

Algis Mickūnas

Globalization and the Responsibility of the Intellectual (Globalizacija ir intelektualo atsakomybė)

Santrauka. *Intelektinės atsakomybės, siejamos su globalizacijos procesais, klausimas yra filosofinė problema (nuo Sokrato iki moderniosios filosofijos). Negalima filosofuoti neatsakant į šį klausimą. Gerai žinoma, kad Sokratas iki savo mirties tvirtai stovėjo savo žemėje kalbėdamas apie savo ir kitų pareigą – diskutuoti dėl tiesos apibrėžimų, kad ir kokia būtų jų kilmė. Intelektinę dorybę jis suprato kaip reikalavimą atverti diskursyvią sritį, vadinamą poliū, kuriame diktuojama dėl tiesos. Tai rodo, kad filosofijos uždavinys – išsaugoti poliū atvirumą. Polyje turi būti tikrinami ir svarstomi visi teiginiai ir visos teorijos. Vadinas, kai kalbame apie intelektualo atsakomybę, turime prisiminti filosofijos uždavinius, kuriuos apibrėžė Sokratas. Tačiau mūsų padėtis yra visiškai kitokia negu klasikiniuose Atėnuose. Ontologinės ir metafizinės moderniosios filosofijos formos skatina svarstyti, ar mes apskritai galime mąstyti apie santykį tarp intelektualo ir atsakomybės. Todėl mūsų paskirtis – diskutuoti apie tai, kokios dabartinės aplinkybės, vertos minėto filosofijos uždavinio, atsiveria intelektualui.*

Pagrindiniai žodžiai: *globalizacija, intelektualai, atsakomybė, modernusis identitetas, diskursų įvairovė.*

Keywords: *globalization, intellectuals, responsibility, modern identity, multiplicity of discourses.*

Introduction

Despite some variations, Socrates as well as classical Greek thought sought to understand all natural events from their limits (*peras*). Every being is determined to be a specific kind of being by the limit which cannot be transgressed. Whether the limit is located in *topos noitos* (the place of ideas), or is the *morphe* (the inherent form of a thing) in each case they are the very essence

of a given thing. In turn, the essence of a being is what comprises its very purpose, its Alpha and Omega, its intelligibility such that from the very inception of a given being, the form, the essence, is what determines the way the given being will unfold its *dynamis*, *kinesis*, its dynamics, the shape of its movement.

The dynamics, therefore is intelligible

at the outset because it manifests its own form as the very purpose of its unfolding. In this sense, every being has its own purpose which is its own essence. This means that the necessity of all beings is inherent in them. Contingency or accidental encounters do not alter the essence of beings. An animal, engaged in the unfolding of its essence as its purpose, such as grazing, may encounter a lightning, which too is unfolding its essence, would encounter an accident. The latter may be mechanical, but not essential to the beings of either event. Moreover, any notion of evolution is excluded a priori. A being does not evolve from previous beings nor does it evolve from itself by addition of elements from other events. In the former case, a parent does not produce something essentially higher than itself. It is the rule of *aitia*, an efficient cause, since the result can be equal, but never more than its cause. In the second case, a being, as a result of its essential cause, cannot evolve, since at the very outset it contains its essence that will unfold to full actuality, but it will not change in itself. A monkey will produce monkeys and cannot be a cause of something more. In turn, beings have no histories, apart from differences in the unfolding of their essence. A human may become a carpenter, a baker, a scientist, but these factors do not change the essence of what a human being is; they are accidental encounters in specific settings. A human is born and will die a human.

This view did not remain unchallenged. Indeed, the philosophical problematic inherent in it was unfolded through

centuries, leading to a dilemma that could not be resolved. The solution of the dilemma could only be accomplished by accepting one side as true and the other as irrelevant to objective thought and science. The brief discussion that follows is designed to articulate the ontological question concerning the very foundations of the world, leading to modern/postmodern thought. The latter is premised on very precise ontological and metaphysical prejudgments that open the conception of an individual subject whose "essence" is pure and unrestricted will. It is of note that such a will is not equivalent with the common notion of will as a "free choice" among available options. Rather, its choice is itself as a source of arbitrariness and its resultant power. Hence, we must first decipher the ontological problem that led to this state of affairs. It is of importance to note that this problem is not discussed in philosophical textbooks.

