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WHAT IS AN ANTHROPOLOGY OF THE CONTEMPORARY?

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ANTHROPOLOGY OF THE CONTEMPORARY RESEARCH COLL ABORATORY (ARC) AIMS
TO DEVELOP NEW TECHNIQUES OF COLL ABORATION, MODES OF COMMUNICATION AND
TOOLS OF INQUIRY FOR THE HUMAN SCIENCES. AT ARC'S CORE ARE
COLL ABORATIONS ON SHARED PROBLEMS AND CONCEPTS, INITIALLY FOCUSING ON
SECURITY, BIOPOLITICS, AND THE LIFE SCIENCES, AND THE NEW FORMS OF INQUIRY.

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What is an anthropology of the contemporary?

Anthony Stavrianakis, Field Statement, Berkeley, April 2009

"What is that fear which makes you reply in terms of consciousness when someone talks to you about a practice, its conditions, its rules, and its historical transformations? What is that fear which makes you seek, beyond all boundaries, ruptures, shifts and divisions, the great historic-transcendental destiny of the Occident?"

(Michel Foucault The Archeology of Knowledge)

Introduction

Over the last nine years there has been an on-going conversation and work on starting a collaboratory for work on the Anthropology of the Contemporary. The project was initiated by Professor Paul Rabinow and then graduate students Stephen Collier, Andrew Lakoff and Tobias Rees. The motivation for the endeavor and the problem to which it is a response was a dissatisfaction with the 'individual project' model in anthropology. It is true that in anthropology as in many other disciplines scholars co-labour on scholarly writing. However, there was an insight into the need for an *organizational* space in which two things would be facilitated which are not facilitated by the university department and current structure of graduate student and professorial labour and subject positions; firstly collective work on concept formation for use in orienting work, decomposing and recomposing data. Secondly, the formation of shared standards of evaluation. Concept formation and work on shared standards of evaluation were a response to the broad question of how knowledge is produced in the human sciences. More specifically, in anthropology, the question was the following; under current conditions and given that graphing *ethnoi* may not be the only topic of interest for reasoned discourses (*logos*) about the human thing (*anthropos*), what kind of anthropological knowledge should be produced today and how?

Aside from the proliferation of anthropology's *topoi* there is the central methodological impetus behind the effort to form ARC. This impetus is a question as to whether it is possible to subject anthropological truth claims to tests of significance. Edited volumes such as *Global Assemblages* following in the wake of now uncontroversial but under-developed disciplinary challenges such as *Anthropology as Cultural Critique* have helped proliferate anthropological *topoi*, but little has been advanced on posing and answering the question of whether it is possible or desirable to subject anthropology's claims to greater verification or to come up with some 'other' way of forming the conditions for there to be shared means of ascribing 'significance' as a second-order practice and subject-position on the way the true and the false is divided up relative to things and objects, structures and events in the world.

Perhaps, in the vein of Feyerabend's critique of Kuhn's account of normal science, and given anthropology's particular existential conditions of production and standard subject position, anthropologists may want to remain methodologically an-archist. As a moment of metareflection I would say that empirically we can say quite surely that such efforts at generating shared standards of evaluation have not been successful but that the impetus behind the project is still with us. Why? Because thinking about the relation of knowledge and care is not easy but is essential. If we reject the search for shared standards of evaluation as worthwhile then we have to specify the way by which idiosyncrasy or

'individual' conditions of production forms a relation between knowledge and care. Why is this? Quite specifically, caring about the knowledge 'we' as re-searchers claim to be producing, (and if we are not claiming to be producing knowledge then what are we doing?) will involve reflection on the dispositions, conditions and perhaps most importantly the effects of knowledge production on a disposition which can contribute to the question of what knowledge in the human sciences can be? i.e. is it the accumulation of new facts? Is it an individual existential practice? Or the dialectical path upward to truth?
The contemporary demands a different response involving shared concepts to submit the world of data to tests of significance through multiple but collaboratively produces veridictional modes.

For ARC the counter point to concept formation and the development of modes of veridiction is the Human Relations Area File type general theory of theory of social development. ARC's challenge to think about the collective conditions of producing a relation between knowledge and care is predicated on a nominalist disposition to the question of knowledge (unlike the HRAF). Without this disposition the individual project is entirely adequate to the task of producing knowledge – I as subject of knowledge can have access to the truth which I will claim to know. So, whether one agrees with or rejects the need for co-labour, I think the challenge of ARC is to make researchers take a position on how to formulate a relation between knowledge and care in the human sciences and the kinds of organizational form appropriate to relation between knowledge and care formulated.

What follows is a schematic formulation of some of the concepts reflected on in common with an eye towards how they may contribute to work on shared problems.

Concept formation

The Anthropology of the Contemporary Research Collaboratory has attempted to turn "the contemporary" into a concept and a mode of inquiry. As Rabinow writes (Rabinow, 2007: 5), following Richard McKeon and John Dewey, a term is a word plus a concept plus a referent. Making the *conceptual* dimension of the *term* "the contemporary" into something to be worked on is connected to the mode of inquiry in which such things the word *refers* to can be taken up. In Max Weber's well known definition, this link between things referred to and the conceptual mode in which things might be taken up is made explicit:

"It is not the 'actual' interconnection of 'things' but the conceptual interconnection of problems which define the scope of the various sciences." (Weber, 1949: 68)

There is no theory of the contemporary, or a substantive content – a delimited or specific "actual interconnection of things" - to the term. The referent objects which can be anthropologized are not contemporary in and of themselves - forms of knowledge, forms of practice – but rather it is the *mode* in which they are taken up that is contemporary. Work on and in the *contemporary mode* is a provocation not a school of thought or a systematic set of true statements about the world. It is a provocation to take up phenomena and relations in the world in relation to a different set of problems and conceptual interconnections. This is a mode of inquiry of which there are perhaps only two exemplars in recent years, Hans Blumenberg and Michel Foucault[1]. Part of the labour of this field statement will be to attempt to name that against which a difference needs to be pursued and of what this different mode can consist. We might follow Foucault when he writes of his own work in response to the critics whom he ventriloquizes in the conclusion to the *Archaeology of Knowledge* that this mode of inquiry (aside from having no claims to disciplinarity) is

> "yet another of those discourses that would like to be taken as a discipline still in its early
> stages, no doubt: which gives their authors the double advantage of not having to
> establish their explicit, rigorous scientificity, and of opening up for it a future generality
> that frees it from the hazards of its birth; yet another of those projects that justify
> themselves on the basis of what they are not, always leaving their essential task, the
> moment of their verification, and the definitive establishment of their coherence until
> later" (Foucault, 1972: 206).

