

LAST CHAPTER FROM:

Bart Nooteboom:

BEYOND HUMANISM: THE FLOURISHING OF LIFE, SELF AND OTHER

Palgrave-MacMillan, 2012

Chapter 9 Otherhumanism

In this chapter lines from previous chapters come together, about the relationship between self and other, concerning freedom, cognition, language and ethics. They converge in an argument for what I call 'otherhumanism', in search of transcendence that is immanent, within life, and horizontal, between people. The self needs the other for the flourishing of life; for the highest possible level of freedom, liberation from narcissism, transcendence in rising above the self, cognition, language and ethics, in their mutual connection. The only hereafter that we have is what we leave behind in the world, and it is part of the flourishing of life to contribute to it. This chapter is about the arguments for otherhumanism, and how it might work. In the subsequent, last chapter I turn around to ask whether otherhumanism is not only desirable but also viable, given limitations of humanity and society

Arguments for otherhumanism

Why otherhumanism? How does it work? In the first chapter and Chapter 3 of this book I indicated why we should try to escape from the egotism and narcissism that plague our society. In Chapter 2 I indicated why in my view religion with a God does not give a solution. I made a distinction between theistic religion or 'godservice' ('Gottesdienst' in German, 'godsdiens' in Dutch) and religion in a wider sense, defined as belief in a tie of the human being to something supernatural or superhuman or beyond the self. One can have a religion without God. One can have immanent transcendence, from within life.

Religion with a god as creator, all powerful, all knowing, providential and benevolent, and with a personal afterlife for the self, give solace for suffering, vulnerability, and anguish of mortality, but at a high price of hypocrisy and suppression of life forces (as Nietzsche showed), misuse in political manipulation, and fundamentalism that leads to imperialism, fanaticism and terror. It lends itself for an unholy alliance with a biologically rooted instinct of mistrust and hatred of outsiders, of people who do not belong to one's group. As Levinas argued, theistic religion distracts us from our responsibility for the other human being. It allows us to shove responsibility onto God and to reach across the other to the comfort of our personal relation to God. Godservice is based on revelation and then requires no argument or evidence so that it is inherently dogmatic, and it strands in logic (in the Chapter 4 I argued that the move to ground Christianity in logic, since the 13th century, was a mistake). Can godservice be reasonable, open to argument against doctrine, leave room for doubt and suspension of belief? God and a hereafter distract us from the need to make the best of the only life that we get. In the absence of God and hereafter only the other human being remains as a source of transcendence, presenting a hereafter in the form of posterity. The question then

is whether and how people can be good without help from God. God can help, but is he indispensable?

In the chapter on Levinas (Chapter 8) I indicated that after his denial of God in any customary sense his account of the relation between self and other still has a religious tone in that the other is seen as higher and impossible to fully grasp and in that sense carries a 'trace' of God, an echo of the 'voice of God'.

Godservice is not the only source of fanaticism and violence. Those are also found in the wake of political ideologies. The common source of evil in my view lies in Platonic dreams of the absolute, universal, eternal and pure, beyond the messiness and chaos of reality and humanity in the world. Those also induce awe and inspiration and a sense of transcendence, and are therefore tremendously alluring, and are all the more dangerous for it. Adopting those absolutes, and claiming privileged access to them, one sees people that do not endorse one's ideals as not just being wrong but being outside the good and hence evil and requiring extermination to preserve the purity of the absolute. That is why I prefer a more Aristotelian view.

In Chapters 1 and 2 I indicated that the Enlightenment with its universalistic pretensions, such as the notion of the universal human being, reason, universal laws and principles of order, universal good and universal ethical rules, also neglects the diversity of humanity and subjected society to universal ideals by which it became vulnerable to totalitarian ideologies. If the spiritual is associated with the universal, and the universal with the eternal that escapes death, then it is a small step to associate diversity with death, which we want to avoid, so that diversity should be eliminated. At present we see how the universal, the great equalizer, the box in which all must fit, locks people up and reduces their identity to the stereotype of a Moroccan, Turk, Muslim or Jew.

We should face and accept death in order to accept and value the non-universal, temporary, uniqueness of specific people in specific conditions. Perhaps we should recognize that literature, with its art of the specific, takes precedence over philosophy with its dreams of universality.

In Chapter 3 I gave an account of the history of the disconnected self (as Charles Taylor called it) on the basis of Taylor's work, to see what we are up against. Our preoccupation with the self is the outcome of a variety of lines of development, in the Reformation, Renaissance, Enlightenment and Romanticism, and the result is deeply etched into our Western culture and not easy to remove.

From Chapter 4 I began to give answers. In Chapter 4, on freedom of the will, I argued that the self needs others to achieve the highest possible level of freedom: the freedom to escape from the prejudices of the self about what it should want. A paradox here is that one must surrender some autonomy and self-directedness to be sufficiently open to the other, in order to reach a higher degree of freedom. Alone, by oneself, that is difficult to achieve: one needs an external source to get away.

In Chapter 5, on cognition, I argued for an 'embodied cognition' where, counter to Descartes, body and mind, feelings and rationality are intertwined, and cognition and identity are 'constructed' in interaction with the physical, social and cultural environment. As a result, people will differ in their perception, knowledge and values to the extent that they have developed along different life paths, in different environments. That *cognitive distance* makes people diverse and unique. Such difference yields a problem, in lack of mutual understanding, but also an opportunity. If objective

knowledge is impossible then testing our insights on what ‘others have made of it’ is the only chance we have to correct our errors. The other is needed not only to escape from phantom certainties. Also in case of scepticism the other may be needed to be sceptical of our scepticism. In that chapter I also summarized a theory of discovery as a cycle in which application of existing knowledge and competence to novel contexts, with new challenges and opportunities, can lead to new knowledge and competence. That was originally inspired by the idea from the developmental psychologist Piaget that by ‘assimilating’ experience into existing cognitive structures one can arrive at their transformation (‘accommodation’). That insight was applied for a deeper insight in how communication, by fitting each other’s different insights into each other’s cognitive structures can lead to their transformation. That yields a more developed perspective on the importance of the other for learning by the self.

In Chapter 6, on language, I used Wittgenstein’s argument of the impossibility of a private language. Meaning not only enables communication but also requires it. The self needs the other to establish meaning and for making sense. Even for stepping away from established meaning, in poetry, discovery and philosophy, one needs others to know what it is one is stepping away from. Important also is the old problem of universals. Universals are needed to achieve generalization and logical and causal inference, and, using that, prediction, design and planning. They are also needed for rules of justice. But they carry the danger of neglect and subjugation of individual cases, of individual people with specific endowments in specific situations. Universals derive their meaning from specific cases and as abstractions from them are only temporary, forming a platform for application in novel contexts by which universals and their meanings shift. This perspective on the formation and change of meaning connects with the cognitive theory of the cycle of discovery discussed in Chapter 5. Knowledge and meaning change by application in novel contexts. The implication is that semantics, the theory of meaning and truth, is subordinate to pragmatics, the use of language in specific contexts. Another fundamental point was that our language is shot through with metaphors, in which we derive categories of thought and concepts in language from our primary experience with things in daily life. That has been etched in us during evolution, or so I propose. But those categories, derived from objects and their mechanics in space and time, are fundamentally misleading when applied to more abstract notions of knowledge, feelings, language, experience, identity and morality. We should face the possibility that the whole of philosophy may be one great deception by ill-fitting metaphors that have misdirected our thought.

In Chapter 7 I discussed Nietzsche. His significance for this book is threefold. First, as a warning not to revert, with a philosophy of the other, to a morality that is hypocritical and suppresses the forces of life in discovery, creation and creative destruction. Second, as a source of inspiration, in Nietzsche’s indomitable endeavour of criticism without limit, the demasking of prejudice, and transcendence of the self. In Nietzsche I also encounter the suspicion of universals that neglect or suppress individuals, which I share, as discussed in the chapter on language. Third, I value Nietzsche as an opponent and polar opposite, as a position to push away from, in Nietzsche’s (mostly implicit) assumption that the self can rise above itself, like a baron von Münchhausen pulling himself from the swamp by his own hair, without the need for any other.

In Chapter 8 I discussed Levinas, as a polar opposite to Nietzsche, in a radical opening of the self to the other human being. For Levinas the other replaces God as source of transcendence. According to my interpretation the resistance of Levinas in his earlier work (*Totality and the infinite*) to thinking in terms of the existence of things in the world (*ontology*) seems comparable, though not identical, to my account of the ‘object bias’ in our thought, the deeply rooted inclination to also see experience that is not related to objects in terms of objects and their movement in space and time, as discussed in Chapter 6. The danger of that is, in particular, that we see the other human being, or his knowledge, as an object that we can manipulate and appropriate. In his later work (*Other than being*) Levinas discusses the tension between what is said in language (*le dit*) and the saying (*le dire*). According to my interpretation this is comparable to my discussion of the tension between universals and individuals, discussed in Chapter 6. We say things in terms of universals but thereby freeze the process in which meaning develops in the saying, in the use of meaning that shifts meaning, and thereby neglect the individuals hidden behind the universals and their importance for the shift of meanings. In exiting from Plato’s cave to contemplate universal ideas we become estranged from humanity.

Central, in this book, is the position that Levinas takes in the relation between self and other. He is extremely radical. Ethics is primary philosophy. The other makes an appeal to the self to take unconditional responsibility for the suffering of the other, and this takes precedence over cognition and identity. That is not reasoned from any point of departure, goal or obligation of the self but precedes any deliberation. In his earlier work the other is seen as a source of escape from the self that is ill at ease in its being locked up in the self. This point is fundamental and I adopt it from Levinas: the other as source of transcendence of the self.

In sum, my argument for otherhumanism is as follows. Any hereafter as life after death is an illusion. The hereafter is not you yourself but the people and their environment that you leave behind. If you want to make your life worthwhile and dedicate yourself to the hereafter then the only way is dedication to others and to the society of the future. That can be done on many levels, of individuals (children, grandchildren, family, friends), of organizations or institutions (school, business, charity) and of society as a whole (culture, science, politics). Dedication to others is not at the expense of yourself and life. The self needs others to escape from illusory certainties as well as doubt, to achieve the highest possible level of freedom, to achieve its potential, to develop and transcend itself, and thereby to utilize the unique gift of life. The other is needed for us to escape from the narcissism that is characteristic of our time, by showing and making us accept our limitations, to deflate our self delusion, to surrender the urge to manipulate others, to fill the emptiness of our souls with others than chimera’s of ourselves, and to derive satisfaction from the space we allow for others and from our contributions to their development. This leads to a notion of the flourishing of life that goes beyond the life of the self not in a claim to any absolute, universal good beyond the world but in participation and contribution to the flourishing of others, during and after our life.

How about arguments against otherhumanism? I turn to that in the next, final chapter.

The good life

I do not believe in a morality ordained by any God, but I do subscribe to a form of ethics. Ethics is about what the good life and good conduct are, and that question goes back to the ancient Greeks and Romans (and beyond). I do want to talk about morality, about right and wrong, and about justice, but as argued also by Taylor (2011) morality makes sense only as part of an ethics: a should is acceptable and understood when conducive to a good. I take that to be fairly evident. What is happiness (*eudaimonia*), and what is the role of virtue in that? According to Epicurus and his followers seeking happiness is itself virtuous. According to the Stoics only virtue yields true happiness and for them virtue is life according to reason, suppressing emotion as a source of tribulation. According to Kant virtue and happiness are separate categories that can both be sought but do not coincide.

Search for the good life has been blamed for being self-absorbed and elitist. It is seen as elitist in its tendency to focus on spiritual or intellectual activity that is supposedly inaccessible to the lower educated. I doubt that the latter is the case. I think that ‘simple’ people often have a better sense of the spiritual than highly educated people. I admit, however, that with Aristotle the notion was elitist: he assumed a hierarchy of beings with different potential, and enlightenment accessible only to few. I assume that every human being in principle has that potential. That is why paying tax for education is part of the good life. Education is part of the good life, as a goal in itself, apart from its instrumental value for individuals in raising future income, and that is part of the reason why it is justified to pay for much of it out of tax. Concerning the accusation of self-absorption, this book goes in the opposite direction, arguing that an intellectual and spiritual focus in the good life requires other-directedness.

