Varieties of Reenchantment in a Disenchanted World

Abstracts (Thursday 6 December)

The Experience of Enchantment

Patrick Curry, independent scholar

In this paper, I begin with a working definition of enchantment, namely as an experience of wonder which is susceptible to degrees of intensity, culminating in what I call 'radical enchantment'. I contrast it with will, especially the will-to-power, and thence programme. I also reject causal explanation in favour of understanding, associated with Ludwig Wittgenstein's advocacy of 'description', and I call for an effort to identify and respect what makes enchantment unique, which entails resisting efforts to reduce it 'up' (to God), 'down' (to neurophysiology) or 'sideways' to the sublime, the uncanny, Romanticism, etc.

In the main part of the paper, I quote from three personal accounts of enchantment (two autobiographical and one fictional): Henri Alain-Fournier's encounter with Yvonne de Quiérecourt, Aldous Huxley's encounter with a vase of flowers, and J.R.R. Tolkien's account of Frodo's encounter with Lothlórien. These are supplemented by other, briefer ones by Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Rainer Maria Rilke, Karen Blixen and myself.

From each of these I infer and discuss some characteristics and dynamics which I suggest are integral and indispensable to understanding enchantment, namely, in sum, that it is fully relational (in both directions between the two parties involved), wild (and as such, ecological), ontological (more than epistemological), metaphoric (but nonetheless embodied), fateful (even if rejected), 'concrete magic' (Max Weber's term) – i.e., both contingent/ contextual, and therefore passing, but also deeply and ineffably mysterious and 'timeless' – and paradoxical vis-à-vis Aristotelian logic, which paradoxicality I argue (supported by D.W. Winnicott) should be respected rather than resolved. I also draw upon Tolkien's rich understanding of *Faërie* and, following his student W.H. Auden, I distinguish between true and false enchantment.

Negatively, enchantment is, I maintain, non-Platonic, non-Cartesian and non-modern, understanding modernity as a mode and sensibility defined by its central project, the 'rational mastery of nature' (Val Plumwood) to which disenchantment is central.

Scholars who inform in my analysis, in addition to Weber, Tolkien, Wittgenstein, Ricoeur, Auden and Winnicott, include Max Horkheimer and T.W. Adorno, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Martin Buber, Jan Zwicky and Henri Bortoft.

In the final section I consider whether the world is in fact disenchanted, including the operations of the 'Megamachine' (Lewis Mumford) and the reasons for its programme of disenchantment. I also discuss (following Weber) the *sine qua non* for disenchantment, the belief that 'all things can be mastered by calculation'. This analysis requires distinguishing between enchantment (which is wild and therefore cannot be managed or manipulated) and glamour (which can), with the latter playing a central role in the production of profitable false enchantment.

Finally, I consider the implications of the preceding discussion for 're-enchantment', focusing on the strictures that follow from enchantment's non-modern dimension. There is no algorithm for enchantment, for example, nor method; nor *can* there be. I close with some remarks about what *can* be done to encourage and defend enchantment.

Throughout this paper, I identify challenges for those who are experiencing enchantment, or have done so. By implication and extension, upon pain of reductionism, these are also challenges for scholars and students of enchantment.

Detachment and Attention

Rob Compaijen, Protestant Theological University

In this talk I aim to do three things. *First*, I will try to make sense of the notion 'disenchantment'. *Second*, I will formulate a critique of the disenchantment narrative. And *third*, I will attempt to understand reenchantment in terms of attention.

In the first part I will attempt to establish the idea that 'disenchantment' does not describe the world, nor a supposedly altered condition of the world, but – instead – that it denotes an *experience* of the world. When we look at textbook examples of disenchantment – the realization that there is no God who is involved with this world, the realization that there are no human values, the realization that there is no meaning to anything that happens, etc. – it might seem as if what is at stake in disenchantment is of an ontological nature. Certain things which we earlier believed to be there, in the world, have now turned out to be non-existent. While this way of looking at disenchantment is not false, I believe that we should go deeper to understand it accurately. That is, I think we should attend to the radical change of perspective that is behind such altered (ontological) beliefs. As Weber and others have noted, disenchantment is induced by the coming into existence of the point of view of modern (natural) science. As Arnold Burms has pointed out, disenchantment is, ultimately, an *experience*: the unnerving experience that the world of human values and meaning is not mirrored in the picture of the world that modern (natural) science provides us with. Through modern (natural) science we have come to learn a perspective on the world that is radically detached. It embodies a point of view that is radically outside of the realm of human experience. Given these facts, disenchantment should be understood as the experience of the loss of the concerned, engaged standpoint that allows us to experience the world as meaningful, or in moral or religious terms.

In the second part I will try to criticize the cultural tendency that informs the narrative of disenchantment. The mode of critique that I will develop argues that the detached standpoint that induces disenchantment is not adequate with regard to the phenomena that it seeks to disenchant. (From here on I will focus on the phenomenon of moral experience.) I will argue that the detached standpoint is, first, not adequate to understand ourselves as moral beings, and, second, not appropriate for our attempts to live well. With regard to the first point we should see that, as Bernard Williams has observed, a conception of human existence informed by the detached standpoint of, for example, theoretical physics would be wildly inadequate to account for the peculiarities of the kind of beings we are. With regard to the second point we should see that, as Williams has noted, ethical thought aims to construct a world that is *our* world – a world in which we have a cultural, social, and personal life. The 'building blocks' that constitute these kinds of worlds should be sufficiently particularized and meaningful to us as the kind of beings we are. It seems impossible that such building blocks can be provided by a standpoint that is radically outside of human practices.

I will also discuss a different strategy to criticize the narrative of disenchantment. This strategy seeks to establish that there are, for example, objective moral values. That is to say, this strategy disagrees with the conclusion of the narrative of disenchantment, but, importantly, shares with that narrative the idea that we should approach morality in a detached fashion.

