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Athens Journal of Philosophy

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- **Dr. William O'Meara**, Head, Philosophy Unit, ATINER & Professor, Department of Philosophy and Religion, James Madison University, USA.

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Athens Journal of Philology

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The current issue is the fourth of the third volume of the *Athens Journal of Philosophy (AJPHI)*, published by the published by the [Philosophy Unit](#) of ATINER

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Athens Institute for Education and Research

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20th Annual International Conference on Philosophy 26-29 May 2025, Athens, Greece

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- Submission of Paper: **28 April 2025**

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- **Dr. William O'Meara**, Academic Member, ATINER & Professor, Department of Philosophy and Religion, James Madison University, USA.

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From Zoroaster to Star Wars, Jesus to Marx: The Art, Science and Technology of Human Manipulation

By Mike Sosteric *

Superficially, it appears that humans enjoy a wide variety of spiritual and religious traditions. In fact, the vast majority of human belief systems (secular and religious/spiritual) are rooted in and colonized by the same ancient Persian narratives (specifically the Zoroastrian Frame), narratives created by elite actors with an elite agenda in mind. This article explores the ancient roots of our modern spiritual and secular beliefs, demonstrates their ideological and colonial character, briefly examines the emotional, psychological, and spiritual toll, and outlines a course of research for those interested in moving forward with an authentic decolonizing agenda. The paper introduces several terms into the lexicon, including Symbol Factories, Ideological Institutions, and Toxic Socialization.

Keywords: Zoroastrianism, accumulating class, regime of accumulation, master narratives

It is not just because it has been neglected that I have chosen to focus upon the relatively neglected ideological dimension. My main reason for this choice is that the exercise of power, in modern society, is increasingly achieved through ideology, and more particularly through the ideological workings of language (Fairclough 2001, p. 2).

The violent metaphor of divine warfare... has become the central metaphor of the Master Story of Western culture. It has settled into the center of the psyche... [and] has shaped the unconscious psychosocial assumptions of our cultures. This set of unconscious apocalyptic assumptions forms the sources and stage set for what we find meaningful in our cultures, from the violent game machines in the arcades our teenagers frequent to the actions of the Islamic Fundamentalist who flew airplanes into the World Trade Center. It is a short psychospiritual step from the vicarious forms of wishful mythic violence... to the mythic wishes that hurled gasoline-laded flying machines into the workplace of twenty thousand New Yorkers (Ellens 2001, pp. 3–5).

Introduction

If you live on this planet and you have spiritual beliefs, even if your beliefs lean towards the secular, it is likely these beliefs are of Persian/Zoroastrian origin. Historian Mary Boyce reveals the origin of our collective beliefs in the words and teachings of the priest/prophet Zoroaster (a.k.a. Zarathustra), who was active

*Associate Professor, Athabasca University, Canada.

around 1000 B.C., in the region that later became known as Iran (Boyce 2001). According to Boyce, "Zoroastrianism is the oldest of the revealed creedal religions, and it has probably had more influence on mankind, directly and indirectly, than any other single faith" (Boyce 2001, p. 1). Boyce's statement about the profound influence of Zoroastrianism is certainly true since there are elements of the Zoroastrian cosmology and theology in just about every religion and mind on this planet. These elements exist in Christianity and Islam (Akbar 2020), which together make up over 50% of the world's religious population ("Religious Composition by Country" 2015), as well as Judaism, and the Bahai faith. They may even have penetrated into Buddhism (Wallis 2018) and other Eastern religions as well. Elements of the Zoroastrian narrative also penetrate deep into culture, including secular culture, all over the world. As such, these early Zoroastrian beliefs form a powerful and globally ubiquitous master narrative (Halverson et al. 2011) or master story (Ellens 2001) which, as this paper shall attempt to demonstrate, was specifically designed to facilitate colonial and imperial ambitions through the psychological and emotional manipulation of the exploitable, working masses.

Origin and Contours of the Zoroastrian Master Narrative

We start our journey through the ideological master narrative of this planet with Zoroaster. Zoroaster was a mystic—somebody who had mystical experiences or direct communications from God and the spirits. Zoroaster believed that he had been "entrusted by God with a message for all mankind" (Boyce 2001, p. 17). His revelations, his reception of this message, occurred when he was thirty in a prototypical baptism event. Boyce (2001, p. 19) explains that "...after emerging from the pure element, water, in the freshness of a spring dawn – he had a vision. He saw on the bank a shining Being, who revealed himself as Vohu Manah 'Good Purpose'; and this Being led Zoroaster into the presence of Ahura Mazda and five other radiant figures, before whom 'he did not see his own shadow upon the earth, owing to their great light'." From this initial revelation and many more communications with Ahura Mazda and other beings that followed, Zoroastrian precepts developed. The mystical beings gave Zoroaster information on cosmology, eschatology, worship, and ritual.

Scanning the system as presented by Boyce (2001), we can identify several familiar themes that originated in the Zoroastrian teachings and that together constitute what we might call the *Zoroastrian Master Narrative* or **Zoroastrian Frame**.¹ This narrative includes several key ideas, including the idea of a patriarchal hierarchy, the existence and personification of cosmic evil, a linear and staged view of creation, a cosmic binary (or dialectic), a cosmic choice, the notion of judgment (both interim and final), and the idea of a utopian end point to history. Let us examine each of these briefly in turn.

A Patriarchal hierarchy: In what Iranian scholar Mary Boyce calls a "startling departure from accepted beliefs" of the time, The Zoroastrian teachings

¹https://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/index.php/Zoroastrian_Narrative.

installed a primary male God and principal authority figure from which all creation, and all good things, flowed. Whereas before there were more Gods, and the Gods were more equal and team-oriented, after Zoroaster, Ahura Mazda became the one true creator God under which other entities in the pantheon all served in their various appointed tasks (Boyce 2001, p. 21).

The existence and personification of cosmic evil: In the West, we are all familiar with the notion of evil, whether embedded in the “dark shadow” within us all (Jung 1980), or personified as the cosmic evil known as Satan who, for various reasons, stands in opposition and conflict to the one true good God and his forces of good. This figure first appeared in Zoroastrianism. Prior to Zoroastrianism, evil figures of cosmic import did not exist. There were, of course, notions of evil, but these were associated more with what Rice (1998) termed the personification of threat, specifically environmental and human threat, than any cosmic/existential evil. As Boyce says, prior to Zoroastrianism, “the Indo-Iranians seem to have regarded their divinities hopefully, as being by nature kindly disposed towards men; and evil they appear to have attributed in the main to lesser, spiteful beings, the demons and witches and fearsome monsters who inhabited this world rather than the heavenly one beyond it” (Boyce 1996, p. 83). After Zoroaster, this changes. As Messadie (1996, p. 85) notes, the essence of the Zoroastrian faith “is the unprecedented creation of a God-Devil pairing and an equally unprecedented Good/Evil ethical dualism.”

A linear, evolutionary, and three-stage view of creation: In addition to a patriarchal hierarchy and the instantiation of cosmic forces of good versus evil, Zoroastrianism also instantiated a linear, evolutionary, and staged view of creation which, as Boyce (2011, p. 27) notes, is also a break with earlier spiritual tenets that emphasized cyclical cosmological frames. “The strong sense inculcated by Zoroaster of both time and purpose, of all mankind and all *spenta* being striving towards a common end, a foreseeable goal, has been held by some to be the most remarkable characteristic of his teachings” (Boyce 1996, p. 233).

This linear and staged view of evolution is expressed in the Zoroastrian **Doctrine of the Three Times**.² In this doctrine, creation emanates from Ahura Mazda and passes through three stages, these being **Creation** (when the world is first created), **Mixture** (where oppositional forces of good and evil fight in order to improve the variety of creation), and finally, **Separation** (where creation is finally transformed and perfected). According to the Zoroastrian faith, the initial period following creation is simplistic, static, and undesirable—a boring garden of Eden, basically. The mixture is a time of energetic conflict instantiated specifically to create more interest and variety in creation. The final stage, separation, so named because the forces of evil are separated and removed at the beginning of this stage, is an eternal period of interesting and entertaining variation and complexity created as a consequence of the shake-ups that occurred in the mixture.

This eschatological belief in an end-times denouement and transition to utopia is a dramatic and significant shift in beliefs. Whereas before Zoroastrianism, cosmic *cooperation* was seen as necessary to “Maintain the world according to

²https://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/index.php/Doctrine_of_the_Three_Times.

asha”³ (Boyce 2001, p. 26), after Zoroaster, “perfection” would be attained, but only by passing through several thousand years of cosmic struggle and conflict.

The Zoroastrian Binary: According to the Zoroastrian faith, we are currently in the **Mixture** phase (or, as some readers might prefer to refer to it, the chessboard phase). In this phase, mixture is accomplished via what we might call the **Zoroastrian Binary**⁴ in honour of the fact that it was Zoroaster who appears to be the first, though certainly not the last, to proclaim it. The Zoroastrian Binary is a binary, a dialectic conceptualized as an opposition between **good** (i.e., order, righteousness, and justice personified by Ahura Mazda) and **evil** (i.e., disorder, immorality, and injustice, personified as Angra Mainyu). In the Zoroastrian faith, it is this “dialectical” struggle between oppositions (good/evil, thesis/antithesis, ying/yang) that creates the innovative movement that leads us through the mixture towards the final utopian denouement.

A Cosmic Choice: If there is going to be a “mix,” we are going to need some things to throw into the mixture. These “things,” as it turns out, are humans. The presentation of the cosmic binary leads to the conceptualization of humans on a cosmic battlefield/chess board where they are faced with a cosmic choice—either work on the side of good or on the side of evil. The choice that humans have to make is prefigured in Zoroastrian doctrine by Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyu, both of whom make a choice to be what they are. One being chooses “righteousness” and goes on to do all good things, while the other chooses falsehood and goes on to do all bad things. As Boyce (2001, p. 10) notes, “An essential element in this revelation is that the two primal Beings each made a deliberate choice ... between good and evil, an act which prefigures the identical choice which every man [sic] must make for himself in this life.”

“The Work” Complete: According to Zoroastrian theology, the “mixing” goes on for several thousand years. At a certain point, when creation has been perfected through mixture, the binary opposition will end and creation will return to a state of calm existence when there is once again no more “duality.” This “end of history” is known as “**Frashokereti**” (‘healing’ or ‘renovation’ or “making wonderful/ excellent”). According to Boyce (2001, pp. 28–29), the time of Separation “is a renewal of the time of Creation, except that no return is prophesied to the original uniqueness of living things....but whereas in the beginning there was one plant, one animal, one man, the rich variety and number that have since issued from these will remain forever....after Frashogird...” all the gods will unite with humanity and “each place will resemble a garden in spring...” In the end, good and evil will be no more, and the Gods and man will be together “restored to its original perfection...”

Judgment, Justice, Punishment, and Reward: Logically, given the necessity of evil in the mix, and the positive long term outcome of mixture (i.e., utopia), one might expect that those who “choose the dark side” would be allowed to join in the festivities that occur when “mixture” is complete. As it turns out, even though

³“Asha” refers to a cosmic order of goodness, righteousness, truth etc. In original schemas, asha was maintained with cooperation, not war. For a detailed overview of the term, see Schlerath and Skjærvø (1987).

⁴https://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/index.php/Zoroastrian_Binary

everybody makes a choice to play on a specific side, and even though the mix requires dialectical opposition for it to proceed, there is a right choice and a wrong choice. The right choice, which leads to reward, is to side with the good God and fight in his war. The wrong choice, which leads to ruin, is to side with Angra Mainyu and do bad things. It helps with the mix if you make this choice; however, if you make this wrong choice, when you die, you are judged, punished, and condemned. The judgment occurs as you traverse a bridge of souls, the so-called **Bridge of the Separator**. On this bridge, souls face a tribunal of three celestial judges. These judges hold the **scales of justice** upon which are “weighed the soul’s thoughts, words, and deeds, the good on one side, the bad on the other.” (Boyce 2001, p. 27) Once the soul is weighed, the soul is judged and rewarded or punished based on whatever side of the scale weighs the heaviest. Boyce once again notes the shift from previous beliefs when she says that Zoroaster takes an earlier less moralistic pagan belief in the transition between death and life makes it into a robust process of **judgment, justice, punishment and reward** based on ethical achievements, with dire cosmic consequences.^{5xx}

The Final Ordeal (i.e., Armageddon) and Final Judgment: In addition to the “run-of-the-mill” judgment that occurs at the end of every life, the Zoroastrian faith also instantiates the belief that once “The Work” is complete, a final struggle or “final great ordeal” will occur. In this end-times scenario, the forces of good and evil meet in one final combat, the purpose of which is to erase evil from creation. As Boyce notes, the tradition describes “the ordeal” as

...submersion in a river of molten metal, to be undergone by the whole physical world and by all humanity, both those still living in the flesh and the greater host of the departed, gathered together again in menog state from heaven and hell. ‘Then fire and Airyaman Yazad will melt the metal in the hills and mountains, and it will be upon this earth like a river. Then they will cause all men to pass through that molten metal ... And for him who is righteous, it will seem as if he is walking through warm milk; and for him who is wicked, it will seem as if he is walking in the flesh (pad getig) through molten metal’.” (Boyce 1996, p. 242).

At this final ordeal, “the wicked will suffer a second death, and will perish off the face of the earth. The Daevas and the legions of darkness will already have been annihilated in a last great battle with the Yazatas; and the river of metal will flow down into hell, slaying Angara Mainyu and burning up the last vestige of wickedness in the universe” (Boyce 2001, p. 28).

According to Boyce (2001, p. 29), “salvation for the individual depended on the sum of their thoughts, words and deeds, and there could be no intervention, whether compassionate or capricious, by any divine Being to alter this.” In other words, when “the end” finally comes, you get no second chance. The judgment that is passed is final and you either live as an immortal in paradise on Earth,

⁵In Christianity, e.g., 2 Corinthians 5: 10 “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.” Also Colossians “Anyon who does wrong will be repaid for their wrongs” (Colossians 3: 25). The Holy Qur’an opens with a reference to the “Day of Judgment” (*The Qur’an* 1:4, Abdullah Yusuf Ali).

enabled by Amesha Penta (Immortal Holy One) who prepares a “mystical ‘white haoma,’”⁶ a substance which confers immortality (Boyce 2001, p. 28), or you don’t.

Thereafter men [sic] will become like the Immortals themselves, of one thought, word and deed, unaging, free from sickness, without corruption, forever joyful in the kingdom of God upon earth. For it is in this familiar and beloved world, restored to its original perfection, that, according to Zoroaster, eternity will be passed in bliss, and not in a remote insubstantial Paradise.” (Boyce 2001, p. 28)

To summarize, the Zoroastrian Master Narrative is a patriarchal eschatological frame that posits a linear evolutionary/spiritual struggle that leads to the evolution and progression of creation from simple to more complex. The progression is driven by a necessary and in the end beneficial, at least for some, cosmic conflict between the forces of good and evil, personified and (later) abstracted into pure force. Our life purpose is to choose a side in this cosmic battle and then fight it out until creation has become complex and interesting. Then, a final judgment is passed where evil is destroyed and the good folks who fought the good fight get to live happily ever after in some version of eternal paradise.

Global Penetration

Any individual with even passing familiarity with this world’s religious, spiritual, and, it should be clearly noted, secular cultural productions will recognize the ubiquitous nature of the themes identified above. The patriarchal hierarchy, for example, is at the core of the Abrahamic monotheisms, including Judaism, Islam, Christianity, (Stover & Hope 1984) and the Bahá’í Faith (Abdu’l-Bahá 1912) as well as many popular cultural productions where the “saviour” figure is inevitably a white male patriarch of some sort. Just think Star Wars (Luke Skywalker), Harry Potter, Lord of the Rings, The Matrix, and so on and so forth.

The good/evil binary has also penetrated this world’s cognitive frames. As Messadie (1996, p. 74) notes, “... our Jewish, Christian, and Islamic angels and archangels, and consequently our Devil, were born” in the “Iranian Matrix.” The good versus evil binary is constantly rehearsed in Christian and Islamic culture. In the Bible it is personified as a serpent (2 Corinthians 11:3), a devil (Acts 5:3), and a satanic figure (Revelations 20:1-6). In Islam, the binary is an opposition between a haughty and defiant satanic figure known as Iblis (Quran 2:34, Quran 7: 11-13) and the one true and good God Allah. The binary also finds expression in the modern “Pharaoh narrative” which casts the personified evil of a Pharaoh against the transcendent good of an almighty patriarchal God (Halverson et al., 2011). We

⁶According to the Wikipedia entry, Haoma is a “divine plant”, with stems, roots, and branches that are tall, fragrant, *golden-green*, and easy to grow. The plant is a healing aphrodisiac that increases awareness and strength, is nourishing to the soul, and can be consumed without any negative side effects! White Haoma is probably either a special version of the plant, or a separate and sacred preparation (perhaps it is a purification of the oils) which, because of its purity and concentration, confers upon the imbiber health and immortality.

also find this binary good versus evil narrative in Judaism, a fact which seems to contradict this paper's sourcing of the binary in Zoroastrianism. Judaism is of course older than Zoroastrianism. This apparent conflict is explained by the fact that this binary did not appear in Judaism until Rabbi Isaac ha_cohen of Castille wrote his kabbalistic doctrine of the "Treatise on the Emanations on the Left" in 1265. As Dan (2006) notes,

The formulation of the powers of evil as an independent enemy of the divine, and the description of human life as being conducted in a dualistic universe in which evil and good are in constant struggle, is the contribution of the kabbalah to Jewish worldview. There are some indications of an intensified conception of evil in the Book Bahir and in the works of the early kabbalists in Provence, but the first kabbalistic dualistic system was presented in a brief treatise written by Rabbi Isaac ben Jacob ha-Cohen, entitled *Treatise on the Emanations on the Left* in 1265 C.E.

Before the good rabbi introduced this binary, Judaism contained only only watered down, domestic notions of evil (Gilad 2018).

We do not find this Zoroastrian binary only in pre-modern religious systems. We also find elements of it embedded deeply in secular culture, in video games, movies, television, popular theatre, and so on. We find it in productions like *Star Wars* where Ahura Mazda, played by Luke Skywalker, faces off against Angra Mainyu, played by Darth Vader. In the movie, the two duke it out in cosmic battle the final apocalyptic ending of which is the destruction of the "death star" and annihilation of all those within it. On television, the popular HBO series *Game of Thrones* is a classic presentation of this ancient ideology. In this show, the good but misguided rulers of Westeros prepare to fight the undead and clearly evil "White-Walkers." John Snow, a resurrected leader (Sayoshant) of the "good forces," makes the all-important Zoroastrian choice in episode one of season three where he says, "I wish to fight for the side that fights for life." In children's books, you find Harry Potter, another resurrected Sayoshant, fighting the deceptive/evil Voldemort. In literature, you find it in Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*, where the forces of light, assisted by literature's greatest underdog, Frodo, fight Mordor's dark horde.

In addition to Zoroastrian good versus evil binary, we also find Zoroastrian notions of a linear, evolutionary, and staged creation, complete with judgment, punishment, reward, and damnation, throughout the world's major Western religious and cultural traditions. In Christianity and its derivatives, creation starts in a beautiful garden, continues when its residents are kicked out, and ends when the "chosen ones," the ones who successfully attain redemption, are rewarded with a final return into a new paradise, while the "cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—...will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulphur. (Revelation 21:8). In Islam, "those [among them] who believed in Allah and the Last Day and did righteousness - will have their reward with their Lord (*The Qur'an* 2:62) while those who have sinned will "dwell therein forever." (*The Qur'an* 2:62). Even in the Baha'i faith, the Zoroastrian Frame is plain for all to see.