It is a long tradition in philosophy, with Epicurus and his followers, to a greater extent with the stoics (such as Seneca), and later especially with Schopenhauer, not to seek happiness in pleasure and excitement, but in the avoidance of pain, danger, risk, ambition, and dependence on others. That is the miserable ideal of what Schopenhauer himself called the ‘half life’ (in his *Aphorisms for wisdom of life* 2010). According to him life is in the grip of a will whose satisfaction is never reached. Every time we experience pleasure there is a new desire and if desires are ever satisfied we fall into deep boredom. The only happiness that can be achieved lies in the avoidance of danger and dependence on others. The blind are happy because they are not bothered by all that can be seen, Schopenhauer says (also in the *Aphorisms*).

I do agree with Schopenhauer where he says that we should not obsess about what we don’t have and we should count our blessings of pains we are saved from, and that boredom can best be relieved in spiritual, artistic, intellectual activity. But it is nonsense that every pleasure should lead to the pursuit of further insatiable desire. One can enjoy in moderation, rest its pursuit and later enjoy it anew. Here I sooner follow Aristotle: everything in moderation. But also Nietzsche, to some extent. Ambition and entrepreneurship carry the risk of failure and danger, but also the chance of new possibilities and insights, and suffering also is a basis for learning. One has to take risk in striving to fulfil the potential of one’s life, especially since it is the only life one gets. And that I also find in Aristotle.

I do not agree with Aristotle and Nietzsche where they, like Schopenhauer, the stoics and many others, claim that one is happy in so far as one is self-sufficient, in no need of

others. Schopenhauer goes so far to say that there is freedom only in loneliness. But that in my view is the freedom of a prison one has locked oneself into. Especially in the craving for spiritual and intellectual enlightenment one needs the opposition from others. I do grant that the more knowledge, experience and insight one has built up, the more difficult it becomes to still find someone who can offer something new. However, that loneliness is not something you seek but something that befalls you. You still need others but cannot find them. Dialogue then becomes a one-sided dialogue with the work of dead thinkers.

It is customary to distinguish three kinds of ethics. One is virtue ethics, following Aristotle. According to Aristotle virtues have no other goal than themselves, form part of happiness, are not instruments for something else. I leave aside for the moment what the source of those virtues is: human nature or some transcendent deity or spirit. Here the good is an activity, such as work, production, and creation, helping others. Aristotle allows for multiple goods, not one single principle, and those goods may and often do come into conflict with each other. Doing good is also complicated by the fact that conditions for action, motives and preferences vary and develop, which causes a great deal of unpredictability in actions and events. As a result of multiple goods and unpredictability life frequently presents dilemmas.

Virtue for Aristotle is doing what is fitting. The virtue of the eye is to see well. For humanity it is especially activity of the mind. The good life and happiness consist in development of the potential one has, especially spiritual potential, and the striving for excellence in the realization of potential and in the use of reason. Material conditions and pleasure are also part the good life, but in moderation.

There are multiple virtues. For example, in life we are confronted with difficult choices between liberty and justice, justice and mercy, self-interest and altruism, rules and exceptions (cf. Taylor 2011, p. 348). A leading principle for the trade-off between them is moderation, in finding a middle between extremes. It is not a-priori clear that one can trade off virtues against each other to arrive at a single measure of utility or consistent preferences.¹ For Aristotle courage, moderation and justice were core virtues. I believe different times and circumstances require the prominence of different virtues. My preference is for virtues of benevolence, extending benefit of the doubt, openness, sincerity, commitment, moral courage, justice and, (following Aristotle and Spinoza and Nietzsche), the realization of human potential, human flourishing. Like Spinoza and Nietzsche I do not see virtue as ordained by any God or other transcendent being or spirit. I do think that the human being has a craving for a transcendent, for something larger and beyond the self and its life. I think that can be found in nature and in humanity, in awe for the other being, and in dedication to a hereafter in the form of what we leave behind after life.

In my view the key criterion of virtue is contribution to the flourishing of life, with the crucial proviso that flourishing of the life of the self requires and to a large extent consists in the flourishing of others.

For justice I do not follow the contractarian tradition (Hobbes, Locke, Kant, Rawls), for reasons indicated earlier. Justice goes beyond a balance of mutual advantage between agents of roughly equal power and capacities. Apart from 'technical' problems in dilemmas of collective choice, justice becomes salient especially when there is lack of reciprocity and asymmetrical power. I prefer the 'capabilities tradition' (Nussbaum 2006)

where justice entails that people have access to what is needed for human dignity and human flourishing, for realizing human virtues. Nussbaum lists the following: life, health, bodily integrity, senses/imagination/thought (by means of education, freedom of expression, freedom of religion), emotions, practical reason (conception of the good), affiliation (empathy, respect), other species (concern for animals and nature), play, control over one's environment (political participation, property, employment, entering relationships). I would not want to commit myself to precisely this list, and I can imagine variations, but it gives a good indication. One solution to the problem of universals that Nussbaum offers is that while the right to a minimum of each of these capabilities is universal, the extent to which people can realize these capabilities and the ways in which access to them can be created vary with individuals and the situations they are in.

Beyond individual capabilities justice requires solidarity. In present complex societies, with extreme division of labour and connected markets, tensions between private and collective interests, unpredictable and unintended consequences of complex interactions between people and adverse effects of markets, people are subjected to systems they have little influence on and that are the product of collective conduct, so that there is a collective duty to help victims of the system.ⁱⁱ The system can also serve as a platform for individual development, profit and flourishing but people should realize that in their success they stand on ground that is drenched with the blood of previous generations battling for rights and freedom and use a system built by the genius and labour of previous generations. Neither success nor failure are completely one's own doing.

A second stream in ethics is oriented towards the consequences of conduct, such as the greatest good for the greatest number of people. According to Epicurus, later the *utilitarians*, such as Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), virtue is no more than an instrument for that. For the utilitarians it was the greatest utility for the greatest number of people, with the implication that individual utility must sometimes be sacrificed for the good of all. That also applied to Adam Smith (1723-90), who is seen as the father of economic science. Later economists mostly reduced utility to self-interest of the autonomous, disconnected self, without altruism and regardless of interests of others than the self. Utility or pleasure can be material but also spiritual, in knowledge or art, in friendship or pleasure in the happiness of others or in ethical behaviour. Spinoza was a consequentialist in that he also saw ethics as oriented towards the natural striving of the human being towards maintenance, realization and perfection of the self (*conatus*). I go along with that, though I stress the realization and perfection of the self, and I maintain, not in line with Spinoza and Nietzsche, that for that we need others, and that next to a natural urge towards self-maintenance (Spinoza) and expression or manifestation of the self (Nietzsche) we also have natural urge towards social legitimacy and altruism, within limits dictated by survival. This, I propose, provides a basis for the virtues I suggested before.

In sum, there are three problems with utilitarianism. First, there are multiple dimensions of utility (here we meet the multiple goods of Aristotle), which are not necessarily commensurable, reducible to a single unified measure. As a result, preferences may not be transitive, for example. Second, self-interest is not so easily aligned with collective interest, in problems of collective choice. Third, people do not naturally strive only for self-interest.

Are virtues, then, ends in themselves or tools for human flourishing? I propose that they are both. Virtues of benevolence, extending benefit of the doubt, openness, sincerity, commitment, moral courage, and justice contribute to human flourishing but are also part of that flourishing.

A third stream in ethics is oriented towards universal moral duties, rights and rules (*deontology*), to which one must adhere regardless of the consequence and which apply equally for all people under the same circumstances. One can strive for happiness but that does not coincide with virtue. The great example is the ethics of Immanuel Kant. One does good because on the ground of rational deliberation and in freedom one finds that it should be so. One can find satisfaction in it but that is not the reason for doing it. According to the *categorical imperative* an action, say cheating for profit, is to be judged good only if one would want it to apply as a universal rule.

Following Aristotle I am sceptical concerning universal rules that apply regardless of differences between people and regardless of conditions. I accept the principle that one may at times use people as means to ends but must always also see them as ends in themselves. But if a psychopath threatens to murder my family must I then also see him as an end in himself?

I do appreciate that universality of a moral rule serves to preclude the ducking of responsibility by claiming special conditions, and to avoid cronyism and discrimination that apply rules selectively. I do accept, in particular, that justice requires laws and rights that apply regardless of status or position. However, what is the scope of the qualification that a rule should apply to everyone ‘under similar conditions’? Are conditions ever completely similar? Does this include knowledge, experience, capabilities? If it does, the rule applies differently to different people after all. If it does not, the rule will not always be just. There is always a need for interpretation and judgement according to unique conditions. Legal and moral laws are not laws of mathematics.

Were universal human rights applied to Khadafi during the military intervention in Libya? Was it possible to do so? Surely, the aim of protecting the population was mixed with a thirst for retribution. And with political expediency. Was the intervention justified only if it could be raised to the status of a general rule? Should it then also be applied to Al-Assad in Syria? So far it has not been because the conditions there were different: more collateral damage due to a denser population, political risks in the delicate situation in the Middle East. Would that hesitation concerning Syria have been a good reason not to intervene in Libya?

Justice is never fully guaranteed. Judges have discretionary space. There may be tribunals of own conscience or a formal or informal community that judges deviations and allows for special pleading. While laws lay down minimal requirements for justice people have the discretion to go further than required. There may be principles that guide debate, but not universal rules (Neiman 2009, p. 214). Universality may be a valid principle but it should allow for special pleading and judgement according to circumstance. A rule when applied yields a ruling, an end of judgement, while a principle, as the word says, yields a beginning, in this case a beginning of debate.

Universal rules become particularly problematic under the following conditions. First, how they play out and are to be weighed against each other depends on individuals and their circumstances. Second, as elaborated by Martha Nussbaum (in her *Fragility of goodness* 1986) Aristotle leaves room for the tragedy that a good person may do a bad

thing because conditions leave room only for a choice between two bads, as illustrated by classical Greek tragedies. Agamemnon had no other choice than that between his daughter to which he had paternal responsibilities and the army for which he was responsible as its commander. What use is the categorical imperative here?

Neiman (2009) does not believe (any more than I do) in an essentialist, closed definition of evil (or anything else), but one of the characterizations of evil that she gives (p. 337) is a deliberate neglect or even denial of the principle that harm to innocent bystanders must be avoided, by which violence against people becomes as random or indiscriminate as natural disasters. She recognizes that suicide terrorists may be motivated by ideals, and indicates that one can never know with certainty what people's motives are, so that people may never be judged as evil, but she condemns their actions as evil. But what if those fanatics have a different view of innocence, and see the bystanders as also responsible for what they see as evil? I am not condoning their actions here but I am merely trying to be coherent in my attempt to understand them. I doubt that the given characterization of evil is adequate. The holocaust was not random but fairly precisely targeted at especially Jews. In my view at least part of evil lies in dehumanization, no longer seeing people as human. I am sure Neiman agrees on this. Here, in contrast with Neiman my fear of universality is that it tends to neglect individuality, to erase the individual, thus becoming part of evil. This gives another, perhaps better, account of evil from idealism, from religion or political ideology. Universalism can be used to fight evil but also to perpetrate it. Evil may also arise from cowardice, in following authority while knowing it to be evil, or from following role models that were thought or assumed to be good.

The Aristotelian virtue of realizing potential resonates in Nietzsche, which somewhat misleadingly he calls *will to power*, especially realization of the potential of human spirit, which also gives joy (cf. Nietzsche's *gay science*). With Levinas I find the virtue of empathy and altruism, in orientation to the other.

It is impossible to be an adequate finite being in the face of an absolute being such as God. We can never live up to Him. In Nietzsche's analysis of guilt (in his *Genealogy of morality* 1988), will to power in its external manifestation is blocked by rules of morality and then turns inwards against the self, tormenting it, and the perversity of that is that we see it as justified given our incapacity to fulfil our duty to God (Janaway 2007, p. 137).

If we now replace God by the other human being, as source of self-transcendence, we have a better chance of behaving adequately. The advantage also is that this other can respond, be heard and understood. Dialogue replaces prayer. However, the other cannot be fully grasped and that is for the good. Some see it as liberating that in contrast with God the other can never fully grasp us. Because we cannot fully grasp the other he/she can continue to surprise us, and we can never have the pretension to fully absorb or appropriate the other. Those insights I derive from Levinas, if I bend his hyperboles into ellipses a bit. This is, I think, what Levinas means when he sees the other as 'infinite' or 'holy'. But we can, in contrast with what Nietzsche claims, understand the other to some extent, and often adequately, if we develop and exercise our empathy a bit. There is always cognitive distance but it is not infinite.

With Nietzsche I want to avoid that benevolence or altruism become such a high demand that few can satisfy it, which suppresses the self and becomes an excuse for lack of daring and enterprise and can burst outside in frustration and violence. Benevolence is

not only, not even in the first place a duty but an opportunity, and to that Nietzsche was blind.

