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Witnessing the Dismantlement of a Proven Structure of Belief: The Challenge of Populism and Alternative Facts to Liberal Democracy

Jean Clam

The crisis liberal democracy is facing today is a new challenge: the relation between alternative factuality and the unleashing of affective impulses is mediated by the transformation of the pre-existing structure of belief. There is an affective turn in the political realm—a realm structurally marked by collective sentiments and their non-relativizable nature. While the structural social and psychic setting of the functional differentiation of society remains unchanged, a crucial component of it has been strongly "affected" by a re-ordering of the function of belief within the cognitive dimension of social communication. In this crucial situation we need a new pedagogy of real-true worldliness to

develop cognitive and doxic forms immune to the fakization of any deixis of the world, be it scientific, religious, or customary.

Argument

Liberal political orders require a decisive measure of functional differentiation of society. In addition, these orders, much like the societies in which they emerge, are highly improbable realities. They both require the psychic capability of living in a constant state of cognitive and normative flux, within which no knowledge, no belief, no collective feeling can enjoy any form of stability. In order to exist in such an environment of continual and all-engulfing processuality, individuals have to learn to place trust in the creativity of high contingency, the counterintuitive benefits of complexity, and the foundational superiority of dissensus over consensus. They have to adopt and persevere with a posture of relentless cognitive openness, which is a trying psychic experience that puts extreme pressure on any sense of identity, belonging, and biographic as well as historic consistency.

The thesis I shall be defending here is that the crisis liberal democracy is facing today is a new challenge: while the structural social and psychic setting of functional differentiation of society remains unchanged, a crucial component of it has been strongly "affected" by a re-ordering of the function of belief within the cognitive dimension of social communication. It seems as if a major shift has occurred in the very same "grammar of assent"[1] that has made possible the evolution towards an ever-growing, poly-contextual, almost heterotopical differentiation of autonomous/autopoietic spheres or fields of social meaning.

A form of diffusive narrative cognition, challenging any common knowledge and sane prime assumptions, has been invented that transforms the structure of "credibility" or the believability of contemporary reality indication (deixis of facts of the world). Such an evolution poses a challenge to any theory of liberal democracy and social differentiation: it brings to the fore the question of the dismantlement of a belief structure that has been formed under the combined action of disciplined scientific cognition and convictionally weak normation.

1 I am hinting at the title of Cardinal John Henry Newman's book: *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent* (1979).

The crisis of liberal democracy in our time is the crisis of an undoing of limitations that have always relied on the believability of worldly facts and the undoing of references of competence as to whom one has to refer in order to decide which worldly fact can be acknowledged as verified, i.e., factual and true. It is the crisis of the dismantlement of a structure that draws the boundaries between what is believable and what is not, in the sense that no (explicit nor implicit) consensus is holding about what is unbelievable by the very nature of its blatantly counter-evidential excessiveness, nor about the authority of institutions, individuals, subsystemically differentiated social instances or communication processes that have all along our modern collective experience[2] been recognized and empowered as the competent and authoritative instances in relation to worldly belief.

It makes it clear that if liberal democracy has to be vindicated, the most urgent task is that of the hedging of its doxological structure. Such a task is a theoretical program that has to renew the question about the conditions under which an affectively complex deixis of worldly facts can be believed, and how assent can be given to courses of action that build on such credibility potentials.

The Challenge of Populism and Its Belief Structure

Excesses of correctional regimentation of beliefs lead most observers of these facts to the conviction that liberal democracy has to be vindicated against populism by opening up to the anxieties of its "public sphere" (Öffentlichkeit). Populism, meanwhile, is a very active, dynamic, and self-confident "public sphere." It is very far from that state of dumbness that has characterized it as a mute, passive opinion basin, mobilized by occasional electoral protests. Thus, liberal democracy has to be vindicated by an effort to understand populist tendencies, bridging the gap between the enlightened, cosmopolitan, European and American elites. It has to acknowledge the plight of certain of its politics (of accelerated integration, enhanced and enforced multiculturalism, economic ideological voluntarism, etc.). It has to fulfill the promise of more democracy, less bureaucracy, and more attention to the people and their legitimate inertias. It has to favor more

2 That is: since the emancipation of the subsystem of science from the dominance of the religious system and the establishing of its pretentions to hold truth and diffuse it through all existing channels of social communication, putting in particular young intelligence to apprenticeship of its methods and contents.

pedagogy and show more restraint in the use of elite superiority of discourse and institutional power. This is neither thought nor implemented in a context in which populism has won major battles against elitism in decisive countries of the West.

