

## INDETERMINACY AND CREATION IN THE WORK OF CORNELIUS CASTORIADIS

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**ABSTRACT:** This article explores the notions of indeterminacy and creation in Castoriadis' work. The notions of indeterminacy and creation are examined in the light of Castoriadis' conception of Being as Chaos, which derives from his Logic of magmas that contradicts what Castoriadis defines as "ensemblistic-identitary Logic". The conception of Being as Chaos is connected with the notion of *otherness*, conceived as creation *ex nihilo*. Specifically, creation *ex nihilo* is analyzed in the context of Castoriadis' division of Being's multiplicity into difference and *otherness*. I will argue that Being's difference refers to the "ensemblistic-identitary Logic", while *otherness* comes up with a novel form of Being, identified as creation *ex nihilo*. Finally, *otherness* is considered in terms of Castoriadis' conception of time, by which *otherness* and, by extension, time itself, is associated with Castoriadis' notion of imaginary, as the latter unfolds in the social-historical field of mankind through the imaginary significations of society.

**KEYWORDS:** Castoriadis; Chaos; Indeterminacy; Being

### BEING AND CHAOS

The concepts of indeterminacy and creation constitute the basic characteristics of Castoriadis' Logic of magmas, which develops in contrast to the determinacy principle that rules "ensemblistic-identitary Logic". "Ensemblistic-identitary Logic" or, for brevity, ensidic Logic is a neologism of Castoriadis referring to a pattern of theorization that originates in Aristotle's Typical Logic, and is systematized by mathematics set theory, introduced by Cantor in 1894. In simple terms, set theory consists in the attempt to attribute determinate properties to determinate ensembles of elements or objects through the principles of Typical Logic. In contrast to this pattern of theorization, Castoriadis develops his Logic of magmas in order to surpass the

ensidic Logic. I must mention though that a thorough analysis of both ensidic Logic and Castoriadis' Logic of magmas is impossible in the contexts of this article. Suffice it to note that in Castoriadis' ontology Being is not a set or system of sets, as considered by set theory, but a magma, whose basic characteristics are indeterminacy and creation.

What is is not set or system of sets. What is is not fully determined. What is is Chaos, or Abyss, or Groundlessness. What is is Chaos with non-regular stratification. What is bears with it [*comporte*] an ensemblistic-identitary dimension – or an ensemblistic-identitary part everywhere dense (...). The non-determination of what is is not mere 'indetermination' in the private and ultimately trivial sense. It is creation, namely, emergence of *other* determinations, new laws, new domains of lawfulness<sup>1</sup>.

The concepts of indeterminacy and creation in the thought of Castoriadis echo the concepts of infinity and chaos in Anaximander and Isiodos respectively. Indeed, the way Castoriadis reads the abovementioned writers in his work *Ce qui fait la Grèce*<sup>2</sup> comes up to a reinterpretation of Being, according to which Being is an inexhaustible creation of infinite qualities and quantities of lifeforms. This reinterpretation reflects Castoriadis' own thought, in which it becomes quite clear that Being is neither a system nor a superset of sets. That is to say, Being is not fully determined, as presupposed by set theory. The ensidic dimension is dense all over Being, but it is neither single nor continuous; at least not in the sense of the determinacy principle. Being is basically Chaos or Abyss: "Chaos with irregular stratification: meaning that it includes partial «organizations», specific each time for the various strata we discover (discover / establish, discover / create) within Being"<sup>3</sup>. Being is a multidimensional reality, one stratified multiplicity with specialized "organizations", wherein unfolds the indeterminate creation of forms *other* than the already existent. This *otherness* is neither a scientific discovery nor a technological innovation based on a single universal logic strictly written in the language of mathematics. The language of nature might be composed of mathematics, but nature is not merely mathematics. Mathematics is one crucial dimension of nature, reflecting nature's various stratification levels. For Castoriadis yet, we need a different Logic from that of ensidic Logic; a Logic being

<sup>1</sup> Castoriadis C., *The Castoriadis Reader*, translated and edited by David Ames Curtis, Blackwell Publishers Ltd, UK, USA, 1997, pp. 307- 308.

<sup>2</sup> Castoriadis C., *Ce qui fait la Grèce*, Tome 1. *D'Homère à Héraclite. Séminaires 1982-1983*, Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2004.