In the *third* part I will focus on reenchantment. Given the kind of perspectival understanding of disenchantment I have put forward in part one of this talk, it will be unsurprising that I regard reenchantment as a returning to the concerned, engaged standpoint that is immersed in human experience and practices. One obvious, and important, worry with regard to the very idea of 'reenchantment' is the naiveté it seems to embody. Isn't it awfully naïve to want to return to an enchanted view of the world? I think it is important to recognize this worry, but believe that it can be met. First of all, the kind of reenchantment that I am interested in presupposes, and comes after, disenchantment. That is to say, it is a reenchantment that has gone through critique. If we insist on describing it as 'naïve', we should characterize it in terms of

a Ricoeurian '*seconde naivité*'. Second, the kind of standpoint that we return to in reenchantment has itself a critical moment build into it. In the last part of my paper, I will attempt to illustrate that standpoint and the critique it implies by turning to Iris Murdoch's discussion of attention in *The Sovereignty of Good*. Attention, on this view, implies a perspective on the world that aims to overcome the limitations and prejudices of one's standpoint by being accurate. Yet, the accuracy strived for should not be understood in terms of the kind of neutrality and objectivity that are characteristic of the detached standpoint. Rather, it is – as Murdoch, following Simone Weil, points out – an accuracy that is qualified by moral experience itself: it is letting the other person (or a situation) come forward as she is, by looking at her justly, lovingly, patiently.

Reenchantment in Ethics: Representational or Hermeneutical?

Michiel Meijer, University of Antwerp

In this paper, I consider two theories of reenchantment in ethics by contrasting "non-naturalistic" views with a hermeneutical approach to ethics.

Non-naturalists typically reject disenchanted "naturalistic" moral theories for being reductive or incomplete, in defense of a more "robust" moral realism. At first glance, non-naturalism seems a good candidate for moral reenchantment on account of its anti-naturalism. The aim of the first part of this paper is to show that this appearance is false. I argue that non-naturalists are held captive by a disenchanted mode of thought to such an extent that it remains doubtful whether their strategy can be seen as a reenchantment proposal at all. In the second part of the paper, I sketch the prospect of an alternative understanding of moral reenchantment that challenges non-naturalism, inspired by a hermeneutical approach to ethics.

In metaethics, the issue of how to understand morality is at root an epistemological one: How do moral thought and action relate to our experience and understanding of the factual world more generally? However, this question is inextricable from an ontological one: What is the place of value in a world of facts? Within this debate, non-naturalism is an increasingly popular position. Epistemologically speaking, non-naturalists characterize moral knowledge by the way in which our judgments represent (or fail to represent) objective moral standards. In so doing, they posit a range of moral facts that are placed ontologically not in our experience of the world but in the world itself.

I argue that the non-naturalist remains completely within the epistemological bounds set by what can be called a "disenchanted" background picture, and, moreover, that this has been a kind of captivity in the sense that it puts those who seek reenchantment in ethics at an *a priori* disadvantage. Put simply, the aim is to show that non-naturalists have been held hostage to a disenchanted conception of morality in their very attempt to reenchant it.

Against the background of this critique, I explore the possibility of a hermeneutical kind of reenchantment that starts not by positing moral facts but by positing human receptivity to moral meaning as a necessary part of human life. Hermeneutical reenchantment, then, emphasizes the essential role for the human subject in the understanding of values as properties in the world. Its central notions are moral experiences (rather than reasons), meanings (rather than facts), and interpretations (rather than representations).

I finally consider the implications of this shift from fact to meaning for moral understanding in general and our conception of moral agency in particular.

Alfred North Whitehead and the 'Reenchantment' of Science

André Cloots, KU Leuven/University of Antwerp

The 'postulate of objectivity' and the 'postulate of determinism' are two central methodological principles in classical modern science. The first means that all explanation should be in terms of antecedents, while the second implies a.o. the reversibility of time.
In all their consequences both principles lead to (and presuppose) a certain concept of nature: a nature in terms of mass-in-motion, lifeless, mechanistic and deterministic. But especially they lead to a 'bifurcation of nature' and to the theory of secondary qualities.

Recent developments within science itself have challenged several aspects of that concept of nature. So for instance the classical (Newtonian) concept of time and space are challenged by relativity physics, and the strict determinism by quantum physics. Both also have implications for the place of the subject, and both bring to the fore the problem of the arrow of time. In addition, the law of entropy implies the slow decay of energy. On the other hand, evolution shows an opposite movement, towards complexification. Not only developments in physics but also the theory of evolution is a real challenge for the Newtonian concept of nature: evolution shows nature as always becoming, always changing, unpredictable, and yet full of rational order.

The British-American mathematician–logician–physicist–philosopher Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947) has spent his whole life studying, teaching, admiring and yet criticizing modern science and its presuppositions. His main criticism is that modern science does not account for what we actually perceive. Some quotes can indicate what he is aiming at:

> For us, the red glow of the sunset should be as much part of nature as are the molecules and electric waves by which men of science would explain the phenomenon. (...) We are instinctively willing to believe that by due attention, more can be found in nature than that which is observed at first sight. But we will not be content with less. What we ask from the philosophy of science is some account of het coherence of things perceptively known. This means a refusal to countenance any theory of psychic additions to the object known in perception. For example, what is given in perception is the green grass. This is an object which we know as an ingredient in nature. The theory of psychic additions would treat the greenness as a psychic addition furnished by the perceiving mind, and would leave to nature merely the molecules and the radiant energy which influence the mind towards that perception (*The Concept of Nature,* 1920, 29 - 30).

> Thus nature gets credit for what should in truth be reserved for ourselves: the rose for its scent: the nightingale for his song: and the sun for its radiance. The poets are entirely mistaken. They should address their lyrics to themselves, and should turn them into odes of self-congratulation on the excellency of the human mind. Nature is a dull affair, soundless, scentless, colourless; merely the hurrying of material, endlessly, meaninglessly (*Science and the Modern World*, 1925, 54).

> Why should we perceive secondary qualities? It seems an extremely unfortunate arrangement that we should perceive a lot of things that are not there. (...) The modern account of nature is not, as it should be, merely an account of what the mind knows of nature; but it is also confused with an account of what nature does in the mind. The result has been disastrous both to science and to philosophy, but chiefly to philosophy. It has transformed the grand question of the relation between nature and mind into the petty form of the interaction between the human body and mind (*The Concept of Nature* , 27).

In his later philosophy Whitehead attempted to develop another view of nature, in which all actuality is conceived of in terms of passage: a passage of always different new centers of becoming, constituting themselves – organically - on the basis of what is given. The transfer

from one to the other is thought of in terms of 'aisthèsis' (feeling), in varying degrees and forms of complexity, but always with an emotional tone and thus also value-related. In this way, nature and man are no longer separated but in fundamental continuity. Not that nature is conceived in terms of man, but rather the opposite: man is conceived fully in line with nature. But a nature which is organistic all the way down, interweaving, throughout the whole of nature, the actual and the potential, past, present and future, fact and value, efficient causality and teleology, feeling and reason, the mental and the physical, the upward movement and the decay.