Let us state that the question of verification is very much an open one and one that needs to be attended to if anthropology in a contemporary mode might be an equipment for the conduct of inquiry, even if it does not make it to the high plateau of a *method.*

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[1] Paul Rabinow writes of this mode; "As Hans Blumenberg has argued at length, a cornerstone of this mode of thinking requires the repudiation of certain older questions and concepts (as well as objects and practices) that had been honed in a different problem space", Rabinow, Paul "Untimely and Inconsiderate observations", Theory, Culture, Society, forthcoming 5. Rabinow also sites Foucault's "*La Poussière et le nuage*" a written response to outraged historians after the publication of Discipline and Punish in which he first contests the baseline assumption that 'society' is the only reality to which history must attend and a refusal to answer the standard follow up question of, 'fine, then what is?' Foucault's response is characteristic of the refusal to 're-occupy' old spaces of questioning in favor of 'other-spaces'. This mode Blumenberg suggests characterized the innovation of specifically modern thought.

What counts? The khresis[2] of a pragmatists approach

Foucault sees in Kant's *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* a refraction of his three critiques (pure reason, practical reason judgment) at the level of the pragmatic. As Rabinow writes, "Kant distinguishes the practical point of view, which treats the moral community of thinking beings, from the juridical point of view, which treats civil society as composed of lawful subjects, from the pragmatic which treats man as a "citizen of the world", as a concrete universal"" (Rabinow 1988, 355, Foucault 1961, 27) For Foucault the *Anthropology* was significant inasmuch as it was a lecture series, one of two that spanned the pre- and post- critical phases, the other being physical geography – the world as nature and the world as human as Rabinow puts it. The significance lies in the fact that this pragmatic point of view is cosmopolitical and not cosmological, that is to say the question of what "Man" is cannot be answered only transcendentally, but in the nexus of practices. Man is what man does; "Kant calls this domain, *gebrauch*, Foucault translates this as *usage*, and today we would probably cal it practices. Practices occupy the domain of already given pragmatic relations to the self, to others as well as to things. These relations are singular in the content but universal in their form" (Ibid).

William James in his *Psychology:The Briefer Course* writes; "The function by which we mark off, discriminate, draw a line round, and identify a numerically distinct subject of discourse is called conception…. Each act of conception results from our attention's having singled out some one part of the mass of matter-for-thought which the world presents …the conceptual function requires, to be complete, that the thought should not only say ' I mean this' but also say 'I don't mean that'." (James,2001; 229)

In James' pragmatist mode, concepts are expected to be useful in dealing with reality. A concept denotes all of the entities, phenomena, and relations in a given category or class by using definitions. A concept may be abstracted from several perceptions, but that is only its origin. In regard to its meaning or its truth, James proposed his 'pragmatic rule'. This rule states that the meaning of a concept may always be found in some particular difference in the course of human experience which its being true will make. We can follow James when he writes of the conceptual work involved in taking up an object of which work on it will make some particular difference;

> "No matter how definite and concrete the habitual imagery of a given mind may be, the things represented appear always surrounded by their fringe of relations, and this is as integral a part of the mind's object as the things themselves are…. *An object which is problematic is defined by its relations only*… we have in the relations enough to individualize our topic" (James, : 231)

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[2] Khresis indicates both 'use' as in use of an instrument, and a disposition or behavior. The term combats a false opposition between "instrumental" reasoning against the question of "existence" .

A problematic object is problematic through the relations it has with other classes, it is as James suggests problematic by virtue of its relations with other objects. There is then a complementary inversion from Weber's point. If for Weber the scope of a new science is characterized by the relation of problems, James shows us how an object is made problematic by its relations and indetermination, that is to say lack of conceptual clarity relative to other objects. Objects and problems are both relational concepts and are themselves related.

James dismisses the metaphysical quarrel between the nominalists and conceptualists; he cites the 'wonderful fact' that our thoughts in their multiple differences can still be of 'the same'. And with this fact dismisses the question of whether that 'same' be a single thing, a whole class of things, an abstract quality and so on. He suggests, "our meanings are of singulars, particulars, indefinites, problematic and universals mixed together in every way." (Ibid; 232) This is a classic pragmatist move away from 'false' problems, towards a reconfiguration of what can count in the register of a true or a false problem. As Dewey suggests, in his _Essays on Experimental Logic_, relative to the question of how an object of thought becomes problematic, every 'thing' has a focus and a context. Dewey's point is that, "reflection arises because of the appearance of incompatible facts within the empirical situation" (Dewey, 2004; 7). The next step for reflection is the analysis of the situation and the resolution of it into elements. "Every reflective knowledge in other words, has a specific task which is set by a concrete and empirical situation, so that it can perform that task only by detecting and remaining faithful to the conditions in the situation in which the difficulty arises, while its purpose is a reorganization of its factors in order to get unity" (Ibid; 8) Thinking is the statement of elements consisting a difficulty (Ibid).

What is the difference between Dewey's experimental logic and an Idealist logic which tries to reconcile logical thought with sense material? Dewey replies, "…the idealistic logic started from the distinction between immediate plural data and unifying, radicalizing meanings as a distinction readymade in experience, and it set up as the goal of knowledge (and hence as the definition of true reality), a complete, exhaustive system in which plural and immediate data are forever woven into a fabric and pattern of self-luminous meaning." (Ibid; 12) The point is that the temporally specific role of reflection is ignored. Dewey's hypothesis: thinking starts neither from an implicit force of rationality desiring to realize itself completely in, through and against the limitations that are imposed upon it by the conditions of our human experience, nor from the fact that in each human being is a "mind" whose business is just to "know" (Ibid; 13). Dewey located his "experimentalism" between idealism and analytic realism. He is idealistic insofar as "objects of knowledge in their capacity as distinctive objects of knowledge are determined by intelligence" (Ibid; 16) however unlike idealism we are not talking about thought as such

but thought as what it does. And contra analytic realism, the operation of thought affects the constitution of the object.