<sup>3</sup> Castoriadis C., 'L' imaginaire: la création dans le domaine social-historique', *Domaines de l' homme*, Éditions du Seuil, Paris, 1986, p. 272, translation is mine.

compatible with the different levels of nature, from microcosm to macrocosm. As Castoriadis claims:

We can construe what is as a set only because what is is capable of being construed; we can categorize it only because it is categorizable. However, any ensemblizing, and categorizing, any organization that we establish / discover there proves sooner or later to be partial, lacunary, fragmentary, insufficient – and even, more importantly, intrinsically deficient, problematic and finally incoherent<sup>4</sup>.

Every organization we establish/discover within Being constitutes, to some extent, a recreation, which breaches the determinacy principle of set theory, insofar as it pertains to determinations of forms and laws *other* than the already existent. The determinacy principle, that is to say the subordination of Being to definitive categories, is breached by reality itself, insofar as Being is both subordinated to sets and lacunary, organisable and chaotic, determinate and indeterminate. But what is the key feature of this indeterminate determinacy attached to the concept of creation per se? What is this *otherness* of creation?

#### CREATION EX NIHILO

Before we define the concept of creation in positive terms, it is necessary to mention that the indeterminacy of Being refers neither to the notion of disordered nor organized chaos. Indeterminacy does not refer to randomness, as considered both in terms of probability and chaos theory<sup>5</sup>. Castoriadis' concept of indeterminacy does not correspond with the notion of probability, since probability itself is calculable and, therefore, determinable. In chaos theory, probability is further disguised into the determinacy principle under the metaphysical guise of universal unity. However, the unity of Being is but fragmented and stratificated. "Insofar as the ensidic dimension alone goes, we could talk of the unity of Being. But this unity is of course only partial and, for the most part, inessential"<sup>6</sup>. The "essence" of Being is rather not unity, but plurality, unfolding on the basis of indeterminacy of creation. The indeterminacy of creation transcends the field of possibility and of subsequent randomness, despite the fact that there is one and only passage in all Castoriadis' work, in which he seems to vacillate.

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<sup>4</sup> Castoriadis C., *The Imaginary Institution of Society*, Polity Press, UK, 1987, p. 273.

<sup>5</sup> Castoriadis C., 'Pseudochaos, Chaos and World', *Anthropology, Politics, Philosophy*, Ipsilon/books, Athens, 2001, pp. 115-116, (In Greek).

<sup>6</sup> Castoriadis C., 'Time and Creation', *World in Fragments*, Stanford University Press, California, 1997, p. 401.

Indeterminacy (If it does not simply signify our ‘state of ignorance’ or a ‘statistical situation’) has a precise meaning: No state of Being is such that renders impossible the emergence of *other* determinations than those already existing<sup>7</sup>.

The quotation marks in the passage above indicate Castoriadis’ usual irony or doubt. Considering though all Castoriadis’ references to the notion of indeterminacy in the rest of his work, the possibility of Castoriadis being doubtful or ambivalent is ostensible. Despite the fact that Castoriadis seems to leave open in the passage above, even ironically, the possibility of the notion of indeterminacy being a ‘state of ignorance’ or a ‘statistical situation’, Castoriadis’ overall approach to the notion of indeterminacy is differentiated both from probability theory and from a temporary scientific ignorance that will be probably replaced in the future by a definitive scientific knowledge.

Castoriadis questions repeatedly the prospect of a definitive scientific discovery, as developed, for instance, in both set theory and probability theory, and in the application of the latter to chaos theory. He doubts the prospect of discovering a scientific theory, which will reduce all observational phenomena to the base of some eternal or probabilistic equations and laws. Moreover, Castoriadis points out quite emphatically that modern science produces more enigmas than solutions: “Solving a problem implies always the creation of other problems, every Lernaean Hydras’ severed head makes many germinate, while our ultimate questions do not diminish as time goes by. Theories follow one another; the success of every one contains the seed of its own death.”<sup>8</sup> Therefore, for Castoriadis, the possibility of indeterminacy meaning a temporary ‘state of ignorance’ or a ‘statistical situation’ is just ostensible. Indeterminacy does not fit the pattern of ensidic Logic, as implemented in set theory or chaos theory. Indeterminacy doesn’t signify the temporarily unknown or possible.

