This, of course, is not to suggest that O.J. Simpson was in fact guilty — it is simply to note that the broad disbelief of the verdict, and the often referred-to narrow margin by which guilt beyond reasonable doubt could not be established in his case, were almost consensually attributed to the resources and skills of his team of attorneys, whatever the factual status of guilt in the case might

---

[10] There was actually a case exactly like this, during the 1980s in Lake Peasant, the state of New York, when a murder defendant confided to his lawyers that he had murdered two other people, and where their bodies were. The lawyers went there, found the bodies, even made photographs, but did not reveal this information to anyone. One of the lawyers even rejected a request by the parents of one of the missing girls to tell them whether their daughter was alive or dead. After a while, when the defendant confessed to these two murders as well, the lawyers were charged for not reporting a crime, and for failing to make sure that the bodies were decently buried. Yet the final verdict found them innocent based on the client-attorney privilege. Some observers noted that this manifested an unhealthy priority given by the attorneys to their success in court with regard to broader issues of decency and humane treatment of the victims and their families. I have discussed this at more length in my chapter on the moral responsibility in legal representation entitled "Etička odgovornost u pravnom zastupanju" ("Ethical responsibility in legal representation"), in the textbook edited by Dobrivoje Radovanović and Aleksandra Bulatović, *Korupcija* (*Corruption*), Centar za menadžment, Belgrade, 2005, pp. 377–92.

[11] Monroe Friedman, *Lawyers' Ethics in an Adversary System*, Bobbs-Merill, Indianapolis, 1975, pp. 1–8.

have been. Adversarial systems of criminal procedure do, undoubtedly, have an element of game about them that are capable of substituting rules and resources for the truth. Still, the very meaning of a criminal trial is to establish responsibility; the shape of the procedure in the particular systems, and the ability of the parties in conflict (in this case the state and the defendant) to argue their cases, may twist the truth, but this does not change the fact that the main goal of the process is finding out the truth. The goal of the criminal trial is to make possible the punishment of the guilty, not the punishment of those who can't defend themselves well enough. The purpose of the trial is not to test the strength of the state vs. the defendant, or the level of competence and motivation by the prosecution vs. the defence, although the practice in adversarial systems sometimes comes down to little more than that. The healthy principled goal of criminal justice is first to establish the truth, and the whole point of the emotions, conflicts, tears and work involved in the process while arguing for and against the indictment is to find out who really committed the crime and in what way. The conflict, institutionalised through the trial, is *meant* to be cognitively productive, to lead to the truth. Whether or not this actually happens in the particular ways in which the process is structured, or in specific cases within the same system, is at least partially another matter.

Any reconciliation, or out-of-court settlement, involves a degree of diversion of focus from the issue of fault or guilt. While the practical benefits of this strategy might be quite considerable, they do not contribute to the truth about the cases. Only a quality trial, genuinely seeking out the truth, may be able to establish what actually happened in the crime and whose fault it was. Thus the trial serves the purposes of the truth, while the purposes of the sentencing and punishment come only after this cognitive goal is achieved, and may or may not be socially productive or morally justifiable. These are two entirely different phases of the criminal procedure, both factually and with regard to the values involved.

The issue of truth is even more clearly illustrated by the fact that, where in the criminal trial guilt cannot be proven because of the high standard of proof required (beyond reasonable doubt), sometimes the families of victims or victims themselves initiate civil proceedings for compensation, after the acquittal of the defendant in the criminal trial, and sometimes the civil case in fact finds the defendant responsible for the crime and awards compensation, due to the lower standard of proof (balance of probabilities). In such cases,

the issue of the truth remains open and it is difficult to talk about genuine forgiveness. However, there are equally cases where the offender is found guilty in the criminal trial and the victim forgives him, or where the offender is undoubtedly guilty *prima facie*, when the crime is discovered, or admits to being guilty right away, and the victim forgives. Arguably, forgiveness is more likely where the offender is willing to accept his guilt, and this is probably because this is considered the most certain proof that somebody is guilty.[12]

On another level, conflict leads to the truth and productive outcomes, and negative emotions can have an extremely beneficial effect in a political system. It is often said that in democracy a government without a strong opposition is highly undesirable, because it tends to become less accountable for its actions, and democracy is gradually eroded. A dynamic government with an even more dynamic opposition that criticises it is the ideal scenario for a democratic political system. Wherever the government makes a mistake, or acts corruptly, the opposition is eager to take it up and try to punish it. The tension between the opposition and the government, constant mutual accusations and demands for account are not just acceptable, but are in fact required in a healthy democracy. The opposition that likes the government, admires it or approves of it is not an opposition. Its role is to dislike the government, to propose a different set of principles, different policies and different solutions, and while this does not mean that the good moves taken by the government must never be approved of by the opposition, in general the opposition must perpetuate tension to make the government either perform better, or fall. This is a process not just inclusive of, but based on antagonism. True, this antagonism does not have to be emotional at all times, but it often is. A degree of sincerity in the tension is equally a requirement of the democratic fabric of a parliamentary scene. If the voters sense that the opposition in fact likes the government and only says critical things because it is supposed to, the opposition itself is likely to lose support. A certain amount of "constructive animosity" is a cornerstone of any democratic parliamentary system. As a result of this antagonism, policies can be mapped out and examined in public debates, leading to conclusions that, ideally, ought to help establish the truth as to what was right and what was wrong; what was

[12] Experience also shows, of course, that forgiveness is more likely where the crime is less grave; where crimes are extremely serious even the most earnest repentance and admission of one's guilt might not lead to forgiveness, but this is in principle a different matter from the role of the truth in forgiveness. The truth makes genuine forgiveness possible, but clearly it does not guarantee forgiveness in every case; the truth appears to be a necessary, but not the sufficient condition for forgiveness.

productive and what was inefficient, etc. Without negative emotions, animosities, opposition, accusations, suspicions and anger, any democratic government would soon become as corrupt and as unaccountable as any authoritarian one.

Let us examine situations where government officials act inappropriately or in an unbecoming manner — scandals. The first ones to reveal a scandal are often members of the opposition, who are sometimes keen to completely destroy the disgraced official in public, with serious consequences for his family, future career, sometimes even for his existence and economic well-being. This is not always a matter of personal callousness, but to do so, one must be negatively intentionally inclined towards another person, or the idea, or the structure they represent. Similarly, it is animosity that largely generates the energy needed for the opposition parties to fight efficiently to overthrow the government and come to power. This is largely what accounts for the very possibility of the zeal that most of them show to force an early election, impeachment of the president, or public debate that will embarrass the government. The relationship between the governing and opposing components of a democracy has its very foundation in the negative emotions and an essentially negative relationship. Yet, clearly, the consequences, and the purpose of such negativity are entirely constructive: higher quality public administration, greater integrity of those in power whether they like it or not, less corruption, and less arrogance of power — at least ideally speaking (in corrupt systems, the animosity that is instrumental for democracy may be faked itself, and both the government and the opposition can partake in political corruption that increases the arrogance of power).

One of the assumptions of this argument, of course, is that in most conflicts there is actually a right and a wrong, namely that there is actually a truth out there that conflicts tend to revolve around. This assumption itself is not absolute (I do not claim that all conflicts are necessarily about seeking a truth — there are irrational conflicts, such as those that people become trapped in when they have irrational episodes, or when they are mentally ill), and it is not consensually accepted, either. Namely, one of the familiar strategies in trying to defuse conflicts is the fostering of an entire culture of reconciliation where the right and wrong are deliberately watered down, and this is reflected in the mediation rhetoric where it is often said that "no side is necessarily right or wrong", and even that "there is no absolute right or wrong". While making rights and wrongs relative may (and, in fact, often does) have temporarily beneficial consequences in the short term (people can

be persuaded to reconcile), I am convinced that this is only a haphazard effect resulting from an approach whereby we try to keep conflicts under control while not fully understanding that they do not just arise accidentally, and that they have a deeper meaning for human interactions. Surely, there are issues in social relations, as in individual lives, that are entirely negative and that are probably there to teach us forbearance, how to weather the storm and get on with our lives. However, most conflicts are not that sort of events. Conflicts are too systematic a part of human relationships that they should simply be dismissed as temptations or opportunities to personally or politically grow by being able to escape or "parry" them.

The same is the case with negative emotions, and clearly they are involved in most significant conflicts. The opportunistic philosophy of life has it that one needs to stick to "positive thoughts" and avoid negative emotions, in much the same way as the reconciliation philosophy implies that conflicts should be quickly brushed aside and "transformed" into something more smiling and welcoming. The problem, of course, is that when one brushes aside negative emotions too long, one encounters psychological consequences in the form of all these emotions rushing to the surface in the form of a massive depression, fear and anxiety; more importantly for the philosopher, though, this disparaging attitude to negative emotions and conflicts leads to a loss of important, albeit sometimes painful, cognitive insights.

For example, if a friend constantly forces us into situations of self-examination and negative feelings about various events, and this situation on the verge of conflict, or in chronic conflict, lasts long enough, the reconciliation philosophy would imply that we ought to look at the brighter side, try to deal with the most immediate causes of the negative feelings, put an additional emphasis on positive aspects of the relationship, induce positive stimuli, and get on with our friendship. This is possible when our conflicts manifest themselves in relation to parties, holidays or daily social issues. However, what if the conflict indicates serious misgivings in the other person about our relationship that will reveal itself in undeniable form once we fall ill or need serious help from them, when negative emotions will not be able to be sweet-talked away? The practical and emotional consequences of a friendship in crisis will then likely be far graver. This is why we might try to face the negative emotions directly, or, if this is too emotionally stressful, at least consider the possible deeper roots and take note of the cognitive insights that the negative emotions

suggest. At least this will minimise the impact of the revelation of the loss of friendship later.

Similar considerations apply to ethnic conflicts. Where there are ethnic animosities over aspects of traumatic history of mixed identities, international justice has proven far less effective than reconciliation commissions such as those established in Africa after the Rwandan genocide, because the aim of the reconciliation commissions was first to establish the truth, and not to penalise anyone. The dominant method of addressing ethnic conflict today is through conflict control and mediation by third parties, often the large international organisations. The problem with this approach is that the public in either of the ethnic communities never gets to know the truth about their own and the history of the other ethnic community: if crimes committed were the fault of both sides (as they usually are), then the communities need to know which crimes were committed by which side, what had caused what, and how this has impacted their current state of relationship. While arguably these things are very difficult to clarify and present to any community in a comprehensive way, the more the people know, the better they will be able to understand their conflict and the limits to which cooperation can go, or the limits to which animosities make sense. Such truth is possible only through a square-on facing of the conflict, and it is certain to be missed if the conflict is protracted by being kept on a low level without being resolved, and especially if it is being deliberately "transformed" into something that at least appears more palatable. In short, while transforming conflicts has its benefits in the short term, on a conceptual level it hijacks the conflict from its truth-seeking path, and to do this is to ask for another conflict to set itself on the same path. The truth that the conflict is about remains out there, and the conflict is only a conduit to it. Dealing with the conflict as though it is a non-directional, non-relational entity, a problem in itself rather than a sign of another issue, leads to merely substituting it with another one in the longer term. Perhaps this is partly why the reconciliation industry deals with a process that has no end in sight.

Clarification of values through negative emotions

The role of negative emotions in clarifying values is closely related to their role in seeking the truth. First, the truth itself is a value, and the truth about a certain negative emotion, or conflict backed up by the negative emotion(s), will depend largely on the value schemes that people adopt. Conflicts and

negative emotions arise from value systems; whether the goals and aspirations stemming from values can or cannot be achieved, or whether an injury is inflicted on important values that a person harbours, negative emotions will ensue. In order for negative emotions to manifest themselves, a threat to a value must first occur; again this excludes certain pathological cases, such as those arising from mental illness or particular episodes of irrationality that healthy people are known to occasionally go through.

Aristotle held it that the value of friendship is greater than love between man and woman; he thought that this was somehow a more noble kind of kinship of the souls that is more devoid of the passions of the flesh. Christianity holds love in the most general way, a positive emotion towards other people as fellows who share the same universal human condition, to be the greatest of all values. In more mundane terms, an athlete will value her training time more than other people will, and will be hurt by her close ones if they should disrespect that time; a philosopher will value his time dedicated to contemplation and free of everyday pressures more than an average person, and might become angry at systematic infringements of that time; people with families will value time spent with their children more than the optional professional achievements that require an extra commitment of time, thus when they are deprived of it, they will feel negative emotions. The connection between values and emotions is very direct and quite obvious indeed.

Given this close connection, one's negative feelings may actually provide a retrospective clarification of the priorities in one's values: we may not always be fully aware of where exactly in the hierarchy of our values certain values are, and by reconstructing the way we feel about certain choices in life that reflect value-preferences, we may be able to become cognisant of the placing of specific values. I might very well think that making my philosophical views on the role of conflict in the pursuit of truth is very important to me, so much so that I would take time away from my family to attend an event where I would have the opportunity to share those views with others. However, as the time of the event approaches and I plan to go away, I may increasingly feel negative about it, and may gradually realise that spending time with my family, even though nothing dramatic is happening, nor is my presence absolutely required, ranks slightly higher than sharing my philosophical views within my value-matrix. I thus might change my plans, and this will be important to me as long as I derive conclusions from this feeling; I might thus be able to adjust my perception of my own values in a way that would be difficult without negative

emotions. Everybody has such experiences, and they are relatively regular, so they are a straightforward and familiar way of illustrating the point, although there are probably starker and more exotic ones to quote, as well.

Negative feelings arise from a frustration of the achievement of values. Thus they are indicators of the values themselves, but they also connect values and a quest for the truth discussed in the previous section. What is the truth sought by a conflict between two people? Or two ethnic groups? It is the comprehensive truth about what each person or each group wants, for what reasons, what this means for what the other person or group wants, and whether or not these goals, when in conflict, can be negotiated. The truth is first a description of the needs and desires involved in the conflict, and these needs and desires may be so implicit and non-transparent to the subjects themselves, that the negative feelings are there to elucidate the truth to themselves. Morality is a dimension of much of human action. However, at the same time, it is also a quest for the truth about oneself; many times we will reflect on our own needs and expectations, our own true motives and goals in a pursuit, including a conflict with others, based on the unexpected negative emotions that we may have. An unusually hostile reaction to something one never thought bothered him so much might make one wander about one's own motives. If according to our own standards, for example, it is not reasonable to want a career goal at the price of spoiling an important collegiate relationship, and we find ourselves reacting with rage towards someone in a way that threatens to end the relationship, over a career goal, sometimes we will surprise ourselves. Those prone to reflection will later consider the priorities and values, and adjust them accordingly; sometimes we will find that the career goal was the truth about our conflicts with others in other cases as well, or that we are motivated by career achievement more than we would rationally admit to ourselves. Without negative emotions, the truth about conflicts would often remain undiscovered.

Only in the contemporary political philosophy is it considered relatively novel to discuss emotions as rational, and emotions as pathways to the truth, especially negative emotions. Psychology traditionally knows about these features of emotions, as do most real people in the everyday urban societies. Psychoanalysis has boomed over the past several decades not only because people had read Freud and Adler, but because it was apparent to them that by having an impartial, trained observer follow their emotions they could find our more about the inner parts of themselves that they were otherwise unaware

of. Psychoanalysis is capable of uncovering our values and the truth about ourselves and our conflicts at least as much as the truth about our feelings, and this is not because psychoanalysis is ingenious (although arguably it is), but because the truth is a property of feelings — they mean something, they are not accidental, irrational, and should not be discarded. In other words, they serve a cognitive purpose on various levels, and the rationalist reductionism through the attempts to rationalise emotions, or to explain them away through rational reasoning, in fact deprives us of a cognitive tool that reason alone cannot supplement.

Assuming that everything said so far in this section is intuitive and fairly straightforward, let us go one step further and radicalise the argument that emotions are carriers of knowledge about the truth and clarifying agents for values. Let us examine the claim that not only do emotions indicate the order of values, but the intensity of the emotions indicates the significance of the values; the more intense the emotions, the more deeply internalised the values are, and the higher they are in the personal value system.

The radicalised argument implies that a mild reaction to a value suggests, in principle, that the value is recognised, but that it is not very high in the value system; an intense emotional reaction, such as a negative reaction to a violation of the value, indicates that the value is higher in the hierarchy. Now this is a statement that needs to be qualified by certain additional elements. *First*, different people react to things with different emotional intensity, including equally important things in their lives, so the intensity of values cannot be unequivocally quantified based on the intensity of emotional reactions to them. *Secondly*, the intensity of emotions often varies in the same subjects based on the environment, various external circumstances, general mood, other events in the day, state of rest and health, etc. *Thirdly*, emotions can sometimes be muted by extremely strong interests or rational considerations: if in exchange for compromising a highly important value for a person that person is offered something else that is equally important, or several other things that, in sum, equal the personal importance of the value that is being sacrificed, the emotional reaction, while still present, may be considerably muted. Thus, it seems far too theoretically risky to say that we can judge people's adherence to their values based on their emotional reactions by quantifying the importance of the value based on the intensity of the emotion. Let us consider briefly those three qualifiers.

To the *first qualifier*, while it is true that different individuals have different intensities of emotional reactions, both positive and negative, to the

same stimuli, to judge the degree of adherence to values by a person (or a collective subject, whether an interest group, an ethnic one, or some other collective), one needs to consider just the history and a general description of the emotional landscape of that person, or that group. For example, consider two ethnic groups with a history of conflict over a strip of land. Their conflict ranges through centuries, and any specific generation likely knows only a part of the truth about how the animosity and the "age-long" struggle had come about and what their meaning is. Emotional reactions become confused or muted by various trade-offs between tradition and progress, conservative and modern ways of life, regional integrations, external political influences, the media, etc. With time, the dragged-on conflict becomes increasingly opaque to its proponents, and a need arises to understand the conflict again. Again, one looks at the emotions when certain values are tested: will people react with anger at the proposition that a part of their territory is taken away in exchange for good relations with the other group? Will they allow that "soft" leaders emerge who will take the group into a seemingly inferior position vis-à-vis the other group? Will there be a violent reaction if the church or religious beliefs are compromised by the state so as to accommodate the other group? The list of questions goes on until as many important issues are captured as is practicable.

Sometimes the emotional reactions are mild where observers expect them to boil over, such as was the case with some countries when loss of part of their territory was at stake in exchange for the new generations living on a more cooperative level with neighbours. In other communities, even placing the same issue on the deliberative agenda is considered as equal to a declaration of war on the other community. Where the stakes are high, and the conflict concerns the values that relate directly to the identity of a community, emotional reactions are more violent, and perhaps there is no better place in the world to illustrate this than Jerusalem, where the religious claims of the three religions continue amidst a state of chronic warfare that has enveloped all aspects of everyday life. Despite the expenditure of energy on the constant lookout for threats, in all three communities the emotional reactions to any suggestion that threatens the core values are extremely pronounced.

True, different individuals and different groups have a different mentality vis-à-vis the emotional response to threats to values, but what really matters with regard to the first qualifier to my intensity of emotions thesis is how the emotional reactions of the same individual or group fare with respect to various

values. Even docile individuals or groups will react with various degrees of emotional intensity to threats to different values, depending on the place of those values in their value systems, even though their emotional reactions in absolute terms might overall be considerably milder than the reactions of another person, culture, or subculture.

The *second qualifier* is to the point of differences in emotional reactions within the same individual or group depending on external and internal circumstances and state of mind. This, again, is true, but the circumstances that influence the variation of the emotional reaction are by definition temporary: a group might be dazed by a sudden windfall in economic performance or a major foreign policy success, if the community concerned is a nation, and might react with less intensity to a proposed loss of territory; however, in the longer term, the variation will check itself and the reaction will return to its normal level. A person might react with less vigour to a political intrusion into one's religious community, a threat to the church, for example, if this comes at a time when one is preparing for a major pilgrimage, and is overwhelmed with joy at the prospect. However, upon return, the reaction to the structurally threatened religious community will rise to its expected level. Someone will obviously react less negatively to somebody parking their car in that person's reserved parking spot, if this happens on a day when one starts in an exciting new job, but once the excitement is over, if the parking problem persists, the reaction will rise in intensity. In short, people and groups do have a certain degree of emotional reaction to certain values that are more or less important to them, and while these reactions might vary diachronically, over time, depending on a number of circumstances, if they are observed in a sufficient time span (reasonably long, in any case), they will show a pattern of regularity that will be proportional to the place the respective values occupy in their value systems. Thus the second qualifier has a very limited impact on my intensity of emotions thesis.

The third qualifier is perhaps theoretically the most challenging. It suggests that people tend to trade off their values for other values. This is true enough, at least in many cases, but there are two ways to diminish the impact of the qualifier. First, if values are traded off for other values, then the former value is in fact replaced or pushed down in the value system by another value — hence the emotional reaction to a threat to the initial value may be muted, because it no longer occupies the place it used to, and now the emotional reaction to compromising the new value might be stronger. This is a strictly

logical response, but it leaves something aside, though it may be difficult to pin-point it exactly. The response, admittedly, is in the rationalist tradition, merely proving that the idea that emotions reflect values not only in kind, but also in intensity and importance, is logically sound, and that in real life, when it seems false, in fact it remains sound because the values have changed. This does not always seem convincing. Thus I should like to first criticise my own response to the third qualifier, while maintaining that it is rationally, or logically, a sufficient response, and then attempt a broader response that would be more convincing in a more comprehensive context.

It is certainly true that some people are able to juxtapose values in ways that allow them to attach different levels of importance to the same values depending on circumstances and what other values they are able to embrace instead. When put formally, the idea seems somewhat challenging for the intensity of emotions thesis. However, in practice this is quite a trivial scenario that we are only too familiar with from our everyday experiences. People will sometimes be quite willing to advocate the value of integrity of their profession, and when their professional judgement is over-ridden by someone else's, their superior's or those of their colleagues, they will feel hurt. Some of the same people will, however, readily accept their professional judgement being ruled out, even if they know that it is correct, and sometimes even if they know that the other judgement is bad, even damaging, if this humbleness is part of their quick way to promotion. Some will even do so for money. Others will allow the bad judgement of their lover to prevail without feeling any hurt. All of this happens because the values are being switched in the value-system; this does not mean that the initial values are excluded from one's mental value-network, but rather that they are pushed down to make room for another value. Another person may mean so much to me that I might be able to compromise my professional integrity and support that person's claim to a position or duty that I know requires more experience, dedication or skill than she has. Similarly, I may be in the position to write a paper review for publication for a colleague in a way that will make his paper go through and be printed, while I honestly believe that it should be subject to serious methodological revision. However, if asking for major revision would mean offending the colleague, and this all occurs within an academic system that does not really reward honesty in reference-writing and where few people adhere to the standards of sincere judgement, then the problems I might cause to the colleague (who could publish the paper elsewhere without revision)

and the spoilt relationship that this would give rise to might be too much trouble. In other words, I will write a commending review for an average paper, knowing that this is of little consequence within the circumstances, because, although I hold my professional integrity dear, I consider the value of friendship or collegiate cooperation more important. Some people will do this; some will not. Those considered obnoxious in the academic profession are in fact those who consider their academic integrity as paramount, and value it above their personal relationships, or some other values, such as, in some cases, benevolence to others in need (this also needs to be taken into account quite seriously in such cases). So, when I write the review, I will not feel as negative feelings as I would if I had written the truth about its methodological quality. Thus, my truth, the truth of my feelings, is different from the material truth about my opinion of the paper. This is how values become juxtaposed, and then the emotional reactions migrate from one value to another.

