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The Gift of Insanity. The Rise and Fall of Cultures from a Psychiatric Perspective

Abstract

This paper argues in favor of two related theses. First, due to a fundamental, biologically grounded world-openness, human culture is a biological imperative. As both biology and culture evolve historically, cultures rise and fall and the diversity of the human species develops. Second, in this historical process of rise and fall, abnormality plays a crucial role. From the perspective of a broader context traditionally addressed by speculative philosophies of history, the so-called mental disorders may be seen as entailing particular functional advantages, and thus have a great impact on the course of human history. Nowadays, however, we live under a threat of cultural uniformity. While the diversity of the human species is cherished at the political level, it is being slowly eradicated through medical means. This paradox is a dangerous feature of contemporary globalized society that can lead to highly problematic consequences.

Keywords:

diversity, plurality, otherness, philosophy of history, cultural development, role-playing, role-identification

“Without deviation from the norm, progress is not possible”
Frank Zappa

Introduction

Before late modern times madness had rarely been an object of scientific studies. Even though it was present in a variety of diverse forms in the Western world, it was seldom seen as a mental illness.¹ Only with the processes of industrialization and concomitant medicalization of life has insanity become an object of the unifying attitude of western rationality. As a consequence, cultural tolerance towards otherness began to diminish. In the 20th century this unifying attitude became worrisome for both social theorists and critical psychiatrists from all sides of the political spectrum. Leftist thinkers were concerned with the threatening political implications of a one-dimensional, allegedly dehumanized, consumption-oriented, and alienated bourgeois subject.² Political theorists argued that modernity reduces the plurality of men to a physiological uniformity.³ From the perspective of Catholic Anarchism, modern medicine was interpreted as a part of the industrial-complex and even accused of literally creating mental health problems.⁴ The anti-psychiatry movement of the 1970's popularized the claim that the statistically normal is already sick. In conservative psychiatric terms, the new cultural uniformity was construed as existential neurosis.⁵ Despite the fact that the so-called “second biological psychiatry” was undoubtedly progressive,⁶ psychiatry continued to function as a normative power of the state.⁷ The critique of the growth of the pharmaceutical industry in the 1990's as well as the widening of categorical thresholds for many psychiatric diagnoses only reinforced such long present concerns.⁸

These worries are by no means outdated today. More than ever, we live under a threat of cultural uniformity. Even though the diversity of the human species is contemporarily cherished at the political level (at least in the western world, a multicultural society is considered a valuable accomplishment), the universalizing pretenses of orthodox biological psychiatry endanger this diversity at the level of mental health care. What we theoretically and politically cherish is being progressively threatened by medical means. This paradox is a dangerous feature of contemporary globalized society that can lead to highly problematic consequences.

1) Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Random House 1965).

2) Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man. Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007).

3) Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958).

4) Ivan Illich, *Medical Nemesis. The Expropriation of Health* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976).

5) Victor Emil von Gebssattel, *Imago Hominis. Beiträge zu einer personalen Anthropologie* (Schweinfurt: Verlag Neues Forum, 1964).

6) Edward Shorter, *A History of Psychiatry. From the Era of the Asylum to the Age of Prozac* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. 1997).

7) Thomas Szasz, *Pharmacracy: Medicine and Politics in America* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2001); Thomas Szasz, *The Myth of Mental Illness. Foundations of a Theory of Personal Conduct* (New York, London, Toronto, Sydney, New Delhi, Auckland: Harper Perennial, 2010).

8) Allan V. Horwitz and Jerome C. Wakefield, *All We Have to Fear. Psychiatry's Transformation of Natural Anxieties into Mental Disorders* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

This paper argues in favor of two related theses. First, due to a fundamental, biologically grounded world-openness, human culture is a biological imperative. As both biology and culture evolve historically, cultures rise and fall and the diversity of the human species develops. Second, in this historical process of rise and fall, abnormality plays a crucial role. From the perspective of a broader context of historical development, traditionally addressed by speculative philosophies of history, the so-called mental disorders can even be seen as entailing particular functional advantages, and thus have a great impact on the course of human history. Modern society that explicitly values mental conformity over mental plurality and attempts to eradicate all forms of mental otherness jeopardizes this process.