The world is established upon the foundations of reward and punishment. Knowledge and understanding have ever affirmed and will continue to affirm the reality of Paradise and Hell, for reward and punishment require their existence. Paradise signifieth first and foremost the good-pleasure of God. Whosoever attaineth His good- pleasure is reckoned and recorded among the inhabitants of the most exalted paradise and will attain, after the ascension of his soul, that which pen and ink are powerless to describe. For them that are endued with insight and have fixed their gaze upon the Most Sublime Vision, the Bridge, the Balance, Paradise, Hellfire, and all that hath been mentioned and recorded in the Sacred Scriptures are clear and manifest (Bahá'u'lláh, 2006, para. 3.11).

You find this linear, staged, judgment-laded view of humanity in secular culture as well, and in some surprising places. In science fiction, in the book *Childhood's End*, author Arthur C. writes about aliens who come to Earth to preside over the renovating rapture of the “chosen few,” a rapture that leaves all the unworthy ones to slowly die away on a fading planet Earth. The exact same idea is found in Christian circles in the “Left Behind” books of Christian fundamentalist Tim LaHaye are clearly carriers of the Zoroastrian master story.

Modern popular culture and traditional monotheisms are not the only places you find the Zoroastrian story. You find elements of it in philosophy, in various places, for example in the concept of *Apocatastasis*, which is reconstitution/restitution/restoration to the original primordial condition. It is also found liberally salted through Western elitist/esoteric traditions where it forms the roots of various “ancient wisdom discourses” like the *prisca theologica* and *philosophia perennis* of the Renaissance, both of which are explicitly linked to “sages” such as Zoroaster (Hanegraaff 2012, p. 8). We also find it in Freemasonry and other 18th and 19th century esoteric religions, but in slightly modified. Here we find evil is both depersonified into a cosmic force *and* explicitly acknowledged as a necessary component in the evolution of society and of human growth. As one Freemason says,

You can think of nothing terrestrial without being compelled to recognize the existence of its complementary opposite. Light and darkness; good and evil; right and left; birth and death; adversity and prosperity; male and female; pleasure and pain. These are the dualisms inherent in the physical world of which we are a part. Experience of these opposites is essential for human growth. Our existence consists of perpetual movement, like chessmen, from a white square to a black and from a black to a white. These moves continually test us and form our character; we grow as a result of our responses to both good and bad conditions. For how can we say that one class of experience is better or worse than the other? Each is necessary and each complementary. (Lomas, 2010, p. 27: italics added).

Notably, Freemasons explicitly link these teachings to Egyptian and Persian roots. In Freemason's teachings, the checker board is a symbolic representation of the cosmic “balance” between good and evil. As one brother put it, the checker board represents “the Good and Evil Principles of the Egyptian and Persian creed. It is the warfare of Michael and Satan, of the Gods and Titans, of Balder and Lok;

between light and shadow, which is darkness; Day and Night; Freedom and Despotism.” (Pike 1871).

The same Zoroastrian narrative also finds expression in Theosophy (Blavatsky 1889), which is founded on the work of Russian aristocrat Blavatsky, where it then passes into various New Age cultures and traditions (Chajes & Huss 2016). This is also found, remarkably, in the work of F. Hegel and Marx. Hegel, a major intellectual influence on Marx, taught a dialectical binary, thesis and antithesis that led, through struggle and opposition, to an end-of-history realization of God’s freedom (Hegel 2015). Hegel himself admits his is merely a “translate[ion] [from] the language of religion into that of philosophy” (Hegel 2015). Instead of Satan/ Darth Vader and God/Luke Skywalker fighting the battle of good versus evil, it is a depersonalized oppositional dialectic, driven by historical “forces” (Ruder 2015) that moves us all forward towards final ~~renovation~~ restitution. In Hegel/Marx, just like in Lucas/Star Wars, just like in the Bible, two opposing forces fight it out in a class struggle, the culmination of which is either “total ruin of the contending classes” or a “revolutionary reconstitution of society.” From Marx’s Communist manifest we have:

The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes. (Marx & Engels 2008).

The influence of the Zoroastrian Master Narrative on Marxist thinking is obvious. Notably, this influence extends into leftist art. Bruce Cockburn, a popular and progressive Canadian singer/songwriter, sings about the dialectical binary in his song “Rumors of Glory.”

You see the extremes
Of what humans can be?
In that distance some tension's born
Energy surging like a storm
You plunge your hand in
And draw it back scorched
Beneath it's shining like
Gold but better
Rumours of glory
Bruce Cockburn

Theorizing the Hegemony

It is clear from even this brief overview that the Zoroastrian Master Narrative forms a bedrock upon which almost all of the world’s current religious and cultural systems, particularly those birthed from and involved in the European colonial project, draw. A question that must arise at this point is, how did this

ancient religious framework become such a pervasive part of our ancient and modern cultural/religious milieu? It is possible to suggest, as some do (Campbell 1972, 2004, Jung 1980), that because these themes appear to be “universal, they must in some way represent features of our general racial ‘imagination,’ permanent features of the human spirit...of the psyche” or that these “holy tales and their images are messages to the conscious mind from quarters of the spirit unknown to normal daylight consciousness” (Campbell 1972), but this is sociologically naive and completely incorrect. More reasonable explanations can be offered, particularly if we start with the fact that these beliefs do not appear out of thin air; they are necessarily and inevitably created, produced and distributed by humans. Once we realize that, the obvious questions from a sociological, psychological, historical, and gender studies perspective are, *who created the belief systems, how did they do it, how they propagate it, and why.*

Three Case Studies

We can answer these questions by looking at three case studies, Zoroastrianism, Catholicism, and the Western Tarot deck. In the case of Zoroastrianism, it was elite members of the empire who created and propagated the Zoroastrian Frame. It is true that Zoroastrianism itself was rooted in the mystical utterances of Zoroaster who lived around 1,000 BCE, but these beliefs were subsequently co-opted, modified in currently unclear ways, and turned into colonial tools of empire by elite’s in the Sassanian empire, specifically the autocrat Ardashir and his high priest Tansar. Tansar was responsible, at Ardashir’s behest, for writing down and modifying Zoroaster’s teachings, which existed primarily as word-of-mouth teachings prior. Tansar began the process of writing down the word-of-mouth teachings when he declared Ardashir the final arbiter of the Zoroastrian doctrine, suggesting that Ardashir was “more richly endowed with virtues than the ancients....” Tansar further suggested that Ardashir was uniquely qualified to revive a faith that had “decayed” because he was a man of “true and upright judgment...” (Boyce 2001, p. 3). Once the authority of Ardashir had been proclaimed, Tansar then selected a single Zoroastrian tradition among several that were available in the region, after which he brutally and with “excessive bloodshed” (Boyce 2001, p. 103) sterilized the Zoroastrian field by suppressing all other word-of-mouth traditions that existed at the time.

“...in place of the former fraternity of regional communities, a single Zoroastrian church was created under the direct and authoritarian control of Persia; and together with this went the establishment of a single canon of Avestan text, approved and authorized by Tansar... Tansar set about his business and selected one tradition and left the rest out of the canon. And he issued this decree: The interpretation of all the teachings of the Mazda-worshipping religion is our responsibility.” (Boyce 2001, p. 103).

Why would the autocrat Ardashir claim interpretive superiority, reduce the Zoroastrian faith to a single cannon, and violently subdue competing understandings? The answer to these questions is simple. Ardashir re-created the Zoroastrian faith as an elite master narrative. He subsequently used this master narrative to consolidate

ideological and temporal power, and gain domination over his enemies. He used it to build a hegemonic narrative frame, in the Gramscian sense (Hoare & Sperber 2016), or a discourse, as per Foucault (McHoul & Grace 1993). These members of the ancient Persian elites created a master narrative which provided the “sacred” beliefs and values which influenced how people think about themselves and the world and how they act in the world. He used the religion not for the good of humanity and not because he thought it reflected truth, but to control behaviour. He created this hegemonic master narrative in what I would call a **Symbol Factory**. Symbol factories are a “special instrument of violence and thought control” (Ruyle 1975, p. 11) where agents of the [Accumulating Class](#) get together to create their ideologically impregnated master narratives.

That Ardashir used Zoroastrian word-of-mouth teachings to create a discourse is made clear by Boyce when she says,

Ardashir was not only a military genius, but a man of great shrewdness and administrative talents, who was prepared to use bloodless means as well as warlike ones to establish his rule and create a new Persian empire; and one of the tools which he chose for this was religious propaganda. There can be little doubt that the priests of Persia, whose forefather had led to Zoroastrian community under the Achaemenians, felt themselves well fitted to do so again; and they plainly undertook with zeal the task of persuading their fellow Iranians that they, together with the new dynasty to which they lent their support, were more devout and orthodox, and would be truer upholders of the faith, than their Parthian predecessors had been. (Boyce 2001, pp. 101–102).

The example of Ardashir demonstrates exactly who creates hegemonic master narratives (agents of the accumulating classes) and how they do it (they do it in symbol factories). It also provides a general answer to the question, why? In short, agents of consciousness working for empire-building elites do it by co-opting available spiritual narratives, centralizing control of these narratives in the hands of elite actors and then modifying these narratives in a way that makes them suitable as ideological tools. They then violently suppress competing frames in order to establish the hegemonic domination of their system. The example of Zoroastrianism provides a precise outline of this process.

This colonization of belief systems for the purpose of empire-building and control of the masses is evident in another case study that examines the progressive, revolutionary work of Jesus Christ as he challenges and is consequently assassinated by local colonial elites (Sosteric 2020b). As with Zoroastrian beliefs, which were anti-elite to begin with (Boyce 1996), Christ was anti-elite with a remarkably progressive mission and message. “The Spirit of the Lord is on me,” he said, “because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free.” (Luke 4:18). Unfortunately, Christ’s progressive messaging was a threat to elite prerogative and they had him assassinated. When that did not work to stop the spread of his progressive messaging, Roman Emperor Constantine “converted” to (really, the proper term is co-opted) Christianity and subsequently set about to control and modify (read colonize) the grass-roots Christian narrative. (Sosteric

2020b) by determining what constituted Christian canon and then by hiding the texts away from mass eyes for centuries while elite scribes edited the texts in privacy (Ehrman 2007, Sosteric 2020a). In this process, elites working in the Catholic Church re-imposed and carried forward the Zoroastrian narratives, once again using these narratives to consolidate hegemonic domination and elite rule right through to the 21st century.

Finally, you can see the bourgeois interference in the spiritual narratives of this planet in another case study, specifically in the Freemason's creation of a Tarot propaganda device used specifically to propagate an updated Zoroastrian narrative to their own members, and to the masses of this planet (Sosteric 2014). In this case, elites working in Masonic Lodges updated the Zoroastrian narrative for a more secular, Capitalist mindset and then distributed this narrative through fanciful images of the Italian Tarot deck, creating what Decker, Depaulis and Dummet (Decker et al. 1996) said was "...the most successful propaganda campaign ever launched: not by a very long way the most important, but the most completely successful. An entire false history, and false interpretation, of the Tarot pack was concocted by the occultists; and it is all but universally believed."

Propagation and Indoctrination

As this point, we have seen who creates the master narratives and we have a sense of how. Diving deeper, the question now becomes how have these beliefs been so successfully and surreptitiously propagated from generation to generation to the point that the world is mostly unaware of them despite their obvious existence. In order to maintain, preserve, and propagate the Zoroastrian Frame, elites set up special creative institutions, **Symbol Factories**⁷ and **Ideological Institutions**⁸ (part of the **Mechanisms of Compliance**⁹ the **Accumulating Class**¹⁰ used to produce, reproduce, maintain, and distribute an ideology amenable to their [Regime of Accumulation](#)).

Symbol factories provide the symbolic/archetypal templates for narratives aimed at thought and behavioural modification. Symbol factories, which include institutions like Freemasonry which created the modern ideological tarot deck (Decker et al. 1996) and the esoteric or internal parts of the Catholic Church, where ritual and dogma are created and the bible is edited to be in line with elite prerogative (Ehrman 2007), do this by reviving, restoring, reviving, reproducing, updating, and distributing the ancient Zoroastrian narrative frame, or some particular version of it. This is exactly what happened when Ardashir used his high priests inside a temple (i.e., symbol factory) he funded to help him co-opt and refine the elite master narrative. It is exactly what Emperor Constantine did when he created the Catholic Church and co-opted the Christian narrative. This is also what happened with the Italian Tarot deck which was brought into the Freemason's

⁷https://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/index.php/Symbol_Factory.

⁸https://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/index.php/Ideological_Institution.

⁹https://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/index.php/Mechanisms_of_Compliance.

¹⁰https://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/index.php/Accumulating_Class.

symbol factory (i.e., their masonic lodges) and subsequently recreated as a tool to distribute the Zoroastrian narrative. These should not be controversial statements. Freemasons and other elites are explicit about the transhistorical existence of “identical doctrines” that have existed throughout the course of ancient and modern civilization (Lomas 2017) and explicit about the need to periodically revive, restore, and “vindicate” the ancient teachings. (Blavatsky 1889). As one Freemason put it:

In all periods of the world's history, and in every part of the globe, secret orders and societies have existed outside the limits of the official churches for the purpose of teaching what are called "the Mysteries": for imparting to suitable and prepared minds certain truths of human life, certain instructions about divine things, about the things that belong to our peace, about human nature and human destiny, which it was undesirable to publish to the multitude who would but profane those teachings and apply the esoteric knowledge that was communicated to perverse and perhaps to disastrous ends (Wilmschurst 1922, pp. 22–23).

Wilmschurst is quite clear. Symbol factories (“secret orders and societies”) produce, reproduce, and revise the narrative through the centuries.

On the other hand, we have **Ideological Institutions**. Ideological institutions are different than symbol factories in as much as they do not modify or recreate narratives built in symbol factories but instead specialize in distributing, via symbol, story and drama, the hegemonic master narrative onto unwitting, and usually unwilling, victims. You can see the use of symbol and drama in ideological institutions throughout the esoteric and exoteric fabric of Western religion. For example, freemasonry, which functions as both a symbol factor and, during regular meetings, an esoteric-religious ideological institution, codes the Zoroastrian binary in the symbolism of their First-degree tracing board. The tracing board shows a “chessboard of life” with black and white squares indicating that the binary between good and evil, black and white, is a natural and foundational part of creation, upon which Freemasons build their advancement. Masons also freely and openly admit the use drama to reinforce the basic archetypes, engaging in ritual enactments designed to convey and reinforce specific ideas. Cicero and Cicero (2004, p. 108) of the Golden Dawn freely admit the use of drama when they say “Then, just as now, ritualists employed theatrical props, special effects, symbolism, gestures, speeches, and other elements of performance to have the greatest visual and emotive impact on their audience...” Symbols and drama are also used in exoteric ideological institutions. The Church, an exoteric-religious ideological institution, holds weekly dramas designed to convey key Zoroastrian archetypes. In addition, exoteric secular ideological institutions, like Hollywood, use highly sophisticated dramatic presentations of the Zoroastrian narrative (Star Wars, the Matrix, Harry Potter, etc.) to convey, sometimes subtly, sometimes overtly, ancient Zoroastrian archetypes.

Note that symbol factories and ideological institutions may be subdivided into esoteric and exoteric institutions, and religious and secular institutions.

Esoteric institutions, which are quite common in the West (Versluis 2007), are elite institutions with elite membership, closed to the general public and whose teachings are in general hidden from view.

Exoteric institutions, on the other hand, are public facing institutions, whose doctrines are publicly available.

Religious institutions create and distribute religious style narratives and include institution whereas **secular institutions** are institutions which create secular type narratives.

Figures 1 and 2 provide a preliminary classification of some of extant symbol factories and ideological institutions.

Figure 1. *Preliminary Classification of Some of Extant Symbol Factories and Ideological Institutions*

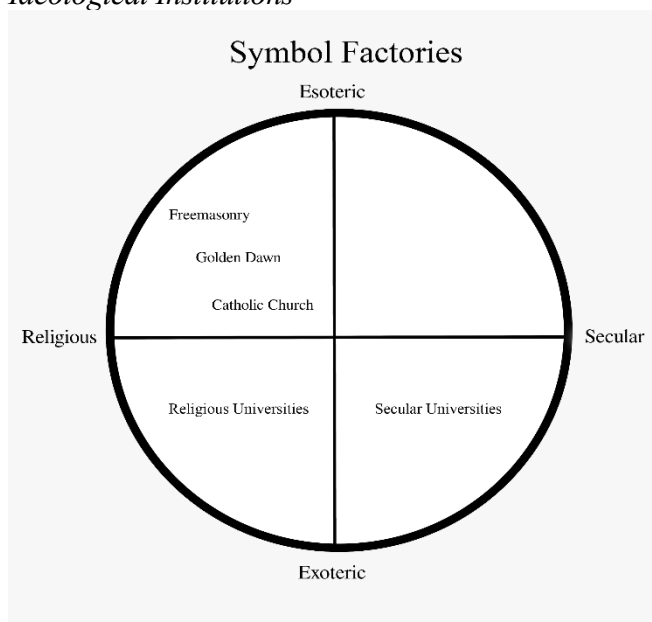
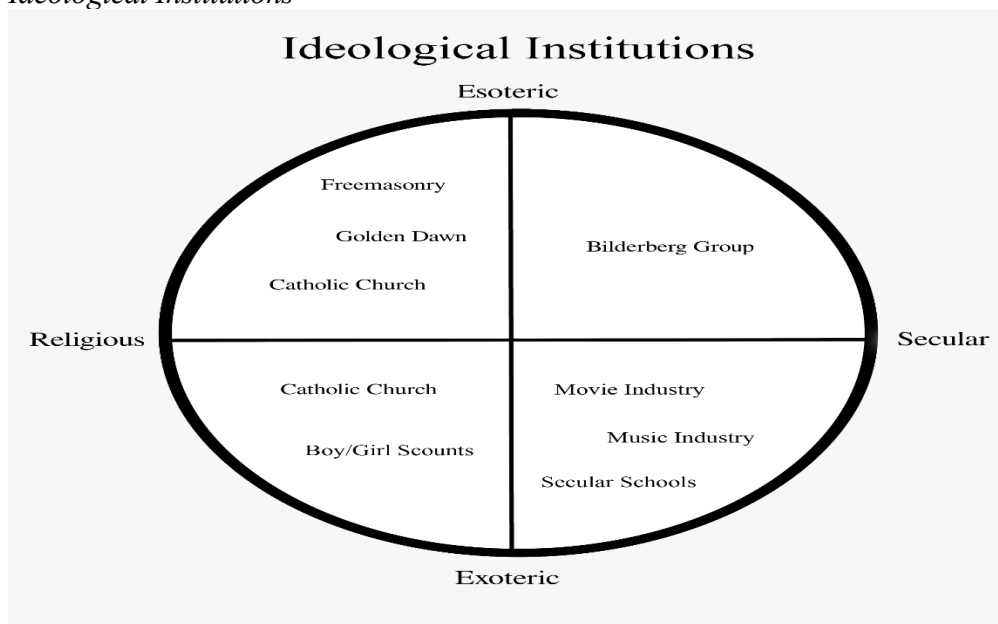


Figure 2. *Preliminary Classification of Some of Extant Symbol Factories and Ideological Institutions*



A few comments are in order.

First of all, note that most symbol factories are esoteric, for obvious reasons. It makes no sense to reveal ideological manipulation of planetary narratives to the public. The exception here is universities where elite narratives like Social Darwinism¹¹, or business narratives that privilege and elevate “entrepreneurs” as a special breed of humans, are consolidated and distributed.

Second, note that some institutions function as both symbol factory and ideological institution. Freemasonry, for example, renovates ancient master narratives and also distributes these narratives in their regular initiatory and social gathering.

