

Topic 3
(18)

,Space is not in the subject,nor is the world in space, Heidegger,Being and time

ENTITLED OR NOT ENTITLED TO DEFINE?
(A QUESTION MARK REQUESTED BY HEIDEGGER)

Could we suspect existentialists of desperate measures in which concerns giving to humanity a complete autonomy?It is easy to suppose that and to consider that all their ambiguous questions are just meant to make us realize that there is nothing in our reality that doesn't depend on our conscience.But this particular Heideggerian assertion hangs a question mark on an hypothesis that we have long taken for granted...and that is:let's entertain our opinion on authentic selfhood while reconsidering elements that are to be found outside our comfort zone(in this case:our subjectivity).

Of the most famous description of space is attributable to Kant.In "Prolegomena"(the preparatory book for "Critique of pure reason"),more exactly in his second observation,he talks about the necessity of a clear distinction between objects and forms of our sensitive representation.Therefore,we needn't treat time and space as exterior elements,but as "instruments"that we use in order to get a phenomenological(in the way Kant understands the world of "phenomenon")representation of exterior elements.At a first look we might find that Kantian and Heideggerian perspectives on space are contradictory.In fact,both philosophers stress the fact that we can not identify neither our forms of sensitive representation(in Kantian view),nor large categories,such as space(in Heidegger's view),with us-as subjects.Of course,not having,or better said-not owning an absolute definition on them may be frustrating for human kind,not to mention for philosophers...but this doesn't allow us\them to imagine definitions and force the human kind "to swallow",as Russell would have said.Indeed,a hallucination is not an error but to form a judgement upon it-that's erroneous!

Before going further with the analysis of the existentialist conception on space,especially Heidegger's,I'm asking for permission to illustrate how Jorge Luis Borges envisaged space in his famous volume "The book of sand" and I'll point out the connection afterwards.

In his short novel called "Everything and Nothing" he presents a hypothetical meeting of Shakespeare with God and he specifies the temporal location as being "before or after death".Not that important to know when does it actually takes place because the main thesis of this short novel is that life requires a higher degree of relativity.After complaining to God that he lived all his life through his characters and that the only thing that he now asks from him is to give him his real oneself,God answers:"well,needn't you complain so much because I'm not myself either.Ever since I have created the world I live through you".I don't remember the complete quotation but I recall that Borges' novel ends with God's request to reconsider what he meant by real life and real world and what these concepts really mean.Space is not a given task to accomplish and that is why a complain about living too much in other person's place\space\shoes is not founded.After all,God does that too...

Now,coming back to Heidegger's version of space:as long as we are not entitled to state what is Ego,Existenz,Dasein,Bewusstsein(to state if it is a phenomenon or the unity of the stream of conscience-as Husserl said),how can we be so precise in affirming that some categories belong to our subject.The primary question in existentialism was about our capacity of talking about our subject or about things that belong to our subject.If we

were, indeed, identical with the unity of our stream conscience then talking about our ourselves both in their quality of individual essence and universal essence, as Husserl did, would mean to disapprove ourselves by treating our identities as object. That is also what Heidegger has to criticize on Husserl's phenomenology—the fact that he gives one of the less dogmatic definitions of man but does not continue his analysis in a descriptive way.

If we cannot afford to define world and space in terms of subjectivity, nor relate them with other subjects for they have a self-sufficient content to enable a full description, what are we then allowed to say! Wittgenstein would have asked: "what can we say that has meaning and signification?" What answer with meaning and signification does Heidegger require to his question? We can call it a question even though it doesn't have a question mark because saying that space is not in the subject, neither is world in space means that you have only pointed out an erroneous conception. Taking into consideration the way he usually constructs his questions (in "Sein und Zeit"/"Being and time") allow me to formulate a question for the present statement: how can we clear what space is reported to us if we are not entitled to say what we are reported to ourselves?

We can also find some interesting opinions on what is it and what isn't allowed for us to say in French existentialism. I won't stress on Camus' vision for it could be misleading. That is why I will just present to you his "proclamation": "I proclaim that everything in this world is absurd but I will not consider myself absurd for I will be treating human kind as objects. Human rebellion is the belief that we are not just another absurd objects". Still, you may ask why is it misleading? Because Camus' assertions are often considered as assertions of despair and anguish. But let us not forget that his hero is Sisyphus, the one who incessantly climbed his rock and never stopped fighting with the absurd situation. We could now consider as well the task of finding what is space or what is world as a motif for not giving up.

An even more clear perspective on space from an existentialist angle we take from Sartre's "Being and Nothingness". In his short story called "Pierre absent" he presents us a view on space and world that is very much similar to Heidegger's. To make a long story short and to show you why I found it relevant: Jacques has to meet his friend Pierre at the cafe. Pierre is not a very punctual person so the entire cafe's space is being reorganized by Jacques. Because Pierre doesn't show up at all other modifications appear. Heidegger would have called them "bewußtseinmodifikationen" in order to show what important effect have on our conscience things that happen around us.

While Sartre speaks of annihilation of the oneself through the absence of another one ("anéantissement d'être"), Heidegger continues in a way Kierkegaard's "existential synthesis"—that synthesis between infinity and finitude, temporal and eternity. He doesn't share Sartre's certitude that "être en soi" (being in itself) and "être pour soi" (being for oneself) are opposed to each other.

That is why we can consider space and time as things that happen around us and afford an objective, non-related to our ourselves conception (that would be facilitated to us by the infinity/eternal component of the synthesis) and, in the same time, to report space and time to our "being-in-the-world" (that is considered by Sartre in direct conflict with the "être en soi"/being in itself).

Many other existentialist philosophers treated this theme and some of them even offered to Heidegger an answer for his question in which concerns what can be said about us or about things that are reported to us as long as we don't have a direct access to ourselves. We can only observe our reaction towards what happens to us/around us. If time or world are, indeed, things that happen to us, that affect us (in the way Sartre points out in his famous "Pierre absent")...well, the most appropriate thing to do will be to get a more accurate representation of our reaction. The only access to ourselves and, therefore, to all those that are reported to us.

Not from cowardice, nor from self-sufficiency did Heidegger hang a question mark on such aspects as space and time (even though we agreed that it doesn't contain a real question mark, but only a suggestion for all those who believe in already given answers). In order to not become what Nietzsche meant by "spiritual atrophied intellectuals" we must undertake Heidegger's invitation to reconsider space and the world in which we live, we don't live or we would like to live...

Nr. 4 Justice – a Force of Freedom

As Glaukon and Adeimantos want Socrates in *The Republic* to prove if justice or injustice is more likely to make an individual happy, Socrates presents the myth of the ring of Gyges. This is not only the mere try to determine the advantages and disadvantages of a just life, but also the starting point of Plato's rigid state system: On the one hand he has Socrates falsified the sophistic opinion that every man has to be unjust from the outset in his very own favour, on the other hand, however, the passage is closed with an extremely negative teaching as far as the relationship between justice and a free will is concerned: Plato claims that every person is not just out of his free decision to act according to this principle, but is forced to do so and has to be put under pressure so that a society can be called just on the whole.

On the contrary, however, his disciple Aristoteles lays open that justice is a moral good which can be 'possessed' and has not to be forced on a free man as a result of oppression or – in a more moderate way – of education aiming at the realization of justice. It seems to be quite simple: Men can be just and live in a society according to this 'complete virtue and excellence' out of free will. Thus the difference between Plato's and Aristotele's conception of this issue is rather distinctive: Plato claims 'dikaiosyne' to be an artificial pattern of behaviour, whereas Aristotle perceives justice as an aspect of men's freedom and an innate intellectual and moral alertness.

The contrary between both points of view cannot be more significant of the problem of justice. According to my experience so far, the same chasm is to be found in the modern discussion about justice: After Nazi-'Volksgerichtshofe', one of the strongest means of oppression in this regime, clearly showed that 'law', 'justice' and 'conscience' are not always identical as the jurisdiction in an constitutional state is considered to be and Hitler himself traced the Shoa back to some kind of 'natural law', justice has to be scrutinized.

Starting with the following questions I do not want to conceal that I am not sure either if I will be able to define 'justice' in an appropriate way, or if this is possible at all:

- What instances and aspects does justice consist of?
- How is our very own conception of justice moulded? What factors can influence it?
- In what way can justice be defined in our society and every togetherness?

In the ancient Greek religion justice is always linked to the heaven of Gods or, in later ages and especially in some tragedies, or to another transcendent being. However, 'dike' and 'dikaiosyne' tend to be influenced or even deprived of its power by the Gods who do not always obey its teaching necessarily. Socrates, however, - and in this point I am sure that Plato has adapted Socrates' words in *The State* to his own idea of justice – claims that his conscience, his 'daimonion', is the highest category of his thinking and acting. This 'daimonion' is uninterruptedly controlling his intellect and cannot be misinterpreted or misapplied like a human law.

This is an interesting point of view. In this case I prefer to speak about a natural tendency to act according to justice which is warning and ruling as an inner voice. Explicitely, this is

perceived as a part of a free man's psyche, i. e. conscience is an aspect or even the result of being free. According to me every existence is put in framework which has to be mentioned later on, but is also freed to constitute his being in the moment of birth. This 'tabula rasa' implies that a man is born into the openness of free decision, for natural forces like drives, instincts or needs cannot lay full claim to his life. Thus, every human is in the need to decide himself how his way of living should be, in what way he should act and how he may shape his life. This is a very extensive point: I am sure that many readers will not agree with me, but I consider this radical and basic freedom to be a crossroads which I want to call conscience. Due to this fact, a man can decide freely to be 'human' or 'un-human', whereas an animal can never judge to act as an 'animal' or in an 'un-animal' way. The personal freedom or in other words the freedom of conscience opens the possibility to create his being on his own and weakens the pure dependence on evolution.

In this point the reader may mention that reason overwhelms human conscience, but I am sure that in the question of justice conscience has to be paid more attention. To take the example from the beginning again 'reason' is to be used carefully: During the Nazi-regime law was claimed to be based on 'reason', i. e. the 'reasonable' point of view that there have to be discrepancies between the races. Therefore this ideology used scientific methods to prove their claim by determining various anatomical differences between skulls, for instance. As a consequence, the regime was able to trace its ideology back to 'reason', but never to conscience, for reason is based on human principles of logic which can be deceived due to the physical borders of human mind.

Conscience, however, has to be seen more differentiated: As the basic foundation of justice in an constitutional state we assume that justice is a homogen good which is shared by every sound human being. This thesis is verified by many sociological studies which prove that a variety of people is set to decide several moral questions equally – in theory.

This will be called naive: As the Millgram-experiment and the atrocities in different regimes as well as warfares show is a human being also the target of influences which seem to overwhelm the human conscience. Obviously, those facts prove that the human bias to act in a just way is not based on conscience exclusively. In this aspect, a human being's identity point its character as 'persona' out which originates from the Latin expression for 'to sound through a mask'. Therefore a person is not only constituted by his free will, reason or conscience, but contains of exterior influences which 'sound through' its way of acting.

