



Research Article

Considerations of Contemporary Crisis Exclusively Within the Boundaries of Phenomenology

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Abstract

The subject of our philosophical reflection is the latest modification of the crisis of European humanity; however, this reflection is conducted strictly within phenomenological boundaries. Specifically, these considerations and analyses are grounded in the method developed by Edmund Husserl and, in their consistent progression, are continuously guided by it. We would like to note that in this paper we will still use the term “Western crisis” because it includes “European” and because the essential characteristics of the phenomenon of the European crisis largely apply to the entire Western world. We investigate whether the phenomenon of the contemporary Western crisis is manifested in a certain type of consciousness and, if so, how; in particular, we examine and analyze this manifestation within two opposing types of intentionality, which are characterized by more or less stable worldview attitudes: namely, modern liberal consciousness and conservative consciousness. Our explication reveals the distinct forms in which “crisis” manifests itself for these two polarized modes of consciousness and clarifies how radically differently the whole-objective sense of “crisis” is constituted for each of them. Finally, the process of constitution carried out by these two contrary types of consciousness necessarily implies a third type, within whose intentionality the sense of the “contemporary crisis” is constituted in yet another manner. It is noteworthy that precisely this perception and understanding of crisis is marked by a particularly intense and comprehensive character. The analysis presented here opens the way for future innovative studies of the crisis of Western civilization and its various modifications. Specifically, we have opportunity to examine these phenomena not through a naive, traditional approach, but rather as they manifest themselves within the horizons of different types of meaning-constituting consciousness. Such an approach will enable us to gain a much deeper insight into the problems and complexities of Western civilization.

Keywords

Constituting, Crisis, Liberal Consciousness, Conservative Consciousness

1. Introduction

In the introduction to this paper, we would like to note the following: the subject of our philosophical reflection is the latest modification of the crisis of European humanity; however, this reflection is conducted strictly within phenomenological boundaries. Specifically, these considerations and analyses

are grounded in the method developed by Edmund Husserl and, in their consistent progression, are continuously guided by it. Based on the phenomenological epoch and reduction operations, we do not allow ourselves to affirm or deny anything about the existence or nature of the modern modification of

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the above-mentioned crisis - otherwise we would ultimately remain captive to the natural attitude and the thinking rooted in it. [4]. Therefore, the first necessary step in these studies is to free ourselves from all developed or preliminary attitudes, beliefs, positions (whether of an everyday or scientific-expert nature) that are usually present in relation to the issue of "crisis". We would like to note that in this paper we will still use the term "Western crisis" because it includes "European" and because the essential characteristics of the phenomenon of the European crisis largely apply to the entire Western world.

We investigate whether the phenomenon of the contemporary Western crisis is manifested in a certain type of consciousness and, if so, how; in particular, we examine and analyze this manifestation within two opposing types of intentionality, which are characterized by more or less stable worldview attitudes: namely, modern liberal consciousness and conservative consciousness. Our explication reveals the distinct forms in which "crisis" manifests itself for these two polarized modes of consciousness and clarifies how radically differently the whole-objective sense of "crisis" is constituted for each of them.

Finally, the process of constitution carried out by these two contrary types of consciousness necessarily implies a third type, within whose intentionality the sense of the "contemporary crisis" is constituted in yet another manner. It is noteworthy that precisely this perception and understanding of crisis is marked by a particularly intense and comprehensive character. At the same time, this explication shows what the common moment of the constituted meaning of the "latest modification of the modern crisis" is for both liberal and conservative, as well as for the so-called third type of consciousness, thus placing this phenomenon in a certain relationship with the phenomenon of the classical crisis, which Nietzsche, Husserl, Spengler, Ortega y Gasset, Jaspers [11] and others spoke about.

2. About Several Key Moments of the Phenomenological Method

Let us first of all briefly and generally recall several key moments of the phenomenological method.

