

REVOLUTIONARY PRAXIS AND THE FUTURE OF PHILOSOPHY

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The modern world is characterised by the juxtaposing forces of hope in unlimited expansion on the one hand, and scepticism at the state of the world on the other. Society is in many ways in a state of distrust, uncertain of how to exist in an inherited world of opportunity and turmoil, optimism and confusion. As the rationality of the economy and its ability to fairly distribute resources is being called into question in current times, technological development in the service of no end continues in a seemingly uncontrollable fashion. In economic rationality, everything is reduced to effectiveness, but for whom? And for what end? This paper, motivated by the writings of Cornelius Castoriadis, explores the inherited state of philosophy today and offers a call towards self reflective autonomy. It outlines the process underpinning social being and doing through Castoriadis' notion of the *social-historical*, which involves a world of significations instituted for the subject by the social imaginary. I suggest that the future for the thinking individual and the autonomous society is seen in revolutionary praxis, involving a radical calling into question of the institution of society and collective praxis to transform the given. This paper will conclude by arguing that philosophy is the key site of promise for the future – philosophy in its truest sense, which encompasses all domains of thought, seeks to break open the closure of the world, ultimately forming creative, reflecting and deliberating subjects. For, as Castoriadis' argues, humanity has a genuine future, and this future is to be *made*.

Society today appears to have little direction to offer toward fresh action and helpful ways of being in a world where the news of global disaster, economic turmoil and unceasing human conflict are the dominant voices in the current social fabric. With the demise of early twentieth century utopias, articulated in the marxisms, socialisms and capitalisms of times past, the decline of mid-twentieth century ideals of neoliberalism and free market economy, we are in a state of distrust in the ability of contemporary politics to provide a way forward. This is perhaps seen most powerfully in the so called 'generation Y' (my generation), which takes a non-committal attitude to living, never giving one's whole self to a task, commitment or movement, which has evolved in light of constant disappointment and disillusionment. Conformity to the drives and demands of society has become the prevalent mode of being of our day, involving inactivity in regards to the available avenues of political change. Notions of society based on tradition have been dismissed as oppressive, total conceptions of 'politics' such as 'communism' have been

disregarded as totalitarian, and the only options forward appear to be passive engagement with the surrounding world, escapist spiritualities or a wounded baring with life. Even within the domain of philosophy we can observe a significant decrease in hopeful and ambitious visions of the future, and philosophy itself which we have inherited appears to be in fragments, unsure of its purpose in society and place in academia. This paper will attempt to articulate a new way forward (or a re-articulation of an age-old one) which is manifest in the creative action of revolutionary praxis, a Marxian term I will explore in the writings of Castoriadis. I write this paper as an appeal for a new generation of philosophers to emerge, critical of inherited thought and structures, not necessarily attempting to overthrow existing institutions and ways of thinking, but to develop a critical and self-reflective stance towards them, and to creatively engage in action to alter them. This, I will argue, is the place of philosophy in society today. As not to fall in the prescriptive mistakes of social movements past which attempt to institute a unity of the world on the subjects involved, merely giving a new totalising reality to replace the old, this paper shall only attempt to outline the broad principles of this idea which views politics *not* as complete theory, but as *praxis*. Thus the discussion and the reflections begun by a paper such as this will prove more profound than these ideas themselves.

To begin this discussion, we need to develop a basic understanding of society and the processes of socialisation which construct subjects such as ourselves as social beings, processes which underpin all social doing and imagining. To do this I will briefly explore Castoriadis' notion of the social-historical which provides a helpful guide to our thought, and shall use the movie *Memento* as illustration. In *Memento* the main character Leonard Shelby suffers from anterograde amnesia from an attack on his wife he sought to prevent, which renders his brain unable to store new memories. His last established memory was the rape and murder of his wife, and he lives in a perpetual 'waking up' from this moment, tragically defining his existence in taking revenge for his wife's death from which he cannot escape. The devastating effects of his condition are obvious, as Leonard is clearly incapable to interact with the world in a normal way, and is constantly lost, abused by those around him, operating in a world where time has no progression. In one of the opening scenes, Leonard discusses the necessity of having a system to guide his action, allowing him to know who to trust, what he is doing and where he is going. He

