

LATE MODERNITY AND ITS LANGUAGE*

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Abstract: *The current paper theorizes the ontological dissimilarities between Classic and Late Modernity. It compares the classic modern logic of 'either/or,' which is embodied in certain grand-narratives and social-cultural patterns, to the late modern logic of 'both/and', which encourages agents to rely on their subjective actorness, and revise all sorts of external references in a reflexive and critical way. The proposed argument suggests that the various structural and individual dynamics of Late Modernity are tracing back to one generative shift, which is the collapse of Truth-based Rationality that contrasts the self to the Other and its otherness by biased framings formulated in meta-culturally patriarchal language-forms.*

Keywords: *Late Modernity, Other, language, Truth, justification*

Late modernity as a new era

Modernization is a non-linear historical process with often changing progressive and regressive stages. Theorists of Late Modernity (in other names, Reflexive Modernity and Liquid Modernity), most notably Anthony Giddens, Ulrich Beck, Scott Lash, and Zygmunt Baumann, underline that what we notice in our time are only new tendencies.¹ These are dynamics that embrace the possibility for future changes. Lyotard said that Postmodernity is the era when all grand-narratives are ceased.² To paraphrase this statement, Late Modernity is the era when agents realize that it is a *new* grand-narrative to claim that all grand-narratives are ceased. In other words, late modern subjects are aware of the revolving mechanism that every attempt to deconstruct the diverse domains of our lifeworld (our

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¹ A. Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*, Cambridge: Polity, 1990; U. Beck, A. Giddens and S. Lash, *Reflexive Modernization. Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order*, Cambridge: Polity, 1994; S. Lash, *Another Modernity. A Different Rationality*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1999; Z. Bauman, *Liquid Modernity*, London: Polity, 2000.

² J.-F. Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984, pp. 23–25.

social, natural, and objectified surroundings) is immanently a struggle for a new and better (more justified) reconstruction.³ And independently from the outcomes of these efforts, the competency itself to construct is an unalienated agency of all human beings. This constellation makes these individual struggles emancipative. So, grand-narratives do not need to be substituted – they rather have to be ideationally-emotionally subjectivized in a reflexive and critical way. Reflexivity means that the subjective character of these narrative framings is acknowledged, while criticism refers to the actorness to continuously revise these individual understandings.

Byung-Chul Han says that the classic modern society is based on negativities manifested in *prohibitions* and *musts*.⁴ An ever penetrating rationalization serves for the mass production of common-sense epistemic categories. Searching for Truths is the foundation of this rationalized form of giving meanings.⁵ Truths are supposed to harmonize individual ways of thinking (ideational substances) and ways of doing things (praxes) into predictable attitudes and behaviors. In contrast, Han argues that the late modern society is grounded in the limitless and endless abundance of infinite positivity.⁶ Instead of prohibitions and musts, *permissions* and *possibilities* are the driving dynamics in this era. Therefore, in the late modern context epistemic categories are not framed as common-sense Truths. Instead, unique subjectivity is the generative background of (self-emancipative) understandings. In light of this, the late modern positivity (*do what you want/live the life you want*) is not the oppositional end to the classic modern negativity (*do what you should/live the life you should*). The main difference is not that positivity advises to follow what is desired, while negativity expects to respect what is conventionalized. The core dissimilarity between them is that positivity urges to rely on an internally constructed subjectivity (be a truth-candidate), while negativity highlights the importance of choice, i.e. to choose from externally developed identities (be a Truth-propagator).

Of course, subjects may be tired of the social pressure to take the chance of permissions and possibilities. Han rightly stresses that. But he misleadingly pours all his criticism on Late Modernity.⁷ He does not realize that those people who experience that late modern positivity that

³ R. Rorty, *Objectivity, Relativism and Truth: Philosophical Papers I*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, pp. 211–222.

⁴ B.-C. Han, *The Burnout Society*, Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 2015a, pp. 8–11.

⁵ R. Rorty, *Truth and Progress: Philosophical Papers III*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, see especially in chapter 10.

⁶ B.-C. Han, *Psychopolitics: Neoliberalism and New Technologies*, London: Verso, 2017, particularly in chapter 1.