Nietzsche was right that empathy is not perfect because we can never fully know the other, but that is no reason to leave the other aside, as Nietzsche seems to think, but precisely a reason to orient oneself toward the other as a source of insight, ethically and cognitively, precisely because he/she is never completely known and therefore can always tell us something that we would not have thought up ourselves. Nietzsche nevertheless is right that empathy can never be complete, never turns into full identification. And where empathy reaches its limit we must extend the benefit of the doubt, we must resist the temptation to discard the unknown and to smear the stain of distrust. Especially because we must resist the instinctive urge to distrust and reject others outside our own circle. I will return to that instinct later, in Chapter 10. In contrast to God but equal to others we are imperfect. We have a right and a practical necessity, in contrast perhaps with Levinas, to be selective in our association with others. Yet, no matter how improbable it may seem that another has something to say to us, that possibility always exists. That yields a requirement for a fundamental respect and readiness to open oneself to any other human being. And there I may approach something deontological, Kantian. This principle weighs heavily and is not easily shoved aside. However, even this is not absolute.

I go along with Levinas in the idea that if one were to take the self and current understanding as a point of departure one can no longer practise the openness needed to escape from existing meanings and identities. I also go along with Levinas in the idea that approach to the other can never be complete and there will always remain distance between self and other. One will never fully grasp the other. Acceptance of this impossibility is an ethical prerequisite. If it were possible then that would entail an end to the significance of the other, used up if it were if one merges with the other. This is reminiscent of Pascal's argument for the inscrutability of God (*deus absconditus*): We must know enough about Him to follow Him but if we knew all of Him there would no longer be a need to follow Him. The other now replaces God and must for the same reason not be fully comprehensible, scrutable (*alter absconditus*). In that sense there is no merging, no mutual absorption of self and other. The potential of the other is never exhausted, the other is never done, and in that sense he/she is infinite, whereby our need for the other has no end. Also there is not an equilibrium, a balance, of giving and receiving, reciprocity. The giving occurs without expectation, let alone a demand in advance that there will be reciprocity.

However, I do not go along with the lack of limit in the surrender to the other that Levinas indicates. For that I am still too much of a Nietzschean (and Aristotelian). One has the duty to extend benefit of the doubt and to be open for each other, but after one has done that and to the best of one's insight, to be tested on the insight of others, if one cannot accept what the other demands or gives one may say no. Responsibility remains one's own. One may not reject people but one may choose one's partners. There lies a Nietzschean consideration of the protection of creative potential, realization of life force, and a striving for self-transcendence. One need not, indeed may not, let oneself be shamed by 'decency' to surrender that or discount it. Even more strongly, the right, yes even perhaps the duty to say no to the other, at times, follows, in my view, from Levinas' own argument. If the other forms a source of self-transcendence for me, in his opposition

to me and his appeal to me, which I cannot ignore, then I am also, vice versa, a source of transcendence for the other, if I truly take his interest into account, and that requires that I also owe him my opposition, my no. Look at friends who can, and often should, 'tell each other the truth' because they are friends.

Difference

*Vive la difference*ⁱⁱⁱ We must break down and connect universals on the basis of individuals, move to and fro between the general and the specific. While life is lived and meaning is created in the differentiation of specific individuals, the abstract concept or idea, the equalizer, threatens to shove it aside or to dominate it. I suspect that here in the deep also the misplaced metaphor of meaning as an object, or as a container with content, is in our way. What should be provisional, as a temporary point of crystallisation, becomes a crystal palace of dominance, in regimentation by theory, formalization, planning, programming and rule giving.

Nietzsche gave similar arguments (in *About truth and lies in a non-moral sense*) for the sake of difference and against universals as the equalizers that destroy life. Dionysus, the Greek god of wine, drunkenness, orgy, force of nature, roots in the earth, and ecstasy, patron of agriculture and the theatre, principle of the liberation of the self, was used in Nietzsche's early work (*The birth of tragedy*) as a symbol of unfettered aesthetic force and inebriation, in contrast and combination with Apollo as the symbol of beauty of form, harmony and balance. In his later work Dionysus appeared again in Nietzsche's work, but now more as a symbol of difference (van Tongeren & Schank 1990, p. 160), ongoing destruction and rebirth, creative destruction and self-transcendence, and as guidance in life, in a re-confirmation of life as indestructible, powerful and joyful (Kauffman 1968, p. 410).

How to proceed? How does the dismantling and re-configuration of universals work? Categories are steps that we stand on only in order to step away. They should not be used as fixed rules but as principles that must find their application, as steps on a road that can change direction. Wittgenstein spoke of a ladder that one throws away after having climbed up on it. In Chapter 5 I proposed a *cycle of discovery*, and in Chapter 6 I applied it to the process of meaning change. There, abstraction is needed to break out of specific contexts to novel ones where next the abstraction is embedded in the new context and is expanded into novel local connotations, which can lead to the breakdown of existing and the composition of novel abstractions. That also offers an opposition to such radical defence of difference that universals are rejected unconditionally. Universals are needed not only for generalization as a basis for logical argument and causal explanation, but also as a bridge to novel contexts in a process of discovery and change of meaning. This applies also to moral principles. Such a principle reflects past experience and is the starting point when entering new conditions, but is a beginning only that may lead to its change.

Often there are no necessary and sufficient conditions for something to belong to a category. In our urge towards logical order without residue we are used to see that as a shortcoming, in our quest for essence, a hidden core. In fact it is a blessing because it leaves room for difference, deviance and shift of insight and meaning.

But how do we cope with such incomplete determinacy of meaning? We employ prototypes that lead categorization on the basis of resemblance (as Aristotle already proposed), and what deviance is tolerated depends on the context. Here I follow the pragmatism of meaning from Wittgenstein, where meaning is employed as a tool: something is tolerated if it works in a specific context. Earlier I employed the metaphor of a screwdriver that is used as a hammer: it is irregular but if it works it is OK.

Another opening for difference follows from the Aristotelian notion of *exemplary cause*. That is the original meaning of the term *paradigm*. It is, for example, a role model that is imitated or mimicked. Mimicking leaves room for variety and difference, on the basis of different interpretations of the role model, depending on the context. If for example as a worker in a firm one imitates the entrepreneur at the head of the firm, then that requires imagination of what he would do in a given situation, and that requires own insight and experience and judgement of the situation. While imitation may denote a strict reproduction of steps of activity (as in a script), mimicry leaves room for improvisation, variation, shortcuts, work-arounds, which aim at the same goal but in a different way.^{iv} This connects with the *Cycle of discovery* discussed in the chapter on cognition. My appreciation of the room for interpretation that a role model yields is connected with my acceptance of principles coupled with a wariness of strict universal rules.

The notion of exemplary cause is also relevant for the discussion on morality. Kant distinguished between knowledge about the world and morality as a form of judgement without knowledge. What, then, is the basis for moral judgement? Neiman (2009) indicated that it is foremost a matter of reflection from moral ‘heroes’: clear examples that most everyone will recognize as examples. A hero is a paragon, a leading example of virtues one cherishes.

Differences within a group are bounded by moral codes, rules and the enforcement of some degree of conformism. But sometimes there are different ways to satisfy norms, and deviant conduct may be accepted when successful and when not successful may lead to exit from the group. To fulfil functions, within a group, such as an organization, people play roles. I define the fulfilment of a function as the fulfilment of conditions attached to a step (or more steps) in node in a script, and those conditions determine the *role* in that script. One approach in the determination of a role is to try to impose full, canonical rules that fix the role under all possible conditions. That is a recipe for failure because the needed differentiation across different contexts is open-ended and cannot be fully predicted. That is demonstrated by the fact that the strict application of rules, in ‘work to rule’, is a form of sabotage. Often the rule is more of a guideline, in the form of exemplary performance that is to be mimicked in discretionary interpretation, depending on conditions.

As argued, among others, by Simmel (1950), while primary socialization takes place in the family, secondary socialization takes place in organizations where people convene for work, sports, recreation etc. In economically lesser developed societies, with a limited infrastructure of all kinds (roads, schools, safety, laws and equality under the law, a reliable currency, etc.) and hence little trade and division of labour, people are often locked up in more or less autarkic clans or families. The majority if not the whole of the life world is enfolded there. Secondary socialization hardly takes place. As a result there is little diversity within the group and little contact between groups so that inter-group

diversity can hardly be utilized. To the extent that an institutional basis for trust is lacking, in the form of laws and a reliable execution of them and widely shared norms and habits, one will have to build trust in personal relations or fall back on family or clan. Within groups social control is strong and there is little room for egotism. In currently well-developed countries that also was the case some time ago and few people would want to return to it.

In complex, modern societies people have many roles to play, in family, work, profession, sport, recreation, art, etc. They have many places of secondary socialization. They develop a 'persona' that does not coincide with any single role and goes beyond roles in individual mental structures they have made along their life paths. People are more than the work they do. They bring into their role fulfilment idiosyncrasies adopted in other roles. That is a source of both error and innovation. And a striking, deviant but successful role fulfilment can lead to a new role model. The complexity of roles makes it impossible to build personal trust everywhere, one needs laws and wider customs and norms, and many relationships will hardly be personal anymore. The self has a wider action space and there is more room for egotism.

In Chapter 5 I indicated that cognitive distance between people arises because they construct different cognitive frames on the basis of different experiences along their life paths, how that gives a problem of limited mutual understanding, but also an opportunity to learn. The capability to deal with people who think differently is not fixed but can be developed by an increase of knowledge (absorptive capacity) and of the ability to make oneself understood by people who think differently, and of experience in collaboration with them. That yields the ability to cross larger cognitive distance and that yields more innovation. That has been confirmed in scientific research (Nooteboom et al 2007). In innovation those have an advantage who have developed the ability to collaborate with people who think differently. That is of great importance, because if orientation towards the different other were not economically viable its overall viability would be much in doubt.

In Chapter 5 I also indicated that the *cycle of discovery* yields a further explanation of how dialogue at some cognitive distance helps to transform our knowledge and meanings. In dialogue we must shift what we know or think into the novel context of what the other knows or thinks (in what in the cycle is called *generalization*). The other must try to assimilate what we say or do into his or her cognitive apparatus. We can help with clever metaphors in which we try to put what we know in terms that are more familiar to him/her. When in spite of such efforts mutual understanding is not achieved we can try it more indirectly by relating what we say to other knowledge we have, about other ways to approach the issue at hand (*differentiation*, in terms of the cycle). When that also does not work, and we listen well, we may see where the thinking of the other works better, has more success, than that of ourselves, look for elements to which that may be ascribed, with help from the other, and try to fit those elements in our own thinking and practice (*reciprocation*, in terms of the cycle), in experiments with hybrids. That requires what Levinas called 'passivity', the capability to bracket oneself and one's ideas and to be open for other thought.

Trust

With Schopenhauer, and many others, including David Hume, I share the view that human beings have two often opposing instincts, one for survival and one for solidarity (altruism) or compassion, and when push comes to shove survival mostly wins, though not always. The evolutionary arguments for this will be given in the last chapter. Under pressure people will often drop benevolence in favour of survival. Nevertheless, though the instinct for benevolence will often be the weakest we do have it, and we can develop and strengthen it by cultural means.

Principles are fine, but how are they practised? In Chapter 8 I discussed the criticism of Levinas' neglect to elaborate his ideas in the practice of society, in justice, law, politics and economics. Let us not only philosophize in abstraction from action and experience but also apply the abstractions in practical contexts of action. That is needed not only for practical usefulness but also for testing of adequacy. Let me, in other words, practise what I preach. I now try to make the arguments for otherhumanism more concrete in their application. What are the pragmatics of knowledge, language and ethics in relations between people?

Horizontal transcendence, how does it work? Can it be reconciled with economic behaviour? I indicated that the ability to 'cross cognitive distance' yields economic advantage. How does collaboration between people in openness and mutual influence work?

Concerning criminal justice I refer to Kunneman's (2009) discussion, indicated earlier, of restorative justice, showing how horizontal transcendence might be implemented. Here I give a discussion of trust. Trust is the proper place to show how important for practical life a philosophy of the other is. The motive for this book arose in part from earlier work on trust, to look for the philosophical background of trust, the sources of altruism and egotism. For the practice of the relation between self, other and third parties, also in the economy, trust is indispensable. It requires give-and take, openness and empathy. I argue that it requires and implements horizontal transcendence. Trust is a rich and slippery notion that requires elucidation. For that I employ work of my own (Nooteboom 2002). Here, the discussion becomes more technical, in part, tapping from socio-economic research.

