EXPLORING POST-TRADITIONAL ORDERS

INDIVIDUAL REFLEXIVITY, 'PURE RELATIONS' AND DUALITY OF STRUCTURE

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Giddens' theory of reflexivity is a central theme of his broader theory of transition from traditional to post-traditional social orders. Traditional orders are characterized by codes of 'formulaic truth' that routinise social conduct in a meaningful, emotionally satisfying manner. Following traditional rules and routines gives dignity to their adherents and moral authority to those who guard and interpret such rules. 'Detraditionalisation', on the other hand - via such processes as disembedment, increase of mediated experience, pluralisation of life-worlds, and the emergence of contingent knowledge - creates a situation where routines lose their meaningfulness and their unquestioned moral authority. They become mindless habits or compulsions that may give temporary relief from the insecurities of late modern life, but cannot and do not lead to a meaningful existence (Giddens 1994b).

However, according to Giddens, the social and moral vacuum created by detraditionalisation is not filled simply by compulsive routines. An alternative possibility is the reflexive construction of one's 'biography' via an active choice from among the varied goals offered by late modernity, and by rational adaptation of one or other of the multiplicity of available means for the realisation of such goals. In other words, whereas in pre-modern contexts individual conduct - in such crucial areas as work, marriage, the socialisation of children, entertainment, and so on - was regulated routinely but meaningfully through traditional moral codes, in detraditionalised social contexts all the mechanisms of social regulation extrinsic to the individual become weaker, and people are forced to confront a situation that urgently asks them to make choices, to decide about their career, their lifestyles, their diets, the number of children they wish to have, the way they will raise them, and so on. In this situation *homo optionis*, faced with a geometrically rising number of choices in all institutional spheres, can either escape from 'the tyranny of possibilities' by compulsively adhering to meaningless routines, or decide actively to construct their life projects by a process of creative self-reflection (Giddens 1994b: 70 ff).

During the earlier phases of modernity the emergence of this type of individual or self-reflexivity was not as marked as it is today. At that time, traditional certainties were replaced, at least in part, by the collective certainties of class, party and nation, and to some extent such configurations were able to provide non-traditional, extrinsic mechanisms of self-regulation and identity formation. In late or high modernity, however, these in-between arrangements became peripheralised by the rapid processes of globalisation. Individuals, more than at any time before, are today facing the unprecedented situation of an 'empty space' that demands to be filled by either meaningless compulsions or, via individual reflexivity, by the active choice of goals/means and the construction of their own self-projects. Whilst Giddens introduces a distinction between individual and institutional reflexivity, my concern in this chapter is to consider same issues relating only to the former.

Two types of self-reflexivity

For some critics, the way in which traditional modes of regulation and the development of individual reflexivity have declined is not as unique as Giddens posits. Even in pre-industrial complex civilisations during periods of transition one can find processes that led to the weakening of traditional controls and the development of self-reflexivity (Rose

1996: 309). I myself, however, would rather agree with Beck (whose theory of individualisation has received similar criticism) that it is only in late modernity that the kind of individual reflexivity he and Giddens talk about has spread 'from the few to the many'. It is only during the present period of 'reflexive modernisation' that the demise of traditional certainties and the multiplication of choices has been forced not only on the elites but also on the masses (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1996). To be more specific, in relation to the radical undermining of traditional arrangements that globalisation brings about, the extraordinary mass production and distribution of self-help manuals (including the myriad guides on how to improve your muscles, your memory, your self-confidence, self-esteem, self-image etc.) constitute a unique phenomenon, whose importance and centrality for understanding our present predicament cannot be minimised by reference to similar practices having occurred in past civilisations.

For much the same reasons I also remain unconvinced by the argument that reflexivity is a constitutive dimension of all social action - whether traditional or modern - and that therefore, even in the absence of detraditionalisation, the application of formulaic truths to specific interactive contexts unavoidably entails choices, uncertainty, the reflexive use of means to achieve a given goal, and so on (see, for instance, Alexander 1982: 67). Although I accept the general argument that humans cannot but be the self-interpreting and, therefore, self-reflexive, animals (Taylor 1985), and that, in an ethno-methodological sense, the ongoing construction of social reality always entails self-reflexivity, it does not follow that one cannot identify qualitative differences between the types of reflexivity to be found in traditional and late-modern contexts. In the former case the reflexivity Giddens talks about is restricted by the fact that the basic parameters of an individual's social existence are provided by formulaic codes and traditional routines and rituals; in the latter case this is so no longer, and individuals have to provide some of these parameters themselves.

