Common Sense and Common Disease
The Pandemic and the Expansion of the Non-real

Victor Molchanov

Russian State University for the Humanities, Department of Philosophy, Center for Phenomenological Philosophy, Miusskaja Sq. 6, GSP-3 125993 Moscow, Russia

victor.molchanov@gmail.com

Abstract

The starting point of this article is the intersection of two global phenomena—the pandemic and the internet. The pandemic and its possible social consequences are viewed from the perspective of two differences that constitute the human world: the difference between certainty and uncertainty, as well as the difference between the real and the unreal. A new mixture of the Real (the accidental, the unexpected, the uncertain, the dangerous, etc.) and the Non-real upsets the balance between

them in favor of the Non-real each time a certain system of meanings is expressed in different texts in the broadest sense of the word. The Non-real is not unreal (absurd, contradictory) and not the Illusory. The latter belongs only to the Real. Furthermore, not only the role of philosophy and science in the formation of the virtual world and non-illusory consciousness is discussed, but also the issue of the freedom of thought in an era of the expansion of various kinds of texts, from comprehensive physical theories and literary works to advertisements for certain products.

Keywords: pandemic, definite, indefinite, real, non-real.

Skupnostni čut in skupna bolezen. Pandemija in razmah ne-realnega

Povzetek

Izhodišče članka predstavlja presečišče med dvema globalnima fenomenoma: pandemijo in internetom. Pandemijo in njene možne družbene posledice obravnavamo z zornega kota dveh razlikovanj, ki konstituirata človeški svet: razlike med gotovostjo in negotovostjo ter razlike med realnim in nerealnim. Nova mešanica Realnega (naključnega, nepričakovanega, negotovega, nevarnega itd.) in Ne-realnega zmoti ravnotežje med njima in ga tako prevesi na stran Ne-realnega vsakokrat, ko se določen sistem pomenov izrazi v mnogoterih tekstih v najširšem smislu besede. Ne-realno ni nerealno (absurdno, protislovno) in tudi ni Iluzorno. Slednje pripada samo Realnemu. V nadaljevanju se ne spoprimemo samo z vlogo filozofije in znanosti pri formiranju virtualnega sveta in ne-iluzorne zavesti, temveč tudi s problemom svobode misli v času razmaha raznolikih vrst tekstov, od vseobsegajočih fizikalnih teorij in literarnih del do oglasov za določene proizvode.

Ključne besede: pandemija, določno, nedoločno, realno, ne-realno.

Die Wahrheitszusammenhänge sind andere als die Zusammenhänge der Sachen.
(The connections of truths are of a different kind than the connections of things.)

Edmund Husserl

"Truth" is essentially unnecessary. If it were suddenly found, it would be a very unpleasant surprise. At least Lessing asserted it (and he knew what he was talking about) when he asked God to hold the truth with Himself, and to keep for man the ability to err and to seek.

Lev Shestov

Introduction

From a routine, planned, and fairly predictable life as a chain of certain events, the contemporary pandemic brings most people back to reality: to dangers, to accidents, to uncertainties. As compared to good old Johann Strauss's *The Bat* (*Die Fledermaus*), the present-day Chinese bats organized a masquerade of a radical new type, a prosaic, compulsory masquerade for the masses with almost identical masks. The elite also gave the masses a new meaning of "social distance," attaching to this term a positive connotation of equality. The reality of the pandemic appears in a series of uncertainties: whether the COVID-19 virus exists or not, has an artificial origin or not, whether this virus is more dangerous than the influenza virus, etc. What is not accidental, is that there may be illusions and errors, which these uncertainties generate. Illusions are an element of reality, and not of "ideas"—theories, artistic images, literary manifestos, political programs, etc.

The sequence of events of the pandemic (real or fictional) was presented in sanitary-epidemiological and administrative economical language. From a scientific perspective, the pandemic brings to the fore the language of biology and virology, which will dominate, together with the language of computer science, the discussion of many pressing problems, including political ones, for a long time and perhaps "forever." In California, and not only "there" alone,

they already dream of computers that will look like human beings, and long before the advent of computers, the authorities of all types always dreamed of men who perform, sometimes even "creatively," one or another of their programs. Is this a technique of power?