The problem with this scenario is that in everyday encounters we tend to ascribe value to coherence and consistency in the behaviour of others, and that, once the shifting of values is seen as a normal way in which moral education functions and people behave, this seriously threatens the predictability and stability of social relations. If we do not want to encourage such shifts, we must find another way to account for the problems in changes in people's reactions. A particular reason for this is that I am here discussing the role of emotions in the constitution of morality, and morality requires stable reactions and stable values. While moralities may change over time, this is always a collective process, and it usually takes long periods of change, which include substantial changes in the circumstances and quality of life of the referential context, namely group or nation. However, when people individually shift their values and compensate for them rationally based on interest, such as receiving benefits in exchange for giving up on their proclaimed principles, this usually takes the form of behaviour that we would *prima facie* label as immoral.

One of the moral critiques of democratic politics is largely based exactly on this perception of immorality, where politicians go to elections with one set of principles and vows, and then receive kick-backs from businesses or various interest groups in exchange for reneging on their principles. However skilfully they later justify this reneging (this typically takes the form of references to broader community interests, not immediately visible at the time when the promises were made), they rarely escape making the impression that they are acting immorally. The entire realm of corruption, in fact, is a class of cases of

value-switching in this way, and as long as corruption cannot be considered a form of moral conduct, the logical response to the qualifier that I gave earlier, though logically sound, is practically insufficient. Let us look for a broader explanation, then.

I shall resort here to another logical rejoinder that may have more acceptable practical consequences. Namely, the qualifier states that people will sometimes react emotionally differently to moral challenges, or challenges to their specific values, because their rational considerations will lead them to mute their response, or they will have an interest that prevails. In other words, the emotional reaction — it is presupposed by the qualifier — stands in a certain qualitative and quantitative relationship with the value, and if there were no outside factors or rational calculations of interest, supposedly any violation of the value would generate certain negative emotions. However, when a non-emotional addition is present, when rational calculations of interest are superimposed on values, then the emotional reactions might be muted in appearance, or those emotions might even not be felt, because the interest might be so great to overwhelm the individual or group. This is true, but it only proves the point that emotions, as long as they are allowed to play their course, indicate the presence of values, and fairly reliably quantify the value in terms of its place in the value system, based on the intensity of the emotional reaction. The fact that, once emotions are subdued by other things, such as deliberate rational pressure to include certain interests, the emotional reactions will be different, does not make the initial thesis false, but rather reinforces it: consistent moral behaviour is not only compatible with emotional as well as rational content, but it is genuinely motivated and, in a way, steered by emotions; the involvement of "strict" rational oversight might actually cause corruption of the moral values as least as much as it can contribute to a detached feeling of abstract moral duty. Rationality is as likely to be a problem for the integrity of values as it is to generate some normative attitudes that ought to stabilise values.

This consequence of the rational obstructions of values (and the subject here are specifically moral values, of course) is confusion in what we call "moral intuitions". Often the simple uneducated people will have a clearer concept of the right and wrong, and will be able to make moral decisions quicker and with less agony than the more educated folk. The habit of including rational constructs in the perceptions of one's own moral values, the sensibility for a "tempering down" of values based on consequential reasoning and additional

considerations, the analysing of moral intuitions to the point when they become torn-apart normative statements with which one no longer knows what to do, are all consequences of the rationalisation of moral emotions. Look at heroic stories from the past: people gave their lives to keep their word, even though there might have been optimal alternatives. They kept their promises regardless of the cost, and when they did not, they felt serious punishment from their conscience. The concept of rational choice-based decision-making was still unknown in moral matters, but today, with the hegemony of rationalism in all areas of life, rational choice has imposed itself as the only legitimate method of deciding about rights, duties, "entitlements", even the moral dimensions of personal relationships.

From what has been said so far one could justifiably infer that emotions are not just another reliable way of telling about one's values, apart from rational considerations (including a rational analysis of one's views and behaviour), but that in fact they are the primary indicator of values, while reason may contribute to or deduct from our ability to determine the values one holds. While an honest rational account of which values one holds and why so is clearly the most straightforward way to share them, reason can be a factor of corruption of the values. When moral values are concerned, then calculation in the face of *prima facie* emotional reactions to moral challenges often takes the form of moral compromise, sometimes corruption itself. However, this inference about the exclusivity of emotions as indicators of values omits an important role rationality has to play in the realm of values. Many values are internalised based on rational analysis. Such are the practical values arising from experience: if one has found out from experience that generally it is beneficial to stick to one's earlier plans and resist any emotional urges to change them at the last minute, then this becomes a living principle that one adheres to based on a rational analysis of one's experience, and often does so in the face of flying emotions that pull to the contrary course of action. Consistency is a value that is not without its moral significance, yet it is one that people typically arrive at in highly rational ways. There are numerous values that give rise to principles whose application in real life involves confronting emotions. Such values, such as perfectionism in one's professional performance, observance of the procedural rights of people in various administrative matters, the keeping of commercial secrets even in situations that are morally challenging from the point of view of everyday morality, all have a moral face, which means that there is a part of our morality that is strictly rational, governed

by principles arrived at by inductive or deductive reasoning. Thus, I do not wish to suggest that emotions are fundamentally formative of the values that one embraces; if emotions were to be the main constituents of values, then it is questionable what sort of morality we would get, because emotions are essentially spontaneous reactions, whilst as I said earlier on morality is mostly about bringing out spontaneity under control and into some kind of predictable order of things, based on shared standards. The content of our morality is in large part generalised from collective experience, and it is a product of our rationality, not of our emotions. However, the dynamism of living that morality depends heavily on our emotions, and it is highly dubious whether we would be capable of genuine moral action without the appropriate moral sentiments. These sentiments develop *post festum*, after certain values are already there, but rationalising the way in which the morality works, and turning moral sentiments as the appropriate impulses for moral action into reductionist rational constructions such as "rights", "entitlements" and "legitimate expectations", overarches the whole structure of moral behaviour and prejudices the dynamic aspect of showing and triggering our moral responses to various situations. That, in essence, is what emotions are for in moral action. They are the catalysts, the fuel of our morality as a practical activity; they even help internalise norms that arise from values, although the values themselves, at least a majority of restrictive moral values, are formed and posited as socially acceptable mainly experientially, through generalisations, thus entirely rationally.

In short, the right and wrong are subject to culture-formation, and thus to learning, which is to a large part rational. At the same time, acting out our morality spontaneously is at least as much if not more a matter of the play of unhindered moral emotions as it is a matter of rational processing.

The collective introjections of individual responsibility

Can one be responsible for one's emotions? This is an issue one needs to discuss very clearly, because it largely determines the degree to which one can have moral responsibility in the context where we have posited common morality here. Assuming that our moral upbringing is set, and that our moral sentiments account for much of the dynamics of our moral action, the responsibility for triggering certain types of action or failing to do so comes close to moral responsibility in most morally challenging situations.

Assuming that the motivation to perform morally arises from emotional, rather than strictly rational causes (as well as that emotions themselves are not entirely irrational), the difference between performing and not performing in a morally challenging situation will in fact come down to the difference in motivation, both in its quality, and in its quantity. To perform, one must have adequate emotions engrained through the upbringing and advanced socialisation, and these emotions must be strong enough to motivate the person to act — for example, to make a sacrifice. Clearly some people will make the sacrifice, some will not. Let us consider an everyday work ethic type of situation.

Person A and person B are both professional philosophers. They both pursue a similar type of philosophy, and have similar workloads at most times. Both of them have contracts or verbal agreements with three journals whereby they have promised to finish papers at an adequate level of quality by a certain date. Both realise, after they have made these agreements (which cannot be changed, because the deadlines are pressing on the editors, as well), that they are at the very limit of their physical and mental capacity to try to complete all three tasks, and that it would take an average of 12 effective working hours per day to fulfil the promises.

Both A and B have three possible choices: either they will stick to their promise and try to complete all three papers, or they will reduce the workload and decide which one or two promises to fulfil, whilst reneging on the third one, or they will simply become overwhelmed with pressure and decide to give up on doing any papers. Let us say that A decides to go for all three papers, whilst B reneges on the agreement with one editor, and tries to do his best with two papers. If they both manage to complete their tasks with reasonable quality, it would then follow, given the presumed similar level of ability, that both could have written all three papers, but one of them decided not to try because it was too difficult. In short, A was more motivated to fulfil the promise, say because he felt a personal responsibility towards all three individual editors and visualised their circumstances with their deadlines approaching more vividly than did B. A's actions were thus at least *prima facie* morally sounder than B's. As a result, the third editor failed to produce the journal in time and encountered consequences arising from B's failure to write the third paper. Is B truly morally responsible for failing, and to what extent?

Let us assume that A is a British academic and B is an Italian academic. They both come from different cultural backgrounds, where the latter is

accustomed to more relaxed terms of work, and the emotions responsible for triggering moral action in the area of work ethic are simply not as strong and widespread as they are in the former's community. The former is used to working under pressure, and comes from an environment where failing in the work ethic causes strong feelings of guilt; he is thus emotionally much more strongly predisposed to go for the complete fulfilment of his obligations. The latter is socialised in a society where the work ethic is not the most important thing in life, where being late for meetings is not considered a serious matter, and where promises of deadlines and the amount of work to be done are perceived as something minor; consequently, in this environment failing in the work ethic only causes mild passing discomfort, not a full-fledged feeling of guilt. B has done two of the three papers, he considers himself quite responsible, because he could have done only one, and in fact some of his colleagues he can immediately think of would probably decide that they could no longer muster the inspiration to do any writing under such pressure. Thus, he does not feel guilty. A, on the other hand, is relieved that he has completed the three papers and reconsiders his judgement of his abilities within a given time, deciding not to place himself in a similar situation ever in the future. He feels relieved at the fulfilment of duty, but does not consider himself particularly virtuous for that; for him, finishing all three papers in time was part of being professional and was to be expected.

The emotional set-up of both philosophers essentially predetermines their levels of motivation. They have different models of work ethic, with differing emotional tags; thus their different attitudes towards the assignment merely reflect the learned ways of feeling about the obligations arising from the contracts. If the relevant segments of learned sentiments and views were juxtaposed between them, A might have acted the same as B did, and B would have done as A did, if only the environmental and formative factors were switched. B's failing was not the result of any bad intention, of bad character, but simply of a different value system giving rise to different emotions as fuel for moral action, in this case work ethic. To what extent, then, is B morally responsible as an individual?

The cult of individual responsibility, which is nourished in liberal societies, would imply that both A and B have the same responsibility, which, rationally, follows from their signing of the contracts or promising that they would do something, and thus should have acted to fulfil the

promise on those rational grounds, regardless of what emotions they might or might not have at the time. This is considered the discipline that makes it possible to follow the demands of rationalistically conceived morality.

The problem with this view is that it is not even theoretically translatable into reality if we agree that emotions are the fuel for moral action. The cult of responsibility (which at this stage can be labelled "The Cult") implies that B has the responsibility, but B does not feel it that way, neither does his community, and the emotions that must steer him to exert himself are simply not there. Rationally, he might agree with the Cult; practically, he will not be able to live by the Cult's credo. The community, his mindscape and his real values simply do not propel him sufficiently to make it possible for him to reach the rationalistic threshold of personal responsibility. He continues as before, and nothing changes. This is a fact witnessed today by the significant inter-cultural differences in the feelings of duty in work ethic regardless of the increasing rule of international academic standards that are based on certain universal rational expectations and measures. The ideal might be taken from one setting that is considered particularly productive, and than rationalised to what is believed to be a universal standard; the reality continues to show that whatever the standard, if it is not matched by energy and motivation in the people who are supposed to live by it, it will remain just a standard, nothing else.

Perhaps this example seems trivial. Let us, then, consider a more serious scenario along the similar principled lines: do empathy, or sympathy, as moral emotions that surely trigger some of the most serious types of moral actions, including dramatic cases of sacrifice, function structurally and dynamically the same as A's and B's work ethics?

Workers active in trade unions tend to be systematically sensitised to workers' rights issues, both when they apply to their own industry, and to those of other workers. They participate in meetings, training sessions and campaigns that make them understand the plight of other workers when they are laid off or underpaid. Thus when there is industrial action in remote industries, they will tend to sympathise, even when this produces more general consequences for their own industry, which might impact adversely on them. In some countries, such as Australia, dock workers occasionally go on strike, and given the extent to which local trade depends on sea freight, such industrial action, when protracted, brings small businesses on the mainland to their knees. The workers affected by the stalled trade show

an unusual level of sympathy for the strike, while most of the population is antagonised.

Members of church communities tend to be particularly sensitised to other people's suffering, both physical and mental, because the normative content of religion tends to focus on assisting others and on generalised benevolence. They are far more likely to develop a morality that will make them prone to sacrifice important things for others; at the very least, religious people hold their pride and personal dignity less precious than others do, and will often be ready to humiliate themselves on the surface of things to provide assistance to others. In more dramatic cases, they will give away assets, privileges, will take considerable risks, when the welfare of others is at stake, especially if others ask for help. In short, they will feel the impulse to moral action where many other people will not, even if they come from the same culture. The culture-relative nature of moral sentiments, which is commonplace in literature, while certainly a valid conclusion, is not everything to be said about sensitisation to moral feelings. There are emotionally transparent families, and those that psychologists label as families with "a lack of love". Children raised in the former are more likely to reach out to others in emotional ways, while those growing up in the latter will tend to resort to more detached and rational types of relations. The learning of emotions, which was discussed at some length earlier in the book, applies fully to the perspective of moral action, assuming as I did in this chapter that in principle emotions fuel genuine moral action. If this is so, what does it then mean for individual responsibility and moral autonomy?

In answering this question, it is again possible to adopt at least two various perspectives. First, one could start from a cold rational approach that life is hard, not everybody gets the initial emotional capital in their family or immediate community, but that one still, at least theoretically, has a choice of becoming a better or less good person, and should be able to utilise some social resources to sensitise oneself to others so that one is capable of acting morally. This is the view taken by the law and by the rationalistic moral rhetoric that dominates official social policy in most contemporary societies. All subtle differences acknowledged, one is nevertheless responsible for the way one acts towards others, and one's actions can be morally evaluated based on the description of the actions, rather than by taking into account all the numerous circumstances that result in that action.

The other approach takes into account the fact that the differences that contribute to one's ability to emotionally trigger moral action are not all that subtle as the rationalistic view takes them to be, in fact that they predominantly determine whether or not one will feel certain emotional impulses in certain situations, and thus, one cannot be held fully personally responsible for one's moral actions any more than one can answer for one's moral views. These views, and the corresponding emotions that charge their reflections in practice, are derived by emotional learning, which in itself is mostly independent of the individual's choices and decisions. If this is so, then personal responsibility for one's fulfilling or failing to fulfil specific moral expectations, or for "underperforming" in the moral context is severely limited, to say the least. The context of generation of one's moral capacities is fundamentally heteronomous, and thus the individual responsibility, as a relational category, cannot develop to a full extent given that it does not have a sufficient footing in personal autonomy. While discussions of heteronomy in the personal context, ranging from work ethic to the ethic of sacrifice in significant everyday moral situations, may not appear too convincing, because our common rhetoric in democracies is so much enveloped in the cult of personal responsibility *regardless* of the discussed circumstances, perhaps its extension into the realm of modern democratic politics will add colour to the argument.

Popular reactions that make possible democratic politics in general depend heavily on the presentation skills by the government, and in fact the control of the media and public discourse are the hidden goal of most overzealous rulers. Securing public support thus often boils down to continually presenting a state of affairs with which a government is associated as desirable. With time, the audience will adopt the stereotype and react to stimuli in the way they are presented in the public; for example, if massive privatisations of public infrastructure are the government's policy, they are likely to be presented in government-controlled media as a sign of progress and economic liberalisations that will bring betterment to everybody. After a while, people interviewed individually will tend to repeat the stereotype, even though the privatisations have impacted negatively on them or their neighbours. The policy that is presented as desirable, even though it hurts in the immediate personal experience, will tend to be conceptually adopted by people as "generally desirable". This is a phenomenon known in psychology as "the prejudice of familiarity": people who are continually exposed to a

stimulus — any stimulus — develop a preference for that stimulus.[13] This is an extremely important phenomenon for social learning in general, as it helps to explain long-term political manipulation and abuse.

For example, victims of hijacking who spend long time in captivity sometimes develop an emotional bond with and sympathy for their captors, and after being freed often describe those who had held them in understanding terms. In urban environments, people who are victimised by reckless urban development that severely compromises their immediate living environment, if the justifying rhetoric released by the government lasts sufficiently long, tend to develop a preference for it and describe the change exclusively in positive terms, by reference to a rise in real estate value and the like. The prejudice of familiarity works in the long-term exposure to violence: domestic violence in particular reflects the fact that victimised women usually refuse to separate from abusive husbands, or to initiate legal proceedings against them, choosing instead a continuation of the pathological relationship. If the victimisation by structural violence in society is sufficiently long and sufficiently strongly justified in public discourse, the prejudice of familiarity will set in there, too. Finally, if the rhetoric of individual blame, which is closely connected with the liberal cult of individual responsibility, is on air long enough, it will become the way most people think about responsibility, including their own, even when they are intimately, emotionally aware that they do not enjoy any significant degree of moral autonomy and thus cannot possibly be fully morally responsible for everything they do or do not do. The prejudice of familiarity is the main mechanism for the liberal collective introjections of individual responsibility regardless of the epidemic proportions of heteronomy; however, the dynamics of the introjections are helped by another phenomenon, equally familiar in the psychology of empathy — the generalised human propensity to feel their own blame. Hoffman puts this as a question in one of his subtitles: "Are humans machines for feeling blame?"[14] The propensity to interiorise blame is a disposition that serves the purposes of introjections perfectly: while the disposition to feel blame, and a certain natural inclination to do so, is in fact a capacity, not an actuality in the human condition, introjections constitute a deliberate policy of encouraging people to feel blame. The capacity itself, coupled with the propensity to act as a "machine for feeling blame" leads to the situation where people, rather than properly perceiving the causes of moral

[13] Hoffman, *Empathy and Moral Development*, chapter 8.

[14] Hoffman, *Empathy and Moral Development*, chapter 7.

controversy in the social environment, will tend to position the causes inside themselves if so conditioned and instructed. They will do so more easily than follow other instructions, because they have a natural tendency, empirically established by psychologists, to feel blame for things that they superficially "cause" or contribute to. The consequences of introjections of blame are devastating, as they lead to people factually being penalised (at least by social or inner moral sanctions, not necessarily by physical or institutional penalties) for things they feel blame for, but they are not really fully responsible for; once the social penalties penetrate their intimate emotional realm, the consequences that they generate are again blamed on the self. All this, naturally, contributes to feelings of less self-value, which undermines the coping strategies in situations of distress, and allows for an excessively high degree of disorientation; such an outcome makes the political constituents of liberal societies even more susceptible to political manipulation.

In fact, the propensity to blame oneself may be considered as a coping strategy itself, which helps with the understanding of situations that provide no other explanatory avenues for odd circumstances. One who is caught up in a hostile community without an apparent reason for the hostility, might well resort to a vague causal explanation that one "must have" caused it somehow, even without being aware of it, just in order to maintain a degree of system in the confusing experiences. The monstrosity of politically manipulating the natural propensity to blame oneself by deliberately triggering the prejudice of familiarity is a strategy regularly used in political governance. The pre-requisite for such a strategy is making people helpless first, or "disempowered" as the modern political discourse formulates the phenomenon.

For all of the above reasons, any pronounced public insistence on blame and individual responsibility ought to be treated as an indicator of possible authoritarian and manipulative strategies. The growing inability by the citizens of modern democracies to *externalise* guilt, to project it outside the self, whether it is guilt for an unjust social order, or for political corruption, or incompetence of public servants, doctors or teachers, or whatever other relevant type of guilt in the everyday experience of modern social interactions, appears to be one of the great social evils of our time. A manipulative society is highly restrictive in many not-so-obvious ways. The rhetoric of "liberty" can translate into a domination of the wealthy and politically violent over the majority, and a system based on "non-infringement of acquired liberties" may, in many instances, mean that a highly frustrating *status quo* is

untouchable. When somebody is a victim of structural violence, the culture of non-infringement of the liberties of those who exert such violence is identical to a complete disempowerment of those victimised. Respect of the acquired rights — a pragmatic principle adhered to by most functional societies — stabilises the social system, and this is truly a positive contribution to social functionality; however, this principle must never be confused with a status quo where the acquired privileges cause major structural victimisation and a progressive sequence of social re-stratifications that generate more and more de facto politically disempowered people. The most radical socialist authors have not shied away from advocating social upheavals to address structural violence arising from the status quo, but here, again, at least two major limiting factors must be pointed out. First, social upheavals, at least the controlled and essentially constructive ones (demonstrations to force a new election, for example), require the maturing of a fairly comprehensive set of intellectual and social circumstances. Secondly, social upheavals have an extremely bad historical record that they owe to the Marxist inspiration of social movements, which have turned most of them into true human tragedies, resulting in a lasting social and intellectual degradation of countries and nations. A new concept of social disagreement appears to be needed to address the ongoing collective introjections of guilt that turn people who are theoretically described as political constituents into mere passive and self-inhibited political subjects. Such a concept would entail a major and principled break with any tradition of Marxism as the most degrading historical handicap that could happen to the intellectual encapsulation of the issues of equality and social justice.

A viable concept and normative setting for collective political disagreement, or upheaval in the more radical form, is necessary because without it social victimisation will tend to produce only coping strategies that are themselves based on a massive amount of introjection of own-guilt for one's own social perils. This collective coping "script", encouraged by the social elites, is a common form of what I would consider a legitimate sub-type of social pathology in modern liberal societies.

Externalisation of responsibility as a challenge

The alternative that I suggest here is social rebellion against any type of domination and manipulative political power — a rebellion that is based

on an intellectual struggle to externalise guilt, to discuss its real sources, and contribute to a reflection on the realistic delimitations to the rhetoric of essentially comprehensively conceived and imposed individual guilt. The foundation for undercutting the ambitions of the Cult (of individual responsibility) is exploring the real reach of its highly valued conceptual basis, namely the idea of moral autonomy. If it is true, as most classical moral theories of responsibility entail, that without moral autonomy there is no moral responsibility, at least in principle, then the greatly reduced scope of morally autonomous action in modern societies certainly entails that the realm of individual responsibility has shrunk equally. This, if argued successfully, provides a theoretically sound basis on which to build the varying conceptions of political redress, including a civilised way of making governments go away. If most of the intellectual elite in a society is convinced persuasively enough that faults in the political system or a specific set of government policies are being masked by introjections of individual responsibility, then it sholud be possible to change governments without causing major damage and upsetting the entire democratic system. On an individual level, if these arguments are made successfully, they could provide for a liberating personal experience on a large scale — wherever a deliberate and systematic disempowerment has been encouraged to present itself as self-guilt, rather than the guilt of those who are doing the disempowering by manipulating structural violence.