In one of his principal works - *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy* - Edmund Husserl begins his fundamentally phenomenological investigations with a characterization of the general thesis of the natural attitude and, on this basis, formulates the so-called method of epoché. [2]. To this end, he considers it necessary to describe how a person situated within the natural attitude perceives the world and themselves. This description proceeds "within the framework of my individual consciousness," that is, in the manner any human individual would undertake it, and it assumes a condensed, generalized form in the so-called general thesis. The latter informs us of the following: I find before me an ever-present spatio-temporal world to which I

myself belong as a rational animate being directed toward this world, and to which there likewise belong other human beings possessing an "other-I," similarly directed toward it.

Our everyday human life unfolds within the framework of this natural attitude, and every positive particular science, through its scientific attitude, ultimately rests upon this fundamental disposition. Phenomenological investigation, however, begins precisely with the operation of radically transforming this attitude in order to attain the sphere of indubitable and evident self-givenness. [1]. What is the content and structure of this operation? It possesses a methodological character, wherein Cartesian universal doubt appears merely as an auxiliary means. Through this universal doubt we arrive at the so-called epoché: a fundamental act of abstention, namely, abstention from any kind of judgment that expresses a position regarding the general thesis. We neither affirm nor deny anything, nor do we make any assumption concerning the existence of the world and, correspondingly, of any being, process, or event contained within it, since none of these present absolutely evident self-givenness. [9]. We merely place the general thesis in brackets, that is, we place it outside the sphere of any use or application—we suspend it. As a result of such an operation, we free ourselves from every form of positionality and every particular point of view. [3]. The question then arises: what reveals itself as Being, that is, as indubitable self-givenness, when through the operation of epoché the entire world, the whole of reality (including one's own human existence), is suspended? What remains is the region of pure transcendental subjectivity, or consciousness, which in no way belongs to the totality of the world and does not reveal itself as one of its particular regions. [6]. On the contrary, it intentionally possesses worldly reality as constituted objectivity—a process whose detailed and exhaustive exposition is presented through Husserl's analysis of this "newly discovered continent." At the same time, phenomenology, as an eidetic science, entails the investigation precisely of the essential structures, peculiarities, and characteristics of this region of pure consciousness [10].

Following this condensed retrospective overview, we may outline in general contours our own methodological approach to the problem raised in the present work; namely, we may delineate the specifically phenomenological approach to the problem of the contemporary Western crisis. Indeed, we refrain from any judgment concerning the existence or nonexistence of the contemporary Western crisis, concerning its being this way or that way, and consequently from characterizing its peculiarities and features. Our description and explication concern only those types of consciousness which, in their intentional activity, constitute the phenomenon of the "contemporary crisis" in a specific manner. More specifically, this concerns conservative consciousness, liberal consciousness, and the so-called third type of consciousness, together with the meaningful gestalts produced by them. One may ask: why precisely these aforementioned types? Our answer is as follows: because these are precisely the forms of consciousness

that dominate in this regard today.

2.1. Conservative Consciousness and the Latest Modification of the Western Crisis

We will first examine some important aspects of the intentionalities of modern conservative consciousness, in which the phenomenon of present-day West is specifically manifested. Above all, it is necessary to clarify which events emerge at the forefront as defining and predominantly significant in the perception-representation of this givenness; then it is necessary to show how their qualitative character appears in evaluative-emotional intentional acts, as well as in what kinds of judgments takes place the comprehension of meaning of these events, that has claim on objectivity; along with this, to trace what other kinds of acts significantly figure in this process; and finally, to outline how the "latest crisis of West" is constituted within the complex totality of intentional acts produced by the above-mentioned consciousness. During these discussions, we appeal to certain examples, specifically the views of some public figures or everyday consciousness, which present an exemplary clear illustration of the essential process carried out generally by modern conservative consciousness.

The process of mass migration is precisely one of the foremost phenomena in which the essential specificity of present-day West manifests itself in certain perceptual and representational acts of conservative consciousness, and which appears as one of the defining and significant characteristics of this situation (i.e., contemporary West). [22]. The flood of migration that began at the start of the twenty-first century, which can be compared to the great migration of peoples in the fifth and sixth centuries, because of its grand scale, indeed provides the basis for it to come to the forefront of consciousness and thereby hold defining importance. [15]. But this alone cannot be considered a necessary and sufficient condition for this phenomenon to automatically appear at the forefront and be recorded with defining significance in perceptions or representations. No, this is performed again and again by a consciousness with a certain essential specificity, which may be completely absent in a consciousness of a different specificity. Specifically, it is precisely a fundamental intentional characteristic of modern conservative consciousness to bring this mass migration to the forefront and regard it as having defining significance. We will see that no such thing happens in the activity of modern liberal consciousness.