Is this reenchantment? It all depends on what one means by that word. And reenchantment of what: of nature? of science? of philosophy?

Hugo Ball: Dada as Reenchantment, Reenchantment as Dada

Marc De Kesel, Radboud University

What if reenchantment is already at work in the very heart of secularizing modernity? What if anarchistic modernity discovers in its core the bases of the religious tradition it vigorously rejects?

This is what Hugo Ball realized during one of the evenings in Zürich 1916, when he and his fellows put Dada on the scene of their *Cabaret Voltaire*. While reading an absolute nonsense poem – expressing a radical break with the entire tradition of western art and with modern culture in general – an experience came over him, which he could not describe but in religious terms. In his diary we read:

> But how was I to get to the end? [...] I began to chant my vowel consequences in a church style like a recitative, and tried not only to look serious but to force myself to be serious. For a moment it was as if there was a pale, bewildered face in my cubist mask, that half-frightened, half-curious face of a ten year old boy, trembling and hanging avidly on the priest's words in the requiems and high masses in his home parish. Then the lights went out, as I had ordered, and bathed in sweat, I was carried down off the stage like a magic bishop (Hugo Ball, *Flight out of Time. A Dada Diary by Hugo Ball*, edited with an introduction by John Elderfield, Berkely & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996, p. 71).

This experience is a real turning point in Hugo Ball's life and artistic career. It will lead him to writings that almost exclusively deal with religious themes and, more precisely, with the basics of Catholicism. Yet, his conversion to the Christian faith he had left already as a child, does not break with his Dada-experiments. He will never renounce the Dada of his wild years in Zurich 1916. Hugo Ball is very clear in this: Dada and Catholicism deal the same core.

My paper will develop its argument in three steps: I will start from an analysis of Ball's diary pages describing his re-conversion to Christianity. I will specifically seek for the precise connection that links anarchistic and modernist Dada to traditional catholic religiosity. It is remarkable to notice that the real core of the Christian doctrine is at stake here. Then, in a second step, I will argue that this is an exemplary case – although 'avant la lettre' – of what we nowadays call 'reenchantment'. The final part of my paper will reflect on the fact that not only Ball's 'reanchantment', but reenchantment in general has something in common with Dada. What is Dadaistic in today's reenchantment? It is an important question that shed a new light on what really is at stake in the contemporary discussion on 'enchantment', 'disenchantment' and 'reenchantment'.

Re-Enchantment & Jamesian Thinking

Kris Goffin, University of Geneva

I will argue that with disenchantment we have lost our trust in what I will call "Jamesian thinking".

I would like to distinguish between two approaches to figuring out what is true, what exists and what one believes: the Cartesian approach and the Jamesian approach. A process of requiring beliefs (or ideas about what is true and what exists) can be "reliable" in two distinct ways: it is reliable if it maximizes true beliefs and it is reliable if it minimizes false beliefs. We can call these conceptions of reliability respectively Jamesian reliability (maximizing true beliefs) and Cartesian reliability (minimizing false beliefs). (The idea to call these two kinds of reliability "Cartesian" and "Jamesian" comes from Godfrey-Smith, 1998.) The names of these two kinds of reliability obviously refer to the philosophical claims of William James (most importantly James, 1899) and René Descartes (most importantly Descartes, 1724).

The Cartesian way (minimizing false beliefs) is characterized by doubt and skepticism. In order to minimize false beliefs, one can only believe something if you have enough evidence that you are almost certain that what you believe is true. If you only believe things if you have sufficient evidence, you are unlikely to be false. This strategy, however, comes at a cost: you might miss out on valuable, important things.

This is the idea which James presents in his famous essay "The Will to Believe". The Cartesian might never find sufficient evidence for any religious or spiritual claim. For this reason, James argues that when the phenomenon that you want to make a claim about is as valuable as a religious or spiritual truth, you should believe it, even though there is not sufficient evidence for a Cartesian. This strategy is aimed at maximizing true beliefs instead of minimizing falsity. It comes with the cost of occasionally having a false alarm. If you believe things although you do not have enough evidence of, you might turn out to be wrong. But you will not miss out on valuable experiences that a Cartesian indeed might miss.

I hold that in human minds there is always a trade-off between Cartesian thinking and Jamesian thinking. The Cartesian thinking corresponds to the folk concepts of "rational" and "critical thinking", whereas Jamesian thinking corresponds to the folk concepts of "intuitive" and "emotional thinking": our "gut feelings" are Jamesian-reliable.

One way of characterizing disenchanted thinking is to say that it solely focusses on Cartesian reliability and not on Jamesian reliability. Skeptical, rational and critical thinking is in a disenchanted society much more appreciated than emotional and intuitive thinking.

Charles Taylor (2011) has argued that an important aspect of disenchantment is a change in our conception of the reality of value and meaning. In a disenchanted world human meaning is largely considered to be a mere projection of the human mind. This implies that human meaning does not belong to the mind-independent world, but it merely exists in our own minds and subjective feelings. Taylor points out that in an enchanted world human meaning was considered to be part of reality. Moreover, an individual mind and the outside world are considered to be intertwined and not strictly separated in an enchanted world.

And it is this aspect of disenchantment that motivated a number of people to look for a re-enchantment of the world. Some people disagree with the idea that there is a mind-independent world, which is totally devoid of meaning.

In my view, what is lost with disenchantment is our trust in the emotional and intuitive aspect of our minds. We only trust our beliefs about what is real and what exists, which are Cartesian-reliable. If one wants re-enchantment, one needs to equally trust Jamesian-reliable thinking. This idea is hopeful because it implies that we have not lost our ability to have access to an enchanted world, we just need the courage to trust the Jamesian aspects of our minds.

