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Melancholy and Polemics

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When we here talk of the interrelation between melancholy and polemics, thus we think mainly of that construct inspired in terms of the history of ideas and of the critique of society and culture, but also anthropologically inspired construct, in regard to which a pessimistic positioning or attitude does not effect a paralysing (stultifying) and crippling resignation, or even the conclusive (definitive), final bidding farewell to the matters of concern of this world, but rather functions as an intellectual(-spiritual) weapon, that is, it serves the articulation and satisfaction of social power claims. Although now the transition from the individual-psychological (i.e. the psychology of the individual), to the cultural and social-political examination of the problem of melancholy, is by no means carried out (executed) linearly, we must, nevertheless, first of all, emphasise some aspects of the former (psychology of the individual), because in regard to this, in a direct way, the anthropological background (backdrop) is made visible, upon, i.e. from, which we want to take off (pick up) as regards our introductory (prefatory) remark(s) (comment, observation). In a certain – but only in certain – respect, the same mental thread runs (passes) through both levels (i.e. the psychology of the individual, and, the cultural and social-political

((and) anthropological) aspect), which means that the texture, composition and kind and manner of (the) combination[[s]] (combining) of the decisive (crucial) mental magnitudes, both seem to be (look, appear) similar to each other. The similarity does (is) not, of course, lie (found) in the fact that anthropologically or else individually-psychologically (i.e. as to individual psychology or the psychology of the individual) given magnitudes are immediately translated (converted, transposed) into culturally effective forces, or forces having an effect as to the history of ideas, in respect of a certain content, but rather in the fact that the deeper the latter (said forces) grasp and catch on (grab), i.e. take/have an effect, the more they have at their disposal an anthropologically, also individually-psychologically (i.e. as to the psychology of the individual) deducible (decipherable) backing (support, back up). In view of this multi-dimensionality of our question formulation (problem examination, central theme), we must not reduce the way of looking at melancholy in terms of the psychology of the individual, to psychopathological findings. However, on the other hand, it is not to (should not) be overlooked that melancholy as a manic-depressive psychosis represents and constitutes an extreme intensification of fundamental, contrasting, opposed and at the same time complementary phenomena (or manifestations) (appearances, occurrences) of so-called normal psychological life in its generally well-known incessant vacillations (fluctuation, oscillations) and ambivalences. And what concerning this is to be found (met, encountered, run into, come across) always and all over (i.e. everywhere), takes root, for its part, in strata (layers), which are given with the constitution of the living human being: no resigned pessimism and no activist optimism, therefore, without non-lust, i.e. inappetence (inappetency, listlessness, reluctance[[, pain]]) and lust (appetite, desire, pleasure), without angst (or fear) and will-to-power (will power). The manifold (ad)mixtures (blending(s), mixings) [[coming]] out of (from) pessimistic and activist positionings (attitudes), which we want to work out and elaborate upon hereinafter in regard

to central examples pertaining to the history of ideas, rest and are based on, again, anthropologically, on the possibility of different intersections of those primary magnitudes (non-lust/inappetance and lust, angst/fear and will-to-power) with one another, although their ideational content is culturally determined and, hence, highly variable.

Like consciousness in general, thus melancholy distinguishes itself and stands out too through intentionality: it is melancholy over (regarding) something – irrespective of how one answers the (infertile (unproductive, unfruitful)) question as to whether this “something” brings on (causes, generates, gives rise to) the melancholy, or whether it merely fulfils the function of a trigger (mechanism). This intentionality of melancholy means that reference is to the real (what is real, reality), which means that it (the real, reality) – outside of the melancholic subject of the processes and events being acted out – can never be broken (off) (cancelled, demolished, cut short), even if the melancholic by himself (on his own volition) asserts that he has burnt all bridges to(wards) (with, vis-à-vis) the world. The intentional Something of melancholy is in this case – for (an) obvious psycho-economic(al) (i.e. psychological in terms of efficiency and practicality (not money, business and wealth etc.)) reason(s) – denied (gainsaid, disaffirmed, negated), or is even made to vanish into thin air, i.e. it is effaced: if “all (everything) loses meaning and value”, then the aforementioned Something also becomes unimportant, and by vanishing in the ocean of melancholic indifference, it is no longer held to be worthy and capable of granting or constituting (providing, affording) the main source of misfortune (unhappiness, adversity); in this respect, precisely the emotional (or intuitive) deepening, or thematic widening (broadening, expansion, extending) of melancholy, respectively, brings with it relief (from strain (stress)) (the relieving of the tension of existence, discharge, release). Accordingly, (the fact) that he takes away (removes, revokes) from the whole world, meaning and

value, the melancholic takes revenge on the intentional Something of his melancholy. However, in this psychological situation there is no third alternative or choice beyond meaning (sense) and meaninglessness (senselessness, pointlessness). Meaninglessness, therefore, carries on being defined and felt (perceived) with reference to meaning (that is, indirectly also to the intentional Something), or is measured at least in regard to the possibility of meaning, and in regard to longing (yearning, hankering, nostalgia) for it (meaning). In relation to that, even an aggressive rejection of that possibility, does not change the slightest thing (anything in the least). Tranquil (Calm, Serene, Peaceful, Quiet) insight into objective meaninglessness during simultaneous understanding as regards the subjective indispensability of meaning, is not, at any rate, the issue (cause, matter) of the melancholic, *as melancholic*¹.