This is of course in contrast to a Hegelian absolute idealism and the dialectic of this idealism. Dialectic is the philosophy of consciousness, reflection and relation. Dialectic, for the Hegelians, constitutes the essence of human relations, the essence of human relations in their double manifestation as conceptual forms to understand the content that man produces for himself in his 'socio- historical' relations with others. The task of dialectic is to analyze the formation of 'socio-historical' concepts. Why is this the task of dialectic? If dialectic constitutes the essence of human relations and as a mode of understanding constitutes the form for understanding the essence of human relations, then dialectic must be able to comprehend how man has comprehended himself, that is, through the formation of concepts in time. Dialectic - dia-logos - means that the account or logos of self-understanding is the result of having gone through the medium and mediation of past socio-historical relations. Socio-historical relations are more complex than any individual can perceive them. However, socio-historical relations can be comprehended in terms of how they have become what they are in conceptual terms, that is, the concepts we use to mediate the presentation to consciousness of objects of socio-historical relations. Comprehension in dialectic is the activity of the concept itself. (Krombach, 1997)

By contrast, Dewey wants to keep separate the means and the object of knowledge; "if we confuse our premises by taking the existential instrumentalities of knowledge for its real objects, all distinctions and relations in nature, life and society are thereby relinquished to be only cases of the 'whole-and-part' nature of things" (Dewey, 2004; 23). The particularity of thought in the moment is what concerns Dewey. "…every reflective problem and operation arises with reference to some specific situation, and has to serve a specific purpose dependent on its own occasion" (Ibid; 42) From the point of view of instrumental logic, "an attempt to discuss the antecedents, data, forms and objectives of thought, apart from reference to particular position occupied, and particular part played in the growth of experience, is to reach results which are not so much either true or false as they are radically meaningless – because they are considered apart from limits." (Ibid; 44)

Mode

By mode of inquiry we could take mode from Aristotle's *Poetics* in which he uses mode in a specific sense. Kinds of poetry, Aristotle writes, may be differentiated in three ways; according to their *medium* of imitation, according to their *objects* of imitation, and according to their *mode* or 'manner' of imitation. I do not mean mode in the even more specific sense of modal logic. To say the contemporary is a concept and mode of inquiry means to say that it is a term (concept + word + referent) which is useful in dealing with reality, abstracting from that reality phenomena and relations which can be taken up in a specific manner. To take up the question of manner it is worth citing a quotation from Rabinow's *Anthropos Today: Reflections on Modern Equipment*, "How should I approach what I am doing? How does what I am doing inflect how I approach it?" (Rabinow, 2003; 69) This then is to add *practice* to Aristotle's triad of mode, medium and object. This could be reworked as a question of what mode of practice of inquiry is adequate to the mode and form of the object of inquiry, which will include practices. What is the contemporary mode such that there could be an anthropology in it? What is the practice of anthropology adequate to the contemporary mode?

In *Marking Time: On the Anthropology of the Contemporary* Rabinow offers three guiding ideas as to what the contemporary can be as a concept and as a mode of inquiry. Firstly, it is not an epochal term. That is to say as a term the word and concept do not refer to epochs. An epoch can be understood as a totalizing way of taking up periods of history, such as "modernity". Contemporary as a term refers to the "emergent". Rabinow suggests that the emergent can be understood as referring to "phenomena that can only be partially explained or comprehended by previous modes of analysis or existing practices." (Rabinow 2007; 4) - hence the notion that the contemporary is also a provocation. Thirdly, as a guide to the ramification of the concept for the practice of anthropology, Rabinow writes; "I take the object of anthropological science to be the dynamic and mutually constitutive, if partial and dynamic, connections between figures of anthropos and the diverse, and at times inconsistent branches of knowledge available during a period of time". (Rabinow, 2007; 4). All this will have to be extended through connected concepts and case material.

Let us reiterate at this point in a schematic fashion that the contemporary is a manner in which things in the present can be taken up as interconnected problems by anthropological analysis and synthesis – decomposition and recomposition - with reference to their emergent form and temporality. Emergence refers to "a state in which multiple elements combine to produce an assemblage, whose significance cannot be reduced to prior elements and relations." (Rabinow and Bennett; 2008) Rabinow identifies "the contemporary" as a temporal and ontological problem space. In *Marking Time* he

distinguishes two senses of the term contemporary. First, to be contemporary is to exist at the same time as something else. This meaning has temporal but no historical connotations. The second sense, however, carries both temporal and historical connotations, and it is this meaning that I will try and elucidate. Rabinow takes up the contemporary as a "moving ratio." Just as "the modern" can be thought of as a moving ratio of tradition and modernity, so the contemporary "is a moving ratio of modernity, moving through the recent past and near future in a (non-linear) space."(Rabinow, 2007; 2) This understanding of 'ratio' perhaps could be unpacked using McKeon's note on the term in his general introduction to his _Selections from Medieval Philosophers_; "Ratio means not only a faculty of the mind, but also a relation in things or a rationale of related elements" (McKeon, 1929; xviii).

There are two connected vectors to the practice of an anthropology appropriate to the contemporary mode. The methodological vector is a question of how to conduct inquiry in this mode and the equipment necessary for it. By equipment I mean a practice adequate to form a correct relation between thought and action. The conceptual vector is a question of how to conceptualize objects of inquiry. To paraphrase Reinhart Koselleck, concept-work gives a form to different "spaces of experience" and "horizons of expectation" which are not 'modern'. By 'modern' I mean a form of historical consciousness which is aware of its historicity and projects the space of experience into a telos. The contemporary is _a-gnostic_ relative to the question of historical consciousness, especially if one considers philosophy of history as the apex of modern historical consciousness and further that all philosophies of history are "gnostic". By "gnostic" I mean that salvation - both in the theological and etymological sense of being made "whole" - occurs through a privileged knowledge (Cf.Voegelin 2000). As Hayo Krombach writes of Hegelian dialectic, "the first and most basic philosophical point about dialectic is that it is, strictly speaking, not a method which we can apply like a tool from without to the domestic or international world in which we live. Rather, the whole of the socio-historical world, that is, the _lived actuality of humanity is_, within itself, and in a dialectical sense, _methodically structured_." (Krombach, 1997; 420, italics mine)

If one does not take the forever modern time as the metric by which all phenomena are judged, and if one is does not have faith in the dialectical structuring of man's lived actuality which is accessible to reason (the question of revelation remains) then in that case a different mode will have to be sought for inquiry into the phenomena of the world and man's relation to them.
I will take up first the question of concept-work as work necessary to an anthropology of the contemporary before asking what the ethos of such inquiry is and the consequence for the kinds of objects.
**Problematization:**

One of the conceptual tools we inherit from Foucault is that of the "problematization", a tool used in what he called "history of the present". Rabinow and Bennett in their book _ArsSynthetica: Designs for Human Practice_ write regarding problematization; "in that project, a certain understanding of the past would provide a means of showing the contingency of the present and thereby contribute to making a more open future" (Rabinow and Bennett 2008b). They developed these insights through their involvement as PI and director of the Human Practices thrust of the first NSF funded synthetic biology center.