does this through a complex network of representations, including polaroid photos with notes as well as tattooing the 'facts' of his life onto his body. This scene depicts him discovering the notes and facts for the first time (the first time in his memory – the audience knows that he has done it countless times before), as he creates the world anew for himself based on his representations. The camera takes his point of view as he explores his own body which is a mystery for him, finding the facts of his life which he has previously projected onto himself. The audience is positioned to feel his frantic discovery as they learn the facts with him, piecing together his world in a disturbing interplay between psychic processes and external reality. The scene tragically ends when he looks in the mirror to see himself as himself for the first time, noting the largest tattoo on his chest written in reverse. In this moment of reflection he finds himself, reading the line 'John G raped and murdered my wife,' which defines his sense of self and drive in the world.

The film *Memento* disturbs and unsettles the viewer, causing them to question their own existence in the world, ultimately asking the questions, 'why does my experience (history) have continuity, and how does it (history) correspond to "reality"?' Leonard experiences his own body as other, and as the audience join his confusion, they are forced to challenge all that is familiar, beginning from their own bodies to the society around them. This leads us to the question of how society would function if we all suffered from anterograde amnesia. The very way we pass on knowledge, relationships and institutions such as language and society would become lost. This helps us to see that society (and the world) is not given or greater than the subjects within it, but that subjects and their memory – and not only memory but something far deeper – hold history and the social fabric together.

This is termed by Castoriadis as the *social-historical* element of society. The social-historical institutes significations for the subject which construct an order of interconnections to create the unity of a world (Castoriadis 1987: 46). We are speaking on an existential level here, as from the moment of birth the subject in society is given a singular *eidos* unique to the society in which she exists (Castoriadis 2007: 224). The psyche of the infant is conditioned to renounce absolute egocentricity and omnipotence, recognise 'reality' and the fact that others exist, subordinate their

desires to social rules, and accept sublimated satisfactions for 'social' ends (Castoriadis 2007: 230). This is not a conscious process but occurs unconsciously, instituted to the individual by their social imaginary, involving both the introjection of the outside world into the psyche and projection outside of the self onto the world, allowing the subject to be given forms, or *eide*, according to the social-historical world around them. This is seen most clearly in the institution of language, as a person is given the structures and forms to construct socially meaningful ways of relating, to articulate thoughts and interactions, and to *act* within the given society. Relations in groups are not simply incomprehensible, but impossible outside of this social imaginary. Just imagine a Trobriand Islander from the Pacific before colonial contact being thrust into a complex capitalist world such as ours, or vice versa – it would be unintelligible. The prevalence of the social imaginary is so great, because it is the entire world for the subject. The power of 'reason' (or the inherited logic of the social-historical) is that through instituting the unity of a world for a subject, it defines for the subject an image of reality and the objects of their desire. While Castoriadis holds that humans are fundamentally creative beings and creatively bring social-historical worlds into reality for themselves, unless they call into question both 'reality' and the objects of their desire, they will simply direct their creativity towards conformity.

Further, in Castoriadis' understanding of the social-historical, every society exists by instituting its world as *the* world. In the complex capitalist societies such as Australia today, reality involves the certainty of the market, the necessary bureaucratisation of the institutions guaranteeing the maximum effectiveness of the economy, such as the state, its laws and policing, production, right down to the level of the family and the private life of the subject. In the capitalist world, the capitalist mode of being *must* be imposed on everyone, otherwise they will remain outside of the system, and expose the system to otherness. In Castoriadis' conception of society, every historical form of collective human existence has an ensembleist-identitary (*ensidic* for short) dimension. For instance, for a language to exist, a society must be familiar with predication, and divide sentences into categories of true and false. It must also have some arithmetic and geometry as well as functioning descriptive categories to classify the physical world in which living beings exist as biological entities (Castoriadis 2007: 229). Ensadic logic allows a society to function adequately, constructing its world in some correspondence to the natural world. Now as