It seems to me that a more constructive way of criticising Giddens' notion of individual or self-reflexivity would be to focus less on the uniqueness or spread of the phenomenon in time and space, and more on the one-sided manner in which the notion has been conceived. More specifically, if one accepts the crucial importance of the emergence of an unprecedented 'open space' in detraditionalised, late modernity - a space forcing the individual to take a myriad of decisions on matters that were previously settled more or less automatically by tradition - and if one also accepts that in such an open situation the two fundamental responses are mindless compulsion or self-reflexivity, then the following question arises. Does Giddens definition of reflexivity exhaust the possible *non-compulsive* reactions to the extraordinary increase of choices entailed by late modernity? Might there not be, potentially or actually, other ways of reflexively reacting to modernity's 'open spaces'? I think that the answer to this question is 'Yes'. In order to show why, I shall start by pointing out the culture-specific, or more precisely western-specific, character of Giddens' view of reflexivity.

Whether one looks at the way Giddens links individual reflexivity with detraditionalisation or at the examples he provides, it is quite clear that his notion of reflexivity is *over-activistic*. Following the Protestant-ethic tradition, the reflexive individuals' relation to their inner and outer worlds is conceptualised in ultra-activistic, instrumental terms: subjects are portrayed as constantly involved in means-ends situations, constantly trying reflexively and rationally to choose their broad goals as well

as the means of their realisation; they are also constantly monitoring or revising their projects in the light of new information and of the already achieved results. Whether the chosen goal is to get rich, become famous, win friends, or improve one's sex appeal, the way in which both the goals and means are selected entails a type of reflexivity that excludes more contemplative, more 'easy-going', less cognitive ways of navigating reflexively in a world full of choices and individual challenges.

To reformulate the question: since the setting of goals and the choice of means for their attainment is no longer given or facilitated by traditional codes, is Giddens' type of activistic, instrumentalist, 'means-ends'-based reflexivity the only alternative to escaping into compulsion? Is it perhaps possible to resort to some non-compulsive, reflexive attitude that does not seek (via rational choices) actively to *construct* life orientations, but rather allows in *indirect, passive manner* life orientations and other broad goals to *emerge*? Is it not possible for modern reflexivity to be compatible with a kind of existence where, instead of actively and instrumentally trying to master the complexity of growing choices, one chooses (to use Pierre-August Renoir's expression) to 'float as a cork' in the ocean of post-traditional reality? Could it be that reflexively achieved individual freedom and autonomy in a detraditionalised situation may entail, following Simmel and Heidegger, the ability to get rid of the 'tyranny' of purposiveness based on calculation, planning, and ratiocination? Could it be that it entails the transcendence of the never-ending rational setting of goals, the fulfilment of which only leads to new goals *ad infinitum*? Could it be, finally, that one might be profoundly reflexive without becoming engulfed by the business of incessant means-ends decision making? Could it be that non-western cultures (e.g. Islamic, Confucian)[1] might offer possibilities for a type of *post-traditional* reflexivity that is not based on the European Renaissance and Enlightenment model of a human being? Could it be that individual reflexivity in the era of globalisation can take less or non-Promethean forms?

In order to answer the above questions one should first of all examine a type of reflexivity that is the exact opposite of Giddens'. In its non-secular form it exists in all the great mystical traditions of both East and West (Jones *et al*. 1986). To limit ourselves to the Christian tradition, Eastern Orthodoxy (much more so than Protestantism or Catholicism) emphasises the impossibility of relating to the divine via rational/cognitive means (Zizioulas 1993), and suggests that the more one attempts to approach God rationally, the more this becomes impossible. Cognition is useful only when used in a negative, *apophatic*, rather than a positive and affirmative, *cataphatic* manner.[2] Reason can help only through awareness and removal of the various obstacles (e.g. selfish practices, various forms of escapism etc.) that prevent the human soul from opening up to divine grace. Apophaticism aims at cleaning out the material and spiritual self so that the believer becomes an 'empty vessel' ready to receive divine illumination. The actual reception in no way depends on calculation or means-ends schemata. These are involved only *negatively*, by being useful for removing obstacles, so that the divine-human rapprochement can take place in a setting where any form of instrumental calculation, any form of ratiocination, is absent.