The dangerousness of this development is obvious and one has to actually design a response to deflect the fatal blows European democracy is taking in the wake of such an inversion of values and power positions. The search for such a response is the urgent matter of the day, and the consciousness of the urgent nature of the quest is deepening day by day among an ever-growing number of observers. This was the conclusion of an exchange I had recently with a friend. I tell the story as it was because it is uniquely enlightening for our purpose.

The anecdote is the following story that a friend of mine told me more than a year ago, before the elections in France. Try to remember that somber period, the gloomy perspectives of a crumbling down of the European political order, with Putin *ad portas*, in Ukraine, on the borders of the Baltic states, and Islamic terrorism striking with incredible savagery in the Middle East as well as in the heart of Europe. The French elections, coming after Brexit, Trump's victory in the USA, the surge of a disquieting populism everywhere, made of France what a witty observer called "a world swing state"—that means: if these elections had led in the "second tour" (end ballot) to a confrontation between Marine Le Pen and Jean-Luc Mélanchon, the candidates of the far right and the extreme left, then an economic and political crisis of an unseen magnitude would have taken place on the old continent, leading to the implosion of the political and military order that has given this continent and the world the longest, most prosperous, and most sustainable pacific period of world history.

In this context, this friend of mine, a professor at an English university, wrote to me the following lines:

> People are summoning me to be optimistic. But all of my effort to let optimism blossom in my chest hit the wall of the following story which took place three days ago. An acquaintance of mine, with the best education, both parents university professors, living now in the US; the lady has been born in the West, today a very serious professional, leading the life of people of her cultural and professional background. At tea, which we have been taking together, I put the non-exceptional question of the day: "How do you feel today as an American?" She answers: "Well, the most important thing is that the horrible Hillary didn't succeed to become president." I thought of a long list of

> supposed failures in Clinton's career. But the supplementary comment that came amazed me: "Didn't you hear of the 'pizzagate'?" I said: "No." It came out that pizzagate was the code name for a child pornography scandal which has been propagated by Hillary's adversaries—most probably the Russian disinformation apparatus—accusing her of sexually abusing children. I checked the information on my computer and was appalled. If she—to say nothing of so many other people with so much less education and ability to form their judgment in an enlightened manner—is not able to deny her assent, not to believe such stories, what are we to do to carry it off?

My friend couldn't ease his pessimism and was, until the results happily sobered him, convinced of the victory of Marine Le Pen in the French elections. To conclude his short story, he wrote: we will need a new hybrid defense against this hybrid (sort of) attack.

The conception of the problem in these terms reduces it along the scheme of a propaganda war that has to be countered. A very astute, subtle, complex and hostile propagandist is forging special tools and contents designed for the hybridity of his attack. This requires a response as astute, subtle, complex and perhaps as hostile as the former—accounting for the hybridity of the parry wished by my friend.

My thesis is that one should precisely avoid that sort of framing of the facts. One has to concentrate on the transformation of the doxological structure of social communication within our liberal societies, a transformation that is today at the very core of the risks they are making to cope with the requirements of late capitalism, post-modernity, and accelerated globalization. This means one must study the "grammar of assent" of contemporary communication, i.e., the ways in which people give their assent to indications describing what is a fact in the world (the production of factuality)—the ways they believe the current deixis of the world, which is constantly performed within the huge swarm of social communications.