Normative Reenchantment and Liberal Naturalism

Thomas Spiegel, University of Potsdam

There is a close conceptual relation between scientific naturalism and the notion of disenchantment. Scientific naturalism, in its ontological flavour, states that only those things fundamentally exist which are countenanced by the natural sciences. This leaves only scepticism or outright rejection for certain items, things like magic, religious entities (God, angels), normativity, and the mind. This disenchantment of the world brings with it certain existential, ethical, and theoretical discontents, however, most notably the so-called placement problems (Price 2013) according to which naturalists have difficulties assigning those seemingly problematic items a place in the world without dispensing them altogether. As an answer to such discontents, some proponents (Griffin 1988) have called for a reenchantment of the world. Nevertheless, naturalists are largely correct in that at least certain forms of reenchantment of the world are either unwarranted and undesirable. This paper argues that there is a form of reenchantment which avoids certain problematic forms of reenchantment of the world while granting the existence of normativity and the mind as unproblematic. This normative reenchantment in the guise of the recently proposed liberal naturalism (De Caro 2018, Macarthur 2015, 2018) allows the naturalist to retain his or her initial insight that there is nothing "spooky" in the world while allowing the normative mind, thereby circumventing the difficult placement problems.

ANTWERP PHILOSOPHY LECTURE

Liberalism's Problem With Identity: Some Philosophical Reflections

Akeel Bilgrami, Columbia University

Bilgrami's lecture will characterize philosophically the concept of identity and then show why it poses a particularly difficult problem for the mentality of liberalism that has been defined by the classical tradition form John Stuart Mill to John Rawls.

Abstracts (Friday 7 December)

The Redemptive Paradigm: Reenchanted Politics in a Disenchanted World

Allegra Reinalda, KU Leuven

This paper attempts to bring the paradigm of redemptive politics into contact with the notion of disenchantment understood more generally as indicating a deficit of meaning in the modern world. This putative deficit of meaning can be internally differentiated into four main sites of critique. Firstly, a critique of temporality in modernity as being flat, unilinear or empty and secondly, a critique of modern political institutions as failing to generate meaningful forms of communal life. This second critique extends and deepens into a third site of critique, namely a social critique which bemoans either the loss of subjective depth through the massification of society, or the loss of authentic communality through individualism. These different critiques ultimately coalesce around the loss of the sacred, or put in terms used by Charles Taylor, the closure of the self and the social to a transcendent dimension. Redemptive politics does not, however, operate only at the level of critique. Rather it addresses itself to these supposed deficiencies of modernity as problems to be solved.

The main part of my paper investigates how redemptive politics, in contradistinction to the romantic critique of modernity, offers definitive solutions to these perceived deficiencies of meaning in modernity. At the centre of this paradigmatic shift away from democratic modernity stands a reconfiguration of the political. Namely, the redemptive paradigm addresses the purported emptiness of the modern political form by departing dramatically from its institutionalised forms. Instead, it places personalised authority at its core, the authority of the redeemer. The redemptive paradigm also represents a marked reorganisation of the social form of modern democratic societies insofar as it takes aim at the heterogeneity represented by the social plurality of groups as well as that upheld by the principle of individual autonomy. The inability of redemptive politics to envision a plural and conflictual social space necessitates that it formed new models for the social body. My discussion centres on the Jacobinist phase of the French revolution as one of the inaugurating moments of redemptive politics. Using the critical historical genealogies of Ferenc Feher and Charles Taylor, I discuss four particular features of Jacobinism; (1) the dictatorship of the state through a (proto)party, (2) the attempt to solve the conflict between the individual and society, (3) the colonisation of civil society through revolutionary morality and (4) the vestiges of traditional religious forms and rituals in the new revolutionary politics.

The final section of my paper addresses the question of whether redemptive politics reintroduces a transcendent dimension into modernity. That is, whether its 'solutions' to modernity's supposed deficits of meaning are able to reinstall a sacred dimension at the heart of the social. I do so by looking at Hannah Arendt's and Claude Lefort's accounts of totalitarianism.

Political Theology and Reenchantment: Odo Marquard and Jacob Taubes in the Context of a Politicized Secularization Debate

Sjoerd Griffioen, Rijksuniversiteit Groningen

The charged and multifaceted concepts of 'disenchantment' and 'reenchantment' contain a political dimension that requires critical analysis, which will be the aim of this paper. A recent debate on 'reenchantment' in the context of postsecularism – between the authors of *All Things Shining*, Sean Dorrance Kelly and Hubert Dreyfus on the one hand, and Charles Taylor on the other – will form the starting point of this investigation, because it illuminates the negative connotations of 'disenchantment' and the need to alleviate its supposed *nihilistic* consequences

through 'reenchantment'. Kelly and Dreyfus suggest that we must draw from the 'happy polytheism' of the Homeric age, whereas Taylor proposes that we must instead turn to the religious sources of post-Axial religiosity. What is however lacking in the discussion between Taylor and Dreyfus and Kelly is a systematic reflection on the *political* ramifications of either an affirmation of full-blown 'disenchantment' or the endeavor to 'reenchant' modernity.

The political ramifications of the conceptual duo 'disenchantment/reenchantment' become most clear when these concepts are applied to an analysis of a significant debate on the political meaning of 'secularization': the German debate on 'political theology'. The focus of this paper will lie on two prominent interlocutors – Odo Marquard and Jacob Taubes – who represent opposing positions within this debate: conservative modernism and revolutionary Messianism respectively. Their contributions reflect the polarized political landscape of post-1968 Germany. In this context, the positions of the erstwhile more progressive defenders of modernity such as Marquard and Hans Blumenberg had shifted towards political conservatism in reaction to what they perceived as a new threat to the condition of '*anti-absolutism*' that, in their view, essentially characterizes modernity. This threat was perceived to come from the Leftist, revolutionary political theology that Taubes represented.

First I will address the 'political polytheism' of Marquard. He maintains that the moral absolutism which he suspects behind Leftist political Messianism can easily turn, once it encounters disappointment, into a nihilistic negation the world. In order to counteract the sense of contingency and nihilism that is supposedly engendered by (all forms of) Messianism, Marquard launches a defense – foreshadowing Kelly and Dreyfus – of the essentially modern condition of pluralism and differentiation by depicting it as a beneficial return of polytheism, in which a 'separation of powers' protects the individual from the threat of the absolute power of the monotheistic God and of his purported political representatives: either authoritarian *or* revolutionary. Arguably, Marquard tacitly appropriates the function of *pre*-Axial, polytheistic religions, i.e. attributing stability and coherence to the social order by reenchanting or divinizing it, in order to neutralize the destabilizing effects of *post*-Axial monotheistic 'absolutism' – all in support of a post-metaphysical modernity.