So far, this fact is of great importance for the question of justice: As the human conception of justice do not exist in a vacuum where it is shaped only by conscience, but is part of a mesh of influences like education, ideology, laws, traditions and conventions, we have to define the attitude towards justice in a new way: According to me it consists both of the human basic freedom to create his moral direction only under the control instance of conscience and outward influences as well as the misforming which may occur in one's psyche. Up to this point, we cannot prove if justice is a natural part of man's intellect or a mere educational layer which is put over our moral considerations by hiding our real ego and adapting ourself to what is commonly called an appropriate conception of justice. In this aspect, we come across the some struggle Plato and Aristotle had to face in their different conceptions of justice mentioned above: We cannot split both aspects unless we isolate a child (similar to the medieval experiment to find the original language of humanity) in order to determine its moral development without any educational influence. Another way would be to reduce our own personality to what we could call our core be 'deleting' everything ('persona') which

does not seem to belong to our own identity. Both methods are impossible, for we cannot judge our system of thought concerning justice like an external observer. Therefore, we have to accept that justice has to be seen both as a part of ourselves as well as a social force, although I cannot satisfy myself thus.

However, this may not be essential: As the 'practice of complete virtue' the 'practice' should be emphasized which means that justice per se is the main issue – without any difference of free intellectual or forced educational influences. In everyday life's relationships as well as in a constitutional state as a whole justice is the root of every form of togetherness. This basic social rule is on the one hand coined by the Christian consideration to treat everybody like I myself want to be treated as well as the modern ethics which warn us not to act without thinking over the consequences. As a human being does not live in a world of its own, the Categorical Imperative want us to include other individuals and to scrutinize the results of our acting.

In my opinion the thesis of reproductive and equal treatment as the consequence of every facet of humanism is not only based on the construction of a natural law or the belief in self-evident values. Modern sciences, especially genetic researches prove that the difference of different human beings of different nations, different origin, different race and different skin colour amount to below one per cent of the whole genetic heritage. This imply that the reduction of all such external effects lead to a new cosmopolitanism which can be traced back to the great togetherness of all peoples and an individual uniqueness as well.

As a consequence, we have to assume that everybody is equal and thus we lay the foundation of justice which urges us to accept this equality as the common factor of humanity. This leads us de facto to the realization of a just life: According to me, justice is a decision which has to be made if an individual is able to choose either A or B, but can only accept one option as an act which does not include disadvantages for another person. Obviously, doing so we may reduce or intervene our own freedom so that fraternity, equality and freedom could oppose each other. However, if A is allowed to violate the freedom of B and A as well as B have to consider each other as equal, B would question his own safety thus. So justice is never only the insight of this equality and the potency to behave according to this principle, but always the act itself which is made use of in one's 'relations with its fellow men' in everyday life.

On the level of a constitutional state this kind of justice is realized as the 'law' is identical with 'conscience', while everybody is determined by human equality: In this stadium the 'iustitia commutativa', 'legalis' as well as 'distributiva' are fulfilled, i. e. the relationship between citizens, the general justice and the just relation of the state with its citizens are guaranteed. In a regime, however, the human conscience has to overcome the 'pseudo-law' in favour of justice which is oppressed by a deceptive construction of a legal system. In this case the intact ideal of justice can truly be called the realization of 'complete virtue'.

Therefore every conception of justice is the result as well as the basic foundation of freedom, the necessity and the unalienable force of society and the apology as well as the utopia of a peaceful togetherness unified by a social 'daimonion'. If we scrutinize this value in order to eradicate the consequences which are combined with it for every human being, we will reach the abyss that results from questioning the basic foundation of human life.

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**3 : L'espace n'est pas plus dans le sujet que le monde n'est dans l'espace. – Heidegger,
*L'être et le temps***

Ce fragment nous donne trois notions principaux – l'espace, le sujet, le monde – et nous donne une idée sur les relations entre eux. Premièrement c'est la relation entre l'espace et le sujet, qui se trouvent dans un rapport négatif : l'espace n'est pas dans le sujet. L'espace est par conséquent en dehors du sujet, autour de lui et à la base de cela on peut faire l'affirmation que le sujet est dans l'espace, c'est où il est mis à exister.

Nous pouvons marquer le fait que la liaison entre espace et monde est une liaison plus complexe qui se développe dans un plan dynamique. Le monde, ce sont les objets et les objets ne se trouvent pas dans l'espace car l'espace est strictement réservé pour le sujet. Les objets sont mis autour du sujet, mais cela ne les fait pas égales à l'espace – ce sont deux catégories différentes qui existent parallèlement sans se nier et qui sont dans un rapport constant et fixe. D'après Wittgenstein le monde s'étend jusqu'au bout du champ visuel, donc le sujet ne peut pas saisir le monde – dans la même manière qu'il ne peut pas saisir l'espace. L'idée qu'il existe une relation entre le sujet et le monde nous amène à la conception que il existe une relation pareille entre le sujet et les objets. Le sujet se construit dans son rapport avec les objets : il les crée comme des objets (opposés à lui) et en même temps il cherche constamment à se détacher d'eux ; de ce point-là il cherche à passer de sa subjectivité vers son transcendance. Ce sont les trois dimensions de son existence : son rapport avec les objets ; son rapport avec soi-même et son ambition de gagner la transcendance.

La transcendance est impossible à toucher : d'après Levinas elle se trouve en dehors de la opposition entre l'être et le néant, parce que les deux catégories s'affirment l'un l'autre ; la transcendance est totalement au-delà d'eux, dans le « non-lieu » (une notion développée dans l'oeuvre de Levinas). Le sujet ne peut jamais se détacher de l'espace comme il est irrévocablement défini dedans et il ne peut pas y échapper. Il se construit dans deux dimensions – spatial et temporel ; la relation entre l'être et le néant est équivalente à la relation entre l'espace et le vide. Le monde (comme la totalité des choses qui existent, c'est à dire, les objets et parmi eux le sujet) n'est pas dans l'espace mais n'est pas dans le vide non plus (on accepte comme une axiome que rien n'est dans le vide); en même temps on ne peut pas dire que le monde est indépendant de l'espace, parce que les deux catégories se trouvent dans un rapport stable.

D'après la philosophie existentialiste (et d'après Heidegger en concret) le sujet est abandonné dans le monde sans explication, sans raison, par hasard – le monde (ou la totalité des objets, comme on a déjà marqué) est incompréhensible et impénétrable pour lui et lui, il est incompréhensible pour soi-même. Une fois dans le monde, il se trouve dans un conflit permanent avec les objets et par conséquent il est en conflit avec la présence de l'autrui – d'après Sartre – car il se définit comme un sujet en relation avec les objets, mais l'autrui s'oppose à l'acte d'être transformé en objet et il agit contre le moi pour ne pas rester enfermée dans mon subjectivité (comme un objet). Dans cet élan perpétuel on trouve l'horreur immanente d'être objet : le sujet se révolte contre l'objectification et cherche sa liberté dans le moment du choix (d'après Kirkegaard), c'est à dire, le moment où sa subjectivité est dans la forme la plus

pure. L'espace et le temps ne sont pas dans le sujet comme le lieu et le moment de choix sont strictement indépendants de ces deux dimensions.

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(35)

There are two things, that fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe... – the starry sky above me and the moral law within me.

Immanuel Kant

From the beginning of the world the men always wanted to know everything. They wanted to know who they were, where they were from, why there existed in the world, and they wanted what for they existed. This strange feeling – astonishment ordered them to philosophize, as we are informed by Plato's *Theaetetus* and Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. What is more both philosophers are surprisingly unanimous, what does not happen very often. So, the astonishment is the cause of the philosophy. Because to philosophize means to ask the questions. Some people say that philosophy does not give any answers – its main aim is not to answer the questions, but to teach us how should we ask them.

But what things astonish and surprise us so much that we want to (or have to) ask so many questions? There are two main things that that make us to ask the questions: the world around us (*starry sky*) and ourselves (*moral law within me*).

Let's consider the world as the first. According to Kant, when the pure reason tries to understand the world, it falters in the four antinomies. Antinomy is a pair of propositions from which each can be demonstrated as a true one. First of the antinomies says that the world has the begin in the time and is limited in the space (thesis) or has no limits neither in time nor in space (antithesis). The second says that the world consists of the finite parts (thesis) or it is not (antithesis). The third informs us that in the world beside the determined causes that is place for the freedom (thesis) or that there is no freedom in the world and all that happens is a result of the determined causes (antithesis). And the last one says that there is a Being existing beyond that world as its aim (thesis) or that there is no such a Being (antithesis).

What is more, according to the philosopher of Königsberg, it is a scandal that no true evidence of the existence of the world was given. Kant solved the problem of the antinomies in his practical philosophy, what will be demonstrated below.

Formulating the antinomies of the pure reason Kant in fact summed up all philosophical views on the predecessors and simultaneously all views that people believe in. To tell the truth in everyday life we hardly ever consider our being-in-the-world as Heidegger would call it. We often do not have time to do so. But everyone of us, consciously or not, has some views about the world. Some maintain that all things consist of the atoms, others do not see any reason to divide the things. Some are monists, it means the claim that all the things in the world are in fact only the parts or modifications of the one substance (like Spinoza did).

The question of the freedom is also one of the most important. But what does it mean to be free? Does it mean to do everything I want to? Certainly not. To be free means that there are no necessary causes that determine all my actions – there is no essential cause that orders me to behave rather in this, than in another way. Of course this definition is characteristic only to the indeterminists. For example Spinoza who was a determinist maintained that to be free means to act from the necessity of one's nature be determined to act only by one's own nature, whereas not to be free means to be determined to act by an external cause. In fact such a definition informs us that to be free means to be conscious that anything is free.

The fourth of Kant's antinomies can be connected with the first of them, because the choice made in case of the first antinomy often depends on the choice made in the fourth one. Because the words *Being existing beyond the world* can be referred to the God. The problem of God's existence has been considered by many philosophers. Some of them were sure that God really exists (e.g. Pascal, Kierkegaard), some were sure that He does not exist (e.g. Holbach) and some were deists, what means that they believed in God's existence simultaneously negating His interventions in the world. From these who were sure of His existence some were trying to formulate proofs, whose aim was to demonstrate this existence. From these the best known are the ontological proof of St Anselm of Canterbury and St Thomas's five ways. Kant summed it up as the three proofs: the ontological, the physico-teleological and the cosmological and denied them one by one. However he has never claimed that God does not exist, he only maintained that His existence cannot be demonstrated in any way. It also refers to His non-existing, which cannot be demonstrated either.

And as I said we may connect this antinomy with the first one, because if we believe in God, and we are not pantheists, we will probably maintain that the world has the beginning in time, because it has been created by God. Of course this is not necessary, because there were philosophers who were not pantheist and who believed in God, maintaining at the same time, the world has no beginning in time. For example Averroes of Cordova claimed that the matter used by God to create the world was co-eternal to Him.

The limit in space is also a serious problem. Today's science maintains that the universe is not limitless as it used to be believed. Today scientists claim that the universe is broadening – what means that it has the limits beyond which it is broadening. This fact also gives rise to a serious question: if the universe is really broadening, so what is beyond the universe? But for this question science cannot answer – scientists say that from our point of view it does not matter whether there is anything or nothing. But it is a problem of great importance – the universe is one big vacuum, so what is beyond it? Something full? Matter? Or maybe something empty? But what can be more empty than the vacuum? The scientists say anything or nothing but if nothing how can we say that? What thing can be named 'nothing'? But unfortunately, science unlikely the philosophy stops in the point where it cannot give an answer and consider the philosophical questions senseless.

But, as I said at the beginning, the problem of the world is not the only problem that makes us to ask the questions. The other one are ourselves. Who are we? How were we found in the world? What for do we live? Does it have any sense? Is life worth living as asked Albert Camus in one of his books? And the other important questions – are we free or determined by something – God's will, laws of nature, fortune, anything? How should we behave? Should we help other people or rather carry only about ourselves? Are there any moral principles that should determine our actions?