Ontological Debate

As mentioned, Greeks understood everything from the limit such that the latter comprised the very essence of an entity. An entity, as a whole, has its specific characteristics which are not identical with, or derivable from the characteristics of the parts of which the entity is composed. To speak more precisely, the problem is concerned with the ontological priority of the whole over the parts or the parts over the whole. Does the whole possess characteristics of its own as a whole, or are its characteristics equal to the sum of the characteristics of the parts?

Greek thought brought this issue to a basic philosophical debate. An entity, composed of parts, must be either an aggregate, like barley and wheat in a barrel, or the parts must blend into a unity. If the first position is true, then the entity, as a whole, cannot possess characteristics beyond those of the parts. If the second position holds, then the entity as a whole can possess characteristics which are more than the sum of the parts and their characteristics. Using a familiar modern example the problem can be formulated as follows: either water, and its characteristic of wetness is an entity, and as a whole is one basic unit of nature or the parts, hydrogen and oxygen, with their specific characteristics, are the basic units of nature. Since these units do not possess the characteristic of wetness, then their aggregation, to form water, cannot possess wetness. In this case, the whole is equal to the sum of its parts and their characteristics; this would mean that wetness, as a characteristic of the aggregate of the parts, cannot exist – it is some sort of ontological mistake of nature.

Another side of the argument is as follows: if the parts are unified into a whole, then they cannot retain their individual characteristics; if the latter were to remain, then the result would be an aggregate of individual parts and not a whole with its own characteristics. To form a whole, the parts must vanish as discrete components into the whole in order for the latter to possess its own characteristics. Here we have a dilemma and Aristotle offered a specific solution to it. He argued that not only the

parts but also their characteristics cannot disappear entirely into the whole. If they were to disappear entirely, then there would be no unification of parts into a whole, but a destruction of one set of entities – the parts – and a creation of an entirely new entity – the whole. This makes no sense. To make sense Aristotle proposes the following: (i) there must be a unification of parts into a whole; (ii) the unification cannot be a mere aggregate since in this case there would not be a whole with its own characteristics, but a sum of the parts and their characteristics; and (iii) the parts and their characteristics cannot be completely destroyed and a new entity generated, since in that case there would be creation of something out of nothing. It is absurd for something to come from nothing.

The basic problem that had to be solved is this: how is it possible for the parts to exist in a whole without losing their individual substantiality, and how is it possible for them to retain their individual substantiality without the whole remaining a mere aggregate? If the latter case were true, then the characteristics of the whole would be mere appearances. As one can readily see, this prefigures the modern distinction between secondary and primary characteristics of entities and, by implication, the modern subject-object dichotomy. Aristotle decided to solve this issue by introducing the notions of potential and actual existence. Since some things are potential while others actual, then the parts, combined in a whole, can in a sense be and yet not be. The whole can actually be other

than the parts from which it has resulted, yet the parts can remain potentially what they were before they became combined into the whole. In turn, the attributes of the whole are potentially in the parts. Those attributes become actualized when the parts are unified into the whole. With unification the attributes of the parts become potential. These arguments allow the conclusion that a whole, composed of parts, can have its specific attributes and be regarded as a basic ontological unit of nature. This also implies other types of realities. For example, the state, while composed of individual citizens, is more than the sum of interests of the individuals.

While this solution to the dilemma lasted through the medieval period, it was already challenged by Arab philosophers. The challenge points to a difficulty of the potential existence of parts in a whole. If the parts become potential, then the whole is composed of potential parts. But it makes no sense for an actual whole to be composed of potential parts. If the whole is actual, then the parts must be actual. Yet if the parts remain actual, with their individual attributes, then the whole is an aggregate sum of parts. In that case the attributes of the whole cannot belong to the parts – they have no ontological status and must be mere appearances. Given this irresolvable dilemma the thesis of the ontological priority of the unity of the whole was rejected and a theory of atomistic parts became the norm. It was granted that the basic ontological entity is a material part that cannot be destroyed or altered in the whole. All unities are sums of aggregates of parts

extended in space and time. The experienced entities as unified wholes have no ontological status. The experienced characteristics of a unified entity must have another “place” and this place was designated to be a subject, containing all qualitative attributes that did not belong to the material, atomistic parts.

