WRITTEN IN THE STARS?

Shaping a new reality in our communities in the ‘autumn of modernity’ through restorative practices

0. INTRODUCTION

1. AUTUMN OF MODERNITY
2. ETHICAL CHANGES IN SOCIETY
3. HETERONOMOUS - AUTONOMOUS LIFE SPHERE (Illich)
4. EXISTENTIAL ETHICS
5. CORNERSTONES FOR A RP SOCIETY
INTRODUCTION

- Background: research since 1994 and phd of Criminology (2005), KU Leuven, Belgium
- Criminology:
  - Belgium: independent training: master of 4 years
  - psychological and sociological approach
- Specialisation: restorative justice and mediation
  - European Master in Mediation, IUKB, Sion, Suisse (1999-2010)
  - Master en Médiation, Université du Luxembourg (2002-...)
- Own theoretical systemic-existential approach (Phd, 2005):
  - 'sys' – 'tem': 'under the same theme': cyclic approach, "seasons"
  - existential: the deeper dimension of life

THE PROCESS OF INTEGRATION AND DISINTEGRATION

SUMMER
- process of INTEGRATION
  - full force
  - expansion

AUTUMN
- turning point:
  - picking the fruits
  - destruction of old forms

WINTER
- process of DISINTEGRATION
  - composting
  - turning to the inside
  - reflection

SPRING
- turning point:
  - exploration
  - renewal
  - fragile new life

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RECENT DEVELOPMENTS OF SOCIETY
Autumn-winter of modernity

* Western Europe: a history of 150-200 years, or from 'spring' until 'autumn'
* from a consensus-, to a dissensus-, to an assensus-society
* Enlightenment: 'reason' as a cornerstone of the age of modernity

'.reason' as cornerstone of modernity:
* politics: parliamentary democracy
* economy: civil capitalism
* faith: separation between church and state

Three phases in normativity:
* consensus
* dissensus
* assensus

**SUMMER**

Integration

Consensus-society, 1800-

**AUTUMN**

Disintegration

Dissensus-society, 1970-

**WINTER**

Assensus-society, 2000-

**SPRING**
SOCIETY IN DISINTEGRATION
Autumn-winter of modernity

* PERSONALLY:
  . autumn-winter feeling
  . feeling of loss of control
  . feelings of fear and insecurity

* SOCIETY:
  . fragmentation of traditional structures
  . change, instability and unpredictibility
  . future as threat
  . destruction of consensus and hierarchy
  . horizontalisation of relations
  . growing distances, rise of conflicts

Autumn - winter of society
FALLING APART AND TRANSFORMATION OF MODERNITY
A SOCIETY IN DISTINTEGRATION
from a welfare state to a security state

* welfare state: (striving for) welfare as a dominant theme
  . growth and expansion
  . integration as dynamics (‘spring-summer’)
  . climax: golden sixties
  . future as desire

* security state: (striving for) security as a dominant theme
  . recession and decrease
  . disintegration as dynamics (‘autumn-winter’)
  . crises as a continuous thread (and not as an exception)
  . future as a threat

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OR: ... TOWARDS A SECURITY SOCIETY (1)

SECURITY:

- The rise of the "risk society" (U. Beck), the prevention and security discourse in politics, media and public opinion;

- Security obsession focused on petty crime in (semi-)public space;

- ‘Existential Insecurity’ (Z. Bauman) - ‘Ontological Insecurity’ (A. Giddens);

- Nuisance and intolerance

... AND A MEDIATION SOCIETY (2)

MEDIATION:

- Loss of social bonds and hierarchy, horizontalisation of relations, growing distances, social disintegration

- From macro-conflicts towards an accumulation of micro-conflicts

- Mediation: sign of a society in disintegration ('autumn-winter'), repeated in history

- The rise of restorative practices and mediation as a new tool in all fields of society: family, environment, work floor, school, neighbourhood, international, victim-offender mediation, ...

- Conflict management in all domains of society
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THREE PHASES IN 200 YEARS OF MODERNITY:
consensus – dissensus – assensus

SUMMER

CONSENSUS-SOCIETY
1800 -
process of INTEGRATION

AUTUMN

DISSENSUS-SOCIETY
1970 -
process of DISINTEGRATION

WINTER

ASSENSUS-SOCIETY
2000 -

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200 YEARS OF MODERNITY
three forms of normativity

• autumn-winter of modernity leads to shifts in power structures and normativity

• three normative 'eras': consensus -> dissensus -> assensus:
  -> three forms of normative power

• winter of modernity: from an external normativity to an internal normativity:
  -> what is still functioning in the old tradition of power?
  -> e.g.: justice (consensus ?), trade union (dissensus ?),
        education (“pupils don't listen anymore ...”)