To start, several misunderstandings need to be eliminated. First, there is the distinction between the subject of trust ('trustor') and the object ('trustee'). Second, trust entails a paradox of information. On the one hand trust is based on some information, from experience or reputation, but on the other hand the notion of trust entails the presence of uncertainty or risk. If one were certain about future behaviour of others one would no longer speak of trust. If trust increases, this does not entail more certainty but more acceptance of uncertainty (as Luhmann indicated). Because there always is uncertainty trust is always to some degree a 'leap of faith' (as Simmel indicated).

Third there is a distinction between trusting behaviour and trust as an inclination or disposition to such behaviour. That disposition can be psychological, for people, but also organizational, for organizations. An organization can have a disposition to trusting behaviour on the basis of its internal structure, procedures, and culture that is enacted and reconstructed or shifted by members of the organization. Thus both people and organizations can be both trustors and trustees. Fourth one should make a distinction between trust in competence, i.e. 'technical' ability to honour commitments, and in intention, i.e. the will and commitment to do that to the best of one's competence. The

latter includes benevolence, the lack of opportunism, and attention and dedication (commitment). Fifth trust can be based on rational evaluation, in a reasoned judgement of the reliability of someone and acceptance of risk, but it is also based on intuition, emotions, routine, or lack of attention to risks.

Sixth there is a distinction between control and trust, though often there is a combination of the two. To avoid confusion and misunderstanding it is useful to employ the wider notion of reliance that includes control, and trust that goes beyond control. One can rely on someone because he/she is contractually bound, for example, but trust requires compliance in the absence of control. Control can take the form of a limitation of freedom, the action space of the trustee, on the basis of contractual or hierarchical enforcement. It can also take the form of incentives of punishment or reward, reputation, dependence, loss of so-called *specific investment* in the relationship (an investment that loses value when the relationship breaks), or fear of uncertainty. In other words, control entails power. Beyond control lies trust on the basis of moral rules or virtues, reciprocity, personal ties in empathy or identification, or routinization. There one relies on someone even if he has both the opportunity and a material interest for breaking trust. Here, in the duality of trust and control, one sees how economics and the 'life world' inevitably intersect.

Seventh, trustworthiness is limited because of possible 'golden opportunities' of disloyalty, or pressure of survival, or conflict between different loyalties. Control and trust are conditioned or affected by institutions, of laws or their execution, reputation mechanisms, ethics and forms of intermediation or arbitration.

In short, trust is a predicate with four places: a trustor (1) trusts a trustee (2) in some respect (3, competence or intentions) under some conditions (4).

Trust is not a matter of being nice to each other. Precisely because we trust each other we can afford hefty differences of opinion. And when conflicts are resolved this deepens trust. Of course, that need not be the case and trust can collapse. That depends on our commitment and our skill in the art of trust. Empathy and a philosophy oriented towards the other are crucial.

Trust not distrust should be the default. One should trust until there is evidence of untrustworthiness. A supposition of trustworthiness can be refuted by experience. A supposition of untrustworthiness withholds us from relationships that can demonstrate trustworthiness. A proof in advance that one is trustworthy is as impossible as proving a theory. As Karl Popper, among others, argued, a theory can be refuted but not proven by experience. If a theory cannot be falsified it is unscientific. Since trustworthiness can be disproved but not proven one could according to that maxim say that trust is scientific and distrust is not. Attempts to prove trustworthiness lead to lies that hide everything that may be seen as evidence of untrustworthiness. And everything that goes wrong can be interpreted as evidence of untrustworthiness.

Trust suffers from *causal ambiguity*. When expectations are not fulfilled, there can be several causes. Some mishap occurred that no one could have foreseen or prevented, or there was a shortfall of competence, or someone did not pay attention, or someone cheated. One generally does not know what the cause was. Especially an opportunist will claim a mishap.

When something goes wrong on our side it is best to admit it instantly, because if we don't the other is likely to conclude the worst and judge that it was deliberate, if it turns

out, as it almost always does. If one did not cheat, why did one not report the problem in time to jointly prevent it or mitigate its effects? We should therefore resist the temptation to hide our failures and shortcomings. We feel that this weakens our bargaining position but that is erroneous thinking. Lack of openness damages reputation and trust and the damage is difficult to repair once it has been done.

When something goes wrong on the side of the partner one should give him or her the benefit of the doubt, asking for the cause or reason of shortcomings, not jumping to the conclusion that the other has cheated. This discussion is connected with the earlier discussion of rule and principle. Application of a moral rule, or a contract, with implementation of sanctions, is exit. With a principle one embarks on voice.

Good negotiation is not surrendering as little as possible, in profit or information, but finding out what problems weigh heavily for the other that one can solve at limited cost to oneself. Openness is needed if only because otherwise the other cannot know what he or she can do for you. Many potentially fruitful relationships fail from unexpressed fears or distrust that are thus withheld from the other who therefore gets no opportunity to help relieve or eliminate them. Openness should go together with empathy, the ability to understand how the other thinks and feels, in his situation. That is not the same as identification, where one thinks and feels alike, in his situation. That would go too far, if it were feasible.

Social psychology

Typically in trust there is a combination or alternation of reasoning and feeling, and on this social psychology has much to say, in terms of 'mental frames' and switching between them, interpretation of the behaviour of others ('relational signalling'), and heuristics of decision making. Here we should take into account that much of our mental activity is unconscious, as discussed in Chapter 4. Much of our activity is routinized and is left to 'subsidiary awareness' (Polanyi 1966), as when we think of other things while driving a car.

Social psychology yields insight into heuristics of decision making that people use. In a survey Bazerman (1998) mentions the following:

- *Availability*: people judge the probable cause of an event depending on what aspects of it are readily 'available' to the mind, i.e. are laden with emotion, appealing, recent and recognizable. Lesser available features and events are neglected.
- *Representativeness*: the probability of an event is judged in its similarity to stereotypes of that type of event. We recognise something according to similarity to salient features of a prototype, which can be a stereotype, and on that basis of that we attribute other features of the prototype that in fact are not present. This easily leads to prejudice. One overestimates probability on the basis of a number of occurrences that is too small for statistical validity.
- *Anchoring and adjustment*: judgement is based on some starting value or standard ('anchor') from earlier experience or social comparison, plus incremental adjustment of that value. It has been shown that people stay close to even arbitrary anchors that have nothing to do with what is going on. First impressions can form anchors that affect the relationship, and trust, for a long time.

- *Escalation of commitment.* According to the rational precept that ‘bygones are bygones’ one should not look at sacrifices made in the past but only at profit and loss of continued involvement. In fact, however, people maintain loss-generating commitments because otherwise past sacrifices ‘would have been in vain’. Thus we arrive at the argument that we should stay in Afghanistan because otherwise the sacrifice of the life of soldiers would have been in vain. This is related with wider principle of ‘cognitive dissonance’: the cutting of loss and exit would imply a confession that in the past one made a wrong decision to enter. Thus the issue does not concern the merits of staying but prevention of a loss of face. It is easier to pull out if someone other than the one who decided to move in makes the decision. To pull out of Afghanistan we need a new government.

These heuristics are often not rational: they lead to impulsiveness, mistaken assessment and prejudice. Yet they can be ‘adaptive’ in the sense that they contribute to survival and success under conditions of uncertainty, necessity of a fast judgement, and limited capacity for rational assessment. Such conditions can occur in the present, but our thinking is also affected by dispositions that have developed under conditions of earlier, long lasting periods of evolution, in times of our ancestors, while under current conditions they are a disadvantage. This the line of thought from evolutionary psychology.

Concerning the heuristic of availability, note that an emotionally charged observation of a crisis situation that jars us from routinized behaviour and catapults our thinking from subsidiary to focal awareness is useful to prevent accidents from being undetected in routinized behaviour. Without routinized behaviour our cognition would suffer from overload, but an emotionally charged perception of a crisis is needed to wake us from routine.

The heuristic of representativeness is connected with the role of prototypes in language and categorization, discussed in Chapter 6. We are inclined to see things as being similar to the familiar, and not to see them if such comparison does not obtain. That leads to blindness for the new but also to fast identification and enactment of the known, for a fast escape from the sabre-toothed tiger.

The heuristic of anchoring and adjustment can lead to too slow adjustment but fast adjustment is not always good. Studies of learning and adjustment show how hasty and large deviations from established practice can yield chaotic behaviour (Lounamaa & March 1987).

The heuristic of escalation of commitment can also be useful, e.g. as a feature of the successful entrepreneur who persists against all setbacks.

The relevance of the heuristics for trust is clear. They affect the expectation and attribution of trustworthiness, on the basis of an emotional appeal, recent experience, stereotypes and existing norms.

Another psychological phenomenon is that sometimes people find it difficult to choose between immediate gratification and long term wellbeing, as in addiction, in the problem of the ‘weakness of the will’. It has been tried to account for this on the basis of multiple selves that are in conflict with each other, or as a visceral drive versus rational assessment, or on the basis of ‘availability’: immediate gratification is more ‘available’. Another possible explanation lies in a time effect: one thinks one can resist temptation as long as it does not arise but fall for it when it is near. The relevance of this for relationships

is also clear, in the battle between loyalty to the other that is important in the long term and the short-term advantage that can be obtained at the expense of the other. Here also one cannot say that this is always harmful. As noted by Bazerman (1998) the impulse of temptation with neglect of the longer term can yield the vision of the entrepreneur who makes a gamble and grasps an opportunity.

The selection and operation of heuristics in decision-making depends on mental frames. People operate on the basis of chunks of mental modules that form perceptions and interpretations and guide behaviour, in the use of heuristics. Relevant to trust are two basic frames: one oriented towards 'defending one's resources' and one directed towards 'solidarity' (Lindenberg 2003). In the first the basic stance is one of distrust, fear of loss, and actions of the other are seen as possible evidence of untrustworthiness, and one is poised for preventive action or revenge. In the second one the basic stance is one of trust, and one is inclined to see actions of the other as trustworthy. The claim that we have these two basic frames is in line with the idea, discussed elsewhere, that we have inborn, instinctive dispositions to both trust/loyalty and distrust/cheating, based on both a striving for survival (*conatus*) and a disposition towards being a loyal member of a group, and to accept sacrifices for it.

In what frame one is depends on character, experience and conditions. If one has little self-confidence and feels threatened one is inclined to distrust. One feels more threatened under pressure of competition or adverse economic conditions. In the present financial crisis we can expect explosions of distrust. In the trust frame one can tolerate more criticism than in the frame of distrust. That is why trust is not being nice to each other. Precisely because one has trust one can have a hefty disagreement. Thus one advantage of trust is that it gives more room for learning from criticism.

Of crucial importance for trust is empathy or identification: the ability to put oneself into or identify oneself with the insight, ideas and feelings of the other. This is clearly associated with the heuristic of 'availability' that increases according to whether one can empathize or identify. This affects own trustworthiness, in the willingness to make sacrifices for others, and trust, in tolerance for behaviour that deviates from expectations. One will sooner help someone when one can identify with his motives or reasons. One may be able to adopt blame. One may see the other's reaction as justified response to one's own.

Another reason to ascribe blame to oneself while in fact it lies with the other is to avoid uncertainty and to achieve a (misplaced) feeling of being in control. If one has the feeling that it is impossible or very difficult to affect someone's behaviour one may ascribe blame to oneself to avoid a feeling of powerlessness by being subject to suppressive or arbitrary conduct. This explains the otherwise incomprehensible phenomenon that against all evidence of Stalinist terror citizens maintained their trust in 'father Stalin'. Facing the truth was unbearable. For people with low self-confidence or low self-esteem trust in the untrustworthy may be a measure of despair or it can give a confirmation of low self-esteem. Also, for people with much rather than little self-confidence the acceptance of own fault can give a sense of control because one feels one can easily deal with it, which may be an illusion from overconfidence.

These mechanisms can obstruct the making and maintaining of relationships, due to prejudice, impulsiveness or miscalculation. They can also stabilize relationships, in anchoring and adjustment and escalation of commitment.

What I wanted to show in this discussion of trust is how important empathy, the ability to be open to the other and to put oneself into his or her shoes, is to build and maintain trust as well as to deal with its risks, with insight into someone's weaknesses and conditions in which he or she has to break trust. This demonstrates the relevance of a philosophy of the other in daily affairs.