Turning to Taubes, we will discover that he had already criticized the tendency – which he traces back to Nietzsche and Weber – of justifying the societal status quo by portraying it as 'fate', or as a 'natural' or semi-divine order, in a series of papers from the late 1950's to 1960's. Taubes argues that the attempt at *undoing* disenchantment (i.e. through reenchantment), which he would later recognize in the work of Marquard, lends itself to a 'reification' of the status quo that denies the positive, critical potential of this Weberian concept, which he connects to the emancipatory core of both the Enlightenment *and* Messianism. However, whereas Taubes' earlier work still displayed belief in the possibility of positive social change through revolutionary action, his later work takes on a more pessimistic tone: in a selection of articles from the 1980's, Taubes appears to have abandoned the notion that this world can be 'redeemed', and instead defends the continued viability of a Gnostic world-negation in favor of a wholly transcendent otherness.

In conclusion I will argue that a reflection on Taubes' critique of Marquard exhibits an essential ambivalence in both concepts of disenchantment and reenchantment. First of all, it will be shown that 'disenchantment' can both entail a *positive* 'liberation from illusion', and the *negative* sense of 'disillusionment' which can result in the nihilism that is reflected in Taubes' later work. It is against this type of nihilism that Marquard launches his 'defense of polytheism', which is functionally analogous to the plea for reenchantment found in Dreyfus and Kelly. Taubes' earlier work however helps us recognize that 'reenchantment', despite its initially amiable capacity to reattribute meaning to the world, also contains a possible danger. This danger arguably becomes manifest in Marquard's 'political polytheism', which is that it can lead to a 'reification' of a *potentially* oppressive status quo and to an exclusion of all kinds of critique, whether it be moderate or revolutionary. I finally suggest that, ideally, 'disenchantment' and

‘reenchantment’ should keep each other in check, but that to Marquard and Taubes this option was precluded by the polarizing tendency in both their accounts.

Reenchantment of the Individual Life. How Arendt and Ricoeur Can Make Us Jump Across the Heideggerian Abyss

Evelien Van Beeck, Radboud University

In this presentation I will approach re-enchantment as a possibility for a new beginning in life for the individual. This means that I will focus not so much on nowadays fashionable abstract-cultural theories of secularization but rather create room for a more psychological approach of dis- and re-enchantment. Nevertheless the two perspectives will proof to be closely interrelated.

As the individual gets more rational – due among others to growing up in a technological, scientific and a more densely populated world – she or he may loose the capability to experience the magical aspects of life, a capability which may also be necessary to experience sense and beauty in life. A merely rational life – if it ever exists, but even if this would not be the case, it remains a possibly dominant tendency in a life – might be a cold, colorless and superficial life. A life nobody really wants. The point I want to make is that it is this emptiness in the individual life which leads to the larger scale theories of cultural disenchantment and re-enchantment. The movement towards re-enchantment is not to be decried as a backdoor to a new religion of whatever kind but rather as a call to an individual turn to magic and meaning. That is, the popular philosophical theories seem in my eyes to be missing the point.

Every human life starts with enchantment. We come into this world with a certain trust and belief in magic that, however, we cannot but lose as we grow up. Every life suffers its great and small disappointments, sadnesses, griefs and pains. Thrown in this world without having asked for it, confronted with events thwarting – or even corroborating – our impulses and wishes, we may experience our lives as streams of events we are not in charge of, give us no clear indication where to go and frustrate our ideas where to go. The confrontation with reality and our reflective, rational response to it may dispose us – to a higher or lesser degree but inevitably so – to disenchantment. This is what I would call ‘the disenchantment of the individual life’.

But – following Ricoeur – we, as capable human beings, are not obliged to accept this as a definite human condition. Born with the capability to start over and over again – as both Arendt and Ricoeur emphasize in reaction to Heidegger –, we have the capability and hence the choice and perhaps even the existential duty to embrace a perspective in life which focuses on natality rather than on doom, meaninglessness or death: that is, a perspective that stresses the beginning rather than the end. This change of perspective might ask for a ‘period of transition’ or a ‘between’ between past and future, old and new, not seldom provoked by a crisis intensifying the disenchantment and making it seem absolute and irremediable. Yet I will plea for a constructive and positive view on disenchantment, mainly by understanding disenchantment as a facilitator to put us on our way and a transition to authenticity in re-enchantment.

In this presentation I will thus firstly explain how to understand this disenchantment overcoming re-enchantment of the individual life in a philosophical way with the help of Ricoeur's concept of ‘second naivety’ and Arendt's concept of the ‘second birth’, both allowing a human being to experience a re-enchanted view on the world. And secondly I will trace back the fashionable analysis of re-enchantment as the back-door call for religion to the neglect of the call of the individual re-enchanted life.

Under the Spell of Technology's Disenchantment

Jonne Hoek, University of Twente

Contemporary culture is rife with technological complexities. The past few decades have seen developments that actively seem to debunk the idea that technology is somehow a straightforward means of bureaucratic control and propagating a unified, scientific worldview. Technologies are deregulating markets, morals, and politics, and have become a main vehicle for declaring a post-truth era. Technologies have brought along Brave New Worlds (plural) both fascinating and terrifying in their (bio)ethical and political implications. No wonder such developments have led to the appearance of new cultural expressions resonating with the magical, symbolical, and religious in strange new ways. But can technology itself also be considered an agent of re-enchantment? Here, I will address this question by comparing three voices in the philosophy of technology on the issue.

Technologies are today no longer analyzed as a vehicle of disenchantment. Over the past half century, philosophers of technology have steered away from the image of technology being a calculative, controlling, and rationalizing application of scientific knowledge. In the early 20th century, so called 'classical' philosophies of technology were still looking for such technological essences, transcendental in their style of analysis (and arguably somewhat romantic in sentiment) they saw a technocratic demonism at work in the development of, for instance, early mass industrialization. (Jaspers, Heidegger, Ellull) Such philosophies are now considered outdated and opposed with an anti-essentialist, anti-transcendentalist 'turn to the empirical'. (Achterhuis) Technology is taken as inherently pluriform, contingently attached to customs of practice and contexts of use. (Latour, Ihde, Winner)

Looked at from this angle, technology might not have been a force of disenchantment and de-sacralization after all, so for instance Bronislaw Szerszynski argued in his widely acclaimed *Nature technology and the sacred* (2005). Our ideas of a high-tech future might be better understood as fusing rationalist enlightenment ideals with their romantic counter movement, so Mark Coeckelberg specified in his *New romantic cyborgs* (2015). And shouldn't we rather see in technology the perpetual reinvention of human's limits, a daring quest for transcendence so to speak, rather than a safe return within the boundaries of immanence, so Peter-Paul Verbeek and Ciano Aydin put forward (2015)?