Buddha claimed that whole life is suffering, so we should not help our people, because it only supports their will of life – what means support their suffering. Instead of that Buddha advocates the rule of non-acting – what means that instead of active mercy we should rather abstain from making the others' suffering even bigger. For the life is suffering the only way of the escape is the *nirvana* it is the state when the man unites with the universe losing his self. To achieve the *nirvana* a man has to kill in himself the will of life. So the moral principle. According to Buddha, would be not to increase the suffering of yourself and of the other people.

Immanuel Kant formulated a different moral principle. His moral philosophy leans on the principle of the autonomy of the will – it means the will is itself the source of the moral law and the moral laws are not external to it. The main moral principle for Kant is so-called categorical imperative. Kant formulates it more or less like this: *Act always according to such a maxim [an individual moral principle] to whom you would at the same time will to be the*

common law. It is a formal moral law that does not give us any concrete examples of behavior, but only shows us the form of our actions. According to Kant the categorical imperative always lead us to the goodness (in contrary to the hypothetical imperative) so if our maxim is contradictory to the categorical imperative the maxim should be rejected.

But the categorical imperative is true only providing that there is freedom in the world. So freedom is the first of the postulates of the practical reason (also called the regulative ideas). The other two are the immortal soul and the God. And so the problem of the pure reason has been solved by the practical reason. From theoretical point of view it is impossible to prove that the God, freedom or immortal soul exist, but their acceptance is necessary from the practical point of view. Kant calls it *Primat der praktischen Vernunft* – primate of the practical reason.

But is it true that the moral laws have it source in us? Are there not any external and eternal values? Max Scheler rejected Kant's categorical imperative for the material value ethics. It means that Sheler instead of giving us the formal law of acting, shows us the values in the phenomenological way. Another doctrine that maintain that there are values whose source is independent from us is the doctrine of the natural law. Men who advocate this doctrine claim that there are some eternal values and laws independent from the positive law given by each state. These laws are known to all people because they result from the human nature (or from the eternal God's law, who created the human nature).

The problem of the values also can be connected with the forth antinomy of Kant. If we believe in God we also believe in the values given by Him like justice or love. Of course it does no mean that if we do not believe in God we have to reject all values – we may just find for them an other source. But it can happen that someone rejects the God at the same time is rejecting the moral values – *If there is no God, everything is allowed* says Ivan Karamazov hero of the one of Fiodor Dostoïevski's books. Such a view can be considered as nihilistic.

One's value system can be also determined by his relation to the world. If one thing that the world, as created by God, is good he will try to live in peace with all creatures because in all of them he will see a reflection of God's perfection. If one thing that the world is evil all his actions would be directed to the other world and he will not feel any sentiment to this world. But there is also a third possible way, chosen mainly by the philosophers of existence. The world is neither good nor evil – it is indifferent, even inhumanly indifferent as would have said Camus. This indifference of the world gives birth to great fear; *The endless silence of these limitless spaces terrifies me* said Pascal. The existentialists maintained that the world is dangerous for men, that even other man is a danger the other one – *The other man is a hell* as said Sartre. In such situation a man can find the support in God (like Pascal or Kierkegaard) or in himself (like Sartre).

Another problem with values is the question whether they are common – it means are they or rather should they be values for everyone? Friedrich Nietzsche distinguished between the morality of the master and the morality of the slaves. For masters this what is good is strong, healthy, dignified. For slaves good means sick, weak and etc. Modern morality was by Nietzsche considered to be the morality of slaves glorifying this what is sick and weak. He announced the arrival of the superman (*der Übermensch*) – a person who would be able to create his moral values which would be beyond good and evil. The superman will create the values relating them only to his own life.

There is also another problem connected with both the world and the moral – is the world and human as its part good or evil by nature? The Christian philosophy had a serious problem to deal with – how reconcile God's goodness with the existence of the evil in the world. Did God create evil? If he did it means he wanted it – and in such case he is not good. If he did not its existence is a proof that he is not perfect and almighty. St Augustine solved that problem in

that way that he maintained that evil has no ontological fundament – in fact does not exist. The evil is only the lack of goodness. A man who sins chooses less goodness instead of the bigger.

But why do we sin? Because of our will? Because God gave us the free will and do not want to determine us to anything because of his great love? But if we are really good by nature why we do not choose the bigger goodness every time? St Thomas Aquinas maintained that man always chooses this what he considers to be good, but he sometimes makes mistakes. Similar view was advocated by Socrates in his doctrine of the ethical intellectualism (people make evil because they are not conscious they it is evil). But it does not solve the problem – the XX century showed that people can do evil just because they want to do that. So we have to live this problem unsolved, hoping that one day someone will find the salvation.

As we see there are many different views concerning both the problem of the world and the problem of human and morals. It is the result of never-ending asking – the main cause of the philosophy. The longer people will ask the more answers they will try to give.

Kant rightly noticed that for our mind is considering mainly two problems – the world and ourselves. We may ask many questions referring to those two problems, but we will probably never give an answer that would be satisfying to everyone. But it is not the main task and aim of the philosophy. We have to learn how to ask the question to, using the words of Hegel, fix the limit and at the same time cross it, asking the new questions. Even if we will never manage to get all the answers it is not reason to stop philosophizing, because people always will be astonishing and *because of the astonishment people in the ancient and recent times begin to philosophize* as we are informed by Aristotle's *Metaphysics*.

Topic 2: There are two things, that fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe... - the starry sky above me and the moral law within me.

It was Kant whose major task in philosophy was to search for reason not only in nature but also in moral laws. He saw that everything in nature moves in accordance with a certain law, even the stars above his house in the night-time. And so he was perplexed; are the laws in the nature familiar to those in human beings? But what is a human being? It is all nature, because he is a part of it. How should he act then, when he meets an old lady on the street who begs her for money? Should he let her go or give her some coins to get herself a piece of bread? If it was for the natural law, he would have probably went by, he thought. Why should the nature help those who are not able to survive? But is this really right? No, he thought, this cannot be. Even if I am a part of nature, I have something to trick her games. I can think of something better. I can think.

So Kant continued with his questionings and found out that there are two imperatives in accordance with which the world acts; the hypothetical and categorical one. The categorical says that you always have to act in accordance with a maxime that could become a general law and that you must never use a person as a mere means – always as a goal. The hypothetical is common in all the nature. It goes like that: if you want to achieve a certain goal you have to follow certain action. If you want to reach a goal A, you have to work in accordance with B – someone who is hungry will go and search for food. It is not only men who follow this example, but animals as well. Even flowers and all that has a living spirit within itself tend to follow this imperative. It is a part of the natural law. But why is it so?

The nature wants to continue with its most important idea of survival: the idea of evolution. What is its goal? To make a selection of those who are able to survive and those who are not, to only keep at life those species that will provide a good genetical background to their descendants. The hypothetical imperative touches the core problem of Darwin's – the evolutionary theory – the nature has integrated some kind of law in all living species, and that law is the one to fight to survive. It must be, then, according to one imperative that all the living things act, and that is the hypothetical one.

However, Kant was still sitting in his cabinet, wondering if he could generalize this to all the world. The starry skies above are the example of the natural law. But is the man also the follower of this example? Is he hungry? Often. But he, if being normal, will think of the sources that are given to him as food. He won't just run for food into the neighbour's house, he won't kill a bystander to gain some food. But would an animal think of killing someone of the same breed? We, for instance, don't kill other people to get food. David Hume claimed that it is because of a certain sympathy that we've got towards the same race and which evolves in ourselves during the socialisation. We are living in a society that made us attentive and caring to the others. Hume claimed that it is the same with animals and that it is thus our emotions that tell us which actions are worth taking and which are not. A bear won't kill another bear to gain food, but will probably be satisfied with a sheep. Men as well as the animals of the same breed help each other. This feelings for aid and love, the emotions are the measure of what is moral and what is not.

To go back to Kant, he disagreed. He claimed that emotions aren't sufficient to our moral, because they differ from person to person and are irrational. But are the emotions really irrational? We always know when we're feeling angry. If we are jealous –and that is a feeling- we know that this mental state did not just come from nowhere. We first see, for

example, that a person has a lot of knowledge and then we think 'oh, if only I could be as intelligent' and it is then that we might feel jealous or not. Actually, we decide about our feelings. So they are not really irrational. However, Kant suggested that we must not act in accordance with our emotions, nor should we obey the talkabouts and sayings of other people. Let's take a more precise look into why did he disagree.

Some people say that moral comes from the heavenly God, but Kant claimed that you cannot just obey whatever he or anyone else says. Even if he's God – that does not yet mean that his moral law can be universal. You yourself have to take the problem under consideration and think if the law that God acquires is a right one. Could we say, for instance, that all people can work in accordance with what some God 'upstairs' in the heavenly place said?

You are given the mind to reason the problem, to think if it could be generalized. We should think about the problem if everyone could act like that. If Kant met an old lady on the street and she asked him for money, he would first have to think about what would have happened if everyone acted like that. It would be right because there would not be so many poor people in the world. However, he stated that the moral laws should be absolute because all the people on the world have a reason in accordance with which they act. It is not about the time and place of living, it is not relative, not dependent of the culture – we can come to the same conclusions because we all have the ability to reason. This is true, because if Kant wasn't right about that, than the Aborigines wouldn't be able to learn how to count and calculate the way that we do. And the Newton-Leibniz formula is just one of those examples where we can see that people can come to the same conclusions independent of time and place.

God. What if he insisted on the law that nature gives to us and we listened to him? The too weak should be abandoned and left behind because we need to provide a better, healthier and stronger race. So we need not to help the weaker people who alone, because of their illness, could not survive? Could this be a moral law? Well if God says so...

We have to think about what happened if everyone acted like this. What would have happened with the human race? The times of plague and now aids would lead us to a near distinction. Perhaps only the stronger would survive, but would it be moral to work in accordance with this law? The bloody nature and its cruel weapons? If we think about the problem from Kant's point of view, we see that this could be alright. Why not? We used our reason and wouldn't it be good to have only healthy and strong people in the world? I know, you're thinking someone went crazy here, but Kant didn't think of the emotions as important. So this would not be acceptable from the emotional part but only from this, rational.

To continue, you might object that Kant claimed that a person must never be used as mere means but always as a goal. So, considering the problem above, did we use people as mere means to provide a better race? Not really, we just left them behind. Were they just a means to the better race? No, because we did not use them, we left them 'rest in peace'. Seems horrible, does it not?

The Nazis were mostly clever people. They somehow wanted to go on with the natural law of reaching a higher race, a better one. They failed the Kant's categorical imperative: they killed Jews and also used them as a means. Could killing and using Jews be made an universal law? No, not at all. Perhaps if they weren't following their kind of reasoning but their emotions, this wouldn't have happened. Hume suggested that no animal would go killing the participants of the same breed for a reason crazy as this. So, the natural law cannot be that cruel, it suggests that life is cruel, but emotions lead us to help those of the same race or, if animal, the same race.