The intentional Something of melancholy remains, consequently, in any disguise (costume, fancy dress) and position whatsoever, constantly present in the mental universe of the melancholic, it becomes – if one may so express it – the spirit from the spirit of the melancholic constitution, and the pivot point of its (the said melancholic constitution's) changing moods (whims, fancies). This change (alternation), which with regard to our question formulation (central theme, problem examination) appears to be particularly revealing (illuminating), swings between two situations, which in pure form might be outlined as follows: on the one hand, the failure (breakdown, falling through) of the efforts and endeavours regarding the intentional Something develops into never-staying-silent self-reproach (self-accusation), and an agonising, tormenting sense (feeling) of guilt; the futile (in vain) search for the Something or its loss (deficit) consequently ends up in identity insecurity (insecurity as to/of

¹ Translator's footnote (nothing to do with P.K.): In other words, it is for the scientist/scientific observer to ascertain that there is no ultimate objective meaning based on all known historical empirical reality, but also, the fact that societies require, absolutely, the existence of meaning in order to function as societies of humans (regardless of the level of, and means of achieving, social order, social cohesion, etc.). "Melancholic" obviously denotes the adjective describing a noun (as in e.g. "melancholic constitution", etc.), or, the noun of the person, i.e. "the melancholic", depending on the context.

identity), or even in I(Ego)-loss/deficit (loss of I (Ego)); the Something – or the world *in toto* as the constant reminder of the Something – overwhelms, crushes the I (Ego). However, the opposite can also occur in relation to that: the I (Ego) wards off (resists) this overwhelming and crushing, and turns aggressively against the, from now on, inimical Something, or rather against the, from now on, inimical world, by revaluing itself upwards (higher) (increasing its own value), and devaluing that world; then, it feels valuable (worthy), capable and also justified (entitled) in regard to pouncing on (attacking, besieging) anti-values (un/non-values (demerits)), and at the same time, that which agonises and torments. This spectrum as the changing suddenly of depression into mania unfolds and develops in psychoses, however, formally (as regards form), it can just as much be recognised in important and completely normal situations of the history of ideas, in which the regular transition from pessimistic ascertainments or voices, to intellectual(-spiritual) thirst or zest for action, takes place, in relation to which (whereby), in fact, lingering or dwelling on the former (pessimistic ascertainments or voices) takes place in the certain (assured, safe, secure) expectation of the latter (thirst or zest for action).

On the basis of the same psycho-economic(al) (i.e. psychological in terms of efficiency and practicality (not money, business and wealth etc.)) mechanism, which, as remarked earlier (a little while ago), creates or produces – through the deepening or rather generalisation of melancholy – relief (from strain (stress)) (the relieving of the tension of existence, discharge, release), it is also conceivable (possible) to avoid (dodge, evade), still before any [[actual]] failure, an intentional Something of the feared eventuality of failure, as a result of which the importance of the Something is (becomes) already relativised in advance; a relativisation of all things (everything) and everyone can, in the course of this, serve as a veiling (masking) with which the (melancholic) person concerned necessarily saves others or himself vis-à-vis (i.e. from) the admission

that relativisation applies actually (genuinely, really, truly) to this concrete Something. One's own powerlessness (impotence, helplessness) is not here experienced as melancholy after failure in regard to the Something, but as the attempt to anticipate and preempt failure through melancholic distancing from the Something. There is still, however, a third possibility available (in existence), that melancholy namely, which precisely comes into being at the moment at (in) which one "has achieved (attained) everything" – or, at any rate, shortly (briefly) thereafter. Since not merely the inner emptiness (void) is in play (i.e. existent and active), which comes over someone when one just stands there after the realisation of one's highest aims (goals, ends, objectives), temporarily without new aims, goals, etc.. At least having just as much of an effect again, is the feeling of one's own powerlessness, which nonetheless, this time springs from the insight that the power acquired (obtained) from the realisation of the aim must, like every other power too, remain relative, therefore carrying on struggling and fighting (battling) against the resistance and opposition of opposed (opposing) forces. This discovery is particularly painful (distressing), if one makes it (the discovery) from a position which one believed to be elevated (raised) above all resistance (oppositions). The relativisation of the intentional Something starts anew (recommences), albeit from another perspective. One knows now: no recognition is shared by all people (everyone), no wish is fulfilled without cutbacks (curtailments, deductions, compromises) or modifications. Precisely at the high point (summit, apex) of success, and exactly to the extent self-consciousness and self-conviction increases, attention is turned rather to the still (always) opposing (going against and resisting), especially since now adversaries (opponents, antagonists) disrupt (disturb, annoy, spoil) [[things]], and provoke still (even) more, (whilst) being able to be tolerated still (even) less than earlier (previously). That is why the feeling (sense) of powerlessness (impotence, helplessness), and the melancholy of powerlessness, can be felt even by the

most powerful, when he consciously or unconsciously measures his power by (way of) (with) the yardstick (benchmark) of omnipotence (all-pervading power). Only God the Almighty never becomes melancholic, and can also in no case be imagined as melancholic, although on the other hand, He, as reliable (dependable, trustworthy) theological sources relate (i.e. report or tell [[us]]), can break out into Wrath (Anger, Rage, Fury).² The representation and notion (idea) of God says or signifies unmistakably and unequivocally that omnipotence may be characterised really (absolutely) as the counter-concept of melancholy.

When the Peripatetics (Peripatetic Philosophers) made the – since then often repeated – observation and remark that great men are all, and irrespective of their field (area, realm) of activity, melancholic, they implied therefore, without perhaps knowing it, that the distance between power and omnipotence can be more agonising and tormenting than that (distance) between powerlessness and power. Thus seen, the feeling (sense) of powerlessness overwhelms (overpowers) in the end the each and every respective reality of power, and melancholy equally covers with its black mantel, the powerful and the powerless (those who are powerful and those who are powerless) – this, these (the powerless), because they are not powerful, those (the powerful), because they are not omnipotent (all-powerful). All cases, of which we spoke ([[1]]) melancholy without an attempt and effort, and without failures; [[2]] melancholy after a failed attempt and effort; [[3]] melancholy after a successful attempt and effort), bear witness to the deep inner (internal) relation(ship) of melancholy and powerlessness towards each other, at any level whatsoever. The feeling (sense) of powerlessness constitutes, nonetheless, the reverse (other, flip) side of the will-to-power – otherwise, it would not be so grievously (achingly) painful, in fact it would not be felt (perceived) at all –, and that is

² Translator's footnote (nothing to do with P.K.): Is this is classic P.K. Irony?

