

## (168) CULTURE, ECONOMICS AND THE FUTURE OF MANKIND

### 1. The self-referential structure of culture

1.1 Culture originally had a clear self-referential feed-back structure in which community life went to and fro between two extremes: On the one side unity, the sacrificial peace, and on the other, finally ritually completed, chaos. Immediately after the expulsion of the scapegoat there was peace. Slowly this peace disintegrated into growing disorder, till ritual pushed, when the moment to do so was there, the community into the threatening chaos with as a result that a new, ritually designed, scapegoat was sacrificed and in a very short time sacrificial peace was restored again. Obedience to an unquestionable transcendence secured that things were again done as they always were done. The ritually indicated scapegoats disappeared, once and for all, out of the community, carrying the chaos and iniquities, for which they were held responsible, with them.

1.2 All this in a diagram:

\_\_\_\_\_ transcendence.

the level of life of the community \_\_\_\_\_

the scapegoats disappear wholly

### 2. The culture of economics

2.1 In the situation in which economics decide on the shape of culture, the situation has radically changed. There is not any longer the movement from sacrificial peace to growing disorder, ending in ritual, which brings the community from chaos to sacrificial peace again by sacrificing scapegoats who are known in advance. Both transcendence and communal ritual have gone. Instead of, culture now constantly lingers on the edge of the abyss, into which endless many random scapegoats (it always can be us) simply, without any ritual, disappear. In fact the old movement, from chaos to peace and the reverse, which once slowly went from peace to chaos and in the "twinkling of an eye" back again from chaos to peace now all happen in the same time. Culture is remaining now on the very edge of the abyss. In a high speed turning around and around, like a top. Although, and just because, there are extreme aberrations to all sides, the speed of the "turning movement" keeps culture on the edge and prevents that it falls down.

2.2 All this is achieved by an extreme increase of the scapegoats, both in species as in numbers. We destroy nature and its reserves, thus using up the future. We destroy humans all over the world, by our various types of violence. There is an incredible waste, with which we buy, for the actually ones-up, an unheard of stability.

2.3 The top is without structure. It consists of endless many individuals who, in changing groups and individually, rival with each other, finally indifferent for the consequences for the others, victimising, scapegoating them recklessly. Just this very indifference, making the whole again a self-regulating mechanism, makes the functioning of economics possible.

2.4 The deciding difference between our scapegoats nowadays and those of old culture is, that they don't disappear, that we cannot get rid of them. We cannot any longer throw them into the abyss, disappearing forever. Moreover, there are now much too many of them. The hungry, the maimed on the roads, the drug addicts, the starving people in Africa, the neurotics in the families, they all are constantly around us. We never lose them out of sight. They keep us worrying in one manner or another. In a sense this is remarkable. Culture is further and further moving away from its origins, driving these origins further back, hiding them again and again with new schemes. Post-modernism, ritualising again our already so deeply ritualised knowledge of history, finally gets out of touch with historical reality altogether, so finally letting origins, and our responsibility, disappear wholly. Nevertheless we are more and more obsessed by our victims. Our consciousness about our scapegoat-mechanism is, since the VXIth century, rising. Although in fact we still are very able to hide the consequences of our doing as soon as we ourselves get the benefit from it, in the same time we become more and more unable to do so, because we know that in the madness of internal mediation, the situation the top is in, we might be and time and again will be the victims ourselves.

2.4 This means that we cannot but do something for our scapegoats. It explains the rise of the "helping professions" and of modern national and international charity. In fact steadily larger parts of modern economics are built on the care for our victims. Caring for our scapegoats, "helping" them, however is a deep double bind, putting them in fact down in a more complicated manner, hiding the scapegoating as we hide the origins of culture. The same actually is true for our care for nature. As long as we remain in the relationship with nature we now are in, as long as we take it that we in facet are the masters over it, we can only refine the exploitation. We cannot really change our relationship for the better.

2.5 Consequently, economics on the one hand is at least more or less stable because of the swiftness of its top-movement on the edge of the abyss and of its preparedness to keep itself going at the cost of the endless many and probably constantly multiplied scapegoats, who and which constantly are thrown into the abyss. However, because the abyss is filled more and more, the moment might come, that economics and the scapegoats come on one level. That would mean that, if nothing fundamentally changes, the world would be destroyed in an apocalypse without end. The task of culture, to contain violence, by bringing the violence inside upon victims, throwing them into the outside, the task to be the katecon, would have become impossible.

2.6 In diagrams:

2.6.1 level of culture \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ level of scapegoats

2.6.2 The level of scapegoats is rising, with in the end:

Culture \_\_\_\_\_scapegoats, which in fact means either sacrificial chaos without end:

(chaos)

or we come to our senses, we at last recognise each other as sisters and brothers. In that case we leave the mechanisms of culture, the scapegoating and the origin of these mechanisms, the mimesis of desire behind us to enter, at last, into a new world.