Third, note that in modern complex societies, many different types of ideological institutions are deployed to distribute elite ideological narratives. This includes, in the secular categories, the many corporate media outlets that distribute ideological content, the K12 and post-secondary education systems elite institutions like the secretive Bilderberg Group (Anon 2019) whose agenda is to “bolster consensus” (read indoctrinate individuals) around free-market capitalism. In the esoteric-religious category we find various secretive organizations, like Freemasonry, the Golden Dawn, and the internal, esoteric operations of the Catholic Church. In the exoteric-religious category we find organizations like the esoteric Catholic Church (the one on display in Sunday go-to-meetings), organizations like the Boy/Girl Scouts, and so on.

Why Do They Do It?

At this point, we have tentative answers to most of the questions posed by the existence, persistence, and ubiquity of the Zoroastrian Frame. We know who creates the narratives (i.e., members, allies, or wannabe members of the accumulating class), how did they do it (they use symbol factories) and how they impose it (they use ideological institutions). We also have a general answer as to why. They do it to help maintain and reproduce their Regime of Accumulation from generation to generation. A specific question remains at this point, however, and that question is, how exactly does the elite narrative reproduce the System.

Compliance and Submission

There are several ways the elite narrative controls thought and modifies behaviour in the direction of System support and maintenance. Number one, the Zoroastrian narrative **constitutes individuals as passive**, compliant, fearful, and primed to submit and worship designated (usually white) authority figures. In the

¹¹Social Darwinism is a set of ideologies (rooted in the theories of elite conservative social scientists and philosophers like Herbert Spencer, Francis Galton, and Thomas Malthus) that emerged in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, which applied Charles Darwin's theory of natural selection to human society. The basic premise of social Darwinism is that the strong or fit should thrive and multiply, while the weak or unfit should not, an idea often used to justify political conservatism, imperialism, racism, and laissez-faire economics (Hofstadter 1992). It was not a direct extension of Darwin's ideas about biological evolution, but rather a controversial application of his theories to social, economic, and political issues.

Western world, in Churches, in the media, and even on Google, the archetypal image of authority is God, an older, abusive, white, male figure who issues commandments and provides final behavioural arbitration. This core archetypes of the Zoroastrian frame provide the emotional and psychological anchors for deference to imperial, colonial male authority the world over, whether that be the “man” in the home, the king of the castle, the principal at the school, the CEO at the corporation, or the president of the country.

The Zoroastrian framing, which is an incredibly violent frame (Ellens 2001), also encourages, enables, and justifies emotional, psychological, physical, and spiritual violence. If somebody does something wrong, if they do not conform or perform to expectations, if they commit a crime against property, we are primed not only to engage in harm but also to feel ethically and spiritually justified in that harm. Why not? Justice, judgment, and punishment are written into the ontological foundation of the cosmos. The function of these archetypes to encourage, enable, and justify violence is most obvious in the case of the Western legal system which invokes concepts of justice as it engages in violence against others. It is also visible in our home life, where intimate partners lash out in retribution every time their partners engages in a “wrong” action, and where parents engage in all sorts of damaging (Sosteric & Ratkovic 2016) emotional and psychological acts of violence as a way of “correcting” their children’s behaviour.

In addition to constituting individuals as passive and compliant, and in addition to justifying the penal/corrective use of force and violence, a violence which facilitates maintenance of their regime of accumulation, Zoroastrian archetypes also enable a particular orientation to the world, one that primes individuals to struggle, strive, and, most importantly, work hard and long hours. Whereas before Zoroaster, cosmic *cooperation* was seen as necessary to “Maintain the world according to asha”¹² (Boyce 2001, p. 26), after Zoroaster “perfection” was the goal and could be attained by passing through several thousand years of cosmic struggle, conflict, and strife. Previous pagan and indigenous frames encouraged less work and less struggle because the modelled goal of life was co-operative maintenance and not unending struggle and change. Following the Zoroastrian modification, one needed variously to struggle, strive, and work hard to prove one’s worth, and idea that becomes clearly formulated and highly significant, as Weber clearly pointed (Weber 1904), to the development of psychological and emotional frames conducive to capitalist exploitation within capitalist economic organizations (Simmons & Mills 2005).

In addition to constituting individuals as passive, compliant, worker bees, and in addition to justifying the penal/corrective use of violence, Zoroastrian archetypes also justify and enable imperial wars and colonial expansions. The Zoroastrian frame constitutes the world and our life purpose as a fight between good and evil. This framing allows for easier manipulation and weaponization of the masses. For example, Kennedy used the Zoroastrian framework to invoke public support for the 1960s and 70s NASA space program in the U.S.A. The

¹²“Asha” refers to a cosmic order of goodness, righteousness, truth, etc. In original schemas, asha was maintained with cooperation, not war. For a detailed overview of the term (see Schlerath and Skjærø 1987).

program was driven forward, at least in the public mind, by a desperate competition fuelled by a Zoroastrian binary between “good” U.S.A. and “evil” Russia (Wall 2011). The frame also provides justification for colonial expansion. Rulers who have imperialist ambitions can (and still do) use the Zoroastrian frame to paint their opponents as evil and deserving of destruction (Sosteric 2018b). So it was the case the European colonizers who used Zoroastrian archetypes to motivate and justify genocides in order to steal the lands of the “godless savages.” So it is, currently, with modern colonizers justifying war, genocide, and colonial theft by painting their opponents as evil. We can see this strategy played out in real-time as former president of the United States Donald Trump recklessly paints anybody and everybody who opposes his Capitalist agenda (#BLM protesters, liberal “elites,” cultural warriors, and all who oppose unfettered accumulation) with the dark side of the Zoroastrian binary (Sosteric 2017b), thereby weaponizing his base against them.

In addition to constituting individuals as passive and compliant, enabling violence, shaping humans into easily exploitable worker bees, and enabling colonial expansion and weaponization of the masses, Zoroastrian archetypes also justify and enable elitism. These archetypes enable the creation and refinement of a distinction between those “chosen,” worthy, or fit, those who are smart and who fight on the side of good, and those who are not chosen and who do not deserve reward because they are evil or bad in some way. This distinction can be used to *justify the inequality and privilege that is at the heart of the elites regime of accumulation*. If you are rich, it is because you deserve it in some fashion. If you are poor, that is just part of God’s corrective lesson plan. Note, these archetypes can also be used internally, with a slight twist, to justify elite actions to themselves. Madam Blavatsky, for example, justifies elitism and secrecy by comparing the members of mass society to servile Simia. “Society in its servile condition suggests to the intelligent observer of its mimicry a kinship between the Simia and human beings even more striking than is exhibited in the external marks pointed out by the great anthropologist.” (Blavatsky 2016, p. 42). A particularly pithy statement of this elite posturing is provided by Freemason Lomas who encourages the ruling class to rule while at the same time providing Zoroastrian justification for their exclusionary and elitist rule.



Non-initiates live from their gross senses. They live at their circumference using reason, cognition, and workaday intelligence. Initiates have a revolutionary inward experience that transforms their consciousness. It is one thing to be the top of one's class, but quite another to be moved to a higher class altogether (Lomas 2010, p. 21).

From the "Lecture of the second degree of Freemasonry" (*The Lecture of the Second Degree of Freemasonry* 2005) we learn that it was masons who dragged the "savages" from their dark hiding places and "instructed" them in the ways of civilization. Similarly, members of Princeton's Skull and Bones society refer to the uninitiated as "barbarians," (Robbins 2000) less evolved, less rationale, and less capable than the top of their class "chosen ones." You can see this dismissive and elitist framing of the grossly sensual barbarians as clear as day in the Golden Dawn Tarot card entitled *The World*.¹³

Finally, Zoroastrian archetypes enable power and privilege by teaching, at least in the hallways of esoteric ideological institutions, a remarkable moral relativism. Casting the material universe as a Zoroastrian chessboard where "light and darkness; good and evil; right and left; birth and death; adversity and prosperity; male and female; pleasure and pain" exist in a "complementary" opposition (Lomas 2010, p. 28), Freemasons learn not only that they must accept when evil things happen, but they learn that they themselves can also act on either side of the great divide and still be aligned and connected to the "Blazing Star" buried deep within.

New brethren sometimes ask, 'It is not our duty to keep to the white squares and avoid the black? The answer is No. It is quite beyond your power to do so, for every good has the seed of evil in it, and every evil contains germs of good. This does not mean that you must prefer evil to good, darkness to light, or court adversity for its own sake. It merely means that the joys and sorrows, the lights and shades of mundane existence must each be accepted with equal thanks....It is the same with our standards of conduct, our ethics. We label our actions good or bad, but the distinction

¹³Note that a typical Catholic Church calls the place where the "barbarians" sit the nave of the Church. The word "nave" is also used to refer to the hub of a wheel. Is the nave of the Church then the hub of a loosely organized set of ideological institutions designed to propagate ideology and indoctrinate citizens into their appropriate social class positions?

is an arbitrary convention. The ideal of one age becomes a fault in the next....Our distinctions of good and bad, true and false, are nothing more than the personal or collective view of our society at that moment. *To the clearer sight of the Initiate things are neither one nor the other, they are just facts of life needing no qualifying..*(Lomas 2010, pp. 28–30).

In other words, ethics are relative and actions, good or bad, just are. This framing teaches elites not only to passively accept the “trials and tribulations of life” their workers face as part of the “master plan,” but also gives them license to do bad things, or to allow others to do bad things because, after all, it is all part of a checker-board cosmic balancing act. Such a framing is useful to captains of industry and government actors because it allows them the ethical flexibility to cast their actions and the actions of their brethren no matter how vile (for example, exploitation of child labour, toxic dumping, etc.) as a part of cosmic balancing act over which they are ultimately merely players. It is a convenient ethical fiction inserted to justify unethical behaviour in service to profit. It is deeply ironic that the Zoroastrian binary is used in this way, considering Zoroaster’s original anti-elitism, and considering the fact that Freemasons tell themselves they are an ethical institutions. As any Freemason will tell you, “Freemasonry is a peculiar system of morality, veiled in allegory, and illustrated by symbols.” Though, after the above, perhaps a better definition would be Freemasonry is a peculiar system of amorality, veiled in allegory, and illustrated by symbols designed to enable greed.

Research Directions

There is a lot more that needs to be said about archetypes, narratives, stories, drama, how elites use these to control the masses, and what we can do about it. The purpose of this paper is to identify the Zoroastrian master narrative and its key archetypes, and to introduce the concepts of symbol factory and ideological institutions to help frame elite ideological activity. Hopefully, this paper has contributed in a modest fashion to elevating our understanding of religion, human spirituality, and its intersection with elite activities. However, this paper really just functions as a foundation for a much larger, desperately needed research program. I would like to close this paper by outlining some of the possible lines of research, and by commenting on the relation of this paper to the important work of decolonizing the study of religion and spirituality.

Building upon the recognition of the reality and significance of symbol factories, one line of historical research would trace the emergence of symbol factories as such and also trace the emergence and evolution of elite-controlled spiritual narratives as they are created in symbol factories and pass through ideological institutions to be propagated and modified into the ideological and cultural institutions of this world. There is some work in this area. Akbar (2020), for example, traces the penetration of the Zoroastrian Narrative into Islam, and Hanneegraf (2013) provides some sense of the transmission of these ideas as they pass through elite Greek and Renaissance culture into modern esoteric narratives,

but much more work needs to be done identifying the specific institutions and tracing their ideological modifications. Consider the Zoroastrian concept of the Saosyant, for example. In the original teachings of Zoroaster, a Saosyant was any highly ethical, spiritually advanced person (“good men and leaders of the people”) devoted to teaching and transforming the world in preparation for Frashorkerti (Boyce 1996, p. 235). Later, this understanding was turned into the doctrine of personal saviour, a single individual tasked by God to singly handily transform the world (Boyce 1996, Dhalla 1938). According to this modified belief, a “man who is better than a good man” (Maneck 1997), a greater man than even Zoroaster (Boyce 1996, p. 234), will come, crown the work of Zoroaster, and arouse humanity for their part in the final struggle. The Saosyant, who will enjoy a miraculous conception, will wake people up and help transit them to a final stage of creation, the Separation (Boyce 2001). Why this modification? Why the suppression of the idea that multiple grass-roots experts might emerge? Why the focus on a single saosyant saviour? This, I think, for two reasons.

One, because it facilitates the constitution of humanity as passive sheeple by casting them as waiting for a saviour to fix everything. Rather than opening the door to Saosyant status to anybody, thereby potentially creating an army of spiritual educators bent on transforming the world, these modifications slam that door shut and lay the salvation of the planet quite unrealistically on the shoulders of only one person, who will never come. Suggesting that anybody can be a Saosyant creates a much different eschatological expectation and motivation than suggesting that we must wait for “the one.” It is the difference between passively sitting and praying for the saviour to come versus actively participating in the work of waking the people up and transforming reality—not an insignificant difference. These days this modification has become a principle archetype distributed by modern secular ideological institutions. Thus we have the saosyant Harry Potter, Neo (the “one”) from *the Matrix*, the saosyant John Snow from *Game of Thrones* and, in a considerably lighter and more mocking vein, “The Guy” from the movie *SkyKids 3D: Game Over*, just to name a few.

Another reason for the modification from multiple grass-roots spiritual experts devoted to transforming the world to a single chosen one may be that this modification facilitates the consolidation, exercise, and even abuse of power. Priming the “barbarian” masses to expect a saviour primes them to accept people as saviours. Those with charismatic or financial resources can exploit this priming with intention and purpose by claiming themselves to be the saviours. This occurs not only with cult leaders (Kohl 2010, Miscavige Hill 2013) but also, notably, politicians. Hitler compared himself to Jesus and said he was chosen to lead the revolution (Kraft 2016). More recently, former U.S. president Donald Trump claimed to be “the chosen one” on international television (Cillizza 2019). Claiming to be the chosen one gives certain elites power over people primed by the Zoroastrian “chosen one” archetype.

In addition to the historical work of tracing the emergence of symbol factories and ideological institutions, and tracing the elite’s hegemonic framing, scholars also need to query their own uncritical adoption and propagation of the frame. For example, some psychologists, psychiatrists (Sosteric 2014), and anthropologists

(Greenberg 2023) believe the tarot to be a useful tool for psychological growth and even cognitive decolonization. However, as should be clear by now, it is not. It is a tool designed specifically to indoctrinate. Thinking otherwise enables continued propagation of the narrative (Sosteric et al. 2023).

In addition to the historical work of tracing the emergence of symbol factories and ideological institutions, tracing the elite's hegemonic framing, and calling into question our own naive propagation of the Zoroastrian frame, scholars also need to identify and trace resistance to these frames. The Zoroastrian frame is powerful and penetrative, but also contested, and this contest needs to be elevated and examined. For example, Margot Adler casts Wicca as a self-conscious attempt to recover authenticity lost as elites colonize human spirituality (Adler 1986). Similarly, Rice (1998) Strong and Strong (2017), Deloria (2003), and many others note the subversion of indigenous spirituality by colonial actors and call for, or point to, the recovery of ancient spiritual authenticity, which is a call to contest the dominant Zoroastrian frame. Christ's opposition to the hypocrites who misrepresent and misused Jewish law (Sosteric 2020b) could be seen as attempting to recover a lost authenticity. Even Zoroaster saw himself as recovering a lost authenticity, putting himself squarely against elite hypocrisy, "outwards observance," rituals, casuistry, and sacrificial offerings and pointing towards a spirituality "based mainly upon the heart" and aiming at "righteous conduct." (Dhalla 1938, p. 38). It is a deep irony among many deep ironies that the teachings of an individual who set himself against elite hypocrisy should come to be so central to their hegemonic regime. Finally, I myself am in the process of developing an alternative to the elite hegemonic frame that currently dominates this planet which I call the *Triumph of Spirit Archetype System* (Sosteric 2021)



In addition to historical research, we also need to do challenging psychological research. In particular, there is the question of the actual psychological, emotional,

and physical impact of Zoroastrian narrative on the mental, emotional, and physical health and well-being of individuals victimized by it. In order to understand that impact, we propose the notion of Toxic Socialization (Sosteric & Ratkovic 2016). Toxic Socialization is a socialization process rooted in the Zoroastrian Hegemonic Master Narrative. It is intentionally designed by agents of the accumulating class in order to undermine human potential, disable the body's ability to act independently, and disengage us from transformative spiritual practices (Sosteric 2018a) with the goal of creating compliant cogs in the System. A toxic socialization process is a socialization process characterized by six components: psychological, emotional, spiritual, and physical **violence**, profound **neglect** of one's Seven Essential Needs (Sosteric & Ratkovic 2020), **chaos** in the home environment, **parentification** of one or more children (because adults cannot function adequately as parents because of the damage they incurred), **indoctrination** (with some version of the Zoroastrian Frame), and **distortion/destruction of healthy family attachments**. As we point out in our paper, this process, which we all experience to one degree or another, does profound damage to the body and mind. It leads to all sorts of psychological, emotional, physical, and spiritual dysfunction. The damage diminishes our human potential and ultimately, and as intended, turns us all into compliant and enslaved cogs in the elite's toxic regime, cogs which, through their own acts of violence, neglect, and indoctrination of others, help the elites reproduce the regime. Research specifically focused on the components of toxic socialization and the impact of this on human health, well-being, our ability to think independently, and our ability to make spiritual connections is sorely needed.

Challenging psychological research also involves coming up with new psychological paradigms. Dated but still highly influential psychological theories, like Abraham Maslow's theory of human motivation and need, or Bowlby's horrifically inadequate theory of attachment, are, with their sexist prescriptions and highly individualistic notions of striving and "self" actualization, are rooted and reflective of the colonial elite master narratives. These theories need to be updated (Sosteric & Ratkovic 2022). It should be noted that there is a shift in this direction. Philip Zimbardo, famous for his prison experiments, recently realized that people following orders and blindly fitting into violent roles do so not because of personal deficiencies or some deeply buried "evil" core, but because of a system of complex and powerful forces that create "the Situation" which facilitates the evil action (Zimbardo 2007). As Zimbardo says "...most psychologists have been insensitive to the deeper sources of power that inhere in the political, economic, religious, historic, and cultural matrix that defines situations and gives them legitimate or illegitimate existence." (Zimbardo, 2007, p. x). Hopefully, this paper has sensitized us to the "deeper sources of power that inhere" and given interested researchers a basic template for describing, understanding, and researching these "complex and powerful forces."

In addition to the above psychological concerns, there are also humanistic and transpersonal questions that need to be addressed. Humanistic and Transpersonal psychology are schools that examine mystical experience, transcendence, "spiritual intelligence," and other questions related to personal development, personal

fulfillment, existential meaning, and human spirituality. Within these schools, there is an awareness of the power of “archetypes,” myths, and even mystical experience to determine human understanding and human behaviour (Jayanti 1988, Semetsky 2000, Vaughn & Neuberg 2019), and to heal and transform (Bidney 2004, Bien 2004, Mitha 2018, Rahtz et al. 2017, Vuckovic et al. 2010); however, there is limited to no awareness of the agenda-driven penetration of the accumulating class into the mythological and archetypal field of the planet and how this penetration might impact, interfere, and undermine our understanding and practice of human spirituality. Given their focus on human spirituality, it should go without saying that understanding the agenda driven manipulation of religion and spirituality undertaken by agents of the accumulation class is important.