• dialogue, encounter as an answer

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200 YEARS OF MODERNITY
three forms of normativity

* three normative 'stages': consensus -> dissensus -> assensus

  * consensus: "... because I tell you !"
    - power relationship: vertical
      - compulsory, authoritarian
    - disciplining: norm is absolute and is not questioned

  * dissensus: "... it is better because ..."
    - power relationship: vertical
      - involvement, participative
    - emancipatory: norm is relative, is motivated and adapted if needed

  * assensus: "... I see it this way ..." – "... I see it that way ..."
    - power relationship: horizontal
      - negotiation, mediation, restorative practices
      - co-construction of the norm: dialogue on arguments and foundations

* three 'types' of authority (e.g. educators, teachers, ... )
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**HETERONOMOUS VS. AUTONOMOUS LIFE SPHERE IN SOCIETY (I. Illich)**

**MEAN**

- formal, heteronomous part of society
  - institutions, professions
  - organised society
  - exchange value based economy
  - world of ‘rights’
  - education: instrumental learning

**AIM**

- informal, autonomous or vernacular part of society
  - informal networks
  - not organised society
  - personal, existential life skills and ambitions
  - practical value based economy
  - world of ‘freedom’
  - education: existential learning

synergetic balance
TWO LIFE SPHERES IN SOCIETY

• every society consists of two life spheres
• these life spheres are complementary
• these life spheres cannot replace each other
• these life spheres are found back on the macro, meso, micro level, in daily life
• in our society there is a disproportion between these life spheres
• this disproportion is found within the justice system, education, ...

HETERONOMOUS VS. AUTONOMOUS
PART OF WESTERN SOCIETY (I. Illich)

‘AIM’
formal, heteronomous part of society
- institutions, professions
- organised society
- exchange value based economy
- world of ‘rights’
- education: instrumental learning

‘MEAN’
informal, autonomous or vernacular part of society
- Informal networks
- not organised society
- personal, existential life skills and ambitions
- practical value based economy
- ‘freedom’ as a key issue
- education: existential learning

LOSS OF BALANCE AND SYNERGY
REVERSAL OF ‘AIMS’ AND ‘MEANS’

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ONE EXISTENTIAL ETHICS, TWO EXPRESSIONS

EXTERNALIST ETHICS

INTERNALIST ETHICS

self regulating ethical power
EXISTENTIAL ETHICAL ROOTS

A DOUBLE ANSWER TO CRIME AND CONFLICT
doing justice – restore freedom

heteronomous life sphere
EXTERNALIST ETHICS

autonomous life sphere
INTERNALIST ETHICS

NORMATIVE PRINCIPLE:
JUSTICE

NORMATIVE PRINCIPLE:
FREEDOM
material, emotional, existential

self regulating ethical power
EXISTENTIAL ETHICAL ROOTS

- complementary relationship: different goal and result
- constitutional state guarantees the freedom of the citizen
- existential ethics as a foundation

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ONE EXISTENTIAL ETHICS, TWO EXPRESSIONS
two fields, methods and approaches

EXTERNALIST ETHICS

*doing justice*
classical justice, applying the law, rules, regulations, deontological codes, human children's and women's rights,

INTERNALISTIST ETHICW

*restoring freedom*
restorative justice and practices, mediation, conferences, circles, round tables, relational methods, ...

self regulating ethical power
EXISTENTIAL ETHICAL ROOTS

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CYCLE OF MODERNITY: "OVERINSTITUTIONALIZATION"
autonomous and heteronomous life sphere (I. Illich) I

summer

phase 1

formal, heteronomous part of society
informal, autonomous, vernacular part of society
consensus society 1800-

autumn

dissensus society 1970-

phase 2

reformal, heteronomous part of society
informal, autonomous, part of society

spring

phase 3

consensus society 2000-

winter
CYCLE OF MODERNITY: “OVERINSTITUTIONALIZATION” 
autonomous and heteronomous life sphere (I. Illich) II

- “spring”: dominance of the autonomous life sphere
- turning point: 1900-1920, heteronomous life sphere becomes present
- “autumn”: 1980-... : dominance of the heteronomous sphere: radical monopoly, over-institutionalization, ...
- now: rediscovery of the quality of the autonomous life sphere in mediation, restorative justice, restorative practices, horizontal methods of support, round tables, family conferencing, ...