we saw in Castoriadis' notion of the social-historical I outlined above, the construction of its own world by every society is the creation of a world of meanings – its social imaginary significations – which organise the natural world, form a social world in each society, establish the ways that socialised individuals are to be fabricated, and institutes the motives, values and hierarchies of social life (Castoriadis 2007: 230). The bureaucratic world we live in today makes the Kantian split between science and art and religion a reality, allowing rationality to become dissociated and imposed on the whole of society, being only concerned whether the connections are correct, and is unaware of the questions concerning foundation, totality, ends, the relation between humanity and reason, and reason and the world (Castoriadis 1987: 159). In such a world, the economy is the epitome of rationality, and leads to uncontrolled technological development in the service of no end. In rationality, everything is reduced to effectiveness, but for whom? And for what end?

So how can we propose a helpful way forward? How can we provide answers to these questions, and question the foundation of society by critiquing inherited thought? While Marxism in its practice over the past 200 years demonstrates a determinist notion of history, making technology the motor of history and attempts to submit all of history to its categories, we can find at the root of Marx's critique of modernity the tools to move towards a helpful way of being in the world which transcends the tyranny of determinism and breaks through the false reality of the modern capitalist state. This is the 'realisation of theory' inherent to Marx, which poses an absolute unity between theory and praxis, aiming to unite reflection with action to move toward a new society (Castoriadis 1987: 29). Philosophy, as it stands, is in a fragmentary state, unable to commit in practice to the theory which it poses. Today's capitalist society is similarly characterised by the stark difference between theory and practice, such as the ability of the market to fairly distribute wealth while the difference between rich and poor continues to grow. This is further seen in the notion of equality which underpins citizenship and defends property rights, while many never have an equal chance to be educated, participate in politics or to afford property. Democracy offers another example of the disjunction between theory and practice, entailing the equal sharing of power and equal possibilities of participation in the process of political decision making. This is, of course, impossible when individuals, groups or managerial bureaucracies

control centres of economic power, which, especially under modern conditions, immediately translates into political power, which is in itself a renunciation of the primacy of reason.

Our task, in the spirit of Marx, is to view politics as *praxis*, for to demand a complete theory, such as socialism, marxism or capitalism as we see it today, is to render politics as technique, which falls into the trap we are seeking to avoid. Praxis, in the sense I seek to use it in this discussion, is the development of *autonomy* – particularly the autonomy of others (Castoriadis 1987: 75). The goal of praxis is not clarification of the world, or the development of theory or categories to comprehend the world, but *transformation of the given*. To seek to understand the world is again to give into a false unity of the world and a notion of reality instituted for the subject by the social-historical.

This brings us to the central term in this paper of 'revolutionary praxis'. Revolutionary praxis seeks to display what it proposes, and that its realisation would greatly increase society's capacity to face up to its own problems (Castoriadis 1987: 90). The word 'revolution' stems from the Latin *revolutio*, which means 'to turn around', involving a questioning of the roots and foundations of a given form of social existence, and action to reconstitute it from the roots up. The goal of revolutionary praxis is not to provide a complete model, as this would render praxis as merely technique, but to offer a different way of being which challenges the given reality of the social-historical world. It is revolutionary in the sense that it manifests another mode of being of the social-historical, the explicit calling into question of its laws of existence and the corresponding work toward their lucid transformation (Castoriadis 1987: 90). For why would human beings want to change their times if they are conditioned by them to function in conformity with them?¹ Marcuse (1966: viii) explores this in a similar way, arguing that it makes no sense to talk of liberation to 'free' men, or of repression with more sexual liberty than ever before. The 'freedom' offered in affluent capitalist societies, Marcuse claims, occurs when the people are efficiently manipulated and organised, resulting in an introjected heteronomy as the price of their freedom. He argues that liberation from repressive affluence is needed to avoid a heteronomous society, involving a reversal in the direction of progress and a conception of