⁷ B.-C. Han, *The Transparency Society*, Stanford: Stanford Briefs, 2015b, pp. 1–14.

aggressively demands from them to be singularly distinctive, they are, in fact, classic modern agents living in an era enriched with late modern tendencies. Instead of an internal motivation and inspiration, they feel to individualize themselves and their ideational substances and praxes due to external insistence. These people do not constitute, they rather consume their subjectivity in forms of self-searching and self-realizing experiences. Classic modern agents, thus, treat their experiences as mere commodities. They hastily gather artistic and aesthetic insights, mental contemplations, emotional impressions, psychological observations, diverse enjoyments and delights for body and soul, political activism, public-life-involvements, and subcultural fulfillments (i.e. chic and groovy pleasures in connection with what to possess, eat, drink, and wear, where to go out or visit, what do as sport, how to relax, etc.). However, these experiences are not qualitatively relevant encounters with the self in the process of becoming. These are only CV-compatible achievements, gratifications, satisfactions, amusements, self-accomplishments, and triumphs which have quantified values. So, classic modern people collect experiences in the same way as they seek to possess symbolic objects – commodification affects both tangible and intangible domains of life in this era.

Accordingly, agents seek to create an authentic lifestyle for themselves, yet not based on unique subjectivity (perspective of the 'I'), but according to consumable pattern-identities (perspective of the 'me'). This is because they are still stuck in the classic modern logic of *either/or* – argued by Beck and Grande.⁸ This epistemic rationale makes them feel that the permissions and possibilities of the late modern positivity are nothing different compared to the prohibitions and musts of the classic modern negativity. Both are demanding social expectations. So, the repeated self-choice-situations are becoming more and more exhausting for these agents, since they consider these trials as something externally pressured. The ocean of commercial advertisements and self-help messages urge the subjects to pick themselves, to make the best out of their individual capacities and competencies, and to enjoy their moments, however as consumers this is exactly what they are unable to do. Because the *either/or* logic distorts all forms of (self-) identifications,⁹ and paralyzes the uniqueness of subjectivity. Through this lens, the attempt to *identify with* is always shadowed by the negativity of *distantiate from* (differentiation).¹⁰ Thus, agents constitute themselves not

⁸ U. Beck and E. Grande, *Cosmopolitan Europe*, Cambridge: Polity, 2007, pp. 28–30.

⁹ In this paper, the term '(self-)identification' is used for the individual act of subjectively understanding the world-out-there with all its social relations, events, links, objects, natural entities, etc. This is because all understandings of the world-out-there are also framings about the self who proposes these ideas. Therefore, identification always has two sides – how the subject understands something it is immanently the subject itself.

¹⁰ L. Borns, 'Othering, an Analysis' *Transcience*, Vol.6, No.1, (2015): 69–90.

inside-out (for something) but outside-in (against something). This pathological prism of (self-)identification does not open up confirmable theoretical positions for the subject to construct itself. On the contrary, it narrows them down. It supports the acceptance of black-and-white sorts of framings, binary meanings and categories, unequivocal narratives and understandings, as well as the affirmation of unambiguous Truths and incompatible vocabularies. Due to the either/or logic, agents pursue the experience of being consummated and concluded. To question is tolerated as long as subjects are unhesitant to look for consistent answers – both about themselves and the diverse domains of their lifeworld. Rationality, as a set of rationale attached to the either/or logic, does not exclude the possibility of improvement or more general development. Yet it very much dislikes uncertainties and ambiguities. So, the classic modern subjects' self-progression is not about the *journey* of being contingent.¹¹ It is only about the *arrival* to feel completed. And about a rushed departure to see whether the next arrival brings something better. However, this hastiness turns the whole process of self-progression into a quantified record of attempts for self-searching and self-realizing experiences. Agents are consuming more and more from their pattern-identities to fill the void inside. Their biographies are like shopping lists (more conveniently called bucket lists). This is why the classic modern subjects are tempted to burn out, and be anxious, depressed and constantly stressed in the era of late modern positivity (and this is what Han misinterprets in his book about burnout society). Because the permissions and possibilities at hand are transformed into tiring prohibitions and musts to self-search and self-realize more vehemently, to experience more intensively without emotional and mental internalization, i.e. to consume more excessively. Late Modernity, thus, becomes the age of excess for the classic modern subjects paralyzed with the either/or logic.¹² The agents do not find their true self, so they consume more, but exactly this consumed subjectivity is the obstacle of self-constitution.

To understand the late modern positivity as not something externally imposed, subjects have to shift their ways of thinking and doing things from the either/or to the *both/and* logic.¹³ The late modern permissions and possibilities infuse the subjects' social interactions with risks.¹⁴ Grand-narratives or cultural patterns (e.g. norms, social rules, codes, taboos, customs, conventions, etc.) cannot offer solutions to these uncertainties and ambiguities because – as Beck argues – the reference value of these

¹¹ R. Rorty, *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, see: part I or chapter 1, 2 and 3.

¹² A. Phillips, *On Balance*, New York: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 2010.

¹³ U. Beck and E. Grande, *Cosmopolitan Europe*, p. 29.