On the contrary, for Castoriadis, indeterminacy refers to the creation of novel and, at the same time, *other* forms, laws or determinations. Indeterminacy resides in creation and vice versa. We thereby return to our initial question: Where does the indeterminacy of creation lie in? What is the *otherness* of creation? Castoriadis holds that the creation of the *novel* does not apply to set theory or chaos theory, given that it breaches the determinacy principle that rules both of them, by being a creation not characterized by definitive or possible attributes applying to a predetermined ensemble of elements. In contrast to this ensidic Logic, the creation of the new comes *ex nihilo*.

<sup>7</sup> Castoriadis C., *The Castoriadis Reader*, op. cit., p. 308.

<sup>8</sup> Castoriadis C., *Les carrefours du labyrinthe*, Éditions du Seuil, Paris, 1978, p. 192, translation is mine.

Being is Chaos because it is exactly creation of forms *ex nihilo*, but for the same reason Being is cosmos, that is to say organization, totality of forms, of multiple forms which is more or less organized as a totality. Therefore, what I am saying implies the existence of phenomena we could call incommensurate (I would say much more trivially irreducible), the fact that the strata of the totality are neither incommensurate and cannot be reduced to one another nor the new forms to those already existed (...). The radically new doesn't mean something simply non predictable (...). As I said, the new is the impossibility of deduction and abduction, that is to say the impossibility to construe, either logically or actually, a given phenomenon or entity, a X, beginning from the total situation already existing<sup>9</sup>.

There are incommensurate phenomena; phenomena that cannot be reduced to each other; new phenomena that are neither deduced nor produced by already existing ones. However, the new element of those phenomena is not simply predictable. One drop in roulette or in dices is 100% predictable, as it enclosed in the ensemble of all combinations existing potentially in probability theory. In one roll of a dice with 6 spots on its sides there is 1 probability in 6 for spot 1 to appear. This probability is random or possible. Instead, the new in Castoriadis mind is a form, an *eidōs*, a determination that is neither random nor possible, but comes *ex nihilo*.

Being is creation, *vis formandi*: not creation of "matter-energy", but creation of forms. For such a creation there are each time necessary, but not sufficient conditions. Creation as to the form, the *eidōs*, is *ex nihilo* but it is neither *in nihilo*, nor *cum nihilo*.<sup>10</sup>

Being is creation *ex nihilo*, but neither *in nihilo* nor *cum nihilo*. Being is a creation into something and within something. Nothingness (*le néant*) is not the womb of Being, but an expression signifying the indeterminacy inherent to the creation of a new form of Being. In this sense, Evangelos Vantarakis is right when he holds that the expression *ex nihilo* signifies a perpetual ontological creation neither reduced to something nor produced by something<sup>11</sup>. It precludes nothing, but itself. Hence the cyclical character of a perpetual ontological creation mentioned by Fabio Ciaramelli<sup>12</sup>, meaning that Being is precondition of itself. Being is itself, and for itself (*pour soi*), meaning a

9 Castoriadis C., 'Pseudochaos, Chaos and World', *Anthropology, Politics, Philosophy*, Ipsilon/books, Athens, 2001, pp. 123-125, (In Greek), translation is mine.

10 Castoriadis C., 'Complexité, magmas, histoire', *Fait et à faire*, Éditions du Seuil, Paris, 1997, pp. 253-254, translation is mine.

11 Vantarakis E., 'A Philosophy of Creation', *Psyche, Reason, Polis*, Homage to Cornelius Castoriadis, Ipsilon/books, Athens, 2007, p. 83, (In Greek).

12 Ciaramelli F., 'La circle de la création', *Autonomie et autotransformation de la société: la philosophie militante de Cornelius Castoriadis*, Librairie Droz, Genève, 1989, pp. 87-88.

perpetual ontological creation without a beginning or an end. Vantarakis yet vacillates when he attempts to approach this ontological creation *ex nihilo* through the classical prism of origin or negativity.

#### CREATION AS *OTHERNESS*

Creation *ex nihilo* refers neither to Isiodos' cosmogony nor Big Bang theory. The inexhaustible ability of creation lies in the *otherness* of Being, by being an indeterminate creation of a positivity, immersing within the magmatic background of an indigenous multiplicity.