Over a period of three years (2004 -2007) multiple research projects from fields as varied as engineering, chemistry, mathematics, computer science, biology, anthropology, law and ethics were being thought and practiced in relation to one another in order to propose biological solutions to contemporary world problems. In one version of the story, the version that can be read in Esquire and Wired, "Synthetic Biology" is an engineering ethos applied to biological systems The Synthetic Biology Engineering Research Centre (SynBERC) is housed at UC Berkeley and made up of five partner institutions including Harvard, MIT, Prairie View A&M and UC San Francisco. The emergence of this institutional form and disposition of scientific practices in August 2006 was contingent on various research programs, individual laboratory works, sets of networks and personal relations at play from many years beforehand.

What is important to note is that the fields of molecular and cell biology, systems biology, synthetic chemistry and metabolic engineering were engaged in key interactions to create a constellation of projects which had the shared goal of making biology amenable to rational design. In response to the initial proposal from 2004 and in verbal communication between the NSF and Jay Keasling (Professor of chemical engineering at UC Berkeley) a fourth thrust in addition to the three scientific thrusts was added and integrated in order to approach the wider research and policy questions that this scientific practice raises, ranging from ethics to legal questions. It was crucial to the NSF that SynBERC be not only a dynamic form for solving technical scientific questions, but that it have the resources and capabilities to be reflexive about its own practice relative to the wider mutually formative relations that constitute it. The impetus for this kind of reflexive work can be seen in other NSF funded projects such as the Arizona State University 'Center for Nanotechnology in Society' (ASU-CNS).

The task for Rabinow, Bennett and others in Thrust 4 has been to design and develop collaborative approaches to address issues of concern to synthetic biologists, ethicists, human scientists, policymakers, private sector and publics at large, through the design of collaboration. The developments in synthetic biology have been an opportunity to invent new forms of collaborative practice. Standard approaches have sought to anticipate how new scientific developments will impact "society," positioning

themselves external to, and "downstream" of, the scientific work per se. This positioning, for example, was mandated by the Human Genome Initiative and the so-called ELSI project (ethical, legal, and social implications). By contrast, the Human Practices frame developed by Rabinow and Bennett, is an approach that fosters a co-production among disciplines and perspectives from the outset. The value of collaboration is that its goal is to build a synergistic and recursive structure within which significant challenges, problems, and achievements are more likely to be clearly formulated and successfully evaluated.

The reason for stating the mandate of Thrust 4 and its role within SynBERC is to highlight two points; firstly, that the relation of 'speculative' thought to science is not only a dis-embedded practice that happens at philosophy conferences, nor a 'bridge-building' function between stabilized spheres such as 'science' and 'society'. Rather, thought is considered as a form-giving capacity to those who involve themselves in the practice of inquiry, or science, broadly understood. This relates to the second trajectory, which is the question of the relationship of organizational form to the question of "ethics" both as an institutionalized discourse and a practice of such form giving. These two trajectories might be summarized as; thought has the capacity to give form and form has to be taken up in practice, which means organizationally.

In a contemporary situation where so much is already identified as contingent, there may not necessarily be a problem- space static enough to render contingent through, for instance, genealogical work. As Rabinow and Bennett identify, history of the present is appropriate for stable figures such as biopower and human dignity (operating in fields, among others, such as Human Rights and Christian conceptions of personhood), but not for something like the practices of rapidly changing life sciences, the object we have be co-labouring on for the past two years. In response, they propose problematization in a contemporary mode:
"In this position the challenge is not to make the present seem contingent, but situating ourselves among contemporary blockages and opportunities the challenge is to reformulate these blockages and opportunities as problems so as to make available a range of possible solutions." (Ibid)
In a history of the present, something became a problem and through contestation eventually a stable response was formed. The stabilization can be reworked and inquired into in order to find those problematic sites prior to the stabilized response and how those particular responses were possible and under what conditions. In a contemporary mode the aim is to render a space of practices into a problem-space.

In a contemporary mode of inquiry the act of inquiry is to produce connections and form an image of the situation so that it can be worked on further. Working in a contemporary mode, as Rabinow and Bennett frame it, is a practice of synthesis and recombination. In this contemporary mode the effort is to characterize the problem space, to shape the problematization and to find conceptual tools for this attempt at characterizing the connections one is interested in. It might be interesting at this point to contrast Rabinow and Bennett's conceptualization of how an object of thought is figured against Bruno Latour. This is interesting in part because it I think it shows two related vectors of thought that distinguishes a contemporary mode of inquiry, firstly it has an anthropological dimension and secondly it continuously poses the question of ethics.

Latour, in his recent overview of his theory, _Reassembling the Social: An introduction to Actor-Network-Theory_, maintains that agency must be distinguished from figuration. The thing which acts, that is made to act, could be figured otherwise than it is. An actant, a term he takes from the study of literature, is a necessary element for a kind of narrative, neither natural nor social but which produces 'nature' or the 'social' (or a legal system, or a public health program) depending on how the element is made part of a narrative (figured), that is, turned into an actor. Latour distinguishes between figuration of actants necessary to make them actors, that is, capable of putting into motion and the figurative, as in figurative painting. The point here is that elements can always be reworked, and if you pay attention to 'mediators' (as opposed to intermediaries) you find out how. Yet for all this extremely interesting insight into the figuration necessary to put actors into motion, there is almost no methodological reflection on the conceptual thought needed to figure actants. Perhaps this is because Latour is less interested in how elements are figured and more interested in how elements can act as mediators within figurations. Again, perhaps, this is because Latour has decided, from the title page, that this work of unfolding and rendering connections which make difference is for the purpose of forming 'the social'. In this sense it is exactly right that ANT is a sociological theory, a tradition of thought that has traditionally taken up the relation of structure to agent, and Latour's intervention can be read as a highly innovative re-articulation of this problem-relation[3]. As such a master figure, "the social", has already been decided on. Granted it is empty, doesn't exist a priori and is a floating signifier, which in cases has to be specified through "the longhand of associations" to use his phrase – but it is a master figure nonetheless.