Culture as a biological imperative

Speaking in evolutionary terms, the question of Self versus Other has nothing to do with a mental illness and was initially an issue for the immune system.⁹ Later on, it became an issue for the nervous system, and only much later a psychological and cultural matter. Our single celled ancestors could interact with their surroundings and with each other, which means that the key structures required for animal development had already evolved before the origin of animals.¹⁰ Multicellular evolutionary development started with signaling between the cells.¹¹ Insects, whose colonies represent basic stages of biological organization, group and raise individual animals to a higher level.¹² All living units spontaneously engage in transactions with their others.¹³ Comte's *dictum* that society is an organism is a metaphor that has a great cognitive significance. Always threatened by non-being, organisms must constantly re-assert their being through their own activity and communication with others, a fact that may be contrasted with non-living things that occupy a space but do not inhabit a world.

Each living creature is thus involved in a structured, active relationship with its surroundings. Enclosed within a semi-permeable membrane dividing the inside from the outside, organisms establish their boundary and take their place within a world. The semi-permeable barrier allows them to pull materials from the outside in and to push materials from the inside out. It implies that living beings are both enclosed within themselves, defined by the boundaries that separate them from their environment, and ceaselessly reaching out to their environment and interacting with it. The existence of every living being is sustained through metabolism, and therefore its existence is its own dynamic achievement (inorganic matter need not actively do anything in order to endure, while the very being of a living creature is contingent upon its own ceaseless activity).¹⁴

Human forms of self-relatedness are relatively plastic and ill-defined. In other words, compared to other animals, humans are much more flexible and underdetermined. This openness explains why culture must complement biology. Culture imposes human-made forms of existence and thus helps to close the world-openness left by biology alone. Culture determines and supplements what biology leaves undetermined and in that sense becomes a biological imperative.¹⁵ Humans are born relatively immature and helpless, but in small litters and

9) Irun R. Cohen, *Tending Adam's Garden: Evolving the Cognitive Immune Self* (London: Academic Press, 2000).

10) Nicole King, Christopher T. Hittinger, Sean B. Carroll, "Evolution of key cell signaling and adhesion protein families predates animal origins," *Science* 18; 301(5631) (2003): 361–3.

11) John T. Bonner, *First Signals: The Evolution of Multicellular Development* (Princeton, Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000).

12) Bert Hölldobler, Edward O. Wilson, *The Superorganism. The Beauty, Elegance, and Strangeness of Insect Societies* (New York, London: W. W. Norton & Company Ltd., 2008).

13) Larry Squire et al., eds., *Fundamental Neuroscience* (London, New York, Oxford: Academic Press, 2002).

14) Hans Jonas, *The Phenomenon of Life: Towards a Philosophical Biology* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966).

15) Michael A. Schwartz and Osborne P. Wiggins, "Philosophical anthropology: Its relevance for psychiatry," *ASCAP* 2, no. 1 (2001): 32–36.

with sense organs fully operative – as a species, they are both nidicolous (reared for a time in nest) and nidifugous (leave the nest shortly after hatching or birth) species. Furthermore, humans are secondarily nidicolous in the sense that a period of post-fetal gestation within what Adolf Portmann termed the “social uterus” (i.e. cultural environment) must supplement their previous period of fetal gestation within the biological uterus.¹⁶ Only outside the biological uterus do humans achieve those features that especially mark them as distinctively human – upright posture, spoken language, and responsible action. The unfinished nature of human life at birth makes the extended period of sociocultural gestation both possible and necessary. It is possible because the human child is flexible and malleable enough to absorb and incorporate the components of its sociocultural worlds. It is necessary because without these influences humans would never acquire distinctively human traits. In other words, human biology remains insufficient for the formation of truly human creatures. It is only socialization into a particular culture that defines for us the acceptable forms of world and self-relationship.

Human dependence on culture arises from the same basic biological condition that makes it possible to create and fashion culture. The plasticity and malleability of human organism leaves people in a dire need of culture. The same plasticity leaves us free to construct a world we choose. In this sense, the source of necessity is the same as the source of freedom. The same is true of values, which arise already at the most basic levels of life, even if only human beings can recognize such values as moral requirements and develop meaningful responses to them. Life itself is already normative and teleological and aims at its own future.¹⁷ Even if unable to free themselves from their centered animal existence, humans can place themselves over against it – they are capable of imaginative detachment from locality and time, and are not only reflexive but also reflective creatures.¹⁸