This creation is always creation of a multiplicity. This we just find and state; we can neither deduce nor produce it. This multiplicity is always deployed in two modes: the mode of the simply different, as difference, repetition, ensemblistic-identitary multiplicity (for brevity: ensidic multiplicity); and the mode of the other, as otherness, emergence, creative, imaginary or poietic multiplicity<sup>13</sup>.

Creation is always a creation of a multiplicity unfolding in two modes: difference and otherness. Every otherness is difference, but every difference is not otherness. Difference presupposes otherness, given that otherness implies difference. However, otherness surpasses difference. More specifically, multiplicity, as difference, corresponds to the ensidic dimension of nature, and to the concomitant logic of set theory, whereas multiplicity, as otherness, signifies the notion of imaginary or poietic alterity. "We will say that two objects are different if there is a set of determinate transformations ("laws") allowing the deduction or the production of this from that. If there is no such set of determinate transformations, the objects are other. The emergence of the other is the only way to give a more than verbal meaning to the idea of newness, or the new as such."<sup>14</sup> For example, 34 and 43 are different, as they are produced by the set of rational numbers, and copper and clay accordingly, as they derive from the totality of chemical elements. Kafka's *The Trial* is yet other from Homer's *Iliad*, since art's necessary imaginary or poietical inspiration surpasses the ensidic Logic. While the notion of difference refers to the rearrangement or reproduction of already existing things, the notion of otherness refers to the creation of a new form or *eidōs*. The notion of otherness lies thereby in originality or, in Castoriadis' words, newness.

There can be of course no newness – neither scientific nor artistic – without a minimum of determinacy. There can be no language without sounds, phonemes, letters, words etc. There can be no music or painting without notes and colors. Every single form entails an ensidic dimension one way or another. However, the ensidic

<sup>13</sup> Castoriadis C., 'Time and Creation', *World in Fragments*, op. cit., p. 375.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 392.

dimension or, in other words, the ensidic mathematics is just the necessary, but not the sufficient condition for the creation of multiplicity as otherness.

Otherness refers to the form of an imaginary or poetical alterity. Otherness, as alterity, is not the unfolding of some “initial” scientific conditions, and the subsequent creation of ‘matter-energy’, but the emergence of *novelty* or, otherwise, of originality. The *novel* in turn is not reduced to any necessary and sufficient causes; it is not thus a necessary result of a predetermined cause, as it is presupposed either by an Aristotelian deductive logic or a Hegelian determinate negation. It is not another link on a causative chain; it is not ruled by a deductive causality or negation. «Otherness is irreducible, indeducible, and not producible»<sup>15</sup>. The *novel* is created of course in relation to necessary conditions – it is not created whatsoever. But it transcends simultaneously necessity by being the surplus element of an original form. The novel emerges on the basis of the old, but the old enters the novel in terms of the novel<sup>16</sup>.

For example, Einstein’s relativity theory is necessarily based on Newton’s classical mechanics. But, at the same time, it transcends classical mechanics by being a novel theory explaining an extended range of phenomena. In another plane, Dali’s and Kandinski’s painting or modern jazz reproduce past painting and jazz, but they do not copy already given forms. On the contrary, they constitute creations, whose surplus element lies in an indeterminate originality. We can of course describe necessary causes or conditions, and outline common “shadings”. We can define relevant determinations due to common places, but we cannot develop a sufficient or thorough justification of the original *eidos* in question. Relativity theory is not causally deducted by classical mechanics. Similarly, surrealism and abstract art exist only as intrinsic potentialities “inside” naturalism or realism.

Thus, for Castoriadis, there is no causality in the strict sense of the term, meaning a fact reducible to necessary and sufficient conditions. In the strict sense of causality, as develops already in Aristotle, a fact is fully justified when both the necessary and the sufficient conditions are determined. For instance, if we want to fully justify the natural phenomenon of rain, is not enough to define the clouds as the necessary conditions. We need also to define the sufficient conditions, that is, clouds’ electrical charges etc.

Yet, for Castoriadis, the notion of causality means the leaning of creation on necessary, but not sufficient conditions. The notion of creation is not depended on Typical Logic’s necessary and sufficient terms, as it happens, for example, in the scientific explanation of rain. Creation is not like rain, a recurrent natural phenomenon, defined by necessary and sufficient terms, as explained by meteorology.