My point is simply is that actors cannot be reassembled without specifying _how_ they can be made to cohere. The fact that Latour specifies that the inquiry will determine how 'social inertia' and 'physical gravity' are connected is well taken, but one is left wondering what the relation of the observer to the

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[3] Other attempts might include the sociology of the social of people such as Anthony Giddens' theory of 'structuration', "the Constitution of Society" (1984) or Bourdieu's "habitus" and "fields", "Outlines of a theory of practice" (1972)

phenomena is. He maintains that this is no naïve realism, but one wonders what kind of realism it is. Latour reduces the 'reassembling of new types of actors' to the category of what makes up the 'social'. As he writes:

"If we call metaphysics the discipline inspired by the philosophical tradition that purports to define the basic structure of the world, then empirical metaphysics is what the controversies over agencies lead to since they ceaselessly populate the world with new drives and as ceaselessly contest the existence of others." (Latour, 2005; 51)

The problem seems to be that the relation between following agencies through the visibility of the trace and connecting them in such a way that contestations of an ontologically pluralist type can be made visible misses a crucial aspect. The question of *coherence* of these – for want of a better word – 'ontological constellations', can only be posed by abandoning a single master figure and through specification of how elements can be brought into relation.

If one has not settled on a master figure, then things understood as actors are not simply the long hand of associations making up the 'social'. Not settling on a master figure forces the analyst *as analyst* to specify *how* conceptual and empirical connections are being made. When elements and objects are figured, they are made into a highly specific series that connects particular ways in which something 'is' with a particular way that the object is known, the rules of practical authority which govern the object and the mode of ethical engagement. Figures are necessary to connect unconnected earthly events through non-temporal means. *Interpretation* in a determined direction becomes a general mode of comprehending reality (Cf. Auerbach, 2003; 16). This does not have to be full blown hermeneutics but it certainly poses the question of what the near future is towards which thought is oriented.

For Rabinow and Bennett in their conceptual diagnostic language 'figuration' as a term "designates a way of connecting elements into an ensemble such that the significance and functions of each element depends on*, though may not be reducible to*, the form produced by the connections. Figuration involves a kind of synthesis—the production of *a composite whole whose logic of composition cannot be reduced to its constitutive elements*. If figuration designates a way of connecting and synthesizing elements, the resulting ensemble can be designated a figure." (Rabinow and Bennett, 2008b) The authors take their understanding of figuration from Eric Auerbach. For Auerbach, figural interpretation "establishes a connection between two events or persons in such a way that the first signifies not only itself but also the second, and the second involves or fulfills the first" (Auerbach, 2003; 73). Auerbach uses the example of the slaying of Isaac and the slaying of Christ as historical events connected not by historical causation but figural connection through a shared ontology. The events can

only be connected such that the first signifies both itself and the other when transcendentally linked through Divine Providence within a Christian teleology. As Rabinow and Bennett write, "in classical figural interpretation, such modal connections usually pass through a primordial, eternal, or otherwise transcendent factor whose temporality is beyond, comprehensive, or definitive of history" (Rabinow and Bennett, 2008b).

Rabinow and Bennett are not calling for the establishment of transcendental figures as a priori means of connecting elements and events as objects of analysis. However, what they take from a term like 'figuration' is that sense in which elements not causally related may nonetheless *cohere* into a series which when connected offer both analytic insight, in the sense of identifying composite elements and synthetic insight, in the sense of recomposing those elements. For example, they offer cases of two stabilized 'figures', those of biopower and human dignity. Biopower as a figure of interpretation consists of connecting the normalization of populations and bodies with a probabilistic mode of ontology and verificational mode of reasoning. Without any one of these elements, for instance a different mode of ontology (instead of probabilistic mode of ontology, a body might be taken up in 'virtual' ontology, in Deleuze's sense) or a different way of making truth claims (instead of verification perhaps revelation*)* the series would not cohere as the figure of biopower and would not work on the object relation population-bodies in the same way. This is the figure of interpretation used often in public health. For the stable figure of human dignity, the object human-humanity is self-evident and declaimed on behalf of where the dignity of that object is considered to be violated. This object is known not through any verificational means, but is axiomatic. This is the figure of interpretation used often in human rights regimes. Thus what Rabinow and Bennett want to accentuate is the way in which the same 'thing' – anthropos in multiple forms - can be taken up *as an object* in a number of distinct modes. It must of course be pointed out that this mode of analysis is anthropocentric and as such the object-relation ultimately will be a form of *anthropos*.

Perhaps the main distinction to draw is that in ANT the relation of agencies to a composed whole is formed by a method of moving from "practical metaphysics" to the question of ontology. For Latour this is a move beyond the epistemological tradition of anthropology which in his view accepts a methodological division between natural science which lays claim to unity and objectivity and the humanities which lay claim to multiplicity and the symbolic aspect of the real. For Latour, "ontology is the same thing as metaphysics, to which the question of truth and unification have been added." (Latour, 2005; 117) Latour eschews the division between "one reality and many interpretations", resulting in the abandonment of the strategy of a hermeneutics of suspicion in favor of a suspicion of hermeneutics, conventionally understood. "Hermeneutics is not a privilege of humans, but so to speak, a property of the world itself." (Ibid; 245) However, if for Latour the ontological question of truth and unity is the

supplement to practical metaphysics for a specifically political project of world building (as he says it is), the question of directionality remains. If interpretation in a (anthropocentrically) determined direction is exactly what ANT resists, which no doubt are for important methodological reasons, how can one be oriented to the hoped for goods of that project of unification?

Equipment

What is equipment and why is it necessary? *Parakseue* is a term familiar to the ancient Greeks. As a technical term, it refers to the capacity to respond to events whose form, temporality and impact cannot be known or calculated in advance, yet which must be exercised in relation to. The term etymologically means both to equip and to prepare. The term has over time been used to denote military activity and spiritual exercise as well as the name for the day in preparation for the Sabbath. As Rabinow writes "[w]hen Foucault undertook his famous detour into ethics during the 1980s, the topics of care and form became central" (Rabinow, 2003) Foucault's discussion of paraskeue in the lectures at College de France asks, "how can the subject act as he ought, not only inasmuch as he knows the truth , but inasmuch as he says it, practices it, exercises it?" (Foucault, 2005; 318). This exercise is not practiced relative to the law but relative to the unforeseen events of life. These exercises that work on the events of life provide paraskeue.