why melancholy can cross (pass, go) over into (proceed to) struggle and polemic(s), like the feeling (sense) of powerlessness in the search for power. It is self-evident that this double transition potentially is not ubiquitous and obligatory. Here, however, the very frequent actualisation of this potentiality interests us. It (the said actualisation) makes, from another viewpoint (perspective, point of view, angle), the set of facts (facts of the case) visible, which manifest(s) itself (themselves) in the sudden change of depression into mania, or rather into similar mutations in the realm (area) of [[what is considered to be]] normality: melancholy is the – from the outside or from the inside – forced (compelled) renunciation and relinquishment (abandonment) of the unfolding of the will-to-power (will power), and at the same time the breeding ground (place) (hotbed, hatchery) for a sudden and yet foreseeable explosion of exactly this will. If melancholy did not have – precisely it (melancholy) – this Janus face, then it would not, for instance in the form of anthropological or of cultural pessimism, as it were, be able to serve as the run-up to very concrete and also very dynamic confrontations (altercations) with the existing (what exists/is in existence).

It should now be fairly (reasonably) clear wherein the interrelation between anthropological and individual-psychological (i.e. as regards the psychology of individuals) consideration of melancholy, as well as the way of looking at melancholy culturally and in terms of the history of ideas, lies. Ubiquitous is the intentionality of melancholy, and this intentionality can in turn bring to light its (melancholy's) possible (contingently) latent references, and pave the way (prepare the ground, open (level off) the road) to an activistic urge (thirst or yearning). The great common denominator of the aforementioned levels concerns, therefore, the general structure and the potentialities of the unfolding and development of the phenomenon, not the variable contents, in regard to which it is concretised on each and every respective occasion. The fundamental

conceptual distinction between the form of psychological acts, and the content of the ideational constructs, expounds (proclaims, declares, explains) a common and at the same time illuminating (revealing, informative) phenomenon (or manifestation) (appearance, occurrence), that, namely, there is no necessary relation(ship) between pessimism and optimism respectively as subjective disposition, and, pessimism and optimism respectively as world-theoretical positioning (attitude). People, who from their nature are commonly regarded as “pessimists” or “optimists” (if one may make use of these characterological abstractions), are to (can) be found alongside (next to) one another in all possible philosophical, religious or political schools or lines of thought (tendencies). The Credo of a school of thought etc., arises, therefore, as regards content, not as a direct outflow, i.e. outcome, or as a result(ant) of a particular psychological (pre)disposition (temperament) of the subject which represents it (a particular school of thought etc.). Nonetheless, a subject, which is not a melancholic, and hence by no means bears (carries, supports) (with)in itself the outlined (described) psychological structure of the phenomenon “melancholy”, can stamp (mark, emboss) this same structure on an ideational construct, whereby (in relation to which) its content(s) remain(s) left to the individual concrete (specific) situation in the history of ideas, as well as to personal preferences or even coincidences (happenstance, chance). The subject concerned appropriates this structure in the de-psychologised form, because it allows the sudden change (conversion) of the pessimistic starting point into a polemically oriented activism; and it chooses a pessimistic starting point because its opponent or foe champions (defends) an optimistic position. That means, of course, that it could also behave (act) in reverse (conversely, contrariwise, inversely). Polemics, which first of all, start from a “pessimistic” position, is/are only a form of polemics amongst several (forms of polemics); “pessimists” are in themselves not as polemically adjusted (focused, minded, engaged, prepared) as

“optimists”. But here we are exclusively dealing with their (the “pessimists”) case.

There exists an, as it were, a priori reason why (for which reason) “pessimism” (just like “optimism”), – as soon it crops up (appears) in a somewhat (fairly) theoretical form (shape) in the spectrum pertaining to culture and the history of ideas –, has to be polemically meant and undertake corresponding tasks. Pessimism and optimism come into being inside of the human situation, they cannot deliver or constitute a yardstick (benchmark) upon whose basis this situation can be looked at from the outside and as a whole, and judged (evaluated) once and for all. As partial phenomena (or manifestations) (appearances, occurrences) in the womb (bosom) of (from within) a more comprehensive reality, they are defined through their demarcation (delimitation) against other phenomena or manifestations etc.; their self-definition (i.e. definition of themselves by themselves) contains (includes, encompasses) or constitutes indeed often a statement about more comprehensive (broader) reality, yet this statement takes place (is carried out) from a standpoint, which is found inside the aforementioned reality, and is able to occupy in it (such reality) only a certain and restricted (limited, confined) place. No pessimism is conceivable without an express (explicit) or tacit (implicit) reference to a better reality, which once existed, or should (ought to) have existed; and no optimism appears to be meaningful and plausible (sensible), if it does not mean the overcoming of existing abuses (anomalies, irregularities) or bad/deplorable states of affairs (woes, ills, trials and tribulations). Because if one takes the human situation as it was and precisely is, without the slightest wish for this or that change (alteration), and without the slightest angst, fear or hope with regard to possible changes (alterations), then every pessimistic or optimistic positioning (attitude, stance) becomes superfluous. However, that would mean (signify) the congealment (congealing, solidification, freezing, paralysis,

rigidity) of the world under the eyes, i.e. under the gaze, of an infinite (unending) intellect. The human situation exists and lives from the angsts (or fears) and hopes, the approving and disapproving value judgements, which are essentially and substantially connected with it (the human situation), which means not merely as effects and results, but just as much as motors (motive forces) of its internal shifts (displacements) and transformations (changes).

