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## Introduction

Andrew Bove

The following articles are fruits of a half-year visit to the Institut für die Wissenschaften vom Menschen by ten young scholars from nine countries who work in a wide range of fields. This diversity explains the lack of any very specific theme or topic. Taken as a whole, the journal is better suited to a social sciences polymath than to any academic specialist. Under one set of (virtual) covers one reads about the Russian Orthodox Church's struggle with modernity, Hannah Arendt's Socrates, social transformation in South Africa, and post-structuralist historiography, among many other things.

Most of the articles were presented at the Junior Fellows Conference at the IWM in June 2001, and all are extracts or versions of larger projects undertaken during residency there from January through June 2001. During our stay in Vienna we Junior Fellows held a regular seminar consisting of work-in-progress presentations and the discussions and exchanges they provoked. The seminar provided us the opportunity to explain our work to an audience at once diverse and highly competent. It was an invaluable opportunity for young scholars to test their ability to step away from the modes and orders of their academic provinces and make a cosmopolitan case for the importance of their research. The seminar was supplemented by frequent informal conversation at meals and elsewhere. We all benefited from what seemed at times a constant effort at translation – linguistic, but more often and more importantly, intellectual and conceptual – undertaken less out of necessity

than a wish to communicate matters important to us to those whom we came to know and like.

The articles represent the IWM's *Schwerpunkte* or fields of concentration. Essays on Arendt, Lefort, and Hegel belong to 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Political Philosophy; papers on Czech liberalism, Ukrainian language politics, and the Russian Orthodox Church pertain to Political and Social Transformation in Central and Eastern Europe; a disquisition on historiography since Saussure goes to the heart of theoretical debates on European Contemporary History; and a rich polemic against universalist prejudices in feminist theory represents Gender Studies. Diverse as these fields are, they reflect not an eclectic institution but one committed to organized inquiry into the diverse totality of the human things, a commitment that in our times necessitates a difficult passage between the Scylla of methodological monism and the Charybdis of aestheticist fragmentation. A few well-chosen fields with important connections to major contemporary historical and intellectual currents seems a wise and moderate course.

Collectively the ten articles constitute an examination of the human sciences as well as their common object, the human. They do so in response to the questions raised by modernity's constant transformations. These questions call not only for continual adaptation and innovation in the study of human affairs, but also for attention to past forms that continue to structure modern life and thought and have not been put to rest by any historical development or progress, or notion thereof. In this connection, we begin to discern a unifying theme after all. The theme is that of *return* – or rather *returns* – to categories and entities that have been obscured or disrupted by social and political change, but whose deep roots in human experience and self-understanding ensure their survival and nourish the possibility of their re-emergence. Most of the articles deal with a return of some kind, though we hasten to add that they do not so much attempt or demand returns as consider ones that are already underway. Return is less the tendency than the subject matter – but neither is it the case that the authors are simply suspicious or admonitory towards the returns which they address. Most begin with pragmatic observations about the inevitability or worth of some category or entity, and then ask how it may be recovered or restored in a reasonable way. A brief review of the articles will help clarify their common theme as well as introduce their diverse subject matter.

The journal is organized into five parts, each of which consists of a pair of articles on related themes or topics. Part one contains papers on two very definite political transformations in Central and Eastern Europe. Michal Kopecek discusses, from the Czech standpoint, the rise and fall of the so-called Visegrád cooperation amongst four Central European states. He traces the origins of the debate – which began in earnest in the 1980s with the publication of a seminal essay by Milan Kundera – over whether Central Europe constitutes a discrete civilization. Kopecek's objects are the idea of a "return to Europe" which animated Czech politics in the years following the Velvet Revolution and the political debates surrounding this idea. Recounting the "row of the two Václavs" that was of crucial importance in the reconstitution of Czech politics after 1989, he shows how the "realism" of Klaus came to prevail over the "idealism" of Havel, and why in the Czech Republic the so-called return to Europe has been much more a matter of pragmatic negotiation than recovery of a buried identity.

Tatiana Zhurzhenko's topic is language politics in contemporary Ukraine, specifically, debates over the status of the Ukrainian and Russian languages in the new state. She gives a brief political-linguistic history of Ukraine from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century to the present, followed by a discussion of the dynamics of Ukrainian's return as an official state language. Utilizing both empirical data and recent theory on the rights of linguistic minorities, Zhurzhenko argues that the task of Ukrainian nation-building today calls for a moderate multicultural approach to "the language issue," one guided by prudence and political justice and not linguistic or ethnic revanchism. Kopecek and Zhurzhenko teach us much about how the revolutions in the East call for careful balancing of past and future.

In part two, Inna Naletova and Julia Huang discuss two distinct religious movements. Using recent sociological data, Naletova analyzes the status and influence of the Orthodox Church in contemporary Russia. Her main question is whether or not a Church revival is underway, and she thinks the evidence suggests an affirmative answer. But this presents a problem, for post-Communist Russia is a modern country where a simple return to the pre-revolutionary bond between church and state is highly unlikely or impossible. On the other hand, Naletova suggests that the Church might play a valuable role in Russia's future by helping restore civic purpose and checking the libertarian excesses of Western liberalism and capitalism. In any case, the Church seems fated to endure alongside liberalism in future Russian society, and Naletova makes a strong case for the importance of practical reflection and systematic research on the relation between the two.