A psychiatric perspective on history

Because of plasticity, diversity and indeterminacy, otherness and abnormality are part and parcel of human cultural development. It is therefore not uncommon among historians and psychiatrists to be concerned with questions of the impact of mental abnormality on culture and history, and to apply psychopathological concepts with the intention of understanding (at least some aspects of) the historical process. Viktor Frankl used to distinguish three historical epochs on the basis of its representative neurotic concerns and concomitant three stages in the development of psychoanalysis – Freudian, Adlerian and his own.¹⁹ Robins and Post argued that the concept of paranoia (applied by the authors in a psychoanalytic vein) may help us to understand 20th century mass atrocities. They claimed that the continuum of paranoid behaviors is a part of human nature that belongs to our evolutionary history with its occasionally destructive influences.²⁰ Even such a profoundly unsystematic work of anti-psychoanalytic social philosophy as *Anti-Oedipus* presented a quasi-universal history of the processes called de- and re-territorialization, which consisted of three major epochs (or social formations) and their representative figures (or “bodies”): the savage, the barbarian, and the civilized man.²¹

16) Adolf Portmann, *A Zoologist Looks at Humankind*, trans. Judith Schaefer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990).

17) Georges Canguilhem, *The Normal and The Pathological*, trans. Carolyn R. Fawcett (New York: Zone Books, 2007).

18) Helmuth Plessner, *Die Stufen des Organischen und der Mensch. Einleitung in die philosophische Anthropologie* (Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1975).

19) Viktor E. Frankl, *Psychotherapy and Existentialism. Selected Papers on Logotherapy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1968).

20) Robert S. Robins and Jerrold Post, *Political Paranoia: The Psychopolitics of Hatred* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).

21) Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R. Lane (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983).

More recently, an American psychiatrist Nassir Ghaemi envisioned a “new psychological history”, by which he meant one utilizing psychiatric concepts in the interpretation of history without pathologizing its subject matter.²² Ghaemi argued that certain abnormal traits may help to make good leaders, especially in the times of crisis.²³ He interpreted depressive qualities, such as those of Churchill, as leading towards a greater political realism, and, therefore, better predictions of the future. On the other hand, Ghaemi saw manic traits, such as those of Kennedy, as providing enhanced resilience²⁴. His overall point was that there is a deeper stigma anchored in our culture, which often prevents us from seeing the benefits of mental illness.

We agree with Ghaemi on principle. Further on in this paper, we argue that one should embrace the interpretative possibility that mental abnormality may entail certain functional advantages, which in turn may have great impact upon the course of history. As normal is not necessarily good, so abnormal is not necessarily bad. Following Schwartz’s and Wiggins’ typology of abnormal “existential types”²⁵ which is based upon the two criteria of role-playing and role-identification, we will reconsider their potential impact on the historical development of culture. Schwartz and Wiggins’ four types are agonomic, hypernomic, hyponomic, and idionomic, and we will metaphorically describe them as visionaries, builders, changers, and preservers, respectively. Agonomic types are very poor at both role-playing and role-identification. Hypernomic people over-identify with social roles and play these roles superbly. Hyponomic types, on the other hand, do not identify with social roles at all, but they are outstanding role-players. Finally, idionomic characters are unable to play the roles with which they strongly identify.

Table 1
Four existential types

	Visionaries (<i>agonomia</i>)	Builders (<i>hypernomia</i>)	Changers (<i>hyponomia</i>)	Preservers (<i>idionomia</i>)
Social performance	Poor role-playing and poor role-identification	Superb role-playing and superb role-identification	Superb role-playing and poor role-identification	Superb role-identification and poor role-playing
Historical function	Innovative	Conservative	Revolutionary	Antiquarian

22) Nassir Ghaemi, *A First-Rate Madness: Uncovering the Links Between Leadership and Mental Illness* (London: The Penguin Press, 2011).

23) Ghaemi’s examples included William T. Sherman, Winston Churchill, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and John F. Kennedy.

24) Note that, regarding Kennedy, the situation was complicated by his Addison’s disease and associated treatment including steroids, amphetamines, and barbiturates, all kept from public awareness. See Janet Maslin, “What Befits a Leader in Hard Times? An Intimate Knowledge of Insanity”, *The New York Times*, August 10, 2011; Thomas Mallon, “Are All of Our Leaders Mad?”, *The New York Times*, August 19, 2011.