To say this is not to absolutely deny the existence or relevance of individual responsibility. That would indeed be ludicrous, as clearly there are situations where individual responsibility is crucial. Most moral and religious traditions include an emphasis on asserting individual responsibility, to an extent. In fact, faith says much more about this, but I shall discuss this at more length in the next and last chapter. What the political introjection of responsibility in modern liberal societies does is deliberately *transgress* the reasonable limit of individual autonomy (and, by extension, of individual responsibility), with the result of stultifying initiative and self-respect, and factually increasing heteronomy through the paralysis of moral action caused by the collective introjections of guilt. Profoundly conditioned individuals, wired in a web of deep heteronomy of values and social expectations, fenced off from the reality of individual responsibility for their own moral actions by fears and threats, end up bearing a heavy burden of guilt cultivated by the numerous internalised tales of "autonomy".

A degree of individual autonomy can exist only within cultural value contexts that are transparent and where the collective expectations from the individual are clear. In the same manner as children may be expected to show responsibility for living up to the expectations of the parents, people can be expected to be responsible for living up to the norms of society, but only if those norms are not hypocritical and contradictory, and if there is no undercurrent of subliminal messaging telling people to act contrary to what the explicit norms say. The emotional "script" must be as clear as in the moral inductions in children. This, of course, can only be the work of honest social elites, and certainly not of manipulative power brokers. The role of social elites (including the political ones) is not just that of managers: it is primarily that of educators. Societies where elites see themselves as managers, and relegate the role of value-educators to someone else (including "the professionals"), nevertheless perform value inductions, but such societies, because of the nature of the values that are being induced, descend quite sharply in terms of social cohesion and common-sense morality.

While it may be said here that the deliberative concept of social rebellion against domination and structural violence is a weak proposition, as arguments do not have a proven track record when confronting power-hungry governments, the deliberative path is not as naïve as it might seem at first sight. The nature of political manipulation is deliberative; governments that use domination and collective introjections of guilt in modern societies no longer resort to guillotine or incarceration to control the opinions of their opponents; they prefer to turn those opponents into outcasts by generating a consensus as the ultimate form of social control, and they do so by controlling the public discourse. A rebellion against the control of this discourse is also deliberative; this, however, does not mean that it is without its risks: governments have been known to do everything in their power to establish control of the major media, and to quietly penalise intellectuals and journalists who threaten their version of progressive discourse. In many transitional democracies of today people lose their jobs because they oppose political domination on a deliberative level, and the ever changing, shrinking and expanding network of those who might be partners and interlocutors in such a deliberative effort is one of the unpredictable factors that generate uncertainty in the very intellectual project of confronting heteronomy disguised as autonomy. Feelings of self-blame are an important emotional safeguard for stable political domination, and for intellectuals to take on

these feelings and try to argue them into their rightful place (which means, in most cases, to diminish them considerably) is a considerable project that has something essential to do with being an intellectual and the role of intellectuals in a democracy.

Robert Solomon has another passage that applies well to my argument here. It reads:

> (…) the real problem with guilt is not so much the fact that it is hard to pin down (much less the fact that it is an emotion) but rather that it presupposes a sort of detachment and a sense of oneself that it is my whole object in this book to shake down. When we fail in this world (and inevitably we often do) we do not just fall short of our principles, and we do not just fail ourselves — the focus of all too much of our attention. We fail each other, and we fail ourselves ultimately only in terms of the others. Loyalty, honour, and the potential for shame are not just curious emotions, appropriate only for earlier epochs and societies, that have dropped out of our emotional repertoire. They are essential to that sense of justice that begins (perhaps also ends) with the realization that we are all in this together.[15]

If there is a mission of philosophers in democratising authoritarian societies, a mission for which many have sacrificed their freedom, fundamental rights, sometimes even lives, then in modern democracy with its more or less hidden tendencies to domination there is an equally important mission of philosophers to try to keep these tendencies in check at least on the public deliberative level. The feelings of loyalty, honour and the potential for shame apply to any project and any community involved in that project. Philosophers just may be the community behind the project of making sure that the rationalisations of moral emotions and morality as a whole, for which they are historically the most responsible, are re-cast in the proper light and context of moral importance. By so doing, the deliberative role of philosophy in modern democracy serves the political purpose of protecting the powerless (or the disempowered) from the continuous and devastating onslaught of rhetorical introjections of blame that perpetuate the most vicious form of structural violence in modern democracies, which is making people believe what is directly contrary to the truth about their lives and to their immediate moral sentiments.

---

[15] Solomon, *A Passion for Justice*, pp. 295–6.

V

HETERONOMY AND THE POSSIBILITY OF FREEDOM

Public and private moralities?

This chapter deals with the most important part of this book, and that is how the controversies of heteronomy and freedom can realistically be resolved. "Realistically" here means that they can be resolved theoretically, but in a way compatible with reality; a mere theoretical resolution, such as the assumption of a social contract, might be extremely elegant on paper, but, unfortunately, runs severely aground in everyday life, where the emotions, and the heteronomy that arises from the learning of values and emotions, are just inescapable. What I seek, therefore, is a way freedom can be conceived of with heteronomy acknowledged. I seek to explore whether freedom can be liberated from the dogma of autonomy as its prerequisite. This step, which I shall try to develop here, generates very serious consequences for the degree of personal responsibility ascribable to ordinary agents, as well as for the long-cherished philosophical distinction between the a priori attributes of morality and its substantive content. Discussions of consequentialism or deontic morality, for example, are essential to the methodology-centered ethics, yet they may well not have a place in an ethic that is capable of reconciling heteronomy and freedom. As an introduction to this attempt, which is, of course, certain to raise some eyebrows, I shall discuss briefly the way in which the methodology-centered moralities function and transform in the conduct of the everyday governance of

society. The matrix for this discussion will be the exceptional essay by Thomas Nagel, "Ruthlessness in public life".[1] Nagel's distinctions between private and public moralities reflect the characteristics of methodology-centered moralities that I hope might be overcome in a more substantively-centered ethic.

The distinction between private and public morality emerges in the realm between the private life of a citizen, with its ethical norms, and the life of a public official, whose duties as public official might be very different, and judged by different moral criteria, from his duties and life as a private citizen. What one faces in the moral arena as a private citizen is thus a matter of private morality; what one deals with in an official capacity is public morality. The most prominent question that arises here is whether or not as a public official one might morally justifiably do things that, if done by a private citizen, would be justifiably held morally reprehensible, even criminal.

History contains numerous examples of people acting on behalf of their countries or institutions in ways that would be inconceivable for a private citizen to consider morally justifiable: wars of aggression, killing of political and insurgent leaders and of civilians, manipulations of economic and environmental circumstances for the peoples far away, including nuclear experiments, make up just a small list of the misdeeds conducted in the name of general interest, "as public officials". None of the politicians involved in ordering "special operations" (often in fact assassinations) or "surveillance missions" (in practice, spying exercises) abroad would even think of killing someone in their private capacity or hiring an assassin to "neutralise" someone they have a problem with, nor would they normally consider installing a recording device in someone's home just because they suspect that person might be saying significant things about them. In all cases, including those where political leaders have been brought to international trial for the crimes they had committed as political leaders, the defense tends to rest on the assumption that they had an *obligation* to act in the interest of their country or their nation, this action being a crime when committed by an ordinary citizen. This argument in explaining public morality is known as *the theory of obligation*.

Nagel rightly points it out that "there is something" in the theory of obligation, despite its apparent moral flaws, for clearly the duties of a public official do sometimes militate against the basic moral principles that apply

[1] Thomas Nagel, "Ruthlessness in public life", in Nagel, *Mortal questions*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1979, pp. 75–90.

to private morality. This is why the public perception of responsibility of the most well-known politicians-criminals tends to emerge only in cases where the personalities of the bearers of public office are so strong and pronounced that they exceed the magnitude of their public role. Individual responsibility is translated into individual guilt most readily where such strong personalities are present; with bureaucratic leaders shy of the media and cloaked behind their mission, individual identities rarely make headlines and leaders are equally rarely called to answer for the crimes they have committed in their public capacity. In most cases, the moral and human cost of such crimes is ascribed to the impersonal forces of history or diplomacy, without the zeal necessary to establish the roles of individual choices in their making. For example, it is known that the German army became notorious for being first in modern warfare to use poison gas on the battlefield, in the Spring of 1915, and since then an audacious German conventional warfare tactic has become commonly expected; a certain stigma has been attached to the German Army after the use of chemical weapons in World War One. However, few people would be able to think of the specific name of the person responsible for issuing this order, while the crimes committed by the German Army in World War Two, when the Nazis were in power, are easily attributable to the known names of the Nazi regime. One could argue that in World War One the personalities behind the murderous policy of using chemical weapons were not strong enough to make headlines; thus they were not held individually responsible, and the crimes were ascribed to the entire German Army. In World War Two, the situation was very different, as the Nazi personalities were all over the world's press. In our time, even the unfounded suspicion that Iraq had chemical weapons (far from having actually used it against other countries) was sufficient to justify an international invasion of that country and subsequently what might well be described as the judicial murder of its leader, Saddam Hussein. This situation, where personalities exceed their roles in notoriety, is quite rare, and most crimes committed by countries go unpunished, because the individual responsibility is neither sought, nor does it ever become an issue for international justice.[2] The fact that individuals can successfully hide behind their public roles, or that they might unwittingly adopt a morality that they believe is the morality of their public role, which allows them to commit grave wrongdoings, highlights the issue of discontinuity between private and public moralities. If a sufficiently

[2] The first sentence of Nagel's essay, quite appropriately, reads: "The great modern crimes are public crimes".

strong case can be made for such discontinuity, then one has a major moral problem with governance in principle. This is the question that needs to be examined from the point of view of the types of morality in a methodology-centred perspective.

The most general methodological distinction between moralities is that based on consequentialist and deontic criteria. Consequentialist moralities justify actions based on the consequences they produce, and one particularly influential type of consequentialism is utilitarianism, which justifies actions by taking into account the sum of utility or benefit they produce not just for the agent, but for everyone concerned.[3] However, consequentialism is not necessarily utilitarianism; goals other than utility can be consequentially pursued, such as the maximisation of individual liberty, rights, autonomy, etc.[4] Unlike consequentialism, deontic morality arises from certain substantive principles concerning what the agent does, often quite regardless of the consequences, and judges the agent's moral integrity based on whether or not he observes these principles. Perhaps the best-known example of deontic morality is Kant's moral theory with its categorical imperatives of moral action. In the most general terms, Nagel summarises consequentialism as "concern with what will happen", and deontic morality as "concern with what one is doing".[5] He notes that both consequentialist and "action-centred" (deontic) morality play a role in our everyday thinking about our actions, and that they are not always symmetrical in our approach to situations that we face. According to Nagel, this interplay between the two types of morality

[3] This is the foundation of the utilitarian concept of "generalised benevolence", which as I mentioned earlier is quite different from that adopted in this book. My concept of generalised benevolence involves the positive intentional disposition towards the other members of the community, this disposition containing a significant emotional element; in other words, it is an extended notion of sympathy between members of the community. In utilitarianism, generalised benevolence is the desire to contribute to the best possible outcomes for everybody concerned, but with no necessary emotional component; quite an obnoxious utilitarian who does not care at all about one's neighbours can consistently be loyal to his philosophical principles and act based on generalised benevolence. This is a contrast to the notion of positive emotional disposition that makes communities more transparent, which I advance here.

[4] The difference here might be seen as terminological, however, because there is a stream of utilitarianism that broadens the concept of utility involved, so that "rights-utilitarianism", "liberty-utilitarianism" or "autonomy-utilitarianism" might arise. In this case, utilitarianism can be seen as coincident with consequentialism as a whole. This point, however, is not crucial to my argument.

[5] Nagel, "Ruthlessness in public life", p. 83.

"(…) result(s) in a certain balance that emphasizes restrictions against harming or interfering with others, rather than requirements to benefit them, except in cases of serious distress. For the most part it leaves us free to pursue our lives and form particular attachments to some people, so long as we do not harm others".[6]

The above lines are an almost perfect picture of the liberal view of communal morality. The first norm, discussed throughout this book, is freedom from interference (or harm from others), while the requirement of positive engagement with, and provision of assistance to others, is only secondary. The exception applies only in extreme circumstances, where our emotional reactions cannot be muted, namely in situations of "serious distress" of others. In other words, whilst my colleague is about to lose her job, and I find out about this, or even play a part in the redundancy by some organisational default, I am supposed to "stay put", and my liberal deontic ethic will only prevent me from taking any kind of pleasure in her misfortune. I am not ethically obliged, on this account, to try and prevent her being sacked. However, if she is in physical pain, suffering a seizure in the street, my emotional reaction is so strong that it is indeed my recognised duty to assist her in distress. This gradation of distress, in fact, amounts to a classic rationalisation of fellow-feeling away from most everyday situations where we can actually assist others. The balance is not necessarily so intimately connected with the distinction between deontic and consequentialist moralities: it can designate a relationship between one "action-oriented" morality and another deontic morality. Some cases might be considered to warrant assistance, while others do not, depending on the description of the cases, rather than taking into account their consequences, and the mentioned example is exactly a case in point. However, the situation becomes particularly illustrative when it does involve a distinction between deontic and consequentialist moral thinking.

The reason moral duties are mainly negative in the liberal context, and only exceptionally involve a positive engagement (in drastic cases of distress of others), is really in the interest-based concept of society that liberalism implicitly relies on, namely in the social-contract thinking that has been discussed in detail in the preceding chapter. The interest-based concept has its direct reflection in the consequentialist way in which one might think about one's role in society. Let us consider the same example as before, but with a slight amendment: my

[6] Loc. cit.

colleague is about to be fired, but I am not part of this process by organisational default; I have merely come to know that this is happening, and this is part of a more general package of, say, 50 redundancies in the company. While I may have a way of preventing this particular redundancy (for example, I know of certain procedural irregularities that, if made public, would stave off the termination of the contract), I also have reasons to fear that, should I cause trouble, I might very well be included in the package of the 50 redundancies to follow. True, if I lose my job, I have a private business to fall back on, and have sufficient property to live on the rents, but I like the job. Thus, my colleague faces an existential threat; she will find it very difficult to find work once she loses this job, for whatever reason; I, on the other hand, merely like the job, although my family and I do not depend on it. My dilemma is the following: should I help the colleague and risk losing my job. Clearly, if I do so, I will do a good deed, she will have more time to seek alternatives and might be able to avoid being fired for quite some time, while I may or may not lose my job, in either case not facing any major financial difficulty. On the other hand, I could just let things unfold the way they do, turn a blind eye on my colleague (presumably this does not qualify as "serious distress" by the lights of liberal theory, as it is not a particularly exceptional situation, nor is it life- or limb-threatening), and retain the job I like. The question for me *as the selfish individual*, envisaged by the social contract, is whether I have a positive moral *duty* to assist. Clearly, being selfish as I am, I rather would not, but I also hold certain moral values and I am keen to establish whether by not assisting I would violate them. The ethic Nagel describes — and indeed, while he does not particularly advocate it, instead simply assuming it, it is a common liberal ethic — entails that I probably do not have a duty to assist, my duties being predominantly negative. I do have a duty not to aggravate the situation, not to influence the decision that my colleague is made redundant, and the like, but I do not have a duty to sacrifice anything to assist her.

The whole situation is rather bizarre, of course. Every morally integrated person would intuitively hold it that, should I assist the colleague, I should do so without so much calculation, and certainly without agonising over whether I rationally must do it or not. The very fact that I do not want to do it reduces the moral value of my action, even if I end up assisting. My assistance should originate from feelings for the other person, from empathy with her, and from the need to support her by showing solidarity, to allow her to feel that she can "lean on someone". This is a wholly emotional relationship, and if it is marred by rational calculations, it ceases to be a scenario of true human solidarity.

What is at stake in the example is in fact making a sacrifice, and sacrifices are considered to have moral value as long as they are made in a spontaneous and uncalculated way. A calculated sacrifice ceases to be a sacrifice; it is a trade-off, and trade is fundamentally different from moral action. This is where the common idea that we do not have a moral obligation to assist others except in serious distress shows its pitfalls. If I am allowed to be a selfish and self-indulging individual who does not feel the need to assist others, and when I do assist, I do so only because I have learned that the situation is grave enough to require me to force myself to make some type of calculated sacrifice, then it seems that most people would agree that this truly is a sorry morality for a dignified human being. However, be it as it may, we can safely conclude, with Nagel, that a balance of deontic and consequentialist reasoning constitutes our common morality, although the balance itself may take different forms. Utilitarian consequentialism rules out selfishness, and, although frequently accused of it, is in fact an example of a philanthropic type of consequentialism: it requires only those actions that will maximise the utility (including happiness) of all or most people concerned.[7] It suffers from some well known problems, of course, including that, if utilitarianism was adopted consistently, then it would be acceptable to conduct a few summary executions to make thousands of other people happy or profiting in some way, but utilitarians usually prevent such conclusions by including a few substantive safeguards. For all of the above reasons, our private moralities are a complex mix of various deontic and consequentialist considerations, where not all of the latter are selfish (though many, admittedly, are), and those who mainly rely on utilitarian consequentialist reasoning may well be the least selfish of us all. What is important in either case, whether we are more or less selfish consequentialists, is that normally, our consequentialism is limited by deontic criteria that usually serve as value-based trasholds. One such trashold is justice.

Nagel's point is that utilitarians will not agree to summary executions however much happiness might result for thousands or millions of people,

[7] Jack Smart, for example, argued that people are like "buckets" into which happiness can be poured, and that the mission of a true utilitarian is to fill the buckets with as much happiness as possible. Clearly this type of consequentialism can hardly be accused of being misanthropic or egotistic in any way. Thus, I would tend to argue that, contrary to the common accusations, utilitarianism is the most noble type of consequentialism, including rights-consequentialism, autonomy-consequentialism, and other value-specific forms of consequentialism. See J.J.C. Smart, *Essays metaphysical and moral: Selected philosophical papers.*

because such crimes violate our basic intuitions of justice that are non-negotiable. In other words, they will not push their consequentialism *ad infinitum*, but will have it as a working moral doctrine within reasonable limits, and there is nothing wrong with it given that ethics is meant to be a guide for real life, not a removed and infinitely consistent logical system. Nagel's further point is that, for most people, their private moralities will be relatively severely constrained by deontic principles, and they will generally hold it important to keep their promises, to cherish their friendships, to be loyal to their family and close ones, regardless of the utility or a lack of it that might ensue from such personal strategies. In most of our private lives, whether we see ourselves as primarily selfish contracting individuals or not, the degree of consequentialist thinking will be severely limited by deontic considerations.

The situation is quite different when it comes to our acting on behalf of public institutions.

> When we apply the same dual conception to public institutions and activities, the results are different. There are several reasons for this. Institutions are not persons and do not have private lives, nor do institutional roles usually absorb completely the lives of their occupants. Public institutions are designed to serve purposes larger than those of particular individuals or families. They tend to pursue the interests of masses of people (…). In addition, public acts are diffused over many actors and sub-institutions; there is a division of labor both in execution and in decision. All this results in a different balance between the morality of outcomes and the morality of actions.[8]

Public responsibility requires that consequentialist reasoning is applied much more comprehensively than private responsibility, which means that public officials will be justified, on this account, in taking actions that, if taken in their capacity as private citizens, would be considered ruthless to say the least, and criminal at the upper ebb.

> Public policies and actions have to be much more impartial than private ones, since they usually employ a monopoly of certain kinds of power and since there is no reason in their case to leave room for the personal attachments and inclinations that shape individual lives.[9]

[8] Nagel, "Ruthlessness in public life", p. 83.

[9] Nagel, "Ruthlessness in public life", p. 84.

One major requirement of the holders of public office is that they act largely impersonally, and that they fend off any impulses to merge their official decisions with their personal "attachments and inclinations". When private relationships are allowed to play a direct or indirect part in the official decision-making (or, far more so, in the official personnel policy), this is considered as political corruption and, in functioning democratic states, ought to lead to impeachment or resignation and the subsequent pursuit of criminal responsibility. The strictness with which the impersonality and objectivity of public policy is enforced is what gives it any leeway it may have in conducting actions that are in public interest, yet that violate certain action-centred moral rules as they are familiar from private morality. The concern here is not whether or not the impersonality and independence from private affiliations is in fact maintained or not in some or all of the existing democracies, as this is an issue that receives its qualification as political corruption, which, depending on the circumstances in the particular political system, may or may not be prosecuted. The main concern here is, given the *requirement* of impersonality and objectivity for public officials, what leeway this gives them in the area of conventional private morality, namely to what extent and in what areas the actions that, according to common private morality would be considered unacceptable, are expected and acceptable when their agents are public role-bearers. In other words, if one is a politician of integrity, what moral rights, if any, he has, that he would not have as a private citizen. The answer suggested by Nagel is essentially that he has rights to think consequentially beyond many thresholds normally imposed by deontic principles.[10]

The larger interests that he represents seem to allow the holder of public office to speculate about aggregate interests and act in ways he has reason to believe will benefit such interests, regardless of many action-centred bars. This, supposedly, includes the breaking of promises and reneging on one's word, sacrificing individual people's careers, sometimes freedom or lives, and, in more malignant cases, not admitting one's own mistakes for the "greater" purpose of remaining in power (the rationale usually being that the alternative political elite would be detrimental to public interest). Once this diabolic dialectic of mission develops beyond a certain point, it becomes all-absorbing, and allows the holders of public office, especially those in high places in the political establishment, to act as though the ordinary norms of morality do not apply to them at all. This sometimes progresses to the degree of disrespect

[10] Loc. cit.

for the constitutional and legal norms, and where political power is coupled with a comprehensive grip on public opinion and the media, it can lead to real dictatorships wrapped in democratic guise.

A similar line of argument is advanced by Nagel (and is considered natural by many a liberal observer) when he writes that the legitimacy of public office morally justifies actions that would be morally unjustifiable *because they are illegitimate*, when they are conducted by a private individual. He discusses this on the example of taxation as a form of wealth-redistribution, which, if conducted by an armed robber who earns a small annual income, would be considered a crime, yet when it is systematic and conducted by institutions (which may take more from the wealthy than any robber would), it is legitimate and justifiable. Startlingly, Nagel goes one step further when he writes that voluntary redistributions, such as cheritable donations, that would conform to the same value-matrix as the enforced redistribution by the state, are illegitimate because they would be too personal and would thus create "disturbances to normal" (presumably selfish) relationships between people, while, when such redistributions are enforced by the state, this is somehow less of a disturbance of the "natural" constellation of relationships.