In Eastern Orthodox Christianity, apophatic theology was closely but not entirely linked with *hesychasm* (*hesychia* meaning quietness), a spiritual movement that acquired importance in the late Byzantine period. Its major representative at that period was St Gregory Palamas (Meyendorff 1974), whose writings rested on three basic

themes. The first was that Cod in his *essence* is unknowable, and therefore one cannot say anything about what he is. Second, if on the level of his essence God is absolutely transcendental, on the level of his *energies* he is absolutely imminent: human beings experiencing the divine do so less as a result of mediation (e.g. via the scriptures, theology, rituals) but in unmediated, direct, personal, 'face-to-face' manner. Third, this direct relationship between human and divine can be facilitated by various techniques (such as posture, breathing, repeating the Jesus prayer) that aim at quietening the mind, so freeing it of categories, images, concepts, thoughts, and so on. Thinking, even *phantasia* (i.e. imagination) must be subdued, otherwise one becomes 'not a Hesychast but a phantast' (quoted in Ware 1986: 247).[3]

One could argue, of course, that the *via negativa*, the apophatic method, is more prayer than self-reflexivity, if for no other reason than because it entails a divinity which, somehow, plays a similar role to that of tradition: it assists the individual to make the necessary choices with the help of a mechanism that is extrinsic rather than intrinsic to the self. It entails, in other words, not a 'self-self' but a 'self-divinity' relationship, which is different from the self-referentiality of Giddens' notion of individual reflexivity.

However, the *via negativa* can also take secular forms that shift the focus from self-God to self-self relationships. For instance, the bulk of the psycho-analytic tradition is based on the idea that the role of the analyst is not to instil new goals or life purposes in analysands; it does not purport to help them directly to solve the moral or practical problems of everyday life. Rather, the role of the analyst is to help analysands to become aware of the variety of repressed and/or defensive mechanisms that are life-destroying, and that prevent the *emergence* of non-pathological life patterns. Once analysands achieve this awareness and experience directly the above mechanisms, the goals and means appropriate for them emerge without any cognitive intervention from either themselves or the analyst.

This is even more so when one moves from psychoanalysis to self-psychoanalysis - a technique that Freud himself practised, and that is becoming increasingly popular today. In self-analysis, the aim is to remove through self-awareness obstacles such as compulsions and defence mechanisms, so that 'what is to be done' is not constructed rationalistically by the subject but emerges spontaneously and unproblematically.

The above type of reflexivity I would call apophatic, in contrast to Giddens' 'cataphatic', affirmative activistic reflexivity. The subject turns away from tradition, divine revelation, formulaic truths and all other extrinsic sources of goal formation, in order to focus on the self in such a way that decisions and life-goals '*appear*' or *emerge* rather than having to be actively *constructed*. In a certain sense, therefore, it can be argued that self-analysis, as practised by Freud and many others, is a secularised form of the religious *via negativa*, a secularised form of apophaticism.

Radical, secular, apophatic reflexivity: the work of Krishnamurti

Stripping the religious connotations from apophatic reflexivity is a feature of not only Freud's written work and practice; in much more radical fashion it can be found in the work of Jiddo Krishnamurti.[4] Although his books are popular and well-known among spiritual seekers all over the world, since his work does not have a 'scholarly' character,

it remains little known among academics. This being so, as well as the fact that Krishnamurti's notion of non-religious, apophatic reflexivity is central for my argument, I shall have to present a fairly extensive outline of his thought.

For Krishnamurti, spirituality has nothing to do with beliefs and formulaic truths (neither religious nor secular). Beliefs, divine revelations, sacred texts, as well as rationalistically derived moral codes, are not only quite irrelevant in the search for a spiritual, meaningful existence today, but they actually *constitute serious obstacles* to such a search. It is for this reason that Krishnamurti's writings scrupulously avoid any reference to God, or to whether or not there is life after death, as well as to other eschatological or existential questions. Concern with the future (in this life or after death) is an excellent way of escaping the present, the here-and-now, and in that sense it is profoundly anti-spiritual. Therefore, if Giddens' notion of reflexivity entails, to use his own terminology, a 'colonisation of the future' (Giddens 1991a: 111ff), Krishnamurti's notion of reflexive spirituality entails a 'colonisation of the present'. Krishnamurti equally rejects any attempt to elevate his own theory into an organised system of beliefs and practices, into a spiritual tool-kit for guiding his followers to a meaningful existence. His constant advice is that one should accept nothing, whether it comes from him or others, without first 'testing it', without seeing what it means in terms of one's own experience.