¹⁴ U. Beck, *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*, London: Sage, 1992.

semantics are lost (or at least fundamentally questioned).¹⁵ Late modern positivity means that the common constraints (the once standardly followed prohibitions and musts) of the classic modern era become invalid and null. Of course, agents often try to stick their ideas and praxes to these narratives and patterns without any revision. However, in intersubjective situations, again and again, they need to cope with the experience that these semantics are not guidance for others, but mere symbolic framings with rather useless content. Late Modernity urges the subjects to deconstruct all the prohibitions and musts of their social surroundings, and rely, instead, on their reflexive and critical agency. It is because this phase of modernization is attached to a global level structural change.

Under a common name these trends can be called *flows* that lead to institutional abstractions. Giddens says that after the Second World War and especially since the fall of the bipolar world order in 1990–91 when the Soviet bloc collapsed, Globalization has emerged as an irreversible process.¹⁶ This perception is due to the experience that in our lifeworld a rapid diffusion of flows is progressing.¹⁷ On the one hand, we are witnessing flows of people (tourists, students, guest workers, temporary residents, migrants, refugees, etc.), products and services, innovative techniques and best practices, automatized and robotized solutions, digitalized information and Big Data, business and financial interventions, as well as cultural and intellectual streams (in the various fields of art, science, fashion, architecture, lifestyle, etc.). On the other hand, global flows of different threats and hazards like ecological and health crises, terrorism, state-failings, financial crises, cyber and international crimes, energy-dependencies, as well as fake news and data corruptions are also observable. And this globally interlinked and accelerated lifeworld of diverse flows seriously undermines our local structures, i.e. the realm of formal (regularizing and socially hierarchizing) and informal (culturally reproductive) institutions we are living with as traditional frameworks.¹⁸ Globalization facilitates similar tendencies everywhere. These processes trigger the local structures and agents to react. While institutional and subjective reactions may differ to some extent, from a global perspective these dissimilarities have moderate significance. Therefore, an institutional abstraction proceeds in the late modern context.

So, this should be seen as an interrelated mechanism of causes and

¹⁵ U. Beck, *World Risk Society*, Cambridge: Polity, 1998, pp. 133–152.

¹⁶ A. Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity. Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, Cambridge: Polity, 1991.

¹⁷ A. Giddens, *Runaway World: How Globalization is Reshaping Our Lives*, London: Profile, 1999.

¹⁸ H. Rosa, *Social Acceleration. A New Theory of Modernity*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2013.

impacts. Globalized dynamics of flows penetrate the local lifeworld and its structural and cultural domains; the induced institutional responses at the local level are fundamentally similar everywhere; these responses combine into a global level institutional abstraction (*universalized institutional unification*). At the same time, due to the shaken local lifeworld and because of the risks triggered by these institutional changes, people revise their reference-based ideational substances and praxes; they start to rely more on their reflexive competencies and critical agencies to de- and reconstruct individually satisfying understandings and practices for themselves; this explosion of individualization (not egoist individualism but subjective constitution of the self) facilitates further risks to the traditional social order; so, continuous de- and rebuilding of the local structures and cultures accelerates even more as the agents strive hard for autonomous subjectivity (*universalized individualization*). So, the core trend of Late Modernity is the interrelation among the processes of Globalization, institutional abstractions, production of risks, and individualization.¹⁹ These are the tendencies behind the late modern positivity and its permissions and possibilities.

Individualization in itself is the emergence of the both/and logic.²⁰ It is much more than a quest for individual uniqueness or a desire to be respected as a sole, distinctive, and unrepeatable subject. It is a process of endless *becoming* without the praxis of othering, i.e. to contrast the self and its being to the Other and its otherness. This is not an ethical shift but an ontological revision of one's epistemic prism. Every self is an Other for others. This constellation is eternally given irrespective to any context. However, in the classic modern era, due to the either/or logic, agents could comfort themselves by the perception that 'me' as part of the collective 'us' (in the name of sameness) is protected from the Other and its dangerous (irrational) otherness by keeping a proper distance. In the late modern era, agents have to change their stance from 'me' to 'I' because there are no references that would tell them comparatively to whom and according to what aspects they are the same with similar ones (i.e. they could feel 'me' among 'us'). The 'I' is the reflexive and critical self who is ready to revisit the grand-narratives and cultural patterns of its lifeworld; who realizes that there are no 'me' and 'us' only 'we,' i.e. similar people with dissimilar perspectives. Of course, it would be misleading to read the late modern future as a sudden elevation to human oneness. Talking about tendencies, it is less naïve to claim that the collapse of social-cultural grand-narratives and references, and the emergence of the both/and logic entail a much simpler ramification – people learn to live with internal and external contingencies. They do not want to see themselves as consummated, and

¹⁹ U. Beck, *What is Globalization?* Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999.