The Nietzsche's overmen idea was perhaps misleading at that time. He looked down on the majority of the Europe who lived the old moral laws but didn't think of them. People took

the words as 'good' and 'evil' for granted and didn't take them under consideration. They were not rational, did not think about the consequences of their acts. It was not hard to misunderstand his idea then. He thought the overman to be eager to go on with his evolution. The overman wouldn't think of himself as a goal, but as a way to a higher, better race. Of noble men, who would be able to live as Goethe did – to take part in many different activities, to fight for a better living and not just waiting for some heavenly place where their dreams would come true. Anyway, Nietzsche's idea was also that if people, the Christians, only look forward to death and the live after it, how will they know what a good, lively living is? If they enjoyed suffering in order to live better later on, none of them will know how to do it.

What does this Nietzsche have to do with Kant, his stary skies and the Nazis? The Nazis not only misused the Nietzsche's idea but also used the Jews as means to their goal and thus they did not work in accordance with the categorical imperative. Nietzsche himself is not guilty for not being understood, because the Nazis weren't 'chewing his ideas'. He was not suggesting to return to old conflicts that appeared during the history between different races. This, for him, was a lambkin-wolf problem. He wanted us to get over with this satisfied and tired way of living where the the wolf is always guilty for lambkin's pityful way of life. What if we rather used our minds, the very thing that distances us from animals, and not only acted hypothetically – if we want A, then B? If we are weak and don't want to get caught, we have to run? Do we? We should better use our minds and climb a tree, we should bite through the natural laws and act rationally.

It is not only for the reason, dear Kant. Nature did try to get some kind of law into ourselves, a law which we can use no matter if having a reason as well. A law that can be moral, if I invite a bit of Hume to this discussion. We feel sorry for someone whose friend has died and we usually feel pain in our neck. We can think and feel the pain, we know why. The nature gave that feeling into us to warn us to be careful with those we need. It would be difficult indeed to survive completely alone, isolated. And if isolated, would we need any moral law? Where would the part 'if all people acted like this' have gone to?

The stary skies above me and the moral law within me. They should both fill us with admiration because the natural laws are in us and even though we are trying to avoid them, we are still a part of the nature. We should not be ashamed of them. The evolution, for instance, continues. The evolution of our minds as well, and consequently, our morals should go on with time and development. We should reach the better moral law and become as outstanding as the whole system of nature to whom we have not yet found all questions. For this, we must have the power to will, the Nietzsche's suggestion that can take us higher; to will with the reason and to reason our will to be moral.

Topic 4
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Should we dare to hope a virtuous world?

Nowadays, in our speeches, at our debates or round tables, we discuss issues such as security, justice, cooperation, responsibility, tolerance...and the fact is that we all agree that these are “sine qua non” conditions for the existence of a peaceful world. But...none of us mentions virtue; actually, we would be considered ridiculous and old-fashioned moralists if we postulated it as a main idea. In my essay, I will try to demonstrate that without the concept of “virtue”, all the others are just shallow ideas. We should try to go back to the Greek philosophers, and then we will realize that our world is just a colossus with legs of clay, if we ignore virtue from our “universes of discourse” (Habermas). The last century, with its nihilism, deconstruction and reevaluation of all values, but also with its greatest atrocities has demonstrated once again that justice tends to transform into totalitarianism if it does not share the same episteme with ethics. We all know Santayana’s Famous quote: “those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” We should also remember the fact that the most despicable acts of humanity eliminated totally the concept of virtue. In order to avoid this kind of deeds, we should realise the intrinsic relationship between justice and virtue.

In order to sustain my arguments, I will try to define these terms.

Aristotle, who was, beyond the shadow of a doubt a very systematic philosopher, made a distinction between the words that had the same meaning and expressing “virtue”. First, there was “arete”, which referred to all the elements of the world (even a hammer could possess “arete”) and “phronesis” – virtue that was characteristic to human beings. As it concerns the concept of “justice”, both the state imagined by Aristotle, as well as the one described by Plato in “Republic” had at their core the concept of virtue. The persons that were considered to be virtuous were the ones that ruled it. And here I would like to stress another element from the given quotation: “he who possesses it can make use of his virtue not only by himself but also in relations with his fellow men”. We all know the aristotelian concept of “zoon politikon” and in its deepest significance, it means that one cannot possess virtue outside the community. This is very well sustained by today’s situation: we live in a world that not only ignores the concept of virtue, but also denies the dialogue. One would say that this statement is not true, because there are debates and congresses all over the world daily. But do we really listen to the other person, or just hear him? Has the “alterity” (Levinas) become a futile concept? Hence, it seems that if we do not know how to manage “virtue”, we will not be able to build a dialogue with our significant others.

But what about justice? What did Aristotle and what do we understand by it? The Greek philosopher thought that the role of this concept was to treat everyone accordingly to his merits or behavior. Today, this idea has developed at such a degree that we can speak about so many types of justice: political, distributive, juridical so on and so forth. Taking into account that it enhances so many domains, we must not regard it outside the ethical sphere.

But justice is based upon rules, and they are made by people. Even though it is a truism, men make mistakes. Hence, the justice is in the hands of the ones that create the rules. That is why

those people must take into account ethics. Actually, it is our duty, as citizens, to be sure that our rulers have a moral behavior.

In one of his works, namely “The Republic” Plato depicts the myth of Gyges. This one was a shepherd, and one day, walking along, he discovered an old tomb of a king. He opened it and stole the king’s ring. This object made him invisible whenever he wore it. Therefore, he usurped the king’s place made plenty of illegalities in order to obtain what he desired. This parable is very relevant in our context. The shepherd’s behavior is, definitely, not a virtuous one. And I think everyone agrees with that. By presenting this myth, Plato wanted to stress man’s real character. He will not make good things, if he is left on his own. Justice is the one that should punish this kind of abuses. But in order to do that, justice must have at its core the concept of virtue. How can one punish virtue if he himself does not possess it? But wait a minute, should we be so harsh and say that the lack of virtue is a sin? As long as virtue enhances so many different ideas, I think the answer is yes. Does that mean that Dostoevsky’s character, Kirilov was right when he stated that “If God did not exist, there would be no interdiction?” Let’s make an analogy, and think that if virtue would not exist, there would be no justice. Well, it isn’t quite like this, justice will exist for the rest of the time. But what kind of justice? One that has lost its meaning and that is nothing more but a shallow concept.

The fact that justice fails to achieve its aims when virtue is ignored was also proved by history, since its beginnings. The decadence of the Roman Empire (of course this was not the only reason of its collapse, but a very important one). When the Romans conquered the Orient, with all its treasures and jewelries, they could not foresee the danger. Values like respect or morality, family were soon erased when reaching economical prosperity. The Roman Republic died because of the internal fights that affected it – the lack of virtue in justice.

But talking about morality and justice, we should recall what Machiavelli stated: that the role of a leader is how to keep the power in his hands, disregarding the means. He was probably the first one to state this dichotomy between politics and morality, between justice and virtue. I myself do not agree with this statement – how can one ignore ethics from his existence? This cold-bloodedness, which is very appreciated today – is confused for a rational and calculated behavior.

I would like to comment now on the last part of the quotation, taking into account the vision of a contemporary philosopher toward the intrinsic relation between justice and virtue. J. Rawls regarded justice as fairness – actually, his main book, “A Theory of Justice” is an attempt to prove that in today’s world – these two concepts must be taken as synonyms. His main contribution to this idea is concept of the “veil of illusions”: let’s imagine that we are sitting at a round table, with a lot of people around us. None of us knows its “statu quo”. We do not know our status for the economical, social, cultural point of view. Actually, we know nothing about us. But we are there in order to establish some rules – that will eventually work in the society we are about to create there, at that round table. Rawls said that if we were in this hypothetical situation, we would act in a manner that were “fair” for each of us. This is due to the fact that we could be a beggar or a king. In this way the contingencies would be eliminated. Rawls thought that neither of us is guilty, nor responsible for its status, when he is born. His question is: does anyone of us deserve what we have or what he does not have? It would be superfluous to answer it. But there are still unanswered questions: how thick must this veil of illusions be? Isn’t there a single information that the persons at that table should know? And the most important of all: if we had to decide for all the humanity, would our

decisions be ethical? Would virtue be brought into attention? In order to achieve a fair society, eliminating the effects of contingency, we would definitely had to take it into account. In my opinion, it should be the criteria according to which this society should be built. And in this way, even the most disadvantaged member of the society would be spared by unfairness. This was another argument that sustained my view, that virtue is intrinsically linked with ethics.

But we cannot regard virtue just as a plain concept – actually, it is a summ of qualities that one should possess. Is there any receipt for a virtuous behavior? Did any of these philosophers gave us a straight path to follow? Virtue may be identified with the Greek term of “eudaimonia” – one must be virtuous in order to achieve it. But here we should raise another concept? Is virtue a mean or an aim? Is it just the path towards the “good life?” But what does this sintagm mean, ”good life”? I think that everyone agrees that it also enhances the concept of justice. We cannot achieve a good life living in an unfair world.

The most powerful argument that sustains my idea is not taken from the history of philosophy, does not represent a certain doctrine, it it History itself. In the last century, mankind has witnessed some of the most dreadful events that could occur. First, there were the two World Wars, with their millions of victims, the Holocaust and the concentrational camps. I’m not blaming anyone, maybe Jaspers was right when he said that we should all feel that “metaphysical guilt”, but one thing is for sure: the ones that committed those acts were not virtuous persons. They used justice in their own interpretation. I think that in this context it is very relevant a letter of an young man who died in Auschwitz. He declared that he was conscious that his life was valuable for others,only as long as he was sacrificed. His visionary statement, which sends a shiver down our spines, should remind us that virtue is not something we need to impose to ourselves, but something that must come from within.

Leaving the field of history, and going back to philosophy, it was Immanuel Kant the first one who imagined an institution that combined both virtue and ethics. He regarded it as a “foedus pacificum” and it’s role was to strenghten the communication between countries, in a peaceful manner. Later one, this concept was tried to be put into practice under the name of the Society of the Nations, by the american president Woodrow Wilson. But he was blamed for his idealism and this project failed. The totalitarian regimes wanted to eliminate every single trace of idealism, of compassion, of virtue. In my opinion, nowadays philosophy should try to reintroduce the concept of virtue, or, as Adorno said, of “sensibility”. Otherwise, its role would eventually turn into a decorative one.

But these abusses were already pointed out by the artists. Pablo Picasso depicted in one of his most known canvas, “Guernica” (1939) the civil war of the general Franco, and the massacre from a small town from Spain. The painter was horrified by the fact that this event had only been mentioned with serenity in a news, like it would have been a regular one. The artist tried to present the metamorphosis of the whole world. There are distorted faces, mutilated animals, a mother screaming for her child. The most powerful element of this painting is (according to the critics of art), a lightbulb. Everything happens in the dimension of human madness, of human despair. There is no moon, no “starry sky above”, no transcendental element. Just pain, dereliction, and loneliness.

In the end, I think I found out that I do not know if this link truly exists. But I have already told you that my opinion is that it should exist. Going back to Kant, as the

neokantianists would suggest, I want to ask myself, “what am I allowed to hope?” – a world where I could state without a doubt, that there is an intrinsic relationship between justice and virtue.