> (…) both theft and charity are disturbances of the relations (or lack of them) between individuals and involve their individual wills in a way that an automatic, officially imposed system of taxation does not. The results achieved by taxation in an egalitarian welfare state would not be produced either by a right of individual expropriation or by a duty of charity. Taxation therefore provides a case in which public morality is derived not from private morality, but from impersonal consequentialist considerations applied directly to public institutions, and secondarily to action within those institutions. There is no way of analyzing a system of redistributive taxation into the sum of a large number of individual acts all of which satisfy the requirements of private morality.[11]

I find this argument extremely illuminating of the role of autonomy in common morality, and this, I feel, justifies the extensive quoting of Nagel here. The passage above clearly reflects a degree of discomfort with intimate and emotionally transparent relations between members of the community, where "individual wills" that are constructively intentionally disposed to each

[11] Nagel, "Ruthlessness in public life", p. 88.

other are at work. Nagel starts from the standard liberal assumption that the normal status of human will in society is self-centered, and thus concludes that theft and charity are basically symmetrical disturbances of the normal state of affairs. He thus ends up with a morally paradoxical conclusion that it is better to be forced to give something away for the poor than to do it out of empathy, voluntarily. While his specific reasons for this view are not elaborated here, they are presumably connected with the idea that charitable donations would challenge the very assumption (which is nowhere argued for, much less proven) that people are "normally" selfish. Charity is an example of autonomous action in the largely heteronomous world, and it is at least strange that it should be considered less desirable than coercive taxation simply because it cannot be "systematic".

A more principled problem with this argument is that it is circular: it posits certain assumptions, and then disqualifies alternatives on the ground that they do not conform to the assumptions, namely the impersonality and detachment characteristic of the institutional mediation of human relations. While such mediation is certainly necessary in many situations, it is not the model for any type of relationship, and specifically it does not have a monopoly on legitimacy in moral matters. If it did, then the customary insistence on autonomy as a pre-requisite for the possibility of morality would have to be given up, as the systematic role of public institutions stultifies individual initiative and blankets out the moral importance of acts of personal generosity and sacrifice. In short, the institutions-centered approach advanced by Nagel suggests that to act voluntarily and out of internal impulse is not morally superior to acting under coercion. This appears completely counterintuitive, given what we are all used to thinking of as proper moral evaluations of actions. Namely, the approach violates the value of virtue and describes it as a disturbance of "normal", selfish human relations, which then has serious consequences for our conception of the role of individual morality in social affairs in the first place. If social affairs are supposed to unfold on the assumption that all agents are amoral, and if they are to be regulated by a detached system of institutions, then there would be no need for personal morality in the public role. This perspective transgresses the limits of public roles: if systematic solutions are ideal, then why not have an amoral agent in the public role governing the lives of equally amoral agents in private roles? This would be a perfectly institutionalised system devoid of any presupposition of

virtue or individual intimate perceptions of moral precepts, and in fact such a system is in operation in some prisons and mental asylums.

Once the view of society is devoid of the need for virtue, the logical consequences for public morality are devastating, because then the limits to consequentialist thinking when in a public role would rest with exclusively rational action-oriented moral reasoning. One might be able to posit a certain substantive value, for example a certain form of international integration, with its expected economic and other benefits to one's country, as the top value in one's moral reasoning about what one is doing, and might hence trample on virtually every aspect of customary human decency in the belief that the pursuit of such a goal justifies almost all else. Alternatively, one might be so conditioned by one's own experiences that one might apply one's individual or private morality in a leading political role, the consequence of which would be major pressure on all other, more widespread types of morality in the community. Both these and many other consequences amount to various types of dictatorship. The superimposition of a rational redistributive or more broadly regulative "system" upon the traditional conception of human virtue makes almost any action by those in public roles possible and legitimate, regardless of the deontic break to consequentialist thinking, simply because the nature of the deontic break can be just about anything. To serve as an effective deontic break, the action-centred principle needs to conform to widespread and well-established principles of morality in the community, which those in public roles are supposed to share. Their idyosincratic moralities cannot serve as deontic breaks, even if they are deontic by nature. One may truly believe in a Nietzschean ethic of nihilism, with the principle that all those weak enough to be falling through in society ought to be pushed to fall through quicker. This is a deontic ethic, but it is unacceptable substantively by the criteria of traditional morality in most societies, thus it cannot serve as a denotic brake for action in public office.

Towards the end of his essay, Nagel brings the discussion into perspective again by concluding that public officials will necessarily be constrained by strong substantive moral reasons, and that there will always be a reasonable break to their consequentialism. The individual responsibility that he projects into public office essentially rests with the individual's decision to enter into a public role, and to leave the public role, for "(a)s with any obligation, this step involves a risk that he will be required to act in ways incompatible with other obligations or principles that he accepts. Sometimes he will have to act

anyway. But sometimes (…) there is no substitute for refusal and, if possible, resistance".[12] In other words, given that public roles are so different from private ones, and that their moralities correspondingly differ, the ultimate form of impact private morality will make on the individual's public role will take the form of "resisting, if possible". This is a weak scenario indeed, as one can imagine people caught up in major warfare who are ordered by their superiors to institute policies of war crimes which they feel that they cannot refuse (whether for predicted consequences to themselves or to their close ones). Would this situation be describable as one where resisting is not possible, and thus it is moral to engage in major crimes? Perhaps on charitable interpretation we could conclude that Nagel's concluding argument suggests exiting the public role where one cannot reconcile basic private moral intuitions with the requirements of the role, but this also leaves us with a philosophical problem unsolved.

From the above discussions it would follow that public morality is so essentially separate from private morality that one is always broken in half between one's capacity as a public role bearer and one's capacity as a private citizen and moral person in the conventional sense. This conclusion makes things very complicated and very dangerous, because it tacitly admits that public roles themselves morally justify ruthlessness — this is why Nagel's essay is entitled "Ruthlessness in public life". The philosophical consequences are even graver: once the public role is separated from private morality, and the responsibility of its bearer is located only in its acceptance or rejection of the role in certain threshold situations, moral values such as virtue are excluded from public life, or at least subjugated to an impersonal "system", the system not being one of morality, but of administrative regulation. All these consequences leave ample room for the moral justification of dictatorship and in fact for the destruction of any grip that conventional morality might maintain on public office as such. However, all the mentioned consequences arise from the very separation of public and private morality, which I believe is unwarranted.

Let us examine the strength of the reasons to separate public morality from the private one in the first place. Clearly public roles require that broader interests are taken into account than are private relations, but this is not a principled difference between the two. It is true that public officials will have to act impartially to their friends and relatives (and the experience in modern

[12] Nagel, "Ruthlessness in public life", p. 90.

democracies shows that even this they often do not do manage to achieve), and that they will have to consider the interests of thousands if not millions of people. This will naturally impact the content of their decisions; they will have to act differently than they would if they were private citizens and did not have such broad responsibilities; but again, this difference is in scope, not in principle. It is imaginable that one who has hundreds of friends involved in an issue will act differently from someone who only has two or three friends whose interests one must consider, yet both of them will act according to the same principles of what Nagel considers private morality. Could it be that public officials act in the same way: they are tied by the same morality as private citizens are, but their concrete decisions tend to differ from those made by individual citizens because of the scope of interests and concerns they must address? The obligation arising from a role may not be a different type of obligation from that arising from friendship or belonging to the same family, although the outcomes of action in accordance with that obligation will often be different. What we are concerned with here is the nature of the obligation, or the nature of the morality involved in the two roles, and not the substantive content of the decisions that any particular situation, with any specific scope of concerns taken into account, will yield. The important question, in other words, is how one arrives at those decisions, based on what criteria, and not what the final decisions are.

I think it is safe to start from the observation that people expect their authorities to have certain virtues and to observe the norms of common morality, and that they do not tend to justify the work of public institutions when they see themselves as separated from the community by a moral gulf. Institutions are supposed to cater for the interests and concerns of all, but they are also supposed to observe the norms of communal morality and to share the concerns most citizens share. Public officials are expected to be exemplary citizens, first, and only then successful politicians. This, after all, is why scandals in private life have such a large impact on the political careers of their protagonists. Public roles are not just commanding posts over society, they are in fact supposed to be the embodiment of the values and virtues the society cherishes, or otherwise the issue of moral character would not figure in elections at all. We do not expect our generals to be good neighbours while off duty, and to be merciless warriors on the battlefield; they are expected to show human kindness along with bravery and skill in conducting combat operations. The role of a general at war is not perceived as requiring anything that leads

to victory, including war crimes, while the role of the individual general as a moral person is not seen as requiring him to gauge the consequentialist principles of his role and then get out of the role once he decides that "enough is enough". The role of a good general merges with the character of the general; he is expected to mould his role according to the delicate balance of the values that the community shares with regard to the issues that the role faces. At war, the delicate balance between the need to achieve victory and the need to observe certain humane standards of behaviour, to show mercy and consideration to the non-combatants or to captured enemy soldiers, all play a part in the general's role. This is the same ethic that applies to a private person defending oneself from attack: both common morality and the law require that the force used to defend oneself is the minimum force necessary, and when severe injuries are inflicted on the assailant, the one who defends himself in such extreme way might be criminally liable. The pursuit of private interests and goals is often led by consequentialist considerations, but they are qualified by certain substantive requirements that involve virtue; similarly, the pursuit of public interests requires consequentialist considerations that relate to large numbers of people and larger composite interests and concerns, but the public roles are qualified by the same substantive values as private roles. These substantive values are not merely "breakes" on an essentially consequentialist pursuit of policies; they are equally significant parts of the meaning of a role. A good general is not a winning general subject to certain minimum restrictions arising from the virtues the community shares; rather a good general is one who acts morally and is an effective soldier to the extent possible given the circumstances. I would submit that most people would say that a good general will rather be a losing general who maintains a moral profile required in the community than a winning general who only conforms to certain moral restrictions. Moral restrictions when they are a break on other pursuits necessarily play the role of a minimum that cannot be transgressed, otherwise they would be the guiding principles; I am not at all convinced that communities always perceive public roles as requiring virtue or deontic principles (the two are not identical, of course) as limiting considerations operating at an imperative minimum. Public roles can be performed more or less virtuously, more or less morally, more or less honourably: their evaluation will often depend on how high a profile the virtues shared by the community have demonstrated in an official's behaviour, with consequentialist considerations being of secondary importance. Again, the very separation of consequentialism from substantive morality is treacherous, because virtue can

also be the goal of consequentialism, in which case ruthlessness in a public role is out of the question.

For all of the above reasons, I believe that there is no such thing as a principled separation of public from private morality, nor do I believe that there is such a thing as a consequentialist morality of a public role that is entirely interest-driven. The whole misunderstanding generated by the suggestion of a division of moralities between the private and the public arises from the reductionist view of public office that portrays public officials as managers of aggregate interests. While this is one part of the public role, there is also a large part of it that consists of furthering certain values and providing a moral example that the technocratic theories of morality based exclusively on the rational encapsulation of interests have consistently tended to miss. The void between public and private moralities that has been suggested by the technocratic moral theories has accounted for the possibility of non-transparent governance. Namely, such governance appers when the values shared by the community and those of the political leaders are not the same. This violates the public expectations of those in public roles and introduces the confusion of values in society that Emil Durkehim labeled *anomie*. As I have tried to argue, the division itself is unfounded, and it is based on a circular argument that presupposes something that it is supposed to prove. Starting from the assumption that public roles require an exclusively calculative interest-driven morality subject to certain minimum restrictions arising from private morality, it suggests that public morality is more consequentialist in a very narrow sense of consequentialism (based only on interests) than private morality, and that consequently, the bearers of public roles will be subject to a different type of moral expectations than those they are subject to as private citizens. My contention here is to show that the argument is logically invalid, and that there is no need to assume the division between the two types of morality. I do not go as far as establishing in a conclusive way that the two moralities are the same, as I consider this to be sufficiently intuitive. My considerations in what follows focus on the structural possibilities to provide an integrative morality that is sufficiently holistic to include both rationality and emotional dispositions, alongside with the substantive requirements that require a constructive intentionality towards others on a broad scale. Such a broad morality would extend over the private and public realms of action, and would contain specific and universally applicable values.

There is a difference between specifying substantive values that claim universal validity and devising procedures for arriving at a particular choice of values. The latter approach is focused on the enumeration of conditions that viable values need to satisfy, thus bringing about a certain set of values. The former approach argues for the inherent normative force of certain values, on both emotional and rational grounds. The former approach is characteristic of religion; the latter has characterised much of the traditional moral philosophy. I shall thus focus on whether a set of values provided by the traditional paradigm of religion, as opposed to the rationalistic paradigm of philosophy, can in fact provide a satisfactory ethical framework for individual and collective action, whilst recognising and fully acknowledging the considerable heteronomy of human agency in society. The following section will discuss the difference between the religious and philosophical methods of capturing moral precepts, followed by a detailed consideration of what values are most likely to successfully solve all of the problems discussed so far, with a specific emphasis on the regulation of social affairs.

After a universal morality: Sources of norms

When discussing religion within a social science book, and especially when arguing that religion or typically religious values are the solution to a social science problem (or all of them at the same time), one needs to thread carefully. The habit in the social science of resolving one type of rational dilemma by creating a set of new rational dilemmas *prima facie* militates against the very proposition that there might be a definitive solution to any problem. On the other hand, in ethics, one must start with the idea that there is a definitive solution, or else there would be no room for any moral enthusiasm. The circular trajectory of ever increasing dilemmas without substantive answers has become the "disciplinary" view adopted by philosophers and social scientists; it is perhaps most succinctly put in the words of the great historian of Chinese philosophy, Fung Yu-Lan:

> Religion does give information in regard to matters of fact. But the information given by religion is not in harmony with that given by science. So in the West there has been the conflict between religion and science. Where science advances, religion retreats; and the authority of religion recedes before the advancement of science. The traditionalists regretted this fact and pitied the people who had

> become irreligious, considering them as having degenerated. They ought indeed to be pitied, if, besides religion, they had no other access to the higher values. When people get rid of religion and have no substitute, they also lose the higher values. They have to confine themselves to mundane affairs and have nothing to do with the spiritual ones. Fortunately, however, besides religion there is philosophy, which provides man with an access to the higher values — an access which is more direct than that provided by religion, because in philosophy, in order to be acquainted with the higher values, man need not take the roundabout way provided by prayers and rituals. The higher values with which man has become acquainted through philosophy are even purer than those acquired through religion, because they are not mixed with imagination and superstition. In the world of the future, man will have philosophy in the place of religion. (…) It is not necessary that man should be religious, but it is necessary that he should be philosophical. When he is philosophical, he has the very best of the blessings of religion.[13]

In my opinion, nothing could be further from the truth than the statements made above, and in what follows I shall try to explain why, in light of the previous four chapters.

The first point to discern from Yu-Lan's argument is failure to recognise that social concerns are not primarily to do with information about matters of fact, but with social norms and the intentional underpinnings of normative behaviour. While it is indeed crucial for an acceptable social system to be sufficiently transparent to allow knowledge or information about matters of fact to flow freely (we should be reasonably well informed about the taxation or criminal law, for example, so that we may adjust our actions accordingly), the most intriguing issues in social science and political philosophy tend to revolve around legitimacy and the ways in which social norms are created and implemented.

The main general issue that I focus on here concerns the positive social inclinations, positive emotions, sympathy, and the resulting authentic, organic solidarity as the building blocks of society. The main question that arises in that context is *how to* foster constructive intentional action and thought. I have argued

[13] Fung Yu-Lan, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*, Macmillan, New York, 1948 (reprint 1966), pp. 5–6.

so far that moral education is a pervasive process, which makes up an important part of political governance too, and that the principal responsibility for the moral education of society lies with social elites, including, but not only, political ones.

The described discussion, however, generates a particular cleavage between the fact that, on the one hand, there is the relatively simple argument that society depends on positive emotions and on the general steering of human intentionality towards feeling for one's neighbour, and that, on the other hand, there is the argument that this occurs largely outside the control of individual citizens, as they are themselves conditioned, directed towards certain values and discouraged from others, in other words largely programmed, by social elites. If people ought to be positively inclined towards one another, but this, in the final instance, does not depend on them individually, but primarily on the social elites, than, it could be argued, it is basically immaterial what people think; the important thing is what the elites think and how they influence the people. Unfortunately, this is usually true, but it is not a methodological problem without a solution. If we were seeking a classical philosophical solution through rational arguments only, without venturing into the actual positing of values as hypotheses, and then checking whether or not these values serve the specified needs well, then we might well be without a solution. However, the way to overcome the cleavage here is to find a comprehensive type of moral normativity with sufficient normative force to impose itself on the elites, as well as on the individual citizens, thus removing the difficulties arising from heteronomy.

This is not just a sophistic solution, where the problem is removed in formulation rather than being really resolved. The contention of this book is that the overemphasis that is placed on individual autonomy in the liberal doctrine obscures the realities of life, thus also obscuring the perspective of a viable ethic. If heteronomy truly reigns in society, and I have argued here that it does, then what matters much more than the values and preferences by individual citizens are the values and preferences harboured by the social elites. This being said, the root of manipulation, domination and abuse lies in the double sets of values: one for the elites, and quite a different set of values for the society at large. In this way, through the cleavage of ethics between the rulers and the ruled, all sorts of exploitation and perversion of social participation arise. However, if our discussion can focus on a single set of substantively (rather than merely procedurally) specified values with sufficient normative force to be universally applicable to both the elites and the constituents, we would be in a position to discuss moral values regardless

of the heteronomy within the distribution of power in society; what would be right for the elites would be right for the people, and vice versa. We would thus be able to fully acknowledge that there is no such thing as procedural participation and equality in society that, if well regulated, would produce equal outcomes in equal cases, or anything like this; to the contrary, one could then conclude that there is not only no equality, but also no reliable procedure whereby equality, justice or any other universal values could be expected to emerge in society. At the same time, however, one could argue that this does not really matter, because there are certain values that hold true for the society, and whatever the distribution of power within the society, whatever the roles of its particular strata, these values, in their substantive dimensions, are what determines whether this is a just or unjust, justifiable or unjustifiable, society. That, ideally, is where I intend this chapter to go. To do so, however, one needs to discuss the specific values and see if they can be given sufficient appeal to gear the entire social ethic.

A described body of normative propositions that would contain the necessary values would have to contain information on moral "matters of fact" that would not be able to be questioned routinely. This is where religion comes into play in society, as it is only the values inherent in religions, alongside with the general normative context of religious life, that hold sufficient normative force and authority to be sources of norms in themselves, without issues of procedure even arising. This is why religion is far more than rituals which, according to Yu-Lan, are a roundabout way towards the same "truths" that philosophy reaches without rituals. Religion is first of all a set of normative prescriptions that command such authority that they cannot be questioned routinely.

This point requires attention. The factual information provided by religion does in fact allow questioning, and such philosophical questioning, including "proofs of God's existence" or arguments about "the best of all possible worlds" have been highly developed by many religious philosophers throughout the history of philosophy. What religion does not allow is routine questioning, which means that it is not a subject of dispute as a whole, outside the systematic attempts to provide a rational account or critique of its content. This is a very different situation from that of philosophy, which does not command such authority. Even conventional morality does not have such authority, as it is given in the form of social recommendations, and in most cases it is not sanctioned by law. It is conventionally immoral to be dishonest to one's wife, children or friends, but it is not illegal to do so, and in fact the norm itself is treated as

relative and optional. It is philosophically acceptable in principle to differ from the norms of conventional morality, if there is a cogent argument for such a difference. However, when a moral norm has religion behind it, when it is a matter of commandment, then it is categorically unacceptable to breach it, and any systematic disregard of the norm is sanctioned within the system of beliefs.

The sanction itself is always connected with the strength of the norm. Namely, the original meaning of moral sanction was largely exhausted in the sense of shame that attended breaches of especially important social norms. Shame was felt not before a distant and omnipotent institutionalised society, but before one's immediate community: the family, friends, neighbours. For shame to function in such a way the norms breached need to be so firmly embedded in society that they automatically generate reproach of the offender. In liberal societies there is no such consensus on values that would allow a strong stigma to be attached to any particular personal choice, unless it was illegal. A pluralism of lifestyles and values, after all, is what liberalism prides itself for. Without such pluralism, however, certain substantively defined values can play the regulatory role without a crude form of legal sanctioning. Communities bound by religion satisfy all the necessary conditions of cohesion and uniformity of values to make possible such an immediate explosion of reproach when fundamental beliefs are transgressed. It is their normative cohesion and sharing in the substance of belief that make them subject to moral obligation that largely wipes out the relevance of the internal distribution of power. This point brings us to the next one, namely that the greater the divergence and dispersion between legitimate value-choices in society, the less chance there is that any values will command sufficient authority that the norms that arise from them will be able to perform a regulatory function in the community. Values are sources of norms, and the more generally accepted they are, the clearer and less controversial the norms are, allowing for greater informal stigma being attached to their transgressions, and conversely, allowing for a lesser role of formal sanctions and punishments. There is a fundamental divide here between cohesive and dispersive value communities that gives rise to different models of norm-setting.

Cohesive and dispersive value communities

As hinted before, there is a price to pay for liberalism in society, and the price may well be exorbitant from the point of view of moral regulation of behaviour.

If the moral codes are seen in a liberal perspective, that is, if they are mostly optional (everybody is free to chose their own life style within certain bounds, and consequently, everybody should refrain from judging other life styles, also within bounds), there is insufficient convergence of values throughout the community to make the community morally transparent. This means that the stigma, which is the primal way of responding to value-challenges, does not work as it should, and in fact the liberal ideology shuns stigma when it concerns individual choices. This individual freedom is only superficial, because the stigma and informal social regulation that arise from a universal sharing in the same values are replaced by the much more cruel and arbitrary institutional intervention that has at its core the law, but is not necessarily restricted to the law. The dispersion of values between individuals and groups means that the necessary minimum of shared values that makes possible the existence of communities (typically the negative values such as mutual non-interference, but also some positive ones, such as a degree of solidarity required for a positive attitude to the payment of taxes, for example, or patriotism required for the voluntary military service) will not arise from the immediate source of common values, but will be engineered by the special social elites.

If the society is not educated by a sense of decency arising from tradition (and any tradition requires a substantial degree of homogeneity of values), it will be educated by the professional educators, namely social elites in charge of "setting the standards". This standard-setting is very similar in manner to the way dictionaries and grammars are composed. A group of authorities gather and produce a dictionary of the modern literary language, or a new version of the grammar of the language we have all spoken since we had been born, and from that point on the book is the standard of the right and wrong. In matters of social values, there are also expert groups, elites proclaimed to hold special attributes of integrity or even knowledge of "matters of fact" in the moral realm, who then propose principles and values that the rest of society considers obligatory. They may do so through the media, through their literary work, or by open political pronouncements. Most of the values produced in such a way are functionally motivated: they make it easier to govern the society. The problem in such cases, as was pointed out before, is that the standard-setters themselves approach the process from a secluded position, and experience has shown that elites typically enjoy standards quite different from the rest of the population. Once a cleavage is created with liberally defined values, it is perpetuated on all levels, and gains its reflections in the structure of norms as they pertain to

different segments of society. The legitimacy of mutually incompatible values within bounds means that the division of labour extends into the realm of values, as somebody must decide which of the many legitimate, yet mutually divergent and exclusive values, are to hold universally. Not everybody can decide this, as ordinary members of society are the bearers of the different walks of life and different value systems; a higher regulatory structure is needed to superimpose certain values as official social norms. This means that the stratum that decides on the values is legitimately called "the elite", and that it will hold authority to impose norms on others, while largely being free to regulate its own conduct, or at least to extend the same norms to itself in a looser and less enforceable way. This has been the characteristic of all elites in most modern democratic societies over the past two centuries, and has become known in political theory under various names, including "the legitimacy gap" or "the democratic deficit". Debates over such failures to implement consistent systems of norms and prevent excessive privilege have tended to revolve around individual agency, the specification of conditions that need to be met for individuals to hold public office, or even around the inevitable pitfalls of public office, including moral hazards associated with it and how to manage them. Needless to say, all these debates have only resulted in more rational questions being asked rather than any solutions being proposed. The reason is in the values, not in the structural or procedural aspects of division of labour in society, because should the values be sufficiently strong and universal, they would envelop the entire society, along with its division of labour, and allow for a comprehensive set of moral standards that would be easily understood and, if not easy to live by, certainly able to be treated with more humane, yet more effective means, such as the social stigma.