As partial phenomena (or manifestations) (appearances, occurrences), which must rest and be based on demarcations (delimitations) and draw boundaries, pessimism and optimism – despite their claim to monopolise the image (picture) of reality for themselves – cannot avoid referring, through the mere drawing of boundaries, to that which lies beyond each and every respective boundary. Consequently, it is unintentionally (unwillingly) admitted that they are dependent on each other within a more comprehensive (broader) framework. This framework is the multi-dimensional human situation, which they (pessimism and optimism) would like to apprehend and describe from the outside and as a whole, without ever doing (managing to do) it, because this would presuppose the elimination of one of both of them. And that which applies to the human situation in general, holds true and is the case just as much for every historical epoch, in fact, for every historical moment. Because in every epoch and at every moment of/in history, the human situation is present in the totality of its aspects, irrespective of which aspect appears to be predominant (prevailing) in each and every situation. Pessimistic and optimistic components are hence found in every culture and in every age (epoch, era, period) (at every time), whether they now fulfil complementary functions inside of the same intellectual(-spiritual) construct, or whether they are mainly or preferably condensed in separate constructs, which then compete against one another. The various kinds of “Age of Pessimism” or “Age of Optimism”, regarding which one reads often in *Aperçus*, i.e. overviews and previews

(epigrammatic statements) pertaining to the history of ideas, are airy, lightweight fictions; they are founded/based on a highly selective and one-sided treatment (handling) of the material, and furthermore, they serve the goals of periodisation with polemical connotations [[i.e. in terms of polemics and not the non-normative axiologically free weighing up of the material]]. Precisely the parallel or mixed presence of the most different elements in every age, allows the sometimes unforeseeable shifts of/in positions in the intellectual(-spiritual) spectrum, the multiple use of one and the same idea, or the succession of different ideas in (at) the service of the same individual or collective subjects.

After this reminder of the belonging together (common bond, togetherness, interrelation, relationship, linkage, interdependence) of/between pessimism and optimism inside of the human situation – a belonging together (common bond etc.), which, seen anthropologically, is just as much necessary as the many-sided co-existence of non-lust, i.e. inappetence (inappetency, listlessness, reluctance[[, pain]]) and lust (appetite, desire, pleasure), angst (or fear) and will-to-power (will power) – we shall now turn (ourselves, our [[attention]]) to the former (i.e. pessimism), which we want to comprehend as the cultural and – as regards the history of ideas – formation (elaboration, organisation, design, shaping, composition) of melancholy, in its two-sided structure outlined above. The already made distinction between melancholics (i.e. melancholic persons) understood in terms of the psychology of the individual, and, culturally along with the history of ideas, can protect us, in the process, from misplaced (out-of-place) psychologisms (or: psychologisms missing the mark). The basic feature of pessimism is the turning away (break, estrangement) from (renunciation of) society or humans, and at the same time the maintaining (perpetuation, keeping up, upholding) of reference to them, exactly in the and through the turning away, which hence functions as the renunciation (relinquishment or abandonment) of acting (action) *and* as an act in one. Because the turning away

is not mute (silent, dumb) even when he who turns away is silent; it (the said turning away) signals in itself what is to be regarded by him turning away in relation to him having taken, i.e. made, his intellectual(-spiritual) or even social distance, and at the same time it contains an appeal to, or invocation of, the anti-value (un/non-value (demerit)), to change in such a way that it (the said intellectual(-spiritual) and social distance) would value the turning away from the turning away. A melancholy escapism, which perceives (feels) flight from this world as allegiance, fidelity and loyalty to a better world and to a higher ideal, can already through that, increase (heighten, deepen, intensify, aggravate) the tension between reality and (the) ideal in such a way that an explosive state of affairs comes into being, which has to be unloaded (offloaded) and discharged somehow in practice. That does not necessarily always lead from melancholy to uprising (insurrection, rebellion) – more or less (as it were, so to say) like the replacement of the depressive phase by the manic phase –. The above-mentioned tension can take several forms and reach (attain) very different degrees of intensity. That depends upon whether the melancholic remains an individual who speaks for himself alone, whether he indeed remains an individual, but who appears (presents himself) in the name of generally binding norms, or whether he would like to unite (unify, combine, bring together) his own powers (forces, strengths) with those of a collective in order to put an end to the tension between reality and (the) ideal by means/way of the pushing through, or imposition, of the latter (ideal) at the social level.

From the rich collection of samples (specimens, examples) of culturally relevant melancholics (or else pessimists), and, relevant melancholics (or else pessimists) pertaining to the history of ideas, we shall choose three ideal types so that this is illustrated. The dandy understands himself as an extremely refined and absolutely unmistakable individuality, and his spleen is the price which he must pay for these i.e. his extremely refined individuality, and absolutely

disenchanted (disillusioned, disappointed) by the course of the world, discovers wisdom in the cultivation (upkeep, maintenance) of his garden, or else withdraws as an ascetic and prophet into the desert (wasteland), and from there thunders against the sinful way of life of his people. The pendant, i.e. counterpart, of melancholy is in the latter case (of the hermit) no longer cultivated, ambiguous irony (or: irony with many meanings), but well-aimed/directed/targeted (deliberate) sarcasm, which increases and heightens (intensifies, rises) to holy wrath (fury, rage, anger), because taking the place of the casual and laid-back amoralism of the dandy, is now a rigorous, deeply mistrustful (distrustful) and eternally vigilant (watchful, alert) moralism. With the absoluteness of the ethical claim, contact with every concrete human reality flows into and leads to regular despair (desperation, exasperation), and the changing of melancholy into despair is carried out in a breath, i.e. automatically, along with the transition from despair to aggression. To such an aggression is of course that person entitled who knows that his own conscience is free from every burden or load (encumbrance, onus). For this reason, the prophet – as long as he remains a prophet, as long as he, therefore, loves the desert rather than the commotion (tumult, noise, kerfuffle) of politics – is hardly capable of finding fellow-travellers, and deep down he does not even want to: the voice of the right (correct) cast of mind (conviction, view(point)) is heard louder and clearer when it speaks (talks) through (by way (means) of) one single mouth.