What is equipment made of? It is not just a supply of true propositions but in Foucault's terms "statements with a material existence" – statements which have a logos (are "justified by reason") must be turned into ethos. "For these material elements of discourse really to be able to constitute the preparation we need, they must not only be acquired but endowed with a sort of permanent virtual and effective presence, which enables immediate recourse to them when necessary" (Ibid; 324). Equipment is a certain set of practices which have appropriate *logoi* that develops an ethos. This equipment must be an aid in the event ("*boethos*").

Why is equipment necessary for inquiry? Focusing on equipment is a response to the troubled relation of knowledge and care. Why is there a troubled relation between knowledge and care? Firstly, by "care" I take the term from the Greek word "*epimeleia*" which signals at least three meanings; an attitude or disposition to self, other and the world, form of exercise and a form of attention. (Ibid; 10-11). If one takes knowledge to be knowledge for itself, that is to say theoretical knowledge devoid of the

question of practice or devoid of the question of the effects of knowledge on the knower, then one might be in a position to pose the problem of the separation of knowledge and care in a so-called modern moment of thought and practice.

One way of specifying what is distinct about equipment is to set in contrast to a technology. The distinction lies in the relation of means and ends. Equipment is a practice in the moral philosopher Alisdair Macintyre's sense of the term. Macintyre offers an excellent overview of the term practice and what it might mean to consider inquiry as a practice. "By practice I am going to mean …activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to reach those standards of excellence which are appropriate to and partially definitive of that form of activity with the result that human powers to achieve excellence and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved are systematically extended." (Macintyre 1984: 175)

This paragraph requires much unpacking even if the central point – that a practice is characterized by the orientation to a good as a telos internal to that practice – is fairly clear. We might say that Macintyre points us towards a historicized anthropology of virtue. He gives us rich accounts of those qualities that are virtues, which allow an individual to move toward the telos of a flourishing life. Macintyre is quick to make a distinction which does not appear in Aristotle. The virtues can be seen as a means to an end; however they are not a technology or a technique. A technology is a particular relation of means to ends, whereby means and ends can be adequately defined without reference to each other. A virtue by contrast is a "means" of acting in which the end is internal to it. Macintyre gives us two accounts of virtues; in Homer, a virtue is a quality which enables an individual to discharge his or her social role. For Aristotle, also read through Aquinas and the New Testament, a virtue is a quality which enables an individual to move towards the achievement of a specifically human telos, whether natural or supernatural. Macintyre takes up this notion in which the cultivation of certain kinds of virtues is contingent on the polis. The polis values those qualities of mind and character which would contribute to the realization of the common good and identifies certain types of action as the doing or production of harm of such an order that they destroy the bonds of community in such a way as to render the doing or achieving of good impossible.

Knowledge may have been made into an autonomous sphere when the knower is, from the fact of his existence, adequate to the truth aside from any practice. Foucault's lecture series at the College de France in '81-'82 *The Hermeneutics of the Subject* took up the problem of *gnothi sauton* – self knowledge – as the foundational maxim of Greek philosophy. He attempts to break the false continuity that is posed

when the ancient Greek *gnothi sauton* is folded into a structure of thought which leads to the Cartesian cogito and the Kantian transcendental subject. Instead, Foucault poses the challenge of *epimeliea* , care, that was, he claims, at the heart of the ancient Greek self knowledge and suggests that whilst knowledge of the self and care of the self were intimately tied in the Hellenistic period, as we enter the history of truth's modern moment, practices of knowledge and practices of care were separated. My claim is that, for the paradigmatic figure of knowledge, the inquirer , the relation between knowledge and care is a problem[4], even when this problem is not articulated as such. The second claim – and following five years of work by the Anthropology of the contemporary Research Collaboratory - is that it is the kind of problem to which co-labour might be a solution.

What are the practices that make a researcher adequate to both know and to act? And can these practices of co-labour contribute to a flourishing existence and how would one know? So the question becomes, how to labour? Under what conditions? With whom and towards what ends?" This is an ethical, methodological and epistemological problem. To say that co-labour is an ethical, methodological and epistemological problem is to ask, what concepts, practical tools and orientation to the good is appropriate for the relation between things and people at stake in a particular setting? It seems as though some conceptual work on *paraskeue* and then finding forms in which to put it into practice is a way to both inquire into and re-form a relation on knowledge and care in the contemporary.

June Allison in a philological exegesis of the term paraskeue in her work <u>Power and preparedness in Thucydides</u> deftly explains the ambiguity in the term; What is most interesting is that the fundamental ambiguity is its use as both noun and verb. Paraskeue is both a process and a product. "*Paraskeue*: A word for process and components – by definition embodies the process of moving from a time or a state when something did not exist to a time in which it is available for use" (Allison, 1983) *Paraskeue*, first introduced (by Herodotus and contemporaries) as a compound of *skeuos - skeuos* meaning instrument and *para* meaning besides or near, is never left without a clear understanding of what its objects are. Thus paraskeue both is and is not an instrumental rationality. It is both a means and an end. It has no fixed referent but always with an appropriate relation to its object. This practice of equipment has two aspects which need to be elucidated; firstly the exercises that build this equipment and secondly the space which facilitates the exercise which builds this equipment, which in Rabinow and Bennett's terms is called a 'venue'.

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[4] Foucault, 2005, 26-27, ""I think we should be clear in our minds about the major conflict running through Christianity from the end of the fifth Century – St Augustine obviously – up to the seventeenth century. During these twelve centuries the conflict was not between spirituality and science, but between spirituality and theology. The best proof that it was not between spirituality and science is the blossoming of practices of spiritual knowledge, the development of esoteric knowledge, the whole idea – and It would be interesting to reinterpret the theme of Faust along these lines – that there cannot be knowledge without a profound modification in the being's subject."

Venues and exercise

Exercises are crucial for the connection between governance, truth telling and the object. These are exercises of decomposition and re-composition of the object of thought and practice. If taking up an object as a problem is also a problem of objectivation, what is the relation between the rebound effect of the spiritualization of knowledge on the subject to the capacity to objectivize problems of thought and practice? Spirituality is the practice that poses to modern philosophy the challenge of re-thinking a comfortable assurance that comes with the satisfaction that method is, to paraphrase Karl Jaspers, the problem and the task.