²⁰ U. Beck, *Cosmopolitan Vision*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006, cf. chapter 2.

they do not seek to consider their lifeworld as fixed. They rather accept the void inside and the ambiguities of the world outside. They agree with Bakhtin in the principle that

*If I am consummated and my life is consummated, I am no longer capable of living and acting. For in order to live and act, I need to be unconsummated, I need to be open for myself – at least in all the essential moments constituting my life; I have to be, for myself, someone who is axiologically yet-to-be, someone who does not coincide with his already existing makeup.*²¹

Feminizing the other

The classic modern either/or logic imposes on the subjects a set of rationale based on dualities. Through this lens everything is reducible to oppositional binaries, and it is up to the subjects to gather enough information in order to rationally identify the more favorable alternative for them. This set of rationale does not exclude diverse modes of reasoning. The either/or logic tolerates the pluralism of understandings and the various praxes grounded in these different ideational substances. It allows the tense coexistence of rival epistemological framings because already at an ontological level it tries to paralyze the subjects' act of (self-)identification. The either/or logic attempts to bar all agents from the perspective of the 'I.' Classic Modernity is interested only in the multitude of 'me' – in people who treat their objectified, natural, and social surroundings, as well as themselves instrumentally. Instrumentally means that every complexity should be broken down into partials.²² The Total as such is unacknowledged. Only partials can gain meanings. The 'me' is cornered into a contemplative and detached position allows only for the act of giving instrumentally framed and egoistically rational meanings (see the concept of reification in Honneth's interpretation²³). Although individual dissimilarities can emerge from these diverse rationalizations, yet the series of acts are common for all 'me' – a praxis based on categorizations, classifications, labels, and tags; then comes the rational comparison of these partials; and finally the selection of favored (tangible/intangible) commodities. So, there is a double distortion in this stance. On the one

²¹ M. Bakhtin, *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays*, Dallas: University of Texas, 1990, p. 13.

²² Gy. Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1971, see chapter entitled *Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat* (1923).

²³ A. Honneth, *Reification: A New Look At An Old Idea*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

hand, all kinds of (self-)identifications are both confirmations and negations at the same time using either/or-framed contrasts. The 'me' cannot identify any object, natural entity, or human being, just as it cannot address itself, without differentiation at the same time. The attraction of certain partials implies the estrangement of others. This is how the 'me' giving rationalized meanings. The act of becoming entails othering, the narrative-performative presentation of being necessitates that something has to be othered.²⁴ At the same time, this distorted contemplativeness pushes the self to consume more from the favored partials. The self wants to see the 'me' (i.e. itself) as consummated by all partials that are preferable for it and for the collective 'us.' This is the reproductive vicious circle of the way in which the self is both othering and instrumentally treating itself.

In order to stabilize the either/or logic as a rational standard, Classic Modernity cannot ease the rigidity of oppositional binaries. The current argument claims that the most fundamental antinomy at the background of all dualities is the Man vs. Woman epistemological framing. Simone de Beauvoir was among the firsts who recognized that one is not born but rather becomes, i.e. socialized to be man or woman.²⁵ Her statement was formulated on Freud's and Lacan's theories of psychogenesis and psychosexual development. Both of them argued that the relationship between body and gendered (feminine or masculine) subjectivity is neither necessary, nor arbitrary – the former would be biological determinism, while the latter would completely deny the relevance of body. For Freud the fate of anatomy explicitly matters, the sexed subject has to mentalize its bodily given material structure (through identification and object-choice).²⁶ Lacan emphasizes other aspects. He conceptualizes sexual differences on a language-based ideational approach.²⁷ This interpretation seems to avoid essentialism. However, as it will be shown below, it implicitly invokes the very same Freudian anatomical causality proposed from a patriarchal perspective. In spite of the justified criticism against Lacan, his theory sheds light on important dynamics.

To briefly summarize, Lacan stresses that there are no feminine and masculine substances only feminine and masculine signified meanings.²⁸ These meanings are relationally constructed, so in order to grasp their

²⁴ L. Borns, 'Othering, an Analysis', pp. 69–90.

²⁵ S. de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, New York: Vintage Books, 1971, p. 301.

²⁶ I. Alfandary, 'Identity between Sex and Gender in Freud and Lacan' *Journal of the CIPH*, Vol.95, No.1, (1999): 22–43.

²⁷ C. Soler, *What Lacan Said about Women: A Psychoanalytic Study*, New York: Other Press, 2006, cf. chapter 2 "Che Vuoi?"