Humanistic and Transpersonal psychologies are not the only sources of positive analysis of human spirituality. Spiritual masters and others (Emerson, 1950) have for centuries been pointing out the positive psychological, behaviour, social, and spiritual outcomes of a properly practised authentic spirituality. In our more modern times, limited research has tagged everything from pure cosmic bliss (Kacela 2006, Watts 1973) through epiphany and enlightenment (Bidney 2004, Bucke 2006) to enhanced creativity (Ikbal 2000), enhanced intelligence, and enhanced psychological function (Hanes 2012) as outcomes of authentic spiritual practice. If we assume, for the moment, that these positive outcomes of spiritual practice have been tainted and suppressed by elite interference and toxic socialization, we might well ask where the human species might be right now, spiritually speaking if we had more clearly understood and identified their interference earlier, and somehow launched a more practical and effective resistance.

Speaking of our failure to properly understand human spirituality, and launch a proper resistance, the next line of questioning becomes “Why?” Why do we not have a better understanding of the nature of human spirituality and the consequences of elite interference. Speaking for sociologists, it is true that we have, since at least Karl Marx, identified the ideological nature of religion; however, we have failed to understand the full significance of ideological institutions and symbol factories and we have failed to properly interrogate human spirituality. Instead, we have sidelined the “mystical” aspects of human spirituality (Sosteric 2017a) and focused on the ecclesiastical components of “religious” institutions (Perry 2020). Given the critical nature of sociology and the context provided by this paper, this oversight is surprising, to say the least. The question then is, why did it happen? We might point to the belief systems of our major sociological figures as one potentially fruitful avenue of investigation. Both Foucault (Carrette 2000) and Berger (2011), major figures in the analysis of religion and ideological discourse, avoided critical discussion of religious institutions. Both Foucault (Carrette 2000) and Berger, who had aspirations to the Lutheran Priesthood (Berger 2011), grew up rooted in Catholic/ Zoroastrian theology. They may have accepted the basic themes (i.e., good versus evil) as existential truths and therefore been disinclined to examine them through a critical lens. Other sociologists may simply reject the study of religious beliefs and human spirituality as irrelevant nonsense in a world of presumed secularizing modernity (Bruce 2002). Alternatively, it is also possible that there has been political interference in the academy. It may be the case that

sociological attention has been deliberately turned from careful examination of religious belief systems and human spirituality for fear that if sociologists were to take a closer look, they would easily see through the curtain, thereby exposing the manipulative Gremlins playing on their global chessboard. Here I would simply point to Elkin's first-person account of the "murder" of humanistic psychology (Elkins 2009) as an indication of this possibility. As Elkins points out in his analysis, Humanistic Psychology was well on its way to demonstrating the significance, potential, and importance of authentic spirituality to heal, enlighten, and fundamentally transform humanity. Consequently, it was deliberately destroyed by elite actors before its findings could lead too far into spaces uncomfortable and unwelcoming of elite manipulations. Did this happen in sociology? Despite early interest in the mystical aspects of human spirituality (Garrett 1975), where sociologists deliberately turned from a more focused analysis? This is not an unreasonable position to take, especially when considering the possibility that elites have suppressed authentic human spirituality unmediated because it is a decisive and easily discernible threat to the status quo (Sosteric 2018a, 2020b). It is so threatening, in fact, that members of the accumulating class have, over the centuries, poured incalculably vast amounts of wealth and resources into symbol factories, ideological institutions, and the suppressive efforts these represent, for the express purpose of mitigating and erasing the terrifying (to them) threat to their system that is posed by informed critical analysis and an authentic spirituality unmediated by elite actors.

Finally, it is important to note here that the research project outlined here is fundamentally an anti-colonial research project. Indigenous spiritualities the world over have been suppressed, corrupted, and outright erased by colonial agents of the Christian Churches in what Clark calls an "African spiritual holocaust" (Clark 2012), but which is really a brutal planet-wide effort focused on erasing all traces of indigenous spiritual understanding (Barbeau 1915, Deloria 2003, 2006, Laughlin & Rock 2014, Rice 1998, Some 1994, Strong & Strong 2017) and replacing it with their alternative versions—similar to what Ardashir did with the Zoroastrian teachings. We see this quite clearly in Sioux (Rice 1998) and Huron/Wyandot spirituality, for example, whose original creation myths represented a highly supportive and co-operative creation process, but which later absorbed colonialist Zoroastrian concepts, like the patriarchal and authoritarian concept of the Great Spirit (Barbeau 1914, Barbeau 1915, Irwin 1990) and concepts of justice, judgment, personal failure and sin, cosmic good versus evil, and final judgment (Parker 1913). In the context of a failing global ecosystem, identifying Zoroastrian impositions, recovering Indigenous spirituality, and incorporating its insights into a modern human spirituality seems like an important, nay critical, project.

Conclusion

The... world will need to decide whether it wishes to change this destructive story and its vicious core metaphors, or continue to wreak increasing psychospiritual havoc upon itself until the metaphor becomes so pervasive that we will all feel relieved with the impending prospect of a final cataclysmic Armageddon, closing out our history.

Does this seem far-fetched? It is the palpable vision of the Zionist Christian Fundamentalists and Evangelicals, of the Islamic terrorists, and can it not be of the Israeli Zionist who would rather fight than switch? Such folk are serious and sincere about their vision and are quite sure they are closer to God's truth than any of the rest of us who seek spiritual authenticity and religious integrity and peace. The metaphor of cosmic evil and violence has taken over their center (Ellens 2001, pp. 3–5).

This paper has provided an examination of elite ideology. In particular, this paper has identified the source of “perennial” elite spiritual ideology in the Zoroastrian Master Narrative, which is essentially a collection of easily identified and globally familiar archetypal codings created in symbol factories and propagated through the world's secular and religious ideological institutions by elites who use their “perennial” ideology to manipulate mass behaviour and justify and excuse the actions that facilitate, power, privilege, and accumulation. After identifying this frame, introducing the terms symbol factory and ideological institution, providing three cases studies to help flesh out understanding, and briefly examining the deleterious impact of toxic socialization on individual well-being, the paper identified several lines of research that scholars need to undertake. The research agenda here is quite large, but of primary importance. Humans are meaning makers and the meaning they make are critical for understanding human potential and well-being, not only of humans themselves but of the entire planet. Elites have exploited this under the cover of darkness for centuries. It is long past the day time for us to expose their activities and enlighten ourselves so we can take back the symbol and meaning making function for ourselves and save the planet, as Zoroaster and others would have us do.

With that said, I would like to end this paper by saying that the Zoroastrian Frame has to be replaced. A new meta-narrative, a new meaningful framing, is need. A new meaning system that encourages authentic independent will, free thought, peaceful co-existence, and authentic mystical/spiritual experience is required if this planet is going to be saved from the looming ecological, political, and psychological catastrophes wrought by the hegemonic supremacy of the elite bred Zoroastrian Frame. Reforming humanity's belief systems may seem like a radical call to some, but this is similar to earlier calls for the re-enchantment of science (Griffin 1988, Laszlo 2006), and also reminiscent of Comte's recognition of the importance of meaning and belief, and his unfortunately quite boring attempt to bring “positive” religion to humanity (Comte 1852). Of course, reforming human archetypes and human religion will not be an easy task by any means. It will require not only the creation of a creative and meaningful new narrative framing, but the immediate and concentrated participation of artists, actors, writers, musicians, academics, priests, gurus, and others involved in the creation and dissemination of human knowledge and human culture. I myself have taken a tentative step in this direction with the creation of what I call the *Triumph of Spirit Archetype System* (TOSAS). The TOSAS provides a set of progressive, emancipatory, and empowering archetypes that emphasis collective responsibility, collective work, and an evolutionary eschatology which we all, and not just the chosen few, must participate in. This archetypal system, introduced in the article

“Imaginal research for unlearning mastery Divination with Tarot as a decolonizing methodology, NOT.

Authentic paths towards decolonization” (Sosteric et al. 2023), is certainly not the final word on ideological, archetypal, narrative, or spiritual reform, but it is my hope that it and this paper may jump start a deeper and more meaningful discussion vis a vis human spirituality, archetypes, meaning, and what we can all do to help save the planet.

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Revisiting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights _ UDHR: From the Fallacies to a New Generation of Rights¹

By António dos Santos Queirós*

The resolution of the UN was adopted on 10 December in 1948(A/RES/217). The research' route of the article analyses the historical conditions where the UDHR was drafted. And intends to analyse and to debate if the political speech that crossed the cold war and emerged again, in the context of geostrategy conflicts, respects the substance of the original document. This research pathway determines and debate five fundamental questions: The connection between the articles of UDHR agreement and labour rights, economic democracy, and, on the other hand, political liberty, the right of nations to decide from themselves and the imperative of universal peace. If the articles of UDHR are compatible or not with the political nature and evolution of liberal democracies and socialist regimes. If propaganda of the Cold War and the geopolitical confrontation, they subvert and distort the principles of the original UN Human Rights or defend those principles. If people around the world really know and are conscientious of UDHR principles and articles, or those propaganda created a phenomenon of global alienation. At last, what means a new generation of human rights. That methodology will be supported by the case study of the United States of America and People Republic of China.

Keywords: *origen and historical context of UDRH, J. P. Humphrey, P.C. Chang, Eleanor Roosevelt, UDHR, preamble and 30 articles, China and UDHR, clean, healthy, sustainable environment as human right*

Introduction: Genesis, Amputation, and Manipulation of UDRH...and Ampliation

From a recent article, researching the historical condition of the genesis of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights_ UDHR, two propositions not falsifiable could be established: People's around the world don't know the substance and the original text, and the historical conditions where was drafted.² Remember:

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights_ UDHR was adopted by the UN on 10 December 1948 (A/RES/217). Drafted by J. P. Humphrey of Canada and Dr. P.C. Chang, representative of China and mediator of Asian countries, the main negotiator of the consensus established in its 30 articles. Eleanor Roosevelt enthusiastically supported her.

*Researcher, Center of Philosophy, University of Lisbon, Portugal.

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Labor rights, economic democracy, the right of nations to dispose of themselves. Self-determination and independence. Refusal of hegemonism and a new era, of peaceful and justice ...they have been elevated to the condition of fundamental human rights and, are incompatible with the political nature and evolution of liberal democracies.

The propaganda of Cold War needs to subvert and distort the principles of the original UDHR. In the U.S. (and the West), human rights are seen and reduced as formal civil and political rights. But it ends there (Roth 2021).³

“Preamble

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law

Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations...

.../...

The General Assembly,

Proclaims this Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard...to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.”

However, USA, United Kingdom, France, don't respected the initial articles of UDHR_ see the articles 1 and 2, because was colonialist countries and social and racial discrimination was institutionalized and practiced in the metropolis and in the colonies (the fascist regimes of Deutschland, Italy, or Japan, obvious could not be the promoters of UDHR).

“Article 1

³Kenneth Roat was director of Human Rights Watch's, an organization hostile to the socialist regimes, that was born in the Cold War with the name of Watch, by initiative of the USA government to follow the Helsinki Agreements, the treaty that recognized the new European political architecture that outcome from the II World War. Installed in Moscow, she does an intensive propaganda against socialist countries, using the theme of Human Rights. After the down of USSR, was transformed on the HRW, over the control of Democratic Party and the financial support of Ford Foundation, acting as a political lobby to pressing the UN Human Rights Council and the governments around the world that do not follow the diktat of the USA state. Kenneth Roat, to postulate an independent image, must recognize that, in the west, human rights are reduced to formal political liberties. See, the World Report 2020, of HRW.

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.”

The collage of Cold War propaganda linking political Human Rights with the model of liberal democracy, it is a fallacy. What Article 21 of UDHR prescribes is the way to citizenship and the diversity of democratic regimes.

“Article 21

- (1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.
- (2) Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.
- (3) The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.”

Article 21 of UDHR open the gate of new democracies and History can walk again to realize all the dreams and Human Utopias. That is the Chinese Dream and the Beautiful China. And the Socialism with Chinese Characteristics.

“Article 28

Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

Article 29

Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.

.../...

These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 30

Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.”

The principles of Universal Declaration of Human Rights _UDHR, freedom, justice and peace in the world, the development of friendly relations between nations, was quickly abandoned, but the memory of the tragedy of II War and the desire of democracy and peace was very strong around the word, so propaganda would be indispensable to justify new military confrontations.

“Article 22

Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security... and, social and cultural rights...

Article 23

Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.

Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.

.../....

Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.”

Fukuyama fundamental thesis, in the book *The End of History and the Last Man*, is not about the end of ideologies, but a celebration of the triumph of liberal democracy doctrines (and the US-UK model of democracy) over socialist ideology and socialists’ regimens from the East of Europe, in the context of the fall of USSR and European Popular Republics, celebrated by Milton Freedman as the triumph of political and economic neoliberalism.

The master idea of Fukuyama was the same of Churchill, the conservative first minister of UK that win the war against Nazism but not understand the changes of the post-war world and inside your own country: The national movements pushing to decolonization, against racism and social discriminations, and fighting for a new international order, peaceful and democratic. It was defeat in the first elections after the end of war in Europe.

Churchill proclaims in the House of Commons (11 November 1947): ...liberal democracy is the worst form of Government except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time. (Churchill by Himself, 574) At the same time, he declared:

“From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an Iron Curtain has descended across the continent...that I calls the Soviet sphere.” (Churchill, 1946)

Another hand, Churchill’s doctor Lord Moran reveals, in her book, *Churchill: The Struggle for Survival 1945-60*, that Churchill suggesting in 1946 that the United States make a pre-emptive atomic bomb attack on Moscow while the Soviet Union did not yet possess nuclear weapons and in 1947, he put the idea in a memo to President Truman.

In the Korean War (1950-1953) a conflict of Cold War, Douglas MacArthur the general commandant in chief of USA and allied troops, wants to develop a global strategy to extend the struggle directly to China and USSR and gain military supremacy with the utilization of tactical atomic weapons. It was dismissed, accused of insubordination and the menace was deferred.

In the end of II World War, the thought and ideas of more powerful Western liberal leaders reserve full democracy to the old (UK) and new (USA) imperial countries, the white supremacy and racism is preserved inside those national and international communities and justify that democracy was not for all countries and nations. The fair of communism would be the following great idea.

The Omission of History, the First Fallacy of the Single Thought

In 1962, Friedman criticized Social Security in his book *Capitalism and Freedom* arguing that it had created welfare dependency and propose private charity as one recourse for alleviating poverty.

Friedman doctrine clashes with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights UDHR: Article 22, 23, 24, 25... the right to social security livelihood supported by each State, Friedman's became the main opposite of Keynesian government policies. After the summary of the Articles 22 and 23, let's see the ...

. Article 24

Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

Article 25

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection."

Friedman theorized that there existed a "natural" rate of unemployment and argued that unemployment below this rate would cause inflation to accelerate. Friedman economic doctrine promote macroeconomic "monetarism", negative taxation, privatization, and deregulation.

In 1975, as adviser of the dictator Pinochet, Friedman could apply its neoliberal program: He said: "There is only one way to end inflation... cutting government to reduce the fiscal deficit"... " ...to... strengthens the private sector" "promising a brief period of higher unemployment

The actual crises of emigration, assuming the dimension of continental waves of emigrants, with the refugee refusal by repressive means in the border of USA and Europe, represents the fall of that theory and clash again with the UDHR:

A recipe that is extended to all America Central, America Latina and Europa. Friedman was an advisor of Republican President Ronald Reagan and Conservative British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. His political philosophy celebrated the virtues of "free market", what understood as deregulation of economic and financial systems with minimal intervention of state, extended to all domains, such as a volunteer military, freely floating exchange rates, abolition of medical licenses, a negative income tax and school vouchers, what means adding publicly operated schools with private management but publicly funded schools through a system of school vouchers. However, the right of political and economic migration, was elevated to the level of universal right.

"Article 13

Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.

Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Article 14

Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.

This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 15

Everyone has the right to a nationality.

No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.”

Friedman favored only a selective immigration, because take jobs that most residents of this country are unwilling to take, however suggesting that immigrants should not have access to the welfare system.

The deregulation of economic and financial market, with an innumerable tax havens which provide cover for money laundering, the creation of hidden financial products, vulture financial funds, the end of separation between investment banks and commercial banks, represent the triumph of Friedman doctrine, not only in the range of conservative parties but involving socialist like UK Labour, from The Third Way of Tony Blair or American Democrats with President Bill Clinton government. The financial crises of 2007-2008 was the consequence.

A brutal clash against the UDHR too: In the US, despite the nominal GDP growth, the wealth of American citizens increasingly concentrated in a few scant 1% of the American population _ in 2006, this group of top received 53% of the income, and in 2010 came to 93%. (Bell 2015).

That means the concentration of capital and property, the loss of public propriety and the expropriation of middle class_ entrepreneurs, farmers, workers, houses, cars, pensions, savings...

“Article 17

Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.

No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.”

The US Census Bureau reported that 16% of the U.S. population lived in poverty. And, concerning extreme poverty of those who live on less than 2 dollars a day, was twice of 1966, growing from 1.5 million to 2.8 million children and families! The theory of Friedman of tendencies to reducing poverty is not confirmed in its own country!

In alternative, agrarian reform of PRCh gives the land to 350 million of peasants and 850 million left behind the extreme poverty.

We Needs a New Conceptual Framework, to Understand the Chinese Way

The cold war never ends and the renaissance of China and the fall of USSR, create two negative waves:

Most of the Communist Parties do not understand why socialism was defeated in the East Europe. And for most of the parties that remain communist, socialist regimens need to follow the model of USSR.

On the other hand, to neoliberal parties_ with the acronyms of democratic parties, liberal parties, socialist parties...liberal democracies were the end of history, the peak of political progress. Socialism with Chinese Characteristics emerged to put into question the two dogmatic views.

A long-time dogmatic propaganda from the right and the left, create a big political misunderstanding and alienation in the awareness of citizen of EU. That is the reason because it is necessary a negative heuristic to dismount the fake propositions_ fallacies and fake news.

Living in a new world where mass media and social media are monopolized, it is not easy to build a critical thought. After fifty years studying China, I always return to the critical issues: What represents the concepts the “Socialism with Chinese Characteristics”? And their evolution to “Ecological Socialism” and the pilot zones towards “Ecocivilization”? What are the propositions of The Global Security Initiative for Peace or The Global Development Initiative? West media and social networks don’t publish the original documents and when make a brief note it is to criticize those initiatives as the soft power of China to achieve hegemony.

Time review calls PRCh a “hybrid model of quasi-state capitalism and semi democratic authoritarianism”. Around the world, different research postulates a common idea: “China’s successful reform has produced a system that is neither Soviet, nor Anglo-American, nor East Asian-developmental state. It has elements of all three” (Wei, 2019, 31).

That last vision was adopted by the American Senate, after a long debate for two years, from 2016 to 2017, that decide: the Federal Government must increase the Economic and Diplomatic engagement with China.

DHS Strategic Action Plan to Counter the Threat Posed by People’s Republic of China'

But in 2021, a critical turning point happened: the Department of Homeland Security’s (DHS), lanced the so-called “DHS Strategic Action Plan to Counter the Threat Posed by People’s Republic of China”. This document is practically unknown by the public in the west but must be taken seriously by the government of China and all the peoples that want to live on a peaceful world. It is the key to understanding the intensification of hostile campaigns about Hong Kong, Xinjiang and Taiwan, and incidents like the suspicion around the 5G technology.

It’s time returning to China political Philosophy. The standpoint of my research is: If the People’s Republic of China represents a new historical experience of democracy and socialism, the Western conceptual framework of political hermeneutics is not adequate to understand PRCh.

And, by this way, I find successive propositions not falsifiable that must be better studied, like socialist market, one country, two systems, that represent distinct faces of a new historical regime, different from liberal democracy, and

Soviet Union socialism. Those regimes did not represent the end of history and the unique way to socialism.

And yes, we need a new conceptual framework, to understand the Chinese way into a new era. That is the mission of political philosophy.

USA Plan against Chinese Threat and China Global Development Initiative

In the beginning of December 2021, two documents established two opposite strategies to the world.