On the one hand, computer technology greatly reinforces the already powerful weapons and means of observation; on the other hand, it finds application in science and practice, including the medical one; "on the third hand," it gives almost unlimited possibilities of entertainment. The contemporary pandemic can be paralleled to computer technology. Firstly, it recalls to attention the capabilities of biological weapons and the possibilities to restrict freedom of movement with the help of special applications; secondly, it points to new possibilities of cognition and medical practice; and, thirdly, it not only does not limit the volume of computer entertainment, but increases it through the restriction of travelling of various types, including tourism. The languages of biology and computer technology (and politics) are converging, and perhaps they will merge into one "superhuman" language. At least the term "virus" is common to both languages. In 500–1000 years, IT-biologists will assert that human beings originated from a computer or from the intersection of a computer and a virus; the debate will only be about which operating system and which virus was the source of this emergence.

It is known that the analogy between computer and human being is called "artificial intelligence;" the analogy between man and virus could be called "natural irrationality": there are many viruses, there are also a lot of people; viruses can live only at the expense of living organisms, including humans, a man can live only thanks to other people; the virus mutates, human behavior is uncertain (the sea is quieter than man, as Jules Michelet argued), and meetings of people that entail long-term communication (friendship, marriage, teamwork, etc.) are more or less random; viruses are sometimes dangerous to a person, a person is sometimes very dangerous to another person even without the pandemic. And, last, but not least: both the world of viruses as well as the world of people are somewhere intermediate between living and inanimate. "*Lebenswelt*" (life-world) is an unfortunate name for a world where there is not only love and birth of children, but also hatred, murders (and of children, too), diseases; where even perception (the basic structure of the life-

world, according to Husserl) depends on many "lifeless" things, for instance, upon the social status (not to mention judgments and emotions); where there are not only "fathers and citizens," but also villains and criminals; where even a theoretical conclusion is characterized as enforcement. The main difference between humans and viruses is that viruses do not create theories about humans, but humans create theories about viruses. No matter how adequate these theories may be, are the theorists themselves not losing, and not only those who are involved in biology?

As a new and global phenomenon, the pandemic brings to the fore at least two differences, which can, on the one hand, serve as possible starting points for its thematization, while, on the other hand, allowing the differences themselves appear in a new light: the difference between certainty and uncertainty, as well as the difference between the Real and the Non-real.

1. Pandemic and philosophy. Viruses as a model of reality

Formerly, philosophers were looking for the general, and not only for themselves, now the general itself came to philosophers, and not only to them. The "truth" has now been found, the truth on a planetary scale, and it was a truly unpleasant surprise, crowning all the tensions and problems of the contemporary world. In the 20th century, there were also very general "truths," but still not so all-encompassing. The two world wars forced millions of people to make efforts of a certain kind, determined the moods, thoughts, and feelings of various social strata and groups. Husserl's "truth" as the definiteness of being or, more modestly, the definiteness of what exists, corresponds to the standard of classical ideal objects. Can it be attributed to real objects and processes, including social (and antisocial, which are essentially also social)? In peacetime, the uncertainty of behavior and the "search for truth" can be optional. In times of war and during a pandemic, decisions and actions are determined by circumstances to a much greater extent. All-encompassing truths entail greater certainty of the present (self-isolation, masks, gloves, "social distance," etc.), but also greater uncertainty of the future in relation to the spread of the disease, as well as in relation to its social consequences. Such truths sharply separate the present and the future, give a new mixture of

certainty and uncertainty, in order to redistribute human spaces, and to test new management possibilities.

If the pandemic is not a world war without warring parties (if we exclude, of course, the purposeful distribution of COVID-19), then it is, in any case, a global threat, and in different dimensions of human existence. From one side, it is a threat to health and life, from another one, again to different dimensions, firstly, as a threat to human rights, and, secondly, as a threat to the present-day type of mass lifestyle.