These three scholarly accounts, so I will show, adhere to different concepts of history, they refer to different notions of (dis)enchantment, and, ultimately, invoke different notions of the sacred. Their answers to the question whether and how technology is an agent of re-enchantment will therefore diverge. Uniting them still, however, is the debunked image of technology being disenchanting – now itself considered as a type of magical fiction we ought to rid ourselves of. This feature, so I will argue, still commits these authors to a variant of the disenchantment thesis, albeit indirectly. For in promoting attention for the empirical practices of technological use over and against transcendental and essential conceptions thereof, they are bound to dispel some of technology's transcendent splendor as unreal.

I suggest, moreover, that this might hinder current philosophies of technology to do justice to relevant imageries and symbols in contemporary culture that explicitly invoke ideas, ideals, and essences of the technological (both in its negative and positive variants). Surely, technology's workings ought not be reduced to such preconceived ideas, but also technological practices – once established – do typically find expression in ideas and concepts that surpass immediate function and use. As regulative ideals these can importantly shape our future. Maybe, so one could argue, we even need such new symbolic orders for our technologized age. For even though technology did not bring us the dulling regularity and scientific clarity once prophesized it would, neither should its alternative course now be one of mere increase in empirical complexity and potential lines of discord.

Reenchanting Enquiry in a Disenchanted Scientistic World

Paul Giladi, Manchester Metropolitan University

The apparent force of the Placement Problem appears to lend considerable weight to philosophical projects such as reductionism, eliminativism, and instrumentalism. These theories, it is thought, are united by vocabularies and conceptual schemes better suited than their more metaphysically-inclined rivals to make sense of things, since reductionism and eliminativism are thought to be prices very much worth paying to avoid supernaturalism. I argue that the explanation for why the Placement Problem grips the philosophic imagination with such force is that rational activity is exclusively articulated in terms of the kind of inferential patterns definitive of analytical thinking, namely the kind of *disenchanting* thinking symptomatic of *Verstand*. This, in turn, leads to conceiving of the space of reasons and the space of nature as fundamentally in tension with another, and to regarding the manifest image and scientific image as metaphilosophical antagonists.

I argue that there is a significant conceptual parallel between Habermas's concerns about how modernity results in the colonisation of the lifeworld and my concern about how the hegemony of scientistic quantitative rationality encroaches on the territory of the space of reasons: for Habermas, the harm of the colonisation of the lifeworld – its disenchantment, so to speak – consists in how the domination of the sphere of cultural reproduction by instrumental reason leads to anomie. Prior to colonisation, the content of the lifeworld is informal and interpersonal. However, because communicative practices have now been supplanted with instrumental and strategic action, the grammar of the lifeworld has been skewed and perverted. Scientism can be conceived of as a partner concept of capitalism, not only by noticing how both scientistic varieties of naturalism and increasingly unfettered forms of market capitalism are historically paralleling one another, but also by noticing how scientism and capitalism are different yet logically bound instantiations of instrumental reason: scientistic varieties of naturalism are typified by systematic practices of nomothetic reason aimed at subsuming phenomena under the laws of fundamental physics; capitalism is typified by systematic practices of strategic reason aimed at subsuming phenomena under the commodity form.

The dominance of the sphere of cultural reproduction by instrumental reason parallels the dominance of the manifest image and the space of reasons by nomothetic reason: for example, the welfare state that is an essential institution of social democracy principally structures the provision of welfare under the framework of reifying capitalist practices: since the structure of social democracy is constituted by the systems of money (market capitalism) and power (the state), the provision of welfare will invariably fail to fulfil the function of mitigating conflict. Under the social-welfare state, there is little or no way to resist ideological encroachment and colonisation by systems, since what is the base of the societal superstructure is the capitalist mode and relations of production. If the base is constituted by systems, then the entire whole is vulnerable to encroachment by systems. Securing and protecting the lifeworld, therefore, is effectively impossible under the welfare state; equally, since the Sellarsian synoptic vision of *fusing* the manifest and scientific images is *primarily* structured by the comprehensively physicalist ontology of the ideal scientific image, the purely naturalistic vocabulary will invariably fail to fulfil the function of mitigating conflict with the grammar of the manifest image. Under the synoptic vision, there is little or no way to resist colonisation by the scientific image, since what is the base of the synoptic vision superstructure is purely naturalistic vocabulary. If the base is constituted by the comprehensively physicalist ontology of the ideal scientific image, then the synoptic vision is vulnerable to systemic encroachment by scientistic forms of naturalism. Securing and protecting the ontology of persons as rational agents and conceptual thinkers within the comprehensively physicalist ontology of the ideal scientific image of the world, therefore, is effectively impossible.

If one is to resist and eventually overcome scientistic forms of naturalism, thereby re-enchanting enquiry, one must develop speculative sense-making practices, in which hermeneutic power can be rooted in the *communicative power of discourse about sense-making*. Traversing this 'path of despair', as Hegel puts it, is progressively transformative, because debunking the *one-sided and one-dimensional* positivist framework in favour of a dialectical framework involves combatting and reversing the circulation of *epistemic* power. Specifically, one can never be 'at home in the world' if one accounts for nature and social relations in a state of 'mechanised petrification' in an 'iron cage'. This form of consciousness reveals how the autonomy and integrity of the manifest image/space of reasons are maintained *not at the expense of philosophical naturalism simpliciter, but only at the expense of scientism*.