25) Michael A. Schwartz and Osborne P. Wiggins, “The Concept of Pathology and Psychiatry’s Need for a Philosophy of Life,” in *Phenomenology 2010: Selected Essays from North America Vol. 5. Part 2: Phenomenology Beyond Philosophy*, ed. Michael Barber, Lester Embree and Thomas J. Nenon (Bucharest: Zeta Books, 2010), 311–323; Michael A. Schwartz and Osborne P. Wiggins, “Pathological Selves,” in *Exploring the Self: Philosophical and Psychopathological Perspectives on Self-Experience*, ed. Dan Zahavi (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2000), 257–277; Michael A. Schwartz and Osborne P. Wiggins, “Community and Society, Melancholy and Sociopathy,” in *Diversity and Community: An Interdisciplinary Reader*, ed. Philip Alperson (Malden, MA, UK, Blackwell, 2002), 231–247; Michael A. Schwartz and Osborne P. Wiggins, “Philosophical Anthropology and Psychiatry: Typus Melancholicus as a Human Disposition,” *Psychiatria et Neurologia Japonica*, 105, no. 5 (2003): 522–532.

The criteria of role-playing and role-identification enable a conceptualization of both normal and abnormal behaviors on a continuous scale, with visionaries, builders, changers, and preservers occupying the most extreme positions. If we associate each of these types with a particular mental illness, the visionaries will be closest to schizophrenia spectrum disorders, the builders to melancholia, the changers to anti-social personality, and the preservers to obsessive-compulsive disorder. It is not our intention to underline the negative or pathological qualities of these types. On the contrary, we want to understand them as human ways of being or “existential types” as defined by Alfred Kraus.²⁶ Therefore, not only we use these terms in a descriptive and non-pejorative sense, but also we aim at showing certain strengths associated with their functional abnormalities. Despite being not only statistically but also (at least for some) normatively abnormal, their extreme qualities entails certain adaptive advantages that can be appreciated only within a wider evolutionary-historical context. We therefore speculate that each of these types has a particular function to fulfill at a given time, which overall pertains to the adaptation of humans as a species. But in order to appreciate their positive side, we must leave the individualist perspective and take a bird’s eye view. It is because the features of each type, analogically to an individual organism that does not exist in isolation and constantly interacts with the environment, gain significance only within a culture. Seen from the perspective of different historical bio-psycho-socio-cultural contexts, even the most extreme qualities may appear as valuable and needed. For this very reason, they should not be a-priori pathologized, i.e. ultimately rendered unwanted in the human gene pool.

The rise and fall of cultures

By adding the extra factor of time, we will now distinguish the historical functions that the four existential types may play in a dynamically evolving historical world. The following sketch provides a possible framework for conceptualizing historical change that takes insanity into account. It presents a certain philosophy of history in the sense of a theory of historical process that is conceptualized in terms of the rise and fall of cultures. Traditionally, philosophy of history has dealt with changes in time on a grand scale. Today, it is common to distinguish speculative and critical philosophy of history.²⁷ Although all-encompassing models of the 19th and early 20th century have been obviously discredited today, the speculative task of philosophy of history has been replaced by more scientific, theory-based models, such as world-system analysis²⁸, to which the above mentioned psychiatric perspectives on history would also belong. The following outline is merely ideal-typical and its goal is rather to give a constructive perspective on the possible role of insanity in history than a scientific explanation *per se*.

At the very beginning or in between of historical epochs, there is a creation of something new – one is which highly creative agonomic thought processes and behaviors are likely to participate. An early 20th-century Polish psychiatrist, Jan Mazurkiewicz, argued that a relationship exists between primitive, magical-mythical thinking and schizophrenia, as in both pre-logical thinking associated with human creativity dominates over causal-logical thinking²⁹. More recently, a theory developed by Artur Dobosz posited that the structure of

26) Alfred Kraus, *A Sozialverhalten und Psychose Manisch-Depressiver. Eine existenz- und rollenanalytische Untersuchung* (Stuttgart: Ferdinand Enke Verlag, 1977).

27) Speculative philosophy of history used to provide all-encompassing models of historical development. Critical philosophy of history does not deal with historical process *per se*, but with historical narratives. It is not concerned with fathoming the nature of history, but with the epistemological task of understanding its narrative representations.

28) World-system analysis offers a clear explanation of the transition between the feudal and the capitalist worlds; Immanuel Wallerstein, *(I World-System Analysis: An Introduction* (Durham, London: Duke University Press, 2004).