The consequences of this ontological decision were well developed by Galileo in natural sciences and by Hobbes in social and political philosophy, and accepted by Descartes as the ground of his mind-body dualism. For him, the perceptible qualitative attributes of the whole are not only appearances but are dependent on the mental states of the experimenter. If the atomic parts possess only material qualities, such as extension, size, position in space and time, then the entity as a whole is a numerical sum of parts. Resultantly, any experienced attributes of the whole must be apparent perceptions of the subject. In turn, what the subject experiences are not attributes of the unified entity, while the parts of which this entity is composed cannot be perceived. In short, what is accessible to experience is subjective and what is objective, reality of the ontological world of material parts is forever removed from direct experience.

The ontological shift in modern philosophy toward mechanistic atomism strips all essential structures from nature and replaces all beings with a sum of material parts functioning in accordance with mechanical laws. Therefore no beings of nature have any purpose. This ontological

conception of all nature leaves one entity, the human as a thinking subject, who has purposes. But such purposes have nothing to do with the real, material world, including human bodies that function mechanically. Moreover, such thinking and its purposes, have no fixed rules or laws; it is basically voluntaristic. Hence human actions, directed by will, make their way that is distinct from the world of ontologically posited reality. Humans make history as a purposive process which might aim at some final end. The latter has been depicted by various utopian images, including some versions of Marxism and capitalism. If material events are needed in this purposive history, they are not ontologically material, but practically, i.e. what can we make of the indifferent, mechanical, and purposeless stuff for our aims and presumed needs. We know the rest of the modern story as a progress of technology and human mastery of the material environment (including the material human as part of the environment). We also know the story of the metaphysics of the will pervading all modern philosophies in such guises as autonomy, arbitrariness and their manifestation as power.

Reflection

Having established a subject distinct from the material world, the next step was to assign essential functions for this subject. There is no way of escaping the conclusion that the primary activity of the subject is reflection upon itself, upon its own thinking, and upon its own powers, as guarantees of the validity of all claims and the possibility

of their realization. All events must justify themselves in the court of the standards and rules established by a subject reflecting upon itself. Whatever appears to the subject, whether it is a physical thing, a foreign culture, a theory, or even a feeling, cannot be taken as it is in its own right, but must first justify itself before the self reflecting subject. Hegel ended the modern tradition by demonstrating its ultimate principle: no longer thinking and being are the same, but reflecting thinking and being are the same. It will not do to argue that various philosophical trends of the last century posited various explanations, even of the egological subject, in terms of social conditions, material or economic conditions, biological conditions and numerous other claims. Yet all of them posit their methods and theories derived from and adjudicated by reflection. Such adjudication is regarded to be critical and hence objective and universal. This universality is regarded as global and should be either imposed on or accepted by all rational beings.

The task then is to expound the results and implications following modern ontology and self reflecting subject as grounds of the universalistic – objective – logic of globalization, its modes of constructing self generation and self validation, and its metaphysical methodology and, in the final analysis, valuative and voluntaristic groundlessness. At the same time, we shall show how this universalistic trend fragments itself into multiple logics and discourses as arbitrary constructs and thus abolishes its own univocal position in favor of what current

writers superficially call “power.” Our task in this sense, is to show other grounds for the claim of power, at least in the sense of being groundless and arbitrary. This is to say we can show that the very exercise of power in globalizing modernity has no other rules or criteria apart from its own self reflective generation. The basis of universalizing globalization is subtended and pervaded by conceptions that claim to explain power, whether social, economic, political, technocratic, while at the same time these very conceptions presuppose the self generation of power within which they are included. This means that these conceptions are in principle the ways of demonstrating the inevitability of arbitrariness and its resultant expression as globalizing power. In this sense, power is not something that is intended, but to the contrary all intentional awareness articulated in various modern disciplines and domains are constitutive of power that contains the logic of the transformation of the world. We hope that at this level we shall avoid any kind of psychological, valuative, genealogical, moralizing explanations, since even the latter are equally at the service of power.