The COVID-19 pandemic can be called the transition to the digital form of globalization: the real movement of people and goods has decreased; virtual communication of all kinds has become predominant. However, the pandemic is not only a transition, but it is also the first global event, or, rather, the first global process, in the era of globalization, a process that affects almost all aspects of social life: production, business, travel, scientific research, entertainment, everyday life, etc. With the exception of world wars, the pandemic has only one rival concerning the coverage of the world as a whole. This is philosophy. Philosophers say: at the heart of everything is water, air, fire, ideas, forms, cogito, monads, transcendental imagination, absolute spirit, will to power, being, disciplinary practices, etc.; maybe it was like that before, politicians and biologists say (new opportunities for this stable link are emerging), but now everything depends on viruses. The point, however, lies not in a certain carrier of the world, whether the latter rests on three whales or on millions of viruses, but in the fact that turtles and whales, eidos and monads, cogito and even spontaneous syntheses, as well as other mythological creatures and philosophical entities are based on "things" as something definite. The certainty of the foundation presupposes a certain certainty of a building, the knowledge of which requires certain methods. This certainty is not cancelled neither by the procedural character of foundation nor by spontaneity, which for some reason immediately breaks down into twelve headings—blind syntheses. Nor does the "movable foundation" and "existential time" cancel out the certainty of the world, just because time, including existential time, is fiction. Even the rhizome, with its labyrinths without beginning and end, and without the guiding thread, speaks more of the uncertainty of thinking processes, of the contingency of thought than of the contingency of the world. The original plurality (of consciousness), which does not have a single center, was already

"known" by J.-M. Guyau at the end of the 19th century. Physicists talk about the uncertainties of the microworld, but people do not live there, and threats do not come from the microworld directly, but from devices made using theories about the microworld. Viruses, unlike electrons, live in humans—the most non-biologically variable creature—, and pose an immediate danger. If the physical uncertainty of the world says nothing about the uncertainty of the human world, then viruses, diseases, epidemics, destructive forces of nature, etc., tell us about this: the human world is fundamentally indefinite; nature manifests certainty in a living organism, including the human organism, but this is only one side of its existence. All diseases, and not only during an epidemic, arise by chance and unexpectedly, if we take into account the "life-world," and not the science of etiology.

The second question that connects the pandemic and philosophy, as well as science, first of all the natural science, is the following: the 2019–2020 pandemic (which will possibly last longer) appeared in the era of an ever-increasing segment of the virtual world. At the same time, it is obvious that the contribution of science and philosophy to the formation of the virtual world can hardly be overestimated. It is also obvious that the scope of the virtual sector has increased during the pandemic. Can we conclude from this that the sphere of the real has decreased? But then reality can be quantified, and even with numbers! Or ciphers? This is exactly what they are trying to do now with the help of the media, reporting on the number of cases, recoveries, and deaths.

What is surprising, here, at least for philosophers and mathematicians? The first person who began, in ancient Greece, to call himself a philosopher, just proclaimed that all things are numbers. In the formation of the virtual world, the union of philosophy and mathematics immediately became apparent: numbers, eidos, forms, *mathesis universalis*, pure reason, theory of all theories, etc.

Is the pandemic a kind of tough and disturbing response to serene virtual communication? Or does the pandemic multiply the power of the virtual world over the Real and Non-real?

The third question is the question of the freedom of thought. A pandemic, like a war, like any mass disaster, requires, on the one hand, an intensification of intellectual efforts to resist people or nature (and generally destroy hurricanes and earthquakes, as Fichte dreamed or planned), and to overcome

the consequences of the disaster. On the other hand, each disaster significantly narrows the scope of intellectual and spiritual life, not to mention the partial classification of scientific information and the destruction of communication in various dimensions of the human world.

"How absurd men are! They never use the liberties they have; they demand those they do not have. They have freedom of thought; they demand freedom of speech." To these ironic words of Kierkegaard one can now add: people still demand freedom of trips, and without masks! The question of the freedom of thought is, of course, more complex, perhaps the most difficult of all philosophical questions, if they exist in their pure form. The pandemic focuses attention on a certain, and at the same time indefinite, range of issues, but at the same time raises new questions, which is one of the conditions for thinking.