Krishnamurti sees himself as simply someone who helps his fellow human beings to look at themselves in a highly 'apophatic' manner. For him, looking inwards becomes creative and fruitful only when ratiocination, planning, and cognitively constructed means-and-ends schemata are peripheralised, and this includes not only all beliefs and preconceived ideas, but also all linguistic categories, and all conceptualisations acquired through the various processes of socialisation. This purgative, negating, apophatic reflexivity is a necessary precondition for the emergence of the spiritual, for the emergence of an internal awareness where decisions (on both goals and means) emerge without the activation of conscious decision-making mechanisms (Krishnamurti 1954, 1956, 1975, 1978, l985).[5]

This type of apophatic approach does not seem to be very different from what psychoanalysts do when they try to clear the ground of defensive preconceptions and misconceptions, so that the hidden or repressed parts of the self can emerge into consciousness. But Krishnamurti is opposed to psychoanalysis on the grounds that the psychoanalytic process is based on verbal exchanges, and verbal exchanges, just like beliefs, ratiocination and other cognitive processes, prevent the emergence of the spiritual. So although Krishnamurti's (non-)method shares with psychoanalysis the urge to explore what *is* rather than what *ought* to be, his exploration dispenses with verbal exchanges. Any verbal interaction between analyst and analysand, or any attempt by the former to use analytical tools in order to describe on explain latent or manifest aspects of the ongoing interaction, automatically sabotages the detached exploration of what *is*. It is through silent and continuous gazing inwards, rather than through talking, analysing, expressing feelings verbally and looking for repressed mechanisms, that the genuine exploration of the self proceeds.

To put it differently: Krishnamurti, following a variety of eastern and western mystical traditions, regards *thinking* and *being* as antithetical. The more the spiritual is sought via conceptual categories, reasoning, means-and-end schemata, the more it

remains elusive and unapproachable. He even rejects all spiritual disciplines, such as meditating with the use of mantras aimed at stilling the mind. *Any spiritual system, method, or technique* eventually leads to a mechanised, routinised relationship vis-à-vis the self, and in that sense it becomes anti-spiritual. In other words, it is not possible to acquire spirituality as one acquires knowledge of a language, gradually, that is, and by the use of various meditative techniques or methods.

Spirituality for Krishnamurti entails the 'pathless way'. It entails seeing, observing what goes on inside the self in totally detached manner - detachment here meaning not simply setting aside all beliefs, misconceptions and ratiocinations, but also, as much as possible, clearing the mind of all thoughts (positive or negative), all labels, all complex conceptualisations.[6] It is in this way that the empty space is created within where the spiritual can emerge. When this happens, it invariably entails a sense of unlimited compassion (or love) towards the self, towards the Other, and towards all creatures (Krishnamurti 1978).

It is precisely this overwhelming feeling of compassion that becomes a spontaneous motivation or (non-)guide to practical action. When in a state of compassion, one does not need to consult ethical codes or rationally ponder alternative courses of action; one does not need to make conscious decisions at all. Decisions emerge automatically, for instance, one knows exactly, without any planning or calculation, what to do both vis-à-vis the self, vis-à-vis the Other, and vis-à-vis Nature.

It is precisely at this point that one moves from Giddens' cataphatic to Krishnamurti's apophatic reflexivity. The latter's notion of compassion - the result of silent, detached, choiceless, internal observation - operates like divine grace does in certain Christian traditions. In the same way that the believer, by means of a corrective, expiatory purification (for instance, by means of apophatic, negatory cleansing) becomes an 'empty vessel' ready to receive the divine, so, as Krishnamurti tells us, silent observation of what goes on inside the 'spiritual non-believer' prepares that person for the emergence of compassion which leads to the right kind of intra- and inter-action. The difference between the more traditional Christian apophatic method and Krishnamurti's teaching is that for the latter the source of energy and guidance is not external but internal.[7]

A final note on the concept of reflexivity. Giddens' and Krishnamurti's diametrically opposed notions of self-reflexivity, as presented here, are obviously *ideal types*. A perfectly self-reflexive individual in Giddens' sense would be something of a computer, applying 'operational research' calculations to his or her every move. At the other extreme, being, a perfectly self-reflexive individual in Krishnamurti's sense would entail the total and impossible rejection of all purposive planning and calculation, even in such practical matters as building a bridge or learning a skill. Quite obviously, both apophatic and cataphatic self-reflexivity are constitutive dimensions of all intra-action. They are both present in various degrees, whatever the type of communication one has with one's self. It is also obvious that for the achievement of certain goals - such as accumulating economic capital or learning to play chess - it is the activistic and instrumental elements that are more relevant or appropriate. The opposite is true with respect to goals - or rather states of being, the realisation of which are not a matter of will or instrumental rationality - for example being humble, or acquiring courage or compassion (see on this point Campbell 1996: 157 ff, and Elster 1983: 50).