All explanations without exception can be demonstrated to be participants in the very proliferation of power which such explanations may claim to challenge. Hence, the universality of globalization and its subsequent critiques make it impossible in principle to escape this universalization in terms of its own logic. Every rationality that will challenge this universalization will

accept its power logic, and hence will become inevitably part of that logic. As we shall show, even the breakdown of this universal logic into modern multiple logics, called scientific disciplines and discourses, are the means by which this universalization proliferates itself and survives. In this sense, the claims by postmodernists to multiple discursivity and therefore multiple discursive powers is a continuation of the maintenance of modern universalization.

Thus, first it is the case that postmodernity is a continuation of modernity and has in fact globalized itself under the claim that it can save the other cultures from Western modernization. It is no wonder that various regions of the world that want to acquire identity in the pretended context of modern globalization are constantly appealing to being postmodern. Second, the various claims to cultural self identity, in contrast to modern universal individualism, is a variant of individualism at the cultural level. We know from philology that in modern West the challenge to individual universalism came from Herder who claimed that there is a cultural individualism with equal global rights. The notion of individuality at whatever level and its identity remains intact. Third, modern universalization and postmodern challenge to it follow the same logic and therefore impose individuality and the rights to it on the basis of a rationality which, as we noted, is already power laden.

In this sense the language that postmodern theses propose for multicultural logic, allowing each culture to have its own iden-

tity, at the same time talk about empowering the other. This is an assumption that pretends that others are equally engaged in power and that all that they need is to be granted that power from us. This is obvious in American feminist movement that wants to empower the Arab women to have their rights to be individuals. What is at issue here is not whether these movements are right or wrong but whether they already assume and therefore impose the modern universal individualism whether singular or cultural in the name of power.

Given this context the next task is to show how this logic of universal globalization as founded on modern ontology and quantitative metaphysics have been intersected by Western theological symbolisms that lend priority to volitional arbitrariness and therefore anarchy over experienced perceptual differences. particular modern Western theological-mystical position has become an aspect of the metaphysics of the will that dominates scientific reason in favor of arbitrary construction of rationality as an instrument. What Max Weber has demonstrated to be the origin of capitalist ethics is much broader to the extent that even scientific reason is at base volitional and therefore scientific discourses have no other criteria apart from the criteria that science itself constructs. Thus, it is no wonder that even philosophers of science talk about world making or paradigm construction, and even verification that itself has to be logically verified. This reflexive circle indicates in yet another manner that

perceptual awareness of the world is suspicious and that arbitrary constructions is to be trusted.

Modern Universality

As has been noted from Descartes to Kant, the objective method, as a priori is formal and includes logic and mathematics. Therefore, everything that has to be understood scientifically must correspond to formal and quantitative rules. In this sense, whatever we deal with, in science, must be quantifiable and therefore measurable. What we are pointing to is the presumption of the primacy of methodology and, by extension, theory over perceptual experience. Since formal quantitative method must exclude anything that is qualitative, then whatever would count as objective would have to correspond to the quantitative methods: measurable matter that disregards any qualitative differences. This is the point at which the modern subject is invented. He is the possessor of qualitative experiences, but in order to be scientific he must also use the quantitative formal methods to deal with the measurable reality.

The first problematic that arises for this modern subject consists of a contradiction. The measurable material reality is posited to be objective, homogenous, and yet the method as formal mathematical is not an aspect or part of this homogenous material reality. Since the latter is posited as the only existence and everything else is designated to be subjective, then the scientific formal and quantitative methods must be equally

subjective. In this sense, we come to a clash between objective, material, homogenous reality, and a method of science that has no objective validity.