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1. It follows, plainly, from the explanation given above, of the foundation of state, the ultimate aim of government is not to rule, or restrain, by fear, nor to exact obedience, but contrariwise, to free every man from fear, that he may live in all possible security; in other words, the strengthen his natural right to exist and work, without injury to himself and others. (Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise*, chapter XX)

*Imagine there's no country,
I wonder if you can?
Nothing to kill or die for,
and no religion, too.*

The lines above come from John Lennon's song *Imagine*. By imagining a world without country and private property, he suggest that all the people could live in peace. It isn't hard to notice the huge contradiction between what Baruch Spinoza, a philosopher from ages ago, and John Lennon, an pop artist and idol from 90ies, have said. Spinoza is suggesting that the reason why we can live in peace, is that there is a state the provides security, but Lennon is suggesting that perhaps the world would be better without it. Next, I am going to search an answer for the question *Is democracy* necessary?* by taking into account different aspects and functions of the state. At first, I am going to compare democracy with tyranny (like Spinoza did in his argument) and anarchy. Secondly, I will call his argument into doubt by asking whether democracy can actually *free every man from fear* and provide *security*. And thirdly, I will discuss whether it is really the *ultimate aim* of the state or not.

1. Democracy, Tyranny, Anarchy...

By imagining a world without private property, Lennon is not alluding to communism, because he also discards any kind of country or state. He suggest an utopia that no-one has ever seen. Spinoza, however, makes quite clear links with democracy by contrasting it with a tyranny. He, probably like most of people nowadays as well, though that democracy is better than tyranny. We might think so, because of the dreadful things that have taken place in tyrannies, e.g. Holocaust in Hitler's Nazi Germany. But if the individual(s) ruling the country wouldn't have any bloody intentions, the results might not be that bad. In *Politeia* Plato introduces us with his vision of society ruled by philosophers. The reason why he thought that this kind of society would be better is that *demos* is not good enough to rule the country. The people who rule the country should be intelligent, not ordinary people who are perhaps more interested in their own individual good, rather than *eudaimonia* for all the people. In contrast, democracy is the rule of majority, not minority. In a way, it might follow the Utilitarian principle stated by Jeremy Bentham *greatest good for the greatest number*. In this case, I do believe that democracy is better, because if more people are involved, more views are

represented. However, I also support the restrictions that Mill has suggested, for example, nobody shouldn't be sacrificed for the sake of other people. Minority shouldn't suffer.

In tyranny people are held under the government that is based on the power of the strong ones and the fear of the defenseless citizens. So, it can be said that in tyranny the people are there for the sake of state. However, in democracy, it is on the contrary, because the state is there for the sake of people.

Comparing democracy with anarchy, it also seems better, because in anarchy everybody will do what he or she wants to do, not taking into account the pain caused for other people. A rapist would rape, a murderer would murder. There would be no security. In democratic countries people seem to be more secure, because people have agreed with the social contract. But perhaps the state isn't any better than church, perhaps democracy is like religion that created an illusion** that promises Heaven for those who are good and Hell for those who commit sins? Perhaps democracy doesn't provide a security, but just an illusion that we are safe?

2. Can democracy actually *free every man from fear* and provide *security*?

Spinoza says that the state is there to *free every man from fear*. I would dare to call that into question. Although I do believe that democracy gives most of the people more freedom and more ways to realize their ideas (as long as they don't threaten other people's security), I don't really think that it frees us from the fear. Thomas Hobbes has suggested that contracts are just words that cannot grant people's security without the support of the sword. Though there are many laws that are supposed to protect, they don't actually provide any physical protection. It is still possible for a murderer to commit dreadful massacres, without any kind of paper-based contract or moral law stopping him. In fact, the psychopath might even think that by slaughtering us he would actually set us free from earthly chains of fear and all the other bodily passions! Though Plato wasn't a psychopath, his theory of the Forms would provide a foundation to lean on, because according to his philosophy the world of Form or Ideas was prior to the sensible world, the world of objects. Epicurus has said that we don't have to fear the death, because there are we, there is no death, and there is death, we no longer exist. A murderer could use this as a good justification as well. *But* the thing is that although the state cannot guarantee our 100% security, what it can do is to punish the murderer (assuming the he will be caught...). That is why we have police and courts. So, perhaps it is not the *freedom* that the state provides, but *justice*?

Of course it is arguable whether the state actually provides justice or is this an illusion as well. Some people might suggest that the legal system doesn't make the right decisions every time. It is not impossible that wrong person could be punished for a crime that he hasn't committed, as well. However, it seems that the legal system still works. Or maybe it is the moral law inside us that prevents us making immoral choices. But I do think that the fear of punishment does prevent us from committing crimes. For example, normally there aren't that many incidences of shop-lifting. But before the earth-quakes and other catastrophes the number will increase, because people know that in the situation like that they won't be punished. They'll get away with it, so the law doesn't stop them.

But one for sure, we wouldn't like if somebody else would steal our own things. As a negative version of the Golden Rule Jesus stated, do not do this for the other that you don't want to be done for you. This is the principle upon which the *social contract* (Rousseau) stands. By giving up some right that we would have in anarchic animal society, we will also gain rights and injustice is replaced with justice.

3. What is the *ultimate aim* of the state?

Going into more depth, it seems almost impossible for me to discard the matter of ultimate purpose. Spinoza claims that the *ultimate aim* of the state is to protect its citizens and provide freedom. Even if it is not the security, but justice, that the state promises, it can be asked whether it is really the ultimate purpose? The state or country consists of 3 main things: people, territory, and power. Two latter ones are there for the sake of human beings, but what is the purpose of humanity? If we would claim that society is there for the sake of people and people are there for the sake of society, we would end up in a vicious circle.

When reminding Aristotle's theory of 4 causes, we often encounter problems with the last one – the Final Cause, because if we ask why is A there, and we make a conclusion that is there for B, we can again ask why is B there and say that it is there for C and so on and so on. So, it seems to me that what Spinoza claims to *the ultimate aim* just reflects a superficial point of view. It doesn't go into more depth to ask what is the purpose of humanity as a whole. And to my mind, that is definitely one of the weak points, because if the humanity wouldn't have a purpose, the society and state might lose their justification of existence as well. In some reason, it is in our nature to ask questions, like a little child may ask *Why? Why? Why?* If the knife is there to cut, when there must always be a person why cuts and eventually we will still end up with the question about the meaning of life. The fact that humanity has a meaning can be regarded as an unstated assumption that Spinoza's argument lies on. If humanity doesn't have a purpose, when the state won't have a purpose either and the whole argument would just collapses. Or wouldn't it?

There are many ways to approach this issue. For example, Aristotle, as mentioned above, would suggest that there has to be an end for the chain of questions *Why?*. There has to be an ultimate end what he called the Unmoved Mover or the Uncaused Cause. But if there would be some kind of deity, doesn't matter whether transcendent or not, would the state still exist for us, if we would be here because of something or somebody else? It would be hard to give either a positive or negative answer.

However, existentialists like might say that life just exists without a purpose. Russell would say that it is just a *brutal fact* that we are here, Camus would describe the universe as an *absurd*. However, the lack of external purpose doesn't necessarily mean that we cannot have an internal purpose. However, internal purpose would be a very subjective matter. Looking back on Spinoza's argument, although it could be said that the vision of democracy and just world is typical for the majority, it might not be self-evident for a psychopath. We might have different internal purposes. Of course, it might be that the state is there to allow all of us who we have different aims just to exist together peacefully and fulfil our purposes. In this case, the humanity as a whole might not have a purpose, but it might not be a disadvantage, because differently from the case where we would be here for the sake of somebody else, and therefore there would have been a question whether the state is here for the sake of us, we don't have that problem any more. In this case, there wouldn't be a doubt that the state actually exists for our sake. The lack of external purpose would be the actual thing that would make us free.

Summary

Eventually, though in part 1 it was justified that democracy seems to be better than tyranny or anarchy (although in theory a country ruled by philosophers like Plato would suggest might not be worse than democracy), in part 2 the conclusion was made that it isn't actually the security that it provides, like Spinoza claims, but justice. A paper-based law doesn't stop the murderer, but it will fix a punishment for the murderer to make sure that the order of the universe is restored.

But the main question asked when comparing Spinoza's argument with the song of John Lennon: *Is democracy (state) necessary?* is still left without an answer, because in order to talk about the necessity of the state, we cannot discard the issue about the necessity and purpose of humanity as a whole that was discussed in part 3. From this aspect, Spinoza's argument seems to be superficial, it doesn't go in to much depth. As long as this unstated premise (that humanity does have a purpose) is not proved, Spinoza's argument might stand on a *brittle grass****.

However, in the end I actually reached to an interesting point: the lack of external purpose might actually be the main fact that makes us free. The fact if humanity wouldn't have an external, but internal purpose, might strengthen the role of state and government as a institution for the sake of human beings. In contrast when there would be some kind other ultimate purpose, it would be doubtful whether the state is actually there for our own sake or for the sake of some other higher being.

* The reason why I have used to word democracy, is that by a proper *state* Spinoza seems to understand democracy.

** I'm not trying to say that religion cannot be valid. This illusion could be real as well. But in order to make sure whether there is Heaven or Hell I should die, but I've got other things to do.

*** Expression that Shakespeare used when describing the bloody rule of English king Richard III. Means that the argument doesn't have proper foundations.

(12)

2)

Dans son Traité théologique-politique Spinoza a établi que la fonction de l'Etat n'est pas de opprimer le peuple qui se constitue en lui, mais de sauvegarder les droits de ceux qui le composent. Pour pouvoir confirmer cette position on doit tout d'abord chercher à comprendre quel est le but pour lequel l'Etat est né; pour faire cela une méthode très utile est celle utilisée par Thomas Hobbes, la méthode généalogique. Le fait que Hobbes arrive à une conception de l'Etat autocratique n'est pas une raison pour retenir que quiconque utilise ce procédé doit en tirer les mêmes conclusions du philosophe anglais. En effets, ce qu'il y a de vraiment important dans la pensée de Hobbes est l'avoir compris que l'Etat se constitue à cause d'une exigence humaine: le besoin d'ordre. L'ordre dans l'Etat est représenté formellement par l'émanation des loi, et je peux affirmer qu'il n'existe aucun Etat sans lois. De plus, je peux dire, simplement observant les différentes formes de structures sociales formées par l'homme, qu'il n'est pas possible aucun type de société sans lois, et donc que toute forme d'organisation humaine nécessite d'être comprise dans un Etat.

Etant donné que, depuis le debut de l'histoire humaine, c'est à dire dès que nous avons des témoignages écrits, l'homme a toujours montré la tendance à s'organiser en communautés, on peut retenir aussi que la constitution d'une société civile est une "forma mentis" de l'être humain.

Cela dit il est naturel de se demander pourquoi l'homme a cette exigence si forte et si durable (rappelons que jamais dans le cours de l'histoire l'organisation sociale a disparu complètement. En outre selon le philosophe français Braudel l'organisation sociale humaine est l'un des phénomènes à longue durée), ou mieux quelles sont les exigences humaines primaires que nous voulons à tout prix sauvegarder et que nous pouvons sauvegarder grace à l'Etat. Hobbes avait dit que la plus forte, dans l'homme à l'état de nature, est la liberté de affirmer sa propre volonté, la liberté de pouvoir faire ce que l'on veut; toutefois, exercer cette absolue liberté conduit à l'affirmation de la loi du plus fort, à une situation ou "homo homini lupus", qui est inacceptable - exactement en fonction de notre "axiome" selon lequel la liberté individuelle est la chose la plus importante – parce que la majorité des hommes voit sa propre liberté limitée. Construire un Etat signifie, comme je l'ai déjà dit, formaliser des normes, qui pour leur nature donnent des droits mais imposent des devoirs. Autrement dit l'Etat réduit la liberté individuelle. Sur la base de cette considération je sent de pouvoir affirmer que la liberté absolue n'est pas la seule valeur fondamentale, ontologiquement supérieure, présente dans les hommes puisque s'il était différemment l'Etat de nature aurait perduré. Il doit donc y être quelque chose de plus important pour les hommes.