The problem Foucault posed was, 'what place does knowledge of the world occupy in the theme and general precept of conversion to the self?' Conversion to self does not exclude knowledge of the world, but involves the spiritualization of that knowledge, or a spiritual modality. Demetrius the Cynic guides us when he suggests that the axis of useful and useless knowledge does not run alone the line of knowledge of the world, knowledge of the self, but rather of two modes of knowledge; a knowledge of causes and a knowledge that effects a transformation. Foucault tells us about the spiritual modalization of knowledge in Aurelius. The figure in Aurelius is the symmetrical opposite of that found in Seneca, he does not draw back but rather goes into – instead of the infinitesimal *point* in space he occupies, the spiritual mode of knowledge is the infinitesimal *view* of the subject who looks into things in a certain manner[5]. This is a "precept", or as Foucault corrects us, the Greek term is *parastema*, it is not exactly something to be done but something to which we hold fast, a statement of fundamental truth as well as the founding principle of behavior - the behavior being the decomposition and recomposition of objects of thought. But the crucial point is that this *parastema,* understood as an ethical substance, has to be exercised (Foucault, 2005; 292).

As a schematic summary we can say, telling true things about an object is inseparable for the mode in which people and things are governed. This capacity to say the truth and govern oneself and others is connected to the capacities built by the exercise of these combinations of principles and conducts

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[5] As Aurelius suggests; "Always define and describe the object whose image appears in the mind in such a way that you see it distinctly, as it is, in essence, naked, whole, and in all its aspects; and say to yourself its name and the names of the parts into which it is composed and into which it will be resolved. Nothing in fact enlarges the soul for us as being able to identify methodologically and truthfully each of the objects which appear in life and to see them always in such a way that we consider at the same time in what kind of universe each is useful, what this use is, and what value it possesses with regard to the whole and with regard to man, this citizen of the most eminent city in which other cities are like households." (Book III of the Meditations: 291)

(*parastema*). These exercises do not happen nowhere; the scene in which they take place is in some dimension co-extensive with the practices, although there may be additional elements not reducible to the practices. The opposition Foucault is interested in is the spiritual exercise opposed to the intellectual method. Foucault suggests Descartes makes this transition explicit. Intellectual method consists in providing ourselves with a systematic and voluntary definition of the law of succession of representations (what Hayden White calls a schema as opposed to a figure in which the there is no law of succession but rather "irrational" leaps), and only accepting them in the mind if there is a sufficiently strong, constraining and necessary link between them. By contrast, spiritual exercise consists in analysis or attention to the flux of representations.

Askesis is a practice of truth, it binds the subject to the truth. There is the connection between one's conduct of one's conduct and the binding of this self who conducts his conduct to the truth. The point is that the modern question is, can the subject be objectivized as an object of knowledge – "man" – i.e. can true things be said about this object, where the objective is knowledge of this object. Whereas, in the Hellenistic period, the question posed of the relation between the subject and knowledge, is whether knowledge of an object, the world, has a rebound effect, a "spiritual value" for the subject – "in the subject's experience and for the subject's salvation" (318). So the contemporary question is whether in turn the rebound effect on the subject can contribute to the objectivization of the object of knowledge, which may or may not be the 'subject'.

James Faubion in *The Shadows and Lights of Waco: Millenialism Today* has written an anthropological account of the *askesis* involved in a subjectivation which works on an ethical substance towards a telos. His provocation is to ask what an invigorated anthropology of ethics could be? (Faubion, 2001). As Faubion suggests, many of the classics of anthropology take "ethics" as their subject matter – Benedict, Bateson and Geertz – however, their works take ethics up solely as precepts in the sense of a rule as opposed to the sense of '*parastema*'. The focus on rules and codes of conduct, as opposed to the inner practice of the ethical field itself allows researchers to conflate ethics and morality. His Aristotelian provocation to the question of ethics as a question of virtue brings to the fore a concern with the activities through which the person of practical wisdom needs to be formed. Faubion writes, quite beautifully, "…it is problematization that provides the thematic bridge between a historically specific genealogy of ethics and a comparative anthropology of the pedagogies of autopoeisis. It is problematization that aids in clarifying the dynamics not simply of ethical homeostasis but also of ethical change within as well as across cultural boundaries". (Faubion, 2001: 127) Faubion does not claim to have written ethnography, but rather to have engaged in anthropological inquiry and given the form of an anthropological essay in

the vein of _Le totemisme aujourd'hui_. Yet Faubion – whilst accepting two basically Levi-Straussian questions, what is this thing we call religion?" (Faubion, 2001; xiv) And "what has become of religion today?" (Ibid) – is at odds with Levi-Strauss in two aspects; one with regards to object the other with regards to method.

The first is that the human sciences cannot lay claim to any a priori methodological claim. That is to say, the joy of this _kind_ of inquiry cannot be justified aside from the specific rationale for taking up _this_ inquiry. The second is to do with the object. It has become somewhat trite these days for cultural anthropologists to abhor "culture" as the object of study, whilst retaining the "cultural". Yet this is not just a slight of hand, replacing a noun with an adjective so as to eschew past debts. Faubion, among others, is exemplary of what it is to graph an ethos as opposed to an ethnos. This ethos of the practices he interested in – millenialism today – is what he calls the 'chemistry of commitment'. The book graphs this commitment through pedagogy of this millenialist reason. I can do no better than to quote James Faubion at length; "One of the points that I care most to emphasize is that were pedagogy – any pedagogy – to be judged only in light of its 'boot camp', its 'basic training', it would always deserve our indignation. Initially, pedagogy – any, and every pedagogy, is violent, disempowering, a curtailment of possibilities. What is or what ought to be more crucial – for those who would judge – is whether it remains so, whether it renders its students and charges nothing more than slaves of their masters. Here, many a religious, many a millennialist pedagogy might well prove suspect – but suspect because of their design, their ratio, their reason, not suspect because of the absence of it." (Faubion, 2001; xvii)

Writing of his main informant, Amo Rodden, Faubion indicates that "no more than (St.) Paul's is her religiosity confined to the cultivation of gnosis. It includes the extension of gnosis into practice. It includes further the testing, the trial, to potential correction of gnosis in practice and as practice. It demands a constant monitoring, a vigilant examination of the self. It also demands a 'historia' an inquiry' that reaches in more than one sense to the ends of the world itself." [Ibid; 118]

What is an anthropology of ethics? It is a corrective to the danger of not looking for the inner logic and practice of an ethic. "The anthropologist cannot begin to do any more justice to Pauline ethics than to Ms Rodden's own if he or she calls on the dualism of the sacred and the secular to evaluate the religious authenticity of ethical practices that do not have any such dualism as their point of departure." [Ibid; 119] Weber is cited as having been able to approach this object more seriously than contemporary religious studies. Why? Faubion suggests that Weber's "broad concern with the greater or lesser fit or affinity between practical design of conduct ('ethics' as he understood it) and the functional demand of particular institutional orders" (Ibid) resists the urge to evaluate the authenticity of ethical practices and

particularly those which are religious from the dualism of sacred/profane. In my reading this is a peril because it rests on a formal argument about the role of a generalizable distinction between the divine and the worldy which ignores both the specificty of *this* God (Protestant, Pauline, millenialist, Branch Davidian etc.) and the relation of the faith in *this* God to a life well lived[6]. This is the relation of gnosis, in the case of Amo Beth Rodden, to a specific telos, an ethical substance, a mode of subjectivation and appropriate exercises.