The theme of rising social complexity necessitating the division of labour is familiar in sociology, and what is said here is nothing new in that sense. However, the complexity of values and their lack of force in liberal democracy come hand-in-hand with the polycentric structure of modern society, where moral authority has multiple sources without necessarily applying to all sections of society. The complexity or size of society coincides with the polycentric nature of morality, but there is no principled link between the two; it is possible for a large and complex society to have universal values just the same as it is possible for a smaller one. It seems that the problem is in ideology, because even a smaller liberal society will have many contesting moralities that will eventually have to be granted a degree of separate legitimacy, which will then

necessitate the profiling of a special class of universal standard-setters, even if only at the barest minimum that is required for the management of society.

For a morality to be integrative, the community must be integrative, and this means that it should integrate around the same, preferably few, key values. Conversely, a disintegrative community, with many divergent values, grouped into different value systems that apply to particular sections of the community, cannot have an integrative morality. The question to ask here is thus whether there are sufficient basic grounds on which consensus could be mustered in large, multiethnic and structurally complex communities, so that the community can focus on several key values and start making way towards an integrative morality. If this was possible, all the regulatory mechanisms arising from simple and sufficiently strong moral reactions to transgressions of the basic norms would come to play. Obviously, however, the choice of values must determine whether an integrative morality is possible.

Consider a community that is known to be highly integrative, such as has historically been that of Japan. A long standing policy of national isolationism and the insistence on tradition as the guiding set of values to determine the nature of contemporary Japan has meant that the ethical code of Bushido, (Bushi – warriors), the code of knights or warriors, has encapsulated the essence of collective Japanese morality for the past 300 years. While Bushido was normatively generated during the long period of feudalism in Japan, it has focused on just a few key values that condense the virtues and ethical principles constitutive of both the traditional and modern Japanese identity. For example, the principles applied to the warrior class, including the willingness to sacrifice one's life for one's employer without hesitation, to assist one's master in times of financial need by offering one's salary or part of it, and participation in warfare when the master does not have the funds to equip a proper army, and the enemy is advancing, are treated equally with the equivalents of these values in modern times. A warrior who breaks up friendship with someone and no longer communicates with that person, will be required to re-establish communication if they are assigned to the same military mission, as the official duty must not be allowed to suffer for personal reasons. Similarly, Bushido says that should two workers be assigned to work in the same office, they will also communicate normally as long as work requires them to maintain an unhindered exchange of information. The moral impropriety of gossip, which characterised the ethic of the samurai class in feudal Japan, is still considered to hold for the morality of ordinary Japanese people. Virtues such as rectitude,

decision, or "justice", courage, daring, politeness, sincerity and truthfulness, honour, loyalty, self-control and others are all considered the founding moral values in the Japanese tradition, and are specifically defined and elaborated on in Bushido. These virtues have different appearances in different times; clearly bravery will not appear the same in the actions of a feudal samurai horseman with two swords and in the actions of a modern day business executive, nor will loyalty, self-control or daring. Still, the values will persist in the different contexts and will be considered equally constitutive of a consensually accepted morality. Bushido, a short ethical manual with a list of virtues and precepts for decency and proper conduct in the typical situations, has penetrated the Japanese sense of community to such an extent that it serves as the basis of moral upbringing equivalent to the role of religion in European societies. In 1899, Inazo Nitobe, the author of the most influential commentary of Bushido, *Bushido: The Soul of Japan — An Exposition of Japanese Thought*, which at the time was read by Theodore Roosevelt and distributed to his friends, started the Preface to his first edition in the following way:

> About ten years ago, while spending a few days under the hospitable roof of the distinguished Belgian jurist, the lamented M. de Laveleye, our conversation turned during one of our rambles, to the subject of religion. "Do you mean to say," asked the venerable professor, "that you have no religious instruction in your schools?". On my replying in the negative, he suddenly halted in astonishment, and in a voice which I shall not easily forget, he repeated "No religion! How do you impart moral education?". The question stunned me at the time. I could give no ready answer, for the moral precepts I learned in my childhood days were not given in schools; and not until I began to analyze the different elements that formed my notions of right and wrong, did I find that it was Bushido that breathed them into my nostrils.[14]

One could hardly say that Japan is an intolerant or aggressive society today. However, it remains a largely traditional society that is sufficiently integrative, despite the enormity of its cities and the extreme urbanisation of life, perhaps greater than in the most urban environments in liberal democracies today. Still, despite the corruption, deviance and all the other

[14] Inazo Nitobe, Bushido: *The Soul of Japan — An Exposition of Japanese Thought*, First Edition, The Leeds & Biddle Co., Printers and Publishers, Philadelphia, PA, 1990, Preface.

evils that typically accompany urbanisation and a large concentration of the population in big cities, the values in Japan remain clear, and the mechanism of reproach and shame continues to be highly effective. The clarity of values, the ethical transparency of the value system, and the strength of the moral norms arising from that system make for a useful and efficient set of tools for social control that often do not require the resort to violent legal sanctions. Perhaps it is different from modern day Europe or North America in that not everybody will feel at home in Japan, but that is the price to be paid for the broad sharing of values that characterises the ethically monolithic communities.

There are other monolithic communities within the larger composite liberal and dispersive societies. Such monoliths include religious communities in modern democracies, which share fundamental values and the respective norms, and within which the moral sanction operates with far greater force than in the rest of society. The difference between these monoliths and the rest of society is not in the size, but in the way the values, leadership and discipline are distributed and structured within them. Such internal structures within sub-communities are sometimes dramatically different from the equivalent structures in the society at large, thus potently illustrating how it is possible to live the life of an integrated, cohesive community within the same circumstances that define the life of a dispersive, poorly integrated modern society. Again, church communities of the various confessions are perhaps the best examples, where the faithful are constantly reminded to strive to narrow the gap between their behaviour in the church, or in their immediate community of co-believers, and their behaviour when engaging in the ordinary societal interactions outside their immediate community. The ideal is to achieve a full convergence between the two, and even if for the time being it may not be possible for any particular person, the ethical principle is to strive to implement one's religious values when relating to those who do not share them. The key to success here is in the critical number of people adopting certain values; once there are more believers than non-believers, their chances of implementing their values and the respective norms in the society at large will be quite good. Similarly, should any type of cohesive values and norms prevail in a particular society, the society at large would be able to be gradually transformed, and that is what provides sense to our discussion of cohesive communities. Much of the discussion of cohesive groups in the existing literature has focused on pre-modern communities, and rightly so, but much of the written material has failed to make it completely clear how

such pre-modern mechanisms may be relevant to our present communities. In fact, sometimes such writings betray a sense of despair over a lost paradise. The reality, of course, is that social circumstances have never been a paradise, and that the study of pre-modern mechanisms of social interaction, or more specifically the positive ones, whilst neglecting the numerous negative ones that have been overcome in modern society, serves the purpose of actually re-creating some of the cohesive elements of such societies within the modern industrial, urban communities.

In his 1975 book on *The Meaning of Life*, published whilst in exile from Russia, in Brussels, Semyon Frank elaborates on the tendency of the Russian people to disregard the brutal realities of the present, and try to cope by an irresponsible hope that there would be a moment in the future where things would right themselves and a life full of joy would start. He points it out that this has been the source of much evil, because it has inhibited the Russian people from striving to realise a betterment in the present, thus failing to contain the horrors of Bolshevism. According to Frank, the constant hope for a decisive breaking point from the gruesome present life leads to anger and disappointment, which gives rise to a mental illness called "revolutionary thinking", where one violent act is expected to bring about the long-expected breaking point, only to see the bloodshed of revolution producing more gruesome realities in everyday life.[15] The alternative to what Frank ascribes to the Russian people, and what may well be a rather universal human tendency, especially in difficult times that nobody can change and must find coping methods instead, is working every day, little-by-little, on making way for a different reality. In large, ruthless and often disorganised cities, where the liberal philosophy of "each to their own devices" and interests has become prevalent, there is clearly little social cohesion, and their realities seem to fall decidedly apart from the pre-modern tradition of what sociologists have called "organic communities". It is easy to despair over the lost paradise and lament on the pre-modern life; however, a closer look into the inner fabric of the large cities reveals that, in the midst of the savagery of "the market" as the over-arching principle of all social interactions, there exist smaller communities that manage to survive with quite different subcultures. These subcultures often contain universal moral principles that, if spread sufficiently, might stand a

[15] Semjon Frank, *Smisao života*, translated from Russian into Serbian by Zoran Buljugić, Logos, Beograd, 2007, pp. 11–15.

good chance of changing the spirit of the cities and introducing more "organic" relations into the modern megalopolises.

While this book if being written, the world faces a global financial crisis, and the public discourse is riddled with announcements that the coming year will bring an "end to capitalism as we know it". Some of the most brilliant minds amongst the economists have predicted failure of the banks and a major recession, thus raising questions over the future of the capitalist society. This is an example of the apocalyptic scenario that emerges when nothing is being done to remedy the everyday evils of polarisation in wealth, over-consumption on a mass scale and the accumulation of debts. The point is analogous to the issue under consideration in this book. Allowing the detached mentality of the modern urban societies to continue to deprive human communities of characteristically humane relations, using the liberal philosophy as a conceptual shield, would inevitably cause revolutionary sentiments and extreme ways of trying to regain the minimum of spontaneity needed for a healthy social life. This could take different forms, from collective withdrawal and depression — phenomena already observed in many western societies — to violent unrest. Instead, spreading a different culture, with different values, even if on a very small scale, through subcultures and life in micro-communities, would avoid causing major disturbance and trauma, because such work would not arise from the expectation of a braking point or a deciding day, but would rest on the assumption that, once the values are sufficiently widely accepted, they would in themselves cause a change in the behaviour of a critical number of people, thus changing the society. This is a way characteristic of religious thinking and the life of religious communities, which are a particularly useful model for regaining the organic ties that have been forfeited to such a devastating extent in modern liberal societies.

The meaning of politics

It was Aristotle who probably posited politics to the pedestal above all other human pursuits, because he associated each activity with a particular "good", where the realisation of the highest good, namely happiness, was the goal of politics, which then meant that politics as a pursuit was higher than other pursuits.[16] The idea of "the good life", which, for Aristotle, was inextricably connected with that of moderation, is therefore also closely connected with

[16] The initial parts of *The Nicomachean Ethics.*

politics. It is the job of politics to make sure that most citizens live a good life, because happiness is the result of a good life. However, in order to attain the good life, one must first adhere to moderation, and that requires certain character traits. Consequently, it is the job of politics, and Aristotle points it out very explicitly, to cultivate certain character traits in the citizens, namely virtues. The tempering of the excesses and the reinforcement of insufficiently pronounced character traits (such as indecision) is then a matter of moral education. As the reader will note, this is exactly the line traced by the discussions throughout this book. We now arrive at the stage where we wonder what politics is, or what it should be in modern society. If organic links are to be sought in modern communities by seeking what remains of the healthy social relations within such societies, then naturally it would be reasonable to see how politics is perceived in modern liberal democracies and whether it has in any way deviated from the organic principles where it was supposed to be a form of cultivation of character of the citizens, so that they might have a good life, marked by happiness.

Let us consider first the very language used in Aristotle's formulations. Already at first sight, clearly the idea that politics ought to achieve the highest good for the citizens, namely happiness, and to teach them to lead a good life, is all couched in the assumption of positive mutual inclinations, and the desire by leaders to improve the quality of the lives of the subjects. It is this perspective that makes it possible to perceive politics as the highest pursuit, not just in terms of methodology, or the talent required to engage in it, or the benefits of being a politician, but primarily in moral terms. Politics in Aristotle's sense, which we can indeed consider paradigmatic of the history of the western thought and "organic" in the sense in which today we speak of solidarity and sympathy in pre-modern communities, is the embodiment of solidarity and sympathy; it is morally the highest profession because it caters for the good of others more than any other profession. Politics, by these lights, then, is the most munificent of occupations. It is thus contrary to the calling of a politician for someone to be greedy, despising of one's fellow citizens, or abusive of them. Politics is seen as an occupation where virtues should be highly concentrated, and which should serve as a corrective for other areas of public life, and this function politics is supposed to be able to perform exactly because of its high integrity and recognised munificence.

When he discusses deliberation, and this is key for understanding the "deliberative" nature of democracy, Aristotle makes the point that "the ends

cannot be deliberated on, only the means". The end of politics is "the good or the apparent good", and this good is describable in positive, munificent terms. There can be no deliberation over the imperative of the good in politics, nor can the good goals be compromised by personal or group interest. What the politician may consider, dwell or deliberate upon, includes only the means for the achievement of what seems clear to Aristotle, and that is the cultivation of virtues in the citizens, the value of which is in that they enable them to live a good life, filled with happiness. Deliberative democracy, along similar lines, allows a public discourse over the means and policies, but it rests on a consensus with regard to the fundamental values for society. If there is constant deliberation over the core values, the society would be too unstable and morally unsound to provide a grounding for a more meaningful debate over the concrete policies. Here we are brought back to the issue of how values are chosen and promoted in society; the role of political elites is insurmountable in the process, but in the context of a consensus over the purpose of politics, which is to promote the good for citizens, the political elites can largely be identified with moral elites. Decency, respect and integrity are perhaps the first and foremost virtues that characterise elites in this sense; political corruption, egotism and clandestine dealings, so characteristic of many contemporary political "elites", are in fact the opposite of what the initial, "organic" conceptions of deliberative democracy envisage. We are thus witnessing a reality directly contrary to the initial idea of democracy that gave rise to the notion of "politics" and "political elites". Something has either gone very wrong in the process of development of deliberative democracy since Aristotle, or Aristotle was totally wrong in connecting politics with integrity and the good. His idea that "every wicked man is ignorant of what he ought and what he ought not do" have much to do with the evolution of political elites in the current liberal social realities: it is the lost, or at best darkened, view of the moral nature of politics that makes it acceptable, and indeed possible, for political elites to act as they do today, namely as bearers of separate corporate-like interests in the name of the state. Ministers who bicker over the size of the operational budget for their ministries, who strive to increase their power by taking on ever more responsibilities, and who enter into dubious relationships with businesses, act so because they perceive public office and the state to be a source of separate interests, with which one can identify and from which one can accordingly profit. In other words, the concept of power, so firmly couched in the dialectic of liberal democratic views of the state, is in fact a very awkward concept in light of the ethical view of politics. Contemporary power-politics is decidedly

different from the initial, organic notion of ethical politics, and this largely explains the change in the nature of political governance that has occurred somewhere along the way of the evolution of modern political democracy. In fact, the acceptance of descriptive characteristics of practices of governance that in themselves are corrupt and perverted in relation to what they ought to be like is largely responsible for the transformations of the understandings of politics. This is how democratic constituents arrive at the current stage where they are justified in considering politics as intrinsically corrupt, and politicians as potentially criminalised, thus expecting specific safeguards from the criminalisation of politics in advance of any such concrete criminalisation occurring. That is why we hear the rhetoric of newly elected governments and presidents, pledging not to be corrupted by power. The very idea that it is somehow natural to be easily corrupted by public office, which is defined as power, is deeply perverted. Once these distortions to the concept of politics become sufficiently widespread, and supported by the social elites, it is difficult to reclaim the original meaning of politics, which is a highly ethical pursuit.

Aristotle compares this with the way a man becomes just and unjust. He says that a man can be unjust through ignorance of what it is right and what it is wrong to do, and that his character is mirrored in his actions, whether they arise from ignorance or from voluntary decision. If one does what one knows is wrong voluntarily, then one becomes unjust by one's own choice, but that, he points it out, does not mean that one can voluntarily switch back to becoming just in the same way in which one might voluntarily become unjust. A life spent in injustice conditions the person to continue in the same way, similarly to the way in which an unhealthy lifestyle may be a matter of voluntary decision, and when it causes an illness, then it could be said that the illness is the result of voluntary decision. However, the illness cannot usually be reversed into health through the same type of voluntary choice, just as a stone, once thrown, cannot be stopped while in the air, although the decision to throw it was voluntary. Likewise, the decision to allow a perverted transformation of the concept of politics, so that it now legitimately includes "power", and thus becomes "power-politics", is a matter of voluntary choice for whoever is responsible for such a transformation, and these are usually the social elites. Once the new concept, which is in fact quite base and subservient to human passions, becomes entrenched, it is not as simple to revert to the higher notion of politics; the stone is in the air. Improper social arrangements, destructive ideologies, and a base, primitive interpretation of politics all take their tall

on human society; this is how the "organic" virtues of the initial concept of democracy within the history of western thought have been lost on the way of the institutional and ideological evolution of modern liberal societies.

Let us return to what I have claimed to be the "organic" concept of politics, ascribed to Aristotle and others who have followed the tradition of insisting on "virtue" rather than "rights", the community of positive moral values rather than that of liberties from interference or imposition. If the aim of politics is the achievement of virtues, which can be defined as the avoidance of excesses, and the overall purpose of virtue is living a good life, then the key thing to examine here is what is the good that politics ought to strive for. Namely, it could be that the disenchantment over the perceived inability to locate the relevant good has led to perverted notions of politics as power politics or calculations of corporate interests.

One of the problems with "the good" that would be sufficiently communal, that is, shared by all members of the community and thus a mark of the identity of the community, and at the same time sufficiently personal to be a motivational factor for each member of the community, is the division that has been imposed on its concept between the so-called "objective" and "subjective" good. On this account, the objective good is supposed to somehow contribute to the well-being of the community in an impersonal and independently verifiable way, while the subjective good is supposed to somehow "feel good", which means that the person would be naturally motivated to pursue such a good. It is also sometimes argued that the objective and subjective goods tend to stand in opposition, because things that "feel good" to the individual are often damaging to the community. Thus, we are somehow supposed to seek the "objective" good as an element of virtue, whilst at the same time practicing self-denial in the sense of forfeiting the subjective goods, which lead to decadence and backwardness. There is only one step from this type of reasoning to the over-rationalisation of politics and social life generally through the liberal and akin political philosophies. This, I shall argue, is also where we have lost contact with the organic concept of the good in politics, and where we have started to forget what the ancient philosophers really meant by "virtue".

If there is such a thing as an objective, detached good, then clearly there is an existential problem with its pursuit, because following such a good, which has no connection to us personally, does not fulfill us, it is not satisfying, and cannot serve as the source of meaning that we seek in life, and by extension,

through politics and social organisation. Such a good may indeed rationally serve certain joint interests of the community, but its detachedness from the personal lives of the members of the community will inevitably deduct from it so much true value that it will lose both existential and ethical appeal.

On the other hand, any personal good, any joy or personal fulfillment, inevitably and ultimately fails, because every personal life is directed towards something else, strives towards an externalisation, the achievement of something larger, impersonal, more lasting than just the ontic individual. Engaging in personal pursuits can thus at best lead to forgetting the world, but it will not be a source of authentic fulfillment. As Semyon Frank points it out, what we really seek here is the deletion of the difference between the subjective and objective, namely a composite good that will unite the two in the same quest for virtue. Such a good is life itself, but life spent in the peace, solidarity and sympathy with fellow men, in a community that is directed at maximising the quality of the peace and positive personal exchange between its members. Life as such, as a passing process exhausted in seeking means to preserve it, without ever giving rise to the question of what it really is about, is not what good politics ought to strive for.[17] In other words, virtue itself is both the means and the content of the good life. Sympathy is both a means and the content of the good life; solidarity likewise. Contributing to the meaningful life of a community is contributing to one's own personal meaningful life as well, and that is the good that politics in the organic sense ought to strive for. From this simple truth, all other corollaries of the ancient concept of governance ensue, including the role of elites and moral and intellectual leaders, and their primary function as social educators and standard-setters. In the organic concept of society, elites set beacons on the road to greater personal fulfillment and the building of a community at the same time, and in this way serve the "interests" of others by teaching them to live a good life.

The perspective of the good life thus not only resolves the issue of ruthlessness in politics, which Nagel uses as a theme on which to develop the interest-based argument on the responsibility arising from public office, but it also resolves the procedural quagmire of calculations of interests, entitlements and rights, so characteristic of modern liberal political philosophy. This perspective allows us to posit directly the substantive ethical principles into the public realm, relating them to the good life, and at the same time making

[17] Frank, *Smisao života*, pp. 36–7.

them duties of political elites in both the moral and functional sense. The point of this organic perspective is that it is focused on the way of life, rather than on abstract preliminary issues of what circumstances ought to exist in order for people to be able to freely choose their way of life. Once the former is resolved, the latter is irrelevant; it is an artificial invention for the gymnastics of thought, much the same as the distinction between the "subjective" and "objective" good in politics. It focuses on the universal human goals and characteristics, on what it takes to live a fulfilling life in the community, on the assumption that inter-group differences, ethnic, religious or occupational specificities do not impact significantly on what contributes to the achievement of "happiness" in the most general sense. This universality is not unrealistic, as is clear from the modern ethical theories: even utilitarianism, which rests so heavily on the relevant concept of "utility" or "satisfaction" does not capitalise too much on group-specificities, but rather draws its appeal from the general human condition and needs arising from the quest for fulfillment and satisfaction anywhere, by anyone. This is reason in itself to consider the over-rationalised over-insistence on cultural relativity of satisfaction and self-realisation, again so characteristic of the numerous liberal political theories, suspect in itself. If there is no such thing as a universal set of values that can guide the human community, but rather a separate set of substantive values for each community, or each culture, where only certain "preliminary procedural conditions" can be discussed on a universal level, then we would truly depart from the very idea that there is a universal philosophy or that there is such a thing as a universal human condition that has been the inspiration of so much of the human culture so far. That is why the culture-relative perception of political philosophy may well be just another form of perversion of the organic, traditionally inherited concept of politics and the human community.[18]

[18] This is not to deny, of course, the obvious differences in the value-systems of particular cultures, or in their organisations — differences that are more than occasionally quite dramatic. However, the point of political philosophy is not to focus on the description of such differences, but to seek principles behind them, to seek the common elements and possibilities to draw useful universal conclusions and lasting recommendations for any community. Just the same as individual people are different, with different temperaments, abilities and tendencies, different communities differ considerably; however, any human pursuit focuses on the universal human characteristics, not on individual difference, otherwise it would abolish itself. Similarly, politics is truly about society as such, about human needs and aspirations in the most general sense, not about the specific aspirations of this or that community or culture; culture-relativity needs to be acknowledged in certain senses, we need to be aware that it exists, but the nature of politics or the ethics of community in its founding principles cannot be subdued to cultural considerations.