The Global Development Initiative (GDI), proposed by China on the United Nations Assembly in 2021, aims catch up and accomplish the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, on risk by pandemic and regional conflicts, with a strong contribution of China in all critical domains, from health to the green transition.

The American plan accuses China of rampant intellectual property theft, counterfeiting and piracy, and deflated commodity prices using forced labor, costing American jobs, and decimating entire industries and towns throughout the United States. China is accusing of using immigration system and exploits U.S. businesses and academic institutions to obtain access to cutting-edge American technology and information. And too, of illicitly acquiring proprietary and critical information, which undermines American safety of armed forces ...And to be responsible for the tragic balance of COVID 19 in US!? More than one million of casualties'...

The plan announces the restriction and police surveillance of all activities and citizens of China in the US and a global partnership around all continents, including the Arctic but also the sidereal space, with the same negative intention.

The "EU-China Comprehensive Agreement on Investment" was the last victim of that aggressive plan". And the document named EU New Strategy, face to China, adopted those American line hostile against China.

The Global Security Initiative for Peace and the Principle of Indivisible Security

President Xi Jinping propose the Global Initiative for Peace on the Annual Conference of the Boao Forum for Asia, April 2022 "The principle of indivisible security", rejects the path of building one's own security at the expense of the security of others, the opposite strategic concept that led to the creation of NATO and the Warsaw Pact, and the escalation of Cold War.

This principle is in line with the principles of the UN, is committed to respect for the sovereignty and integrity of all countries, advocates non-interference in their internal affairs and respects the different political and social regimes chosen by the history of their peoples

This new architecture, for perpetual peace, can be built from the United Nations and accompanied by the progressive dismantling of military pacts and the progressive reduction of mass destruction weapons_ nuclear, chemical, biological, digital...The last pollical declaration of the representative of China in UN, reinforce this position, PRCh wants that all mass destruction weapons be banish.

The Belt and Road Initiative and National Strategy and the Economic War against China

From China's standpoint, all the conflicts that the United States promotes directly or indirectly, using interference, aggression, and civil war, are part of a strategic plan to retake American hegemonism. The fusion of the complex military-industrial with the oligarchy of finance, oil, real estate, and the media business, created a deep social gap where 1% control 93% of the GDP _ Gross Domestic Product, and the budget of the two hegemonic parties are dependent on their funding.

From China's standpoint, an world divided by confrontations of blocs, with military tactical conflicts, the supremacy of the business over the sustainable environment, are the core of the US political economy.

The difference between the BRICS enlargement, New Silk Road and RCEP agreements, which herald a New Era, lies first and foremost in access to free trade on an equal footing as well as to affordable low-interest credit from all partners; second, the respect for the sovereign decision of each one on the choice of their strategic economic projects and the model of governance regime (with various types of democracy); third, in China's position as a partner that does not seek hegemony, because it abdicates from creating mechanisms that could guarantee it this hegemony.

A New Generation of Human Rights

A new project of democracy is imperative. Can capitalist model reform itself to an ecological economy? And socialist economy?

28 JULY 2022

UN, reaffirming its resolutions, namely the “2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, and its recognition that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, in its three dimensions – economic, social and environmental, approved in 2022 a Resolution Recognizing Clean, Healthy, Sustainable Environment as Human Right.

Also recognizing that, conversely, the impact of climate change, the unsustainable management and use of natural resources, the pollution of air, land and water, the unsound management of chemicals and waste, the resulting loss of biodiversity and the decline in services provided by ecosystems interfere with the enjoyment of a clean, healthy and sustainable environment and that environmental damage has negative implications, both direct and indirect, for the effective enjoyment of all human rights,

Reaffirming further its resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, entitled:

“Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, in which it adopted a comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centered set of universal and transformative Sustainable Development Goals and targets, its commitment to

working tirelessly for the full implementation of the Agenda by 2030 ensuring that no one is left behind, its recognition that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, and its commitment to achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions – economic, social and environmental – in a balanced and integrated manner.” ...

Empathize:...recognition that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development!

Since their proclamation in 1949 to the year 2020, RPCh eradicated from the extreme poverty 850 million people, departing from a higher standard of Power Purchasing Parity. In response to the UN Vienna Declaration and Program of Action, the Chinese government has made and carried out the National Human Rights Action Plans and National Human Rights Action Plan (2016-2020).

Poverty is defined by China as anyone in rural areas who earns less than \$2.30 a day (adjusted for inflation). The national benchmark used by China is higher than the \$1.90 per day poverty line used by the World Bank.

Deliver the Two Assurances and Three Guarantees was achieved in the year of 2020, for all people. The "Two Assurances" refer to the necessary food and clothing. And the "three guarantees" refer to compulsory education, basic medical treatment, and housing security. On the liberal democracies standard about poverty do not exist the Two Assurances and Three Guarantees.

In the Special Autonomous Regions and among the national minorities scattered throughout the Chinese Provinces, extreme poverty has been eradicated. (Guizhou, Xinjiang...). The per capita disposable income of the rural poor/extreme poverty, which was 30 \$USD in 1949, increased from RMB 6,079 in 2013 to RMB 12,588 (1,928 \$USA) in 2020. China leads the world ranking of PPP Comparative Purchasing Power since 2011 (IMF/WB), surpassing the US (Roach 2016).

Free Conscience, Political and Social Liberties

This essay, as a comparative-study, could not forget the principles of free conscience and social liberties, from UDHR:

UDHR. Article 18... the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion.

UDHR. Article 19... the right to freedom of opinion and expression

UDHR. Article 20 ...the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

What offer peoples Republic of China in this matter:

Those rights are record in the Article 35 of the Constitution of PRCh: “Citizens of the People’s Republic of China enjoy freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly, of association, of procession and of demonstration.”

But what is the reality of the state of social liberties and the exercise of the freedom of conscience?

National People's Congress

The National People's Congress_ NPC is framed by the Constitution of the People's Republic of China_ PRC as the organ of the supreme national power. The basic functions of the NPC include the legislative production, the election of the upper organs of the State and the supervision, highlighting the five-year plan. The Constitution stipulates:

“All citizens of the People's Republic of China who have reached the age of 18 shall have the right to vote and stand for election, regardless of ethnic status, race, sex, occupation, family background, religious belief, education, property status and length of residence. Persons who have been deprived of political rights in accordance with the law shall not have the right to vote and stand for election.”

The representatives of the NPC of the village and district level are elected directly.

The representatives for the higher levels are elected indirectly, from those assemblies. It has enacted electoral laws for the National People's Congress_ NPC and local people's congresses, and organization laws for local people's congresses and governments. Estimating around 45.000 townships and towns, 1.700 counties, 400 county-level municipalities, 900 urban districts, 300 prefecture-level municipalities and 31 provincial-level units, is the largest democratic electoral process around the world.

The eight democratic parties that founded the People's Republic of China with the Communist Party of China (1949) have the constitutional right to be represented in the NPC and on their Standing Committee. The actual composition of NPC sustain that large alliance, with 384 elected deputies from the 8 democratic parties, 470 independents, 2.090 communists and 36 places waiting for elections.

Chairmen of Central Committees of eight Democratic parties are regularly elected vice-chairmen of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress and the Standing *Committee of National Committee of Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference CPPCC*

Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC). Structure and composition In September 1949, the first plenary session of the Chinese People's Political.

Consultative Conference, working as a constituent assembly, announced, on behalf of all the Chinese people, the founding of the PRCh. Following the election of the first China National People's Assembly in 1954, the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference evolved as a supreme organ for the supervision of popular democracy, assessing the conformity of national laws and regulations with the application of principles of the Constitution and intervening to improve and refine them. According to the principles of “long-term coexistence, mutual

supervision, sincere treatment with each other and the share of weal or woe” between the CPC and the democratic parties and democrats with no party affiliations.

Poorly compared, is a kind of administrative organ hybrid between the Senate State Council and Constitutional Court, but without a last-instance character, functioning as a negotiating forum, elected from the base and representing all the living forces of the Chinese nation (34 sectors), where the communists are minority (1/3 was the golden rule of United Front committees communists, democratic parties and local people). The primary functions of the CPPCC are to conduct political consultations and democratic supervision, and organize its member parties, organizations and personages from various ethnic groups and walks of life to discuss and manage state affairs. All activities of the CPPCC are guided by the Constitution of the PRCh. The right to know.

Increase the Right to Participate

Consultative democracy is applied extensively as a mechanism at multiple levels: The right to know. Increase the right to participate. Platforms are being improved to make government more open. In 2004, the State Council released the Outline of Comprehensively Advancing Administration in Accordance with the Law, which promotes government transparency and requires administrative organs to disclose government information.

A mechanism through which public opinion is consulted in drafting laws has been set up and improved. Since 2008, the state legislatures have solicited public opinion on 139 draft laws, receiving 2.46 million comments from 590.000 people. Since 2013, the government has released announcements inviting responses from the public and expanded channels and multiplied means for soliciting opinions in drawing up plans for the legislation work of the State Council.

China is a democratic State based on the rule of law, with a hierarchical system of popular courts and an independent prosecutor’s office.

Free Religion

No religion is given preferential treatment over other religions to enjoy special legal privileges. The major religions practiced in China are Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, and Catholic and Protestant Christianity, involving a total of nearly 200 million believers and more than 380,000 clerical personnel. At present, there are about 144,000 places of worship registered for religious activities and 91 religious’ schools in China. Social security for religious clerical personnel has been enhanced. By the end of 2017, 96.5 percent of clerical personnel had been covered by medical insurance, and 89.6 percent by old-age insurance, and all eligible personnel had been covered by subsistence allowance welfare almost all clerical personnel had been covered by the social security system in China.

Ethnic minority groups’ right to freedom of religious belief has been fully protected.

Religious beliefs and normal religious activities are protected by law. At the moment Tibet Autonomous Region has 1,778 venues for practicing Tibetan

Buddhism, and some 46,000 resident monks and nuns. The Living Buddha reincarnation is a succession system unique to Tibetan Buddhism and is respected by the state and governments at different levels of the autonomous region,

Reincarnation of Living Buddha's of Tibetan Buddhism. Tibet now has 358 Living Buddha's, more than 60 of whom have been confirmed through historical conventions and traditional religious rituals. The system whereby Tibetan Buddhist monks study sutras has been improved. Monks from Tibet had received senior academic titles in Lhasa and in Beijing.

China has published translations of the religious classics of Islam, Buddhism, Christianity, and other religions in multiple languages to satisfy normal religious needs. More than 1.76 million copies of the Quran and Selections from Al-Sahih Muhammad Ibn-Isma'il al-Bukhari have been distributed. The Tibetan Buddhist canons have been revised and published, and 1.490 million copies of the canon Kangyur have been given to monasteries for monks, nuns, and religious persons to study. To improve the self-management capacity of religious groups, the state offers training sessions to clerics on interpreting scriptures, and to persons who manage venues for religious activities.

Since 2011 the National Religious Affairs Administration has organized over a dozen training sessions on interpreting Islamic scripture and trained several hundred clerics from Xinjiang. The central government supports the Xinjiang Islamic Institute in expanding its campus, improving teaching conditions, and enrolling more students.

Democratic Tibet

“UDHR. Article 3.

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

UDHR. Article 4.

No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

UDHR. Article 5.

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.”

China New Democracy finished with the servitude along all provinces and regions and ended the slavery that resist in the Tibet feudal regime under the government of the last Dalai Lama.

On 23 May 1951, in Beijing, the central and local government delegates signed the agreement of 17 Articles, recognizing the unity of China and the Government's authority over the entire national territory, pledging that keep the rulers and the institutions of Tibet until it was negotiated the peaceful democratic reform in the region, an agreement supported by the fourteenth and current Dalai Lama.

In 1954, the Dalai Lama took part in the first National Assembly of the People's Republic of China, which drew up the Constitution of the Republic, having been elected as one of the Vice-Chairmen of the Standing Committee of

this Assembly. In 1956, became President of the Organizing Committee of the autonomous region of Tibet.

Since that time that Tibet saw enshrined in the Chinese Constitution the respect for your language, culture, customs and beliefs, including Tibetan Buddhism.

The conflict arose when the democratic reform of Tibet, with the separation of religion and the secular State, the abolition of serfdom and slavery and, especially, the distribution of land and herds to Tibetan peasants until then subject to an anachronistic feudalism dominated by aristocrats and the upper layer of the monks.⁴

Characterize Tibet briefly, far way novels and Western filmography:⁵

According to the Census of 1959 (and read the biography of the current Dalai Lama to confirm this picture “between the lines”, nevertheless the flagrant omissions oh historical events), the monks of the upper layer and the nobility represented 5% of the population; 400 families shared each other almost all the arable land and herds: local government held 38.9%; the monasteries, 36.8%; the aristocracy, 24%. The small peasants fit the remaining 0.3%.

The servants, 90% of the population, were forced to pay the nobles and monasteries a *corvée* (unfree labor), an income on products and sometimes in money, in addition to heavy taxes and fees in cash and services. Without enough resources, borrowed the nobles and monasteries, paying high interest. If they died without paying off the debt, she passed to the descendants or the neighbors.

For the slaves, 5% of the population, household and public services were heavier, like cleaning, the dumping of feces, the freight transport and the transport of nobles and officials, in palanquins or own back.

Servants and slaves could be exchanged, donated, loaned or even sold. For the poor, there were no hospitals, no schools. The monks of the upper layer and the most influential nobles shared political positions. The Yellow Sect of the Dalai Lama was privileged in relation to other sects and Tibetan Buddhism in relation to other religions.

⁴The Potala Palace in Lhasa, comprising the White and Red Palaces with their ancillary buildings, is built on Red Mountain in the center of Lhasa Valley, at an altitude of 3,700m. It was the winter residence of the Dalai Lama (seat of government and fortress) since the 7th century, rebuilt in the 17th century, comprising thirteen stores of buildings, containing over 1,000 rooms, 698 murals, almost 10,000 painted scrolls, numerous sculptures, carpets, canopies, curtains, porcelain, jade, and fine objects of gold and silver, as well as a large collection of sutras and important historical documents. It is now a museum and World Heritage.

⁵The Autobiography of Tashi Tsering, an old monk that escape to USA, developed a strong dislike of his country's theocratic ruling. Return to Tibet, during Mao's Cultural Revolution, he was arrested in 1967 and officially exonerated in 1978, becoming a professor of English at Tibet University in Lhasa. Their testimony can be useful to demystify the regime of Dalai Lama and understand the political meaning of the process of reform and opening up.

Norbulingka, the Dalai Lama's former summer palace constructed in the 18th century, with 374 rooms, is located on the bank of the Lhasa River about 2km west of the Potala Palace in a lush green environment. It comprises a large garden with four palace complexes and a monastery as well as other halls, and pavilions all integrated into the garden layout to create an exceptional work of art covering 36 ha. The property is closely linked with religious and political issues, having been a place for contemplation, cultural festivities and for signing political agreements.

After politically distancing himself from support for U.S. foreign policy, from which he has depended financially, the current Dali Lama had to go into exile again, in India and hand over political leadership to a member of his group.

The interview (2014) he gave to DW (Deutsche Welle) Germany's international broadcaster reveals the commitments in which he is embroiled, but formally denies the campaigns on his behalf for Tibetan independence and conveys a positive view of China's current governance, face to Tibet:

"We decided in 1974 that we are not after independence. We only seek those rights that are mentioned in the Constitution. They should be implemented. This is our request.

In his interview now, President Xi Jinping is fighting corruption in a serious way. And recently, during his visit to Europe, in Paris, he openly stated that Buddhism has a very important role for Chinese culture. So Buddhists should take more responsibility.

To me this is something extremely out of the ordinary: a communist leader publicly praising or making a positive remark about Buddhism. So, things are changing."

Press and Media. Social Networks

The history of the two main independent groups of Chinese press can be systematized by the biography of the journalist Hu Shuli, quoted from World Economic Forum:

"Hu Shuli is the founder and publisher of Caixin Media, professor of the School of Communication and Design at Sun Yat-sen University, adjunct professor of the School of Journalism and Communication at Renmin University of China. Internationally recognized for her achievements in journalism, Ms Hu was named one of the World's Greatest Leaders by Fortune in 2017. She was awarded the Ramon Magsaysay Award in 2014 and Missouri Honor Medal for Distinguished Service in Journalism in 2012. She was listed among Top 100 Influential People of 2011 by Time magazine. She was twice named one of Top 100 Global Thinkers by Foreign Policy magazine in 2009 and 2010. The Caixin editorial team under her leadership won the 2011 Shorenstein Journalism Award from Stanford University. In 2007, she received the Louis Lyons Award for Conscience and Integrity in Journalism from the Nieman Foundation at Harvard University. In 2006, Ms Hu was called China's most powerful commentator by the Financial Times, and The Wall Street Journal cited her as one of Asia's Ten Women to Watch. Ms Hu was named International Editor of the Year by the World Press Review in 2003 and one of BusinessWeek magazine's Fifty Stars of Asia in 2001. Ms Hu serves as a global board member of United Way Worldwide. She was awarded the honorary doctorate degree from Princeton University on May, 2016."

Caixin is a private media group dedicated to providing financial and business news through periodicals, online content, mobile apps, conferences, books and TV/video programs. As an industry leader in China, Caixin takes the lead to explore overseas markets and is well positioned to serve global users with the insight, information and news report about China. Caixin offers the English news

via a 24/7 website and runs a weekly digital magazine and a bi-monthly print magazine that is distributed in financial centers in the U.S, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Zurich. Caixin also produces top grade summits, roundtables and dialogues that bring together political, business, and academic leaders from across China and around the world.

In 2009 Zhang Xianghui, Caijing Magazine's director of public relations, announces that 70 employees, or more than two-thirds of the business department, have resigned. "The key is that SEEC wants to step in and censor all of our financial stories..... especially cover stories and investigative reports. This is unbearable (for us)." SEEC was the financial group of Hong Kong that was the proprietary of the magazine, and Hu Shuli the principal journalist. She lost Caijing and founded Caixin.

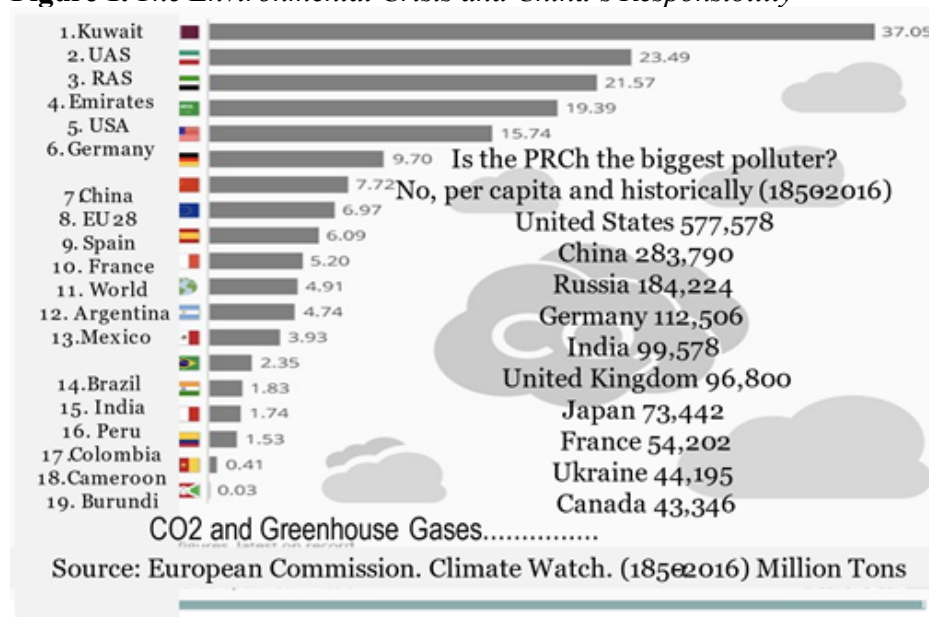
Caijing Magazine continues to be published (since 1998) mainly focuses its coverage on finance and the economy, business and industry, politics, law, and society, including civil rights issues.