Such self-manifestation of the latest specificity of the phenomenon of West in the event of mass migration simultaneously acquires a more or less distinct evaluative (qualitative) character in various evaluative-emotional acts of conservative consciousness: specifically, this phenomenon appears to us as a "terrible deadly threat," a "destructive factor," a "pandemic," etc. Moreover, such self-manifestation may find realization even in much more acute acts of shock: waves of migrants arriving from the Near East, Africa, Central East and Central America, and we see these mixed up, motley countries:

Germany, France, Britain... — all of this can also appear for consciousness in the form of an apocalyptic and horrifying picture.

The forms of self-manifestation of the specificity of the phenomenon of West are, of course, accompanied by corresponding intentional acts of reflection with objective claims, which are expressed in certain types of judgment: "the process of rupture of the socio-cultural and national identity of Western countries", "cultural confusion and degradation", "movement toward complete dispersion and chaos", "the prerequisite for major political destabilization", and so on. In such acts of reflection, the emphasis is generally placed on where the migration process is headed and what it will turn into. [17]. Along with all this, our explanation will highlight another intentional act that plays a very important role in the perception and representation of the phenomenon of migration by conservative consciousness and subsequently in its emotional assessment and reflection — this is a fundamental nostalgic sentiment, a lament for the lost past, which allways throbs and operates within all the above-mentioned forms of self-manifestation: "What the truly French team of Platini's France was like earlier and what it is now!", "The streets of London that spoke truly British yesterday, and these mixed up, chaotic streets today!"... — nostalgia is revealed in almost all intentional activities of conservative consciousness. It should be noted here that we characterize the presented forms only in very general outlines, since their in-depth and detailed explication goes beyond the scope of this article, although carrying out such serious work is undoubtedly important. We must also emphasize the fact that these forms of self-manifestation are closely intertwined and constitute a single whole, and it is not excluded that other forms may also be identified and analyzed.

Indeed, through the diverse modes of self-manifestation of the phenomenon of West in mass migration, conservative consciousness constitutes a certain unified sphere of meaning (Sinnzusammenhang) of objectivity. More specifically, it constitutes what may be termed the "latest modification of the Western crisis" as an essential characteristic of contemporary West. Consequently, this type of consciousness comprehends and constitutes the phenomenon of crisis precisely through the prism of migration, a phenomenon that presents itself within a plurality of intentional acts—acts of perception-representation, emotion-evaluation, reflection, nostalgia, and so forth. At this point, the distinctive methodological path of phenomenological inquiry into the problematic of the Western crisis becomes evident: our task is to describe and analyze the mode of constitution of the phenomenon of "crisis," and, more specifically, the constitutive activity which is produced by a particular type of consciousness.

As we proceed with our investigation, a further point should be noted: for conservative consciousness, mass migration is only one—albeit a particularly significant—manifestation of the contemporary crisis. The latter is constituted not only through migration but also through a variety of other phenomena of greater or lesser significance. Among these, one

especially important phenomenon is what is commonly designated as the LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender) phenomenon.

For contemporary conservative consciousness, the LGBT phenomenon is one of the most salient and evident manifestations of the “crisis of the West.” It is perceived as one of the foreground and defining tendencies of the contemporary Western form of life. Within the evaluative-emotional intentional acts of this consciousness, this phenomenon is disclosed as “repulsive,” “ugly,” “contrary to nature,” “pathological,” while simultaneously appearing as “aggressive,” “dangerously expansionary,” and so forth. Within the typical judgments of the conservative consciousness, LGBT is interpreted as an increasingly organized transnational force that, through forms of half-political censorship and pressure, seeks to establish a broad public legitimacy and institutional position for what this consciousness regards as sexual abnormality. [16]. In doing so, LGBT is perceived as ultimately eroding the Christian foundations of Western civilization and undermining its socio-cultural stability. To characterize the matter in very general terms, the LGBT phenomenon is constituted as an event possessing precisely such a meaningful gestalt within the corresponding intentional acts of conservative consciousness. It is through this phenomenon that conservative consciousness constitutes and sights the “contemporary Western crisis.” Indeed, from this perspective, LGBT appears as a far more alarming, evident, and tangible indicator of crisis than notions such as “nihilism” or “alienation,” themes that occupied many twentieth-century thinkers in their philosophical analyses; and had they lived to witness the present situation, they might well have regarded the West of their own day in considerably brighter hues! – the conservative consciousness tells us half in jest.

