

## *The long good bye from the good (in) life*

### *Content*

#### Introduction

1. Hannah Arendt and Agnes Heller  
Tension between thinking and feeling
2. A good life makes us want to live
3. Psychohistory as a „metabolism” of complex historical experience
4. Leo Tolstoy’s self-conception as an artist: Hedgehog or fox?
5. “Reality“ in history, historical science and in teaching history as well as in art and dreams
6. „Sois sage, ô ma douleur...“
7. Terms as actors in the “theatrum mundi”
8. Losing the „stream of life” when dying
9. About the utopia of alternative thinking and living  
Being conscious about history and worrying for the future

#### *A few keywords for the entire subject and for single texts*

Adam and Eve had a “good” time in paradise (Old Testament, genesis. They had everything they needed and didn’t need to care about anything. Thoughts and work, fight and longing, love and desperation, all that slumbered undiscovered way down the myths of the history of creation until the one momentous day, seduced by the snake, they ate the fruit of the forbidden tree of knowledge and saw they were naked.

God, enraged, kicked them out and blocked their return path once and forever having the access guarded until today by cherubim armed with flaming swords.

Since then and until the end of our lives we have to work off God’s execrations (Genesis, 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter) unless one believes in redemption through Jesus Christ. A consciously reflected *good bye* from Paradise of which comprehension, regret and grief are part, doesn’t occur in the biblical narration.

The complete title of the present text collection put the accent on the adjectives: the *long* good bye from the *good* life. It is not about the good bye from life itself but about the good bye from the good life or – playing with words- about the good bye from the good *in* life. This good bye is undeterminably long, both collective-historically and individual-life historically because we never overcome the decrease of wishes and illusions or grief over missed occasions to gain something good in life.

We are insatiable in the desire for the Good in life what ever that really means. Thus it takes a long time to say good bye, interrupted by phases of (misunderstood) grief, melancholy, depression and anything else occurring when the “lost time” does not return (Proust’s *mémoire involontaire* [→ *A la recherche du temps perdu*] corresponds to the unconscious in psychoanalysis).

A counterpoint from the angle of history of literature and psychohistory to the “long good bye from the good in life” has been set by Wolfgang Borchert (1921-1947) by naming his life experience as one of the “generation without good bye”. The awarded book “Wolfszeit” by Harald Jähner refers to him.

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Based on two illustrious women philosophers, in the first text I investigate the tension between thinking and feeling which colors the good bye from the good life in their own way. According to me, these two ways of articulation of the human spirit can converge but not overlap.

Good life as an experience, also and exactly then when this experience is scarce, is the profound reason for a resistant and resilient life style which generates further good life (2<sup>nd</sup> text).

One of the illusions we chase and grief over, is life as an unclouded good one which can be experiences only punctually during an entire life span but this limit relegates to a bigger, undivided life fortune. The letter is something like an unconscious sound board of our thinking and feeling. In everyday life we can be satisfied when we have the courage to live and preserve the joy of living (3<sup>rd</sup> text about “Metablie”)

In reality and during our life history the long good bye from the good life announces itself in early childhood, when a loved one – mother, father, sibling, friend,....- dies and is suddenly no more around. This loss may start up long, very long effects like we know from the lives of many male writers (Charles Baudelaire, Roland Barthes, Leo Tolstoy). In front of this experience background a good life could be circled psychohistorically but could not be put in a nutshell from a real historical point.

(The impetus for the 4<sup>th</sup> text derived form an essay of a well known culture theoretic who did not analyze Tolstoy’s life but more his psychohistorical self-conception as an author).

In historical science, the undetermined long good bye from the good life comes into focus when we try to unite historical realities with dream realities (Sigmund Freud, 5<sup>th</sup> text), trying to overcome specialization. In modern times, insights into greater historical and social interrelations between the conscious and the unconscious are denied and precluded rather than sustained. Alternatives that include more than technological improvements need to be preserved in the thinking and the feeling if we don’t want to get paralyzed from a psychohistorical point of view.

In the 6<sup>th</sup> text I recall a psychotherapy sitting when I (as a patient) brought associatively a poem of Baudelaire and, all of a sudden, the door opened towards a non-resolved part of my early life.

As a philosopher par excellence Agnes Heller (7<sup>th</sup> text) did not say good bye to life as such (1929 -2019) but truly philosophical from ratio which she greeted in her book about

philosophy of history for an ultimate farewell (*A philosophy...*, S. 106): „Farewell my lovely – let us make Peace with our finitude.”

The passing away of a human being is described by the Italian writer Tommaso di Lampedusa (1896-1957) with the metaphor of a river (8<sup>th</sup> text) which initially rustles and booms, then becomes weaker and finally totally runs dry.

The 9th text focusses on the past which is full with experience of the good life (and more with the good in life). Historically, even moments of happiness are there, let's think about the fall of the Berlin wall (in November 1989) which was greeted with jubilation, tears of relief and euphoria for the future. But how long does this life feeling last? How quick can mistrust, disappointment and resentment take its place?

The 9th text says good bye to everything which is gone beyond recall. In the following texts, excessive social hope and pretention of gone times had to make room to reflections about smaller, seemingly unimpressive human and social progress.

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So much about a narration which should have followed a linear logic, ended up in a one-way street, also because of proper dynamics of the key aspects which themselves broke their boundaries all the time. Following the myth of Paradise, I wanted to start with the beginning of life in the womb, adding Hannah Arendt's philosophical revaluation of the being born which according to Arendt has unfortunately not been considered enough in contrast to the exorbitant reflections about passing away. But my plan crumbled piece by piece and it was because of the tension between thinking and feeling. The text of Lampedusa about the passing away of Don Fabrizio impresses me more every time I read it again while Arendt's philosophical rational innovation of the “Gebürtlichkeit” (bornability, this unusual word seems to have been created as an antipole to mortality) involved my thinking but never seemed to touch my feeling.

However the final product of the here announced elaboration will look like: it is not a broody confession of a lifetime but a construct, a reflexive narration, an intellectual final retrospective.