¹ This again reminds us of 'generation Y'. Why question society if you have all the iPods, information and relationships which are central to your social desire at your fingertips?

liberation which conceives of liberation as life as an end in itself. This would involve a true revolution, resulting in new needs and wants of the people in the revolutionary community (Marcuse 1966: xv).

The community engaging in revolutionary praxis is to demonstrate a new way to those outside. I say community, because to call the established social imaginary significations of a given society into question, and to work towards creating new ones, involves a *social* practice. I will discuss this collective focus presently. We can describe the passive acceptance of the given world of society, and the apolitical subject which a society such as ours tends to generate, as the infantile position. The subject in the infantile position seeks only to receive but not create, attached to the breast of the social-historical and submitting to and reproducing its notion of reality, and the objects of desire which it gives. We can describe the society which allows the social-historical to define for the subject both reality and desire as heteronomous. What the autonomous society, or those under the project of revolutionary praxis, is to undertake is the *conscious elucidation of the unconscious*, recognising that the social-historical gives to the subject a world of significations, defining for the subject both reality and desire, and attempts to consciously open up and redirect both reality and desire for themselves.

This is explored in Castoriadis' analysis of Freud's famous maxim for psychoanalysis: *Wo Es war, soll Ich werden* (where the Id was, Ego shall come to be) (Castoriadis 1987: 102). In his usage here, Ego describes consciousness in general, while Id refers to the origin and the place of drives or instincts, that is, the unconscious. By this maxim, Freud means that the Ego, the consciousness and will, must take the place of the Id as an agency of decision, allowing regulation of the self to be conducted *by the self*, rather than by the law of other. The Id is 'other' in the sense that it is another *in* me, involving desires, intentions and significations to which the individual has been exposed to from the moment of conception (the social-historical in Castoriadis' formulation). This allows us to see that autonomy as the 'consciousness's rule over the unconscious' does not involve the releasing and gratification of desires, or the removal of all inhibitions, but active *self-limitation* (Castoriadis 1987: 102). Self-limitation is essential to the project of autonomy as it is a social and political project, which and is inherently tied to that of

democracy. Autonomy, then, is the establishment of another relation between the discourse of the other and the subject's discourse. While the total elimination of the discourse of the other is a fantasy, there is a continuous possibility of regarding, objectifying, setting at a distance, detaching and finally transforming the discourse of the other into the discourse of the subject (Castoriadis 1987: 105).

Thus we must avoid the obvious trap here of holding an abstract notion of freedom, as a subject can never create their own meaning or truth for themselves, as social imaginary significations which create a world of meaning for the subject are rooted in society and history. To neglect this has been a pitfall for many philosophers past, and is a tempting notion to the contemporary philosopher, subordinated in the university and detached from living society. The body is preconstituted to a world of significations which enable the radical imagination in the new born child which is completely narcissistic to take structure, allowing the subject to become a social being. Thus the individual and social dimensions of autonomy are inextricably linked, as collective revolutionary praxis is needed to actively engage in self-reflection of the given world of reality, and the active creation of *new* forms of being (Castoriadis 1987: 128). Novelty is a key concept to Castoriadis' conception of the self, as even the processes of surging, striving and bringing forth significations for the subject in the radical imagination is a creative process. Thus, in Castoriadis' understanding, humans are inherently creative beings, but must take a critical stance towards their social-historical reality if they are to bring forth truly novel forms of existence.