2.2. Liberal Consciousness and the Latest Modification of the Western Crisis

We are now interested in identifying the essential specificity that characterizes the intentionality of contemporary liberal consciousness when it comes to the phenomenon of mass migration. Indeed, what we encounter here is a radically different orientation—one might even say an inverted one. Specifically, this consciousness perceives the manifestation of the Western crisis not in mass migration itself, but rather in the discourse surrounding it, in the propagandistic campaign conducted by conservative consciousness through politicians, cultural figures, and civic activists. In its perception, emotional evaluations, and judgments, it is this very campaign that emerges as the truly noteworthy phenomenon—one that appears as repulsively anti-humanitarian, xenophobic, and pro-fascist demagoguery. Yes, it is precisely this demagoguery that, according to liberal consciousness, signals the contemporary crisis; it is within it that the crisis reveals itself. For this demagoguery indicates that the formation of a unified and homogeneous space within the Western world—one grounded in universal

liberal values and multicultural coexistence—is facing the threat of collapse. Thus, liberal consciousness constitutes the meaningful gestalt of the “contemporary Western crisis” through the phenomenon of anti-migration discourse. As we can see, this is a complete inversion of the process of constitution described and analyzed above as characteristic of conservative consciousness.

With these general yet essential elucidations regarding this specific topic, we shall limit ourselves here and proceed to the next theme, in order to clarify another important dimension of how these two contrary forms of consciousness constitute the “crisis.”

For contemporary liberal consciousness, so-called non-traditional sexual orientations and, consequently, sexual minorities no longer present merely objects of tolerance whose rights ought to be protected. Rather, what we encounter here is a transformed attitude. Liberal consciousness constitutes as both necessary and of paramount importance to the Western political system and as something that already largely exists in a legitimate form, the notion of “homosexuals, bisexuals, and transgender individuals occupying a secure place, enjoying broad opportunities, and playing a significant role within society and the state.” It is upon this foundation that the meaning of “LGBT” is established. Its significance does not reside in the sphere of compassion for and protection of a “poor” minority; instead, it belongs to a purely ideological dimension: “an internationally organized force whose purpose is to ensure the unrestricted self-assertion of non-traditional sexual orientations within the socio-political arena.” – so constitutes the liberal consciousness the above mentioned meaning. Consequently, liberal consciousness perceives LGBT as a foreground phenomenon and as one of the defining characteristics of contemporary Western life. At the same time, it understands it as one of the key elements of Western liberal-democratic ideology and of the political system built upon that ideology. Accordingly, another phenomenon comes into focus for this consciousness: what today appears in the form of a large-scale international campaign directed against LGBT. This phenomenon becomes the object of a variety of clearly defined emotional and evaluative responses, manifesting itself in these acts as “repulsive hate speech,” “anachronism,” “fascist malice,” and the like. Within the acts of thought and judgment characteristic of this consciousness, the anti-LGBT campaign is interpreted as a “mortal threat to liberal values and, moreover, to the entire architecture of the modern West.” For this reason, the campaign itself becomes one of the principal phenomena through which liberal consciousness constitutes the meaningful gestalt of “the Western crisis of our time.” For liberal consciousness, this crisis finds one of its significant manifestations precisely in this event: a crisis emerges when the very system built upon liberal values is called into question, because one of its key components is under attack and the future appears uncertain – such, according to this consciousness, is the nature of the crisis.