Scientism vs. the Integrity of the Manifest Image

Filip Buekens, KU Leuven/Tilburg University

My target in this paper is scientism and its distinctively disenchanting effects on the Manifest Image. If science – perhaps not science as we currently have it, but some suitable successor of our current theories -- is going to tell us what really exists and what really matters (including the possibility that nothing really matters!), it must give an argument against what I will call the *global integrity* of the Manifest Image (MI) – the image we have of ourselves and others in a shared world, and an image in which conceptual resources to make sense of others and ourselves in that world, play a central role. If it would turn out that the conceptual resources on which we draw to make sense of each other in a shared world are deeply flawed, the Manifest Image collapses into a mythological picture we must eventually set aside in favour of the deliverances of the Scientific Image (SI). An *error theory* about (talk about) beliefs, desires, intentions and choices would be the result, perhaps coupled with the consoling idea that such talk creates benign but nevertheless profound illusions. Ironically, this picture is often supported by a distinctively *metaphysical* picture, the supervenience of the mental (and everything it involves) on the physical.

In the *first part* of my paper, I will show that the argument from supervenience of everything (the social, the psychological) on the physical is, as employed by scientists like Rosenberg (2018) is an empty move (Buekens 2018). For it to show that have any impact at all on the allegedly confused character of the Manifest Image, it must show that the concepts and habits with which we make intelligible ourselves in a shared world are (at least in principle) reducible to concepts and explanatory interests that wave together the scientific image or that the explanatory interests proper to the Manifest Image can be fully absorbed by physical explanations. Neither aim is feasible, however. The key argument against this disjunction is that legitimate *ontological* reductions and eliminations need not entail *conceptual* reductions. The conceptual scheme that constitutes large segments of the Manifest Image cannot be reduced to or eliminated in favour of the concepts the Scientific Image employs. The broad contours of this line of argument were developed in the philosophy of mind of Donald Davidson (1980) and John McDowell (1994).

In the *second* (and main) *part* of my paper, I provide an *additional* but largely neglected argument for the integrity of the Manifest Image. It explores a dialectical strategy first set out by Rudolf Carnap and developed by P.F. Strawson in 'Freedom and Resentment'. In 'Empiricism, Semantics and Ontology', a paper published in 1950, Carnap made a famous distinction between internal and external questions. Internal questions are asked *within* a linguistic or conceptual framework, and they receive straightforward answers based on what is going to count as evidence for or against those claims as laid down within the framework. External questions about the global status of the framework, raise legitimate pragmatic issues about the viability and usefulness of the concepts and epistemic strategies used within the framework. The external point of view cannot, however, raise and answer further theoretical questions. Such questions –

often metaphysical questions – simply become meaningless. On this picture, scientism can be seen as the tendency to raise general external questions about the Manifest Image, and to answer them in the negative, based on what scientific models tell us about 'what's really out there'. Psychologically, this gives rise to pessimism: the manifest framework is obsolete, corrupt; whole regions of concepts and clusters of beliefs must be given op, revised or replaced.

Many philosophers have resisted this picture. One influential example is Peter F. Strawson's dialectical strategy developed in 'Freedom and Resentment'. His particular brand of compatibilism, and the way he argued for its viability, harbours a key argument against those who dispute the integrity of the manifest image. Strawson argued that the internal point of view, in which we appear to others and ourselves as persons, objects of reactive attitudes and creatures for whom moral interactions (including assigning responsibilities, blaming practices and desert) cannot be substituted by a conceptual scheme that abstracts away from the reactive attitudes and sees us as creatures subject only to social, biological and ultimately physical processes.

Strawson's complex argument appealed to and brings to light a fundamental feature of the Manifest Image we have of ourselves: mistakes, errors, inapt judgments, and moral failures are to be identified against a background of successful actions, correct judgments and apt reactions. ('The abnormal cannot be the universal condition', as Strawson put it.) Strawson also identified cases where it *is* legitimate to abandon the internal or involved point of view: when persons are clearly incapacitated, we shift to a more objectifying attitude which allows us to looks for faults and breakdowns at the level of the enabling conditions of our manifest reactions. I argue that Strawson's *model* (the internal vs. external point of view, the global integrity of our Manifest Image of ourselves, conditions under which an investigation of neural, social or evolutionary enabling conditions of our moral scheme can become relevant) can be generalized into a more global picture of how we can reconcile the Manifest Image of our place in a shared world with insights in its neurological and evolutionary enabling conditions. Science can explain patterns of abnormal or deviant attitudes relative to ecological variables, but such explanations neither *justify nor rationally undermine* adequate, appropriate or apt manifestations of our mental economy and exercises of the Manifest Image. Since the the normal/abnormal distinction has its origin *within* the manifest image and science must rely on that distinction in order to study the underlying mechanisms that ground its manifestations, global debunking arguments cannot question the global integrity of our manifest image (Buekens 2010). Giving up the integrity of the Manifest Image is giving up a key source of evidence for our knowledge of its physical and neural enabling conditions.

In a final section I explain (but not justify!) the *psychological* impact of scientific theories and, more specifically, scientific models that depict us as physical creatures void of mental properties. One explanation is basically Humean: scientism is itself the product of a theoretical stance which, once are in the grip of it, seems to temporarily turn the Manifest Image into a mere illusion. But the theoretical stance can be adopted only temporary; its impressive power is a psychological effect comparable with the local psychological effects of entertaining skeptical or deterministic scenarios.

Value, Agency and Alienation

Akeel Bilgrami, Columbia University

Bilgrami's lecture will give an argument for the enchantment of the world by value and then draw consequences from the very idea of such enchantment for reconfiguring our political ideals.

Dangerous Concepts of Process: Hans Joas and the Grand Narrative of Disenchantment

Paolo Costa, University of Trento

The focus of my talk is the standard thesis (or theory or master narrative) of the *disenchantment of the world* (*Entzauberung der Welt*). I am going to discuss at length one of the few recent attempts to systematically deconstruct it in order to make room for an alternative view of the relationship between religion and the modern world.

This work of demolition was undertaken by a prominent German sociologist – Hans Joas – in his last bulky book: *Die Macht des Heiligen. Eine Alternative zur Geschichte von der Entzauberung*, whose fourth, more than 100 pages long, chapter is devoted to a meticulous analysis of Max Weber's narrative of disenchantment. Joas's book was published by Suhrkamp in Germany in October 2017, and will appear in English in 2019 (with Oxford University Press).

Before embarking in a systematic reconstruction of the counterargument put forward by Joas, I am going to precede the exposition with a condensed overview of its subject-matter from a non-specialist point of view that I will use as a background for the ensuing discussion. From this perspective, the disenchantment thesis appears as a self-referential claim that maintains something about the claimant, i.e. about *us*. It contends that we are disenchanted in so far as we experience whatever goes under the name of "enchantment" – let's call it the "religious" domain – as a peculiar field. Its peculiarity derives from the fact that religious people seem to admit a mysterious kind of causality in their dealings with their surroundings that does not belong in the realm of physical laws and efficient causes.