The sole solution to this problem had to take on the following structure: the subject constructs theories and methods to be tested in material reality. But the subject has no criteria by which to judge which constructed method is the correct one. Being subjective, they have to be adjudicated on the basis of objectivity which is perceptually inaccessible. Since the imperceptible objectivity depends on the constructed methodology which is inevitably subjective, then the only way to deal with this objectivity is in terms of subjective constructs. Our point here is that there is not way to demonstrate at this level how the subjectively constructed methods connect to the posited objectivity, i.e. the material reality. While the latter is posited as objective, it is also regarded as incapable of implying formal quantitative methodologies. In turn, these methodologies do not imply any empirical perception of this material reality directly, since by definition our direct perceptions are qualitative and therefore subjective.

In both cases, whether we start with the posited materiality as measurable, or whether we start with the subjective methodologies, we have not shown the connections between the two. The reason that the connection cannot be shown is that the qualitative experience that indicates the direct awareness of the difference among things, differences that are more than the

sum of the material parts, is reduced to qualitative subjective experience, while the sum of measurable parts is posited as the objective reality, thus constituting the principal differences between subject and object. Our concern is this: given that objectivity is the sum of material parts and, by implication, everything else is subjective, then the formal and quantitative methods are equally subjective and therefore there is no connection between the subjective methods and the sum of the material objective parts. In this sense, there has to be an account by virtue of some median aspect that would allow us to understand how the posited objective material sum of parts can be connected to the subjective formal quantitative methodology. The modern issue here is one of mediation that goes from Descartes to Hegel and Marx, into the contemporary issues of the in-between domain the mediation. The point of principle that we want to articulate is how Western modern scientific logic proclaimed to be universal globalizing logic this issue of mediation. At one level it offered the notion that the connection between the subjective formal quantitative and the pure material homogeneous some of parts is through application of method to "objective reality."

The application is regarded as experimental testing of hypothesis in correlation to reality. The very testing means intervention. There is no notion of direct method that looks at the way things are but rather applying and testing means that somehow we must intervene in order to

avoid our perceptual awareness and therefore to construct the so-called imperceptible material reality in terms of our methodological that is subjective structures. In that sense, we give priority to the methodological structures that require our intervention in order to construct the so-called material reality in accordance with our own subjective methods. It is no doubt that Kant drew the right conclusion: objectivity is synthesized by subjective a priori conditions. This means that we have modern science that connects different domains by a mediation which is our activity of applying the subjectively constituted logics and methods on the indifferent homogenous materiality. Here at this level emerges a mediation that is neither the methodological, so-called formal quantitative rational, nor the so-called material homogenous sum of parts, but a dimension that ranges between the two of them and has no criteria how to apply the formal to the material. This is the first intimation of a constructive process that emerges as the modern will. It becomes a selective process that has not posited anything apart from its own self generation.

This point of mediation has been called by modern philosophers "autonomy" suggesting that every formal and quantitative rule is constructed without any conditions, that is has no cause. In this sense, the material world subjected to those rules can be transformed without any question concerning the traditionally known categorical differences among experienced limits of things. In fact, the formal and quantitative rules do not have within their own compo-

sitions any criteria for making such distinctions, thus they can be applied on everything indifferently. At the same time, the material world, the extended substance, must be regarded as homogenous and, therefore, constructable in accordance with the invented rules.

What is at issue at this level is the choice of formal and quantitative rules over qualitative categorical distinctions. Since both are by modern definitions subjective, then there is no inherent criterion why one would be more objective than the other. We must look for an account within the very composition of those invented rules. First, it can be argued that it is impossible to gain any advantage over the environment on the grounds of categorical, qualitative distinctions. Second, it is also the case that formal and quantitative rules comprise within their own structures techniques for transforming the material environment. This way the choice of formal quantitative rules already implies the choice of instrumentality and the possibility for application. The modern sciences whose theories and methods are framed within formal and quantitative structures is in principle technical. This is the reason why any scientific discipline that cannot be technically tested is not regarded to be scientific. This is another reason that all modern scientific and philosophical theories are premised on arbitrary power.