This last possibility looks unlikely to happen, but we can together come in a situation in which there really only is the choice between totally destroying each other and ourselves or, just to make this choice as the only remaining way forward. There are aspects of reality which might promote that once such a step is made. One of them is that we are not utterly without transcendence, even if the old, religious one would be wholly gone.

### **3. The (hidden) transcendences**

3.1 In the culture of economics in fact there still is the transcendence of religion, however hidden and powerless. Although the disappearance of this transcendence had and has enormous consequences for culture, very often of a dramatic kind, nevertheless there is not a single reason to wish it back. It is the transcendence of the scared, of violence, the transcendence of the mimesis of desire. As long as this transcendence reigns, there is no real new future for culture. That it is disappearing actually is a sign of the coming of a new time.

3.2 Culture in the time of economics seems to be without real transcendence. There is not transcendent reality left, to which everybody belongs and everybody obeys. Instead of, everybody seeks frantically ruthlessly her or his own gain. Nevertheless there are still two realities, of which one has the character of transcendence, the other is a real one.

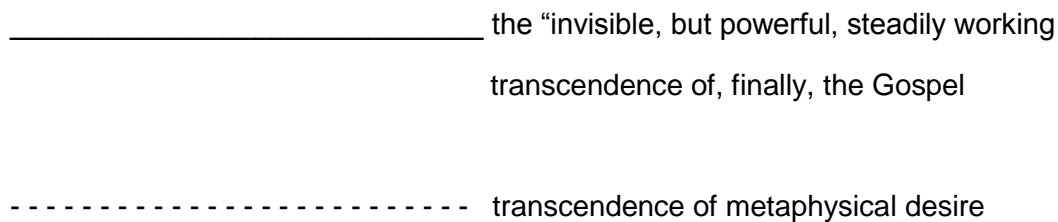
3.1.1 The transcendence of our own making, the one towards which our desire to have being is directed, is the philosophical transcendence of metaphysics. We desire everything which is shown to us as desirable, we wreck with these desires the world, but finally we desire everything in order to acquire, to have, BEING, the possibility to say "I am". Anima naturaliter Christiana is as such nonsense, but that we cannot acquiesce in our situation as soon as we have fallen out of structure is clear. We try to get the lost being back by taking it away from the other, but we don't achieve. We do not wish to acknowledge, or are not able to, to recognize that we cannot get being in taking it from others who are seeking it as frantically as we ourselves are doing. Paradoxically, finally we would not need to take this being from each other when it really would exist. As soon as there is being, it cannot be scarce. It simply is there, for everybody, as it once was in culture with structure. This desire

to have being, a being which we made ontological in metaphysics, might in fact be the invisible hand of Adam Smith. Although finally it is mythical and thus destroying, it still has one propriety, which brings it very near into the neighbourhood of real transcendence: It makes all humans parallel, reaching together to a goal, "somewhere up there".

3.1.2 Secondly and, of course finally primarily, there is the transcendence out of which culture came into existence. We cannot strive to make it, as we do with metaphysics, or to reach it, it really comes from "the other side", making us human. This, originally religious, transcendence seems to be gone although, from the "back door", it is powerful as ever. It belongs to the past. In the same time, in the transformations it underwent in the Jewish-Christian experience, in which everything was and is put upside down, it is the ongoing demythologiser of the old cultural transcendence, of culture itself. It made, as a culturally intermediary stage, the culture of economics possible. It is the transcendence which is, who demythologizes the scapegoat-mechanism, which/who is with all the scapegoats, with all the weak.

3.2 The first transcendence is powerful in the life of all of us and finally it is nothing, a nightmare, a ghost, or, theologically speaking: The nothingness of evil. When we think that we embrace it, that we have won after having discarded all our opponents, it disappears into nothingness. The second one is in our culture without esteem, seen as nothing, and in the end it is the only reality which creates again reality. When the present stage of culture and, in fact, sacrificial culture comes up its end, these two transcendences meet.

3.3 To put the actual situation in a diagram again:



Level of culture \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ level of the scapegoats,

a situation which once, if we don't choose for chaos, ends in:

\_\_\_\_\_ the real transcendence, which  
gives being

\_\_\_\_\_ all are on one level, scapegoating, its  
necessity and its consequences are gone

#### 4. The developments in the actual situation

When we look at the actual situation, we observe different developments:

4.1 Economics is for the time being going on, maintaining itself in its stability, gained by its ever increasing “toll-speed”, scapegoating everybody and everything who and which are weak and helpless. This system cannot change or be changed any more in a real manner. It probably is the final stage of cultural development, now encompassing the whole of the world.