This is disenchantment from the object's side, as it were. From the subject's side, conversely, disenchantment is a specific stance, a way of relating to the world as a whole, that denies the world any independent power to bring about a cognitively justified state of overwhelming awe or terror in humans. Disenchantment, in this regard, appears as a condition of *disengagement* where a minded subject is faced by a mindless external reality and any emotionally charged property of what is out there is regarded as a projection of the (responsible) feeling being onto an unresponsive reality.

Prima facie, the transition from an enchanted to a disenchanted condition can be made better sense of if it is understood along biographical lines. In brief, we can account for this major shift by envisioning it as a Gestalt switch, on which a familiar story of growing up can be told. But it is precisely the sense of familiarity enveloping such teleological narratives of maturation that arouses the suspicion of scholars such as Hans Joas who are wary of accounts that appear too simple to be true.

"Disenchantment" is a term of modern coinage. As such, it makes sense only if embedded in some theory or historical narrative about religion's origins from a modern point of view. This is the main reason why Joas begins his investigation with a self-reflexive move whereby he shows, in the first three chapters of *The Power of the Sacred*, how the "*Geschichte von der Entzauberung*" is the late offspring of a new field of investigation made possible by the rise of the "secular option". This historical innovation went hand in hand with a new way of looking at "religion" as a contingent, natural, discrete human phenomenon susceptible of being investigated with standard scientific means.

This is the historical context where the master narrative of disenchantment took shape and became the most influential portrait of the place of religion in modern life. This is, however, also the context in which one can set oneself the goal of "disenchanting disenchantment" ("entzaubern die Entzauberung").

The ambivalence and open-endedness of the novel option are of crucial importance for Joas and bring to the surface its challenging character. In Chapter 4, following a trail already blazed by David Martin with reference to the secularization thesis, the German sociologist shows in details what "disenchanting disenchantment" boils down to in the last analysis. Schematically,

it amounts to: (a) Drawing attention to its extravagant influence on later understandings of the alleged decline of religion in modern societies. (b) Contrasting this hyperbolic impact with both the contingent emergence of the concept in Weber's oeuvre and its constitutive plurivocity, if not outright ambiguity. (c) Unpacking its plural meanings and showing that this plurivocity cannot be made coherent. (d) Unmasking the non-empirically grounded status of Weber's multilayered claim. (e) Conjecturing that "Weber at a certain point in his intellectual development [was] swamped or drowned in the varieties of his historical reconstructions and, as a consequence or a remedy to this fragmentation, [imposed] on his material certain [...] 'dangerous nouns of process'".

In conclusion, I will say a few words about the alternative to the *Geschichte von der Entzauberung* envisioned by Joas and take a look at its pros and cons.

Reenchantment: A Revival of Romanticism's Problem

Janneke van der Leest, Radboud University

We must regard reenchantment as a revival of Romantic reenchantment. During Romanticism reenchanting the world was a reaction against the Enlightenment. Today reenchantment is incorporated in the movement that has Enlightenment roots and that still disenchants the world: the neo-liberal system.

At the end of the 18th century there was a strong atmosphere of modernization among the intellectual elite in Europe. This enlightened environment was based on the overwhelming and liberated understanding that the human being could and must, by means of his own reason, understand reality, organize life and manage society. Neither state nor church, but *reason* had the final say. Philosophers and the cultural elite of the time were on the one hand enthusiastic about these developments in modern thought, but many of them were on the other hand very sensitive to critical voices that warned against a possible monopoly of reason and its negative effects. Those voices are known as 'the Romantics'. They disapproved the *exclusive* emphasis on universal reason and rationality and they reenchanted the world, romanticized it.

In other words: Romanticism was a movement from a disenchanted world – coursed by the Enlightenment – to a reenchanted one. Nevertheless many Romantics did not simply turn to the religious worldview of traditional religion. They discussed and represented various beliefs and philosophies of life – formulating a different relationship between the human, God, nature and the universe, such as pantheism, (post-)theism, deism, natural religion and atheism. Almost each one of them created a reenchanted world based on his/her individual love-hate relation to traditional religion.

Thus, the "disenchantment of the world" that Weber observed, had already started more than hundred years before he defined it. But also the reaction of reenchantment had already taken place before his definition of disenchantment. I like to lay bare that we nowadays are dealing with an on-going movement and an on-going countermovement, that are grounded in the same principles as from they rose: Enlightenment and Romantic thinking. This means we can observe a further development – from the Enlightenment onward – of the disenchanted world and as an answer to that, revivals of reenchantment.

The most striking difference of reenchantment nowadays with that of Romanticism is that today it is visible for everyone. During the last centuries Enlightenment philosophy and that of Romanticism slowly filtered through via a small elite group to eventually the democratized masses.

A second difference between the occurrences of reenchantment in the age of Romanticism and today is that reenchantment is presently incorporated in the leading system of the disenchanted world, that of neo-liberalism. The varieties of reenchantment are only possible within that system, not as an independent phenomenon.

I would like to take as an example of the on-going reenchantment in a further developing disenchanted world the idolatry for the artist. Byron and Beethoven were the first artistic heroes worshiped by *fans*. Those *geniuses* had a god-like status in a disenchanted world of the industrial revolution, wars and successes of science. Yet, in our further secularized society of today with a seemingly need for godlike figures, the reenchantment in the form of the artistic cult has grown to more huge proportions. If we regard heroic godlike pop stars we see parallels with Romanticism. We also notice that the amount of worshippers have grown from a relatively small elite group to all sections of the population. And we can notice that the worship of the *idols* is commercialised, directed by the neo-liberal spirit of the disenchanted world.

Religion Without Magic: Responding to the Natural World

John Cottingham, University of Roehampton

The idea that the scientific revolution 'disenchanted' the natural world is doubly inept, if taken to imply that the methods of scientific inquiry are inimical to responses of awe and wonder at the cosmos, or that science displaced a religious outlook principally defined by belief in magical or supernatural powers. Examining the shifting concept of nature before and after the early-modern period allows us to get past the unhelpful 'enchanted'/'disenchanted' antithesis and achieve a better understanding of what is involved in a religious interpretation of the natural world.