I will conclude with a rough sketch of a place where I see the greatest potential for revolutionary praxis, but correspondingly contains the seeds for its oppression. This is the domain of philosophy itself – not an abstract notion of 'Philosophy' proper, not philosophy as the 'natural' and spontaneous tendency of society and history, but a notion of philosophy that is *itself a historical creation*, entailing a radical break with previous states of affairs. Philosophy – philosophy in its truest sense – involves a calling into question of the instituted representations and meanings and the changing of them through the self-reflective activity of thought (Castoriadis 2007: 227). Science, historiography, geography and anthropology were born of

philosophy in the largest (and *truest*, argues Castoriadis (2007: 228)) sense, which was itself a dimension of the democratic and emancipatory movement born in the Greek *poleis*, and reborn in the cities of Western Europe after the Middle Ages. This highlights the inherently political nature of philosophy, viewing true politics in the sense of calling into question the existing institutions and changing them through deliberate and collective action. The task of politics is this: to create a society which fosters autonomy in its subjects, where they can collectively call into question the institutions, drives and objects of desire inherent to their community in order to become reflective deliberating subjects. Thus the project of philosophy and politics are in many ways inseparable, while in society today there is nearly a complete split, or an institutionalisation (and marginalisation) of two modes of human activity. It is no wonder that both philosophy and politics as we see them are somewhat fragmented and lost for direction.

In this context of institutionalisation, when we imagine a revolution we often fall into the trap of using the established social-historical categories in our understanding of what revolution means, such as viewing the state as the site of revolution. Castoriadis' notion of revolutionary praxis argues that revolutionary communities must stand in a critical relation to such institutions, as the bureaucratic and highly rational nature of the state enforces a particular subjectivity on its citizens which revolutionary praxis seeks to challenge. Castoriadis, along with other thinkers such as Foucault, argue for a new economy of power relations starting from the roots of society up. What Foucault (1982: 328) describes as the 'disease of power' can be seen in movements such as fascism and Stalinism which used the same ideas and devices of the preceding political rationality, and thus continued similar exploitative power relations. While Kant argued that the role of philosophy is to prevent reason from going beyond the limits of what is given in experience, Foucault (*ibid.*) argues that it is also to keep watch over the excessive powers of political rationality. While the political rationality of today does not leave room for a revolution, revolutionary praxis involves communities themselves calling into question the established political order (political order in its truest sense, involving everyday inter-subjective relations) to create new institutions from the grass-roots level. Ellul (1988: 20) articulates a similar perspective to Castoriadis, arguing that tendencies in society which are so firmly rooted cannot be eradicated in one generation, but a transitional period is needed of communities engaging in

revolutionary praxis. As we have explored in this paper, the establishment of societies occurs on the level of the people and human doing, and cannot be enforced through conventional government techniques. While this perspective offers no vision of the possibility of an entirely revolutionary society or state, it recognises the complexity of human being and doing, and sets the establishment of revolutionary praxis as a normative ideal for human sociality, which must begin with the institution of philosophy.

The first task of philosophy – philosophy qua the calling into question of the institution that made us what we are and of the ways of thinking it has furnished us with – is to probe our so-called 'rationality'.² This is our first *rational* task. I use the word 'rational' here in two senses, the first involving that which society constitutes as *its* reality, involving a category of the imagination which gives a symbolic system allowing the subject to navigate the world. For we cannot understand society outside of a unifying factor that provides signifying content and symbolic structures (Castoriadis 1987: 160). The second sense involves the logical outworking of true philosophy, where the subject seeks to elucidate the unconscious and its ensidic logic, working toward autonomy. Thus, as we have previously discussed, rationality is a collective process, and cannot be explored in isolation from society. While history certainly contains progress in rationality, it cannot be reduced to this. This is evident in Castoriadis (2007: 48) understanding of capitalism, arguing that it is the first social regime to produce an ideology asserting its own alleged 'rationality' as opposed to using myth, religion or tradition as the grounds for social ways of being. In capitalism, we have the claim that legitimacy is 'rational.' That very criterion – being rational (opposed to mobilising tradition or myth as justification) – is, as Castoriadis sees it, literally instituted by capitalism, yet instead of opening up the social world for question, opposed to societies based on closed systems, it has made it unquestionable rather than relativising it. No thinking person can avoid asking what that rationality is, or what rationality we are talking about (Castoriadis, 2007: 48).