²⁸ W.F. Bracken, *Becoming Subjects: The Agency of Desire in Jacques Lacan's Return to Freud*, PhD. dissertation, Department of Philosophy, Harvard University, 1998.

adequate and relevant significations other meanings need to be known.²⁹ Hence, for the task to describe (or interpret) a meaning which represents something, other meanings are mobilized for explanatory motivations. Representation, thus, cannot escape the *realm-of-language* and enter the *realm-of-substances* whether there is a *world-out-there* or not. According to the Lacanian approach masculine and feminine signified meanings are framed in a relational sense, and the master signifier of this language-structure is the *phallus*.³⁰ The phallus should not be confused with the (erected) penis. However, as Moi points out, this confusion stems from Lacan's own writing.³¹ In his essay 'The Meaning of the Phallus,' Lacan argues that '[The clinical facts] *go to show that the relation of the subject to the phallus is set up regardless of the anatomical difference between the sexes.*'³² This statement claims that the symbolically functioning masculine and feminine positions can be taken regardless of the subject's body. Yet at the same time Lacan suggests that women (as a rule) take up a feminine position, and men (as a rule) take up a masculine one. Why so? It is because the phallus represents the threat of castration.

For Lacan the entry into the symbolic order, into language, is a particularly important phase of both psychogenesis (becoming a subject) and psychosexual development (becoming sexed, i.e. taking up a feminine or masculine position).³³ The phallus distributes human beings into two symbolic (ideational) sexes. Not along anatomical features, Lacan argues, but because it subjectivizes them as speaking beings. Therefore, entering the symbolic order or language is a fundamental subjection to castration.³⁴ It is being subjected to an abstract Power (name of the symbolic-ideational Father in relation to the Oedipus complex) penetrates all relationally interlinked signifiers and signified meanings of language. For Lacan the conscious and the unconscious are both structured like language. So, all forms of subjective observations, mentalizations, understandings,

²⁹ Following on this path, Judith Butler emphasizes that not only the gendered (feminine or masculine) subjectivity is relationally constructed, but also the meanings which refer to the material structure of body. So, even though there are obvious differences on bodies of men and women, but these anatomical features are signified by linguistic meanings as well – these are not mere substances out of the realm-of-language either. J. Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'*, New York: Routledge, 1993.

³⁰ N. Chodorow, *Femininities, Masculinities, Sexualities: Freud and Beyond*, Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1993, pp. 54–55.

³¹ T. Moi, 'From Femininity to Finitude: Freud, Lacan, and Feminism, Again' *Signs*, Vol.29, No.3, (2004): 841–878.

³² J. Lacan, 'The Meaning of the Phallus' in J. Mitchell and J. Rose (eds.), *Feminine Sexuality: Jacques Lacan and the Ecole Freudienne*. New York: Macmillan, 1985, p. 76.

³³ J. Gallop, *Reading Lacan*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985, pp. 133–156.

³⁴ J. Mitchell, *Psychoanalysis and Feminism: A Radical Reassessment of Freudian Psychoanalysis*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974, pp. 74–93.

reflections, fantasized imaginations, dreams, narrative interpretations, and performative self-expressions are inseparably attached to language-use. And language itself is inherently sexualized, and makes human beings sexed (feminine- or masculine-positioned) speaking beings.³⁵ However, Moi rightly asks back – based on this theory, why women should take up a position as feminine more often than men?³⁶ And the only answer Lacan gives is the very same anatomical reasoning developed by Freud. Even though girls and boys are similarly threatened by castration, the traumatic experience of the Lack is different for girls and boys. Girls desire *to be* the phallus because they cannot have it, while boys desire *to have* the phallus, to possess it as their own. Both sexes thus desire the phallus, to control that powerful master signifier that structures the whole signification of language and all subjects. Yet women have to perform a masquerade, they have to mask that in absence of a penis they cannot have the phallus ever. However, it is still unclear why the penis is so symbolically powerful against, for instance, the breast? It is due to the logic – Moi argues – that language is not sexualized per se, but from a patriarchal perspective. And therefore, women are the othered ones and not men. So, sexual differences are ideationally constructed signified meanings, but the two sexes are not equal in this language-framed constellation. The masculine position is differentiated from the feminine one by othering, by distantiation from the feminine otherness. Lacan is remarkably right to claim that beyond institutionalized cultural constraints, language, as mediation for interaction and subjectivation, is normatively sexualized. However, he is absolutely wrong to claim that this logic of language is unchangeable. Of course, it is not. This is not an essentially inherent dynamic of language, because language itself does not have any substantial status either. It is relationally constructed as well. Like all its signifying meanings. So, what Lacan explored and described, it is nothing else than the meta-cultural language of the (pre-modern and) classic modern era infused with the ontologically distorted either/or logic. He was right to identify a patriarchal master signifier in this language. The phallus is, in fact, the generative Power beneath the dynamics of othering.

