The Imperfection of Reality as a Motor for Progress

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What does one mean by *human reality*, this habitat constructed by our species' labor? What is the reason behind its dynamics? What clues does it offer about our concept of progress?

This variegated set that constitutes our contemporary human reality has been constructed over time, throughout millions of years: from the remote origins of the first hominids all the way up to the hallucinating vertigo under which runs the flux of our current times; from the rudimentary tools, weapons, bowls, and ornaments produced by our first ancestors, up to the most sophisticated artefacts, monumental cities, outstanding artworks, and modern systems of coexistence. A sinuous trajectory oriented toward making our existence safer, more comfortable, and more efficient.

This formulation of validity is as general as it is imprecise, since the goals mentioned above can be understood in the most diverse ways according to each geographic and historical context – let alone according to each person's subjectivity. However, this very formulation also contains a more audacious correlate – if we dare to imagine, on a level of abstraction of cosmic dimensions, the machinery that moves the **progress vector** of our human reality. It is that correlate that constitutes the central proposal of this note: I suggest that said machinery's propelling force comes from its inherent **imperfection**, which is irreparable for it was **constructed** by the also imperfect man.

But actually… an imperfect reality is, intrinsically, **perfectible**; a decisive quality since it obstinately pushes us forward, beyond a supposed perfection. A quality that, such as a shifty oasis, changes its mirage every time we believe to have reached it. Even if this concept of **'forward'** or **'progress'** constitutes – like every future – an unfathomable unknown. *Perfectible*, on the other hand, is a more modest term, since it protects us from the dangerous promises of perfection in the shape of utopias – be them religious or ideological. After all, as our Western world became secularized, religious beliefs softened, and intolerant, acritical dogmatism shifted toward ideological beliefs. These utopias have, throughout history, led humanity to disastrous cataclysms. In the last century, Freud (1930; 1932), who knew the human soul better than most, warned us of the doubtful viability of the 'communist paradise.' Almost simultaneously, we were the abashed and impotent witnesses of the sinister Nazi conjuncture that planned the depuration of 'inferior' human beings in order to distil a 'superior race.' Even today, we still see innumerable people submerged in extreme poverty, servile social subjection, political cruelty, and misogyny. Such elements are strongly embraced by anachronical religious and ideological fanatics 'hypnotized' by pathetic and despotic leaders or preachers.

On the other hand, the aforementioned asymptotic imperfection has also been the motor of a vigorous bustle that has constructed our present world over tens of millennia; a world full of imperfections, but equally full of uncountable material and intangible goods that, over time, have decanted, forming this extraordinary patrimony that we enjoy today. Monumental works of engineering and architecture, substantial scientific, technological, and artistic resources, and, above all, systems of human relations based on institutionally agreed pacts that promote and exercise the protection of individual and collective freedoms and rights. Such arrangements encourage and facilitate the development of personal capabilities and talents for the benefit of the community and the individual. It is a world where authority is exercised in a way to reduce the risk of regression to the

system of submission under the almighty and tyrannical father of the primitive herd (Freud, 1912/3).

With this concise enumeration of successes achieved by our species, I draft a prudent compliment to imperfection. Additionally, I intuit that such triumphs that marvel us, and which we value, will never be enough, nor distributed in a reasonably equitable way. It is prudent too to counterbalance this dynamic with a few warnings demanded by the unexpected eruption of the (until now uncontrollable) Covid-19 pandemic. The attempt to control this pandemic demonstrates in a dramatic way that the superior power of nature indicated by Freud (1930) continues to impose itself. It also forces us to differentiate said control from 'depredation.' And, at the same time, it invites us to pay attention to global themes such as climate change and environmental contamination. This way, we can soothe – albeit illusorily – this unfathomable unknown that is the future.

References

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