Choice of political elites

The two perspectives of politics, which I have called the organic perspective and the modern liberal one, have direct and very different consequences for the choice of political elites. Clearly the organic perspective requires the choice of leaders in accordance with the values and virtues sought after in that perspective: as here the aim of politics is to teach the citizens to live in moderation and achieve a good life, clearly the leaders need to be able to teach them, must possess the knowledge, and must be the "elite" in the intellectual and moral sense. It is in this context that ancient philosophers argued that "philosophers should be kings" (although, and this is an argument associated with Plato, no philosopher would voluntarily want to become a king, thus he needs to be "forced" to do so, by appealing to his duty); the most well educated, the most respected members of the community, with personal authority, whom people are inclined to listen to anyway, would be the natural choice for organic political elites. As such elites are tasked with guiding the rest of the citizens towards moral perfection, they themselves need to be morally more perfect than the rest. This is the true meaning of the very concept of "the elite".

For example, the philosophical perspective on the good life adopted by Aristotle defines practical wisdom as choosing the middle road between excesses. Assuming that this is how values are defined, the elite would have to embody the virtues arising from the observance of such values, and that means that self-indulgent and egotistic people could not be members of the elites. Moderate elites, on the other hand, would not be greedy, and that would largely eliminate corruption in public life. The choice of elites would not be based on the formal observance of the laws, but on the judgement of character: those considered to be of indulgent and intemperate character, even though law-abiding, would not qualify to lead others. Similarly, when the expenditure of public funds is concerned, the members of the elite would have to be people who are not flamboyant in spending money, but are neither too fond of money so that they neglect the needs that should be taken care of with it. Their personal finance is a good guide in judging their character. On this account, people who have accumulated large amounts of money, especially if they are young and cannot convincingly explain the way in which they have earned it, and who have their own large business interests, are clearly motivated by money far beyond what would be considered moderate, and they thus do not qualify for the rulers. In other words, in the organic perspective, businessmen would not

be recruitable into the elites. On the other hand, someone who is very liberal with money, who has squandered all his belongings on daily pleasures, and is inclined to giving money away for trivialities, is equally not a candidate for membership in the elites, because a degree of managerial talent is required when taking care of public funds. The idea of "the golden mean", ascribed to Aristotle, is thus one (not necessarily the only) simple and practical way to define virtue and to make concrete decisions in determining the composition and the necessary characteristics of a political elite. This is an intuitive and natural way of choosing leaders: theoretically, anyone is in principle entitled to a position of leadership, assuming that one has certain qualities. In the organic perspective, these qualities relate to character.

The modern liberal context militates directly against any assessment of the character of the elites in the described sense, insisting instead on the procedural preconditions for someone's "electability", or "selectability" into the ranks of the elite, whilst at the same time protesting against any intrusion into the private realm. One's role as a member of the elite, on this account, is seen as one's public role; one's character, tendencies and personal characteristics, on the other hand, tend to be seen as parts of one's private role and private life. Liberal theories insist on a strict separation of the public and the private, thus forbidding the taking into account of one's private preferences in the selection of members of public elites. This casts an interesting context for the discussion of the required qualities of members of the elites.

The first issue that is seriously distorted in this perspective is the very definition of the private. There are certainly aspects of life that are private and that ought to be respected as such, not just in potential members of the political elites, but in all citizens. However, there are also aspects of the private life that are directly relevant for one's suitability for public office. Assuming that members of the elites must possess certain personal qualities, it immediately becomes clear that their personal preferences as exhibited in their private lives, at least some of them at any rate, do play an inevitable role in qualifying or disqualifying them for public office.

One's home, for example, is private, in some cultures it is consider highly privileged, to the extent that if an intruder was found in the home and the home owner killed him, the owner would not be considered responsible for murder. However, the way one arranges one's home, including its place, the building, the furnishings, is not entirely private when one holds public office. In organic communities it was considered that people in positions of public influence

ought to behave appropriately in everything that they do. One's home is a place where one lives privately; however, at the same time, it is the place where one will occasionally entertain guests, including official guests, colleagues from work, or people with whom one might have business in one's capacity as a public official. The way in which one's home is furnished, for example, tells about one's financial status, way of life, the amount of time one spends at home, one's family, one's taste, the type of goods one prefers to buy (domestic or imported, for instance), etc. A low-level state official who owns a mansion furnished with antiques makes a statement to everybody who comes to his home that he is either corrupt, or that he has tastes that are inappropriate to his occupation and social position, or that he is involved in lucrative activities aside from his official position that, then, give rise to questions about one's dedication to public office. Similarly, a high level state dignitary who lives in a small shabby apartment furnished with second-hand furniture makes a statement that he either has other interests where he spends his money that are dubious, because they leave him in a state of financial need, or that he is an eccentric, or that he is incapable of managing his own finances, or that he has a strange or even antisocial taste, which is inappropriate for a state dignitary. Similarly, a person in high public office who acts cruelly to one's family, friends, mistreats the animals, or acts environmentally recklessly, although he may exhibit all these personality traits in his private domain, clearly makes a statement about one's personal characteristics that are directly relevant to one's performance in public office. It is illusory to assume that a public official's personal life is irrelevant to one's public duty. One must exhibit certain communal qualities, certain social dispositions, as a private individual, in order to qualify for public office. In Aristotle's words, one must be "just", assuming that justice is the highest virtue that includes most other virtues, and importantly, as justice concerns one's dispositions to act towards other members of the community, justice is thought to be "another's good". This is an essential element of the positive moral qualities that make one a candidate for membership in the political elite.

The main misunderstanding here lies in the description and definition of the public duty itself. If the public duty is seen as serving certain public interests in accordance with the law, as it is in the liberal context, then basically any person, regardless of one's tastes or personal preferences, can by free decision obey the law and do one's best to fulfil what one is tasked with in the most concrete sense. However, if leadership entails also the ability to set

standards and educate others in what relates to the wisdom and promotion of the quality of life in the community, then not every type of person can be a leader, nor can everybody be a member of the public elite. In the liberal perspective, in other words, an immoral or eccentric person can be a member of the elite, because the elite means nothing apart from performing certain specified administrative tasks in accordance with the law and public interest. In the organic perspective, the elite achieves its full meaning, it includes the best members of the community, who are exemplary individuals, and who command both intellectual and moral authority from which the other members benefit by being able to learn. The difference could hardly be more dramatic. The individual is an organic part of the community; just as the community does not exist without individuals, who are its constituents both politically and culturally, thus also the individual cannot survive without an organic community of some sort. Like the branch of a tree, it is attached to the community not just accidentally, or opportunistically (as the social contract theory essentially has it), but essentially; it is not a matter of convenience, or a trade-off between a pre-social and a social state of affairs; one's belonging to the community is an existential necessity, so when the community is destroyed in the organic sense, an important dimension of the individual person's survivability or viability is under threat. Thus also the virtues and the moral well-being of the community, while dependent on those of the individuals, also help sustain the moral well-being of the individuals in turn. The leadership of the community must embody certain moral qualities because the moral status of the community, its values and ways of living by those values, will necessarily impact the lives and the moral status of each member of the community. It is thus absurd to believe that people can have separate public and private lives, and that a person who does not embody the values of the community in one's private life can be part of the political elite; such a view deprives the elite of its formative influence on the constituents, and thus turns it into a group that is justifiably called "elite" in the pejorative sense. A leadership that is not true elite is clearly the product of a distorted and misunderstood notion of politics or the community.

Liberty and guidance in the organic community

The perspective of organic community simplifies things considerably when it comes to the issues of freedom, or political liberty. Because it is a perspective that is firmly entrenched in the standards of virtue and the good life, freedom is less controversial than it is in the context of manipulative

power-elites. The simplicity of the standard, and the underlying values, allows a relatively straightforward account of individual liberty and, by extension, responsibility.

Once values are posited in the society substantively, and not just procedurally, namely, once the values are clear and it is known what values and the respective norms constitute what the society considers socially desirable behaviour (behaviour arising from virtue), the perspective of free choice and responsibility starts to relate only to what one needs to do in order to act in accordance with virtue. The indicators of virtue are equally simple: one's character traits are described based on one's actions, assuming that one was not under any concrete type of compulsion, external or internal (such as that arising from mental illness). Given that in the organic community the standards of right and wrong are unequivocal, freedom extends to the ability to decide to act rightly or wrongly. Thus someone who engages in extreme behaviour, whether it is lawful or unlawful, is considered intemperate, someone who is primarily motivated by financial gain is considered greedy, someone who tends to withdraw from situations where praise is accorded is considered modest, etc. Every personality trait has its equivalents in external behaviour, and it is assumed that people have a choice to make between the socially defined good and the socially defined bad. The values themselves are stable and are not subject to manipulation by political elites; the elites may abuse their positions, but such abuses are clear from the perspective of values; they are hardly able to change the values if the tradition is sufficiently strong and the consensus on the values is firmly entrenched.

When decisions are judged in terms of their moral value, then perhaps the most composite value that is used to evaluate them is justice. In the context of organic thinking about the community, which I discuss here primarily along the lines of Aristotle's ethics, justice is a proportion between extremes; taking into account everybody's interests and desires will usually require a proportion accorded to each, thus also not being able to satisfy anybody to a maximum. A freedom to decide thus necessarily involves a responsibility to decide justly or appropriately, and this applies to personal lives just the same as it does to public office. There is no fundamental discontinuity between a private and a public morality, because the public morality is defined as serving the good life that is to be enjoyed by all individual, private citizens. The idea that public office ought to contribute to the quality of private life removes any possibility of legitimate separate interests of the state that could militate against the public

interest of the community. Any corporativitisation of the state, on this reading, is a perversion of the purpose of the public institutions. Acting in proportion to social expectations and the relevant interests distributed throughout the community constitutes the particular virtue that makes someone particularly suitable for public office. One is of course free to act intemperately, one-sidedly or without regard for the others, and this will meet with reproach to varying degrees, depending on the degree to which it jeopardises the constructive functioning of the community. However, the fact that one decides to act morally, justly or socially acceptably, in specific ways, means that such a person is suitable for public office. The issue of choice of lifestyle in the sense of various ideologies, value-systems and views of the community does not arise in the organic community, because the set of values that determine the spirit and shape of the community are so firmly set that any variations can only exist within the bounds of the basic values. Importantly, liberty to chose values is not one of such basic values; the basic values are contained in the socially-embedded standard of justice, while the liberty to chose values is a lower-level value that is strictly limited. One may not chose to be antisocial, to boycott social endeavours, to act improperly to the authorities or one's neighbours, because such choices will meet with social sanctions. Similarly, one may not chose to "throw away one's shield" in battle, or be a coward, because that, too, will meet with social sanctions.

The idea of substituting substantive with procedural criteria in defining social values, so characteristic of modern pluralistic liberal societies, contains a fault that is similar to the fallacy of trying to render the truth relative in theories of the truth. As Gilbert Ryle pointed it out, claiming that there is no truth is logically a self-defeating statement, because the very claim aspires to its own truthfulness; this is similar to saying that there are no real coins, but only counterfeits, while the meaning of the counterfeit is defined by reference to a genuine coin — a counterfeit is not real, which presupposes that there is a real coin, which the counterfeit, as it were, pretends to be.[19] In much the same way, the claim that there are no substantive social values, but only procedural guidelines that determine how such values would be posited in any particular society, or the claim that non-interference and the liberty to pursue private choices is a value in itself, arises from the negation of certain traditionally inherited substantive values. Negative liberty has no meaning

[19] Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1986 (first published 1949).

without a reference to legitimate social expectations: why would others "by default" be inclined to interfere with any individual, if it was not for authentic social reasons that people are intrinsically directed to one another, that they depend on one another in society, whether they like it or not, and that most social interactions are just that — interactions, and they presuppose mutual influences? Non-interference is a futile protest against the reality of social life; it is intended to shield the person from her social nature, and instead of transforming the way interactions unfold — instead of humanising them — it seeks to desperately minimise them. There is no non-interference without legitimate interference, just as there are no counterfeits without real coins; once the interference is seen as the primary substance of relations in society the substantive values make their way back on the scene, because they give content to such relations; without substantive values, there is no ordered society, nor are there legitimate social expectations that govern it. Once this is accepted, it becomes immediately clear that the socially legitimate types of mutual dispositions must be predominantly positive, sympathetic, marked by solidarity and the sharing of identities and preferences, but that, to some extent, they will also include animosities, negative emotions, even hatred. In any case, such values will be personal, and they will be subject to evaluation depending on how well they fit into the socially accepted standards of decency, appropriateness, proportion — in a word, justice as a composite virtue.

One's choice in the organic social setting relates directly to one's ability to either live by the social standards or failing them. There is no concept of "alternative", much less an equally justifiable alternative to the social norms. "Choosing" to violate those norms means simply failing to achieve them. In such a clear and simple normative setting, the cultivation of certain virtues is seen as dependant on the person: thus Aristotle's assertion that good character is built by a "repetition" of good actions; building a good character is like training for battle or for a sports competition — the more times one practices certain actions and movements (in the context of virtue these are "movements of the soul") the greater perfection one is likely to achieve in the activity being practices. Thus, choice and liberty are a matter of working on the building of socially unequivocally defined virtues.

On the one hand, it could be argued that this type of liberty is simpler and more viable because it is so much more limited than the complex and often unfathomable liberty envisaged by the liberal theory: in liberal societies (or, more precisely, in liberal theory rather than in any real liberal societies) liberty

is seen as ranging far further than in the organic communities; it is seen as encompassing even the right of the individual to contribute to the formation of the right and wrong in the given time, and this presupposes a degree of the right to challenge the distinction between right and the wrong and their postulated contents, too. In other words, where in organic communities liberty served the purpose to endow the individual with the ability to choose rightly and with the merit for doing so (or the responsibility for failing to do so), in liberal communities liberty itself is envisaged as the value in its own right. In organic communities, liberty is instrumental for the achievement of the good that can be fully attributed to the creative and morally integrated individual; in liberal societies, liberty is proclaimed to be the goal in itself, as well as being an indicator of social progress.

The problem with this juxtaposition of an instrument for the goal itself is that, once liberty becomes an end in itself, it becomes unfathomable and unachievable. Its promotion from the status of an instrument to that of a goal occurs in circumstances where the individual agent is still heavily conditioned by the outside circumstances and by the social order itself; the aspirations of liberty rise enormously, while the ability of the individual to act autonomously does not rise at all, or is even reduced through increased friction with the social structures. If one is expected to be a decent person by lights of a traditional organic community, one's options are clear: one may either follow the path set by society, or may deviate and fail. On the other hand, if one is found in the conglomerate of values involved in the idea that freedom is something to be desired for its own sake, and that the right and wrong cannot be defined independently of the interplay between human freedom and human choices in the synchronic moment, one is by no means clear on where one should go, for it appears that one determines where one should go at least as much as the community does, and that is a problem indeed.

The complexity of norms, or the confusion between them (and the two coincide more often than not), leave one without an effective normative guidance. In addition, complex norms tend to produce complex social arrangements, and the more complex such arrangements are, the more social structures there will be, both regulatory and others, which means that there will tend to exist more structural violence against the individual. The result of complexity is that there is a vacuum of normative guidance (which is sometimes filled by adopting deviant norms or sub-cultural role models), while the degree of individual heteronomy rises because of the rising

structural violence generated by the increasing volume of social structures. One faces structural violence everywhere where there are institutions, and the modern liberal society knows of more institutions than any other type of society. In fact, the very concept of liberty tends to be institutionalised in liberal democracies, so that the individual voice is seen as significant only if it can be institutionally articulated, be it through trade unions, professional associations, government ministries or parliaments, or through the various non-governmental organisations. In such a context the factual amount of individual freedom is truly minimised, because organisations lurk everywhere in the name of freedom, all of them demanding a slice of the remaining freedom from the impoverished and confused liberal citizen. It is no wonder that in such circumstances the directions of the right and wrong become obfuscated and remote, while different "life styles" or choices emerge as legitimate responses to a desperate human condition. Compared with the rights and wrongs of the organic communities (and let us not forget that there remain small organic communities within the contemporary liberal societies, even if only as sub-cultures), the liberal perspective seems incomparably more heteronomous for the individual citizen, while offering so much less real choice and assistance in actually choosing the life-path.

The metaphysics of freedom in heteronomy

The conventional wisdom in the history of western philosophy is that there can be no freedom without autonomy, namely that the agent can be said to have freely chosen a course of action only if the agent can reasonably be said to have been able to act otherwise. Thus, given the limited amount of actual ability by most people to chose autonomously, it could be argued that their freedom is severely impaired, or even, in a fundamental aspect, that it does not really exist in modern society. If one is conditioned to respond to social stimuli in certain predictable ways, and the social structures are so numerous that structural violence is pervasive in all areas of life, than the fact that one might have a small island where one might be able to make one or two autonomous decisions in one's most private domain can hardly be a justification for the existence of freedom in such society, at least in any significant way. If there is freedom, it must be hidden somewhere outside the commonly accepted formula of "autonomy implies freedom". Can one meaningfully challenge this formula, and argue that there is indeed a degree of freedom preserved

somewhere, while acknowledging that the dominant and pervasive human condition is heteronomy?

The idea of freedom, like all the other great ideals in philosophy and spiritual life, has an empirical and a metaphysical dimension, one that Kant called "noumenal". The *noumenal* aspect of freedom arises from its conceptual origin: there is clearly a drive for freedom, namely for absolute freedom, unlimited by social violence (this is why one is able to label the influence of social structures "structural violence" against the individual), and this drive has inspired so many artistic and philosophical systems attempting to rationally establish the existence and contours of freedom. As this aspect of freedom is far removed from any experiential reality in any existing society (as the very organisation of social life is associated with structural violence), one wonders where it comes from and how the concept of freedom in the sense of the source of tranquillity and goodness arising from one's unhindered ability to do right has come to exist in the human mind. The same question applies to all the other great philosophical and spiritual ideals, including the idea of peace, perfect contemplation, unlimited benevolence. At this point the divide between the phenomenal and the *noumenal* emerges and it is this divide that may provide answers to the issue of freedom in the context outlined in this book. Kant sensed the divide and was the first one to elaborate on it, but much has remained to be said about freedom in the political context while taking into account this fundamental divide.

The origin of the concepts can be traced differently, but in most cases they are found to stem from some type of experience; the ideas that cannot be found in experience are usually arrived at by abstraction from experiential realities, their exaggeration or the trimming out of some of their properties to leave others pure and unlimited. Everything that applies to freedom (and even to the idea of autonomy) appears so far removed from the social realities of any epoch that the origin of the idea must be somewhere else. The divide looms large whenever one tries to explain the origin of the great political ideals in familiar and applicable everyday terms of political practice: universal suffrage, ability to peacefully remove governments, checks and balances — all these practices are but a far cry of the primordial ideal of freedom and autonomy that has been sought through these political mechanisms but has never been able to be experienced; nobody has actually been acquainted with perfect freedom or ability to act fully autonomously towards an indubitably right cause.

We have started from a rather suggestive point of departure: the exploration of sympathy and solidarity as the pre-requisites for any meaningful and ethical society. The realities of social life are very different from the ideals of sympathy and solidarity, and yet there is little doubt that without the two mental dispositions society would cease to exist; it is the positive inclination of one man towards another that makes possible the continuation of society, however minuscule the amount of such positive disposition may seem much of the time in comparison with the amount of hatred and animosity. Conceptually, it is clear that the glue that keeps social tissue together cannot be hatred, but sympathy; that the agent of success of communal efforts cannot be competition, but solidarity. Similarly, however far removed from experiential reality much of the time freedom is, clearly it is only freedom that makes morality possible, although what remains for us to do here is to explore what type of freedom is indeed appropriate to strive for, specifically whether or not this is the freedom that most of us commonly associate with the ability to chose unlimitedly and unconditioned by outside factors.

One strives towards freedom in much the same way as one strives towards happiness or an absolute meaning of life. While for some or all of these things one might reasonably believe that they are unattainable in the reality that is accessible to our senses and empirical experience, still one must possess some type or hint of unempirical experience of freedom, happiness or meaning of life in order to know what it is one strives for, and in order to be able to desire to attain these things. They may not exist in the reality that we can literally see and feel any more than abstract concepts or mathematical truths do; however, their existence is confirmed by the fact that we know very precisely what it is that we seek. In the world torn apart by unrest and temporariness, we seek peace and values that are eternal; something inside us opposes the sensual realities that suggest that there are no such things as peace or eternal love or the truth. The knowledge that exists in all of us, in much the same form and with the same content, despite the experiential realities in the empirical world, demonstrates that on a deeper ontological level these "things" or qualities exist. The very idea of freedom that brings peace with it, a completely content life devoted to the right and the good, is directly opposed to the realities of life in any society; in fact to the realities of empirical life as such. However, this idea is present in most religions and in philosophical systems and teachings in most cultures, however distant and historically mutually unconnected they might be. The *noumenal* life does seem fundamentally separate from the empirical

life, and on the *noumenal* level the differences between cultures and various experiences of human groups across the world seem much less dramatic than they are on the "phenomenal", experiential level. I shall return to Semyon Frank on this:

> Whoever has seriously pondered what the true good, tranquillity or eternity that one seeks really are, that person *by merely having thought* about this knows that *these things exist*. May they contradict all the possibilities associated with the empirical world and may we never have met them in our sensual experience. May they be paradoxical and incredible from the point of view of the ordinary human experience and all our usual concepts and predominant interests; but if only our heart strives towards them and thus our sight is directed at them, we *see* them and that is why they *exist*. I may think that they are unviable in the real world, that they are powerless when faced with the blind forces of life that have banished them somewhere in the depths outside the limits of the world, where they are accessible only to my seeking soul; but there, powerless and remote from the entire world, they nevertheless *exist*, and nothing can prevent me from loving them and being attracted to them. After all, I unwittingly notice, even if very rarely, their presence or at least their weak reflections in life: a sincere greeting and full-heartedness by another person, their eyes full of goodness looking at me, tell me that a reflection of the good lives and glitters in them. Every act of self-sacrifice proves that life is not ruled only by the animal passions and the cold calculation of interest; sometimes, in the most extraordinary moments of my life, I am able not just to phantasise about the eternity or the fullness of satisfaction but *to experience them*, even if for a short time — to feel that they are possible. What I seek not only exist, but its beams reach and influence the world.[20]

It is in this sense that one might be sure that there is such a thing as freedom, despite being surrounded with realities that show only a pervasive lack of freedom and autonomy. There is little in the social arrangements throughout human history that could give rise to the human idea of perfect freedom and individual autonomy of choice, and thus we can be sure that the idea is born in the mind independently of the empirical realities; it motivates

[20] Frank, *Smisao života*, pp. 66–7.

and inspires efforts to achieve ever increasing degrees of freedom, including political liberty, even though in practice such efforts may never succeed, and some of them, indeed, may in effect reduce the existing amount of liberty, human rights, or tolerance, such as was the case with Marxism and some other ideologies. On a metaphysical level, empirical realities do not limit the possibility, or indeed the actual existence of, freedom. The fact that it is unrealised tells more about the world, the political arrangements and social realities one lives in than it does about the plausibility or implausibility of the idea of freedom.