Over one billion people had access to internet in the country, resulting in a fast-growing mobile app market. In the last years, 83.4% of Chinese users access the web from their mobile devices (compared to 63% in the U.S.), and many of the most popular services, like WeChat, exist only as a mobile application. Chinese users are also more engaged than Americans are. Already in 2011 the Chinese spent more time on the Internet than watching TV, while in the U.S. this crossover happened last year. More than 75% of them regularly contribute content online, but only less than a quarter of Americans do. And users in China spend more money on e-commerce than Americans. The literacy of hundred million of Chinese users can overcome the most sophisticated's firewall.

The Environmental Crises and the China and West Responsibilities

In the first phase of reform and openness, the West transferred to China some of its most polluting industries and all kinds of modern waste for recycling. Yellow phosphorus production transferred to China reduced Japan production to zero, on the US to a half and in Europe to two-thirds. Between 1999 and 2009, exports of recycled paper shipped by the UK to India, Indonesia and China increased from 470,000 T to 4.7 million T. "If these emissions were accounted for, the reductions announced by Europe in recent years would be reversed. The UK Government's staggering 18% reduction in CO2 emissions since 1990 would be a 20% increase".⁶

⁶Jonathan Watts, "When a Billion of Chinese Jump, how China will Save Mankind", page 146. Watts is a defender of liberal democracy and does not sympathize with Chinese socialism. But, to quote people like them, a journalist well documented in the matter of environment, can be useful to open the mind of occidental public opinion, that have a prejudice about Chinese sources.

Figure 1. *The Environmental Crisis and China's Responsibility*

Is true that China is the first responsible by the atmospheric pollution? If we considers the historical process and the per capita ratio, the answer is no. If we consider CO₂ emissions along the period 1850-2016, USA is the first responsible, the double of China and EU countries represent much more of PRCh. If we consider the per capita measure, in the top are the Arabian countries, USA and Deutschland, and countries as India gives a reduced contribution to global warming. The data source is EU data (Global Watch).

Toward a New Era of Cooperation

South-South Cooperation: A New Era in Africa

The South-South cooperation promoted by China can be defined by its fundamental policy measures: exemption from customs duties and “debt forgiveness” granted to the least developed countries (PMDs) and, following the 2018 China-Africa summit, the agreements with 37 countries for the construction and modernization of the economy, far from the neocolonial model of the raw materials. The 2018 summit was also an event of enormous importance for the European Union, which, with the help of China for the sustained development of the African economy and its support for the UN action on that continent, will see diminished pressure from refugees and migrants Africans fleeing from war and misery.

EU-China Comprehensive Agreement on Investment Could Sustained the Fall of Europe

When the China-EU Comprehensive Investment Agreement (CAI), after seven years of negotiations, was finally signed in December 2020, Ursula Von der Leyen, president of the European Commission-EC, signaled its strategic importance for the European Union, already living in a new economic crisis accelerated by the pandemic, because the CAI would allow "unprecedented access to the Chinese market".

Chinese and Europeans wanted facilitate market access and reduce investment barriers, helping to recover European industry and economy in sectors such as transport, health equipment, telecommunications etc...

US leaders used again their influence over the dominant parties in the European Parliament to suspend ratification of the agreement. The EU Parliament decreed sanctions against Xinjiang's rulers and China has responded with sanctions against some EU officials.

China is supported by Muslim countries and a large majority of countries on the Xinjiang issue. 22 ambassadors sent letters to the UN Human Rights Council in 2019 criticizing China's policy in Xinjiang towards Uighur Muslims. The letters were signed by 19 European countries, in addition to Japan, Canada and Australia. 37 states, and later 50, (and after 65 countries) supported Chinese policy in Xinjiang through the response letter addressed to the same Council, praising what they call China's remarkable achievements in the field of human rights. And they emphasise:

"Faced with the grave challenge of terrorism and extremism, China has undertaken a number of counterterrorism and deradicalization measures in Xinjiang, including the creation of vocational training and education centers," the letter says (Yellinek and Chen 2019).

The letter also states that security has returned to Xinjiang and the fundamental human rights of people of all ethnic groups have been safeguarded. adding that there has been no terrorist attack for already three years The letter is signed by major Muslim countries, including allies from the U.S., Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Oman, Kuwait, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Syria, several African countries and others from Africa, Asia, America, and the Europa. Around 65 countries support now the position of PRCh, the promoters of fallacy stay in large minority.

Global Governance of Human Rights

China is actively engaged in global governance of human rights. China proposes at the United Nations General Assembly and the United Nations Human Rights Council the view that "The rights to subsistence and development are the primary, basic human rights."

In response to the UN Vienna Declaration and Program of Action, the Chinese government has made and carried out the National Human Rights Action Plan (2009-2010), National Human Rights Action Plan (2012-2015), and National Human Rights Action Plan (2016-2020), setting phased goals and tasks for respecting and safeguarding human rights. It has fulfilled the targets set in the first two action plans and is working on the third.

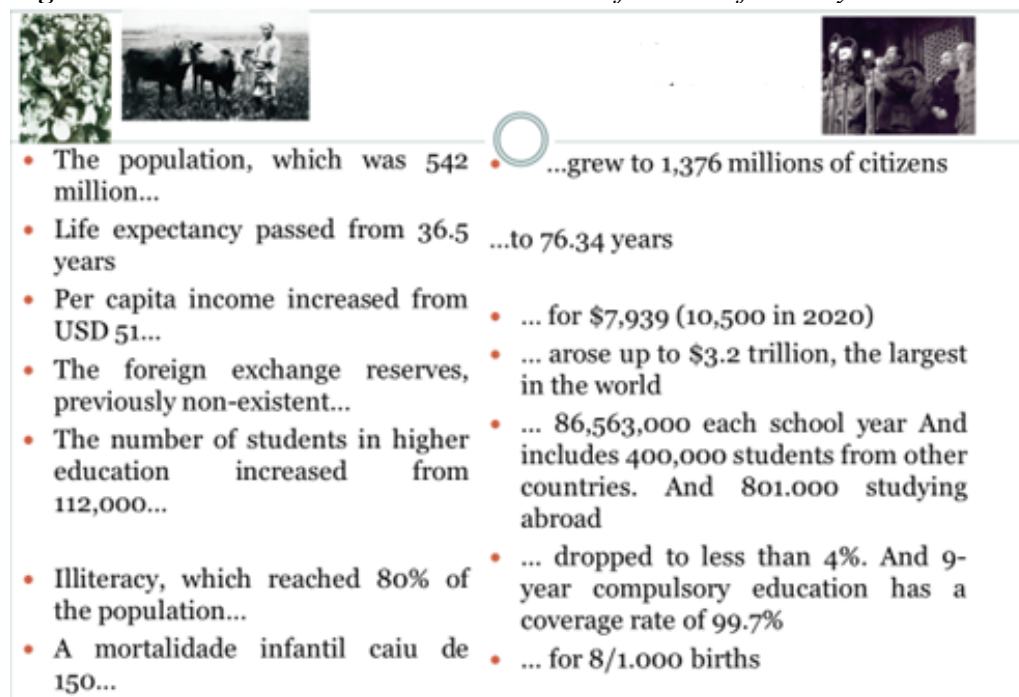
The Chinese government has also formulated special action plans relating to the economy, culture, society, the environment and other fields, as well as special plans to protect the rights of specific groups such as ethnic minorities, women, children, the elderly, and people with disabilities.

Over the past 40 years, adhering to the principle of interdependence and inalienability of all human rights, China has coordinated the planning and promotion of all rights and endeavored to strike a balance between economic, social and cultural rights and civil and political rights, and between individual rights and collective rights.

Moving toward the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation set out by the 18th CPC National Congress, the CPC has advanced the overall plan of seeking economic, political, cultural, social, and ecological progress, and made comprehensive moves to complete a moderately prosperous society in all respects, to extend reform, to advance the rule of law, and to strengthen Party discipline.

Conclusions: PRCh is Co-Founder and Turn Up Toward of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights _ UDHR

Figure 2. *China 1949 2019. 2020-850 million Lifted Out of Poverty*



Source: Author.

The propaganda of Cold War needs to subvert and distort the principles of the original UDHR. In the U.S. (and the West), human rights are seen and reduced as formal civil and political rights.

However, UDHR open the gate of new democracies and History can walk again to realize all the dreams and Human Utopias.

The Right to a Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment, is the new universal Human Right. Resolutions from the Human Rights Council in 2021 (A/HRC/RES/48/13) and the General Assembly in 2022 (A/RES/76/300) add this fundamental human right to the library of internationally recognized rights.

Peoples Republic of China, incorporate the thirty (30) articles of UDHR in the Constitution and progressively, they turn them real to common people and design the international policy of China, since the 5 principles of peaceful coexistence to The Global Security Initiative for Peace guided by the Principle of Indivisible Security or The Global Development Initiative.

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The Wager on God by Blaise Pascal: Blaise Pascal's Bet on God

By Ada Prisco*

The third chapter of the Thoughts of Blaise Pascal is presented as a letter that leads us to seek God. The seventeenth century, however, is not yet the ideal space for the freely passionate personal conscience to trace the Spirit wherever it wants to be found. The sensitivity of the philosopher intends first of all to emancipate the religious discourse, to lighten it from the diving suit of terror, which is unjustly placed on it by the most widespread preaching. This leads itself to fueling terror, thus hoping to cause man, small, miserable, and sinner, to take refuge in the faith forcibly induced for a sort of merchandise, which guarantees, in exchange, salvation. Pascal reverses the itinerary and recovers within it the tools of reason and conscience. The search for God appears as a flame lit not by terror, but by what, in comparison, looks like the refined tool of autonomous thought, namely doubt. The certainty of the existence of God is not affirmed either as a dogma or as evidence, it is not a presupposition of reasoning. The presence of God is a hypothesis. It is not irreverent, it does not devalue the value of the research or its purpose. It does not disown the person-God relationship. Rather, he wishes to nourish it from a different perspective, which allows the person to perceive the irreplaceable value of his soul. Following Pascal's discussion on the matter, it is useful to ask ourselves a question that can bring it up to date: why does human life change, based on the hypothesis of whether God exists or not?

Keywords: Pascal, God, soul, philosophy of religion

Introduction

The immortality of the soul is something that matters to us so much, and that affects us so deeply, that one must have lost all feeling to be indifferent to knowing what it is about. All our actions and our thoughts must take such different directions, depending on whether we have to hope for eternal goods or not, that it is impossible to take a single step with common sense and judgment, if not regulating it on the vision of this point, which must represent our supreme object. Our first interest and our first duty is therefore to enlighten ourselves on that point on which all our conduct depends. And this is why, among those who are not convinced, I see a very big difference between those who work with all their might to understand, and those who live without worrying about it and without thinking about it¹.

Ours distinguishes people not on the basis of faith, but according to the criterion of doubt that leads to research. The question of the soul is so important in his opinion that not being interested in it is inhuman. Ultimately, however, it is

*Independent Researcher of Religious Sciences, Italy.

¹Blaise Pascal, *Thoughts*, chap. III, n. 114.

easy to overlook the terms, even by professing any faith in an uncritical way, imposed by fear or submission to an authority that foresees it as an order.

The ordeal can be more authentic even than the goal in front of you: it demonstrates that living in a fully human way never precludes taking on the vitality of the soul as a prerequisite for life as such. The horizon to which Pascal turns his gaze, in fact, does not end in the current world, which is only relatively capable of happiness. To breathe deeply he must know that he can count on eternity.

While dealing with eternity and the soul, the philosopher suggests a method for dealing with unbelief, and an approach for winning unbelievers to conversion. He rejects the acrimony of invectives, blame, the sharp weapons of terror and threats. With a style original for his times, he rejects the possibilities offered by traditional apologetics. He is not interested in stating a thesis, demonstrating its goodness, belittling his opponents, attacking their insufficiency and ignorance. He focuses attention on the truly human substance. Uncertainty is presented as a constitutive condition of the human being. Welcoming it, absorbing it, living with it represent just as many possibilities of taking charge of it. Delegating everything to certainty, whether it comes from a fearful faith or from the total denial of the presence of God in history, are two sides of the same coin, expressions of being immature and presumptuous at the same time. Pascal provokes man to the need to provide for the soul, foreseeing its eternity and thus guaranteeing its happiness. This result can only be experienced by living in the Eternal, which he identifies as God. Giving the soul a chance requires that it be expected to support that God is present and at work continuously in history. The optimal outcome is achieved by those who doubt, search and research, appropriate the faith and live it in the certainty of eternal life in paradise. However, anyone who is committed to research is worthy of consideration and is following a path towards the possibility of full happiness.

Therefore, the soul necessarily matters to anyone who really cares about guaranteeing themselves authentic and lasting happiness. The care of the soul is accompanied by the commitment to research, and, if unavoidable, by living with the precariousness of doubt.

To fully and authentically draw on this experience, however, a leap of the soul is necessary. The starting point is represented by the ability to clearly distinguish happiness from pleasure. Pleasure takes on an ambiguous physiognomy in Pascal, in which the human being ends up becoming passive, losing self-control. In this regard, the comparison that the philosopher establishes between pleasure and pain is illuminating:

It is not shameful to man to yield to pain, and it is shameful to yield to pleasure. This is not because pain comes from without us, while we seek pleasure, for we may seek pain, and yield to it willingly without this kind of baseness. How comes it then that reason finds it glorious in us to yield under the assaults of pain, and shameful to yield under the assaults of pleasure? It is because pain does not tempt and attract us. We ourselves choose it voluntarily, and will that it have dominion over us. We are thus masters of the situation, and so far man yields to himself, but in pleasure man yields

to pleasure. Now only mastery and empire bring glory, and only slavery causes shame².

Happiness, however, is a more stable condition, which the individual achieves by following his own path. It is a path that cannot be traveled in the name of another. It is achieved by accepting as one's own the presupposition of faith, for which the definitive point of reference is not constituted by oneself and what causes pleasure, but by the evangelical indications. In this way one can become happy, even by despising oneself, by pursuing the One in whom everything receives meaning and value, God who became man in Jesus. The pleasure/ happiness combination, therefore, is more complex than it seems, it builds one's relationship on the basis of faith, logic and personal adherence. Pleasure has enormous value, as it reflects the depth of faith itself. The complacent human being will never be able to place it in succession, but always as the culmination of his spiritual journey and the foundation of all the other dimensions of life. His reasoning also represents a way in which pleasure, happiness and faith relate to each other in a coherent and harmonious way.

Courage in Nothingness

Pascal's train of thought on the matter is free from any naivety. All human beings want to be happy, so they have no reason, theoretically, to deny its fulfillment by affirming the existence of God and the immortality of the soul. If, however, they are unable to submit to the yoke of imperious and frightening homiletics, they find themselves faced with an alternative that is not at all easy, which involves the comparison with the nothingness that they are, since in fact they know nothing at all about either God or the soul and to the end they cannot reason about it, since

The conduct of God, who disposes everything with sweetness, is to place religion in the intellects through reason, and in the hearts through grace³.

No human faculty contains within itself the ability to combine itself with religion with satisfaction. In fact, reason investigates it with its own means, but the heart also needs its answers. Human beings are thus naturally led to think critically about eternal questions, but they also feel the need to abandon themselves to them with confidence, through emotional involvement. Both dimensions manifest the characteristics of necessity. Each is called to follow a certain path, remaining attentive to the relationship with the other variable, in order to obtain an integral harmonious balance. The difficult journeys faced, even before the destination, put one in close contact with nothingness and regularly remind us of the human insufficiency with respect to the satisfaction of the thirst that he feels and which in

²Blaise Pascal, Thoughts, chap. II, n. 93.

³Blaise Pascal, Thoughts, chap. III, n. 110.

any case he must have the courage not to silence even by quenching it with illusory drinks and by limited effect.

If the human condition is nothing, Pascal recognizes it as the great distinctive feature of the search for God. The soul in fragility turns towards the Eternal, even if there is an almost incomprehensible drama recognizable in indifference. Human beings can also be disinterested in God and not take charge of the search for truth. In this case, we are dealing with a very modern man, even close to the anguished depths of postmodernity, or, even before that, to twentieth-century existentialism.

Pascal, however, evaluates the condition of isolated man with respect to speculative metaphysical themes in a substantially negative framework, as if disconnected from his most authentic and profound instance. He does not foresee that there can be a search for truth detached from the tension towards the divine.

The deciding factor between the two options is indicated over time by Pascalian logic. Human experience takes place in the temporal dimension, it is circumscribed by it. Blaise Pascal sees the fragment as a limit in this. And he points to the great horizon in eternity, into which the human inevitably flows. To fully dedicate oneself to it, it is therefore necessary to focus one's attention not on what is fleeting, but on God. This task is suited to man and is, therefore, right. The opposite attitude is unfair:

... I find it necessary to point out the injustice of men who live in indifference in seeking the truth of something that is so important to them, and which affects them so closely. Of all their deviations, it is undoubtedly this which most proves their folly and blindness, and in this it is easiest to confuse them with the simplest reflections of common sense and with the feelings of nature. Because there can be no doubt that the time of this life lasts only a moment, while the condition of death is eternal, whatever its nature may be; and that, consequently, all our actions and thoughts must take very different paths according to the condition of this eternity; that it is impossible to take a step with common sense and judgment if it is not regulated in relation to this point, which must be our ultimate goal. There is nothing more evident; and therefore, according to the principles of religion, the conduct of men is wholly unreasonable, unless they take another course. Let us therefore judge from here those who live without thinking of this ultimate end of life, who allow themselves to be carried away by their inclinations and their pleasures without second thoughts and without anxiety, and, as if they could annul eternity by diverting their thoughts from it, they only aim to live happily in this moment. However, this eternity exists, and death, which is its beginning and which threatens them at every moment, must infallibly put them shortly into the horrible necessity of being eternally either annihilated or unhappy, without them knowing which of these eternities is prepared for them, forever⁴.

It is curious that the Author encourages us to seek God, not thinking of paradise, of eternal life, but of death, a clear emblem of misery and the total absence of meaning with respect to human life. It is also very interesting that he clearly underlines what, in his opinion, the main purpose of humanity is:

⁴Blaise Pascal, *Thoughts*, chap. III, n. 115.

live happily in this moment

If we think about the current success of the many philosophies of well-being of our times, of the most common applications of Eastern philosophies, of stoicism put to good use in the serenity of the 21st century, of meditation techniques, of the diffusion of mindfulness protocols, all these fruitful schools of wisdom do nothing but facilitate the exercise of concentration of man, of woman, on the present moment, not allowing themselves to be dragged into memory, not projecting themselves into the uncertain not yet, but deepening what is there, here and now.

For Pascal, however, this is the testimony of injustice, the failure to respect the only balance capable of freeing man from the senselessness of nothingness and eternal death.

If even a God is contemplated, therefore, he requires the collaboration of man, who, despite his fragility, weighs thanks to his own intellect and the orientation of the heart. A particular humanism nestles in such a perception. It is not just a question of metaphysics and theology, for the human being it is a question of appropriating in depth a way of relating to one's own finitude, to expand it until reaching the infinite. Therefore, it is possible for him, for her, to overcome death by setting out on the trail of what is not mortal and which leads man himself back to the depths of himself.

The characteristic of human life is identified in death: this retrospectively instills in everything else the sense of an inevitable condemnation, which reduces man to the condition of a prisoner.