Is, thus, not an ideal situation being created for phenomenologists? Whether an isolated virus exists or not, a pandemic can be viewed as a phenomenon with its threats to health, rights, work, communication, entertainment, etc., but considered again "theoretically," according to the phenomenological attitude. "To the things themselves!" Is this a way to reality, or to the theory of all theories, and to the method of all methods?

2. The Real, the Non-real, and the Illusory

Communication is a fundamental and value-neutral phenomenon of the human world. The difference between real, non-real, and illusory is one of its main constitutive differences and a necessary condition for any, including global, communication.

On the one hand, the pandemic is an obstacle to communication of different—but far from all—types; on the other hand, it is one of the main, if not the main, topics of discussions, assumptions, guesses, etc. In this, again, a pandemic is similar to a world war.

In the real dimension, the pandemic is becoming global due to population density and the intensity of the movement of people using up-to-date modes of transport; in the non-real, informative dimension, the pandemic is grasped as a general threat, as a series of ongoing efforts, etc., thanks to the media and

individual means of communication. The distinction between real, non-real, and illusory, which in itself deserves to be the subject of research, becomes especially relevant in this kind of a "borderline situation."

Reality is a word that everyone knows and understands, if no one asks about it themselves. Usually, the real is understood as what does not depend on human will and desires, and limits, even determines it. However, the non-real as a system of meanings also does not depend on, and thus limits the will of the people. For example, 2x2 is always 4, no matter how much someone wants it to be five or eight.

The Real and the Non-real are not two substances or abstractions denoting something objective, but two fundamental dimensions of the human world, which mutually complement each other in the communicative space of a certain human world. The Non-real is not a denial of the real, but its counterpart. The Non-real includes any relatively closed system of meanings realized in written texts (scientific theories, literary works, political programs, etc.) and in oral speech. The Non-real is not illusory and unreal. The Unreal is something opposite to the Real; it is fictional, false, absurd, etc. However, the meaning of something fictional is not fictional, the meaning of something false, which presupposes the meaning of truth, is not false, the meaning of something absurd is not absurd, etc. Meaning is neither real nor unreal. It is non-real. On the one hand, the Non-real is the means of ordering the real, on the other hand, it can be a source of the fictional, the absurd, etc. In its turn, the Real can be a source of the illusory. It sounds paradoxical, but the illusory is a sign of reality.

The Real and the Non-real form a certain proportion, and their balance is a basis for the sustainability of the world. The experience of the Real is the experience of the accidental, indefinite, obstructing, sometimes dangerous, and terrible. The experience of the Non-real is the experience of the ordered, rational, logically grounded, systemic, and "theoretical." The Real is what makes the world uncertain, the Non-real is what makes the world defined and manageable.

It is possible to single out the main criteria for the distinguishing between the Real and the Non-real. 1. The Real implies the presence of the human body as well as objects, processes, living organisms that in one way or another, directly or indirectly, can come into contact (in a broad sense) with

the human body. In the Non-real, i.e., in the systems of meanings, there is no place for corporeality; you can touch the surface of the table, but you cannot touch the mathematical plane, just as it is impossible to shake hands with a literary hero, if this is not a metaphor. The real is perceived objectively or procedurally; in the sphere of the Non-real, perception is only a means (for example, a drawing) for working with a system of meanings. 2. The Real implies contingency and uncertainty; the Non-real, structural and logical completeness and certainty.

The mediators between the Real and the Non-real are, firstly, the "acts" of differentiations and differentiations between differences (acts of consciousness, which are communicative in one way or another); and, secondly, diverse sign (and symbolic) systems. Thus, the contemporary world is composed at least of the following elements: the Real, the Non-real, the communicative ("acts" of distinguishing between differences), and the semiotic. Now, the question is to what realm the illusory belongs.

In the literal sense, an illusion means a deceptive perception of an object, caused either by a similarity of objects or by a combination of phenomena that appears as a certain object. In the figurative sense, an illusion is something imaginary and, as a rule, positive concerning other people, the course of life, etc.; it is something similar to dreams and hopes. Both the first and second types of illusions belong to the real dimension of human life: illusions (and disappointments) refer to real people and circumstances of affairs in real communication. The question, however, is: can illusions of the second type also relate to the Non-real: to the characters of the works of art, to the images of historical figures, to this or that image of an era, to ideological attitudes, etc.? In the realm of the Non-real, we are, rather, dealing with the depiction of illusions and their loss in the heroes of novels (for example, in Balzac).