4.2 The possibilities to scapegoat, to use up everything to fulfil our desires, our desire to have being, are continually diminishing at a greater speed. Scarcity, finally and necessarily always the result of our desiring, becomes overwhelming. How enormous ever our desires, they hit upon objective boundaries which cannot be overcome. Consequently we become more and more imprisoned in our desires. We might become more resentful, even become mad, because we end up in being enclosed in our own violence. In the same time however we might begin to acknowledge, not only rationally but more so existentially, that human life is limited, that not everything is possible. Out of sheer necessity we might begin to understand the necessity of humility.

4.3 Our various strategies to throw our scapegoats out, to keep them down, by exploiting them or by “helping” them, will work less and less. That means that the levels of culture and of the scapegoats will near each other more and more. The development, already hinted at in 2.5 and 2.6 will in the end be completed.

4.4 In the same time another movement in the opposite direction, a contrast movement, is going on. This movement is obedient to the transcendence of the Gospel (or its derivatives), in the relationship of which we can learn to be humble in an authentic manner and in which we can learn that real life, that Being, the possibility to say “I am”, is not found within culture, acquired by scapegoating others and by destroying the possibilities of human life. In this contrast-movement we can learn that being, which we always fight for, only can be found in weakness, when we allow that it is given to us. In this contrast-culture we can learn that God himself, who gives being, the possibility to say “Me” and to use our name, is weak, totally opposite of the gods we adore as long as we are striving in the mimesis of desire, the violent gods who we ourselves make and who destroy us, of which metaphysics finally is the last expression.

4.5 This contrast movement influences cultural reality in at least two different manners, which both open a new future for culture, for this world:

4.5.1 It reintegrates the victims of culture, but it does so in the opposite direction. It no longer tries, by helping, as culture does, to bring them again on the level of culture, pushing them in fact in a more complicated manner again deeper down. It recognises in the victims the sisters and brothers, with whom we only can be together if we really wish human life. Thus, instead of bringing the scapegoats “up”, this contrast movement goes “down” to the scapegoats.

4.5.2 It keeps the real hope for this world, the hope for another future alive. It is the yeast, through which rises the bread, a new culture, a new world.

4.6 In this manner a deciding contrast movement is already since long going on. In this movement we don't any longer try to reintegrate our victims into society, into culture, although of course this will go on as long as culture, the culture of economics, will last. Instead of, culture, the mass of the scapegoaters, will finally be integrated into the mass of their victims. The victims need not to be lifted to the level of the scapegoaters. There only is

a future, and in the same time a new culture, when the scapegoaters come down to the level of the victims.

4.7 Thus there is a dialectical movement going on. The victims are nearing the level of the scapegoaters, the pit becomes less and less deep. They are “rising”, although their situation does not become any better. The scapegoaters, in the same time, only have a new future, when they turn to their victims, join them on their level. Finally consequently they are standing face to face and can only go on by reconciling with each other, recognising each other, recognising each other as fellow humans.

## **5. The future culture**

5.1 It seems to be the case: The culture of economics is the last, the final form of sacrificial culture. It keeps life going, be it at enormous costs, both of human life and of nature. It is very probable that these costs will rise, provoking a chaos and cruelties as foreseen by the apostle John in the apocalypse. There is helas little reason to doubt about that. And there is no cultural way beyond.

5.2 In the same time this culture is the culture of growing self-awareness. We begin to understand that not everything will be possible. We begin to understand that all these sufferers, who are crowding the world, are our victims. We begin to understand that we are destroying nature, the world itself and that we cannot go on like that, that we really cannot achieve our goal, to acquire being, in this manner.

5.3 This situation certainly only would make us quite hopeless if not the consciousness was rising about another possibility, in which we not any longer seek being by taking it away from the others, but quite the reverse, seek to receive it instead of acquiring it. It means that we go back to the original order of reality. In which we are second and not first, in which we cannot be independent, like gods, but always are dependent for our very being. When we do this, we are able again to accept what is given instead of fighting to get.

5.4 This is about conversion, clearly so. Probably we have to come into the situation in which we are at the end of our wits, both practically and ethically, in which we all are in the situation of hopelessness in which our scapegoats time and again were. If we recognise and accept that, then a new culture, something like the Kingdom of God, could begin.

5.5 This beginning will probably arise out of chaos as culture originally did: The “top-movement<sup>2</sup> of economics will turn around quicker and quicker in order t remain more or less stabile, making more and more victims. The result finally will be that the difference between victimisers and victims becomes smaller and smaller. In the same time the culture of economics will be undermined by the growing influence of contrast-culture.

It will be the great time of increasing possibilities and newness, accompanied however with the catastrophes, belonging to the disintegration of culture. Dreams, like world-government, will in these times eventually be realised. And then, finally, there comes the switch, the changing of the balance, changing the real or more and more threatening madness of desire and violence into a new world, the new culture, the Kingdom of Christ, of God.