The idea here is that freedom does not merely exist in one's "mind's eye", that it is not some type of mental reality as opposed to other, observable realities: Ryle held it that mental realities could be described as dispositions directly related to the potential or actual reflections that they could generate in the observable reality. A skill, which is something unobservable in itself, is still not independent of the actual performance of that skill, be it a theatrical, sports or intellectual skill: it is the disposition that relates to a potential performance, and should not be treated as a fundamentally different type of "thing" or reality than the performance itself. At the same time, the existence of the skill does not mean that a performance will occur; perhaps the circumstances are such that it is impossible, yet the skill irrefutably refers to the performance, and should it be applied, it will produce a performance:

> (…) a skill is not an act. It is therefore neither a witnessable nor an unwitnessable act. To recognize that a performance is an exercise of a skill is indeed to appreciate it in the light of a factor which could not be separately recorded by a camera. But the reason why the skill exercised in a performance cannot be separately recorded by a camera is not that it is an occult or ghostly happening, but that it is not a happening at all. It is a disposition, or complex of dispositions, and a disposition is a factor of the wrong logical type to be seen or unseen, recorded or unrecorded. Just as the habit of talking loudly is not itself loud or quiet, since it is not the sort of term of which 'loud' or 'quiet' can be predicated, or just as a susceptibility to headaches is for the same reason not itself unendurable or endurable, so the skills, tastes and bents which are exercised in overt or internal operations are not themselves overt or internal, witnessable, or unwitnessable.[21]

[21] Ryle, *The Concept of Mind*, pp. 33–4.

While Ryle seeks to demystify the post-World War Two philosophical theory of the mind that asserted the existence of separate mental causes of physical actions, which were supposed to be entities of a different type than their physical consequences, his point, while basically negative, as it denies separate reality to mental "objects", is valid in the context of ideals. Consider a love of freedom, the longing for freedom that one has never witnessed or experienced in any way in one's empirical life (one might have dreamt of it or imagined it, however). The desire is directly related to what it would be like to enjoy freedom in experiential reality; it can co-exist with the cognitive awareness that, in the given circumstances, such enjoyment is impossible, yet the very idea of freedom would lose any significance, and indeed meaning, if it were permanently divorced from its aspiration to reflect on experiential reality. The ideal of freedom that did not contain elements, or "pictures" of an imagined reality that is the same as experiential reality, would cease to be an ideal, because it would lose its normative force; namely, freedom is a value that gives rise to a normative judgement that one ought to be free, able to act autonomously, and able to decide rightly between the right and the wrong choices, both of which are freely available. This idea is similar to the idea of health, or indeed any other ideal: imagining a health that would be totally separate from reality and would in fact never be realisable in reality would make no sense; such an idea, if it existed, would be normatively indifferent, irrelevant. The same is the case with abilities, skills, desires, longings, or aspirations of any kind. They all represent intentional content as Searle called it, and only through their referential directedness towards the experiential reality do they receive significance and normative force for the subject.

Ideas such as freedom, fulfilment, happiness, are described as "ideals" exactly because they are detached from experiential reality, but are essentially directed towards it; they are appeals to change the reality, and thus guide efforts within the experiential reality. Their "idealistic" content is not in the realisation that they are completely divorced from reality, but rather that they are temporarily exiled from it, and that it is a matter of strife and time before they can return to it. Freedom is the ideal that has guided so many political and social processes attempting to increase the amount of political liberty in society; it is thus an indubitable fact that freedom exists, even exerts a causal influence on experiential reality, whether as a disposition, or a goal not yet attained, although admittedly it is mostly absent from many existing political arrangements.

It is undoubtedly true that there is a chronic deficit of freedom in any existing political institution, and that much of the political effort and many of the political movements throughout the political history of humanity have sought to address that deficit; especially in the liberal times, political movements almost exclusively focus on "lobbying" for greater liberties for particular groups, thus trying to address, if only partially, the overarching deficit of freedom, so clearly reflected in the concept of structural violence as an inseparable facet of any society. The lack of freedom and the lack of autonomy are, thus, true. They are empirical truths. But there are at least two different types of the truth, namely the empirical truth and the truth that arises from higher-level considerations within the human mind. I may not be able to account for certain ideas and desires that I have in terms of the experiential realities that I have encountered, and especially so when ideals are concerned; the more affectionately I strive towards the ideals, and the farther removed they are from the current — or diachronic, past — experiential reality of my life, the clearer it is that there is a different type of the truth within me that I consider more important than the merely obvious, empirical truths. Some will call this a logical truth that is not witnessable in immediate experience: the mathematical truth that the Earth rotates around its axis was not empirically witnessable and was indeed contrary to the dogma of Galileo's times, but it was far more the truth than the empirically observable "truth" that the Earth was stagnant.[22] The empirical truth that there is no freedom or autonomy is inferior to the higher truth that there is freedom, and that there is autonomy, and that both influence the experiential reality and our lives, that both move us in ways that experiential realities often cannot, despite the fact that, for the moment, they do not seem applicable or realisable in the experiential reality. The internal realities are no less real than external, experiential realities, and in fact the origin of the ideas in our mind, especially those that can be seen as ideals, is at the same time the question and the answer as to the reality of the things they refer to.

This discussion does not strive to re-create the distinction between the Platonian and Aristotelian "first" and "second" substances, namely whether ideas are the primary causes of things or empirical things are the "first" substance from which ideas are formed. Its aim is rather to discuss a specific type of ideas, namely the ideals. The human need to strive for perfection and to perceive the lack of freedom as slavish is witness to the fact that there

[22] Frank, *Smisao života*, p. 82.

is an important aspect of human nature that is rooted in perfect freedom, despite the fact that such freedom does not exist in the empirical conditions of human life. That is the most serious point of departure for any discussion of freedom anywhere, and it cannot, and should not try to, avoid the issues of the constitution and nature of *faith*.

Faith is a type of *will* to strive towards higher truths, and it is not limited to religion in the most conventional sense. All great scientific discoveries were so great exactly because they seemed so far removed from the obvious at the time when they were made, and some have led to sacrifices by their authors to the prevailing opinion and regime of beliefs. Still, logic and empirical evidence amassed subsequently have confirmed their validity. At the time these discoveries were made, they went against the conventional knowledge, against the comfort of the obvious and the accepted; they required a faith by their authors that it made sense to sacrifice everything for the truth that was hidden, and that they saw themselves as entrusted from above to reveal. Without such a faith nobody would have embarked upon the troublesome road of philosophical, astronomical or physical experiment where one faced being castigated, excommunicated or burned to death by the Inquisition. Thus faith is the moving principle behind any visionary activity, behind any ground-breaking movement, and behind any creative endeavour that challenges the accepted knowledge or boundaries of the known world.

Faith in political liberty has motivated revolutionaries to take utmost risks to change the social arrangements of their times; however, faith in the existence of freedom, despite the heteronomous human condition after all political revolutions and "transitions" to democracy, requires the recognition of a higher realm of realities, of truths that go beyond the empirical realities that we may, and indeed often should, strive to change. Does the fact that the history of political revolutions has shown little progress in true human autonomy in society mean that there is no freedom? Does the fact that in modern liberal democracy man is arguably more detached from the others and less creatively "free" than in more authoritarian societies of the past mean that freedom has lost its appeal? Indeed, without faith, the answer is the unavoidable: "yes". If our sights are fixed on what is possible in the empirical reality, then the existence of our ideals is in doubt.

When ideals are considered from the point of view of empirical realities, it is clear that should there be no desperation and degradation in the empirical reality, there would be no need for the ideals, and the overcoming

of the obstacles associated with the degenerate and backward aspects of empirical life would yield no heroic credit nor would generate any spiritual "merit": in fact, the appeal of the ideal of freedom would hardly exist if the empirical reality was not so firmly opposed to it. Thus it seems that the higher level of truths requires the seemingly contradictory lower level of truths, associated with everyday life, in order to motivate action that may lead to internal fulfilment and satisfaction. Man's constitution seems to require the overcoming of resistance and obstacles in order to assert its worth; thus the seeming senselessness and cruelty of the existing life, political as well as private, gives rise and normative strength to the internal realities, to the higher level of truths, to ideals that give meaning to one's existence. It is sometimes argued that political visionaries and revolutionaries lead happy lives because they are so absorbed by ideals that they can withstand the grim realities of the societies they attempt to change better than the average citizen, who is not under such a large influence of the higher-level truths. The same is the case with any type of faith: the grimmer and the more challenging the reality in the society where we live, the greater the potential for faith to generate enormous normative power, and the greater room there is for the values that characterise the higher level reality that gives meaning to our life to consume our time and thought. It is indeed possible to be free in heteronomous circumstances once the fundamental divide between what is empirically possible at a particular moment, and what one must strive to do from the point of view of the truths that condition one's existence as a human being, is fully acknowledged. In the former realm, heteronomy is omnipresent, and one has little opportunity to influence events; still, it is the latter realm that defines one as a human being, as opposed to all other creatures. Faith is thus the directedness of our mind's eye inside, towards the realities that truly matter for what we truly are, rather than a preoccupation with the empirical realities that, most of the time, militate against the ideals that inhabit the higher-level realm of the truths. The metaphysics of ideals is very different from Plato's ideas: while ideas are seen as examples upon which reality governs itself, albeit imperfectly, ideals are truths that are often in open disagreement with the empirical realities and seem far removed from them; as has been argued repeatedly here, this by no means makes them any less real or true.

The tension that exists between the idea of freedom and the reality of heteronomy — the idea whose truth is in the higher realm, and the heteronomous relationship that characterises the lower level of reality, the empirical reality —

generates the context in which freedom has a purpose: its aim is to motivate one to struggle against the empirical heteronomy, to make sacrifices, to rule out the seeming imperatives of selfishness and self-preservation that dominate the empirical realm, and thus, through the struggle that is made possible by the tension between the two realms of reality, to assert oneself as a human being and deserve one's human status, to deserve one's freedom. By being heteronomous in relation to the experiential reality in which we live, we gain the opportunity to make sacrifices; this decision to make sacrifices is in itself opposed to the laws of the empirical world; it militates severely against the heteronomous relationships and cruelty of the empirical reality, and thus, in itself, is an indirect realisation of autonomy. I may not be able to act freely in the political context because I am so severely conditioned by the structural violence of the political order and the social and political institutions; however, I will always have the opportunity to go against the seeming logic of the empirical world by making sacrifices. Doing so means chosing a different reality, and has been historically inextricably connected with living for the ideals, in whichever aspect of life they might have played a role. My heteronomy arises from my acceptance of the laws of the empirical reality: if I want to earn money, or become politically powerful, or gain external recognition in some way, I must follow the laws of the experiential reality within which I strive to achieve these goals, and within this reality I am so strongly heteronomous that my freedom is deeply questionable. However, if I chose to give up political office, to give up an inherited fortune, or to withdraw into a life of contemplation, I am making a sacrifice that may not be easily understandable to those influenced particularly heavily by the laws of experiential reality; by doing so, I choose to give up heteronomy, because heteronomy applies only as far as my vision is confined to the experiential realm. The moment when I decide that my goal is spiritual, internal, tied to the higher-level truths where ideals live, I depart from heteronomy and achieve freedom. This is why freedom is primarily to be found in self-sacrifice, and this is why it is the self-sacrifice that is implicitly present in authentically motivated acts of solidarity and sympathy that provides a glimmer of freedom even in political realities.

The empirical reality of social life is particularly painfully revealed in the liberal ideology — that is why this ideology is the primary subject of critique in this book. Man is seemingly isolated, confined to one's own interests, fears and desires, all this seemingly in competition with and opposition to another man. However, this context, so superficially true, makes man completely

heteronomous and deprives him of any substantial freedom. The willing departure from the seeming ties of the experiential definitions of "interest" and "legitimate rights" into the realm of seeking deeper freedom while turning one's back on one's experiential heteronomy, by making a sacrifice of the usual considerations of isolated self-interest, and raising concern for another that equals one's concern for oneself, immediately establishes a degree of higher level autonomy that is not subject to the restrictions and laws of everyday experience. The more one departs from the usual selfish endeavours and directs one's efforts towards the ability to achieve greater freedom within, the more one is able to act in solidarity with others, the more he is able to exercise a true sympathy for the others, the more these acts will in themselves influence the experiential reality to some degree. They may not change it, but they will provide a symbol, a sign that there is a different reality from the grim and cruel circumstances that colour the society as we know it, on its surface. Religion, faith, the directedness within all mark the hallway to the unseen part of society; faith is what accounts for the subcultures that provide a symbolic presence of different values in modern cities; on a collective level, religion is what faith is on the individual level: it sets ideals and standards that are different from the everyday standards, not just in their external description, but structurally, different in nature, and thus allows for a different approach to freedom than do the ordinary laws of strife for recognition and satisfaction of interest.

The metaphysical dimension here relates directly to the question of the type of reality that is chosen as the primary referential point for one's life strategy. The experiential reality, which is the dominant context for much "practical" philosophy, does not allow sufficient room for the very idea of freedom to be established, because freedom in the experiential circumstances is inextricably connected with the autonomy of action, and the complexity of political communities with the pervasive presence of structural violence of various sorts makes autonomy a far-fetched possibility, or at best a limited area within the vastly greater set of heteronomies that, ultimately, determine the nature of social transactions and the quality of life in society. On the other hand, the higher-level realm of the truth, the reality of ideals, allows the possibility of freedom to co-exist with its actual impossibility in the experiential reality, while leaving constantly open the possibility that freedom might penetrate from the higher-level reality into the experiential reality, even if only in certain moments, as a glimmer of hope. At the same time, on a more principled level, the determination for a set of standards and values inherent in

faith, as the primarily mental attitude that characterises the choice of higher level realities as opposed to experiential ones, makes it natural to act in ways that go against the prevailing lower-level logic of experiential realities, namely to exercise self-sacrifice as a form of liberation from heteronomy, and thus also to follow the path of authentic solidarity and sympathy. This defeats the main postulate of liberalism, that each man must be protected in his discreteness and separateness from the intrusions by others, by making it possible to deny one's own interest in the interest of others, and in the name of higher-level truths and realities (ideals), which then brings men closer together in the experiential realm. The more distance each assumes from the low-level goals of everyday life and the more one approaches the ideals of the higher realm of life, the closer together people grow in the experiential realm. This is witnessed by the social consequences of the great disasters, where people often make sacrifices and grow close together, only to become separate and distant again once the situation becomes "normal" again. The same is true for sympathy: it is easier to sympathise and feel positive emotions towards others if one renounces the empirical goals and sets one's sights on standards different in nature and able to mobilise the energy of freedom that is blocked by the experiential calculations of interest and rights to the limited resources. Conversely, the more people are motivated by higher-level standards, the less animosity and more solidarity will appear in experiential reality, in much the same way as the kindness of one man in the street may cause one to consider whether the cruelty and harshness of social transactions is really all that there is to life. Signs of a higher-level reality are not insignificant in their influence on the experiential reality. In society, they have always been causes of major social change.

The "social role of religion"

The leading role of religious leaders in all communities arises from their moral authority, and the same can be said about the religious communities within larger societies. Religious values and relationships embody the ideals lost in the worldly affairs of secular democracies, and this is why examples of organic communities, with their natural and more immediate grasp of the substantive values of life, can largely be identified with the presence of religious communities in a society. Such communities typically do not suffer from anomie, even if they are situated within the most confused of societies. They do not have normative problems between their members, even if their societies are torn apart by industrial, class or even civil strife or warfare.

In short, religious communities are the primary form of organic communities in the contemporary urban world; this is their "social significance". At the same time, however, their importance is not exhausted by this "social role".

Discussions of the social role of religion have tended to reduce religion to a social phenomenon: a type of community organisation, a structure of values, rules and rituals. This is the way religion appears to an outside view, to someone who does not know anything about its substance, and certainly to those who do not belong to the religion under observation. For a churchgoer to describe Christianity in its "social role" would be nothing short of an insult; his perception of the religion is couched in the substance of the values that Christianity posits, and in the significance of those values for the concrete organisation of life, including both personal and social affairs. That does not mean that the "inner" dimensions of religion do not impact the social fibre quite directly, but from an inside point of view they do so quite differently from what the "social role approach" suggests. The external side is more or less exhausted in the organic form and function of religions communities; the internal side consists primarily in the ability of religious values to change people and their perceptions of others, thus initiating cooperative and mutually assisting processes that are not characteristic of the society at large. In other words, the values involved in religion — in most religions, in fact, and specifically in Christianity — have the inner energy and potential to mend people's ways, to transform characters, and to lead to introspective and internalising processes that allow the embedding of positive, constructive, cooperative, sympathetic values and dispositions towards others. In this way, the values otherwise expelled from the most gruesome of liberal social realities, which lead to mutual estrangement and the superimposition of interest upon all other values and norms, regain their social role. The social role of religion, from the inside point of view, lies in the content and normative prescriptive force of religion. In other words, it lies in the values and their structures that make up the religion itself.

True faith cultivates the values that we have discussed in the earlier chapters as pre-requisites for a functioning and morally justifiable society. These are the values of sympathy and solidarity, the general complex of positive mutual dispositions, which Christianity knows as the universal love that it calls for; this is not just a paradoxical statement (for "how can one love those one does not know?"), but the expression of a concrete social truth: the human community that does not rest on positive mutual inclinations by its members

enters a constant turmoil and confusion; the confusion only increases with time and leads to ideologies that end up striving to protect the discrete, unimaginably lonesome individual, separate from the others one ought to depend on and live with. That is how the doctrine of social contract came to exist, and that is equally the functional foundation of modern liberalism. On the other hand, religious societies of today show much less confusion with regard to where they are going, even when they live in the most unfavourable of circumstances, surrounded by far more numerous enemies, and immersed in policies that to the outside world may seem savage and anachronistic. Despite the odds imposed by the external circumstances, they have the clear advantage arising from the clarity of goals, values and vision, from the normative precept that all members of the community — perhaps *because of* the dangers that the community faces from the outside — ought to adopt a mutually constructive culture of solidarity. Israel is a state that comes to mind because of the constant warfare that it is engaged in. Without any desire to justify (or criticise) its sometimes quite extreme tactics to counter what it perceives as external threats, this is a community that survives on the solidarity of its members and the cohesion provided for by the national religion. Such a uniformity of religious thought cannot exist, of course, in the entirely different multicultural democracies in the West, but even there the same values, solidarity and sympathy (although they are proportionately much less present) provide for what cohesion and positive social processes there are in those societies. Whatever the society, however unified or dissipated it might be — culturally, nationally, or politically — what there is of cohesion, clarity and unity of purpose, however much or however little, arises directly from the positive dispositions between its members. In other words, whatever there is of the constructive social processes and unity of purpose arises from the feelings of sympathy, self cross-identification between the members of the community, and their solidarity in the face of the various difficulties of life. These values and the norms that arise from them are organised and distributed in various ways in the different communities, but they are the substance of social functionality anywhere. As the substance, then, they must be "grown" somehow; they must be produced and preserved in ways that are fundamentally different from their distribution, organisation, structural formation or "implementation" in the various communities, which is the job mainly of political and cultural elites. The question to address here is where and how the socially constructive values are *produced*.

Much of this book is dedicated to the thesis that positive social inclinations reflect the constructive values that play a key role in any organic, morally well integrated, functional community. The social activism that promotes such values is thus socially constructive, while, by my lights, that activism which degrades them and promotes values that harbour divisiveness and cut short the future of communities, is socially destructive. In this sense, politics can be socially constructive or socially destructive, depending on the ideology and the underlying philosophy that it adopts. Conservative ideologies and politics arising from them tend to be socially constructive, because their social activism promotes well-tried values that have been proven in the past to contribute to social cohesion, morally upstanding policies and a healthy future for the communities; alternative and experimental ideologies that promote deeply controversial values through their activism, such as gay rights to the same level as the rights of heterosexuals, or the right not to bear arms in the military service, hold socially destructive potential, because, should they become general principles, they would threaten the cohesion and future of the communities. The simple test of generalisation reflects the truthfulness or falsity of the values in terms of their constructive impact on the community: if the gay culture were to become dominant, or exclusive (and any right to equality to heterosexuality must in principle allow for this possibility, just the same as for the possibility of the opposite), the community would cease to exist in quite a short time, because it would effectively mean a suicide of the human race. If the right not to bear arms in military service were to prevail, there would be no effective fighting force for the nation and sooner or later it would succumb in its independence to some other nation or entity, in one of the many possible ways; in short, the fundamental rights and interests, including the identity of the community, would almost certainly be destroyed. Thus, although it is politically incorrect at the time of writing of this book, this conclusion is by no means controversial logically, but is rather obviously true; in fact, it is certain to the degree of being able to serve as an axiom.

Given the axiom that there are socially constructive and socially destructive values (some of which are easy to establish, such as the two mentioned in the previous paragraph, while others might be more challenging to determine, but nevertheless exist), clearly the social activism exemplified in conservative politics tends to be more socially constructive than that present in what I call here alternative or experimental politics. However, neither politics generates either the constructive, or the destructive values; they merely serve

to promote them in socially recognisable ways. The values themselves are created in a more intimate context, in the way people are educated to perceive themselves and the meaning of their lives, through the role of the social elites not connected with political parties. The key intimate institution that influences the closest self-perception of members of a community is religion, and this is its most important "social role": the creation of sensibilities and judgements that make it possible for people to develop positive social inclinations. Religion (or substitutes for it in the unfortunate societies from which it is temporarily banished, as was the case in some extreme communist regimes) makes it possible for the primary social impulses to be positive, cooperative and empathic ones. The functional role of religion is thus a primary factor of social cohesion and at the same time the primary mechanism of positive value-socialisation; in fact, politics can be distinguished between the conservative and alternative or futuristic ones largely based on their relationship to the forms of socialisation in the community provided for by religion. Conservative politics defends and advances the values defined within religion by external means, and in this sense it is the conditional, relative and socially desirable form of activism; however, it cannot replace religion, because it is unable to produce the values and socialise people into the sensibilities and value-systems that ideology itself grows from. Religion remains far more important for the generation of socially constructive emotional, social and even rational dispositions than any form of social activation, and remains the generator of the essential ingredients of what I have called sympathy and solidarity as composite values and sets of dispositions. No society without a religion can withstand the temptations of short-term practicalities, including those that arise from the organisational and practical aspects of conducting politics, without sacrificing the essential elements of sympathy and solidarity. No amount of social education performed by the institutions of the state can replace the role religion plays so close to the most intimate sphere of each individual. This is also why social elites, including intellectual, spiritual, but also political ones, must have a sense of religion, at least a feeling of its importance, and preferably should be religious. Their social role is that of solidifying, formulating and institutionalising the value systems that already lay within the consciousness and the emotional set-up of each individual in society, and it is performed the most effectively if they work with, and possibly within, the religion. Irreligious social elites may also contribute to the consolidation of authentic and socially constructive values if they harbour adequate respect for the sentiments of the community and for the role religion plays in society, but they may also play a destructive

role if they adopt alternative ideologies that challenge religion or even try to mock it. Examples of both scenarios are plentiful in the world today.[23]

The existential role of religion in political communities

The exigencies of living in a complex and demanding political community are well known, and have clear repercussions for the degree to which it is possible to enjoy freedom. Generally speaking, the more complex the society is, the more it tends to proliferate norms, and consequently the amount of structural violence tends to be greater. Conversely, the overall amount of freedom diminishes substantially. Freedom that is tied to consequentialist considerations, one's actual ability to effect a change in one's social surroundings in ways measurable and perceptible from the outside, is severely limited. When measured by that standard, it often justifies the conclusion that hope is almost absent and that the social circumstances in most developed democracies allow only the sort of liberty mediated by the institutions, whilst at the same time almost totally destroying the liberty and spontaneity that arise from the availability of different avenues that lead to the same goal. The avenues tend to be fewer, as do the legitimate goals in most complex societies, so that the often debated "predictability of behaviour" as an element of democratic order is not too difficult to achieve, because everybody seems to be striving towards the few identical goals, whilst using the few legitimate avenues that lead to those goals. The room for originality, individuality or creativity is increasingly diminished, and so is the possibility of freedom perceived in this context.