To come to that point, however, we will have to state that there is a propaganda war, and that liberal democracy is under attack from multiple angles—that it has been made the target of various attempts to destabilize its fundamental views. In saying this, we acknowledge the reality of the offensive and intentional nature of what/who makes the crisis, in order to shed clarity on our contention that ultimately this strategic and agent-based aspect of the crisis is a veil inhibiting the perception of the true, intrinsic vulnerability of the target societies themselves. The advent of such

vulnerability corresponds to the dismantlement of the belief structure that has governed their doxic relationship to the world for two centuries.

The Dismantled Belief Structure and the Emergence of Alternative Factuality

What must be stressed first is the necessity of doing away with any defensive thinking, and attempting to understand that the battle to be fought is an offensive, pre-adaptative proto-cognitive one, one which takes place at the elementary levels of the constitution of the knowable and the known, that is of what is held to be "out there" (a cherished expression of Donald Trump) is believed to be the fact, to be there.

The problem becomes clear when we acknowledge the perplexity of the defenders themselves, who are trying to implement their strategies to fight the propagandist on the other side of the fence. They have to recognize that all means of counter-propaganda they can mobilize to reach an undoing of dis-information are fully inefficient, simply non-operable, given the depth at which the perturbation of the credence structure is itself operating.

The defensive posture has to search for standards by which a certain type of information can be forbidden, as well as certain methods of its propagation. It should have the ability to outline an unlawful transgression, the trespassing of a normative line of liceity (of what is permissible, not prohibited). Fake news represents a deixis of an event structured/evenemential reality that integrates a high level of perceptivity into reality, which means supposedly that reality is not independent from and neutral in relation to its perception.

It is always a constructed social and medial reality that depends upon the site of observation from which its deixis is made. It is not a faking of reality, but an alternative observation of it, made from one of the other angles of sight in which an object can be seen: like a demonstration taking place on an avenue that can been seen, heard, and smelled from different places in the space surrounding it and experienced from very different mental and affective dispositions.

In the realm of factual reality there are only facts and all facts are alternative to one another. The are no factual realities that would be orthogonal, building a sole "right" angle, to all other factualities—which would be partial, incomplete representations of it. This should not be mistaken as being part of a sort of postmodern relativism in which any account

of reality "goes"—be it scientific, artistic, political, moral, legal, economic, culturally estranging, magical, ceremonial, mythical, tribal, clanic, individualistic, idiosyncratic, etc. Postmodern relativism is a posture characterized by perplexity and humility, opening intersubjective exchange to (yet more) tolerance of provocative, estranging alterities. Proponents of alternative facts take their alternative version of the facts for granted, reject vehemently—aggressively—the other deixes of reality, and suppose that they are themselves faked along the interests of social groups conspiring to master reality and order it in the most profitable manner for them. They present themselves as disempowered groups whose lived version of the facts is negated and repressed by a political and medial establishment. They see the reality version of this establishment as falsely normative, legally but unlawfully binding, politically, over-empoweringly coercive (more precisely: correcting). They see that version of reality as exclusive and perpetuating the power monopoly of that establishment.

The defensive strategy is perplexed by the fact that what is acting as a massive and radical destabilization of the political order in liberal democratic societies cannot be qualified as illicit from any possible perspective. If offensive propaganda displaying foreign hostile powers nurture as a matter of fact those alternative versions of the real, those versions are not reliant on them to exist, to be disseminated, and above all to be believed by substantial numbers of people within those societies.

The thesis is that the process of the emergence, the invention, the dissemination, the credence of this alternative factuality is nowadays endemic to those societies. Alternative facts, creeds, and versions of the real are endemically, spontaneously, genuinely, internally produced within our societies. Their producers, exponents and consumers are the Trumps and their followers—and, in second place, the Putins and the Erdogans. The endemic goes beyond the typical supporters of populist preachers or politicians and reaches into the educated groups and strata of society. This is why the defensive apparatus designed to contain the "hybrid attacks" targeting our liberal orders tends to delegate the monitoring and censuring of alternative versions of factual reality to the channels through which they are conveyed to the wider public.