As Castoriadis asserts from his background in psychoanalysis, it is through understanding the processes of socialisation and the institution of society in its social-historical dimension that we

² This argument began in *The Imaginary Institution of Society*, and is summarised in 'The Social-Historical,' in *Figures of the Thinkable*.

can understand the historicity of rationality, and how it operates in a given society. As he asserts in his concept of the subject, through understanding the radical imagination and its social instituting capacities, shifting the significations and cathexis cast on objects of a society to objects of the mind, the subject may realise that their *lebenswelt* (life-world) is but one among many, allowing them to render themselves a reflecting and deliberating subjectivity, thus breaking as far as possible from the closure of their own world (Castoriadis, 1994: 136). Once we have shaken up our world and partially broken its closure, our imagination allows us to invent violently different world schemes and to compare them with observable social-historical phenomena in the world (Castoriadis, 2007: 235). Imagination, for Castoriadis, is the key site of exploration for the subject, as the psyche *is* imagination. The subject, he argues, *is* radical imagination, an indeterminable and perpetual self-alteration which cannot be mastered (Castoriadis 1984: 59). It is from the radical imagination that ego and Id emerge, and it is before 'reality' exists that the imagination exists for the subject. Castoriadis concludes from his notion of the imagination that that self-alteration in and through elucidation of the psyche by the subject is a possibility in the project of autonomy.

As we have seen, the calling into question of 'rationality' today involves the analysis of capitalist ideology, as it infiltrates every element of contemporary western society. At its most philanthropic moments, capitalist ideology claims that the goal of 'rationality' is 'well-being.' However, its specificity resides in its identification of that well-being with an economic maximum, or in the claim that it will certainly be the outcome of what that maximum achieves (Castoriadis, 2007: 48). This rationality is then reduced to 'economic' rationality, having a purely quantitative notion of maximisation of 'output' and minimisation of 'costs' – yet even the regime itself decides on what is an output, what is a cost and how this will be evaluated. The positive evaluation of the accomplishments of capitalism still rely on criteria, or more broadly on imaginary social significations, instituted by itself. This circle of justification is hardly different to that of the society founded on traditional or religious ideology, and shows that much of contemporary political economy, politics and even philosophy is meaningful only for a fictitious world.

Placing rationality and capitalist ideology under question calls for interdisciplinary study, as philosophy in its truest sense will use a multiplicity of analytical tools. The intention of this is to avoid the mistake that the doctor makes, who, upon amputating the arm of patient in order to scrutinise it more closely, returns it to the patient declaring that it is in perfect functioning order. Multireferentiality is a provisional instrument for the analysis of complex phenomena, which are the creations in the subject's relation to the object, and we must be critical of the fragmented limits that the disciplined nature of the university places on our creative thought. The first phase of analysis consists of problematising the complexity of the object, enabling the subject to apply the appropriate tools to it (Castoriadis, 2007: 186). This involves the relinquishment of the imaginary unity posited by the social-historical and the monadic state, as behind each appearance in the world there are and will always be other appearances and we must set up some sort of order to these appearances and their mutual relations – not an ensemblisit-identitary order, but a representational order which allows creative action, recognising that there may, in fact, be no 'real' order at all (Castoriadis, 2007: 189).