AUTUMN/WINTER OF MODERNITY 
towards an ethics of mediation (1)

- from an ethical object (doing what is imposed) towards an ethical subject (defining himself ‘good’ and ‘bad’)
- disintegration of traditional ethical structures
- radical individualisation of ethical experiences and opinions
- existential orientation (ethical compass): internal, no longer external
- experiences are steering, and less and less external frameworks
- a multitude of stimuli confuse existential anchor:
  - kicks, flashes, boosts
  - easy access to drugs, alcohol, medication, sex, violence, games
  - extremes become normal
- Permitted? Yes or now? Why (not)?
  - classic blame does not work (anymore)
  - the ideal of a life without troubles, cf. idols, celebrities (normative belief)?
  - (risk of) loss of orientation -> existential damage
### AUTUMN/WINTER OF MODERNITY
#### towards an ethics of mediation (2)

**PAST**

- from a moral object ...
- objective, externalist ethics
- individual only as part of the collective
- strong implicit consensus
- parents and teacher: one front
- rules are of central importance
- fear of punishment
- against experiences
- ethical consumerism
- vertical pattern, imposed

**NOW**

- to a moral subject
- subjective, internalist ethics
- radical individualisation
- everyone his own meaning: assensus
- front is often gone
- rules do not make impression any longer
- punishment doesn't make impression
- experience based
- active construction through experiences
- horizontal, dialogue and encounter

### CLASSICAL JUSTICE

### MEDIATION & RJ / RP

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### AUTUMN/WINTER OF MODERNITY
#### towards an ethics of mediation (3)

**consequences:**

- imposed rules are no longer connected with the experiences of younger generations
- rules are accepted, but only superficially
- young people become 'ethical yourselfers'

**an existential ethics:**

- common source of internal and external ethics
- source commune, beyond influence of culture, gender, etc.
- accessible on is sensitive of a cultural relativity
- accessible insofar as one is free on an existential level (flow of life)
- becomes visible in extreme situations
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4. EXISTENTIAL ETHICS
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INTERNALIST ETHICS

self regulating ethical power

EXISTENTIAL ETHICAL ROOTS

right to destructiveness (Nagy)

habbits and traditions

dogmatics

habbits and traditions

turbidity:

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EXISTENTIAL ETHICS AS FOUNDATION

- internalist en externalist ethics:
  - changes in time and place (cultural assumptions)
  - relative:
    - turbity because of ‘right to destructiveness’ (eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth) -> internalist
    - turbity because of customs and traditions -> externalist

- assensus society: rediscovery of an internalist ethics

- existential ethics: root or foundation:
  - absolute character
  - “root”, inner source beyond time and place
  - whole humanity

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4. EXISTENTIAL ETHICS
5. CORNERSTONES FOR A RP SOCIETY
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Turning point:
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- renewal
- fragile new life

AUTUMN
Process of DISINTEGRATION
- composting
- turning to the inside
- reflection

Turning point:
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SPRING

WINTER

Autumn - winter of society
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SUMMER
INTEGRATION
- consensus-society, 1800-

AUTUMN
DISINTEGRATION
- dissensus-society, 1970-

SPRING

WINTER
TRANSFORMATION INTO A NEW ERA?
building the future

assensus-society, 2000-
"autumn-winter" of modernity
THE CHANGE OF THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE

- "composting" 200 years of the cycle of modernity
- transformation of modernity and the falling apart of vertical, patriarchal sociological structures and patterns
- traditional structures of society falling apart, cf. class society -> Durckheim, Talcott Parsons (functionalism), ...
- from a "three"-structure towards a "rhizomic" structure of society and social relationships -> Guattari & Deleuze, ‘Rhizome’
- Enlightenment: 'reason' as a cornerstone and changes in society: what's new: emotions, ecology, women, sustainability, diversity, ...
  -> "building the future"

"autumn-winter" of modernity
ASSENSUS & THE AUTONOMOUS LIFE SPHERE

- the emergence of assensus society:
  - consensus -> dissensus -> assensus
  - horizontal methods and techniques
  - rediscovery of an internalist ethics
- from verticality to horizontality in ethics
- rediscovery of the autonomous life sphere:
  - field of the assensus qualities
  - field of horizontal methods
  - a correction to the over attention for the heteronomous life sphere
SHAPING A NEW REALITY for restorative practices

sociological developments of horizontalisation in relations ("rhizome")
+
the crumbling-away of verticality in normativity: assensus
+
rediscovery of the autonomous life sphere: biotope for RP and mediation (↔️ over-institutionalization)
+
from an externalist ethics towards an internalist ethics

= CORNER STONES FOR A FUTURE OF RJ & RP
in autumn – winter of modernity

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MORE INFORMATION?

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If you use these projections of my presentation ©, please refer to the Doctoral thesis below. The projections are an excerpt:


Thank you,