The central concept for the portraying of freedom here is that of *personality*. In order to exercise a full freedom as a human being, one must be a personality in the proper sense, rather than merely an agent in any specific constellation of relationships. Personality, however, is possible only within a

[23] To say that the healthy respect for the social role of religion is essential as a minimum of socially constructive activism of the elites is not to say that this is the most important aspect of religion itself; this is just the social side of it that is often discussed in political philosophy and sociology, however religion's most important facets are ontological, ethical and epistemological, and these dimensions only make possible the socially visible functions such as the one discussed very briefly here; these deeper segments of religion are not the subject of this book, however. The fact that I am discussing the social role of religion here should not be confused with the idea that this is its crucial aspect, and I should like to make that perfectly clear. This book, namely, is not about religion, but about the possibility of freedom in the political and social context, and that delimits our reach into the issues of religion very substantially.

dynamic social context: personality traits and the profile of an individual personality are developed through social interactions; thus a deficient social environment, or one where individuals tend to withdraw into isolation, is not conducive to developing strong and articulate personalities. One is more likely to develop a personality if one has access to the public sphere, if one has a functional work environment, a good and coherent family, and a proper degree of social life. At the same time, a permanently marginalised individual, whether because of individual circumstances, or because of more general social or political developments (political isolation and domination, authoritarian regime, war, international cultural or economic sanctions, etc.), is likely to be depraved of the benefits of a fully developed social personality.

In a certain sense, the more complete the human personality is, the greater the realm of freedom that person is able to perceive and exercise. Thus strong personalities, authors, artists and political activists who had grown up and matured in one set of circumstances (socially favourable, although often within dictatorial states), were able to retain a greater degree of inner freedom even when later some of them were imprisoned in the Gulags, than the other inmates, who might have been less articulate personalities. The external circumstances play a key role in developing personalities, but only in the diachronic sense, through a long period of time, while any synchronic external conditions (such as detention in a labour camp in Soviet Union under Stalin) might as such militate against the development of strong personalities, but may not be able to seriously undermine the already developed complex and firmly structured personalities. In this sense, Solzhenitsyn was probably a more "free" person in the Gulag than the next prisoner, and he remained free after the break-down of the authoritarian regime and his release from prison.

The factors of development of personalities are many, and some of them have to do with one's natural predispositions and genetic imprint. However, the others, which are more subject to political arrangements and one's voluntary influence, include the type of social atmosphere were the person grows, the forms of intellectual, physical or cultural influences that one experiences, the emotional and intellectual links with other people, the degree to which one is taught and able to identify with one's community, including one's nation and country, etc. All these factors, along with ideology, personal education, freedom of speech and the ability and opportunity to engage in public or political affairs, contribute to the building of a strong and multi-faceted personality; they are building-blocks of such a personality, and it is usually described by

explicit reference to these building-blocks. But what keeps the building blocks together? Can one not simply fall apart if one is exposed to sufficient pressure, so that one's upbringing, education, moral experience, stands and the like will simply evaporate under the physical pain and deprivation of the moment? There must exist a deeper inner core that keeps the person together, and that allows the building blocks to contribute to the strength of the personality as a whole, rather than merely deriving the very identity and existence of the personality from the particular facets of one's experience. This deeper core, or "who we really are", depends on the more intimate experience and values that remain once the secondary values are stripped off: if one's education is abstracted, as is one's public experience and reputation, alongside with the other external additions, the values and convictions that remain in the barren personality are its core values and principles that it is very difficult to extract from it without destroying the person altogether. Our view of the world and ourselves in the most significant moral and existential terms are parts of these core elements, and more often than not they are expressed in religious terms.

Everybody is familiar with people whose core values and principles are weak; their religious outlook is rudimentary or non-existent, and they are extensively tied to the external dimension of existence. When such people are promoted to positions of social influence, they often perform exceptionally well, but when they fall to anonymity again, sometimes they experience great personal difficulty and disappointment, because there is little inside them that they can fall back to. At the same time, strong personalities are often able to be removed from positions of public prominence, even disdained or persecuted in public, without showing any significant signs of personality crisis. They are able to weather the storms of political fortunes without great difficulty, because their core values and convictions are sufficiently strong to serve as a basis on which they rest as persons and do not need to restructure themselves profoundly from the inside. Religious people are probably amongst the exceptionally stark examples of the latter, because their values are so intimately internalised and their cognitive and volitional dispositions are primarily directed at things "not of this world", thus making them highly capable of both performing in public and retreating to anonymity and their private realm almost without any difficulty. People with strong convictions (sometimes this is also applicable to those with exceptionally strong ideological views) such as religious people, in other words, exhibit significantly different personality traits in social interactions, and tend to be more resilient to the heteronomies inherent in these interactions.

Equally when faced with structural violence, those with a stronger set of the most intimate values and principles will tend to be more resilient in terms of the ability of their personalities to survive the challenge: somebody who sees oneself as almost entirely describable in external attributes will likely cave in psychologically in the case of loss of public profile much sooner than someone whose view of oneself is in spiritual terms. Thus the external heteronomies will be less able to diminish the sense of freedom of religious and strongly value-integrated individuals on the most intimate level than is the case with those who do not hold such beliefs.

The existential meaning of religion is to cast the realities of this world in a relative perspective: political democracies may be a better social arrangement than an open dictatorship, but they are still far from perfect, or even good. Structural violence is present in any type of social organisation, and this fact in itself means that no such social organisation can possibly be a full realisation of freedom for the human personality. Consequently, the human personality, which requires a social environment to develop in, is enslaved in every society to varying degrees. Does this mean that something needs to be done to change the society? This is what the Marxists and most social activists think. Does it mean that one needs to resign oneself to blind fate and give up any idea of freedom, given that autonomy is an unreachable ideal? Social nihilists have taught this. The third solution is to realise that one's freedom does not lie in one's existential autonomy in society, or in the perfection of one's society in the institutional sense, but rather and primarily in the way one sees oneself and in the values that one considers more or less important. For a religious person it is important to do one's job properly, to attend to one's family and to conduct one's economic affairs rationally, but it is not essential. Equally it is important to try to perform a public function to the general benefit, one's social standing and the opinion of the fellow-citizens are by no means unimportant, but they are in no case essential. The aspiration of the religious man is to devote appropriate attention to everything, including the worldly affairs, but to maintain a perspective where none of these affairs are of absolute importance, and thus also the heteronomies and the lack of freedom within the public and social realm are not of utmost relevance. What the religious person considers the most important are the most intimate values, the directedness of thought and will to realities that may not be obvious to the eye, but that one feels nevertheless influence and shape one's life, such as the ideal of fellowship, sympathy, solidarity, compassion, mutual

self-sacrifice, seeking what is common to all people in what is sometimes called the universal human condition. If the values are positioned in this way, then the real sense of freedom will result from that structure of values, and one will be able to be more free than others even in the most stultifying and oppressive of circumstances, such as in the Gulag.

The point developed here was made poignantly by Victor Frankl in his meditations on the Logos, the meaning of life, while he was in Auschwitz during World War II.[24] His point, rather empirical and presented somewhat differently from what I am saying here, was that people who had a strong desire to live, who had some point in their lives, some particular, concrete reason to survive (such as the unfinished manuscript of the book that he went to the camp with and that was subsequently taken away from him, or one's loved ones who were awaiting them) survived in greater numbers than those who had no particular "reason to survive" to cling to. This is existentially true, and the same point can be made with regard to the sense of freedom in heteronomy. In conditions where it is impossible to act autonomously and exercise external freedom, one might still be able to enjoy some freedom from within by perceiving the heteronomies not as the ultimate realities, and not as the core values that one's life in its existential, psychological and spiritual dimensions fundamentally depends on. The religious person is primarily concerned with realities that are not susceptible to daily corruption and cannot be taken away by chance events; thus the greater sense of stability and the greater ability to withstand crises in one's social life.

This point can be illustrated experientially. In some countries, due to unfortunate political and economic periods, the majority of the young people of certain generations have never been abroad. Imagine that the countries face an unfavourable international standing, a stigma, and that from within they are riddled with corruption, violent crime and economic decay. The moral standards also plummet, and so does the culture of everyday social interactions. A sort of barbaric everyday reality ensues, where people are forced to either adapt, or experience major social and existential friction with the society, which will eventually wear them down to the point of death or total marginalisation (or emigration). The young people who have grown up in such unfortunate circumstances simply do not know of any other type of reality, they uncritically accept the media refrains of the official proclamations of self-righteousness, and become the sorts of personalities that can only exist in

24 Viktor E. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*, Beacon Press, Boston, 2006.

the barbaric circumstances. They feel frustrated, deprived of any significant degree of freedom not just of action but also of thought, deprived even of ideas of a different life. At the same time, those of the slightly older generations, who had grown up in different times and different social realities, who have travelled extensively and have been able to place their experiences in a broader context that gives them a different meaning, might be able to distance themselves more from the barbaric relations. They will tend to feel more free from within, at least for some time, because they will have internal resources to fall back to when the social environment that they face in everyday life fails them. Such internal resources are exceptionally strong in religious people, because their sources of support, both cognitive and emotional (and volitional) are not of this world. It is possible to live in this world functionally and responsibly, and at the same time not see oneself as "being of this world" essentially. This is the perspective that makes is possible to feel a considerable degree of inner freedom in the face of overwhelming heteronomies in the realities that surround us.

In his epistemology, Semyon Frank was unhappy with the logical and ontological limitations of the western rationalist philosophy exemplified in Kant and Hume, based on the barren dichotomy of either *A*, or *not-A*. He felt it acutely that where there are *A* and *not-A*, there must exist a higher-order reality that is inclusive of both the *A* and the *not-A*, from which both the *A* and the *not-A* arise. This reality could not be a void, for nothing can come to being from nothing, but it must be some other type of reality, prior to the sensually observable realities that we describe by the laws of binary logic. This semi-intuitive and semi-logical argument was a rudimentary form of what he shaped into a highly sophisticated Christian epistemology. Part of the poverty of the binary logic is that it essentially excludes the subject from the picture of reality, thus presenting the truth-conditions in descriptive terms devoid of the more sophisticated, layered assumption of the structure of reality, including the layers of one's perceptions, inclinations, intentionalities in the most general sense. The way we perceive reality depends on the way we are, on the expectations that we have, and on the aspirations that arise from our value-systems. A religious person will see different content in perceptual sensations; certain events will be obvious to him as signals that he is doing something right or wrong, and the way events unfold he will often see as pictures of the higher-order forces and intentions that point the way for his decisions. This content of the external realities will often not be explicable in terms of binary logic, and will sometimes not conform to what others will see, yet they may

achieve their own internal emotional, cognitive and even factual confirmation for the religious person due to the experiences and consequences that the events may lead to that only that person is able to interpret in their meaning to himself. Such consequences and outcomes can be highly personal; if one goes with the perceptions of things that are not explicable in everyday logic, based on the personal meanings that one sees in the events, one might end up with unexpected satisfactions and confirmations of one's views that are only possible for the particular person with one's unique experiences, memories, fears or convictions. Does the fact that these meanings are personal, or shared by just a few people with the same level of personal development or with the same beliefs, mean that they do not exist?

Similarly in society: perhaps the level of structural violence in a particular society is such that it is impossible to exercise any degree of freedom in one's life without the permission of people who belong to the various "elites" or the institutions; perhaps the society is so tightly controlled, or so barbaric in its internal human relations, that oppression is the only appropriate description of life in it. However, if a small group of people perceive this oppression and barbarianism as phases in the more general and higher-type of reality for the nation that has to do with that nation's actions in the past and the type of beliefs and values that the prominent representatives of the nation hold, as a type of "punishment" in history, and if they have reasons for such beliefs that do not conform to the criteria of binary logic, but have their more subtle sources and grounds of verification in facets of national history, in literature and in the articles of faith, does the fact that the "general public" do not see things this way mean that all these elements of reality are non-existent, or "incorrect"?

The existential level of meanings is different from the desktop logical level of binary distinctions, and arguably the former are far more important for both individual and collective self-identification and a sense of identity than the latter. Faith in higher-level realities that influence our lives in crucial ways is an existential level of meanings, and this is the type of meanings that has helped people survive Auschwitz in the most extreme, and that also assist people in being able to accept the change of their social fortunes more or less calmly, in the less exceptional cases. While the higher-level realities may seem mystical at first, they are deeply rooted in the way we perceive morality in the most intimate form. Love, as the most noble of emotions and relationships, is said to include the willingness to self-sacrifice; such willingness, which is historically recognised as the necessary ingredient for morally justifiable

actions, from protecting one's friends and family to forging a scientific or political revolution, does not conform to the criteria of binary logic. Sacrifices are usually made in the face of overwhelming odds, without the ability to predict any benefits, and are considered the more noble the less possibility of prediction is involved. People who sacrifice themselves for others, without reason to believe that the beneficiaries will ever reasonably be able to know that they made their sacrifices, are considered more noble than those who sacrifice themselves but make sure that everybody knows they have done so. Those who sacrifice themselves for a belief without being able to see that belief prevailing in the end are considered the purest true believers, yet this is a totally illogical situation from the point of view of binary logic. The emotional sources of morality largely come from a perception of higher-order realities, and, as I argued in the respective chapter of this book, they are not at all as "irrational" as binary rationalism would have us believe; they merely rest on a different, higher type of rationality that does not always conform to the "*A or not-A*" principle. The difficulty to accept what is not immediately available to the senses, the existence of realities that transcend the basic logic and what we are able to see and calculate, is the main historical reason for the emergence of the theory of social contract, which in itself is so imaginary and lacks cogency from within that not even its proponents claim that what it stipulates actually ever happened (the pre-social state and the making of the contract). Human resistance to spiritual realities and to the simple truth that personal faith is as legitimate as a form of relating to reality as is logic is so strong that it has led to what its own proponents agree is an imaginary construction of society, all in order to try to reduce social structures and dynamics to strictly binary-rational grounds. Alas, this reduction has not solved anything, but has simply produced more theoretical difficulty, leaving the most constructive social dispositions, including sympathy, love and self-sacrifice, seemingly inexplicable.

The inability of binary logic to successfully address the positive emotions that go beyond calculable categories such as interest is also the reason why so much less attention is paid to commonalities, universal characteristics of people in the community, than to their differences, conflicts and possible frictions of rights and entitlements. Scheller discussed the intuitive commonalities between individuals of differing species using the ugly example of the wasp that knows how and where to sting another insect so as to paralyse and impregnate it, without possessing any prior experience of the insect's physiology. Is there less reason to assume that there are intuitive connections and deeper

commonalities between human beings that allow us to develop empathic and sympathetic structures that are not necessarily connected with concrete experiences or empirical knowledge of the other person or their circumstances? Is there less ground to assume that commonalities ranking higher than the immediate empirical experiences might allow for the possibility of generalised benevolence discussed earlier on in the book? If there is such a possibility, then an entire ethics of a priori positive emotions and dispositions would be viable, and recourse to such positive intentions would plausibly replace the entire rhetoric of interest and binary calculations of the ways it is factored in typified social interactions; this is exactly how religious ethics is structured. It is based on postulates about the proper human relationships and on the respective prescriptive norms conceerning to how one ought to think and act with regard to the typical social situations. Unlike the social science of interest, religious ethics is not restricted to binary logic, and includes references to realities that are not confined to ones that are immediately sensually perceptible or deducible from empirical experience.

The existential role of religion is both to allow the possibility of freedom by casting a relative light on experiential reality, and to open a cognitive path to values and ethical precepts that allows us to transcend the narrow boundaries of empirical and deductive cognition. This knowledge is clearly not subject to criteria of mathematical certainty that apply to a large part of binary rationality, but that has been the recognised general feature of all ethical precepts at least since Aristotle. What people have been able to believe in sufficiently strongly to motivate them to act in ways not necessarily in their immediate interest has never been the subject of mathematical-type proof, and has instead had to be anchored in a higher and more authoritative realm that everybody has been able to relate to, intimately and directly, though perhaps logically inexplicably. Love is such an emotion, and so are all disinterested positive inclinations (though some types of empirical love are not necessarily entirely disinterested) that allow for types of community cohesion that appear to militate against the immediate interests of their members. At the same time, and in virtue of this feature of love, a love-based ethics is that normative value-system that is conceptually capable of preserving an almost complete freedom of agency, whilst at the same time fully acknowledging all of the obvious heteronomies present in society. That is the key value of Christian ethics in its relevance not just to Christian communities, but to society at large, including its capacity to resolve the controversial aspects of liberty in modern political communities.

INDEX

A

C

D

E

F

G

H

I

K

L

M

N

O

P

R

S

T

V

W

LIST OF LITERATURE QUOTED IN THE FOOTNOTES

Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, translated by William David Ross, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1998.

Barry, Brian, *Why Social Justice Matters*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2005.

Borras-Alomar, Susana, Thomas Christiansen & Andres Rodriguez-Pose, "Towards a 'Europe of the Regions'? Visions and Reality from a Critical Perspective", *Regional Politics and Policy*, vol. 4, no. 2, 1994, pp. 1–27.

Burke, Heather & Stephen D. Hart, "Personality Disordered Offenders: Conceptualisation, Assessment and Diagnosis of Personality Disorder", in Sheilagh Hodgins & Rüdiger Müller-Isberner (eds), *Violence, Crime and Mentally Disordered Offenders*, Wiley, Chichester, 2001, pp. 63–85.

Davidson, Donald, "A Nice Derangement of Epitaphs", in R. Grandy & R. Warner (eds), *Philosophical Grounds of Rationality: Intentions, Categories, Ends*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1986, pp. 157–75.

Edmund Gettier, "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge", *Analysis*, vol. 23, 1963, pp. 121–3.

Ehrenreich, Barbara, *Nickel and Dimed: On (not) Getting By in America*, Henry Holt, New York, 2001.

Fatić, Aleksandar, "Criminal responsibility and personality disorder", *Arhiv za pravne i drustvene nauke* (*Archive of Law and Social Sciences*), vol. LXXXIII, no. 2, 1997, pp. 279–90.

Fatić, Aleksandar, "Psychopathy: Cognitive aspects and criminal responsibility", *The Criminologist*, vol. XXI, no. 2, 1997, pp. 66–75.

Fatić, Aleksandar, "Political violence as a value problem for security policy", *International Problems*, Beograd, vol. LVIII, no. 3, July 2006, pp. 1–17.

Fatić, Aleksandar, "What has Happened to Firstborn Social Theory — The Social Contract", *South-East Europe Review*, vol. 10, no 3, 2007, pp. 121–31.

Fatić, Aleksandar, *Punishment and Restorative Crime-Handling: A Social Theory of Trust*, Ashgate, Aldershot, 1995.

Frank, Semjon, *Smisao života*, translated from Russian into Serbian by Zoran Buljugić, Logos, Beograd, 2007.

Friedman, Monroe, *Lawyers' Ethics in an Adversary System*, Bobbs-Merill, Indianapolis, 1975.

George, Stephen, *Politics and Policy in the European Community*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1985.

Goodin, Robert, "Why Social Justice is not all that Matters: Justice as the First Virtue", *Ethics*, vol. 117, 2007, pp. 413–32.

Hoffman, Martin L., *Empathy and Moral Development*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2000.

Honderich, Ted, *After the Terror* (expanded, revised edition), Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2003.

Hume, David, *A Tratise on Human Nature*, Nuvision Publications, Sioux Falls, 2007.

Hume, David, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Edited by Peter Milican, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2007.

Kant, Immanuel, *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* — "How is a Categorical Imperative Possible?", in Lewis White Beck (ed.), *Kant Selections*, Macimillan, New York, 1998, p. 291.

Kasser, Tim, *The High Price of Materialism*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2002.

Kipnis, Kenneth, "Professional Responsibility and the Distribution of Legal Services", in Kenneth Kipnis & Diana T. Meyers (eds), *Economic Justice: Private Rights and Public Resposibilities*, Rowman & Allanheld, Totowa, New Jersey, 1985, pp. 130–42.

Lucić J., Vukotić, D. & Marković, A., "Svaki peti u Srbiji bez završene osnovne škole" *Politika*, Beograd, 19 April 2008, stable url: www.politika.co.yu.

Lukes, Steven, *Power: A Radical View,* Palgrave, New York, 2005.

Macneil, Ian R., "Exchange Revisited: Individual Utility and Social Solidarity", *Ethics*, vol. 96, no. 3, April 1986, pp. 567–93.

Nagel, Thomas, *Mortal questions*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1979.

Nitobe, Inazo, *Bushido: The Soul of Japan — An Exposition of Japanese Thought*, First Edition, The Leeds & Biddle Co., Printers and Publishers, Philadelphia, PA, 1990.

Radovanović, Dobrivoje and Aleksandra Bulatović, *Korupcija*, Centar za menadžment, Belgrade, 2005, pp. 377–92.

Ron, Amit, "Power: A Pragmatist, Deliberative (and Radical) View", *The Journal of Political Philosophy*, vol. 16, no. 3, September 2008, pp. 272–92.

Ryle, Gilbert, *The Concept of Mind*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1986 (first published 1949).

Sahlins, Marshall, *Stone Age Economics*, Tavistock, London, 1974.

Searle, John, *Intentionality*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1983.

Smart, Jack J.C., *Essays Metaphysical and Moral: Selected Philosophical Papers*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1987.

Solomon, Robert, *A Passion for Justice: Emotions and the Origin of the Social Contract*, Addison-Wesley, Reading, Massachusetts, 1990.

Tarski, Alfred, *Introduction to Logic and to the Methodology of the Deductive Sciences*, Oxford University Press, 1994.

Viktor E. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*, Beacon Press, Boston, 2006.

Yu-Lan, Fung, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*, Macmillan, New York, 1948 (reprint 1966).

CIP – Каталогизација у публикацији
Народна библиотека Србије, Београд

321.01 : 141.7
321.7 : 316. 324. 8

FATIĆ, Aleksandar, 1967
Freedom and Heteronomy : an essay on the liberal society / [Aleksandar Fatić] . – Belgrade : Institute of International Politics and Economics : Centre for Security Studies, 2009 (Belgrade : Dereta). – 225 str. ; 24 cm

Podatak o autoru preuzet iz kolofona. – Tiraž 500. – Registar. – napomene i bibliografske reference uz tekst. – Bibliografija: str. [233-235] .

ISBN 978-86-7067-112-6

a) Демократија b) Филозофија политике c) Либерализам
COBISS.SR-ID 157109516