At this point, the paths (roads, ways) of the lonely prophet separate from those of the political revolutionary, who must rely on collective action. Accordingly, the social intentionality of melancholy is differentiated. This comes into being now not as the sight (spectacle, view, vision) of a general moral decay (decline, abasement, dilapidation), which can likewise lead to a general lament (complaint) about the corruption and depravity of man, but rather from a comparison between that which man and society is today, and that which they

could be, and in fact would have been, if they had been able to develop (unfold) only corresponding to their true nature and destiny (purpose, designation, determination). Melancholy applies therefore to a loss or, at any rate, a lack (of something), i.e. absence, shortage or deficiency (flaw, defect, deficit), which is to be balanced or offset (leveled out) in the future, but until then serves as a yardstick (measure, benchmark) in regard to which the evil in society is supposed to be measured. Here, the typical contradistinction between Ought and Is (Is and Ought), Ideal and Reality is present as the lever for the revolutionisation of the latter (Is, Reality). The conviction that every man is potentially the bearer of the Ought and of the Ideal, allows, apart from the general moral accusations or reproaches, the fire of polemics to be concentrated on socially determined deplorable states of affairs (woes, ills, trials and tribulations), and consequently to find allies or instruments (tools, implements, organs) for the good cause from [[amongst]] those in the majority who the fiery, but unpolitical (i.e. non-political) prophet denounced (pilloried). In collective action or – if the action cannot be collective in the sense of the participation (involvement) of the masses – simply in the intoxication (high, state of euphoria, thrill) of activism, melancholy finally evaporates (melts away, vanishes, disappears) too. Because in political apraxia (i.e. inability at and lack of political action), the loss or the lack (absence, shortage) of which we spoke just now, is perceived and felt at its acutest (i.e. to the greatest degree). That is why revolutionary praxis, which actually is supposed to be the means of their (the said loss and lack's) nullification (cancellation, abolition, revocation), is frequently already seen or experienced therefore as nullification, because it represents and constitutes the opposite of apraxia (lack of action).

Nonetheless, the question of the internal interrelation between melancholy and polemics is not exhausted in the putting forward (drawing up, formation, specification, tabulation) of a typology of relevant melancholics (i.e.

melancholic persons) pertaining to the history of ideas, or culturally and politically relevant melancholics. It can be illuminated just as well from another point of view, if we, namely, investigate the contents of each and every respective intellectual(-spiritual) construct coming into question. Here again we must distinguish in principle between three levels, and indeed between perceptions (views) which concern the Is (Being) and the world *in toto*, perceptions of an anthropological character, and perceptions regarding historical and cultural sequences (orders) of events, processes or courses. At the first level, the purely melancholic or rather pessimistic world-theoretical positioning must obviously be reflected in the thesis that all (things) (everything) are/is absurd and meaningless (pointless), life has in itself no value (worth). What one can set about doing privately as a solitary (isolated) individual with this thesis is certainly one thing (matter), and what one brings about (effect(uate)s) as a public representative of the same thesis inside of a concrete spectrum pertaining to the history of ideas, is an entirely different thing (matter). First of all, to be (what should be) ascertained (discerned) is whether and to what extent the thesis is to be (should be) taken at (its) face value, or else whether and to what extent its proclamation might be interpreted as the ostentatious symbolic act, which the person concerned is supposed to delimit (demarcate) against the vain (conceited, idle) illusions and the foolish (silly, scatty, mad) goings on or hustle and bustle of the clueless (unsuspecting) common man. Things took place in this way for example with regard to various versions of the Romantic pain of the world, i.e. world(-)weariness, which promptly became alleviated (relieved, eased, soothed) as soon as practical prospects became better (improved). If, again, the thesis is to be taken literally, then the possible inconsistency of its representative would not consist in that he does not commit suicide (because suicide would just as much be meaningless (pointless) as life, and no binding logical rules can be formulated for the choice between two meaninglessnesses (i.e. two kinds of meaninglessness and pointlessness)), but in that from the

ascertainment of meaninglessness (pointlessness) of the Is (Being), he would deduce a *demand* or *requirement* of other people to believe in no meaning – absolutely overlooking that precisely the general subjective belief in the meaning of the world, according to the different interpretation of this meaning on each and every respective occasion, makes up a fundamental aspect of the objective meaninglessness of the world.⁴ However, even at the price/cost of a logical leap (leap in logic), he would have achieved little in practice. Because against him, the individual and collective drive (urge, impulse) of self-preservation of humans (men, people) would revolt, which under the conditions and circumstances of culture, fuses with the idea of meaning; whatever appears in nature as a biological magnitude, must in culture (as specifically human nature) takes the shape and the dignity (prestige) of the ideational or of the ideal. And only whoever commends himself in culture as the creator of meaning is in the position to pacify and reassure the drive (urge, impulse) of self-preservation of humans (men, people), and thereupon take up, capture or appropriate such self-preservation for himself, that is, exercise, on the basis of the assumption, adoption and acceptance of meaning, power over humans⁵ – irrespective in which form. The acceptance (assumption, adoption) of meaning, in other words, confers (bestows, grants, gives) upon (to) the powerful (person, ruler, elite, etc.) his power, because it affords (accords, grants) to subjects (those who are subordinate, underlings), or to followers, likewise, the/a minimal feeling of power, of taking part and sharing in real meaning. On the contrary, in

⁴ Translator's footnote (nothing to do with P.K.): in other words, if one observes there is no objective meaning of the world, one cannot expect others to believe in any one particular meaning of the world, since subjective meaning means that people can believe whatever the FUCK they want, and if there is no objective meaning of the world, all meaning is subjective (this should not be confused with the question of whether there are facts or not – facts exist if one accepts there is empirical reality perceived through the senses *and* with the intellect, even though one cannot “force” another to see that empirical reality exists (even though the other person has the capacity and potential to see and agree that empirical reality exists, since he shares in human rationality not found in non-human animals)).

⁵ Translator's footnote (nothing to do with P.K.): this is what all elites in all societies do in all of history, and we know exactly who this means on a GROSSLY DISPROPORTIONATE basis under ZIO-USA (it doesn't mean though that things are necessarily better elsewhere – they (i.e. things) might be much worse, but it does mean that other groups of elites and or people(s) will invariably want to be free of that group of elites – ultimately as a question of Power relating to a Subjective Matter of Taste).

relation to that, meaninglessness (pointlessness) means just as much as powerlessness, i.e. a lack or absence of power, that is, at most, power which cannot attain (reach) – beyond merely physical-animal(bestial) momentary compulsion or force (coercion, constraint) – any duration (continuance) and bindedness, and that is why – under the conditions of human culture – its use (utility) can only be slight.