We have reached the point such that the constructed methods have no other criteria apart from being technical. While we have such methods they have to be connected to the material homogenous

world. This connection is provided by various theories, yet all theories assume body activity as a mediation through which scientific methods are applied. At this level is born a new definition of the human as a tool maker, as *homo laborans*, as practical man, including the primacy of pragmatism. This is to say body becomes a constructed set of abilities in accordance with the requirements of technical discourses. This is to say such bodies must slowly become technical, productive, efficient, rule bounded, and perhaps fragmented into diverse functions. At the outset the mechanical and technical body takes precedence over body as simple physiological object. The latter will be judge on the basis of its abilities or disabilities to perform technical functions. What is of theoretical importance is that this required mediation precludes in principle to access the world as it is in itself. This is the reason for Kant's claim that "the thing in itself" is unknowable. Any effort to deal with the world of direct experience is deflected toward active intervention and manipulation of the environment in terms of our own invented formal and quantitative rules.

The globalizing process that promises to improve everyone's life and to bring liberation to all peoples from want and oppression is premised on claim to universality of this technical active intervention in the world. This intervention at the same time requires that all peoples anywhere and anytime must also engage in reducing their environments to required material resources for technical transformation and exploi-

tation. The term "liberation" was at times replaced by humanization in a sense that we as natural beings in a natural environment are subjected to forces that are not under our control. That is they are alien and inhuman. Therefore, once the environment and our own lives are subjected to the scientific methods and their way of transforming the environment and us, then we shall reach a human stage which liberates us from natural necessities. At this level, this universal claim provides a rationale for teleology and progress. The teleology proposes that there is a stage in which man will be a total master of the environment and himself and this then provides a standard on the basis on which others, those who have not yet joined "human history" will have to judge their positions and lives as inferior. This is the logic that is offered by numerous organizations caught in theories of development.

The universal claim to this construct that has equally become a logic of globalization is the ground of various theories of power. At the outset, the very instrumentalization of method and theory applied through the mediation of body activity on the material homogenized world has an implicit premise: the increasing application of our methods and the transformation of the environment in terms of our own controls lead to an increasing ability to master and control domains of the environment and, therefore, to acquire greater power over the environment and ourselves. It is to be recalled that the methods and theories are not given objectively but are constructed

as instruments to reshape the environment, and as instruments they are at the service of autonomous will. The latter sets its own criteria for increased mastery and therefore increased power to master. of all discourses as power laden. We have reached a position of the metaphysics of the will that, while generating itself, it generates the very rules by which the world is to be constructed. This

self generation of itself and rules is the ground of modern anarchy and “human divine complex.” After all, only divinities create themselves and the laws by which the world is constructed. Abolishing all the experienced limits, this will is an arbitrary source and power that abolishes all limits by its reductive and homogenizing metaphysics.

ABSTRACT

GLOBALIZATION AND THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE INTELLECTUAL

The question of intellectual responsibility in confrontation with globalization is the philosophical question from Socratic to modern philosophies. In brief, it is impossible to practice philosophy and not to raise this question. It is well known that Socrates stood his ground unto death with the demand that he and others have a duty to interrogate all claims to truth regardless of their origin. Intellectual honesty was for him a requirement to keep open the discursive domain – called the polis – wherein the search for truth could be pursued. This means that the task of philosophy as such is identical with the maintenance of an open polis

wherein all theories and propositions can be tested and contested. Hence, when we raise the question of the responsibility of the intellectual, we must recall the task for philosophy set by Socrates. Yet our situation is quite different from that of classical Athens. We are confronted by modern philosophy in its ontological and metaphysical guises that require a serious consideration whether we can even think of the relationship between intellectual and responsibility. It is our task, then, to consider what sort of position will open up for an intellectual that would be worthy of philosophy.

REFERENCES

Richter, Horst E. 1982. *Der Gotteskomplex*. Hamburg: Rowohlt Verlag.

Lasswitz, Kurd. 1963. *Geschichte der Atomistik*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.

Volkman-Schluck, Karl Heinz. 1979. *Die Metaphysik des Aristoteles*. Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann.

Įteikta 2007 01 28

Pateikta spaudai 2007 07 26

Department of Philosophy
Ohio University (USA)
El. paštas: aigms5@frognet.net