At first glance, the depiction of illusions and their loss in the novel, differs from the interlocutor's story about his illusions in real communication only in artistic merits. However, it is not so. The interlocutor's story conveys his own experience in a complex communication process, in which new illusions and disappointments can arise, a certain degree of trust can be established, etc. The illusions in the novel are already defined; they require not trust, but the tuning of imagination. As for the first type of illusions (in the literal sense),

they cannot, as we will see later, take place in the sphere of the Non-real. All types of illusions belong to the human world. Human life is hardly possible without illusions of one kind or another. Even politicians sometimes need the illusions that they are working for the benefit of society as a whole.

It is obvious that the Real can be illusory: a bird can be mistaken for a branch, and vice versa, a stump for a wolf or a dog, etc.; here, one real object "pretends" to be another one. In the realm of the Non-real, one meaning cannot pass itself off for another. The Non-real, centaurs, logarithms, and round squares, etc., cannot be illusory; a rider on a horse cannot be mistaken for a centaur, they belong to different worlds. Not only are theories, as Husserl argued, made up of meanings; centaurs are unreal objects, but as figures in mythology they are also made up of meanings. One can only naively assert that a centaur is a combination of a man and a horse, because this is simply not true, because in reality there is no such connection; a centaur is a combination of many meanings, among which the meaning of a horse and the meaning of a person are decisive and are combined into one image. Unlike real spaces, in Non-real spaces one cannot be mistaken for one another: a square for a triangle, two for three, a centaur for Narcissus. This does not concern images of figures or signs, but abstractions themselves, or images, compared with other abstractions or images. You can assume that you see two objects, but in fact there will be three of them; you can take the number two for the number three with poor eyesight or writing, but it is impossible to consider the number two as the number three, and vice versa. One can take the image of Hercules for the image of Achilles, and vice versa, but it is impossible to consider Hercules as Achilles, or vice versa, as heroes of various myths. On the contrary, in the forest, we believe that this stump is a wolf or a dog, because in the forest there are no images of each stump next to the original, so that the traveler does not feel fear. In this case, fear is another sign of reality; when we take Achilles for Hercules, neither one nor the other threatens us. (The danger of the Non-real lies in another direction.) In the Non-real world, everything is already marked, labelled; abstractions and images are correlated with each other, even if not unambiguously: there are variants of mathematical proofs, variants of myths, different editions of the same revised work (artistic or philosophical), etc., but this variability again presupposes internal certainty as the proposed option. In

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one version of the myth, the hero performs some actions, in another—others, but in the same version, there is no uncertainty or even probability in relation to certain actions or deeds. In mathematical theorems and proofs, there is no destiny governing them, but in the same way there is no uncertainty and randomness, if it is not a result related to the field of application. It cannot be assumed that on the Euclidean plane the sum of the squares of the legs may accidentally turn out to be different from the square of the hypotenuse or that such a statement is more or less likely. The probability is not calculated here. Where probability is concerned, it refers to real processes and objects, but the calculus of probability itself is not probable.

The source of errors lies in the subjective sphere, the source of illusions is the objective state of affairs; the main method of researching the Real is analysis, the main method of researching the Non-real is interpretation. Analysis and interpretation complement each other in the same way as the Real and the Non-real. There can be errors in mathematical reasoning, but there can be no illusion; on the contrary, illusions, directly or indirectly, are always associated with the uncertainty of the real world, bodily-practical and emotional attitudes. Analysis, not interpretation, plays a critical role in exposing illusions. At the same time, the use of the term "interpretation" as the main method in relation to the Real is a very dubious enterprise. When Husserl defines intentionality as an interpretation of sensations, then the act of consciousness turns out to be non-real, giving meaning (one can hardly experience interpretation) to the real, i.e., sensation. The example of a wax doll, which we supposedly "interpret" first as a lady, and then recognize as a doll, is indicative. According to Husserl, we interpret the same complex of sensations in different ways, at one time, in this way, at another one, differently. However, we are simply not in the position to interpret what has not yet received a definite meaning, i.e., just a complex of sensations. Sensations are not interpreted, but the immediate surrounding world, which always contains communicative and non-real elements (a certain configuration of meanings). The difference between the lady and the wax figure is the difference between the two worlds, communicative and non-communicative; we tend to be mistaken, because we are offered communication (the lady bows), and this is a sign of everyday and habitual action.