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Reflexivity and the 'pure relationship'

This brings me to Giddens' other fundamental notion, that of the 'pure relationship' - a notion closely linked up with that of reflexivity. If, in conditions of detraditionalisation, self-reflexivity entails a non-compulsive, intra-active, self-to-self relation, the notion of pure relationship entails a non-traditionally regulated, non-compulsively established interactive, self-Other relation (Giddens 1991a). As an intimate bond between two human beings, pure relationship involves *active trust*; it involves emotional disclosure, the opening up of one's self to the Other in a context of mutual respect for each other's autonomy and self-respect. According to Giddens, it is an intimacy not based on extrinsic considerations of either *Gerneinschaft* or *Gesellschaft*. Instead, it is a type of intimacy that rests on constant dialogue between two human beings who can fall back on neither kinship networks, traditional codes of conduct, nor Kantian moral imperatives to buttress and sustain their relationship.

From the above perspective, pure relationship comes very close to Martin Buber's dialogic, I-Thou relationship (Buber 1937, 1947, 1952). Having been influenced not only by philosophers like Nietzsche and Kierkegaard but also by Simmel and Weber, Buber had a strong sense of social interaction as crucial for an understanding of social and moral life. His views on ethics and spirituality (after a mystical and existentialist phase) took the form of a dialogical philosophical sociology (Mendes-Flohr 1989). In this, the distinction, between the I-It and I-Thou relationships plays a fundamental part (Buber 19 7).

The former is based on what Weber has called instrumental rationality: the self responds to something extraneous to it (a physical object, another person, God) in a manipulative, rationalising, or calculating manner. The ultimate aim in the I-It relationship is the attainment of control or domination.

By contrast, the I-Thou relation, when applied to the 'interhuman',[8] comes very close to Giddens' pure relationship. Here the Other is neither reduced to an object, nor viewed as an extension of the self. There is a type of inter-personal mutuality[9] in which each individual retains full autonomy while opening up to and deeply understanding the Other's situation. It is from this in-between, inter-human space of open, 'undistorted' communication that the ethical in particular, and meaningful life in general, emerges. To put this in negatory terms, the ethical and spiritual *emanates* from an inter-personal situation where the rationalising, calculating, planning, utilitarian element (which transforms the 'Thou' into 'It') is absent. In default of such elements the I is able, in an open-ended interactive situation, to confirm the worthiness of the Other, and to show trust by being fully *present*: for instance, by not withholding any part of the self from the 'meeting' or 'dialogue'. A genuine meeting, therefore, being based on an I-Thou relation, presupposes a non-instrumental confirmation of the Other, which is expressed through the self being fully present to the interactive situation (Silbernstein 1989: 129ff).

In the light of the above, it is not surprising that Buber rejects categorically any attempt to derive ethical rules of conduct from sacred texts, traditional religious practices,[10] or logico-deductive reasoning. For him, any attempt at codification, classification, typification - regardless of whether inspired by religious or secular theorising - automatically precludes the genuine meeting or dialogue. By leading from the I-Thou to the I-It type of interaction, it eliminates the 'in-between' space where the ethical and the 'what to do' can emerge. Another way of putting this is to say that codes

of conduct, whether constructed via religious or secular theorising, cannot provide guidance for a concrete encounter, because each encounter is unique, unrepeatable and, therefore, not subsumable to any general category or concept.[11] This means that genuine ethical guidance can only spring from the encounter itself, it cannot be extrinsic to it (Buber 1947, 1952).

Going back to Giddens now, it can be argued that, despite the fact that his problematic is different from Buber's, his notion of pure relationship approximates the latter's I-Thou relationship. Both concepts are highly self-referential, in the sense that they exclude modes of regulation extrinsic to the relationship. They both emphasise openness, dialogue, mutual trust, and respect for the Other's autonomy. However, there is a difference with respect to the linkages between self-reflexivity and pure relationship or, in Buber's terminology, between intra-human and inter-human relations.