Third parties

We should look further than the relationship between self and other, recognizing third and more parties. Go-betweens or third parties can perform valuable services in a variety of roles to build, maintain or repair trust.^v Levinas recognized this but did not elaborate on it very much, and his analysis is mainly negative. According to Levinas the entry of a third person upsets the ideal relation to the single other, with its purity of unconditional concern and sacrifice. Now one has to make an impossible comparison between incomparable, unique others, to take into account the interests of the third and the effects of what the other is doing to the third. Here I offer a more positive account, of how a third party can mediate to improve a relationship with the other, as a broker in cognition and trust. Here again there is both a cognitive and an ethical side.

Earlier I indicated that one has the right to one's own choice of partners but that it is wise to test it against insights from third parties. To the extent that people are more locked into a single relationship after a while cognitive distance between self and other will decline: they have less novelty to offer each other. However, as Levinas said, cognitive distance will never decrease to zero. It can even increase, as Levinas suggested. People never become identical, and can continue to surprise each other. However, the potential for diversity remains larger when both parties also have contact with different other parties. Thereby knowledge of partners is continually refreshed, which feeds the relationship.

The sociologist Simmel (1950) showed how much changes in the transition from two (a dyad) to three agents (a triad). If in a triad one loses a partner there is still one left. In that way risks of loss are spread. Two can form a coalition against the third, for good or for bad. It can help to curtail an opportunist, but it can also lock someone up and keep him from exit to better environments. A third party can act as a go-between between the others but can also play them off against each other. The latter yields the notion of the 'laughing third' (*tertius gaudens*). Go-betweens can help to build trust, bridge cognitive distance, prevent or eliminate misunderstanding, and mediate in conflict.

In organizations people assimilate, build and maintain shared (but never identical) perspectives, values and norms. This yields the notion of an organization as a 'sense making system' (Weick 1979), a 'system of shared meanings' (Smircich 1983), an 'interpretation system' (Choo 1998), or a 'focusing device' (Nooteboom 2009). For the sake of an efficient utilization of competencies and other resources, without the need for discussion at every step or turn about directions, goals, visions, interpretations and ways to solve conflicts, organizational focus gives a sense of a shared purpose or 'mission', priorities, agenda's, vision of the organization and its environment, ways of dealing with each other, and role models. Benevolence or rivalry can both be part of that focus. The danger of focus is that it creates myopia and group think that makes the organization blind to some opportunities and threats in the environment. To repair that organizations

need external partners to complement imperfect cognition. Thus also organizational entities require others, at sufficient cognitive distance.^{vi}

What I wanted to show is that what runs through everything is the importance of openness to the other; the capability to understand the other, to make oneself understood by the other, to put oneself into the thinking and feeling of the other, however imperfect that will always remain. That openness to the other, spiritually, socially and economically, is the cork on which otherhumanism floats, in its philosophy as well as in its economy. The mentality of otherhumanism is needed in the 'network economy'.

Chapter 10 How viable is it?

Do arguments for otherhumanism stand up to the reality of often instinctive, unreasoned, unconscious fears, egotism, narcissism, urge and pressure for survival, prejudice, ignorance, weakness, misunderstanding, and unintended outcomes of conduct in interaction in a complex society? And the reality of horrors of Man perpetrated against Man across the world? Isn't otherhumanism a naive, utopian ideal, pie in the sky? But when is a view on humanity realistic: only when it recognizes human weakness and perverse effects of society, or also when it recognizes human potential and opportunities for culture? The point is not that humanity is on a course towards benevolence but that it has some potential for it that we can develop in culture.

The most pessimistic among philosophers is Schopenhauer. According to him the human being is driven by a blind, insatiable will to satisfy urges. This makes people self-centred and unreliable. Furthermore, the character of people is fixed and their betterment is an illusion. Hence any forgiveness is unwise: once people have shown themselves to be unreliable, one can be sure they will remain so. One should avoid dependence on others. One should treat others as if they were objects: inert and unalterable, or at best as children, not spoiling them with friendliness and benevolence. It is best to cultivate solitude. It is better not to be open to others and to stay aloof. It is better to distrust than to trust. If all this applied, the prospect for my views would be dim indeed. But while I go along with Schopenhauer some way on some points, on most points I argue the opposite in this book. In sum my argument is that the self needs the other to escape its delusions of self. A full life entails acceptance of risks, which also entail novel opportunities. One can learn from setbacks. Next to self-interest people are also driven by altruism. It is better to start with trust, and to grant benefit of the doubt to people, and learn from disappointments than forego its opportunities. Life as proposed by Schopenhauer is miserable, bleak, autistic, arrogant and delusional.

In Chapter 9 I already took into account economic conditions. Willy nilly, economic viability probably forms a necessary though not sufficient condition for viability more widely. However, our idea of economic viability may change. I showed that the capability to collaborate with people who think differently yields economic advantage in an enhanced capability to innovate. To employ a fashionable slogan: it is needed for 'open innovation'. Doing everything by yourself is counter-productive.

Perhaps the greatest shortcoming of otherhumanism is that so far my analysis fails to yield drama and ritual, which people need in order to celebrate and enact togetherness in otherness for solace and transcendence. The first question for this chapter therefore is whether otherhumanism offers sufficient perspective for this. How might it appeal to emotions and feelings? Can social intercourse substitute for prayer?

A second question is whether otherhumanism may not lead to the disappearance of difference, a lack idiosyncrasy, or, on the contrary, to fragmentation and relativism. Does it lead to people taking each other into account to the extent that no deviant view and own will or conviction remains? Will it, after all, be to the detriment of the flourishing of life?

A third question is how it would then work. That is largely the question how trust works, and that was discussed already in Chapter 9. But how resilient and viable is trust?

Appeal

For a broad and emotional appeal otherhumanism requires drama that can match that of Christ, Mohammed and Buddha. Here there is a lesson in the development of Buddhism. There was a time that it was cerebral, abstract and sparse, a preoccupation for a spiritual elite, and this provided insufficient appeal to gather a wide field of followers, and the gap had to be filled with symbolism and ritual. It is not easy to compete with the drama of the son of God who is persecuted, betrayed, executed in torture and was resurrected to carry the burden of human sins and open the gate to heaven. Can we think of something adequate to that power and appeal? Are there prophets and martyrs of otherhumanism? Levinas perhaps? Few people will be carried along by the abstract arguments of preceding chapters. What can substitute for catholic liturgy, ritual with resplendent robes in splendid churches? I shudder at Christian fundamentalism in the U.S., but when I watch the television channel that broadcasts the singing togetherness of their communities, I am impressed, not necessarily favourably, while shuddering, by the surrender and emotion with which they sing. Such exaltation does not have to go along with catholic splendour. Franciscans, Cathars and the Reformation show that humans can be attracted to the simple, sober and intimate that we also feel in small Romanesque churches and chapels that go back to when catholic faith was not yet lost in grandeur. Can otherhumanism offer something similar? Communities where people tell one another of the good life, exemplify, share and celebrate it?

Consider how much human drama we have outside godservice, in the history of literature, and film, theatre and popular culture. Could not those offer the experience and celebration of otherhumanism? See the old epics, Greek tragedies, Shakespeare, romantic literature, the literature of sensibility, operas, and so on. Now one could say that much literature shows how people exercise their egotism and their Nietzschean will to power rather than benevolence, and indeed literature should do this, if it is to reflect life. But if there is any truth in my earlier arguments, then true literature will also show the perversities and tragic demise of egotism, the tragedy of heroism as well as the 'fragility of goodness' as Martha Nussbaum called it. Even literature that opens up to the depravity of humanity, as in the work of Dostoyevsky, de Sade, Baudelaire, Genet, Céline, feeds our feeling for otherhumanism. Egotism is tragic and destroys itself because commitment to empathy for the other is needed for the highest form of freedom, spiritual growth, learning and even success in the economy. Literature is the activity par excellence in which universals are thrust into the sobering stream of reality, fragment and dissolve in the rich specificity of individual people in specific circumstances. Thus, by falling apart in literature universals are called to life and reconstitute themselves. Literature can be a celebration, a demonstration and an exercise of humanism

Literature offers the opportunity for virtual experiments in ethics and morality by stepping into the shoes of protagonists in the novel, with their doings that in real life would be too risky, would carry shame and blame, or would be impossible for lack of opportunity or means. In Chapter 4 I discussed the role of conscious thought and language to feed the unconscious with mental simulation of possible actions prior to their initiation, on the basis of our or others' prior experience with similar situations. It is difficult to draw adequate lessons from one's own life, because one selectively forgets what one did in the past, what the conditions were, and one reconstructs what one did more positively, more flattering than it was (Ricoeur 1990). And as indicated in Chapter

6 there cannot be a private language. Dreams may be honest, revealing our secret vices, but memory is not. The novel (or opera, or play) tempts us to suspend disbelief and moral judgement, giving room to contemplate conduct that otherwise would not be admitted to consciousness. As Reckwitz (2009, p. 167) said it: Literature 'can make us aware ... of the irreducible particularity of the world and the people living in it, thereby teaching us to respect their alterity or otherness that is no longer perceived as an extension of our own self-image'. A play is an exercise in empathy; music is an exercise in attunement. In the terminology of Levinas, drama shows the 'visage' of the other, lifting the self above itself.

Poetry ventures further beyond the actual and tinkers with the boundaries of the thinkable. It shifts perspectives, and doing that it can, among other things, help to cross cognitive (including cultural) distance between people. Metaphors are an instrument to trigger understanding of the unknown, and it is no coincidence that poetry employs metaphor a great deal, but poetry is more than that, it triggers resonance between people (as Taylor 2011 phrased it).

Novels, plays and films can parade lusts of violence, discrimination, egoism and narcissism, but in the unfolding of drama they can also offer release or cleansing (*catharsis*) from anguish of death and contingencies of life.

What is the role of art more widely? Does art yield rest or movement, harmony or disharmony? Is ecstasy rest or excitement? Schopenhauer or Nietzsche? According to Schopenhauer art offers an escape from the contingency and vicissitudes of life and death in serene contemplation of unmovable Platonic, eternal ideas. It offers a momentary escape from the will, in a surrender of the self. Art as arrested eternity. For Nietzsche art is, at least in part, next to Apollonian harmony, Dionysian exuberance, in an intensification of the will and confirmation of the self. Can it be both? What if the crux, and what they have in common, is transcendence, ecstasy, which can be both settling and unsettling? One can have the feeling that everything settles into place, as well as a feeling that a breakthrough is made to a new horizon. If indeed transcendence is the crux, art in several ways is a delivery from the self and in that may facilitate otherhumanism.

But can the other human being, inside or outside of literature, really replace God as a source of transcendence? Can it satisfy us in our thirst for the absolute, the indestructible, to escape from our puny, trivial, suffering, vulnerable existence? Can a conversation replace prayer? Can the other help us to accept the tragedies of unjust suffering, accident and disaster? Not if we can only find solace in a fabled life after death. Not if we expect miracles or an answer to our prayers from a non-existent God. For many such surrender of God is an unacceptable loss.

Yet the concrete other and the notion of otherness can provide solace in living through the pain of life, and help us to rise above it, and we can receive solace in giving it. In this there is more spiritual nobility than in shoving our burdens off onto the shoulders of a redeemer. We can have awe not alone for a God but also for the other human being and for the miracle that in spite of everything it is capable of benevolence. Benevolence is not entirely against our nature and we have a fighting chance to develop and sustain it. I will return to that at length. The crux lies in the acceptance of death, and surrender to it, perhaps even the celebration of it, without help from God or a hereafter. Patricia de Martelaere (1993) suggested that in art we can defeat death's determination of the end of our lives by determining our own end in the pursuit and achievement of the

sublime. Art as self-determination. But the crux is to accept that death tells us where the end is. The longing for ultimate completion and completeness is inherently egotistic and lies beyond the reach of the human being. It yields a never-ending shift of the horizon of want that maintains unhappiness, as Schopenhauer said. But is the only answer Buddhist surrender, an effacement, of the self, as Schopenhauer also claimed?

Again I look to evolution for inspiration. Our challenge is to realize our potential as best we can and then pass on that potential and our accomplishments to those who follow us. We should derive satisfaction in what we can do and in what we leave behind. The idea that death should inspire us to live was also an idea of Heidegger's. Hannah Arendt objected that we should equally be inspired by birth. Let us look forward to the birth of those who come after us, and the new potential that yields. Such conduct can be dedication to children, the environment and society. Having done what we honestly could we can welcome the tranquillity of death. If God did exist, perhaps that is what he would have wanted.