It is a delegation of a normative review of the contents to the medium: social media, internet providers, and discussion platforms are supposed to act as a censorial instance of reality accounts on the vague grounds of fact adequacy. They are endowed with hugely excessive competence to decide what is the real fact in the world and to deny those alternative

deixes of reality any access to public notice. Our societies thus appear to be incapable of defending themselves against narrative devices/narrative viruses or viral narratives they produce from within themselves—the virus having here the structure and form of a narrative, of narrative arrangements of facts making sense of perceived reality. Their grammar of assent shows unsuspected flaws through which the viral dispositive enters the cognitive/doxological organism. The process by which assent is given to such representations of factual reality has become intrinsically problematic. *To sum it up: our liberal democratic orders are not under attack (however hybrid it may be) from an external, exogenous actor or power, but endemically by an erosion/transformation/pathology of their doxic structure.*

The Coeval Immanence of World Facts to Their Medial Production

The battle to redeem liberal democracy and the open world-society from their present predicament is akin to that fought against smallpox in the century of Rousseau. A perplexing battle given one had no idea of where or on which of its multiple fronts to engage it, and how to link those fronts to one another and thus advance the curative process. One was lacking a good understanding of the harmful processes taking place within the organism, was unable to give it clear nosographic contours, while having a precious intuition of its prophylaxes—with the idea of vaccination—but not knowing how to bundle the right information and go through it to the recognition of the emerging new structure.

In relation to the disease undermining liberal democracy, the most significant insight is that of the immanence of the pathology: it is not inflicted, propagated from the outside, but develops from the inside, with no other external causality than the occasional co-incidence of factors enhancing the endemic one. Healing the structure is a huge and improbable program—as to its conception, to say nothing of its feasibility. It has to act upon a structural setting, has to merge into the processes of its constitution and to be anchored in them, to render them less receptive to those new forms of doxic assent, which are the more efficient, the more affine they are to the most intuitive (narrative) forms of believing.

The emerging structure of belief has to do with the evolution of the world-form (Weltform) from that of the supposed autonomy of the external world to one in which the whole complex of mundane reality is produced by the media of its observation (not a philosophical-idealistic proposition,

but a radical constructivist sociological one).[3] What is primarily relevant here is the insight that, from the point of view of sociology and communication theory (and not from that of an idealistic philosophy), the world is constituted in the processes of functionally differentiated subsystemic social communication and that no other world is observable than the one emerging from their operations. This major theorem is complemented by a situation in which the subsystem of mass medial communication in our societies is coming to a state of technological maturity, which makes it possible to produce world events of world observation simultaneously with their own occurrence, and not a posteriori "in relation" to them.

The media do not tell or re-tell the evential course of the human-world reality (encompassing cosmic reality) and "relate" it, that is, give an account of it, make deixis of it to subjects, individuals existing as members of society at large who receive this relation of and to the world and believe it (or don't) according to the degree of confidence they have in those media, and their possibly biased view on certain aspects of social reality. The media and the medial reality they are emitting are in themselves the evential course of the human world (anthropocosm), i.e., social communication itself.

There is no divide, no interstice, no line of distinction that can be drawn between social communication and its own medial production. This is a new foundational, ontological fact based on the technological maturity of medial transmission bringing it so close to the transmitted that no interval can be postulated between the transmitted and the transmission, the former having to occur first in order to be related to or simply, absolutely to be "related" (reported, recounted) as such. This ontological fact has not been acknowledged at this level of theoretical abstraction by the majority of individuals, nor by the strategists of disinformation and aggressive propaganda—the least one can say is that they are not interested in such abstract insights.