Faith as Affirmation

While noting the absurdity of the human being who more or less falsely ignores his own destiny, Pascal makes a digression in the direction of faith. Human beings can accept it or not. He does not welcome her and delivers her to a world of denial:

If I saw nothing that indicated a Divinity, I would resolve to deny; if I saw the signs of a Creator everywhere, I would rest peacefully in faith⁵.

Both options are put in hypothetical form. Faith is associated with peace, while its absence, indirectly explained as an inability to recognize the signs of divinity, is equated with denial. Its presence is therefore an affirmation. The philosopher admits that he finds himself in a dramatic limbo that makes him feel like he is divided in half between the two possibilities. To overcome this distressing uncertainty he invokes God, he essentially chooses a path of trust, which acclaims him as a believer, however tormented by doubts. He only knows how to be a believer in this way. He admits that he observes with envy those who enjoy the gift of faith, but experience it with indifference. Therefore, faith alone is not

⁵Blaise Pascal, *Thoughts*, chap. III, n. 131.

enough to overcome the miserable dimension that distances the finite being from himself. Pascal would like to be able to believe with certainty, but at the same time he desires a faith that is far from habituation. Many times not even sermons communicate as much fervor!

Faith is a powerful remedy in its philosophical reading: it performs a function, it is useful. In itself it has no more value than its opposite. It is a precious instrument, as it emancipates man from nothingness, frees him from eternal death, opening him to God. This, in turn, is destined to reflect the same destiny of faith. Intuited in its essence, it remains suspended in terms of definitions. Pascal's torment is reconciled in the admission that God exists, similarly to how the intellect intuits the infinite, even though it cannot characterize it. Knowing that God exists, tolerating not knowing how. Such a statement excludes or in any case strongly compromises faith understood as a relationship, a dimension so close to postmodern sensitivity. The believer is left with invocation, praise, submission, he is in total subordination.

Aware of the limits, Pascal urges us to accept the possibility of God as a bet, inserting him into future predictions, of which it is impossible to calculate whether they will actually be realized and how. We plan tomorrow's day, but we are not sure whether we have enough life to go through it, nor how it will go in reality, yet we conceive it in our thoughts, we take care of its development. Similarly, it is healthy to welcome God as the same bet. What are the reasons behind this exhortation?

First of all, Pascal underlines the ability to discern the signs of the divine in the universe as an entirely human sensitivity to recognize and interpret differences, escaping the danger of being swallowed up by indifference.

Secondly, this fully valorized hypothesis allows the human being the most important victory regarding his ultimate destiny, which certainly faces death. The believer, beyond any evidence more or less validated by the intellect, does not lower his head in the face of the mockery of nothingness, anguish and definitive defeat. A different horizon imposes itself, which, even before theology, metaphysics, the idea of God, takes care of the entirely human meaning of life and gives it a body for eternity.

In constitutive doubt Pascal chooses to lean in favor of faith and Christian faith, since he recognizes that the advantages of believing far outweigh the disadvantages of incomplete certainty and physiological ignorance.

It is partly an existentialist discourse, partly it seems utilitarian, partly it rushes into mysticism and embraces it decisively.

Conclusion

Returning to the starting question, that is, why a person's life changes, based on the hypothesis of the existence of God, we can conclude with some reflections.

Live as if God exists
Living as if God didn't exist

These are the two possible paths, one excludes the other, each of the two carries fundamental consequences in the present and for the future and cannot be retracted.

Pascal connects every possible positive outcome for human life to the concept of God. He considers his essence necessary with respect to the existence of man. He's not interested in it, though, as a topic in its own right. Instead, he starts from the human being and his desire to be happy. The only way is to get around nothing. Leading an existence that simply ends with death is comparable to the condition of the condemned, already with chains on his feet. The idea of God accepted, even as a bet, internally frees the finite being and therefore hurls him towards what he or she does not know, because he or she cannot have the capacity for it.

In some ways Pascal presents an honest recipe for well-being, in which he does not linger behind logical, ontological proofs, all of which are relatively satisfactory, in the best of cases. Focus on what concerns each one closely. Believing in God responds to anguish, fear, the loss of the meaning of life. It gives you strength, opens you up to what you don't know, exactly like many of the choices and actions that everyone faces over time.

For himself he gives proof of faith, when he mentions the signs to be deciphered, capable of articulating the language of God, his will, his plan. This idea also frees the cosmos from chaos and chance to safeguard it in a superior choice ennobled by finality. It's like running with a goal. There is a path between the start and the finish. Knowing or even just intuiting that the goal exists and that an approach is possible changes the runner's spirit, makes him feel motivated, valued, and sets his pace.

Pascal's God's Wager, criticized from many quarters, including by his contemporaries, emerges today with renewed interest. It does not force mathematical logic, it does not delude itself that the tools of different sciences can be confused and thus be useful. He looks at the result, he takes charge of the indistinct fear that inhabits the human being. And it shows him in himself the redemption from indifference in reading the signs and in the willingness to face the bet as a leap. He invites you to get involved and also to involve yourself in a sort of mantra capable of configuring a different reality:

God exists, I'm fine.

God exists, I make the difference.

God exists, his signs of love surround me.

Transcendental meditation, self-help, positive affirmations for meditating move along a path already traced by much more than utilitarianism, by philosophical genius at the service of everyday life.

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Is Classical Music Superior to Pop Music? On the Structure of the Evaluation of Music

By Johannes Wirtz*

The question whether classical music is superior to pop music is discussed in everyday life, it is socially relevant regarding funding issues, and it is debated in the philosophy of music. The aim of this paper is to lay out the general structure of the evaluation of music and to show how classical music is superior to pop music. Its four main points are:

- (1) Musical works/styles/genres can be evaluated comparatively if we presuppose a purpose that is pursued with listening to that music.*
- (2) A musical work is more suitable for a purpose than another musical work because of their musical properties and because of the properties of the listener.*
- (3) A purpose of listening to music is the mirroring of the listener's personality. With regard to this purpose, classical music is more suitable than pop music.*
- (4) Classical music is suitable for this purpose because it is sufficiently complex and it is ideally listened to in a focused manner.*

Keywords: *aesthetics of music, evaluation of music, instrumentalism, aesthetic value, aesthetic relativism*

Introduction

Is classical music superior to pop music? Outside academia, the widespread opinion is that there are no differences in the quality of musical works. However, this view is at odds with current practice, in which the quality of musical works or performers is passionately debated. Furthermore, schools and music academies in Europe follow a curriculum that is centered on classical music roughly between 1700 and 1900. Instrument instruction also has its focus here. For a long time, this focus was based on a social consensus about the value of classical music, which no longer exists. Finally, the question of the evaluation of music plays a role in the philosophical discussion of the aesthetics of music. The latter must not be considered closed.

The paper's aim is twofold: *Firstly*, it will outline a general framework which allows to evaluate musical works comparatively. *Secondly*, it will be shown that works of classical music are generally superior to works of pop music if the purpose of listening is to gain deeper self-knowledge and to develop one's own personality.

At the beginning of the paper, an overview of the literature relevant to the discussion is provided. Then it will be clarified what is meant by classical music and pop music. In the main part, my approach to the evaluation of musical works is presented. It will then be shown how works of classical music may be

*Teacher, Gymnasium, Erzbischöfliche Ursulinenschule Hersel, Germany.

considered superior to works of pop music. Finally, some central objections are discussed.

Literature Review

The question whether classical music is superior to pop music has been addressed in recent papers. James O. Young (Young 2016) attributes a higher quality to classical music, as it has more means of expression. This wealth of expression is largely due to its complex and functional harmony. Young grounds his claim empirically. Because of the richness of expression, classical music has a psychological depth that pop music only rarely achieves. Stephen Davies (Davies 1999) starts from a debate between Bruce Baugh and James O. Young (Baugh 1993, Young 1995, Baugh 1995). Baugh argues that rock music and classical music each have their own criteria of evaluation. Davies reaches the opposite conclusion.

I follow Young in attributing greater expressiveness to classical music. My approach goes beyond Young, however, as I explicate the instrumental structure of music evaluation that he only hints at. Like Baugh, I believe that different evaluative criteria should be applied to different genres and styles of music. However, my approach also turns against Baugh by laying out a higher-order general structure in the evaluation of musical works.

The question whether classical music is superior to pop music also touches on the debate about the “evaluation of music”. It deals with the way in which musical works can be evaluated comparatively. Jerrold Levinson (Levinson 1996) assumes that listening to music can have intrinsic value. The quality of this listening experience is measured in three dimensions. (1) How rewarding is it to follow the formal structures of music? (2) How rewarding is its expressive content? (3) How rewarding is the connection between expression and formal structures? According to Stephen Davies (Davies 2005), the aim of evaluating music is to recommend which works should be learned, performed, or listened to. Davies takes an instrumentalist approach, where ultimately music is a means to the end of hedonic pleasure. Music can serve many purposes. However, Davies emphasizes that we should approach it with aesthetic interest. We do so when we understand musical works as individual solutions to formal problems as posed by forms such as the symphony or the concerto. The quality of musical works is therefore measured by their unique solution to formal problems. According to Theodore Gracyk (Gracyk 2011), there is a purely aesthetic evaluation of music. Musical works are a means of achieving aesthetic reward. Aesthetic reward has intrinsic value. Gracyk discusses various evaluation principles, but concludes that these are of heuristic value, if at all. He does not provide a model for how musical works should be evaluated. According to Alan Goldman (Goldman 2011), listening to music can have intrinsic value. The value does not consist in using musical works for therapeutic or community-building purposes. Rather, we appreciate and evaluate their formal structure and logical development, but also their expressive qualities.

I agree with the above authors that musical works should be judged comparatively. Evaluating music is not a matter of identifying the best or ideal musical work, but

of determining whether one musical work is better than another. My position differs from that of the authors in that I do not assume an intrinsic value of musical works or the listening experience. Furthermore, I do not regard musical works as a means for a particular kind of aesthetic pleasure or reward. Nevertheless, I advocate an instrumentalist approach according to which we must evaluate musical works by whether they serve as a means to an end, such as dancing or deeper self-knowledge.

Evaluating Music Instrumentally

To begin with, we need to clarify what is meant by classical music and pop music. Classical music is understood as the canon of Western art music from the Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, Romantic and Impressionist periods, i.e. the masterpieces of composers such as Palestrina, Vivaldi, Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Wagner, Mahler, and Debussy. The music of the Middle Ages and modernist music (*Neue Musik*) are excluded for the sake of simplicity. Pop music is understood as widespread musical works that have been created since around the 1950s and can be found in genres such as rock'n'roll, beat, rock, folk, funk, reggae, punk, metal, hip hop, house, and techno. Jazz music and the traditions of non-Western music play no role in the following considerations (similarly Young 2016: 523f).

The question whether classical music is superior to pop music can be put more concretely: Is a specific work of classical music superior to a specific work of pop music? My approach is that differences in the quality of musical works can be identified if we understand musical works as means to certain ends. The quality of musical works can thus be evaluated based on their suitability for the purpose. The purpose is “extra-musical” and not a form of aesthetic reward. The structure of the evaluation of music can be put as follows:

Musical work m^1 with the properties p^{m1} is more suitable for the purpose z for listener l with the properties p^l than musical work m^2 with the properties p^{m2} .

This structure of the evaluation of music will now be illustrated using an example from military music. Military music is functional music. Its being music for a purpose should be uncontroversial. It is claimed that the *Dessauer Marsch* is more suitable for motivating soldiers to march than Ed Sheeran's song *Photograph*. The variables are shown as a list and their content will only be sketched.

- m^1 : *Dessauer Marsch*
- p^{m1} : clear rhythm, tempo 100bpm, form in 8-beat pattern throughout, instrumentation with marching band, major key, emphasis on the heavy beats in the melody
- l : soldiers
- p^l : tired, unmotivated, lacking combative spirit
- z : awaken the soldiers' combative spirit/triumphant feeling, march in step, make the marching tempo felt
- m^2 : Ed Sheeran *Photograph*
- p^{m2} : Tempo 110bpm, major key, instrumentation with acoustic guitar, piano, sparse chords, calm vocals, syncopated melody

The suitability of a march compared to a love song for the purpose of marching may come as no surprise. However, the juxtaposition illustrates which musical characteristics— p^{m1} and p^{m2} —make the *Dessauer March* suitable for marching in comparison to *Photograph*. Of course, the variables could be fleshed out in more detail, but our focus is the structure of musical evaluation. In the same way, examples could be given from other contexts in which functional music is typically used. Think of music in commercials, dance music, film music or music at a dinner party.

Next, the variables are commented on.

Musical work m^n : There are contexts in which the comparison of genres, styles, epochs or the entire music of a composer or performer may be useful. For example, a restaurant owner may wonder whether funk or house music is more suitable for the champagne reception of a wedding party.

Properties of musical work p^m : The properties of a musical work are those properties that can be attributed to the work on the basis of the score, the recording or the digital production, e.g. melody, harmony, rhythm, tempo, instrumentation, but also voicings, beat, riffs, sounds, or digital tools used.

Listener l : Often we listen to music together. The appropriateness of musical works can depend on the purposes of all listeners. For the sake of simplicity, no distinction is made in the structural sentence between a single listener and multiple listeners. For the sake of simplicity, we also assume that music is listened to. Performing or composing music is excluded from our considerations.

Properties of the listener p^l : The term “properties” is used in a broad sense. These can be psychological states such as feelings, fears, or desires, but also physical characteristics such as fitness, physical condition, or appearance. Age, gender, or relationship status may also play a role, depending on the context. Think of the music in commercials.

Purpose z : People often do not explicitly pursue any goals when they listen to music. Nevertheless, they find some musical works more suitable than others. The purpose must then be assumed in the sense that none of the people involved consciously decided on the purpose. Furthermore, the purpose is often not set by the listeners themselves, but by others. Think of military music, music in commercials, or music in restaurants. For the sake of simplicity, no distinction is made between one or more purposes. Finally, there is a difference between listening to music on the car radio, in the stadium or while cooking. The context of listening to music could also be represented as a variable on its own but is considered here as part of the variable of purpose.

Classical Music as a Mirror of Personality

The purpose-oriented evaluation of musical works may be uncontroversial in the case of functional music. But how can this method of evaluation help us in the case of art music, which does not appear to be functional? The approach taken here assumes that we can also pursue purposes in listening to classical art music.

The proposed structure for evaluating musical works can be applied to our question concerning a possible superiority of classical music over pop music.

Depending on the purpose one seeks to realize, different “value hierarchies” of musical works can be formed. With regard to many dance styles, pop music is certainly more suitable than classical music. Nevertheless, classical music is superior to pop music for at least one purpose. This purpose is to mirror one’s own personality. We can listen to music to hold up a mirror to ourselves, to parts of our personality. And this can contribute to a deeper understanding of ourselves. By engaging with music, we can explore, develop, and shape our personality.

What does this mean? By personality I mean enduring cognitive and emotional characteristics of people, e.g. longings, fears, goals, or ideals. This concept of personality is largely the same as personality concepts from personality psychology (Larsen/ Buss 2018: 4-10; Schütz/Rüdiger/Rentzsch 2016: 17-21). Roughly speaking, the idea of mirroring one’s own personality is that we like music that expresses our personality traits or enables us to experience them. In this sense, an aggressive person would like aggressive music and a balanced person would like balanced music. It should be emphasized, however, that longings are also understood as part of the personality. The idea of mirroring one’s own personality should therefore not be understood in the narrow sense that music we like is always a copy of our personality traits. Even a person who is reserved and introverted can enjoy energetic and aggressive music, for example because they feel a longing to break out of their restraint.

To elaborate these ideas, in (1) and (2) I will discuss some everyday phenomena that suggest a connection between the music we like and our personality. In (3) to (5) it will then be argued that classical music is particularly well-suited to realize said purpose.

(1) *A judgment of taste is something personal.* Imagine a guy named Agamemnon claiming at a party that *Shake It Off* by Taylor Swift is of inferior quality. His friend Clytemnestra then exclaims indignantly that it is her favorite piece. It is likely that she is personally affected by Agamemnon’s verdict. Let us now imagine that Agamemnon had instead claimed that spaghetti Bolognese is a truly awful meal. Clytemnestra would be less concerned, even if it were her favorite dish. This everyday phenomenon shows that musical taste is personal in the sense that it often affects our personality. This applies regardless of whether we prefer classical music or pop music.

(2) *»Happening« of liking.* Whether we like music or not happens to us. We hear a piece of music and spontaneously think: “Oh, that’s beautiful!” It takes hold of us and we have a good feeling. We cannot decide on whether we like this piece of music or not. Some pieces of music we only like on a warm summer evening because they reflect, underline, and reinforce the atmosphere of that evening. We like other pieces of music for decades and this liking matures the more we listen to them. This may be because we associate these musical works with a certain event or a certain period in our lives. But that is not always the case. One way of explaining this phenomenon is the approach taken here. Musical works can mirror parts of our personality. They express something, allow us to experience something, or have a structure that corresponds to our personality. It is obvious

that it is a pleasurable feeling if we assume that music expresses or allows us to experience psychological states that we long for. For example, when listening to Wagner's music, we may have the experience of a heroic effort of deep meaning. If we feel a longing for this in our less heroic everyday lives, this experience gives us pleasure. Contrary to the position taken here, Alex King (2022) reconstructs the experience of aesthetic liking as a weighing up of aesthetic reasons. In my opinion, this fundamentally contradicts our everyday experience.

The purpose of holding up a mirror to our own personality and thus understanding ourselves better can be pursued with any music that we like in the long run. For example, Diomedes may be a great *Rammstein* fan. This could mirror his longing for a certain form of archaic masculinity. It is therefore not disputed that the purpose of mirroring one's own personality can be achieved with pop music. However, it is claimed that classical music is generally more suitable for achieving this purpose.

(3) *The language of emotions.* Music has repeatedly been described as the language of emotions. Personally, I think this description is too narrow, as music can express not only feelings, but also the atmosphere of a situation, attitudes, actions, physical or psychological movements and much more. This can be seen in the vocabulary we use to describe music. For example, music is aggressive, gentle, serious, joyful, exuberant, athletic, moving, strict, dramatic, rational, boring, unsteady, torn, calm, restrained, hectic, or heavy. For our task, however, it suffices to say that music—and even purely instrumental music—can have a content that is sufficiently subtle and complex to mirror one's own personality. This does not mean that instrumental music can express specific situations such as “Medea is an aggressive person who threatens Jason with a knife”. However, it is claimed that music can express aggression and threat or that it can allow us to experience them. The view that music expresses content is not synonymous with the view that music makes content experienceable or “sympathetic”. Roger Scruton (1997: 343-368) takes the latter position. I use both phrases as they are equally compatible with my approach. We can feel pleasure when we attribute to Wagner's music the expression of heroic exertion. But we can also feel pleasure when Wagner's music allows us to experience such feelings or to be sympathetic to them.

The approach, on the other hand, is not compatible with an extremely formalistic position, such as that of Eduard Hanslick. Roger Scruton has rightly pointed out that Hanslick's formalism is inconsistent. Thus Hanslick speaks of the content of music as “sounding forms that move” (»tönend bewegte Formen«, Hanslick 1966: 59). However, since music does not move in the literal sense, Hanslick uses a metaphor here and thus already ascribes a content to it (Scruton 1997: 340-342). The fact that the approach taken here is not compatible with extreme formalist positions is therefore of little consequence if one follows Scruton's rejection. However, the approach is compatible with musical works that do not express specific feelings, as might be the case with some Bach fugues. The position is also compatible with a formalist attitude to listening. I will discuss this further below.