As for everyone, for Nietzsche also there was the problem of the apparently senselessness and arbitrariness of human suffering. According to Nietzsche one way out, in Christianity, was the self-imposition of guilt that justifies suffering as punishment, sought in asceticism. We are guilty therefore we suffer. Suffering is justified because of our inadequacy in the face of the absolute. But asceticism as penance for guilt and inadequacy goes against life. Another option, that of the stoics, is to accept the senselessness of life and minimize one's vulnerability. But this entails the dodging of life.

Nietzsche sought another way, where suffering is part of self-transcendence, noble, impressive, meaningful and engaging, in a Dionysian thrust of life. Inspiring in Nietzsche, and to me the crux of his thought, is the Dionysian joy and exuberance of life, not as pleasure, and certainly not the absence of pain, but an overflowing of the will, to my mind not a will to power but a will to self-realization. However, that cannot succeed by oneself, and one needs others for it.

Is otherhumanism elitist? During the French revolution Robespierre saw atheism as aristocratic, and hence atheists as worthy of capital punishment, along with earthly aristocrats. Is there truth in this? Is irreligious acceptance of death a privilege for the singularly well educated, or the singularly brave? But why should upbringing be an advantage here? Might not a simpleminded sense of humanity be just as good for it? Montaigne said that to philosophize is to prepare for death. But could not other forms of the good life be as good or better at it?

How desirable is the striving for the sublime and absolute, the supernatural and superhuman? Precisely those have led, in religious and political ideologies, to hypocrisy, dodging responsibility, false shame, misuse of ecclesiastical or bureaucratic power, ideological blindness, fanaticism, suppression of the individual and denial of life, as Nietzsche forcefully argued. And, as I said, also the other human being can be object of awe and source of transcendence. Literature testifies to this. The sublime rests in human life, precisely in the tragedy and finitude of it, and the striving to make the best of it.

I do not deny the logical possibility of a God but by definition, if God is to be God, He cannot in our life be seen, heard or understood. For life we will have to make do with the other human being as iHis substitute. It testifies to pride to claim that one is the recipient of revelation, that God is inscrutable but we as the elect do know of Him and how best to follow Him.

In short, why pursue the chimera of a God who does not answer and whom we cannot know other than by an appeal to privileged revelation that leaves no room for doubt or debate, while we have the living human being, concrete and tangible, who can respond, can be an inexhaustible source of inspiration, compassion and transcendence, in its appeal to us and its opposition to us, and yields a hereafter in what we offer to following generations?

Power

How about power? Doesn't my allegiance to Nietzsche's thirst for the flourishing of life entail acceptance of his will to power? Earlier, I argued extensively that subjugation, dominance of others is self-defeating since it locks the self up in itself and robs it of its potential for cognitive and spiritual growth. But there is more.

What is power? Here, one can turn to Michel Foucault (1988). Let us adopt a customary definition of power as the ability to affect the conduct of others, in particular by affecting the room and direction of choice. This power can be constraining but also enabling, in offering people new insights, options and means. The seeking of such influence on others, and strategic behaviour, are inevitable in life, happen all the time in daily life, and contribute to 'creative destruction', the flourishing of life. The striving of Jürgen Habermas (1982, 1984) for discourse without power ('Herrschaftsfreie Discussion') is both illusory and undesirable. However, power relations should not become fixed and institutionalized, unassailable, which would yield repression, and there should remain freedom of opposition, of seeking counter-power. Such counter power need not depend only on the individual, and may be based on coalitions. That, I think, is the crux of democracy. To be fair to Habermas, perhaps this is what he intended. In an extension of Foucault I add that mutual opposition of power is not just an inevitable fact of life, of the nature of humanity, and is consistent with freedom, but is also a source of development and flourishing of the self. It is fundamentally part of what Foucault called 'technologies of the self'. The purpose of this book may be seen as showing how that works.

In the economy, Schumpeterian entrepreneurs exercise power in 'creative destruction' and when that innovation is 'competence destroying' established firms exercise power to block it, in order to protect their current investments. It is a task of government to allow and constrain both, to prevent destruction that is socially harmful (the mafia also engages in creative destruction) as well as the blocking of socially desirable innovation. In markets, there is both competition and collaboration between firms. In competition they seek to reduce other's options and in collaboration they seek to develop new joint options. In collaboration also there are power relationships, in creating mutual dependence, and even in the best of collaboration there seldom is an exact balance of dependence and hence power, but there is willingness to go a long way in give and take and commitment to the relationship, tolerating and not misusing some measure of unequal power. To use voice as the default and exit as the option of last resort. The point for governance is to maintain freedom of access and exit from markets and relationships. The art of collaboration and the role of trust, that slippery notion, are discussed in Chapter 9.

Power is to be analysed not only on the individual level but also on the level of collectives such as markets, professions, industries, regions, states and nations. In other words, power is also systemic (cf. Niebuhr 1934). Institutions and culture in symbiosis with economic systems produce what Said called 'structures of reference and attitude' that shape and rule representations, establish views of the world and rationalize or occlude abuses of power (Said 1993). Or with Wittgenstein's term, they establish the rules of language games. This is evident in imperialism but also in economic and political structures within states, in tacit assumptions of economic, social, educational and cultural policy. Suppression or exploitation becomes culturally sanctioned and immune to criticism, expelled from the arena of critical discourse. This has been argued also by Adorno and Foucault, among others. An example in the economy is the remarkably robust system of robbery in financial markets that manifested itself in the financial crisis, culminating in 2008. Bankers hold governments and populations hostage to their profits and rewards in bonuses, with populations carrying the risks while they take the revenues, and they manage to maintain this under an ideological rhetoric of the market that hides its perverse incentives. Individual responsibility is eclipsed in market forces and prisoners dilemmas.

This is not just a matter of mentality but also of structures of interdependence in which people and organizations get caught and which yield unintended consequences. Next to individual action, or as carriers of it, social structures, network phenomena, prisoner's dilemma's and the like affect options and choices of people in both negative (constraining) and positive (enabling) ways and in that sense exert power. Managers and administrators may be compelled to go against their individual conscience in order to satisfy institutional interests attached to their position and role.

Beyond social structure people are also drawn into and made subservient to tacit assumptions, notions, views, customs, expectations and moral rules that are part of the culture of organizations, communities, nations, or even humanity as a whole, as indicated also in Chapter 1. This relates to what Said called 'cultural structures of reference and attitude', mentioned above. If it is odd to use the word 'power' for such anonymous, unintentional influence perhaps we should find another word for it. Of course cultural constraints not only constrain but also enable. Anything that enables also constrains, but we can try to enlarge the first and reduce the latter.

In all cases, on all levels, power becomes evil when it refuses independence, thwarts inherent potential, and blocks exit or entry. When it locks in or locks out. Imperialism, the endeavour to practice over there what one has developed here, can be a step on a path towards transformation and learning, as I argue in Chapter 5, but it succeeds only if it fails to impose oneself there and is forced to adapt and break its familiar social structures and cultural systems of reference and attitude. Imperialism triumphs only when it is defeated. Locking oneself up in one's own sphere is debilitating for the self. And so I return to the central argument of this book: Dominance, in imposing views and practices on people is ultimately self-defeating. On all levels power should remain open to opposition. That is part of horizontal transcendence.

Pluralism

One might expect that opening up to the other and immersion in the other would lead to mental or spiritual homogenization or evening out, a decrease of cognitive distance. In fact we see an ongoing or increasing pluralism of views and opinions, in diverse religions, varieties within religions, and alternative sources of spirituality (Joas 2007). Conversely, one might then expect that pluralism in combination with openness lead to relativism. We do observe such relativism. Is relativism acceptable? Is it workable? Don't we search for a direction, a striving for something, a committing ourselves to something in which we believe and that is not as good as any other goal? Yes, but why should that goal be the same for all?

One can be open to others and yet take one's own conviction seriously. If one cannot be convinced by others one should stick to one's conviction. Debate with others can deepen that conviction. Tested on the views of others it may stand stronger. Learning can lead to transformation but also to confirmation of conviction. As long as pluralism goes together with otherhumanism it goes together with vitality, not evening out, neither mutual isolation nor relativism.

If one claims that moral conviction in its nature must be universalistic and therefore cannot bear diversity, then I refer to the discussion on the sparsity of abstraction, and the provisional nature and changeability of universals in Chapter 6.

There can be unity in diversity, where unity is based on shared views on openness of discussion, discussion instead of violence, empathy, respect, even awe for the other. We see individuality in diversity everywhere in daily life. Every organization has its own culture, and 'focus' (Nooteboom 2009) of goals, knowledge, style and views of the world and of relationships between people in the organization, but is also connected to surrounding culture of wider society. Like the difference between people, the difference between firms, even within a given industry, is a basis for both efficiency and innovation in the economy.

Evolution

Can otherhumanism be reconciled with our instincts for self-preservation inherited from evolution? It is clear that from evolution our species carries such an instinct for self-preservation, survival and procreation that drives us to expand and protect our means of existence, and is a source of egotism. However, at the same time it is now widely agreed that there are also arguments that point to an instinctive, genetically inherited inclination to '.. seeking companionship, imitation of group members, some disposition towards reciprocity, avid learning of arbitrary group norms and some commitment to enforcing these norms in other group members' (Hurford 2007, p. 300). This inclination yields some basis for altruism, which I define as the willingness to make sacrifices, within bounds, for others or for a community even if losses exceed the gains of it. As defined in Chapter 4, enlightened self-interest can entail sacrifices, in give and take, but on the condition of net gain or at least not a net loss in resources, while altruism entails acceptance of a net loss. Altruism is not boundless: one can be altruistic within limits, without self-denial. I define benevolence more broadly as including altruism but going further than making material sacrifice, in a spiritual opening to the other and the willingness and capability to accommodate one's identity, feelings and knowledge, without thereby surrendering or dissolving the self.

The human being thus has two instinctive inclinations, self-preservation and altruism, which often clash. When it comes to the crunch, the urge of self-preservation is mostly the strongest, and there are limits to altruism, but it is nonsense to deny the existence of altruism on the ground that it has limits. We should be happy that it exists, even if it is limited.

Evolutionary theory gives several arguments for how altruism can have evolved. It is viable in evolution if it is not quickly selected out in competition with more selfish people or groups. The most obvious and most widely accepted argument, which remains close to the logic of individual selection and the 'selfish gene', is that of selection on the basis of kin (*kin selection*). Individuals are prepared to make sacrifices to others to the extent that they are related genetically, so more for one's own children and less for cousins, since it contributes more to the proliferation of one's own genes.

More widely, in *inclusive fitness* one can be altruistic to people who are to some extent similar in genetic endowment without being kin, if one can identify such people on the basis of similarity in appearance or conduct to people with whom one already has an altruistic relationship. In other words: people discriminate. The tragedy is that altruism within groups can only exist in combination with discrimination of outsiders. Is that in our genes? I consider that likely, but as far as I know it has not been proved.

This is not all. Instinctively or in rational deliberation one can employ the principle of *tit-for-tat*: collaborate and make sacrifices as long as the other does, and retaliate when de does not (*defects*). More effective, and still viable, is *forgiving tit for tat*, where now and then one forgives defection and does not revert to retaliation but continues collaboration. That opens up the possibility of escaping from a deadlock of mutual retaliation. This is still a matter of enlightened self-interest.

A key question now is to what extent there can be altruism without guarantee or expectation of a reward or reciprocation, and without any kinship. The spread and maintenance of such altruism requires group selection next to individual selection. The idea, already harboured by Darwin, is that mutual sacrifice aids survival of the group. The problem with it is that transmission of genes operates through individuals, not groups. If at any time there is a sufficient number of altruists then the group is vulnerable to invasion by opportunists who prey upon altruists without reciprocating, and thereby have more means to compete, survive and procreate, so that in the long run the opportunists replace the altruists. However, altruism can survive if opportunists can be identified and a sufficient number of altruists are prepared to engage in punishment of opportunists even if that yields them a net loss. We appear to be helped in this by an instinct for detecting cheaters. For a good observer cheating may be revealed in posture, movement, gestures, facial expression, dilation of pupils, discomfort, voice and even smell (on the basis of so-called *pheromones*), unless the villain is mentally disturbed, has a malfunction of brain mechanisms attached to guilt and compassion. In Chapter 5 I discussed how people develop skills in identifying intentions and feelings from people's expressions and movements. However, if cheating is difficult to detect and there are not enough people willing to engage in punishment, then the group may have to fall back on discrimination on the basis of appearance or origin.

While prejudice and discrimination may subside in times of prosperity, in adversity people may be thrown back into it. As I suggested before, under duress trust will erode. This may be exploited in shrewd manipulation by populists or demagogues who insinuate

that cheating is on the loose by a suspect class (Jews, Moroccans). The condition that this is difficult to prove can be used to make it look even more sinister.