Il n'a pas sens, ici, de se demander qu'est ce qui peut être plus important que la liberté pour la simple raison qu'on ne pourrait joindre à une réponse unitaire. Comme le disait Wittgenstein dans son Tractatus, les questions qui n'ont pas de sens ne doivent pas être posées. Je dit que trouver la réponse à la précédente question est impossible non plus à cause d'une ignorance de l'homme en matière, mais parce que en effet il n'y a pas de réponse, sinon la suivante (qui dit tout et, contemporanément, rien): l'exigence de l'homme est de réaliser soi même.

L'Etat se constitue non pour assurer une particulière opportunité aux hommes mais pour consentir à chacun-et-à-tous de pouvoir atteindre le but le plus élevé: soi même. "A chacun-et-à-tous" signifie que les hommes dans une société doivent pouvoir se réaliser tous au même

temps, ce qui implique le non sens du désir de liberté et de pouvoir absolus. De cela suit nécessairement que l'Etat, le vrai Etat, ne peut pas être par définition un système despotique, un absolutisme ou bien un totalitarisme. De plus, si nous acceptons la description faite par Hannah Arendt du totalitarisme nous devrions conclure que ceci est l'anti-Etat. Il n'est pas, attention, un non-Etat, parce qu'il est impossible une organisation sociale si rigide au dehors de l'Etat, mais il est un anti-Etat pour le fait qu'il est une structure du même type de l'Etat mais qui poursuit l'objectif opposé: la non-réalisation des individus au nom de celle de l'Etat même.

Pour retourner à Spinoza, ce dernier dit que l'homme doit conserver "son droit naturel d'exister et d'agir". Cela est fondamental: dans une interprétation différente, en sens moderne et existenciel, de cette affirmation on pourrait dire que en effet le droit que l'homme doit posséder est celui de exister et non plus celui de être. L'homme doit avoir le droit d'exister (assuré par l'Etat) si on accepte la conception sartrienne selon laquelle l'existence précède l'essence. J'explique: si l'être humain avait une essence commune individuante par quelqu'un, alors il serait justifié de constituer un Etat qui a comme seul but la préservation de l'intégrité de cette essence, même à coût de utiliser des moyens de coercition, , même à coût de discriminer ceux qui, ne se rendant pas compte de la supposée vraie essence humaine, ne suivent pas le comportement commun des autres. La conception de l'Etat de Hobbes, exprimée dans Le Léviathan, naît du fait que le philosophe anglais concevait la sûreté et la vie – biologique – comme des valeurs intrinsèques à l'essence humaine que l'Etat doit préserver en opprimant les citoyens aussi (même si il n'aurait probablement pas exprimé ce concept avec ces mots). Si par contre nous ne cherchons aucune essence humaine, et nous acceptons que chaque homme se fait par ses mains tel qu'il se veut dans l'existence, après avoir existé, alors nous assumons comme seule condition que l'Etat doit préserver la réalisation personnelle des individus. On pourrait dire que à nouveau il y a une valeur supérieure, au nom de laquelle l'Etat pourrait devenir un "Léviathan", mais cela n'a pas de sens, puisque l'Etat se forme, dans ce cas, exactement pour sauvegarder les caractéristiques des différentes existences, pour n'être pas un Léviathan.

Vu que les hommes sont tous différents et continuent à naître différents, il est obligatoire de reconnaître qu'ils pensent et agissent différemment sur la base d'une multitude de valeurs, au point où il devient impossible d'établir une morale universelle, comme le voulait Kant. Postuler l'existence d'une telle morale contredit évidemment les faits que nous voyons dans le monde: il n'existent pas deux personnes qui ont la même morale (il en existent, par contre, beaucoup qui ont des morales semblables mais pas égales). La reconnaissance du relativisme éthique s'impose ici.

On pourrait objecter que si vraiment "l'homme est mesure de toutes les choses", comme le disait Protagoras, chacun pourrait prétendre d'instituer un Etat selon sa propre conception politique et ensuite chercher à imposer sa vision aux autres. Toutefois l'acceptation sincère du subjectivisme, la véritable intériorisation la plus haute de ce concept porte à reconnaître la validité des opinions de tout le monde. C'est cette idée qu'on doit transférer en politique, et l'Etat qui en dérive est celui authentiquement démocratique, la démocratie représentative.

Mais pourquoi ce type d'organisation est la meilleure? Je trouve que Kelsen l'a dit de façon excellente, en individualisant le cœur du problème: si on conçoit la vérité comme unique, donnée une fois pour toute l'Etat que nous voulons est de type autocratique, même si nous le voulons pas admettre. Si par contre nous dérivons la notion de vérité de la vision critique et relativiste de la science, alors la démocratie se pose comme l'unique modèle d'Etat qui a la possibilité de sauvegarder la multiplicité des valeurs existantes. Pour expliquer pourquoi la démocratie et pas une autre institution politique il pourrait être utile une considération sur le terme "démocratie". Si on la conçoit dans le strict sens étymologique elle est le gouvernement du peuple; cette définition est inacceptable parce que si elle était appliquée aux

sociétés contemporaines, qui sont massifiées, la démocratie deviendrait le gouvernement de la foule qui emporte tous les délires que nous connaissons grâce à la littérature (il suffit de penser aux “Epistolae morales ad Lucilium” de Seneca, ou bien aux “Fiancés” de Manzoni); mais si on adopte la définition donnée par Dahrendorf selon laquelle: “La démocratie est la possibilité de changement sans révolution” alors on peut comprendre que ce type d’organisation politique est supérieur aux autres parce qu’il consent des mutations à l’intérieur de la société qui ne comportent pas la violence, la coercition et l’oppression (c’est pour cela que le philosophe spécifie “sans révolution”) mais qui ont la faculté de pouvoir transformer en loi les synthèses dialectiques – en sens Hegelien – entre les différentes positions des citoyens. La démocratie assure à la société la possibilité de toujours trouver ce que Paul Ricoeur définit “le juste moyen”. Mais, en effets, la démocratie est elle même un “juste moyen”, qui se trouve entre les deux extrêmes représentés par le totalitarisme et l’anarchie.

J’ai dit que Spinoza proposait un Etat dans lequel l’homme puisse vivre sans crainte, sans dommage pour autrui et en exerçant le droit d’exister et d’agir, j’ai dit que, au jour d’aujourd’hui, cet Etat doit être démocratique mais il y a encore une considération fondamentale à faire: si l’Etat se formalise en un ensemble de loi, il ne peut pas être seulement cela. Les lois peuvent être conçues comme des règles ou mieux des axiomes établis par l’homme, mais depuis 1931, année dans laquelle Goedel a démontré son deuxième théorème sur les systèmes axiomatiques, comment pouvons nous ne pas douter de tels systèmes? Nous savons de ce théorème que, établis des axiomes, il y aura toujours une proposition indémontrable sur la base des axiomes mêmes. Dans le cas du système de loi d’un Etat on peut dire qu’il y aura toujours un cas, une situation particulière que les lois ne prévoient pas. Ceci est un limite structural des Etats, qui oblige à introduire le très ambigu concept de “bon sens”: seulement avec le bon sens on peut décider comment construire et faire vivre une démocratie, pour qu’elle ne trahisse ses propres principes et pour qu’elle puisse se rapporter de façon correcte même avec les “cas particuliers”. Avec “bon sens” j’indique la capacité des individus de juger quelle est la morale commune (mais absolument pas universelle), la sensibilité face aux problèmes fondamentaux de la majorité des gens selon laquelle on peut orienter les décisions importantes qui concernent les “cas particuliers”.

Pour qu’on puisse exercer le bon sens il y a une condition qui doit toujours être respectée dans la société, condition individuée par Hannah Arendt comme fondamentale pour l’existence de la démocratie: la présence d’un espace public. Sans un espace public où tout le monde peut se confronter, où le bon sens peut naître, les lois, les règles de l’Etat et de la société sont stériles, ne produisent pas les résultats qu’on veut voir de ces mêmes.

Je finit en faisant une précision: au début j’ai dit qu’il n’y a pas des valeurs vraies a-priori que l’Etat doit défendre, mais l’institution d’un Etat est fonctionnelle à la sauvegarde de l’existence des hommes (c’est-à-dire à leur individualité). Souligné cet aspect, je dois quand même dire qu’il y a des règles que la démocratie doit toujours faire respecter: ce ne sont pas des règles métaphysiquement valides, mais seulement des normes qui dérivent de la cohérence logique:

- si l’Etat qui peut garantir l’individualité des hommes au mieux est la démocratie, il est fondamental qu’elle ne puisse jamais être convertie en autres formes de gouvernement
- si l’Etat est protecteur de l’existence des hommes, il est nécessaire que les hommes existent physiquement, donc l’Etat doit chercher toujours à préserver la vie des citoyens
- si pour l’homme exister signifie aussi réaliser soi même, l’Etat doit activement donner la possibilité que cela arrive, en favorisant la présence d’un espace public qui puisse entraîner la maximale liberté de pensée.

(42)

There are two things, that fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe... the starry sky above me and the moral law within me – Immanuel Kant (Critique of Practical Reason)

Morality shaped by the moulds of mind – what is morality anyway?

Reflecting on the state of ethics drawn up by the discourses of philosophy, one has the impression that each philosopher engaged with ethics had already known or possessed a specific and personal notion of morality where each of their discourses started of. The question therefore can be put: are ethics competent within the margins of human thinking, or are we dealing with beliefs. To launch a commonplace here: are we ever going to know what is right or what is wrong, and do we need this distinction; is human happiness a result of morality, and consequently: can human happiness be imagined without morality. What is happiness anyway? Calmness and apathia, or a dynamical and perpetual rise-followed-by-descent of the soul in human life?

The question arises: can morality be defined logically, can it be derived from pure understanding and consideration, therefore: are ethics possibly examined by philosophy? If so, how are moral laws going to be handy for us to use, how are these going to fit us, human beings?

I.

Several discourses on Kant's moral law after his Critique of Practical Reason being published contained a sour rejection of it referring to his idea of moral law nested in *duty*. It is too rigorous, and for an individual (as a human being who inherited not only a healthy reason but a body too "hosting" the mind) it is not acceptable, too complicated anyway – complicated considering the intense mental scan before every each of our acts we are up to. From many aspects, Kant's notion of morality is fairly abstract, but taking this adjective here: abstract, into consideration, we have already gained our keyword to describe and apprehend what Kant really meant. His morality rooted in the critique of practical *reason* already presumes this abstraction, because Kant in his monumental work drafted the most purest idea of morality, based in the logically thinking mind (reason).

Kant rejects utilitarianism, since the engine of moral acts must not be a pace of general goods or possessions of the individual people or the state as a whole (J. Bentham, Helvetius). He distinguishes two types of connections or attitudes with the outer world, our acts, and our life – thus two types of "mentality" and morality. The first one is the individual mostly reigned by his instincts, his eternal seek for pleasure. But such individual is not living its life in *autonomy*, and will not fully be hold of itself, that is why Kant – it's important here: the major explorer and critical of mind, of our a priori categories - prefers autonomy, the morality not persuaded or empirically determined, but which is manifested under the genuine and considerate supervision of mind, reason. His morality would not accept acts mobilized by love or hate. We must act as if following a rule which could be stretched out onto every thinking person, considering our acts as the source of good.