In the realm of the Non-real, there is no place for the illusory, because in the realm of the Non-real, there is no place for the fundamental uncertainty and contingency of the real world. On the one hand, we are dealing here with already formed images, with interpreted signs, with well-known images; on the other hand, we ourselves form images, interpret signs, and recognize images. This or that interpretation can be caused by a random cause, i.e., by random circumstances, in which the interpreter finds themselves. However, the interpretation itself, which is realized in the system of meanings, cannot be accidental in the process of its explication.

In the case of illusion, we are not talking about distorted perception, but about deformation of the perceived field, in which a shift in meanings takes place. In the realm of the Non-real, i.e., "within" a certain system of meanings, be it a mathematical proof or a discussion about the artistic merits of a performance, etc., our judgments can only indirectly correlate with the perception of real objects. Here, our judgments are primarily associated with the perception of signs. However, for all the inseparability of sign and meaning, signs are not what establishes meanings, but meanings require signs as their representatives in the realm of the Real. If actions require security, then it is security as a meaning that requires certain signs, thanks to which the realization of meaning becomes possible. Signs require, in turn, systems of their material embodiment. In everyday life, people believe that traffic lights provide safety. However, safety is still ensured by people with the help of a traffic light, a device that gives signals-signs, but does not hold the hand of people walking at a red light. Signs of this kind are created by some people and deciphered by others according to their meanings. Likewise, masks and gloves during a pandemic are safety measures that require human decision. In this case, the mask becomes a sign of both relative safety and law-abidingness. It is not the masks that decide, which of the meanings of this sign is more important in that moment.

The Real cannot exist without the Non-real, but the Non-real has relative independence. However, no matter how the Real and the Non-real are intertwined within any one communicative world, this difference becomes apparent during the transition from one type of communication to another, with the awareness of many worlds and many ways of acting.

The pandemic brings us back to reality, but at the same time, it destroys illusions to a large degree. Firstly, the suddenness of the pandemic destroys the illusion of the endless flow of everyday life. Secondly, the illusion of independence of many decisions made—the most common plans, projects, etc.—are destroyed. Besides, and this is the main thing, the pandemic leads to an expansion of the virtual sphere, where there is no, and cannot be, illusions.

3. Texts and reality

The pandemic was unexpected, but not very surprising after the many disasters (natural and artificial) taking place in the 20th and 21st centuries.

Much has been written about the benefits and dangers of science for life in the 20th century. Auguste Comte proposed the classification of sciences as a movement from the most abstract science—mathematics—to the most concrete one—sociology. At present, it is possible to propose a classification of scientific applications according to the chronology of harmfulness. Physics and chemistry are clearly arguing for the status of the first science here: with the help of physics, more precisely mechanics, the first weapons of mass destruction have been created: multi-charge rifles, then machine guns, and submachine guns. However, the creation of such weapons was initially perceived as an improvement of the old ones—muskets, smoothbore guns, etc. At the same time, chemistry has been creating something fundamentally new—chemical weapons, which found their application on both sides in the First World War. Afterwards, physics gained revenge by proposing a weapon that can destroy the planet Earth completely. And finally, biology, with its viruses, bacteria, "bats," etc., makes the source of death invisible, inaudible, imperceptible, and universal. The weapon becomes directly indefinable and adequate to the mass society (a sort of a *das-Man*-weapon). Thus, weapons, like knowledge, went from the singular to the general: one arrow—one person; one sword and one pistol—one or two or three people; one rifle—several people; one machine gun—dozens of people; one bomb—hundreds and thousands; one virus (one type of virus)—all of humanity.