29) Jan Mazurkiewicz, *Zarys psychiatrii psychofizjologicznej* (Warszawa: PZWL, 1980).

the expressions of schizophrenic patients through which their symptoms are revealed resembles the structure of mythical tales and the delusions and hallucinations of its heroes³⁰. One possible implication is that magical cultures were thoroughly schizophrenic, but since it was a norm to think then in what Dobosz calls the “metamorphic-anarchistic” mode, such a way of thinking did not constitute any abnormality. While we agree that agonomic thoughts and behaviors characteristic of the schizophrenia spectrum disorders are indeed anarchistic, and while we readily admit that by breaking up common sense relations between objects they can be exceptionally creative, we maintain that their creativity is not a defect of the rational (causal-logical) mind. Moreover, the abovementioned view suggests a possibility of a quasi-schizophrenic society, whereas our notion of visionaries implies their exceptionality within a given system (culture), the exceptionality that pertains to their innovative historical function. Therefore, seen against the background of the rise and transformation of cultures, an otherwise abnormal individual agonomia may contribute to the cultural development, especially at the times of change.

The deficit conception of schizophrenia has been criticized by, among others, Louis Sass, who argued that the disorder is radically different from primitivism.³¹ In Sass’ view, schizophrenia is a manifestation of hyperreflection, introversion, and propensity towards detachment from the world, which also leads to unconventional ideas and innovation, especially artistic innovation characteristic of modernism. Our view of the agonomic visionaries shares the anti-primitivistic stance of Sass’ theory and, to an extent, the idea of detachment from the world of the common sense. This detachment, in our case, concerns the rules of conduct regarding both performance and identification, but it does not require hyperreflexivity. A minimal level of identification with social norms combined with a minimal level of performance of social roles is responsible for the creative and potentially innovative function of the visionaries in the process of cultural change. Such creativity is utterly important at the times when old systems fall apart and new systems are not yet constituted. The visionaries are not simply creative according to some existing rules of the game. They are radically innovative beyond prevailing conventions and modes of behavior. To recall Sass’ theory once again, their creativity is not that of a romantic genius, whose irrational, instinctual, and passionate ideas lead to novelty. Their creativity is detached from the existing social rules and norms in a radical way.³² Hence, the innovation they can provide is also radical.

An example of such a radical innovation that established a wholly new system was the transfer between hunting-gathering and horticultural-pastoral societies.³³ This is not to say that the domestication of animals was rapid and insane. What this speculative example is supposed to illustrate is that such changes require a radically new and unprecedented way of imaginative thinking that normal (average) people were not capable of. Only the visionaries could break the continuity of previous development in the most unusual and un-thought-of way.

Yet, the visionaries lack qualities enabling them to perform the revolution themselves. As we observed earlier, a society of visionaries, who are imagining a new world against the many would not sustain itself. Building a new system requires, precisely, the builders, who in contradistinction to the visionaries lack an open future

30) Artur Dobosz, *Myślenie magiczno-mityczne a schizofrenia* (Bydgoszcz: Epigram, 2013).

31) Louis Sass, *Madness and Modernism: Insanity in the Light of Modern Art, Literature, and Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

32) Louis Sass, “Schizophrenia, modernism, and ‘creative imagination’: On creativity and psychopathology,” *Creativity Research Journal* 13, no. 1 (2000–2001): 55–74.

33) According to a comprehensive and widely used typology of societies, they developed along the historical trajectory from hunting and gathering, through horticultural and pastoral, agrarian, to industrial and post-industrial societies. This typology constitutes a certain philosophy of history in the aforementioned theory-based sense. The distinguishing, common sense criterion is the primary means of subsistence (Patrick Nolan, Gerhard Lenski, *Human Societies. An Introduction to Macrosociology*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

and are fixed upon repeating the past. The builders are hyper-normal, that is highly conventional people who overidentify with social roles and perform these roles superbly. The hypernomics exemplify the so-called *typus melancholicus* that is vulnerable to depression³⁴. They follow their social roles no matter how personally unsatisfied they are. For the very same reason, society as a whole depends on them. They are fully committed to maintaining a given system, but they are unable to transform it. When everything goes in a predictable, systematic way, they are mentally fine. They perform a conservative historical function of maintaining a given society's standards and norms. A modern example of the builders is hypernomic bureaucrats – hundreds of thousands of clerks who scrupulously follow the orders of their superiors and expect the same from their subordinates as well as ordinary citizens. The bureaucrats are in need of regulating all aspects of life. They have literally built the modern state and economic administrative apparatus, and they still uphold its overwhelming power. They thrive in strictly ordered normative circumstances, but start to feel guilty when not following the instructions. Indeed, the builders are exceptionally reliable, but their major limitation is that they are unable to change the rules of a social game that they are playing with such a great devotion.