Here Buber implies that an I-Thou, dialogic inter-human/inter-active relation entails treating one's self in a non-instrumental, and not I-It manner. Whether the 'object' is the self, the Other, or Nature, it is possible to relate to it in either instrumental or non-instrumental fashion (Silbernstein 1989). Treating the Other non-instrumentally entails treating oneself non-instrumentally. On this issue Buber's and Krishnamurti's thinking approximate quite closely, although the weight they give to the self-self relationship is different. Krishnamurti emphasises more the intra-active and intra-human: a pre-condition for a non-instrumental interpersonal relationship is the non-utilitarian, non-instrumental relationship one has to one's self. In Buber's case, the self-Other rather the self-self relation comes first. It is the establishment of a dialogic, I-Thou involvement with another that leads to non-instrumental, self-self relationships. Thus, although Buber considers practices of internal contemplation as legitimate, they are pathological and narcissistic when they become dominant, when they lead to a hermitic, isolated type of existence. For Buber, self-Other non-instrumental relations are more important than self-self non-instrumental relations.

For Giddens now, self-reflexivity leading to an active, do-it-yourself type of 'biography' is not necessarily egotistic or narcissistic (Giddens 1991a: 178); it does, however, entail an instrumental relationship to the self. When the self becomes the object of strategies aimed at 'character-building' or at the development of such qualities as the capacity to 'win friends and influence people', then the self is being manipulated. (A similar argument can be and has been put forward with respect to one's body - Joas 1996: 167-84). If this is the case, how compatible is Giddens' self-reflexivity (which entails an instrumental self-self relation) with his notion of pure relationship entailing a non-instrumental self-Other relationship?

What I want to suggest here is that if one limits self-reflexivity to its activistic dimension, then there is a tension between this notion and Giddens' notion of pure relationship. At least in ideal-typical terms, there is more compatibility between a pure relationship based on mutual trust and an apophatic self-reflexivity, rather than an activistic instrumental self-reflexivity. The latter type of self-reflexivity shows greater elective affinity with a pure relationship (i.e. a relation regulated by considerations intrinsic to it) based on mutual *dis*trust and manipulation.

This leads us to the conclusion that just as there are two types of self- reflexivity, so there are also two types of intrinsically regulated, or pure, relationships: a pure relationship based on active trust and mutual respect of the Other's autonomy, and an

equally pure relationship based on mutual distrust and the mutual manipulation of each Other's weaknesses and insecurities. Both types of pure relationship can exist in a relatively stable manner within detraditionalised contexts. There is no reason to link, as Giddens does, 'purity' of the self-Other relationship with the life-enhancing element of mutual, active trust. Absence of extrinsic mechanisms of regulation can just as easily lead to a stable, but at the same time sado-masochistic type of relationship.

Giddens could argue, of course, that there is always the possibility of actors who are instrumental towards their self and body without being instrumental vis-à-vis the Other's. Although this combination cannot be excluded, it seems to me more plausible to establish an elective affinity between a non-instrumental self-self relationship, that is, between apophatic individual reflexivity and a non-instrumental self-Other relation, rather than vice versa. Here, however, we come to matters that can be settled only empirically. What it is important to stress in this respect is that the concepts of reflexivity and pure relationship that are here being proposed allow us to launch *researchable* projects based on questions such as:

- In what institutional conditions does reflexivity take predominantly cataphatic, and in which conditions predominantly apophatic forms?
- What precise mechanisms does a society or culture provide that can help a social actor to switch from one type of reflexivity to another?
- Is the present popularity in the West of eastern religious traditions a yearning for an apophatic type of lifestyle or spirituality that organised Christian churches have failed to provide?
- Is the resurgence of mystical Christianity in several developed countries today (e.g. Spain) related to a reaction among the young to the type of logocentric, do-it-yourself life project that Giddens sees as the only non-compulsive alternative in the present context of radical detraditionalisation?
- Concerning intimate relationships today, apart from the obvious decline of traditional 'external' modes of regulation, are there any intra-active and interactive considerations 'internal' to the relationship that explain their extreme fragility?
- Finally, on the level of social theory (i.e. on the level of 'second-order' discourses), are there, in conditions of rapid globalisation, any affinities between post-modern, anti-foundationalism and apophatic discourses on spirituality?[12]

I think that questions like the above make it clear that a more adequate analysis of reflexivity and pure relationships in conditions of detraditionalisation requires both a distinction between activistic/purposive and apophatic forms of reflexivity, and a distinction between pure relationships based on mutual trust and those based on mutual distrust. These fundamental distinctions represent a set of heuristic tools that are better able to deal with the complexities and pathologies of late-modern existence, because they can grasp more adequately the type of non-compulsive intra-active and interactive relationships that come to the fore once traditional or collective certainties decline.