However, our intuition has experienced an astonishing generalization, which is that event reality (and that is human, historic, social reality) can be and is constantly fabricated by social instances, apparatuses, institutions, and organizations. Social reality is the creation of social reality along its organization to produce itself in its medial mediation/production (and not reproduction). Starting from this intuition, it is not difficult to see how the inclination of the masses as well as of the elites is to ascribe to those

3 I can't delve into that theme of the production of mundane reality in and by social communication, a piece of theory I developed in another context.

instances involved in the coessential, coeval production of social reality vested interests, concrete, hand-tight biases determined by those interests, manipulative intentions and techniques designed to influence public opinion and to steer it towards the acceptances and reactions useful to their plans. Such a possibility of an ascription of intentional causality is a treat to human intuitive intellection of any sort (be it popular or scientific). It neutralizes the painful demands of rational judgment building as well as the demands of building a poly-selfish subject of poly-contextual social communication. It neutralizes partially the cooling off of immediate, affective/affectual reactions to world events, a distanciation process necessitating an effective attuning to the cognitivization processes that constitute the mental and attitudinal basis for the functional differentiation of consociation.

The other aspect of the evolution is that of the empowerment of any part of social reality to vindicate its own production of its own reality. The contention here is no longer about which of the competing realities is the true and real one, which one has a greater pretention to be validated (by instances of truth validation of reality deixes); it is, so to speak, not a contention at all, but a mere factual position of reality, of its own reality by a social reality with no pretention ever of justifying, arguing, or legitimizing its own reality (which is coessential and absolutely coeval to its reality production) by way of stronger reasons or "grounds."

Reality as such has not to be justified nor legitimized by any reasons—it is the founding ground of reasons as such—: the world is what it is and reason is one fact of the world that emerges in it and can only reflect it as the ultimate ground of all grounds.

Alternative realities are in a fight for survival against one another. They do not possess any syntax of mutual tolerance, of a more or less meaningful interrelated coexistence. Hence this development is often described as a lifting of limitations put upon affects of self-assertion (Selbstbehauptung), correlating with the lifting of limitations upon affects of denying wholeheartedly any legitimacy to relativistic liberal orders. Affects of hatred, negation of the other, will to eliminate them are thus unleashed without any reserves, any consciousness that letting them play out is not consistent with the subsisting liberal political order that gives those affected by such affects paradoxically their best chance.

The Globality of Belief and the Engulfing of Science

To sum up, we have to think through:

- the structural transformation of social communication as a co-originating medial communication of itself
- the intuition of a tendency to bring the world ever nearer to a state in which it can't distinguish between reality and retold reality
- the assertion of alternative realities to other alternative realities without any privilege anchoring one of these as the reference point of all others
- and the acknowledgment that the ascription of intentionality to causal determinations of the social world revives a magical reading of the world and unleashes affects that remain uninhibited by any censorship pointing out their massive identity driven self-centeredness, their lacking of any altruistic comprehension of the constitution of alterity, their aggressiveness, and their violence in the assertion of their occupancy of space and history.

The decisive point of my argument is not however that alternative factuality is bound to an affective turn in the political realm—a realm structurally marked by collective sentiments and their non-relativizable nature. The relation between alternative factuality and the unleashing of affective impulses, which have until now been under the control of the altruistic maxim of liberal political orders, is not as simple as that. It is mediated by the transformation/dismantlement of the pre-existing structure of belief. It is because the believable has undergone a decisive extension and transformative inflexion that the conditions are ripe for such a lifting of limitations from a series of driving components of social communication.

The extension we are talking about is the process that makes believable all courses of interpretation by which social becoming can be framed as a result of a strictly immanent transformation of the social structure, fabric and course by society itself. The inflexion, on the other hand, is the apprehension of that transformation as intentional and thus ascribable to powerful instances of society, and here mainly to the subsystemic function that delivers the image of society to itself and the social groups which have the command upon that subsystem. Without that extension and inflexion of the believable no revitalization of impulsive mass affectivity within populist movements in Europe can occur;[4] without that extension

4 Is the same precondition required to explain the resurgence of nationalistic populism in Russia, islamo-nationalistic/sultanistic populism in Turkey? The

and inflexion the checks and controls that regulated the newly dismantled regime of believability would have reigned over it, would have neutralized it by the simple and unceasing operation of the doxically unimpeded processes of cognitivization which characterize the late modern perdifferentiation of social communication along the lines of thorough deconstruction of any starkly assertive normative stances. It would have maintained unchanged the global political, legal and doxological configuration that prevailed in the last two decades of the 20th century.