Huang, an anthropologist, deals with a phenomenon not so much of religious return as religious expansion and adaptation. Her topic is the extraordinarily successful Buddhist Compassionate Relief Society, a Taiwanese non-governmental organization that has spread around the globe and become one of the world's largest charitable organizations in its 35 years of existence. Her intriguing question, "What Travels?", supplies the framework for a study of the relation between religious charisma and charitable relief in a global society. Huang's account of the organization and its founder explores with great clarity connections between traditional Buddhist notions of compassion and modern humanitarian ideals.

The third "questionable return" is that of the notion of culture, the topic of articles by Jyoti Mistry and Andrew Bove. Mistry's paper is a case study of the South African contribution to the 2000 Millennium Global Television Broadcast. She discusses how traditional images of South African culture – village life, dancing, the natural beauty of the land, etc. – were employed to the political end of integrating the new South African nation into a quite different global culture based on commerce. The broadcast centered on Robben Island, the site of Nelson Mandela's imprisonment, and Mandela's symbolic passing of the flame to current President Thabo Mbeki literally stole the show, since the broadcast's international producers had expressly prohibited political content. Mistry's account of the event shows the difficulty, and perhaps the futility, of attempting to fix a border between indigenous culture and the demands of present day international politics and economics.

Bove considers the use of the notion of culture in modern empirical political science. He argues that there are serious problems with the way culture has been incorporated into certain models of political explanation. These problems point to a more general tension between politics and culture in both the theory and the practice of the modern state, for which the dualism between a low-brow modern politics of individual satisfaction and the cultural critique of modern politics is a constant source of instability. Bove argues that recent attempts to bring culture to politics ultimately point the way back to Hegel and his radical reconception of *Bildung* as an immanent process of self-completing division within the modern state. We are given a fresh perspective on what is often inaccurately regarded as Hegel's attachment to a fustian or even totalitarian educational ideal.

The methodological and epistemological emphasis of Bove's article carries over into part four, consisting of two papers concerned in quite different ways with the restoration of universality in the human sciences. Alessandro Barberi, a historiogra-

pher, asks why the science of history has only recently opened itself to the insights of the other human sciences, even though the latter became thoroughly historicized during the nineteenth century. He seeks to use this belated “opening” not to divide and compartmentalize the study of history, but on the contrary to revive the notion of *histoire generale* in a way consistent with the historicistic insights of the past two centuries. It is an ambitious project, and Barberi takes us through one stage of it: a reconstruction of the history of media that builds on the linguistic insights of Saussure.

Sociologist Veronika Wittmann provides a provocative “analysis against the homogenization of feminist theory and practice in the context of the so-called First and Third Worlds.” Beginning with an analysis of power relations between European and non-European nations, she proceeds to show how these relations have distorted the approaches of “First World” feminists to their “Third World” counterparts – an opposition Wittmann calls into question. She shows how race prejudices and the “naturalization” of cultural differences have yielded falsely universalistic feminist claims, and calls for critical reflection on the role of socioeconomic inequality between Europe and non-Europe, North and South, white and black in feminist discourse. To begin with, Wittmann suggests that feminists pay greater attention to the actual life circumstances of women outside Europe and North America.

The last two papers deal variously with the status of the political in philosophic thought about human life. In her modestly titled “comment,” Meike Schmidt-Gleim tarries with the question of whether class struggle plays any necessary role in the democratic theory of Claude Lefort, or whether for him it is just another contingency in the open and indeterminate space of contemporary democracy. Drawing on linguistic and psychoanalytic theory, Schmidt-Gleim attempts to recover the importance of class struggle in a way consistent with a thoroughly contingent understanding of modern democracy. Proper attention to the “symbolic” and the “imaginary” as well as the “real” reveals the originary but nevertheless decentered role of class struggle. In the background is Lefort’s own move away from Marxism towards a more general and reformist conception of democratic politics, and for this reason the paper makes an important contribution to our understanding of the course of the French Left in the decades since 1968.

In the last article, Kamila Kulik discusses Hannah Arendt’s civic interpretation of the Socratic *daimon*, and makes a case for its importance in Arendt’s attempt to elaborate an authentic political dimension within modern life. Kulik links Arendt’s

conception of the citizen with her more general notion of political judgment by calling attention to the doubleness or “two-in-one” of the human being and his or her *daimon*. To think is to be in constant dialogue with oneself – not, however, an internal contemplative dialogue, but an external practical or public dialogue with one’s constant but unseen companion, one’s *daimon*. This dialogical or intersubjective character of thought, developed through constant practice, generates the specifically practical judgment proper to politics – such according to Arendt is what we learn from the example of Socrates.

Finally, it is the returns of certain ideas and forms of social life that are in question, not the returns on the time we spent in Vienna, and for this reason thanks and acknowledgements are in order. We thank the IWM for the invitation to spend six productive months in Vienna and for the many kindnesses extended to us throughout our stay. We specially thank Janos Kovacs for his direction of the Junior Visiting Fellows Seminar. His patient attention and penetrating questions (often posed at the very end when we thought we were in the clear) were an example of a rare generosity of intellect. Thanks to the discussants at the Junior Fellows Conference for their time and effort, which were of great benefit to us, and Michal Kopecek, Katharina Coudenhove-Kalergi, Susanne Fröschl, Maria Nicklas, and Anita Traninger for organizing the conference. Thanks also to Klaus Nellen for overseeing the production of the journal, and to David Soucek for the electronic work and for his great and generous expertise in all matters technical throughout our stay. The editor personally wishes to thank all the Junior Visiting Fellows and the members of the IWM publications staff for their patience and assistance while this volume was being prepared.

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