For the time being, as we summarize everything that has

been said above, it is essential to emphasize the following circumstance: the constitution of the “contemporary Western crisis” as a meaningful objective wholeness naturally implies a certain horizon of development. This horizon may be progressively shifted, and accordingly, the scope of this constitution may be gradually expanded through the inclusion of new contents and dimensions. [7]. For any given type of consciousness, the manifestation of a “crisis” is never confined to one or two aspects, such as migration or LGBT-related issues. Rather, we can discover ever new aspects, because this crisis unfolds within the world itself and not within a closed space. It is precisely the world that presents the ultimate encompassing horizon, making it possible to uncover new and still unknown manifestations of this phenomenon. [5]. Even such “major” aspects as migration are themselves always disclosed through particular sub-aspects. Therefore, there always remains room for viewing and understanding them from new perspectives and angles.

2.3. Some Materials for our Phenomenological Research

Following the phenomenological inquiries presented here, I would like to cite statements by well-known public figures on both migration and LGBT issues.

Robert Jenrick (A member of Parliament of UK): Argued that excessive, uncontrolled migration threatens to overwhelm public compassion and hinders national cohesion.

Viktor Orbán (Prime Minister of Hungary, Fidesz Party): “Migration is poison. We don't need it and won't swallow it.” (2016).

Donald Trump: “Immigration and their suicidal energy ideas will be the death of Western Europe.” [18].

Pope Francis: “Migrants and refugees are not pawns on the chessboard of humanity. They are children, women, and men who leave or who are forced to leave their homes for various reasons.”

Angela Merkel: “We have managed so many things — we will also manage this situation.”

Joe Biden: “Immigration has always been a lifeblood of America... I will never demonize immigrants.” [20].

“LGBTQI-free zones are humanity-free zones. And they have no place in our Union.” — Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, on Polish initiatives.

“LGBTIQ rights are human rights. Citizens like everyone else and yet LGBTI+ people face constant discrimination... simply as a result of who they love or who they are.” — Marc Angel, MEP. Socialists and Democrats.

“Nature made a mistake, which I have corrected.” — Christine Jorgensen (an American actress, singer, and transgender activist). [21].

In a 2003 amicus brief for *Lawrence v. Texas*, Johnson argued that states had “legitimate grounds to proscribe same-sex deviate intercourse” and stated that “homosexual marriage” is a “dark harbinger of chaos and sexual anarchy” Mike Johnson

(U.S. Speaker of the House).

Mike Pence (Former U.S. Vice President): In 2006, as head of the Republican Study Committee, he stated that “societal collapse was always brought about following an advent of the deterioration of marriage and family” and called being gay a choice.

Andrzej Duda says LGBT ‘ideology’ worse than communism (Former president of Poland from 2015 to 2025).

Viktor Orbán (Prime Minister of Hungary, Fidesz Party): Orbán has often linked LGBTQ+ issues with immigration and European federalism, claiming: “The EU rejects Christian heritage, carries out a replacement of its population via migration... and conducts an LGBTQ offensive”. [19]

We will not continue listing statements made by these publicly known figures; instead, we should note here that, for our phenomenological discussions, observations concerning the attitudes of everyday consciousness are no less important—attitudes that we encounter quite frequently in connection with migration or LGBT-related issues. It was precisely expressions reflecting these attitudes of everyday consciousness that we used in the analyses presented above.

2.4. A Third Type of Consciousness

We can see how contrary the two processes of constituting a “crisis” are, and therefore how different the two understandings of crisis can be, even with regard to the two topics discussed above—namely, the understanding of crisis on the one hand by conservative consciousness and on the other hand by liberal consciousness. At the same time, however, a third type of consciousness emerges “onto the stage.” This consciousness does not identify itself with either of the aforementioned “camps” and therefore is not characterized by any well-formed or clearly defined worldview or political attitude. What enters its field of vision is this very opposition itself, as a prominent and significant characteristic of the contemporary Western world. In its emotional and evaluative acts, this opposition presents itself through judgments such as “alarming,” “destructive,” and so forth. Moreover, in the perception and reflection of this “third” consciousness, the conflict between contemporary liberalism and conservatism undergoes an ever-increasing escalation and progressively develops into an irreconcilable clash. Consequently, this consciousness interprets the confrontation as a “fateful crack in the Western body, one that continues to widen and threatens it with internal fragmentation.” Accordingly, for this “third” perspective, it is this growing conflict itself that serves as the principal indicator of the phenomenon of the contemporary Western crisis. Thus, the crisis is constituted precisely through the manifestations of this conflict within the acts of various forms of consciousness.