Therefore Kant's ethics are not consequential ethics, for whatever the result of our acts are they must be considered from the aspect of purpose or intention distilled from emotions – and this is duty.

The quotation refers to Kant's acceptance of natural laws, but on the other hand we must not forget that our will is always going to be free. Hesitating before an act, or to be more authentic: before a good deed, we must "utilize" our moral law, and only later, bypassing the consequences of our act, are we able to place our deeds into a historical process and determine them as evident results of – for example – specific culture, age, community etc. Naturally, determinists would shake their heads here, considering human being totally entangled in its engulfing environment, thus the will totally dependent from it. Kant's freedom is inevitable in his theory, it is us, who choose. It is our choice to live in an autonomy, to live freely, devoted to good, not following pleasure itself, but considering our deeds, whether they are adequate or not, but again, us not being permanently filled with ourselves: even though Kant's moral law denies empathy towards other people, or any feelings, but this does not mean that personally only I am important constantly for myself. This has nothing to do with conscience for example.

Our revision of our acts and purposes is a collective thinking, a collective discourse on good deeds, which is never to be ended in the future anymore.

II.

Parallel to Kant's discourse on moral law, a certain mentality of the middle class (specifically: citizens living in an urban background) in the period of the age took shape. Kant's thesis on morality was a genuine aspect considering such problems compared to former utilitarian theories. To be considerate: Kant's platform where he started off was already somehow determined by the battle between the rationalists and empirist camp; but not just due to them had Kant needed to take a step forward, rather due to a wider philosophical context present in the meantime. For Kant, reason became a very strong authority, and from this can his "awe" be derived.

Kant's morality distilled from whirling emotions is rather comfortable. However, mostly the strictness and paleness had been transferred to this mentality along with a renewal of the importance of results following our acts as well. We luckily have an (although a rather narrow, but again very authentic) outlook on such mentality of the contemporary society fidgeting just at the front door of the second (or whatever which) industrial revolution from monumental works of German literature. Goethe's Doctor Faustus and his contract with the devil illustrates a somewhat clear situation of choice to be bypassed. It is either the choice of the strict rules and the comfortable life of middle class though *boring* and motionless, or the life of uncontrolled hedonism. And Faustus' choice was the latter. Not just that such "lifestyle" is boring, but also not being frank to human nature creates a true conflict amongst citizenship, amongst everyone.

Anyway, is our mind the only jury of our deeds? It is an interesting problem to come across, why actually a positivist attitude grasped the mentality of the modern eurolit today. However, today's desperate search for scientific answers and the mentality actually in hold of this process (which – to make a short consequence – just feeds itself on and on) stems from much earlier times.

The question must be put referring to this state of being of the human nature not being honest to its nature - mentioned a few lines above. This also means a certain loss of freedom. How, if we have managed to get independent of our instincts?

Nietzsche first of all, while criticizing the Western-European culture saturated with an optimistic and devoted mentality towards human intellect, also - though very radically - demands a sharp turn back to where we have come from: our original state of being in our

nature (Born of Tragedy). This does not mean a direct move out into the forests, rather (to try and draft a possible practical lesson of his artistic works) an honest supervision of our nature and not suppressing any originality: thus the attributes of a human being generally created out of flesh and *life* must remain. Such discourse was against religion, qualifying all worshipers as a flock of sheep, but it is not really against conservatism for example; or to be more precise it does not reject any values as far as these values origin from the basic human nature. Because the wide class of peaceful people may also be a tyranny from the aspect of a genuine person trying to realize himself, as an individual, but always facing a strengthful crowd of people.

III. [Conclusions and some remarks]

The problem of ethics is tightly entangled in the problem of freedom as well. If we start to try and live in a certain autonomy, always intending to be good and by our acts to choose the *best* solution – best in the means of being the most appropriate, the solution which could be declared even as a law for everyone in the same situation –, can we actually call ourselves free enough? On the other hand, do not we forget our origins, our state of being a natural being, human being.

It is evident, however, for an individual thrown into cultural and social circumstances and states, that a very clear-minded dialogue must take place. As individuals, we may face society as an oppression against our personal freedom, but we have to make it clear, the cultural, social etc. background too had let us develop. We live in a society, we accept the rules, our life is formed through society, and collective life oozes into our private life. However, we must not forget where we are from, we must be able to imagine our life independent from the background of collectivism, because otherwise we get dissolved into a collective and general life, and we get to think as general, we became general.

One's responsibility must rely on deliberateness of one's acts, and a constant reflection on the background as well, constant supervision of oneself to make sure where the Pole Star is on the starry sky above us.

(22)

Topic Nr. 1

Spinoza / Theological Political Treatise

Spinoza's quote deals with the role of the state in the individual's life. He states, that it's a primary aim is to free its civilians from fear, so they can live as free and peaceful as possible and not injure themselves or others. During the following essay I would like to deal with the general topic of 'the state' by examining it's history and then question, whether Spinoza's ideas are still true today or if history and our momentary situation contradict them.

One of the basic things to do, when dealing with Spinoza's quote, is, of course, defining the way the term 'state' is used in the following text. 'State', always associated with power, is, as far as I am concerned, pretty different to locate (I witnessed this in recent times, when talking to a marxist, who said, "we have to do away with the state", and I asked him "well, what is this concrete that you want to attack?", he could not tell me). I doubt, that a state is only a government of a nation, that the power of the state is not clearly to be personified, but exists in a pretty complex system of politics, society, even economy, which all work together and influence each other in a very special way. Another definition would be, that society is the core anyway that produces all forms of politics, economy, mass media and so forth.

The main point of Spinoza is that the state should rule and restrain its citizens with fear. I would interpret the historic development of the state as a process of civilization. During the Middle Ages, when a small population was spread over vast distances and held together in very small communities, the fear of being affected by outside violence was omni-present. A farmer was always in danger to be attacked during night or robbed on his way to a near village. This changed rapidly when the population density increased, the smaller communities were absorbed by bigger ones and new economic strategies strengthened the bond between the people (for example the job sharing, where suddenly a worker depended on many others who delivered him certain special parts or the raw material for his work, which would all together lead to a product, which again he had to sell via a merchant in the towns, so the interdependence of people grew). As the interdependency becomes more complex, the community has to put more pressure on the individual to not destroy this by sudden emotional outbreaks, by disturbing others or even attacking them. Special codes of behavior, language and so forth have to be set up, because more and more people have to work or interact with each other, which is only possible, if they share a certain basis, which is built by behavioral instructions. This increases during the 16th and 17th century and is again paralleled by a strong concurrence of communities. The struggle between these lead to bigger ones, which actually lead to the building of the modern nations and states.

So, after all, the state (the various forms of communities in history) really had to keep the individuals from being bodily violated, so they could build up this complex system of interaction, which still grows today - and probably even faster than before, because of new media like Internet.

On the other hand, the community - and a state is just one form of it - always also has to rule on its citizens, since it has to make them follow the 'rules of the game'. Laws from the states and certain codes from society indeed rule the individual to a big extent. Even an ordinary conversation is mostly just controlling each other by both partners, each one keeping the other

in a generally accepted way of thinking - so the society's codes, which also include topics, points of views etc. - by using standard-phrases, -questions and -topics and by showing the other one immediately a deep misfortune, if a more crucial topic is being touched.

Although the physical fear may decrease in a state, the psychological fear does certainly increase. There are so many codes and rules that the individual is in a constant doubt whether it does, says, probably even thinks in the right - meaning the general accepted - way, it has to fear rejection of its social surrounding, which can even lead to bodily violence (just think of society's differentiation into 'normal' and 'mad', for a very long time the ones who were declared mad had to suffer heavy physical pains, when they were treated with electro-shocks and stuff like that). Even if the rejection of an individual by society does not end in physical aggression, it is a severe punishment. It is generally known that people who are isolated from their social surroundings, who lack of acquaintances and systems like family, friend- and relationships, are more easily affected by illness and even die earlier than others. So the fear from being ostracized is a very grave one and sociologists like Norbert Elias showed, that the ongoing process of civilization also leads to a heavier psychological weight on the individual.

So therefore I would contradict Spinoza, in so far as the state - a pretty complex system - has to put the human being into fear, it is actually an essential part of the state itself, because only the fear of probably being expelled from this community makes the individual fully accept the community's codes (and also sets the need into the individual to fulfill these codes, so pressure, initially put on it from outside, now comes from within), which again are the conditions which make community possible.

I would also question the possibility of individuality in a state. Since a state has to control its citizen to a very big extent (as just shown above), it is very hard to be an 'authentic individual', because a person always has to comply with its surroundings, which is society, which is the state. A person is educated in a certain way - which is one generally accepted way, that might change at times, but there is always one way of educating the child, which is a la mode, in the first half of the 20th century for example it was a very authoritarian way, which was answered during the late sixties by a concept of education that relied on freedom of the child and avoiding to be authoritarian.

There is a language, in which the new born is thrown and which determines his or her thinking to a big extent.

And there is - which is probably the main point - the society, the civilized, which means very complex, which again means very organized and rigid society. I do not think, that one is very free in the form of existence nowadays. One probably has a few choices (go to work, or study, study natural science or the humanities,...), but these are just little variations of a single, general way of life, which is set up by society (so it can function anyway). Spinoza himself states it, it is the "natural right to work", but this is the first rule, the state puts upon the individual.

So what about the "natural right to exist"? Is it the right TO exist? In this case it is no right, because no human being is able to decide whether he or she is to be born or not. Probably - one might argue - a human being can decide on whether existence or not, by committing suicide or not, but I think this is of no importance, since there is nothing like a specific existence, meaning a way of life, which is truly individualistic. Once a human being is born, it is thrown into a society, it has no possibility to choose HOW to exist, because it has to fulfill the needs and demands of this society, so therefore it has to comply with them, it has to go to kindergarten and then to school (although it can make some decisions, depending on the school-system) then go to work, then - also at an age that is set by the state - can retire. What

remains is the fact of existence, but the possibilities of how to live this life are pretty small, narrowed down or determined by society.

Spinoza himself gives another example of how the state rules on its citizens. The state should strengthen the right to exist, "without injury to himself and others." This is exactly the point, where all the ruling of the state comes in again, because the laws are there to save somebody from being injured and also to injure another citizen of himself, and this has to be founded on some definition of what is the injury like. So the state has to define this, before turning it into a law. These prohibitions increase in recent times, which is a frightening example for the growing impact of the state on an individual's life. A government does rule on every man, by saying you are not allowed to smoke in certain areas, you are not allowed to drink alcohol under a certain age, and so forth. In all these cases, the state rules on the individual, and I think these are very grave interventions into anybody's life.

In actual fact, I would conclude, that the state's aim is not to free the individual, but that it is one of the constituting facts of a state, to rule upon its citizens. Once more I would emphasize on the definition of state, of not seeing only a government behind the term 'the state' but the whole complex of society in all its forms, with all of its variations, of which a government is only the product.

Since society is the assemble of a vast quantity of individual human beings, it needs certain parameters that everybody shares, which are achieved by a process of civilization. These parameters (codes of language, behaviour, etc.) are held up by constant control - the laws of the state (f.e. certain beliefs are forbidden in some countries, so the state tells his citizens, at least to some extent, what to think), the control of an individual by others (during a conversation,...) and, last but not least, by the individual itself. This is the most interesting point, because the individual human being takes over the pressure to fulfill certain parameters and now produces this pressure automatically (to say and do the right thing in the right situation). Power and control settled, where the human being though to be most sovereign - in its own consciousness and reflexive thinking.