Oppressions against women originate from a much earlier time than Classic Modernity and the capitalist mode of production attached to it. The either/or logic and its meta-culturally gender-biased patriarchal language, as well as the othering of women obviously trace back to a pre-modern era. However, these dynamics – in a certain sense – are fundamental features of the classic modern age too. The objective and universal (in fact, subjective

³⁵ K. Horney, *Feminine Psychology*, New York: Norton, 1973, pp. 37–70.

³⁶ T. Moi, T. 'From Femininity to Finitude: Freud, Lacan, and Feminism, Again', pp. 867–871.

and particular) form of Rationalization continuously challenge the reference value of the either/or logic. Yet due to its Truth-orientated (in diverse contexts Truth means profitable, valuable, lawful, scientifically true, etc.) epistemological approach, which urges for unequivocal ideational and praxis-related distinctions, Rationalization is unable to really shake the rigid framings of the either/or logic. While it has successfully dismantled the pre modern era's traditional-religious semantics, which were collective lifeworld-explanations imposed by a few powerful agents on many powerless others, the classic modern over-rationalization, instead, installed a new set of rationale in accordance with *common-sense facts* could be perceived and understood individually. Therefore, Classic Modernity has decentralized and diffused the either/or logic to all subjects under the guise of self-interest-based, egoistically rational comparative categorizations and calculations applied from a socially detached and contemplative position. Due to these limitations, the patriarchal language and the othering of women as ontologically flawed foundations have remained almost intact during this phase of modernization, which is the age of individualism (instrumentally treated 'me' and 'us') that has to be proceed by the late modern individualization (subjectively constructed 'I' and 'we'). The rational self, who search for Truths relentlessly, can reveal epistemological category-mistakes and immoralities along discriminative binary codes,³⁷ but it is unable to reveal the either/or logic's generative distortedness. It would be irrational to accept that the rational is not rational. This is the vicious circle of Classic Modernity. It was a historically necessary era in the course of modernization, but its alleged finitude has to be opened up for infinite progressivity.

When speaking beings use a patriarchal language to communicate, interact, and (self-)identify their lifeworld, they not just other women for their perceived otherness, but they also feminize everything distantiated as an Other. The either/or logic and its mediating language designate women as the ultimate Other. So, if something is othered it has to be feminized to some extent. Therefore, something is not othered due to its substantial feminine status. It is, instead, feminized because it is simply rejected. Irrespective to the speaking beings' masculine or feminine position, if agents apply either/or kinds of ideational and praxis-related (self-) identifications, then they more or less feminize the Other at the same time. When something is othered, it is framed as a not-Truth, and therefore it is considered as irrational. Yet Truth, as it was mentioned above, has diversely contextualized meanings. During its historical evolution, the either/or logic has always applied the Man vs. Woman opposition as the generative

³⁷ A. Honneth, *Reification: A Recognition-theoretical View*, Tanner Lectures on Human Values, Berkley, University of California Press, 2006.

antinomy structured into a linguistic form. However, in different times, or to put it in Marxist terms, in various stages of the mode of production (antique, slaveholder, feudal, capitalist), the either/or logic had different kinds of authoritative binary codes. It is only since the capitalist era that one distinguished code tries to over-dominate all other binaries. The code of profitable/unprofitable, just as its subversions of productive/unproductive, innovative/non-innovative, competitive/uncompetitive, etc., is a duality that strives to function as the sole (determining) binary of the either/or logic. This tendency has two milestone-consequences. On the one hand, everything that is considered as unprofitable, is labeled as irrational too, and therefore it is feminized. This trend leads to the discriminative feminization of whole sectors, social roles, professions and vocations, positions, scientific disciplines, artistic streams, passions, forms of recreations and relaxations, etc.³⁸ On the other hand, due to this tendency, masculine rationalization with its flawed logic and language, as well as biased ideational and praxis-related othering is unmasked in more and more contexts.³⁹ So, its reference value becomes instable. Accordingly, while Classic Modernity pushes for growing capitalist profitability, productivity, innovativeness, and competitiveness, which is in fact the Globalization of flows described above, it urges its own ending.⁴⁰ Of course, in the pre-modern and also in the early stages of the classic modern era discriminative feminization was much more radical and aggressive than in our contemporary times. This statement is especially true if we focus on the Western civilization, i.e. on the native land of Capitalism and its rationalized, administered-registered, bureaucratized, industrialized, technologized, nation state-based mode of operation overarched by the egoistically instrumental individualism. However, the capitalist mode of production, just as once the feudal one, has reached its dialectical point of tenseness in the last decades. Nowadays, the conditions it creates enable the agents for a different kind of mode of production. There is no sharp caesura to realize, there are only shifting trends to observe – a chance to progress from Classic to Late Modernity, and to gradually replace the capitalist-individualist mode of production with a critical-reflexive individualized one.⁴¹

The language of late modernity

³⁸ H. Frigga, 'Feminizmus és marxizmus' ['Feminism and Marxism'] *Eszmélet*, No.32, (1996): 27–44.