In that capacity, they must be replaced by those who are able to play social roles without identifying with them, that is the changers. It is because the changers are capable of bringing the existing rules of a social game, invented by the visionaries and manufactured by the builders, to an extreme. The changers are risk-taking, attachment-lacking, and they find it easy to move on. They can, in a way, “deconstruct” the system from the inside. The changers are creative, much like the innovators, but their creativity is of a different type. The changes that they propose often take the form of a creative destruction. Their historical function is therefore revolutionary. There are no better historical times in which the changers can flourish than our own, post-modern period. Their hyponomic personality traits make them almost predestined for success.³⁵ That is to say, when the rules of the social game are shifting rapidly, the changers' inward distance from their roles paired with their outstanding role performance enables them to constantly reinvent themselves. Both evil and good can come out of their behavior, but it would be foolish (evolutionarily and culturally speaking) to deny that we need creative destruction, even if its excess always creates harms. Real psychopaths and sociopaths are often destroyers, but they can also create through destruction by checking the limits of what is possible within a given game. Because of that, the changers are usually situated at the peak of development of a particular culture – at its climatic pinnacle. After their intervention, a culture starts to fall. They are unable to stop this process and save what is valuable from the previous epoch.

This is where the idionomic preservers come in with their historical antiquarian function. A good example of the preservers is Christian monks who appeared on the historical scene during the times of chaos and anarchy separating the ancient and the mediaeval times. These monks retreated into monasteries and spent their lives trying to preserve whatever there was to preserve from the shattered Roman Empire, painstakingly coping the ancient philosophical and scientific manuscripts, aiming to rescue knowledge and values of a world long gone. By doing so, they raised a wholly new world, fixated upon repeating the past. They identified themselves with it, which explains the rigidity and relative inflexibility of the mediaeval worldview. Clearly, without them, we would have no Greek and Roman literature just as we would have no knowledge of Hippocratic medi-

34) Hubertus Tellenbach, *Melancholy* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1972); Michael A. Schwartz and Osborne P. Wiggins, “Philosophical Anthropology and Psychiatry: Typus Melancholicus as a Human Disposition,” *Psychiatria et Neurologia Japonica*, 105, no. 5 (2003): 522–532.

35) Taking advantage of the concept of narrative identity instead of the role-playing and role-identification criteria, Thomas Fuchs has argued that it is actually the borderline personality that is the most suitable for the postmodern age (Thomas Fuchs, “Fragmented selves: temporality and identity in borderline personality disorder,” *Psychopathology* 40, no. 6 (2007): 379–87).

ciné. The historical role of the preservers can be also exemplified by obsolete technologies in general. After the invention of the printing press by Guttenberg and the wholly new system of book production built upon his discovery, copying books by hand became unreasonable and old-fashioned. Analogically, the digital revolution of the late 20th century made printed copies obsolete for certain purposes, such as saving storage space. Nowadays, computer technologies creatively destroy the traditional printing techniques in a similar vein to the latter destroying handwritten manuscripts five hundred years earlier. Yet, despite this fact, there are still preservers, who will cherish the beauty and the quality of the pages written by hand. They are not necessarily obsessive-compulsive, but much closer to high role identification and much further away from being good role players than the majority of their contemporaries.

These are specific kinds of contributions that people who embody the extreme qualities of human species' diversity make to the development of culture. They may not or may be mentally ill. When a given culture or cultural achievement comes to an end, erected by the builders and presumably destroyed by the changers, an opportunity to start something completely new appears on the horizon. For that to be accomplished, however, we need some new visionaries who are not bound by previous rules and norms of conduct and can provide a fresh start. In the meantime, some preservers will remain to value and protect the remnants of the disappearing world.

Conclusion

The foregoing, speculative examples are not at all exhaustive and are merely intended to illustrate the informative potential of the presented model. It is beyond the scope of this paper to provide the model's empirical validity. It should suffice to say that the model provides a culture-centered perspective on abnormality and enables us to appreciate the culture-producing and transformative power of some of the extremes within the diversity of human beings. We can thus conceptualize a large-scale historical change in a manner that is appreciative of our species' biological and cultural diversity. As far as the question of the structure of the historical process is concerned, the model we propose is circular-linear.³⁶ At the same time, it does assume some extent of both linear progress and regress, but only within a given circle of change. It is a progress that would not be possible without a deviation from the norm. We should, therefore, embrace and appreciate the diversity and plurality of humanity in both sanity and insanity, extending beyond the presented existential types, at the very least for the very sake of our own survival. It is because, in the face of the unpredictability of future socio-political circumstances, the protection of human diversity makes us better prepared for the unknown future.

36) William, H. Dray, *Philosophy of History*, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1964).

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