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p. 395.

<sup>16</sup> Castoriadis C., *A Society Adrift*, Fordham University Press, New York, 2010, p. 54.

Creation refers to the otherness of a novel form, leaning necessarily on preceding terms, but not fully predetermined by them, as it happens with the natural phenomenon of rain. In other words, there are no sufficient grounds for a thorough explanation of creation. What we can provide instead is an *elucidation*, that is, the creation of adequate philosophical significations, permitting us to consider Being in its relation to our experience. Accordingly, we cannot fully explain why Einstein invented relativity theory or why Kafka wrote *The Trial*. Each invention is a creation that transcends the sheer necessity of ensidic Logic, since it exits the context of Aristotelian deduction or Hegelian dialectic negativity. The nothingness of such a creation is not a contradiction or a determinate negation, but the indeterminate otherness embedded in a novel form, *eidos*. Each novel form does not derive from a contradiction or deduction. Instead, nothingness is an expression signifying the creation of a new form of Being. Though paradoxical it may seem, a new form “contains” nothingness as the indeterminate part of otherness. Nothingness is embedded in Being by being the indeterminate part of otherness that transcends the determinacy of ensidic Logic. Finally, nothingness is the sheer otherness of creation, the sheer positivity of creation in the form of an indeterminate determinacy.

#### TIME AND BEING

In Castoriadis’ thought, the notion of creation opposes Parmenidis’ position “nothing comes from nothing” in a sense that signifies the indeterminate passage from a form of Being not already existent to a form of Being that will exist. In this sense, indeterminacy is furthermore connected with the notion of temporal otherness as long as Being is temporal.

Time is being insofar as being is otherness, creation and destruction (...). Time is creation and destruction – that means, time is being in its substantive determinations<sup>17</sup>.

The resemblance of Castoriadis’ notion of time with that of Bergson is more than obvious. For Bergson, time is juxtaposed to duration. More specifically, Bergson rejects the Kantian a priori conception of time on the grounds of his apprehension of Kantian time as subjected to mathematics and physics laws and, thus, analogous to space. In contrast to the quantitative and homogeneous time of mathematics and physics, Bergson conceives real time as a qualitative and heterogeneous duration unfolding as a continuous creation of novelty that consists in the indeterminacy of *otherness*<sup>18</sup>. Indeterminacy and creation characterize duration in a sense that there is no

<sup>17</sup> Castoriadis C., ‘Time and Creation’, op. cit., p. 395 and p. 399.

<sup>18</sup> Bergson H., *L’ évolution créatrice*, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 1969, pp. 1-11.

mechanistic causation between the past and the present. The present, though integral to the past, “escapes” the past through a qualitative incommensurability between itself and the past<sup>19</sup>. In this sense, the notions of indeterminacy and creation in the thought of Bergson are strikingly similar, if not identical, to Castoriadis' ones. However, as I shall demonstrate in the following, not only are the similarities striking, but the differences as well.

Castoriadis claims that, despite the fact that Bergson criticized the philosophical and scientific notion of time as approached in terms of a disguised space, he accepted the quantitative character of space itself. Castoriadis argues that, while this holds true for the ensidic or mathematical space, as approached by physics in terms of a four dimensional space-time, this by no means certifies that real space – meaning the space we live in as well as the cosmic space itself – is reduced to the abstract mathematical space<sup>20</sup>. It is by no means certified that real space is measurable, and thus quantitative, as considered in terms of positive sciences. For Castoriadis, there is an ensidic space-time – as considered in terms of a four dimensional space-time, including all its paradoxes and enigmas<sup>21</sup> – inherent to an imaginary-poeitic space-time, consisting in *otherness*. Otherness is expressed through the imaginary-poeitic space-time, as the latter unfolds in the creation-destruction of new forms of Being. The creation of a new form implies the destruction of another form as long as the destruction of a form signifies the alteration of one form by/into another<sup>22</sup>. Whereas *otherness* appears also in space, there is no pure and abstract space of *otherness*. Otherness is an essential characteristic of imaginary-poeitic time *per se*, whereas space is just a necessary concomitant (*forma accidentalis*) of time<sup>23</sup>.