Thus philosophy can potentially be the site of radical self-reflection, where those involved in philosophical praxis seek to critique the social-historical inherited thought of society around them in order to develop a deliberative mode of subjectivity. This involves bringing the foundation of society into question and critiquing all inherited institutions through philosophical reflection. Revolutionary praxis as Marx envisioned it produces a change in the subject *and* the circumstances around them, demonstrating the way of philosophy is an analytical tool of *action*, as reflection and deliberation occur within the context of *doing*. Castoriadis explores this mode of subjective action in the term *teukhein*, which is the component of social doing, involving the ensemblit-ensemblising dimension of collective action (Castoriadis 1987: 174). It stems from the concept of technique and pertains to the domain of society, as society can only institute itself as 'something', and this something already has imaginary signification prior to the ensemblit function of ensidic logic. Through social doing, a world emerges for the subject and is shaped by the subject according to the ensemblising nature of *teukhein*, demonstrating the way that all social doing is political, and that the political involves the everyday action of the subjects in society. While these terms only serve as markers rather than real categories, they assist us to

understand how history has continuity, translating significations and bringing new creation into being. The successive upheavals of 'rational knowledge' of societies known to us have always been conditioned by upheavals in the global imaginary representation of the world, nature and the ends of knowledge such as the emergence Euclidean space and Copernicus' cosmology (Castoriadis 1987: 270).

Thus both the subject and the world around them will be altered and changed when philosophy is practiced. These two aspects occur simultaneously and cannot be separated, again demonstrating that praxis is the key sight of revolutionary action and philosophical reflection. This community praxis occurs through dialogue, critique, exposure to alterity and difference, and most importantly, fresh political action aimed at the creation of a society geared towards fostering the autonomy of its subjects. Such a community existence attempts to create a new social-historical way of being, posing a mode of existence that solves the problems of society, and invites the other in society who lives according to inherited thought to join, as revolutionary praxis involves a radical commitment to the other, recognising that autonomy is a collective project.

So where is the place of the philosopher today? I conclude from this discussion that we need philosophers *in society*. In wealthy western societies such as our own, philosophers have often been reduced to *following* the cultural and social trends, attempting to explain and understand them, but are not a driving force in the change that occurs. Those driving social change are often the activists, the conservatives, the politicians separated from philosophical reflection, and the passive 'infantilised' citizens who form the majority of an affluent society. This should concern us, as by being committed to philosophy as we are, we obviously see the value of philosophical thought in political and reflective action. As a new generation of philosophers, we must think carefully about how we conceive of ourselves, and how our practice of philosophy will function in society. If we fail to alter the inherited institution of philosophy and its declining trend, we may not only find ourselves in an increasingly heteronomous society, but without integrity, authenticity – and ultimately without a job and identity.

Finally, as I mentioned earlier, while offering a site of revolutionary praxis, 'philosophy' in its disciplined sense (especially within the inherited categories and debates we have all been exposed to) also holds the potential to uphold heteronomy, and stifle the project of autonomy. This can be manifested in philosophy as a distinct discipline in the university, instituting inherited thought through the teaching and upholding of orthodoxy, the encouragement of scepticism and non-commitment, and a feeling of fragmentation to reinforce the old social-historical way of thinking and existing. Revolutionary praxis requires that the whole world always be open to question, and the foundations of the social-historical modes of being be brought under community critique, and this must be remembered in the discipline of philosophy as much as anywhere else.

In conclusion, revolutionary praxis entails a willing type of historical existence, a recreated type of relation the past and to the future. As we have seen in the writings of Castoriadis, this involves understanding the processes involved in the formation of the subject, as the subject institutes for themselves a world of significations inherited from the social-historical reality around them. We must see the past both as our own and as independent of us, being able to engage in discourse with it and to let ourselves be questioned by it, generating a critical stance toward the social institutions we find ourselves in (Castoriadis 2007: 117). Philosophy has a rich heritage to utilise, and must be a key point of contact, discussion and retelling in the revolutionary community. And we need to establish a new relation to the future, so that we stop seeing it as an indefinite 'progress' giving us ever more of the same, nor should we limit future possibilities by imagining utopias. We must dare to *will* a future – not a blueprint future, but an ever creative unfolding, striving and struggling. This is surely the task of the philosopher who conceives her vocation as meaningful, helpful and political.

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