Reflexivity and duality of structure

If there is tension between Giddens' notion of individual reflexivity and his notion of pure relationship, there is flagrant contradiction between the former and the basic conceptual framework of structuration theory. As I have dealt with this problem

extensively in previous publications (Mouzelis 1989, 1991), I shall be very brief here. By his structuration theory, and particularly by his concept of the duality of structure, Giddens tries to transcend the divide between objectivist sociologies (structural and structuralist) and subjectivist ones (interpretative sociologies). In an attempt to go beyond the subject-object divide, Giddens defines structure as rules and resources which, like Saussure's *langue*, exist outside time and pace (Giddens 1984: 18 ff). In fact, he considers structure as a virtual system\that is recursively instantiated as agents draw on it in order to act and interact on a routine basis. From this perspective, structure (i.e. rules and resources) as an object is not external to the subject, since it is inseparable from the agent's conduct. Subjects, according to the duality-of-structure schema, do not face structures as objects 'out there' that constrain their conduct. It is rather that structures are both the means and outcome of action. So, for example, rules about teaching help me to give my sociology class, while my actually giving the class reinforces the rules of teaching. Therefore, when I (a subject) draw on teaching rules (object), the dualism (i.e. the distance) between subject and object disappears. It is replaced by a subject-object duality: a situation where the object is not external to the subject.

However, the notion of lack of distance between subject and object fits only cases where actors use rules in a taken-for-granted manner. When they become reflexive about the rules they use - that is, when they distance them- selves from them in order to analyse, criticize or change them - then we move from subject-object duality to subject-object dualism. To take my previous example again, when I use teaching-rules in a routine, taken-for-granted fashion, then the duality-of-structure schema is perfectly appropriate. When, on the other hand, I distance myself from such rules because I am no longer satisfied with them, when I consider modifying them, then subject-object dualism replaces duality.

In the light of the above there is no doubt that Giddens' reflexivity (individual and institutional) entails a subject-object dualism. For instance, the 'do-it-yourself biography' entails, to use Meadian terminology, an 'I' that takes critical distance from the 'me' in order to observe it, analyse it, and actively transform it.

On the other hand, apophatic reflexivity, as I have argued in my analysis of Krishnamurti's work, entails a reduction or disappearance of the subject-object, observer-observed, I-me distance. In so far as the I does not aim at directly manipulating, transforming the me, in so far as the former is not instrumentally oriented to the latter as an object, then subject and object approximate closely and the distinction between observer and observed is blurred. To put it differently: instrumental intra-action increases the subject-object distance; non-instrumental intra-action (i.e. a situation where one treats oneself in the I-Thou rather than the I-It mode) decreases the subject-object distance.

If this is accepted, then one can go on to argue that there is a fundamental contradiction between Giddens' duality of structure schema and the way in which he theorises reflexivity in late modernity. For the latter notion is based on a clear subject-object dualism, whereas structuration theory has as its founding principle the subject-object duality.

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Conclusion

I have made the following points in relation to Giddens' theory of individual reflexivity in post-traditional contexts:

1. His theory of individual reflexivity over-emphasises the activistic, purposive, instrumental aspects of intra-active, self-self relationships, and under-emphasises their apophatic, non-instrumental, non-activistic aspects.

2. Because of this, he does not take into account that in detraditionalised contexts one can avoid compulsive routine not only via a predominantly activistic/purposive reflexivity, but also via an apophatic one. Of course, in different combinations or 'mixes', both types of reflexivity are present in all intra-active situations. The theorisation of both is absolutely necessary in order to make sense of the complex ways in which subjects face the 'empty space' of growing choices created by detraditionalisation.

3. There is an incompatibility between Giddens' notion of individual reflexivity, based as it is on instrumental self-self relationships, and his notion of pure relationships, which presupposes non-instrumental self-Other relationships. A way to deal with this difficulty is to admit that a pure relationship (i.e. a relationship regulated without reference to considerations extrinsic to itself) can stably exist not only on the basis of active trust, but also on that of active mistrust and mutual manipulation of each other's weaknesses.