19 Capec M., *Bergson and Modern Physics*, Dordrecht: Reidel, 1971, pp. 191-192.

20 Castoriadis C., ‘Time and Creation’, *World in Fragments*, op. cit., pp. 391-392.

21 The paradoxes and enigmas of a four dimensional space-time, as conceived by physics and mathematics, consist in the fact that, whereas space is considered reversible, time is considered irreversible. Time obeys the second law of thermodynamics, the law of entropy, according to which time cannot follow an irreversible direction. Castoriadis yet claims that it is by no means certain that all movements in space are reversible, as space movements near a black hole are influenced by gravity to such an extent that they cannot follow reversible directions. In addition, both the reversibility of space and the irreversibility of time become enigmas in the context of cosmology, in which, according to the redshift of the light of distant galaxies, there are directions in the universe that are irreversible, whereas, on the contrary, one “contraction” phase of the universe permits theoretically the reversibility of time. The situation becomes more complicated in the context of the theory of general relativity, in which the “measure” of time depends on the whole time-space structure of the universe, which depends in its turn on the “content” of the universe in terms of matter and energy – let alone the quantum phenomena. *Ibid.*, p. 390.

22 *Ibid.*, pp. 396-401.

23 *Ibid.*, pp. 394-395.

The correlation of otherness and, by extension, of creation with imagination differentiates radically Castoriadis' notion of time from that of Bergson. Whereas, in Bergson, imagination is a function attached to memory (*mémoire imaginative*)<sup>24</sup>, in Castoriadis, imagination is a crucial element of creation *per se*. In Castoriadis' ontology, Being is divided into three intertwined strata: the *physis*, the psyche and the anonymous collective of society<sup>25</sup>. Physis is divided into the non-living being (inorganic physis) analyzed through the ensidic logic of the positive sciences, and the living being that is magmatic inasmuch as it is characterized by three additional attributes: intentionality (*l' intention*), affect (*l' affect*) and representation (*la représentation*). While it is no place here to analyze in full detail these attributes, suffice it to say that the intentionality of the living being refers to the notion of *pour soi* of continental philosophy, meaning in terms of the positive sciences the notion of the biological autonomy as conceived by Francesco Varela<sup>26</sup>. Castoriadis builds on the notion of the biological autonomy of Varela to demonstrate that the biological autonomy of the living being consists in an intentionality evolving on the basis of the affect of pleasure (*plaisir*) and displeasure (*déplaisir*) into representation, the basic characteristic of which is the elementary imaginary (*élémentaire imaginaire*)<sup>27</sup>.

The elementary imaginary of the representation of the living being as the latter reflects in the biodiversity of flora and fauna of nature (*physis*) evolves in its turn into the radical imaginary of the psyche and the social imaginary of society<sup>28</sup>. The radical imaginary of the psyche emerges biologically through the hyper-development of the central nervous system, which accompanies the autonomization of the affect of pleasure. The autonomization of the affect of pleasure consists in the domination of representational pleasure over sexual pleasure and the concomitant biological-organic defunctionalization of pleasure. Pleasure no more derives only from the biological functionality of organic self-preservation and the reproduction of the living being. Pleasure evolves itself into the free representational / affective / intentional flux of the

<sup>24</sup>Bergson H., *Matière et mémoire : Essai sur la relation du corps à l' esprit*, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, p. 64.

<sup>25</sup> Castoriadis C., *The Imaginary Institution of Society*, op. cit., pp. 229-237.

<sup>26</sup>In 1979, Francesco Varela, in cooperation with his teacher and colleague Humberto Maturana, introduced the notion of biological autonomy, which is somewhat differentiated from a genetic teleonomy of species. The notion of the biological autonomy consists in the view that every species of flora and fauna filters with its senses inorganic matter in a way that creates a single sensorial and cognitive closure. Every living being "discerns" in its environment between "noise" and useful "information" for the purpose of self-preservation and sexual reproduction. This "discernment" is what makes for the biological autonomy of each single living being. Varela F., *Principles of Biological Autonomy*, North Holland, New York and Oxford, 1979.