We understand now why the world-theoretical melancholy of the first water, i.e. genuine and pure or unmixed melancholy, that is, the proclamation of the meaninglessness (pointlessness) of life has been a *quantité négligeable* in the spectrum pertaining to the history of ideas of all cultures and of all epochs. Even materialistic world views, which for polemical reasons, rejected the direct and original binding (bond, tie, connection) of meaning to an intellectual(-spiritual) or else godly, divine world foundation, had to smuggle in – in a logically breakneck (hair-raising, highly dangerous, desperate) manner (mode, way) –, at this or that tier, stage or level of the theoretical construction, principles or forces, which were supposed to save and rescue the assumption of meaningful moral-social action. Because of the cultural indispensability of this assumption, meaning can only be combated only in the name of meaning; that is why the proclamation of meaninglessness (pointlessness) is polemically completely (perfectly, absolutely) useless (impracticable), and melancholy, to the extent it goes/is traced back to or is reduced to the assumption of the incurable meaninglessness (pointlessness) of the Is (Being), must (necessarily) remain(s) a private matter (affair, thing, issue, case). Positions, which give rise to (call forth, create, produce, induce, provoke, cause) melancholy or rather seem to spring from a melancholic disposition, can – inside of ideational constructs – undertake only polemical functions, if they represent or constitute one side of a two-sided construction, whose other side founds (produces) meaning and gives ontological or other guarantees for the pushing through, i.e.

imposition, of meaning. As [[occurs]] inside the human situation itself, thus also inside of every world image, which does not want to fully renounce and relinquish normative aspects, pessimistic and optimistic components exist next to one another; otherwise the world image concerned proves itself to be incapable of existing in competition with other world images, that is to say, to fulfil polemical goals (ends), and accordingly to satisfy power claims. The reason is obvious: one begins and justifies at the same time a polemic(s) by referring to the constituent parts (elements) of reality which are valueless or damaging (worthless or harmful) – that is, instil (infuse) grief (sorrow) and melancholy; and one announces and justifies a power claim by, this time, optimistically asserting that the social granting or imposition (pushing through, predominance, prevailing) of our own meaning-creating (meaningful) position can put aside and eliminate (cast out, banish) that evil by equating therefore the victory of one's own position and social salvation (well-being, good) in practice. And in actual fact: no single case until now has occurred in history in regard to which someone has declared that the deplorable states of affairs (woes, ills, trials and tribulations) complained about by him himself would be got rid of through (by means of) the recipes and action of his opponents, and not through (by means of) his own recipes and action. Only from this perspective does it become explicable why in all great world images of the hitherto history of ideas, good and evil, or else optimism and pessimism, have existed next to each other (side by side). And it is, in the course of this, entirely irrelevant whether the corresponding pair of concepts (conceptual pair) are called God/Devil, Salvation (Redemption, Deliverance)/Sin, Freedom/Oppression (Suppression), Self-realisation/Alienation (Estrangement), or multicultural society/racism and nationalism.

We want to now outline (sketch out) more concretely this fundamental thought figure through examples from the second of the three aforementioned

levels, namely the anthropological level. Thus, the Christian-theological image (picture) of man was distinguished in a structural respect by a dualism, whose both limbs – the pessimistic and the optimistic – served complementarily in favour of/for the underpinning of the Church's power claim. In the most highly (extremely) pessimistic of tones, human misery (wretchedness) after the Fall (of Man) (Original Sin) was described, whereby the practical conclusion was obvious (suggested itself): if man is in such a way, weak and imponderable, then he needs constant supervision or monitoring (surveillance, policing) and disciplining by an authority, which undisputedly knows what is good and what is evil, and over and above that, what is requisite for the salvation (redemption, deliverance) of the individual. What, however, could guarantee that the endeavours and efforts at salvation (redemption) would finally be successful, and that hence its steering (guidance, guiding) by that authority could be justified in every case? For the certainty of salvation (redemption) – always under the precondition (prerequisite, presupposition) of intellectual(-spiritual) guidance (leadership) – vouched now, the other, the optimistic aspect of this same image (picture) of man. The doctrine (or teaching) of man (created) as image and likeness of God laid open (brought out, disclosed, revealed) the ultimate ontological reason (cause or foundation) of (for) human existence, and served as the full-of-promise ((fully) promising) reminder that one *had to (necessarily) bump or run into (encounter) exactly this reason (cause or foundation) when one removed (took off, wiped away) through asceticism and remorse (penitence) the dirt (grime, filth), which had until then buried or submerged him (i.e. man). Church-supervised disciplining, whose necessity was founded first of all through the teaching and dogma of the Fall (of Man) (Original Sin), consequently found in the doctrine (or teaching) of man (created) as image and likeness of God its ultimate and above all consoling (consolatory) justification.*

From this perspective, it is not difficult to see which polemical reasons drove Luther to the strong and intense (stark, emphatic) stressing of the pessimistic aspect of Christian anthropology: the refraining from the ontological, that is, necessarily existing reason (cause or foundation) for salvation (redemption), made the latter (salvation) dependent exclusively on the unfathomable (inscrutable, impenetrable, unsearchable) godly, divine will, and consequently snatched (tore, wrested) it (salvation) away from the institutional control and guarantee of the (traditional) church.⁶ That (The fact that) – despite all pessimism regarding human nature – the activist elan of Protestantism by no means fell by the wayside, should (ought to), after our fundamental ascertainments (observations) on the interrelation between melancholy and polemics, not appear to be any longer a paradox. However, we must leave it (the matter of Luther etc.) here with these hints and allusions (intimations), in order to linger or dwell somewhat longer over/upon the complementarity of the pessimistic and optimistic aspect in the anthropology (of a main current) of the Enlightenment. This (Enlightenment) stood on its head. i.e. turned upside down, both components of the theological image (picture) of man simultaneously, and kept (retained, maintained), through that, dualism with reversed signs (i.e. symbolism). The Enlightenment could obviously not seriously contest (challenge, dispute) the social power claim of theology and of the church without refuting (disputing, disproving) the teaching (doctrine, dogma) of the innate sinfulness of Adam’s descendants (progeny). To this teaching, the perception or view was contradistinguished (contrasted) that human Reason is