Music can have a content and this content is to be found in the sphere of experience, of “how something feels”, of longings, feelings, atmosphere, moods, or movements in a broad sense. This field of content is one that we also associate

with an individual's personality. It is not claimed that an individual's personality is limited to this, but simply that, for example, long-lasting desires or feelings make up a central part of the personality. There are also "propositional" parts of the personality that music might be less suitable for mirroring, such as political convictions or values that can be expressed in sentences, e.g.: "Hera is convinced that spouses should remain faithful to each other."

Classical music is often not composed as functional music. And even if a specific piece was written for a specific purpose, such as Bach's Passions, it is not usually listened to today as functional music. This is possible because it is not limited to its function. Atheists or believers of other religions can also listen to Bach's Passions with reward. The reason lies in the expressive richness of classical music. The content of classical musical works is often so deep that it can easily be detached from its original functional context and listened to as "art music". This is less the case for popular music. It is often composed for the purpose of remaining in the background, whether, for example, as pop music in the narrower sense on the car radio or as house music in the club. The content of pop music is less deep because of its function. As background music, for example, it should not capture and fill the listener's attention, but leave room for other social or individual activities. Or it is meant to express clear feelings unambiguously. The depth and richness of expression of classical music is one reason why it is generally better suited to mirroring the personality of the listener than pop music.

(4) *Complexity*. One "formal" reason for the expressive depth and richness of many classical musical works lies in their complexity. This can be demonstrated by many musical dimensions, such as harmony, rhythm, dynamics, polyphony, form (e.g. musical sentence and period, sonata form, rondo, symphony, concerto), melody (e.g. thematic transformation), and instrumentation. Young (2016) demonstrates this in detail for the dimension of harmony and more briefly for tempo, measure and rhythm. There are counterexamples for each of these dimensions. This means that there are individual works of pop music that are more complex in one or the other dimension. Nevertheless, it is probably uncontroversial that classical music as a whole is by far more complex than pop music. The fact that the development of works of classical music is more difficult to anticipate than that of works of pop music also contributes to their greater complexity. This complexity leads to many possibilities of musical expression. Personalities are also highly complex entities. The mirroring of aspects of our personality in a musical work is more likely to be successful if the musical work has a similar or higher degree of complexity than our personality. Of course, I am not claiming that a person's entire personality is mirrored in a single work, but only some aspects of their personality. The more superficial aspects of our personality may be mirrored in a pop song. The more profound ones require more complex musical works with more subtle expressive capacities.

(5) *Listening attitude*. Today, the historically evolved attitude to listening in classical music differs from that in other forms of music. Ideally, listeners sit completely still in front of the performers, such as an orchestra or a string quartet. They do not talk to their neighbors during the performance, they do not eat, they do not pursue other activities at the same time. These rules of conduct when

listening to classical music aim to ensure that one can concentrate fully on the music as an individual without distraction.

Firstly, the aspect of listening without distraction: The complexity of classical music makes it necessary to deal with only the music. Any kind of secondary occupation results in not grasping the music in its complexity. The fact that this ideal has been formed indicates that grasping this complexity is not only intended for music nerds but is seen as a central feature of successful listening to classical music. This ideal of listening has created the possibility for composers of classical music to create complex works and the audience's expectation to listen to such works.

Secondly, the aspect of listening as an individual: You engage with classical works of music on your own, as an individual. If the ideal of classical music reception has been described correctly, it is irrelevant whether you attend a concert together or alone. The engagement with the content of classical music happens as an individual. Many other styles of music can only be adequately experienced as a group. The various forms of dance music are experienced as a couple, as an organized dance group or as a disorderly crowd. Many forms of pop music are listened to as background music. Concerts of pop music have always been a mass event in which the audience does not sit still, but moves, talks, screams, or sings along.

To summarize, we can complete the variables of the structure of the evaluation of music:

Classical music with the properties of depth of expression and high complexity is more suitable for the listener l with the properties of concentrated listening and for the purpose of mirroring l 's personality than pop music with the properties of clear expression and lower complexity.

Objections

Aesthetic Relativism

The idea of evaluating musical works instrumentally contradicts Kant's famous thesis that an aesthetic perception of works of art is "disinterested" (Kant 1974: 117). More recent authors in this tradition of philosophical aesthetics speak of an "aesthetic interest", which is to be distinguished from all other "profane" interests or purposes (Davies 2005: 206). Thus, Stephen Davies opposes an instrumentalist approach to the evaluation of musical works that assumes many equally legitimate purposes. His contention is as follows: Assume that an evaluation can only be made in relation to certain purposes. Then musical work m^1 can be more suitable for some purpose than musical work m^2 . Relative to another purpose, however, m^2 may be more suitable than m^1 . If two listeners disagree about the value of a musical work, then they cannot agree unless they are pursuing the same purpose. According to Davies, this unfortunate situation can only be dealt with by designating a specific purpose as essential. This outstanding purpose is the "aesthetic interest" that we take in a musical work. Furthermore, an instrumentalist

approach supposedly leads to radical aesthetic relativism or subjectivism, which eliminates the rational basis for any evaluation of musical works (Davies 2005: 198). In the following six points, I will argue that a multitude of value hierarchies is unproblematic and that we can therefore dispense with the assumption of a vague “aesthetic interest”.

(1) In most cases, we agree on what purpose we want to pursue with a musical work. If we do not agree, many discussions or conflicts about the value of a musical work can still be resolved by pointing out the conflicting purposes that are pursued.

(2) In real life, musical works are not used for an infinite number of purposes, but only for a few, such as dancing, marching, relaxing, distracting or creating an atmosphere conducive to conversation. In everyday life, there is no radical relativism or subjectivism. The danger seems rather to be theoretical.

(3) If we want to create a unified hierarchy of musical works, we have to introduce differences in the value of the purposes or activities listed. This does not seem to be promising. Should rowing be more valuable in principle than dancing, or *vice versa*? We might distinguish between activities in which music is the servant of other practices and activities in which listening is of central importance. But again, it is *prima facie* not clear why dancing to music should be less valuable than concentrated listening.

(4) Furthermore, we should reflect on the function of evaluating music. We want to make recommendations with comparative judgments (Davies 2005: 196). These often-implicit recommendations are sometimes made for a specific purpose, e.g.: “When I go for a run, I always listen to Metallica.” Or: “Chet Baker’s music is really relaxing for dinner.” On the other hand, we seem to make recommendations for no particular purpose: “Chopin’s *Nocturne No. 1* is my absolute favorite piece.” Or: “Beethoven’s early piano sonatas are not quite as good as his late ones.” In my opinion, these seemingly purpose-free evaluations are to be understood as ellipsis. The purpose is not explicitly formulated. This means neither that the purpose pursued in these cases must be an aesthetic interest, nor that it must lie in the mirroring of one’s own personality. In many cases, it will be “mundane”, such as relaxing or creating a good mood.

(5) Incommensurable value hierarchies are to be evaluated differently in the field of aesthetics and in the field of morality. While in morality we sometimes need unified value hierarchies to resolve conflicts without violence, in aesthetics we can largely “get out of each other’s way”. A standard ethical example is the question of the morality of abortion. In this case, the fetus’ right to life and the mother’s right to self-determination are in conflict. We can only choose one or the other. On the other hand, if there is a conflict of musical taste, we can in most cases choose which musical work we want to listen to. Conflicts arise time and again, for example if the neighbor’s music is too loud. However, the quality of the music is hardly relevant when dealing with such conflicts. Instead, reference is made to excessive noise and the like.

(6) The presented approach does not imply that we can evaluate the quality of music “merely subjectively” if we want to remain rational at the same time. We can argue passionately and rationally about the quality of musical works.

However, the approach leaves room for “rational dissent”. Two disputing parties can disagree completely rationally about the value of a musical work if they assume different purposes. They can disagree even when assuming the same purpose, since the suitability of a musical work for a given purpose also depends on the weighting of various musical properties. If the purpose of listening to music is to mirror one’s own personality, there can be a rational dissent about the evaluation of musical works even if there is agreement about both the purpose pursued and the expressive content of the music. After all, we have different personalities.

Subjectivism

In the philosophical discussion on the evaluation of music, there is largely a consensus that evaluations can be undertaken. This is in striking contrast to the everyday view that the evaluation of musical works is completely “subjective” and that a generally binding, “objective” evaluation cannot be achieved. I will counter the subjectivist objection by pointing out to what extent my approach does justice to both subjectivist and objectivist “intuitions”.

The intuition of subjectivism is that the evaluation of music is subjective in at least three meanings of the word. (1) The evaluation of musical works cannot be justified objectively, in the sense of being generally comprehensible. (2) The evaluation of musical works varies from person to person. (3) The evaluation of music is something deeply personal. While the presented approach rejects (1), it does justice to (2) and (3). As we have seen, the fact that our evaluation of music differs from person to person does not speak against generally comprehensible evaluation criteria. Moreover, the fact that our taste in music is something deeply personal is due to the fact that one purpose of engaging with music can lie in mirroring one’s own personality.

The intuition of objectivism is (1) that it is possible to make generally comprehensible statements about the evaluation of music. Musical evaluation is not solely subjective in the sense of being random. (2) The evaluation of music depends on the properties of the work to be evaluated. It is therefore object-oriented. My approach is consistent with both intuitions. The evaluation of music is not just random but can be justified in a generally comprehensible way. However, it is dependent on purposes. Purposes are set by individuals and are in this sense something subjective. The evaluation of the adequacy of a musical work also depends on the properties of that work. With reference to the example of the march: the march must have a suitable tempo, suitable dynamics, suitable instrumentation and a suitable key in order to fulfill its purpose effectively.

The approach presented here also explains another phenomenon related to the evident subjectivity— i.e. individuality—of our musical taste: We can recognize music as good music without liking it. For instance, we can value the compositional quality of a musical work, appreciate its historical impact or recognize the adequacy of the musical means used in relation to the expression achieved. Nevertheless, it can happen to us that we do not like the work, that it does not carry us away, or does not speak to us. This is because we can rationally

justify the suitability of a musical work for its purpose on the basis of the structure of evaluation described above. At the same time, however, we can realize—just as rationally—that the piece does not concern us personally. The musical work does not offer a mirror of our personality and remains unsuitable for this purpose.

Intrinsic Value

In contrast to our instrumentalist approach, Roger Scruton believes that listening to masterpieces of music is an intrinsic value: “We speak of aesthetic value because there is aesthetic experience – the experience which arises when we attend to appearances ‘for their own sake’.” (Scruton 1997: 374)

Scruton’s view is of particular interest here, as he also assumes a close connection between music and personality: “[A]rt provides us with a means not merely to project our emotions outwards, but also to encounter ourselves *in* them.” (Scruton 1997: 348; italics in the original) “We encounter works of art as perfected icons of our felt potential, and appropriate them in order to bring form, lucidity, and self-knowledge to our inner life.” (Scruton 1997: 352)

These statements by Scruton suggest an instrumentalist approach, which he rejects, however. Scruton points to an analogy between listening to music and an Aristotelian ideal of friendship. Friendship is a value in itself. We do not treat another person as a friend if we primarily focus on our own advantage that may arise from the relationship. At the same time, a genuine friendship is beneficial, just think of a friend’s support in emergency situations (Scruton 1997: 375). Furthermore, Scruton illustrates this with the distinction between purpose and function. While a friendship can be functionally beneficial to a person, the benefit should not be the purpose that person is pursuing. The latter even endangers the friendship.

Analogies may illustrate a claim, but they do nothing to substantiate it. It has to be shown that the alleged analogy exists, and it can only be shown by justifying the relevant issues for both parts of the analogy. However, it is the relevant issue what the analogy seeks to substantiate. Scruton therefore speaks of using an analogy to “illustrate” his point (Scruton 1997: 375). His analogy has some weaknesses, though. If one of the “friends” in a “friendship” is constantly seeking their own advantage, even at the expense of the advantage of the other, then it is not friendship. However, if we listen to music with the purpose of holding up a mirror to our own personality, it is a legitimate and worthwhile way of listening to music. Furthermore, the distinction between purpose and function may make sense in the case of friendship. This is different in the case of the purpose of mirroring one’s own personality. If we consciously pursue this purpose, then the result, namely an improved knowledge of our own personality, is more likely to occur than if we “merely” follow the musical development.

It seems that the successful reception of classical music requires experience and even musical education. It takes many hours of concentrated study to understand the depth of expression in Beethoven’s piano sonatas. And it is possible that the reception will be more successful if one initially refrains from the purpose of mirroring one’s own personality and focuses the attention primarily on the

development of the subjects, for example. Our mental capacities are after all finite. However, it is not clear that improved self-knowledge can only be achieved by completely renouncing the pursuit of this purpose.

Another widespread concern, to which Scruton refers, is that an instrumentalist approach opens the door to the political exploitation of music (Scruton 1997: 374). This concern is historically understandable with regard to cultural policy in totalitarian regimes. However, it obviously throws the baby out with the bath water. Firstly, the purpose of mirroring one's own personality is not political. Secondly, it is hard to see why an instrumental approach to the aesthetics of music necessarily supports its political exploitation, given the multitude of purposes that can be pursued with music. The obsession with the intrinsic value of art in general and music in particular seems to be part of a Cold War worldview: On the one hand, free societies with free art that serves "only itself", on the other, socialism, in which art is subordinated to political directives.

Formalism

There is another objection to the purpose of mirroring one's own personality. According to this objection, this purpose presupposes that music has expressive qualities. The approach presented is therefore based on an expressivist conception of music. A formalistic understanding of music, by contrast, is not compatible with this purpose. My view is thus based on controversial assumptions that have been discussed since Hanslick, without one view being universally accepted (Hanslick 1966). To refute this objection, we will show that our purpose is compatible with both positions and that it can do justice to both. According to a formalist view, music has no expressive content at all, or at least has no advantage in this respect compared to natural languages. Music is rather a kind of play of forms like the arabesques of a tapestry (Hanslick 1966: 59-60). According to an expressivist view, music can express something. The phrase "the language of emotions" also conveys the view that music can describe inner states of the soul more precisely than natural languages. Both views are compatible with the purpose of mirroring one's own personality if we regard them not as assumptions about the nature of music, but as different, equally valid attitudes to listening. In the case of expressivism, this is obvious. If feelings and the like are expressed in music, then this expression can be used as a mirror to ourselves.

In the case of a formalistic approach to listening, this requires explanation. There is no denying that some people listen to music in a formalistic way and find it particularly pleasing. In this way we can follow the movement of different voices in a polyphonic work of the Renaissance, even without any theoretical knowledge. Or, with a little more knowledge of music theory, we can follow the entries of the different subjects in a Bach fugue as well as their augmentation, diminution, or inversion. Finally, we can consider the formal requirements of an instrumental concerto as a compositional problem and admire its solution in a piano concerto by Mozart (Davies 2005: 213-232).

Some people enjoy this way of listening very much, others less so, even if they have acquired the necessary knowledge and have an appropriately trained ear.

We have already mentioned one way of explaining this phenomenon. Music that we like in the long term mirrors our personality and this is also the cause of our liking it. People who particularly enjoy a formalistic way of listening probably have a tendency towards rationality, combinatorial problems, complex thought structures and the like. These are undeniably parts of their personalities, and these parts are mirrored in the music. The formalistic approach to listening is thus not only compatible with the purpose of mirroring one's own personality, but also explains why people find pleasure in such abstract plays of form.

Self-knowledge

It is an undeniable fact that we listen to musical works over and over again, often for years or even a lifetime. We always find pleasure in it, and this pleasure may increase after decades of listening to a work. This phenomenon has been explained above with reference to the close connection between our personality and the works of music we admire. However, it also raises an objection. Let us assume that the result of listening to music for the purpose of mirroring one's own personality is a kind of self-knowledge. This self-knowledge can be expressed in propositional sentences. For instance, if Patroclus listens to Wagner's music, he could summarize the result in the following sentence: "I have a longing for heroism with deep meaning."

The following objection is possible. Research or generating knowledge are often finite processes. Once Patroclus has found and articulated the knowledge, he can dispense with any further listening to Wagner's music. However, this contradicts the phenomenon described above. We hear the musical works we particularly appreciate again and again (Goldman 2011: 158). I will make four points in response to this objection.

(1) In contrast to some other fields of knowledge, self-knowledge does not appear to be a finite process. One of the reasons for this is that we are constantly changing. And listening to music plays a role in this. By engaging with music, we can not only recognize our personalities, but also develop and shape them. By listening to Wagner's music, Patroclus can experience what it feels like to accomplish great deeds with deep meaning. In dealing with this feeling, he can notice similarities and differences to other related feelings, such as the feeling of great responsibility.

(2) The interpretation of musical works is not a terminable process. As with other works of art, we can approach the meaning of a musical work hermeneutically, but we cannot determine it once and for all.

(3) The propositions that can be articulated as a result of listening to music should rather be regarded as hypotheses. Patroclus should therefore say: "I notice that I like Wagner's music. This may be because it expresses a feeling of heroic effort for a deeply meaningful cause. Maybe I feel a longing for such a feeling."

(4) We do not like most works of music for the rest of our lives. They only keep us busy for a while. This applies to classical works as well as pop music. This applies to masterpieces as well as trivial pieces. Sometimes musical works have told us everything that interests us after listening for a few times. We have learned a few things about ourselves but realize that this only has a superficial connection to our personality. Sometimes we have changed so much that the mirroring of our personality no longer takes place. We are then amazed that we valued a musical work so highly in the past. In these cases, we do and should indeed dispense with any further listening.

Identity

Pop music is generally better known for forming a sense of identity (*Identitätsstiftung*) than classical music. Listeners of classical music rarely dress in fan fashion nor do they form comprehensive subcultures. On the other hand, for example, metal fans have long been a subculture. More recently, Taylor Swift fans also define themselves in a subcultural manner. The identification with a musical style and the constitution of a lifestyle around it is one of the characteristics of youth culture that emerged with pop music, which can be traced back to Elvis Presley and the Beatles (Wicke 2017). The thesis that music can be used to mirror one's own personality is compatible with this. However, at first glance, classical music seems to play a subordinate role. I will address this objection in two points.

(1) Mirroring one's own personality is different from forming an identity with the help of music. Forming an identity is primarily aimed at creating a sense of belonging. Music is, then, not primarily a means of self-knowledge, but rather a means of establishing social belonging, community or distinction from others, such as the parents' generation. Nevertheless, the mirroring of one's own personality in music can play a role in creating this sense of belonging. People who do not like metal music will hardly decide to become part of the metal community.

(2) The purpose of mirroring one's own personality can also be pursued with the help of pop music. A passionate listener of Manowar's *Warriors of the World* is likely to have a propensity or longing for militarism and the personality traits associated with it. Nevertheless, I argue that classical music is generally better suited to this purpose than pop music. And this was discussed above for classical music with reference to its depth of expression and the special attitude of listening. Pop music, on the other hand, is often designed to express clear messages using simple means of expression or to function as background music. It is not usually listened to in a contemplative manner, but in a group or even a crowd. Singing and dancing along are expected behaviors in both a normative and descriptive sense.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to summarize the three most important results of the paper.

(1) A general structure of the evaluation of musical works, styles, and genres can be provided: Musical work/style/genre m^1 with the properties p^{m1} is more suitable for the purpose z for listener l with the properties p^l than musical work/style/genre m^2 with the properties p^{m2} .

(2) The superiority of classical music over pop music can be established by assuming the purpose of mirroring one's own personality. Applied to the structure of the evaluation of music, the following thesis can be justified: Classical music with the properties of depth of expression and high complexity is more suitable for the listener l with the properties of concentrated listening and for the purpose of mirroring l 's personality than pop music with the properties of clear expression and lower complexity.

(3) Our instrumentalist approach does not lead to radical aesthetic relativism or subjectivism, nor does it lead to political exploitation. Finally, it does not exclude a formalistic attitude towards listening.

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