Furthermore, to explain the impact of such an extension and inflexion, we need to ascertain some of the structural traits of the dismantled regime of belief itself. Mainly the fact that our culture maintains very tenaciously a dichotomy between cognition and belief, censuring the idea that belief is an all-engulfing function that encompasses cognition, building around it the sphere of a doxic continuum, and erasing at a certain moment the highly relevant differential between science and opinion. A scientist of our day holds ultimately an opinion like any other layman and operates within the realm of the thinkable, his own combinations of thought constructing a more or less consistent image of his various environments.

Ancient philosophy thought of science (not scientific knowledge, but scientific insight) as distinct from opinion by essence and not only by means of its methods, procedures, and verificative reiterations. The difference is one of the nature of its act. Science was thought to be the operation of an intellect bestowing upon the operating intellect a union with the intellected idea. It is thus a unitive operation, which transforms the intellect into the ideally intellected. The spirit (nous, intellectus) performs acts of intellection. It is a "mind" of another nature than that which performs acts of sheer believing. There is thus a criterion given to differentiate between an intellective seizure of a thinkable and the simply doxic one.

Reflecting upon these matters from the point of view of a constructivist epistemology, that is from the only point of view we can adopt with reason under the conditions which constitute the intelligibility of the world for us today, that distinction vanishes. We thus learn to recall the scientist—he recalls himself spontaneously and without any reluctance—to reinsert himself into the mental group of all thinking and believing human beings. This comes to erase any distinction through structure or essence between science and all other forms of possible world apprehension and to

differential of modernity between these societies and the Western ones has to be taken into account when we address such a question.

de-privilege science as being in its own right of another nature than all other doxic acts.

A reminder of those ancient theories is useful at this juncture because it allows us to understand how our Weltbild (world-picture), if it is sustained by science, does not give the scientist, who is always a specialist and masters a very limited portion of world knowledge, any decisive advantage in the construction of the Weltbild. He belongs to the generality of people in respect to his doxic relationship to the world.

The democratization of knowledge deconstructs the idea that thorough, deep, ultimately foundational knowledge is the monopoly of the philosopher as an opener of epochal Weltbilder. It sociologizes science and normalizes its personnel. The only demarcation to be still set between educated (Bildungs) elites and the generality of the people is the more easily produced capacity of the former to go along with the thorough and general cognitivization of cosmic and social reality.

However, from the moment at which social reality begins to be produced alternatively by its own reflection in itself, these elites seem to unlearn their cognitivizing skills and join the majority of the minds who tend to think very intuitively. They share with them their beliefs and let themselves be guided by the affects that make for their adherence to them. Alternative factuality is, as we have seen, the immediate reflection of what one is as what one wants to believe.

A Possible Hedging of the Imperilled Structure of Belief

The Achilles heel of the society-world (Weltgesellschaft) and of its definitive pacification/hedonization has to be located today in its pistic/doxic structures. These structures are a given today, or the given of today. They cannot be eradicated.

My thesis is however that something can still be "done," which is a form of infusion of the socialization and elementary/mid-level education process into schemes of apperception and cognition, immunizing against modes of penetration and inflection of the doxic structures which have, as we have seen, undergone a very broad and (for our liberal political orders) disquieting transformation. This can be imagined as a long-term "offensive" program designed to prevent the radical destabilization that transformation carries in itself. The situation can be compared to those historical

junctures at which European culture and society had to strive to ensure their viability by disarming/dismantling a certain structure of (religious or symbolic) belief.

The history of European culture and society shows us examples of the tensions that arise when simultaneous tendencies to integration and differentiation are not able to reach the end-form (telos) of sociality, which they bear as a germ within themselves, without destabilizing certain modes of belief still very deeply anchored in the psyche of most individuals.

