

## NORM AND OCCURRENCE

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When we say that life is a mixture of norm and chance, we offer a significant and attractive utterance; it seems easy to understand. However, it does not define anything in a definite, predictable, usable form. How much is there in this mixture? Norm means rigour, a stable form of existence, permanence, symbol. It represents the known. Occurrence refers to surprise, novelty, authentic. It represents the unknown. The occurrence pushes the norm towards new forms, it creates the circumstances that have to be put under control. The norm cannot be perfect; it makes room for occurrence and sometimes it even provokes it. The unpredictable implies the norm and explains the accident.

We cannot speak about an equation, an equality of two terms. There is no coexistence and completeness between Maths and Physics. We have, on the one side, the experience of life taken over, assimilated and established in society and, on the other hand, the experience gained from real but not yet experienced situations. The norm and occurrence happen rather chaotically. The validity duration of a norm and the moment the occurrence appears relate to the field of the unpredictable. Norms and occurrences live together in our conscience. Their cohabitation is in our mind, as it stems from the experience that we gain. The significance of the society rules is given by the way they work in reality, by the social practice. As the well-known British philosopher Roger Scruton points out: "*It is what we do that is the arbiter of what we mean*" (SCRUTON, 1997).

Of course, it is about how we understand what we do or what we have done. It is true that we place these facts in an order of significance according to our decisions. But the number of applications of the rules is theoretically infinitely

large and also includes the ones that we have never used. And then how could we possibly know now what we will have to do at some point, at a moment that we shall reach and cross? Wittgenstein states that facts, in their most elementary form (so simple entities of objects that they cannot be neither analysed, nor composed of other entities) do not refer to needs but to the profound contingencies of human condition: our habits, practices and skills, "unalterable forms of the world" (WITTGENSTEIN, 1975). They all may manifest themselves or not, they are subject to an event, but we know that we shall return to them. Without them we do not have any definite answers. Our decision has to include both the norms (rules) and the occurrence.

The highest truths, acknowledged as such by the society – the large mass of citizens – cannot be fulfilled or transposed in the life of the society only due to the force of reason. It is imperative for them to be strengthened and placed in the social behaviour of all citizens. We need norms. Without norms there is no freedom.

Hannah Arendt, in her text about *oases in the desert* (ISAAC, 2008), meant as a possible conclusion to politics, says that what Hamlet claims is always true: "*The time is out of joint; O cursed spite, That ever I was born to set it right!*" (SHAKESPEARE, n.d.).

Because the world feels the need to start over and over again every time the desert seems to settle on it. The world feels that the order has to be restored.

We need norms, as stated previously, because those who lead the society, by the consent of the people, have to take measures of eventual punishment (by virtue of the norm) not driven

by anger, rage or revenge but out of a sense of fairness. The value of an act is not only included in its material achievement, but also and especially in the will which produced it.

At the same time, in another paper, Hannah Arendt (ARENDR, 1998; HONIG, 1988) values the contingency of the human world, because only in a contingent world can the action truly be innovative and unpredictable.

The existence of change, either as a sign of divinity or as a fundamental concept in the Physics of probabilities, continuously goes through the history of humanity. According to Cicero (GRIMAL, 1986), the two well-known causes (motivations) of the civil war between Caesar and Pompey are that they are slightly equal and that each of them has good arguments, but “*we must consider that the best option is the one that gods themselves supported.*” Caesar is called Fortuna (luck, change); with its help his cause is efficient. It represents a guarantee of divine goodwill.

For the stoics of Plato’s academy wisdom did not require anything from outside the self. The righteous action of the wise ensures goodness and even happiness. Therefore, the wise is independent of change and of luck. Aristotle, however, sees and acknowledges a reality, that of the fact that occurrence has an important contribution beyond morality.

In Kant’s ethics a starting point is that *Must implies Maybe*. For David Hume there is a clear distinction between norm and fact, between *Must and Is*. There is only an apparent conflict of principles between Kant and Hume. Specifically, norms are not to be confused with judgments about the norms.

Von Wright (VON WRIGHT, 1963) interprets the principle *Must implies Maybe* in the sense that “*the problem of whether or not there is a norm which stipulates certain things cannot be decided without prior knowledge of the facts regarding human skill. The existence of a norm logically depends on the facts related to skill.*”

Everything takes place between norm and occurrence, in a mixture between them, as

previously stated. The goal of the norm is to reduce the appearance of the accident, of the unpredictable.

We don’t want the future to represent an illusion or an absolute unknown. We want to prolong the present of an order that we understand and which is within our reach, in the future. Usually, occurrence “strikes” the norm, defies and even ridicules it. A norm (law) can be struck by nullity. We start from the conviction that the occurrence exists precisely in the intimacy of nature, of the society. Even if we know that a certain thing is going to happen, but we do not know precisely when, we still find ourselves in a state of unpredictability. Norms decisively help us live orderly and even in a certain peace or security, and this makes our life more normal. What can a political leader offer to the citizens he leads? Often and with priority, a normal life.

It is only fair of people to imagine that luck might do them good. The fear of a unfavourable, even tragic, outcome is therefore diminished, if not completely eliminated. “*The individual does not bring what the moment brings!*” represents a perfectly clear statement in this regard.

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