These negative consequences of scientific discoveries, many of which would not have been possible without mathematics, are well known; I have

only arranged them in a chronological (perhaps not very precise) order as stages of a kind of phenomenology of the militaristic spirit that strives for its absolute realization.

In fact, one cannot have any doubt about the positive and negative impacts of science, including the extension in the sphere of the virtual world: all its "carriers"—television, computers, smartphones, etc.—were not created without the help of science. But what about theories, and not their applications? Can scientific or quasi-scientific theories influence the consciousness and behavior of people, prompting them to replace real forms of communication with virtual ones? There is hardly a direct influence of this kind, although an indirect influence undoubtedly takes place: in the process of education, the schoolchild and the student master the internal logic of various scientific disciplines; the study of various scientific theories teaches us to move from meaning to meaning, from presuppositions to consequences, from theory to experiment. Afterwards, it can turn out that the theories being studied are wrong, despite their logical perfection. Other theories are accepted, which can also be rejected. Thus, criticism is carried out within the framework of the non-real "autonomous third world" that develops independently of the first two. At the same time, the "movement" from theory to practice becomes even more dangerous in social sciences and practices.

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The essential difference between the world of theoretical knowledge as such and the worlds of human life is that in the world of knowledge as a world of connection of meanings there is not a grain of reality—no chance, no corporeality, no uncertainty (concerning the latter, the question is more complicated). However, there is a similarity between scientific and "unscientific" worlds, which is that "unscientific" worlds also form closed typologies of meanings and actions. As a matter of fact, any human world (the worlds of labor, science, art, sports, etc.) has certain boundaries. Within this or that world, the system of meanings can develop as much as necessary, but only within the predetermined framework of a certain typology of language and objectivity.

From one perspective, science opens closed and little worlds of ordinary life striving towards the general and infinite; from the other perspective, scientific disciplines, as a result of the differentiation of sciences and the professionalization of knowledge, turn out to be relatively closed spheres,

inaccessible not only to laymen, but also to colleagues from other fields. Thus, a certainty of thinking is formed: a certain way of forming abstractions, or concepts, a certain set of methods, the choice of a paradigm or tradition, etc. Abstraction as an element of a system cannot be indefinite; it serves other abstractions within a theory: "Alle Wissenschaft ist ihrem objektiven Gehalt nach, ist als Theorie aus diesem *einen* homogenen Stoff konstituiert, sie ist eine ideale Komplexion von *Bedeutungen*," Husserl rightly asserts (Husserl 1984, 100),[1] and the experience of the mathematician suggested this truth to him. The refusal to recognize the theory of knowledge as a theory of a deductive type does not mean the refusal from the theory as a study of the pure connection of pure meanings.

Abstract mathematics forms the only and vast independent sphere of the Non-real, and has no direct relation to reality. The famous physicist Pyotr Kapitsa sarcastically proposed: "Isn't it time to list all mathematicians in the sport section, like chess players?" Another aspect of removing mathematics from reality was noted by A. N. Whitehead: "Let us grant that the pursuit of mathematics is a divine madness of the human spirit, a refuge from the goading urgency of contingent happenings" (Whitehead 1925, 26–27). In fact, the "tingling of chance" forces you to hide from it where there are no, and cannot be, accidents and, therefore, no reality. Unlike abstract mathematics, applied mathematics, in the sense of its name, is directly related to the description of real processes. However, not only technology is improved (including weapons) with its help, but virtual worlds are also constructed. Thus, applied mathematics brings us back again to the Non-real.

The positive functions of the internet as the main carrier of the virtual world are known, they are primarily associated with the speed of information exchange, new opportunities in training and education, etc., although the quickly transmitted information itself can serve for purposes that are not necessarily good. Thus, as in the field of science, one negative consequence can cancel all positive ones. The internet is now becoming a place of the realization of mass consciousness, a special lifestyle, a kind of art for art. If

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1 "All the theoretical science consists, in its objective content, of *one* homogeneous stuff: it is an ideal fabric of *meanings*." (Husserl 2001, 226)

Hollywood cinema was called the dream factory, then the present-day internet (beyond the transfer of scientific, business, and other information in a broad sense) is a factory of opinions and presentations, as well as self-presentations on the most insignificant occasions. The virtual world creates an illusion of reality, but in this "reality" there are no illusions, no emotions caused by real communication. Illusions as a necessary element of human life (the inevitability of the transcendental Illusion is Kant's great discovery) disappear when the real component of the human world is eliminated. This lifestyle provides neither disappointment nor exposure of illusions, but only a binary system of assessments—like it or not. This "like"/"dislike" binary is imitative and collective as a rule. On the contrary, disappointment is one of the few communicative acts that imply an independent decision.