An instinct of prejudice against outsiders, if indeed it exists, is more effective for evoking internal loyalty and sacrifice if it is accompanied by a blind hatred that urges violence even to former friends and neighbours, if they are outsiders, even at high costs to the self. In the bombardment of Sarajevo, in the wars in former Yugoslavia, hospitals were bombarded where one might want to be taken up as a wounded at any moment. How can an instinct for benevolence be thus perverted? One way to generate blind hatred and violence against outsiders is to lift prejudice to a level where one is no longer afraid of death. Violence against outsiders then becomes part of vertical transcendence. I will elaborate on this below.

Here we arrive at the interaction between evolution and culture.

Culture

Earlier, in Chapter 2, I characterized culture in the anthropological sense as a system of opinions and views that give content, direction and limits to goals, norms, thought and action. Those are largely tacit, unconscious, acquired in education and all manner of socialization. There is culture on multiple levels, of family, neighbourhood, association, organisation, party, club, nation, etc. Because cultural mental and spiritual framing is largely unconscious it can easily lead to prejudice and incomprehension. Culture can then form a major obstacle to empathy and benevolence. Another meaning of culture is that in contrast with nature it is human made and therefore is more easily changed than human nature. In contrast with instincts, we can, in due course, bend culture to the advantage of empathy and benevolence, and culture may bend the thrust of instinct.

If it is true that the human being has an instinct for self-preservation as well as an instinct for altruism in groups it belongs to, and if the latter is accompanied by an inclination towards suspicion of outsiders, then measures are needed for peace and collaboration between different communities and nations. One measure that goes back a long way is that of exogamous groups: marriage within communities is prohibited and marriage across communities binds them. This is a clever device to mobilize the altruism towards kin, in kin selection, to normalize and stabilize relations between groups. That is also how we can understand the role of marriages across royal families. However, another though not necessarily conflicting interpretation is that family that are married off serve as hostages that enforce peace.

Another clever device is growth of prosperity from trade and collaboration between nations so that it is in the interest of material wellbeing and survival to maintain peace and forbearance. That was the main idea behind the European union. But then, if this source of prosperity breaks down, then so will the readiness for solidarity outside nations.

In earlier civilizations reciprocal gift giving was used to cement and stabilize inter-group relationships, and we still find that even in daily social relations between people, as when people reciprocate in invitations, Christmas cards, and giving flowers.

Can, should culture shape morality? Schopenhauer denied any role to the state for shaping morality because he believed that the will is autonomous, part of immutable character, so that all the state can do is constrain the negative effects of will by limiting access to the means for exercising bad will. In Chapter 4 I argued that while there is no

free will in the sense that at any moment we cannot control the will, we can influence choices consciously and we can affect the future development of the will. For this I used the evolutionary theory of cognitive development, or 'neural Darwinism'. Neural structures that underlie cognitive processes are developed by an evolutionary process of more or less random variety generation, in neural connections, that are selected and reinforced on the basis of felt success. Moral discourse and reward and punishment can affect felt success of actions and thereby affect neural development, also of structures of the will.

Earlier I argued against genetic determinism. Evolutionary arguments concerning genes and selection of their carriers are important but they are not exclusive. If we claim that certain conduct has a biological basis in our genes then we should give arguments how that could have survived under selective pressures. However, such arguments also have their limitations. They do not tell us how genes 'express' themselves under the influence of interaction between genes among each other and with the environment, inside and outside the body. Genetic arguments in the sense of arguments in terms of genes are not yet genetic arguments in the sense of how conduct develops. Social and cultural conditions can further, constrain or bend the expression of genes individually and in combination with each other. As Maxine Sheets-Johnstone (2008, p. 236, footnote 15) said it: 'What is evolutionarily given is culturally played out'. This confirms the importance of education for moral conduct, and the importance of institutions. There are also implications for the role of culture in the conduct of adults. Earlier I indicated how demagogues can whip up suspicion, prejudice and hatred against outsiders on the basis of ethnic or religious sources of emotion. In the interaction between genes and culture there are roots of both good and evil.

Let us return to the discussion of the viability of altruism. We can and do set up institutions for the detection and punishment of opportunists, by means of the law and its agencies. Those institutions are paid from collective means (tax). Thus we are not entirely dependent on the detective skills and voluntary sacrifice of altruists to fight defection. Such institutions, however, are seldom watertight, and instincts can sneak their way through the gaps. But then we also have ethics and morality. In this book I try to develop an ethic of other-directedness. But that also will not be entirely up to the force of instincts. Let us therefore look a little more deeply into the interaction between instincts and culture.

Sheets-Johnstone (2008) gave a closer argumentation for the cultural elaboration of instincts. The human being has a genetically determined inclination, an instinct, for tuning and empathy to others, as a possible basis for benevolence, the realization of which depends on how children are cared for and how they are educated. At the same time from fear of death people have the inclination to invent and follow myths of immortality. It is not clear whether this also is embodied in genes or is a cultural outcome of self-consciousness. The inclination or instinct towards myth can be hijacked for violent aggression to groups with competing myths, as discussed previously. Also, it seems that the human being also has a genetically determined inclination towards male-to-male competition and surrender to the winner. We see this in everyday life in the monkey business of corporate boardrooms. That instinct also can be captured to enforce submission and loyalty 'to the alpha male'.

An instinctive potential for empathy is trained and brought to bear in the social context of child care shared between mother and grandmothers, aunts and siblings, where the infant has to observe, interpret and assess expressions and actions. Here also childcare is crucial for otherhumanism.

In a further elaboration of the urge towards myths of immortality Sheets-Johnstone emphasizes, and here we are dealing with something that is often neglected, that in people the primordial awareness of the body as vulnerable and mortal evokes an existential anguish, and a strong urge to take refuge in ways to circumvent or bend that anguish, in myths of immortality and corresponding rituals and sacrifice, in the worship of forebears, spirits or gods, and belief in a hereafter, or in ideologies in which the human being thinks it is able to transcend itself in dedication, self-sacrifice even, to something bigger than itself and than life, more durable than itself, such as national identity, fascism or communism. Is that what happened in former Yugoslavia, on the basis of sentiments that went back to a lost battle against Ottoman Muslims 600 years ago? Such events contribute to my deep suspicion of vertical transcendence. Killing others in name of a myth of the superiority and immortality of a nation or ideology engenders feelings of immortality by proxy, and legitimates cruelty.

This goes further. Geometry, abstraction, universality, generality, spirituality, reason, clarity and light, as in the Enlightenment, are sought, I propose, for their association with the immortal, the timeless, the unchangeable and incorruptible. They are cousins of God and the immortal soul. This goes back, of course, to Plato and his ideas, and persists all through the history of philosophy.

They are also associated with the masculine. Men have always managed to appropriate them. Finesse, ambiguity, individuality, specificity, complexity, entanglement, concreteness and context dependence are associated with the contingent, unstable, fickle, dark, ambiguous, vulnerable, impure, corporeal, earthly, which are all attributed to the feminine. That feeds the distinction between on the one hand culture, which produces abstraction, categorization, universals, reason, clarity etc. and on the other hand nature that is dark, unpredictable, ambiguous, irresponsible, erratic, arbitrary and dangerous. Culture (and the male) is there to subdue nature (and the feminine). Men are afraid of women as they are of death. Is this connected to Schopenhauer's misogyny?

As indicated earlier, in the chapter on language, according to Sheets-Johnstone (2008) the evolutionary inheritance of man-man competition, as part of sexual selection, found also in animals, is still found in an inclination of men to compete in order to gain the upper hand in power and access to females. With animals the urge of competition often leads to violence, though dominance and submission of their victims is the aim, not their death. However with animals also there is a certain relish in the exercise of violence. Now according to Sheets-Johnstone in contrast with animals in human beings the urge to compete for power and submission has been hijacked in several ways. A more benevolent form is competition in sport and games. We also encounter it in the urge towards status and power in organizations, markets, politics and science. Perhaps here lies the source of Nietzschean will to power. It also seems to lie at the root of markets and competition in the economy. Who obtains the highest bonus? The other side of the urge is to submit to the winner. Does this connect with Nietzsche's 'slave mentality'? Does this also bring members of supervisory boards to submit to excessive urges of the managers

they are supposed to supervise to expand and to take risks, and to tolerate unproductive acquisitions?

More ominously, and of greater systematic importance, in the present book, is the mobilization of this urge to compete and then submit to the winner, complementing the urge discussed above towards the defence and celebration of myths of immortality in defending faith, culture or political ideology, in blindly following the leader. The ruthlessness of the leader does not reduce this, by making the leader suspect, but enhances it, in establishing his alpha status.

The idea is that here, in these mutually reinforcing urges, lie the roots of mass slaughter and persecution through the ages. From battles between tribes to defend the spirits of forebears, through crusades and pogroms, 20th century wars for the sake of fascism and communism, ethnic and religious barbarity in former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Congo, Islamic terrorism and military intervention in Irak. This descent of violence runs through the male but women goad and cheer the men along.

In sum, it seems that here we are facing a pitch black syndrome of a genetic endowment for in-group loyalty combined with out-group discrimination, a thirst for vertical transcendence in myths of immortality, and cultural exaptation of male-male competition.

Development

Now I turn to the positive side: how can instincts be guided in a benevolent direction, in education. For the positive side of culture in the form of literature (including plays, opera, film, popular culture) I refer back to the earlier discussion in this chapter.

Next to drives of selfishness, dominance, submission and violence people also have natural roots of empathy and trust, in processes of mutual adjustment between selves. This can be nurtured in parent-child relations, in child's play and education. This is of crucial importance for the viability of otherhumanism, and I will again enter upon this, using the work of Sheets-Johnstone (2008).

As already indicated in the Chapter 5, according to Sheets-Johnstone attunement is built up in rough and tumble play where by bumping into each other children explore the vulnerability and robustness of their bodies, and thereby that of others. This is no random, senseless activity. It helps children to engage in attunement and thereby develop the capability of empathy.

According to Sheets-Johnstone infants have a natural inclination of openness to other beings, shown in a smile that they offer early, as an expression of pleasure. Children also have a natural disposition to play, which gives a basis for creativity as a spontaneous urge, not aimed at self-interest or dominance. On the other hand according to Sheets-Johnstone children also have a natural startle reflex when confronted with unusual events or appearances, in 'stranger anxiety', as a normal disposition to flee or defend, from an awareness of vulnerability. This feeds fear, which first can yield a reflex to retreat, but can also be transformed into anger and attack on the source of fear. Thus there is a natural disposition to openness and benevolence as well as rejection and aggression. In personal development, both can be stimulated and developed as well as suppressed.

I disagree with Sheets-Johnstone where she makes a stark contrast between child's play and competition between adults. Of course they are different, but I think they are

also related. Sheets-Johnstone's view is as follows. While empathic understanding is supported by child's play, it is drowned out in competition that is 'one-dimensionally self-interested' and aimed at 'winning, winning at any price' (p. 242). According to Sheets-Johnstone, a premature shift from child's play to adult competition 'shunts their attention from the care and survival of others in concert with their own to a quest for dominance over others' (p. 247). I think that here child's play is romanticized and competition receives too dim a view. In the relevant literature opinions vary on how far the 'rough and tumble play' can also be competitive and aggressive, aimed at dominance or fighting to win. If male-male aggression were indeed instinctive, as Sheets-Johnstone argues elsewhere, wouldn't it show early, also in child behaviour? During play children seem to be able to easily shift to competition, and outside intervention is often needed to revert to play. And according to Sheets-Johnstone's own analysis, empathy only develops later, after bodily attunement in rough and tumble play. It seems clear that in play children not only explore the boundaries of safety and vulnerability of their bodies and those of others, but also the boundaries of pain by accident and hurt by purpose, dominance and submission, give and take, and lay the basis for the exercise of 'voice', in the expression of protest and resistance, and negotiation of the terms for resolving conflict. Thus they learn the scripts of both collaboration and competition.

Conversely, adult competition also has its benevolent side. It can express a joy of challenge and response; it can lead to creativity and new insight and to new ability of empathy and the resolution of conflict. There can be mixes of competition and collaboration. Rivalry can be playful, even benevolent.

