

who realizes himself only in the civil community; we shall call this destiny 'politicized'; c) destiny of the human person who realizes himself only in the religious community; we shall call this destiny 'sacral'; d) destiny of the human person who realizes himself in the various subordinate hierarchical communities: the family, associations, the religious community, the state. We shall call this destiny 'normal.' ”

False solutions

Among the philosophies which Dario Composta analyzes as false solutions to morality are those of Kant (1724-1804), Hegel (1770-1831), Comte (1798-1857), Kierkegaard, and Sartre.

Bécause of his enormous influence in shaping the Enlightenment and belief structure of economic liberalism, and our limited space, I would like to report only some of the features of the author's attack on a single philosopher—Immanuel Kant.

While Kant put forth rationalism mixed with religious pietistic ideals, he could not locate the creative freedom in each individual person. Dario Composta writes:

“For Kant morality—that is, the good or evil of the voluntary action—does not depend on factors external to the person (God, the material world), but on the person himself; but, Kant rejects that moral rectitude depends on the person as a being in the world. . . . The person is a substance among all the others and cannot be known in his metaphysical entity. So, the only thing remaining are human acts; but, Kant *rejects the emotions, impulses, and tastes*; being variable, they cannot establish universal rapports such as those of morals.”

Since Kant does not believe in good acts for their own sake, he does not recognize the Christian conception of charity as an efficient force in society. It is not “good will,” but “duty,” which mechanically bounds the individual. What are necessary are *categorical imperatives*:

“What for Kant represents the mechanical, instinctive non-moral elements is of an anthropological order and derives from the inferior impulses of man; morality arises from the practical reason as duty and imperative.”

Dario Composta offers as a positive alternative to such dreary outlooks the classical tradition of natural law. The foundation of morality must be found in the author of human nature, who is God. Thus natural law (*lex naturalis*) is a participation in the eternal law of God.

In pagan systems, man's work is reduced to the equivalent of a beast of burden, in contrast to Christianity which ennobles man's work as a projection of the creative acts of God.

Composta's work is a systematic presentation of the subject divided into two parts: “Fundamental Ethics” and “Social Ethics.” He also provides three valuable appendices—one on “Communist Morals,” a second on “Hebrew Ethics and Greek Ethics,” and a third on the “Specificity of Christian Ethics.” It contains a rich listing of suggested further readings

as well as valuable end notes for those stimulated to pursue the subject.

This book will give the reader deep insights into how to restore morality to economics, science, and government. Readers will find particularly timely his discussion of the interrelationship of Justice, Peace, and Economics, from a traditional Christian standpoint. Although his work was not intended to be “topical,” it is precisely relevant to understanding the current simultaneous breakdown of both the Marxist and Adam Smith economic systems.

Peter Sellars puts the soap in Mozart's operas

Imagine Roseanne Barr choosing to assault the National Anthem with her own peculiar body language and gestures. Now transfer and enlarge this image so that Roseanne is put in charge of the most widely circulated performances in the United States of three Mozart operas, for the Mozart Bicentennial celebrations.

Voilà! In the simplest and least painful way, you have the secret of what Peter Sellars calls his productions of the Mozart operas, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, and *Così fan tutte*, widely being shown on the Public Broadcasting System currently. Deliberate and premeditated ugliness.

The only difference is that most Americans didn't feel they had to swallow Roseanne's interpretative creation. However, the guardians of our national culture, our art critics, haven't allowed themselves any such healthy responses. Rather, they prefer hiding behind such phrases as “interesting,” “new dimensions,” *ad nauseam*.

Does one have to take seriously Sellars's claim about making Mozart relevant to modern-day, soap opera America? If so, much time and noise could be spent showing how Sellars's “translation” of Mozart goes beyond interpretation, beyond recognizable distortions, to outright fraudulent misrepresentations. Roseanne Barr's National Anthem, by comparison, was a model of faithfulness. It seems, however, that Mr. Sellars has succeeded in translating one 18th-century concept: “*enfant terrible*” comes out rather clearly as the “terrible infant.”

You might have known: Some people's idea of the proper commemoration of Mozart's premature death is to assassinate him all over again.—*David Shavin*