Nonetheless, the virtual world has an inconceivable effectiveness in social life. Life without illusions obeys the logic of meanings, including imposed meanings and their systems. Paradoxical as it may seem, but the massive flow of internet consciousness reveals a certain similarity with its absorption in literary texts and even scientific theories. One might agree with Heidegger when he argues that science does not think. But this does not mean that scientists do not think. Likewise, one can say that literature does not think, and this does not mean that writers, at least some, do not think. However, in the scientific and artistic texts themselves, already formed systems of meanings are given—theories, developed plots, and artistic images—, which only indirectly relate to the real strata of the world and which change themselves only in order to appear again in a complete form. The ecstasy of scientific and literary creativity, as well as the involvement in the study of scientific theories and in the reading of exciting (this is already an aggression) literary texts, could not weaken the social energy of both creators and readers, but it creates the illusion of reality as orderly (chaos cannot be portrayed), reasonable (even the image of the irrational and the unconscious is completely rational), and comprehensible (comprehensibility is identified with the truth).

Be that as it may, mathematics, natural science, philosophy, and literature in the form, in which they have developed over hundreds and thousands of years, have not created a paradigm of social action and social thinking, which would lead to significant changes in social life, preventing epidemics

and wars. Against the background of advances in biology and medicine, we have nothing more and nothing less than a common threat to life, health, and freedom of travel. Against the background of the great literature of the 19th and 20th centuries, we have the pandemic announcement as an instruction from authorities, i.e., as a purely ideological act, the content of which we must simply believe. Instructions can be correct, but that does not stop them from being instructions. In the pandemic, the attitude of authorities towards the population (the masses) takes on the connotation of the attitude of adults towards minors and the elderly. This became obvious through the age discrimination during the period of so-called self-isolation. At the same time, "adults," as it often happens, do not know exactly what to do with their wards.

Objectively, however, a pandemic is the identification of a new management potential of the Non-real. It is even possible that this is another step on the way to a new dystopia, where texts in the broad sense of the word will become one of the main means of administration and control.

Great examples of literature differ like heaven from earth from detective stories and advertising texts, films of great directors from popular TV series, the creations of great artists from crafts of mediocrity, etc. However, the earth and the sky converge on the horizon, and this horizon is texts, different texts that possess different people, and their power over a person is greater than that of a person over them. Who has not praised the text as such in the 20th century? The authors of texts have died and are dying in the literal and figurative sense, but the texts do not die, because they are non-real. For Ray Bradbury, the salvation of culture consists in memorizing the great works of literature and philosophy. Does man then not become an appendage of the text, as he once was an appendage of the machine?

Conclusion

1. The more the balance of society shifts towards the Non-real, the easier can it be managed and the likelier it is to obey. Ideology is not an augmented reality, but the Non-real, supplanting the Real. Intellectuals lose to authorities and business, and are often forced to play along with ideologies due to their focus on closed systems of meanings.

2. Weapons of mass destruction and mass disease will disappear only when the masses disappear. This provides two options in accordance with Kant's "Eternal Peace." Any optimistic scenario would now be utopian. The pandemic reminds us of the fundamental uncertainty of future and of the alternative of utopias and dystopias. It is unlikely that the resolution of this alternative, upon which the existence of the future depends, can be possible without common sense, the subject of which can only be the finite and free association of people that accepts the paradigm of balance between the Real and the Non-real, the meaningful finiteness of projects and the responsibility for non-aggressive communication. However, this can also be only a utopia, because the utopia of common sense remains the most utopian of notions in the contemporary world.

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