There is an important connection between play/exploration and learning/innovation. In the chapter on cognition I argued for a 'cycle of discovery', in which a playful disposition to apply existing practices in new contexts (*generalization*) plays a crucial role. In contrast to sport, in play there are no prior, externally imposed rules, and rules are made as part of the play, and this gives room for exploration. Exploration and innovation require a loosening of rules and certainties. In exploration there is surprise that is part of play, and can generate laughter, but there is also an increased risk of vulnerability that can be source of crying. Exploration can arise from play but also from pressures of competition or survival. Thus they can lie close to each other, no matter how different their patterns of movement and expression may be.

Thus I propose that the opposition between play and competition is a false one, from childhood onwards, both in fact and in theory. Play can consist of shifting combinations of rivalry and collaboration. A boundary is crossed when fear shifts into anger and aggression, and competition turns into battle.

This issue, which merits much more phenomenological research, reflection and discussion, is important here, in this book, to establish the connection between the flourishing of life and benevolence.

In sum, from evolution we have inherited natural capacities for empathy and benevolence, and loyalty to groups, as well inclinations to egotism, defence of our resources, and will to dominate others, with use of violence, particularly against outsiders. Both instincts can be enhanced and curtailed by cultural, social and institutional conditions, in education and schooling. Otherhumanism is both viable and vulnerable.

How far does the art of trust go?

After the question what obstacles and aids for otherhumanism we have been endowed with in evolution and personal development, now the question how far it can work in practical interaction between self and other. That depends closely on the opportunities and limitations of trust. Earlier, in the chapter on otherhumanism I gave a clarification of the notion and the practice of trust. Here I explore in more detail the limits of it and ways in which people deal with it. Can trust exist, also in economic relationships, and how does that work?

Supposing we know the value of benevolence, and we want to commit ourselves to it, what if the other does not have the insight or the will? And if we can convince the other, with the arguments set out above, of the good that benevolence can bring, in self-realization and self-transcendence, is that enough for people to learn and practice it? Are they capable of it? When are they and when not? What then are the self and other up against? What risk is there that we become a victim or victimize others? What can we do about that? We may be sincerely convinced that we will honour commitments to others and yet succumb to temptations or pressures when those come near.

Earlier, in Chapter 9, I indicated that there are limits to trustworthiness, depending on temptations and pressures of survival. Unlimited resistance to that is too much to ask, and wisdom requires that we face it, and are able to understand and forgive people when they cannot resist the pressure. That is part of the required empathy. We can, however, resist temptation to some extent and discover that with that we can gain more than we lose.

It has repeatedly been shown in experimental game theory that in fact people more often go for fair solutions than for individually optimal outcomes. A classic case is that of the *ultimatum game*. Suppose one has 10 euros to share between self and other, one has to offer the other a share and if the other accepts one can keep the rest but if he/she rejects it one gets nothing. The individually optimal solution is to offer little, because for the other it is always better accept and get something than to refuse and get nothing. In fact, however, people mostly opt for the 50/50 solution, more or less.

Earlier I showed the importance of openness for trust and for the relation between self and other more generally. However, if openness is imposed, in a demand for transparency, that is seen as a show of distrust. That is tricky because distrust evokes reciprocal distrust, in a vicious circle where distrust escalates. Furthermore, an increase of rules and controls reduces intrinsic motivation, and that motivation reduces the need for rules. The more rules there are, the less the inclination to feel responsible for what has not been regulated. Hence here also a vicious circle of rules that evoke dodging behaviour that necessitates further rules. Rules cannot in practice rule everything. Professional practice is too rich and variable, in its dependence on context and corresponding needs to adjust, which contributes to its quality, to allow for canonical, i.e. complete and exact rules. Openness should be as much voluntary as possible. However, that must be earned by the controller by not in the first instance using the openness as a basis for administering blame but to give room for repair and learning to lessen future failure. Granting professional leeway, to be earned by voluntary openness also concerning one's errors, is part of what is called 'horizontal control', which contributes to the practice of horizontal transcendence.

Benevolence can be false, insincere, as a pose to avoid conflict and to present oneself better than one is, perhaps from cowardice, lack of genuine commitment to the function one has or the organization where one works, or the relationship one is engaged in, lack of self-confidence or a narcissistic urge to self-confirmation. Criticism is not voiced but finds its way in indirect sanctions or in passing the problem unto a third party. The other then has no grip on what is happening and no opportunity to defend him/herself or improve his or her conduct. The penalty for such insincere behaviour is loss of intentional trust that is difficult to repair. It is questionable whether this penalty is sufficient to prevent such insincerity. Fashionable rhetoric of trust can increase it, in pretence of trust against all odds, which reinforces the existing inclination to narcissism (Lasch 1991). Thus it is possible that an emerging rhetoric of trust flips into a massive loss of trust. This accentuates the requirement of openness and 'voice' for trust and the insight that trust is not being nice to each other but also of setting each other right with criticism or complaint precisely because there is trust.

The other must also be given the opportunity to say no to a relationship with me, and to end an existing relationship, no matter how much I think that would be to his own disadvantage. The decision is up to the other. Without such opportunity for 'exit' trust would entail slavery and power gone wrong.

However, there are hard, aggressive and soft, benevolent forms of exit. In the hard form one prepares one's defection in silence, to prevent the other from blocking exit, and one drops the bomb at the moment of exit. The soft form is to employ voice even in exit. One announces exit amply ahead of time, with the offer to jointly prepare measures to minimize damage for the other and help him to go on. Of course the other's emotions of loss may impede that.

Well known is the asymmetry between a mind frame of gain and one of loss. In the sight of impending loss people often go to further extremes of conduct than when the perspective is one of gain. If a partner defects with great loss for the other, the latter may resort to expensive lawsuits without any chance of success. This implicit threat tends to stabilize relationships: those who suffer loss will go to greater extremes to keep the partner than the partner will do who wants to exit from the relationship for greater gain.

As discussed in Chapter 9, social psychology shows that in making their decisions people employ a repertoire of decision heuristics. Those yield prejudice and impulsiveness that disturb trust but can also lead to continuation, stabilization of relationships, to continue relationships in spite of impulses to end them. In the chapter on cognition I discussed scripts. Once the script of a relationship has been established events are interpreted in terms of that script, and this anchors conduct.

Lack of self-confidence, fear of being the weakest party, can yield excessive distrust and breed an expectation of opportunism that can easily be confirmed when something goes awry, because of the causal ambiguity of trust discussed earlier. When something goes awry this can be interpreted as deliberate opportunism rather than an accident, shortfall of competence or lack of attention or dedication. Again we see how important openness is, in which the other explains what and why something goes wrong before the rot of suspicion sets in. Third parties also can help to resolve causal ambiguity. On the other hand an excess of self-confidence can lead to a neglect of relational risk.

As also indicated earlier, benevolence and empathy are physically enabled by the operation of mirror neurons and oxytocin. Of the latter it has been shown that it increases

trust exhibited in a greater willingness to incur relational risk, and not by merely reducing the avoidance of risk^{vii}. It has also been shown that cooperative behaviour yields activation of brain areas involved in the generation of dopamine and pleasure behaviour.

Summary

In sum, there are factors that support benevolence, empathy, loyalty and ‘voice’, as well as factors that trigger concern for the self and ‘exit’. This is what one would expect, and is indeed what is needed to allow for both flourishing of the self and benevolence, for elements of both Nietzsche and Levinas. Earlier I indicated that otherhumanism does not demand that the self submit itself unconditionally, as Levinas proposed. We are reminded of Nietzsche’s condemnation of weaknesses of compassion that block realization of potential, breed mediocrity or give an excuse for it, and then lay the blame on the other. The relation between self and other is full of both attraction and repulsion, commitment and freedom, compassion and rivalry. That is both the predicament and the opportunity for human being.

Perhaps the most important thing is to resist the instinct to get carried along with solidarity within a closed group to the point of considering it right, or a duty to the group, even a sacred duty, to discriminate outsiders, harm or even kill them ‘to protect the group’. We should break the borders, open the group, and let the instinct for solidarity flow outside.

Let me summarize the good news. Otherhumanism is not hopeless. We are not empty-handed. We can build on a range of foundations of benevolence.

It helps that we have mirror neurons as a neurological basis for empathy.

It helps to develop empathy in the care and education of children.

Perhaps having a pet is an exercise in non-verbal communication.

We have no free will in the sense of full conscious control of our actions, but conscious thought and reason can influence it, in anticipation of consequences, in debate with others, and in evaluation of the outcomes of actions, in the development of our future dispositions.

Literature helps as an exercise in empathy, a moral laboratory, simulation of the possible consequences of actions, celebration of individuality and delivery from the tyranny of universals.

We can, in literature or our surroundings, find heroes or sages that provide exemplars of the virtues of benevolence, empathy, honesty and altruism while radiating the flourishing of their lives.

It helps that collaboration with others who think and feel differently gives economic advantage in learning and innovation.

It helps that complex societies cannot function and survive without trust, and collapse when trust does. Without trust even language would not work.

It helps that in economics and psychology there are factors that stabilize relationships, in spite of misleading economic rhetoric that celebrates egotism and maximal flexibility of relationships.

It helps that from evolution next to an instinct to guard our resources for personal survival we also have an instinct for altruism, for satisfying moral codes and some ability to identify trespassers. We have shame for bad conduct. The dark side of that is that it

may be limited to one's own group and also yields the potential to be mobilized in violent hatred towards outsiders.

We can develop the art of trust, in openness, voice, voluntary transparency, granting the benefit of doubt, give and take, and allowing room for intrinsic motivation by which one can relax rules.

We can stimulate the development of go-betweens who are masters in the art of trust.

As pleaded by Nussbaum (2006) we could consider to institute a social service, instead of military service, in which young people are obliged to work for a while in care, for example, as an exercise in empathy and benevolence, and to learn that tax spent on care is money well spent. This may also contribute to a solution of the shortage and high cost of personnel in that area.

The crunch

What when it comes to the crunch? Where does otherhumanism stall and fall? What if the other demands compassion for which the self must relinquish the realization of its own potential? When a spouse no longer hears any music in the marriage but wants to spare the children from the anguish of a divorce? I don't know the answer and I doubt that there is any universal answer. Perhaps there is the possibility of a voice mode of exit. Staying together may be worse for the kids, when antipathy turns into venom.

Realization of the self is not necessarily at odds with commitment to the other, and self-transcendence may require it. Compassion can contribute more to elevation of the soul than extrication of the self for one's solitary striving for it. But it depends on the motives of the other. It may be, as Nietzsche indicated, that the other has perverse motives in moral coercion of compassion, is lost in envy, vengeance for own weakness, will to dominate, or narcissistic manipulation. When none of that is the case, and suffering is deep and sincere, the self can feel itself compelled to compassion and achieve spiritual growth from it. Nietzsche rejected the avoidance of all suffering because suffering can be part, perhaps is an unavoidable part, of the development and transcendence of the self. And if that applies to one's own suffering, why not also for the suffering of the other? By accepting, adopting the suffering of the other, with the commitment of all means, one may elevate the self more than by engaging in battle by and for oneself.

But what if the other has no insight or feeling for the beneficence of benevolence, or is overwhelmed by fury, an irresistible urge to manipulate, dominate, conquer, persecute, violate, maim or kill? One can rationally try 'tit for tat' or 'forgiving tit for tat'. In the end one may only be able to resort to acceptance of death, as a liberation.

Recall the story of the master and the slave. In the end the master is the loser. He can afford to impose his will, indulge in coercion, even cruelty. and thereby lacks the opposition needed to test and correct the self and learn. The slave becomes a master in empathy and adjustment, clever in manipulation, avoidance and withdrawal into freedom of thought. At death, an suppressive master is caught in the terror of his void; the slave is released from the plenitude of his suffering.

What, then, if one is overwhelmed by terror, persecution and slaughter? What is the force of otherhumanism in the face of such inhumanity? What when one is overwhelmed

by contingency in an airline crash? I have no right or basis for opinions here, since I haven't experienced either. Perhaps I would burst into prayer to a non-existent God.

ⁱ Multiple dimensions of utility can, for example, lead to intransitive preferences

(Nooteboom 1984).

ⁱⁱ Here I follow the argument from Emile Durkheim, with his notion of *organic solidarity*.

ⁱⁱⁱ I say this in French to honour the French philosophers who pleaded for difference:

Foucault, Deleuze, Derrida, Irigaray, Glucksmann, ...

^{iv} More technically, in terms of scripts: a different filling in of a node of the script, a change in the order of nodes, introduction of a node from a different script.

^v For an empirical test, see Klein Woolthuis et al (2011).

^{vi} While on the individual level cognitive distance lies in differences between cognitive frames, on the level of organizations it lies in differences in organizational focus.

^{vii} Kosfeld et al. 2005, quoted in Hurford 2007, p. 327.