⁶ Translator’s footnote (nothing to do with P.K.) **DO NOT READ THIS! THIS IS ME BEING SILLY (THOUGH IN PART AT LEAST, PROBABLY, IN PART CORRECT)!**: this was one of the ideological openings for the Representative of SATAN or Satanist, “Money is the Meaning of Life” Judas, the Jew (JOO, Hebrew, ZIO), to get his foot in the door to gain, incl. though Primitive Secret Society Networking and Centuries of International Banking, Finance (Usury) and International Trade (incl. the Slave Trade), GROSSLY DISPROPORTIONATE forms or elite-level wealth and power in the West, in conjunction of course with British, French and ZIO-USA forms of colonialism and or imperialism (Hegemony) (having previously latched on parasitically to anti-HellenoRoman Papist Venetian, Genovese, Norman etc. Colonialism/Imperialism and of course later also, Ottoman (Osman) Mohammedan Musulman Mohammed (Islam(ic)) Turkic-Asiatic Conquering Genociding Forced Conversions Janissary Imperialistic Barbarism too), but particularly aligned with Protestant and Atheist (and later) Catholic (mercantilistic) (proto-)capitalism and then industrial capitalism.

out of (i.e. based on) its own forces in the/a position to lay down (set out, put forward, establish) and follow (keep to, uphold) rules of moral behaviour; the main school (line) of thought or tendency (direction) of the Enlightenment in fact thought (opined) that not only Reason, but already the sensorial constitution of man, can care for and ensure autonomous moral action, since drives (urges, impulses), passions etc., are either originally good, or else can be channelled in such a way that Enlightened self-love can bring about victory (be victorious) over egoistic and avaricious self-love. From (Out of) the polemical reversal of the doctrine (or teaching) of man (created) as image and likeness of God, arises, nevertheless, a very less optimistic image (picture) of man. The likeness (exact (spitting) image) of God (i.e. Man being the likeness of God) – and consequently God himself – was destroyed and degraded, by being subject(ed) to strict natural causality – and indeed his Reason just as much as his sensoriality, because precisely Reason could be interpreted as God's spark in man [[in theology]]. Now, in the overall Enlightenment concept(ual plan), pessimistic-deterministic and optimistic (Reason-)anthropology stood just as much opposite each other, as the doctrine (teaching, dogma) of the Fall (of Man) (Original Sin) and the doctrine (or teaching) of man (created) as image and likeness of God in the theological concept(ual plan). Enlightenment thought used or availed itself of a number of (clever) tricks in order to get out this logical dilemma (catch-22). However, both limbs of the dilemma were polemically indispensable. And this was neither the first, nor the last time in the history of ideas that polemical consistency, during the parallel use of pessimistic and optimistic theses, outstripped logical consistency.

The available space does not allow us to discuss equally (similarly) the decisive (definitive) component of anthropological pessimism in the 20th century: here the philosophical and literary dissolution (decomposition, disintegration) of the I (Ego) into functions coincidentally (accidentally, by

chance) or temporarily (transitorily) interrelating with one another, or rather into mental and affective currents going (flowing, mixing haphazardly) into/ with one another, turned against the bourgeois synthetic-harmonising image (picture) of man, and paved the way for that (no longer necessarily pessimistic) perception (view) of the open-fluid subject, which is typical for most highly i.e. extremely mobile mass democracy. We shall now go (cross, pass) over to the level pertaining to the philosophy of history and of culture, where firstly of course a contrast and opposition between the (recti)linear schema of Progress, and circular historical movement situated, as it were, at a dead end (in a cul-de-sac), occurs. Our purpose (goal) is, however, served just as well if we recollect (remind ourselves) for instance how the Janus-faced (i.e. two-faced) perception of the history of the Enlightenment was formed; the choice of this example is commended because of the very instructive structural analogy between this aspect of Enlightenment thought and its anthropological dilemma just outlined. In order to come up against and counter Christian universalism in respect of history (Christian historical universalism), which wanted to bring, i.e. reduce or subjugate the history of all nations and all times to the great common denominator of the plans of Divine Provenance, (the) Enlightenment philosophy of history and (Enlightenment) historiography set about bringing out and elaborating upon the particular individuality of every nation and every age (era, epoch). This could only be achieved (accomplished) by means of proof that historical individuality was shaped and moulded in space and time through the visible or imperceptible (indistinguishable) effect of causal, that is, geographic, economic and otherwise material, but also political and ideological, for their part, more or less materially determined factors. The often deeply pessimistic characteristic (trait) of Enlightenment historical thought (Enlightenment thought in respect of history) comes into being precisely in this summoning or mobilisation of as rigorous a determinism as possible against the secret and imponderable plans of Providence. Determinism could perhaps (possibly)

explain the individual case, however, even with the successful explanation of historical individualities, the normatively and ethically comprehended coherence of the overall historical process failed to materialise (appear). But which social and political fate awaited the preachers of meaninglessness (pointlessness), we know. Especially against the stark (strong and intense) moral claim of the theological opponent, the Enlightenment had to mobilise a claim possibly still starker, stronger and more intense, which was expressed or reflected in the field of the philosophy of history, in constructions which put an end to the constant back and forth (to and for, backwards and forwards) between (the) causal and normative, pessimistic and optimistic consideration (way of looking at things). In regard to these (constructions), of course, the in the meanwhile various kinds of knowledge gained about the historical mechanisms of causality were not simply thrown overboard, i.e. jettisoned, but the Happy End was safeguarded (secured) through such a treatment or handling of historical individualities, that they could constitute an ascending sequence of tiers (stages, levels) (scale).