³⁹ U. Beck and E. Beck-Gernsheim, *The Normal Chaos of Love*, Cambridge: Polity, 1995.

⁴⁰ A. Kapitány and G. Kapitány, *Szellemi termelési mód [Intellectual mode of production]*, Budapest: Kossuth, 2013.

⁴¹ U. Beck and E. Beck-Gernsheim, *Individualization: Institutionalized Individualism and its Social and Political Consequences*, London: Sage, 2002.

According to the either/or logic, there is a world-out-there as our objectified, natural, and social surrounding, and there are also *Truths-out-there*. So, this logic is foundationalist, representationalist, and essentialist. It claims that if the agents try to enrich and expand their knowledge vertically, then they are able to get closer to something higher, deeper, hidden or veiled – to essential Truths.⁴² The either/or logic treats the world-out-there and the *world-inside-the-self* similarly. Both are there to be grasped, to be understood. Everything has a most inner foundation covered by outer layers of attributions, characters, and features as partials. The links, connections, and mechanisms among these partials are important to be observed and described, because this is the way how everything can be rationalized based on ‘facts.’ Both the world-out-there and the world-inside-the-self represent themselves, so their intended meaning just needs to be perceived adequately.

In contrast, the both/and logic has a fundamentally different ontological prism. It says that even there is a world-out-there, there are absolutely no Truths-out-there, because all kinds of truths are sentence-based subjective constructions cannot be separated from the subjects who created, formulated, and argued them. As Rorty describes:

To say that the world is out there, that it is not our creation, is to say, with common sense, that most things in space and time are the effects of causes which do not include human mental states. To say that truth is not out there is simply to say that where there are no sentences there is no truth, that sentences are elements of human languages, and that human languages are human creations. Truth cannot be out there – cannot exist independently of the human mind – because sentences cannot so exist, or be out there. The world is out there, but descriptions of the world are not. Only descriptions of the world can be true or false. The world on its own – unaided by the describing activities of human beings – cannot.⁴³

So, nothing, neither in the world, nor inside the self speaks for itself, only human beings as subjects do so. The claim that there are factual Truths refers to a belief that everything, all entities of the universe and among them also the self, has an intrinsic nature which is still not fully understood by human

⁴² R. Rorty, *Objectivity, Relativism and Truth: Philosophical Papers I*, pp. 211–222.

⁴³ R. Rorty, *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*, p. 5.

beings.⁴⁴ From the perspective of the both/and logic this argument leads to unanswerable questions and unknown super authorities such as God, Nature, Spirit, Rational Mind, Authentic Self, etc. which all somehow constrain the reflexive competencies and critical agencies of subjects to construct and reconstruct themselves. To strive for the acquisition of something higher or deeper essence, something used-to-be-unknown by discovering and describing factual Truths is a hegemonic praxis tries to mute rival arguments.⁴⁵ It is nothing else than one understanding with its own vocabulary imposes sentence-based narratives on other framings from the same horizon of human subjectivity by claiming vertical elevation or depth for its status. It is a misleading statement of certain agents who assert that they managed to explore knowledge fragments of something non-human, that they succeeded to decode and transpose the secret language of something worshiped into our common sense language. Both pre-modern and classic modern subjects appreciated this illusion of the world (and the self) as it is created by something which has its own, still not fully translated language, and factual Truths are sentence-shaped meanings explored from this non-humanly established knowledge. Due to this belief '[...] *it is easy to start capitalizing the word 'truth' and treating it as something identical either with God or with the world as God's project. Then one will say, for example, that Truth is great, and will prevail.*'⁴⁶ The practice driven by this ontologically distorted idea is simple judgment rooted in the either/or kinds of confrontations (confirmation of the rational/true 'me/us' and negation of the irrational/untrue Other).