Compared with these crises, the present one inverts in a sense the scheme and presents us with a destabilization of a doxic structure that should be saved, and not, as in the historical examples, with structures which had to be overcome and to recede in order to give room to the emergent new one. Between 1700 and 1900 deep doxic structures of religious belief had to be overcome. This could not be done without disempowering once and for all religious instances and institutions that perpetuated the framing of world perception in a mindset congruent with religious beliefs, thus instituting the autonomy and monopoly of authority of scientific truth regarding any observation, description of, or active intervention in states of the world, and its non-relevance to, its incommensurability with religious contents. The most telling and consequent achievement in this respect was the integration of evolution theory in school curricula and the definitive relegation of biblical creation narratives—i.e., an etiological narrative with total explanatory potency—into the mythological reference space. Science could not differentiate itself as an autopoietical functional subsystem without this sharp cut from the continuum of truth pretentions and plausibilities "infecting" the field of knowledge. It had to present an image of the world with absolutely self-founding justifiability and legitimacy. The question of compatibility with one another of both truths, the scientific and the religious, once central in the medieval and early modern debates, becomes absolutely irrelevant. It needs not and ought not to be put. This is the precondition for the full deployment of a scientific and technological world apprehension and its transformative impulse.

The second achievement is a more recent one. It is the introduction into school curricula of sexual education and enlightenment programs that imply the socializing generalization of access to a profane, biological and hygienic knowledge of sexuality as well as of a certain mode of coping with sexual issues. This too has been a hard-fought battle against doxic and symbolic structures whose resilience is related to their universal anthropological embedding.

What is needed is a new pedagogy of the real-true worldliness, a program grounded on Piagetian development psychology in order to help children and adolescents develop cognitive and doxic forms immune to trolling/faking of any deixis of the world, be it scientific, religious, or customary. This is quite similar to what is already the case in our reproductive and educational practices, with which we inform the faculty of judgment of our children by teaching them to cope with differentiated etiologies.

That means that while exposing them to the charms and pleasures of imagination in fairy tales, films and creative play, we also conduct them, through what we teach them discursively and non-discursively, thematically and non-thematically, by example of experiencing, feeling, thinking and acting, to construct a background reality that they do not really grasp, but which is there as a resisting and estranging prosaic reality where space is organized along transitive relationships, where time is irreversible, where both can be partitioned and counted, measured, where transversal and over-intensive sensations can be ignored in their (absent) consequences in the world, where sensorial textures can be offset by sensorial contours and object-centered thematic addresses, etc.

The new pedagogy of the real-true worldliness will have to embed itself in the flow of this already existing construction of the basis or the torso of a disenchanted reality. It lies in the continuity of the progressive inhibition of enchantment and the production of a univocized reality established on the basis of temperate, moderately intense homeostasis. It inhibits the otherwise insuperable tendency of the young mind and sensibility to very strongly adhere, affectively and doxically, to the mythological structure of world apprehension and its almost unrestrained compatibility of most narratives with most narratives.

The analogical program needed to instigate the dismantlement of the doxic regime of our liberal social and political orders could become as coessential to our culture and society as the two others. It is an urgent task because it is plausible that the whole construction of our postmodern cognitive and normative orders falls to ruin before that counter-doxology has come into operation.

The Luhmannian society-world seemed to have no other problems besides those of its peripheries and those of the inflexible societal alternative of inclusion and exclusion. Luhmannian theory ensured the recognition of that paradoxical limitation put into the dynamic of inclusiveness that is intrinsic to functional differentiation as such. However, it saw in it no inhibition for a functionally differentiated society to reach its telos. Nor was

the trap of incomplete modernity at the peripheries so consequential as to offset the hyper-potent processors of the production regimes of central (i.e., European and North American) modernity.

My thesis is that the only critical vulnerability of this society-world is that of its doxic structures, which Luhmann neglected, thinking that the dynamic of differentiation was radical and powerful enough to re-appropriate those structures and to transform them *uno actu* with the accomplishment of its own operations. European and North American politics since 2016 have shown that the existing potentials to counter and inhibit differentiation are very broad and comfortable; that *no structural teleology, no immanent tendency to a functionally differentiated society can guarantee the success of differentiation*; that it is by all means possible that the other, alternative order wins the day and brushes aside the invaluable improbability of our so profoundly paradoxical liberal orders the day after.

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