<sup>27</sup>Castoriadis C., 'Imagination, imaginaire, réflexion' in *Fait et à faire*, op. cit., p. 312.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 294-336.

psyche, which, as free, is not reduced to the mechanistic causality of the ensidic dimension of physis. Whereas psyche leans necessarily on the ensidic dimension of physis, it transcends ensidic logic as it evolves furthermore into the magma of the social imaginary. The free representational / affective / intentional flux of the psyche evolves through the creation of language and technique into the magma of the imaginary significations of the anonymous collective of society. Pleasure reflects thereafter in the creation of the imaginary significations of society as the latter are crystallized in religion, art, politics, science, technology and in human civilization in general. The non-mechanistic reproduction of pleasure is the essential “motive” of imagination, which is therefore the key point of the ontological creation of otherness evolving from the living being of physis into psyche and society. In this sense, imagination is not just a secondary function serving memory, but an essential element of ontological creation *per se*.

In this ontological context, not only evolves the imaginary or poietic time into the “self-time” of each living being as a “subjective” instance of otherness, but also into the interaction of this “subjective self-time” with the imaginary significations of the anonymous collective. Not only possess different individuals and societies different times in terms of ensidic space-time as analyzed by the positive sciences, but can also co-formulate different imaginary conceptions of time. There is a private time and a public time, the time of unconscious and the time of consciousness, the time of reincarnation and the time of Second Advent, the time of buddism and the time of capitalism and so on<sup>29</sup>. Whereas every conception of time leans necessarily on an ensidic space-time as analyzed by the positive sciences, different societies can formulate different conceptions of time according to the different imaginary significations a society formulates given a certain historical period. And this social-historical element influences radically both the ensidic and the imaginary-poietic space-time as long as the ensidic space-time is just the necessary medium of imaginary-poietic space-time, as conceived by different individuals and societies in different historical periods.

Finally, Castoriadis’ ontology constitutes a radical conception of Being as an indeterminate self-creation developing in the mode of temporal *otherness*. Being is temporal and time is otherness unfolding as radical and social imaginary throughout the different, but intertwined strata of physis, psyche and society. And this is, in my view, one of the greatest contributions of Castoriadis in contemporaneous thought that remains still undiscovered by the literature: the identification of time with the otherness expressed through the affect of the imaginary of psyche and society. In

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<sup>29</sup> Castoriadis C., ‘Time and Creation’, *World in Fragments*, op. cit., pp.385-387.

Castoriadis, time is the affect of psyche and society as expressed through the radical and social imaginary, which “blends” with ensidic space-time. Time rules the “communion” of the physis, the psyche and the society on the basis of the otherness of the affect of the imaginary.

## CONCLUSION

Castoriadis conceives Being as Chaos consisting of two essential characteristics: indeterminacy and creation. The notions of indeterminacy and creation contradict the ensemblistic-identitary logic of mathematics set theory insofar as they transcend the philosophical and scientific goal of attributing determinate properties to determinate ensembles of elements or objects. For Castoriadis, Being is divided into two modes of multiplicity: difference and otherness. While difference refers to the ensidic dimension of Being as examined by mathematics and physics, otherness refers to the creation *ex nihilo*, which is characterized by an inherent indeterminacy. The indeterminacy of creation *ex nihilo* signifies the originality attached to a novel form of Being; the fact thus that a novel form of Being, as expressed in art or science or even in everyday life, is irreducible, indeducible, and not producible. Being is creation *ex nihilo*, but neither *in nihilo* nor *cum nihilo*. Being is a creation into something and within something. In this sense, we cannot fully explain this sort of creation on the basis of a mechanistic causality. What we can do instead is to *elucidate* reality, that is, to create philosophical significations that will permit us to think of Being in its relation to our experience.

Castoriadis’ conception of Being is further connected with time as long as Being is temporal and time is otherness. Otherness is an essential characteristic of time and, by extension, of Being itself in a sense that it transcends the ensidic dimension of time, as examined by mathematics and physics, by signifying the imaginary or poietic time. Imaginary or poietic time leans on the ensidic dimension of physis or, in other words, in the cosmic or natural time, but it transcends ensidic logic as long as it develops in the radical imaginary of the psyche, which evolves in its turn into the imaginary significations of society emerging in the historical context of mankind. In this sense, different societies form different imaginary significations based on Being’s two radical characteristics: indeterminacy and creation.

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