We lack the space in order to say more as to details regarding the manner which the formation of programmatically pessimistic philosophies of history in the 20th century served polemics against bourgeois belief in Progress, and at the same time against the Marxist eschatology of History, which stood (was) in direct succession of the former (bourgeois belief in Progress). Instead of this, we want to conclude our retrospective survey of the history of ideas with a short reflection on the concept of crisis, which accompanies (escorts, comes (goes) with) the European New Times like a shadow. If one takes the frequency of the use of the concept as a yardstick (benchmark, criterion, gauge, measure), then one would have to regard the last European century [[i.e. the 20th century]] as the most lugubrious (gloomy and melancholic) epoch of/in world history. There is a lack, however, of tangible indications or pieces of evidence which would

allow the conclusion that human happiness and unhappiness (fortune and misfortune) were during this century essentially differently distributed than in others (other centuries). If, by the way, all respective diagnoses of crises corresponded all together with reality, then modern society would have long ago been dissolved (broken up or disbanded). Completely irrespective of whether crises exist, and how they are to be (should be) defined, every case between talk of crisis, and the real processes which are supposed to constitute the crisis, must therefore be strictly distinguished. Here of interest is only the former (i.e. the talk of crisis), and indeed in its necessary double reference to melancholy and polemics. A diagnosis of crises gives rise to uneasiness (malaise) or angst and fear, because the dangerous and the uncertain become possible or are promised (or: become real possibilities or prospects). At the same time, such a diagnosis contains or implies a genetic explanation of the situation of crises (crisis situation), which means an indication of factors which caused it (the said situation of crises), as well as an appeal for the putting aside or elimination of the same (situation of crises), and consequently for the manufacture of normality, namely for the imposition (pushing through) of a crisis-proof, stable norm. That means concretely: whoever lays claim to the status of the social therapist for himself, must first make a diagnosis of the illness (sickness, disease, malady) and of the crises, and thereafter derive from it (the diagnosis), legitimation for the combating of all those who are responsible (to blame) for the crisis. The regular connection of such power claims (of all power claims) with a diagnosis of crises arose in the New Times from the fact that these (New Times) declared permanent Progress as their own internal Law, and that is why they have to live with the permanent angst and fear in respect of the absence (non-appearance, non-arrival, non-realisation) of Progress. Crisis preserves a particular, absolutely (really, directly) polemical and activistically interpretable meaning, when the deplorable states of affairs (woes, ills, trials and tribulations) denounced, appear not as unalterable (immutable), eternally recurring destiny

(fate) within (inside of) a circular motion, but as in principle reparable defects of (damage to) a mechanism. Without being a mechanic of crises (crises mechanic) (or: If he were not a mechanic of crises [[who could/can repair defects in/of crises]]), the diagnostician of crises (crises diagnostician) would sooner or later be transformed into a stoically distanced spectator (viewer, bystander, observer).

The distinction made just now between the diagnosis of crises, and the reality of crises, points (alludes) to the general methodical (i.e. methodological) necessity for keeping and telling apart, i.e. distinguishing, the self-understanding of actors, the actions/acts of the same (actors), and, real processes, as cleanly, neatly and accurately as possible. The melancholic-pessimistic positioning (attitude, stance) of a social actor, or actor in the history of ideas, reflects his self-understanding, and it (such self-understanding) can flow into and lead to a praxis which interrelates with this self-understanding symbolically rather than logically. In general, the level of self-understanding, at which innumerable mental and ideational magnitudes propel (drive) their incessant (ceaseless, unending) combinatory games (games of the combination), often looks (proves to be) considerably more complicated and conceptually more inaccessible than the level of action in the real world, which through concrete conditions (circumstances), and not least of all through polemical considerations, is forced into a more or less clearly recognisable direction. The action of the actor has a more banal effect, in other words, than the self-understanding of this same actor. The giving(s) of meaning (The acts of giving meaning, Meaning-giving, Significations) at the level of self-understanding can be interpreted as socially, or else culturally, indispensable attempts at stepping/coming out of, and emerging from, the banality of real action, which (i.e. such banality of real action) catches the eye as soon as we become aware of the perspectivity of the giving(s) of meaning (acts of giving meaning, meaning-

giving, significations), as well as their (the said giving(s) of meaning's) concrete intentionality. The banal and the evident, however, do not coincide just like that, i.e. directly and immediately (without a second thought). And the human [[dimension, aspect, sphere, element]] in its banality remains perhaps more unfathomable (inscrutable) than the convoluted, entangled, pessimistic or optimistic wisdom of the giving(s) of meaning (acts of giving meaning, meaning-giving, significations).^{i + 7}

⁷ Translator's footnote (nothing to do with P.K.): I interpret this to mean that Man always retains certain traits, e.g. the capacity for (and or practice of) conflict, violence, cruelty, Hate, Domination,... as well as his capacity for, and undoubted practice of, many forms of co-operation, Love, Solidarity, etc., etc., etc., notwithstanding all his rationalisations, justifications, "giving(s) of meaning", etc., which in turn (in a kind of circular fashion) become convoluted, entangled, pessimistic or optimistic in trying to justify, rationalise, give meaning to banal reality.

ENDNOTE

ⁱ In relation to the anthropological examination of the problem touched upon, and problem examination also touched upon pertaining to the philosophy of culture, and the history of ideas cf. Panajotis (Panagiotis) Kondylis, *Macht und Entscheidung* (= *Power and Decision*), Stuttgart 1984; *Die Aufklärung im Rahmen des neuzeitlichen Rationalismus* (= *The Enlightenment in the framework of new-times rationalism*), Stuttgart 1981; *Der Niedergang der bürgerlichen Denk- und Lebensform* (= *The decline of the bourgeois thought form and life form*), Weinheim 1991. [[The translator adds: and of course, *Das Politische und der Mensch* (= *The Political and Man*), Berlin 1999.]]