This growing confrontation between the two ideologies is driving each toward increasing radicalization. Under

conditions of irreconcilable conflict, this could lead to the emergence of two extremely radical and dominant poles: namely, on the side of contemporary liberalism, a neo-Marxist/neo-Bolshevik ideology could come to occupy the dominant position, while on the side of conservatism, a neo-fascist ideology could prevail. Such a development would herald a complete catastrophe for Western civilization - this is how this third type of consciousness comprehends the present confrontation in a prognostic and diagnostic manner; at the same time, it is permeated by a mood of anxious and ominous foreboding. Indeed, it may be said that it is precisely this third understanding of the crisis that possesses the most acute and dramatic character.

It should also be noted that this third type of consciousness warrants extensive research, given its particular significance. And what does this significance consist in? Specifically, it lies in the fact that the horizon of this form of consciousness is considerably broader than that of either conservative or liberal consciousness. Unlike them, it is not unambiguously oriented by a predetermined political attitude; rather, in its openness and freedom, it remains receptive to the constitution of new, politically impartial visions and new structures (Gestalts) of meaning.

3. Conclusion

Do modern liberal, conservative, and so-called third-type consciousnesses share anything in common, any point of intersection, in constituting the phenomenon of the latest Western crisis? Yes, what they share lies in a latent or explicit pre-understanding of a relation that qualitatively distinguishes this phenomenon from the “classical” crisis about which great thinkers spoke from the end of the nineteenth century and throughout almost the entire twentieth century. This distinguishing understanding is undoubtedly implied even in the fact that all three types of consciousness focus on the themes discussed above, in which they perceive the “contemporary modification of the Western crisis.” These themes were entirely foreign to the consciousness of the so-called classical crisis. The latter was focused on other key themes that reflected the principal forms through which the crisis of that period manifested itself. Friedrich Nietzsche, as the first serious herald of the approaching crisis, saw its primary manifestation in nihilism [12]; Edmund Husserl identified it with the domination of the scientific-positivist mode of thinking and, consequently, with the forgetting of the life-world (Lebenswelt), which results in a loss of meaningful orientation in human existence [8]; Ortega y Gasset saw it in the revolt and domination of the masses [13]; Arnold Toynbee discerned it in the same phenomenon that characterizes the disintegration of all civilizations, namely the degradation of ruling minorities and the swelling of the proletariat, and so on. [14]. Of course, the analysis of the twentieth-century crisis and the examination of the concepts developed by thinkers who reflected on this problem constitute the subject of extensive and meticulous

research. However, this lies beyond the scope of the present work, and therefore we limited ourselves to a few very general observations. Nevertheless, it is already evident that the phenomena highlighted above—those to which these great thinkers directed their attention—do not constitute the primary focus of contemporary crisis consciousness, unlike LGBT issues or anti-LGBT campaigns. Yet I would like to emphasize that nihilism, the revolt of the masses, the forgetting of the life-world, and the degradation of selected minorities continue to appear as manifestations of the latest crisis, albeit in radically modified forms. The study and analysis of these transformations belong to the task of our future research.

Indeed, contemporary consciousness—whether liberal, conservative, or of the so-called third type—on the one hand clearly perceives the qualitative difference between the crisis phenomena of our time and those of the twentieth century, and on the other hand, under conditions of proper explication and analysis, inevitably becomes convinced of the genetic connection between them. “The crisis has not disappeared anywhere; it has simply undergone a profound transformation and has become even more acute!” - contemporary consciousness tells us.

The analysis presented here opens the way for future innovative studies of the crisis of Western civilization and its various modifications. Specifically, we have opportunity to examine these phenomena not through a naive, traditional approach, but rather as they manifest themselves within the horizons of different types of meaning-constituting consciousness. Such an approach will enable us to gain a much deeper insight into the problems and complexities of Western civilization.

Abbreviations

LGBT Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender

Author Contributions

Irakli Batiashvili: Conceptualization, Data curation, Methodology, Investigation

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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