For an anthropology of the contemporary oriented to inquiry into the ethical, Faubion's appraisal of Weber's 'ethical portraits' are of great value ,even though as Faubion writes, the Ideal-type has limits, as all methods do. The specific limits of the Ideal-type is that although Weber does not exclude practice from his analysis, his method "cannot highlight axes other than the logical" (Ibid). So, for example in the distinction, useful as it is in its ideal-typic manner, between ethic of commitment and responsibility, the difference is not a logical contradiction, in Faubion's analysis, but a question of how a 'value-rational' ethic is lived relative to a plurality such ethics and the form of that life. "The distinction is not between ends that justify any means and merely subjective contingent ends… the distinction is instead between an actor whose ends preclude compromising even by the means that would attain them and an actor for whom the ethical life must always be a life of compromise, a pursuit constrained by the obligation to leave some room, some way for others to pursue their own goods, their Good" [Ibid; 154].

The fibers of our life?

Foucault gives us insight into the ancient Greek relation between knowledge and right conduct and Max Weber gives us a distinctly modern take on this relation. The benefit of thinking Weber in relation to Foucault is that thinking with Weber through Foucault avoids an epochal split between the ancient and the modern, as though an older relation between the two terms was irrevocably lost. Rather, Weber gives us an insightful account of how he saw the conditions of knowledge production in his day, refusing nevertheless to leave the question of ethics aside.

Weber's *Vocation lectures* have two major concerns; Science's desire to claim final authority for itself and the desire to rest political matters on moral certainties and justifications. The lectures pose the following questions, what can I know? What can I do? A crucial concern for Weber is the question of

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[6] The reductive element in Durkheim's sociology of religion consists in the notion that all "religion", when clear about itself, would turn out to be the Comtean-Kantian religion of humanity. As John Milbank writes, "One never sees the social, except in the instances of its manifestation in 'individual' action and one can never read the intention of this action except in terms of its objectively 'historical' situation within a more general process which it assumes and modifies. The relation society/individual is not that of scheme to to content, not of whole to atomic parts. This antinomy can only be mediated by narration; an adequate 'transcendental' reflection on the conditions of possibility for social action discovers the inevitability of historiography, but finds no room whatsoever for 'social science'." [Mibank, 2000; 74]

whether science can underpin politics and if it can on the basis of what authority? The fact that science justifies its own activity on the basis of demagification poses a specifically ethical problem for Weber. Owen and Strong in their excellent introduction to the lectures, cite a conversation that takes place between Weber, Japsers and the Berlin jurist Richard Thoma after _Wissenschaft als Beruf_ was delivered. After having delivered the coup that the scholarly demands of the day may only be met "if each finds and obeys the demon who holds the fibers of his very life" Thoma held that Weber knew "neither what scholarship was nor why he was doing it" . [Owen and Strong, 2004; xxix] Weber's response according to Jasper's is ,"well, if you insist: to see what one can bear, but it is better not to talk of such things." (Ibid) With this elusive response, Weber seeks to make two points in the relation between demagification and ethics. On the one hand, the question of 'how much' truth one can bear is a Nietzschean test of spirit, on the other hand Weber is no nihilist. In asking in what sense science gives 'no' answer to the question of how we should live, the stress, perhaps, is on _in what sense_ and hence Weber's famous question of the significance of science for living.

The connection to how much truth one can bear then is for Weber the question of whether science can help us to pose the right problems in the right way? Only in this sense will science have an 'answer', but in the form of its capacity to pose the right questions. Is this a conception of knowledge devoid of the transformation of self that Foucault traced to the Greeks? I am hesitant to say so. As Owen and Tracy write, "In enforcing clarity, science enforces upon you the presuppositions that make possible the activity you have undertaken" (Ibid).The commitment to truth under conditions of both demagification and "polytheism" ultimately is what connects the two vocation lectures. Whilst the truth of science is subject to change, the ethic of the activity is what ties the subject to this practice of truth-seeking, as opposed to the product of such activity. If the ethic of truth seeking tests the limit of the subject, and, as Weber knew all too well, often breaks him, what practices will _we_, social and human scientists, invent to build or reconstruct an ethos of truth adequate to the collective labour of seeking truth and knowing truth?

Weber acknowledges that competing value spheres still have absolute claims on us, although they are fragmented and increasingly incoherent as the increasing technical virtuosity and specialized forms of knowledge continue to differentiate functional relations between people. For moderns, there is no salvation – salvus -in the sense of being 'whole'- and to be 'political' means ultimately to arbitrate between these fractured and competing spheres (the question of those contemporary souls remains). Weber asks what kind of historical beings we are in our political situation, i.e. our mode of ruling and being ruled? The rationalization of these functional relations produces the rule of the norm ensured by bureaucracy, as anyone who has served on or passed through bioethics committees know. This for Weber

is the opposite of politics, as politics occurs when people are in conflict and not when behavior is arbitrated by the rule. The corresponding role then for politics is to introduce a different mode of organizing and giving form to relationships, whether agonistic or irenic, as nothing outside the norm can be legitimated by the functioning rationalized system. It is in this sense that one might say reading Foucault and Weber together we find a sense in which 'politics' is ultimately the question of ethics – and an open question as to whether we are moving towards "*Sittlichkeit*".

How are we to govern ourselves and be governed by others, with a view to the goods we wish to pursue and produce? What is the character, the ethos that is able to govern well? This is ultimately a pedagogic question , in which there is "no" answer, but in which the practice of co-labouring itself might be the conditions for asking the right question and forming such a character and a right relation between knowledge and care.

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