4. There is also an incompatibility between Giddens' notion of individual reflexivity - a notion entailing subject-object dualism - and his structuration theory, which has the duality of structure at its centre.

5. If we take seriously into account the two (ideal) types of reflexivity and the two (ideal) types of pure relationship discussed above, we have a more adequate set of conceptual tools for analysing empirically the intra- and inter-active dimensions of social life in conditions of detraditionalisation.

Notes

[1] 'The idea of the uniqueness of Renaissance man and the subsequent Eurocentric view of history based upon it has prevented the Islamic influence upon *studia humanitatis* to be taken seriously in the West until now, especially since the Islamic conception of man as in perfect surrender to the Will of God stands so diametrically opposed to the Promethean and Titanic view of man cultivated in the Renaissance' (Nasr 1996: 166).

[2] In the Greek, *cataphaticos* entails the notion of affirmation, and is the opposite of *apophaticos*.

[3] The link of hesychasm with certain Buddhist and Sufi traditions is quite obvious. There was a long controversy within the Church over the validity of the basic hesychast positions. Eventually, Palamas' standpoint was validated by the 1341 synod in Constantinople (Ware 1986: 249). A hesychast renaissance in the second part of the eighteenth century was started by a group of Mt Athos monks, who were reacting to the rationalism and scientism of the Western Enlightenment (Ware 1986: 256 ff). Today, the

hesychast tradition not only survives but is doing quite well in Russia, Greece, and elsewhere (Dupré and Saliers 1990: 417-79).

[4] At the age of 14 Krishnamurti was 'discovered' in India by the clairvoyant C.W. Leadbearer and brought up as a messiah by Dr Annie Besant of the London Theosophical Society. As is usual in such cases Krishnamurti's early teachings and 'divine revelations' led to the founding of a religious order with followers, rituals, funds etc. But unlike most spiritual gurus coming from the East he, after a profound existential crisis in 1927, rejected his messianic status and all the elaborate organisational and institutional arrangements that went with it. Switching to the other extreme, he developed a secular teaching in the spiritual and ethical sphere, which is profoundly anti-foundationalist (see Lutyens 1988).

[5] Of course, Giddens' concept of practical knowledge also entails an absence of conscious decision-making mechanisms. The difference, however, between Giddens' and Krishnamurti's reflexivity is that the former entails taken-for- granted, routine operations (which means that there is no reflexivity), whereas the latter entails a special type of reflexivity, an inward, 'silent' gaze.

[6] Obviously, on a certain fundamental level, even silent observation entails language and concepts and this Krishnamurti ignores.

[7] This is of course also the position of certain radical-liberal theologians (see for instance Robinson 1963), who do not necessarily adopt an apophatic theology.

[8] According to Buber, the I-Thou relation, as a non-instrumental orientation to something outside the self, applies not only to the inter-personal, inter-human space, but also to the relationship between the self and Nature, as well as the self and God. For some of the difficulties entailed in this broad definition see Levinas (1967).

[9] Buber developed the concept of mutuality late in his work. He distinguishes I-Thou relations entailing mutuality between persons, from I-Thou relations that are on the 'threshold of mutuality', for instance, between the self and Nature, or self and God (Silbernstein 1989).

[10] In his later work, Buber turned more decidedly towards a secularised, anti-foundationalist position, as he found it less and less necessary to support his ideas by theology (Silbernstein 1989: 146 ff).

[11] 'Between the I and the Thou there is no conceptual structure, no prediction, fantasy, purpose, desire or anticipation. All intermediaries are obstacles. It is only when these vanish that the meeting occurs.' (Buber, quoted in Levinas 1967: 144).

[12] With respect to this last point, I do not think that it is mere coincidence that Derridean deconstruction has been seen and criticised as a secular form of apophatic theology (Derrida 1989, Foshay 1992). It is also no coincidence that towards the end of his life, in dealing with issues related to the care of the self, Foucault began to speak of practices not only for subjugating the self, but also of practices of freedom, relating the latter to certain forms of meditation (Foucault 1986). Although post-modernism/post-structuralism has not been able to explain very well the constitution, reproduction, and transformation of late modern social structures (Mouzelis 1995), it has been rather more successful in raising pertinent questions about the spiritual crisis of our age (Berry and Wernick 1992).