When We are the Government

1. “It follows, plainly, from the explanation given above, of the foundation of state, that the ultimate aim of government is not to rule or restrain, by fear, nor to exact obedience, but contrariwise, to free everyman from fear, that he may live in all possible security; in other words, to strengthen his natural right to exist and work, without injury to himself and others” - *Spinoza*

Government, ah, the government – the most mysterious and troublesome problem of a nation. “It (the just state) is only possible when kings are philosophers and philosophers are king” once said Plato. When it comes to government, most of us, probably all of us has a word or two to complain about our government, and all other governments around the globe. In this international society, having a government that can indeed govern its country well decides whether that country can survive the universal competition of survival.

Spinoza argues that what the function of the government is not to oppress its people into submission, but to free them from such loads and allow them to live like a human being should: with his legitimate right to fulfil his life. But to what extent then, should the government interfere? Or even before that, is such state should be the aim of the government? What is government?

What is often expected from a government is to protect people from danger, guard their rights, and provide them with work, food and comfort. It is the core of the society, it is where the people expect their hopes to be turned into reality. But the truth is, not one government can ever become all-perfect. What is more, I think the biggest problem of having a government, is that it is self-destructive. The government that may lead the country to victory in war will be seen as barbarous in a peaceful society, and the government that provided safety and support during a rapid development will become just frustrating and bossy when the country flourishes and no longer needs a specific guidance as to where to go next. Therefore, even though the government may seem to be perfect for the situation now, once that state is fulfilled, people will start to see the flaws and mistakes of the government.

Here, I would like to introduce a possible way of thinking about how the government changes, based on George Orwell’s novel “Nineteen-Eighty-Four”. Usually, in a society, there are a group of people who has the power of the nation, who runs the government and controls what it does. There are also the people who are living on the edge of life, barely have enough to live each day. Then there are others who exist in between the two groups. The people who are at the top, therefore, the ones who has the power, is keen not to lose that status, because of the luxuries of having a materialistic life is too addictive. Yet, of course there are faults in the system, and social problems that need sorting. A group of people will then huddle and warm their views, and indeed, many do have zeal and passion to make the world a better place. They would probably suffer from many backlashes, but ho, the call of their utopia drives them through the wind and the rain. Gradually, their ideas may start to persuade people, especially the discriminated and oppressed, to change their mind in favour of such group. After elections after elections, finally, the little group turns into a political party, and eventually wins over the majority of the Parliament. Then, the rest is all down fall. The power is too attractive and addictive, that they do not want to let go. A group of people will become oppressed by the governing force, and the citizens will grow unhappy with the flaws that the government is acting as if it cannot see, and the repetitive mistakes will inevitably

lose to function purely for the need of people. Even though there are many other ways for a party to become a governing force, in a nutshell, power is always a serious problem. Therefore we need a government that will not be blinded by power, a Party that are formed by good thinkers. Perhaps in such a moder society, the monarchy of kings is somewhat out of date, but having the leaders to become philosophers and philosophers as leaders, as Plato argues, is a very effective way to acheieve a just state.

A nation, on the other hand, needs stability and order. It is interesting that Spinoza specifies that the government should not aim to “restrain, by fear”, because it was one of the main ways a governing force tried to control its people so many times in the course of history. In the past, there were some extreme government that pushed fear to its limits. For example, in the Soviet Union, people will driven to do as they are told from the fear of being killed, having their loved ones and loved places destroyed, and tortured so grusomely that they felt throwing away their rights and pride as humans are a better solution than resisting. It was exactly the state that Spinoza is counterarguing for, therefore it is the ultimate state the government should despise and detest. But it is a state that the government can so easily have a tendancy towards: to rob people of their freedom, to stop people from speaking, and even from thinking. Actually, the Chinese Cultural Revolution is also such example, because it tried to eliminate people who can think against the government, so that the stability of the government is guaranteed. Of course, the surviving documents, journals and accounts clearly show that people were not given the right to think, which is the one and only unique gift that are given to human beings. In a sense, I think they were treated like animals, as if the government was rinning a farm, but the problem is, some people could not even realize that they are being de-humanized, and was completely obedient to the leaders. But all the same, most totalitarian states did not last long, because, as Lord Acton puts it, “Power tends to corrupt, absolute power corrupts absolutely”, and the corrupted government will sooner or later kill itself from it. I say this because a corrupted system will start to fail to function properly, cause dissatisfaction among the citizens, and gives them the reason to unite against the governing force and replace it anew.

Then, how to obtain stability, which is ultimately peace, as well as order without driving the people with fear, needs to be questioned. Why don't I commit a crime? Why do I know it is wrong? Other than the fact that ever since my childhood, I have been taught that harming another is evil, I cannot deny the fact that I do fear the punishment that awaits me if I do. For example, how about committing something minor, such as parking my bicycle in front of a building where I am not supposed to. I am probably in the way of people trying to get in, but on the whole, I am not harming somebody else. Still, the reason I do not take the chance to park there is because I know I will be fined if I do. It is the fear of violating the law that drives me away from committing a crime. Yet is that the only thing? I suppose the anwer is no, because I feel I have a duty as one citizen of the city to keep the rules and laws that are set, since they are probably there for a reason. Just as I do not want people to do so in front of my house. However, no doubt, there are people who do not care about things like parking a bicycle, and only does not park there because they fear they will be fined. The law, then, is not necessarily only punishing the crime committers, but prevents the would-be criminals from acting, but through fear. With so many people in a nation, I am skeptic about a government freeing everyone from fear, as Spinoza argues. The government needs the support of its people. Without it, people will not have any faith in the government, which means it cannot save or protect anybody, at anytime. It needs to make people follow certain laws and rules in order to give equal chances to all, and give them justice. Otherwise, people will barge into queues without waiting for their turn in lines, they will start to act as they wish including comming crimes, and therefore, the state of the nation will become chaotic. The natural right to exist, is in danger.

To what extent though, is “his natural right”? Of course, the famous “I think therefore I am” can be used to argue that we all exist, and therefore has a right to keep existing, it is the freedom that should not be robbed by any other being or power. One could say that it is the right to eat, to drink, to sleep, to laugh, to cry, to live and many more. I think the natural right is to think. The government should give us freedom to think for ourselves, to act on our own accord, and to find happiness. However, I am not sure to how a man can exist without being controlled by the government in one way or another. What is a “right”? I think a right is what guarantees what makes of you, something that everyone, or a group of people acknowledges as proper, and you are given it to make your life better. At the same time, it is something precious but vulnerable, that needs constant care. A right can be easily be overlooked and be a victim of ignorance. I also think that such rights, protects the very core of human life, because without it, people are not given the option to resist anything; it is the foundation of our thoughts and of morality. Therefore, a “right” turns a human being from an animal to a social being, and allows him to think – a process that forms the very base of life. Therefore, I agree with Spinoza that the government has a duty to protect our rights as a human being, because the right to exist is not only talking about the right to live physically, but to truly become a human being with a heart and a mind, to distinguish myself from all other animals on earth.

However, there is a problem with to what extent the right could be protected. Spinoza does say that “without injury to himself and others”, but what happens to a murderer who is waiting for the verdict? Is capital punishment wrong then? Should the murderer be allowed to live because he has a right to exist, presumably in prison, even though he (in this case, I am not referring to the gender but as a human being) has just robbed another persons life? Even he is to be prisoned for life, consequently, he is being robbed of his right to work. It could be argued that the person should be robbed of at least some of his right, because he has destroyed the possibilities of all other rights of the victim. Yet who is legitimate to draw the line to rob of which right? Also, if he is not sentenced to life, or by chance, his verdict allows him to return to the society once more, what punishment will be appropriate if he commits murder again? Thus, there is a never ending conflict between the rights themselves. Hutcheson said that “The action which procures the greatest happiness of greatest number of people”, but that means that the happiness of that murderer, and perhaps of his family, is not fulfilled. Furthermore, it is up to the government to decide what to do with the murderer, whose security it should protect.

Also, it is a matter of discussion about the extent of interference by the government. If the government interferes too much, it will be exploiting its power over us and takes away our right to do as we think, but if they do nothing, then there is no point of having a government altogether. One could just conclude that it is the balance that matters, but how to find that balance, is a delicate question. Frankly, I do not think that the balance would just have to change accordingly to the situation. That is why a good relationship between the government and the citizens is essential. The government is somewhat a unique system in our society, because even though it is formed by people like you and I, it still has its own characteristics, it could so easily create a huge gap between the people and the rulers. I think one such example is the relationship between the Bush Administration and the Americans. Now that there are so many casualties of American soldiers and Iraqi soldiers and citizens, people are keen to draw out of Iraq. The reason why they cannot is because the government is not truly listening to the people’s voice, or only listening to the ones they want to. The communication between the rulers and the ruled are vital for an ideal state, because the ruled should always be able to overthrow the rulers, so that the government is always function for the better of the nation, not ignore what the people say and continue using force against another country.

However, the important point for an ideal government to be obtained is for governments around the world to also do the same. I say this because if a government frees people from fear, and protect the right to exist and work without injury to anyone, that ultimately means war is not worthy. Yet unless the other nations demilitarize as well, it will be the victim of a nation of extreme power, who wants to exploit the nation and rule it. Ruling means the destruction of that nation's freedom. That, then, would mean the government has failed to protect the nation from danger.

Yet I think the way that the government may be able to free people from fear itself, is by making them act according to their responsibilities. Sartre says that "Man is alone, abandoned on earth in his infinite responsibilities", and I do think that that realization is the key to a freedom from fear. Of course, Sartre's argument is that man is not completely free, and I agree so. We are never free, there are various duties that we forges for ourselves, and chain ourselves to tasks and responsibilities that we know not of. In that sense, Rousseau's "Man is born free, but everywhere he is in chains" becomes valid as well. However, I do not think having responsibilities is not a negative thing, as long as there are no negative feelings about it. What I mean is that even though we may not be a hundred-percent free, if we are free from fear, we are able to live as a proper citizen.

All in all, I do agree with Spinoza that the government should always aim to strengthen people's natural right to think for ourselves, and do accordingly. Even though as human beings, we tend to be corrupted and make many mistakes, I think there is still hope in the future, we still have the right, and in fact, the duty, to hope for the better, to always aim high, even it seems impossible. Nonetheless, as for freeing people from fear, I do not think people will ever be free even if we are to live in a perfect nation. The task of the government is to free the people from fear as much as possible, even though a complete freedom is probably not realistic. I think the idea government, is not a proper government at all, it should always be open and easily affected by its people and not overpowered by a specific thought. The power of the government should always be purely provided by the people each moment, so that the relationship of the ruled and the rulers are flexible. For that to happen, we must realize what it means to have a right to exist, the duty that would come from that right. Unfortunately, there are too many governments that are deceiving its people, and so many of them are turning away from what its main function should be. The point of having the government, is to give us the right to exist, which is the freedom to think. It is not only the government who has a problem; we too, must realize that having this precious ability to think means we must take part in the action that the nation is going through.

There are responsibilities beyond just voting and discussions over a drink or two. People must realize that they are part of the government as well, even though it is not so clear-cut today. No one should be purely recessive against a government, nor should be ignorant enough to think it has nothing to do with oneself. Therefore the ideal state would be when we are the government, and the government is us, and that is what we must aim at.