

HUMAN DECISIONS

(A first try)

1. Every human being who takes a decision is as such extremely complicated. She/he is the result of endless many influences in the past, most of which are in the body, in the very existence. By far the most, and probably by far the most important, because they belong to the first years of our life, we are deeply influenced without any possibility to know about them. Many seem unimportant when we acknowledge them and so we forget them, but they work on and on, moulding our being.

This result of temporal mimesis is, any moment in which a decision is taken, in an exactly as complicated “afield” of spatial mimesis of which, again, we know hardly anything of, because, again, the intermingling of the influences of the spatial mimesis with those of the temporal mimesis happens without our knowing. So in a very deep sense we don’t know who we are, neither are we knowing what we are doing when we take a decision.

2. There is another reality which complicates the situation very deeply when we take a decision. Decisions are about doing and they have to do with thinking. Doing and thinking are located in different parts of the brains, the doing being much, much older than the thinking. In many decisions we hardly are able to think, because we are already doing. It always stays a big question, which part of our brains took the decision and why? The decision can look like extremely rational; afterwards we know it was an extremely irrational one and even then we mostly don’t know and never will know why we decided exactly that.

3. Nowadays we have to take decisions very often. Much more so than people in earlier times had to. As long as there were structures, “life” mostly took the decisions for people. Everybody knew what was expected from her/him. If things were not that clear, the way to structures, the place in society, the duties and tasks, was sought back and the decision to take was mostly clear. We are not any longer in that situation. We have to take decisions, liking and enjoying it or hating it, or often, both in the same time.

4. To take decisions, already the task to take decisions means to carry responsibility. We don’t get rid of the responsibility, by thinking everything through, coming to the conclusion, that that, and not anything else, is the right thing to do. That only would be possible if in human life and in human relations (to take decisions always has to do with human relations) cause and effect – chains could be sought and found. It might be that that would be possible if we knew everything about all the billions in the square experiences we had, with all the influences they had and have upon each other. Of course we never know. In fact we hardly know anything about ourselves. So cause and effect – chains are not a possibility to come to a decision, which make the way open to the future.

5. This future, again, is a reality, about which in fact we know nothing. We can make our decisions now, and we can hope that the future for us will approximately be what we hoped, but we only stay free, when, at the same time, there is deep down in us a knowing that everything might be totally else and that we will always find, in new circumstances, news ways to go, new decisions to open the future. If we don’t have that freedom, the future very quickly becomes a model obstacle, a continual cause of frustration, depression.

6. So in fact, there is only one possibility to decide and decide freely. We look at everything relevant, about the past, about the now, about the future. And then we go back to ourselves. We take distance from all these things and we let the totality of our being decide. This decision is in the end irreducible. We can try to make clear, for those who wish to understand. In the end the decision is just personal, my own decision, the reality of my life. No doubts are needed. I can live out of this decision and freely go my way without worries. I take the responsibility for my life. We have, so Rene Girard, only one freedom, the freedom to choose. And that is a real freedom!

7. Of course very often we don't take our decisions in freedom. In fact very often when we think that we took a decision we were, without knowing about it, the victim of the mimesis of desire. The movements of mimesis enslave us. It is a hard, and anyway in our culture probably a lifelong learning-way to get out of this train and to find, to find back, again and again, the possibility of deciding freely.

8. By not deciding freely but following the servitude of the mimesis of desire, the end is always that we end up in rivalry and, more damaging even, in model-obstacle-relationships, so destroying our human possibilities. It could be very useful to learn about this. And I suppose that this learning process is only really enlightening and pattern-changing, when we know with our very existence, in our experience, about the reality of deciding freely