The both/and logic, instead, urges for justifications.⁴⁷ It has a meta-culturally non-patriarchal and unbiased language respects the richness of different vocabularies. This logic is the ontological stance of the 'I' who does not need to other the Other in order to identify itself or any entity in its lifeworld. As it was said before, the 'I' does not treat the Other instrumentally because it does not reify itself either. It is aware of the diversity of individual subjectivities. Thus, the 'I' strives to embrace the humanness [or in Marxist term: the *speciesness* (*Gattungswesen*)] of the Other instead of estranging it for its otherness. The subject 'I' (self-)identifies its lifeworld in appreciation of the motto of *sameness in differences* – people are dissimilar and exactly this diversity makes them similar. In contrast, the 'me' sees only the *sameness in exclusivity* – people are dissimilar, but certain ones can form a group based on their distinguished similarity. The former approach, since it has a focus on

⁴⁴ R. Rorty, *Truth and Progress: Philosophical Papers III*.

⁴⁵ R. Rorty and P. Engel, *What's the Use of Truth*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2007.

⁴⁶ R. Rorty, *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*, p. 5.

⁴⁷ U. Beck, *Cosmopolitan Vision*, see chapter 3.

human beings as a Totality, enables for universal and pan-relational togetherness (self-transcending connectedness), while the latter, since it concentrates on instrumentally framed partials, allows just for particular belonging (self-enhancing bond among superiors).

The 'I' is able for these ideational framings and praxes underpinned by justifications produced in both/and-driven deliberative discourses because it gives up the language of generative antinomies. The 'I' is devoted to learn a new language since it accepts that vocabularies are constructed and variable. There are no Truths, no 'essences,' no 'facts,' no reality-matching correspondences or representations – there are only more or less coherent vocabularies describe the world-out-there and the world-inside-the-self in a more or less useful way – as Rorty argues in most of his books.⁴⁸ Usefulness, in this sense, refers to an agreement among reflexive and critical subjects about how to give a detailed account of 'reality' in sentences. It is not a full consensus achieved by compromises, nor an ultimate or eternal harmony of oneness in understanding our objective, natural, and social surroundings. It is rather a commitment to the procedure of repeated deliberative justifications which can never be discriminatively unjust even to those who do not accept the majority-favored descriptions of our lifeworld. Subjects commit themselves to justification because they acknowledge that everybody has the actorness to be a truth-candidate but nobody is able to tell the Truth. This does not mean that all people's arguments are equally true. It cannot be the case, because true is what is justified – justified not by one, but by many. This acknowledgement rather means that everybody can argue a truth-proposal which does not deny others' agency to constitute their subjective truths.

Of course, there are vehement criticisms against this argument of *truth is made and not found*. Those who disagree with this claim emphasize that majority-supported justifications are not guarantees for anything – the majority can be brutally unjust and merciless. The problem with this counterargument is that it is said from the perspective of the either/or logic, and this logic cannot refute the both/and one, simply because they have fundamentally different ontological prisms. There is no dialogue between these logics since they apply totally incompatible languages. The either/or logic's language is considered as a medium between the self and its 'reality.' The both/and logic's language is rather a tool – a tool in the hand of the self to communicate and interact with others in order to describe our lifeworld in a more useful way. For the progressive recognition to stop the quest for Truths and all the unequivocal 'facts,' it is indispensable to give up the idea that language relates us to the intrinsic nature of the world-out-there and the world-inside-the-self, that language can give common sense meanings

⁴⁸ R. Rorty, *Philosophy and Social Hope*, New York: Penguin, 1999.

to the unambiguous ‘essences’ discovered. As long as people believe that language mediates between the self and its reality, as long as they are convinced that human language can translate the secret language of the world-out-there and the world-inside-the-self by searching out newer and newer Truths from these hidden knowledge-realms, they won’t give up to instrumentally treat each other (and also themselves) along reductionist binary codes. Simply because this ontological lens and the meta-culturally patriarchal and biased language attached to it make them to affectively feel and cognitively think that they are closer to something worshiped, something non-human source of existence. Since this source, whatever is claimed about it, is utter speechless, then the Other has to be othered (negated) in order to open the way for the self to identify (confirm) itself. So, it is not God, Nature, Spirit, Rational Mind or Authentic Self who gives special exclusivity to the ‘me/us,’ but the rejected dissimilarity of the Other. The either/or logic’s language, as Lacan stated, is relational, i.e. all meanings are meaningful just in relation to other meanings, and in relation, of course, to the master signifier of the phallus. Language is relational because it cannot be supported by anything external to it. This conclusion is right since language, just as truth, is made and not found. But this relational constellation is used by the either/or logic for judgment – to produce rationalized and masculinized Truths by judging irrationalized and feminized untruths. This is the language of othering. It makes people unable to realize that not verbal meanings but speaking beings (i.e. themselves) are the ones who are (pan-)relationally attached to each other.

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