

EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED
TO KNOW ABOUT CORNELIUS CASTORIADIS
BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK
DAVID AMES CURTIS

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Abstract: Andrey Rolyenok's conversation/correspondence with David Ames Curtis on Cornelius Castoriadis's legacy, its preservation, promotion, and critical updating in the context of the current socio-political situation took place in January–March 2023. The contribution of the Agora International Association to the development and extension of Castoriadis's work is considered in the interview. The origins of Castoriadis's thought (break

- 1 David Ames Curtis (1956–), who studied Philosophy at Harvard, is a translator, editor, writer, and citizen activist. He has worked as a multiracial community organizer in the Carolinas and as a feminist union organizer at Yale University, where he also directed research for Henry Louis Gates Jr.'s Black Periodical Fiction Project. Curtis's translations and writings appear in American, European, and Australian journals and books. For each translation, he writes a Translator's Foreword, each time new and each time improvised, to express, through philosophical reflection, how he himself has been transformed. Curtis coordinates a Bibliographers' Collective for the Cornelius Castoriadis/Agora International Website. He has spoken at conferences in Canada, France, Germany, Greece, South Korea, Mexico, and the USA.



with Marxism, revision of psychoanalysis, influence of Martin Heidegger's ideas, return to ancient philosophy, etc.) are evoked. Key ideas of Castoriadis are reconstructed and contextualized (the project of individual and collective autonomy, creativity, and the rising tide of insignificance). The problem of the reception and critique of Castoriadis's ideas in contemporary social thought is articulated (e.g. in Zygmunt Bauman's theory of liquid modernity).

Key words: Castoriadis, David Ames Curtis, Socialisme ou Barbarie, autonomy, heteronomy, creativity, psychoanalysis, Marxism, the rising tide of insignificance

Andrey Rolyenok: Although translators often remain in the shadow of authors, David Curtis can hardly be reduced to Cornelius Castoriadis.

David Ames Curtis: Certainly. I was fortunate to work closely with Cornelius Castoriadis for the last thirteen years of his life and have translated and edited more than a million words of his writings. Part of my practice as a translator-editor is to create an imaginary character who would be Castoriadis as a native English-speaking author (while somehow preserving his distinctive voice as a native Greek speaker who learned French at an early age from his Voltaire-inspired Greek father and who spoke English very well). But I also emerge regularly from that creative process to reflect philosophically on how I myself have been transformed by this extended experience of original third-person voicing and to recover/recreate my own voice. By way of highlighting differences: Castoriadis's aesthetic taste at times veered frankly toward what I consider the bombastic — High Gothic cathedrals and Wagner (though also jazz) — while I admire Frank Lloyd Wright and Free Jazz.

A.R.: You have translated various authors. Cornelius Castoriadis, Claude Lefort, Jean-Pierre Vernant, Pierre Vidal-Naquet, and Jean-Jacques Lebel are among them. Where does your passion for the French language come from?

D.A.C.: I would not speak in terms of a “passion for the French language.” I did learn French in Junior and Senior High School in suburban eastern Massachusetts, becoming a *lauréat régional* in the *Concours National de Français*, and I continued reading and writing about texts in French while at Harvard University. I had worked in a grassroots Civil Rights organization in Virginia and as a multiracial community organizer in the Carolinas before being hired by Professor Henry Louis Gates, Jr. as a researcher for the Afro-American Studies Department at Yale University, where I also helped organize the largest American strike on the issue of “comparable worth” with Local 34, Yale's feminist

labor union of secretaries and other “pink-collar” workers. It was because my life-partner, the choreographer Clara Gibson Maxwell (who, like me, studied Philosophy at Harvard but who had herself attended a Paris *lycée* her last year before college), wanted to move back to France to dance that I reinvented myself as a translator, writing to Castoriadis to propose translating more of his work (I was already compiling an extensive French-and-English bibliography of his writings before arriving in Paris to meet him in person).

A.R.: Generally speaking, you are a complex creative person. You are passionate about music (jazz) and sports (baseball). What are your other hobbies? What are you working on at the moment (translation, book, article)?

D.A.C.: Thanks for the compliment. I generally don't like to speak about myself personally in public settings, except insofar as that might foster autonomous philosophical reflection, political action, and artistic creation in myself and others while offering an account of material I have made public (there is a duty to provide a “self-presentation” to one's audience, the classical historian and essayist Pierre Vidal-Naquet has said). Yes, it is true that I love jazz and baseball, two original American cultural forms (as well as another one, cinema — in my case especially American films of the late 1940s). Our Appalachian Springs Foundation is currently sponsoring a monthly jazz music and interview series, “Third Thursdays”² in Cambridge, Massachusetts that is inspired by the “Harmolodic” musical theory of Clara's longtime collaborator, the late Pulitzer-Prize-winning composer and saxophonist Ornette Coleman. “Harmolodics,” which gives equal value to *harmony*, *motion* or *rhythm*, and *melody* — hence this magmatic neologism — articulates a profoundly *democratic* conception of participation, where anyone in a collective setting can, while listening and responding to others, help to steer an improvised collaboration in new and unforeseen directions. We have also funded Nathaniel Draper's experimental film that takes the choreography-for-film investigations of Maya Deren into the digital age and a work of “poetic cinema” directed by Anastasia Melia Eleftheriou that uses the Greek myth of Tantalus to illustrate/dramatize ecological and water-access issues. The 80th Annual Gathering of The Thoreau Society hosted the Virtual World Premiere of Clara's latest dance film/social documentary. Revolving around an 1859 excerpt from Henry David Thoreau's *Journal*: “What we call wildness is a civilization other than our own,” *Thoreau's Henhawk Visits Mexico* is a 39-minute video of a choreographic/musical/video-projection/spoken-word performance for a colloquium at the early 16th-century Casa de la Primera Imprenta de América (House of the First Printing Press in

2 <https://dbryantmusic.com/third-thursdays/>

the Americas) in Mexico City, with the active participation of students from the Cátedra Interinstitucional Cornelius Castoriadis (CICC) for this bilingual event.³ One of the CICC attendees, Ana Julia, who has worked with the Amuzgos, an indigenous people in Guerrero State, on their pirate-radio project in an area suffering from water-access issues, was particularly interested in Thoreau's involvement in native culture and civil disobedience. The audiovisual record of the post-performance student discussion with our artistic-technical team about the relevance today of Thoreau's views on art, nature, native peoples, somatic practices (yoga), and social change forms the emotionally gripping and thoughtfully fascinating final section of our new video. We are now seeking a venue for *Henhawk's* Live World Premiere.

A.R.: In 1990, you co-founded the Agora International Association (AI). If I understand the mission of the project correctly, AI is about the emancipation of knowledge, free access to Castoriadis's ideas and the possibility to circulate them. This is relevant because digital and economic inequalities in academia continue to exist in the contemporary world (paid access to databases, problems of independent researchers without academic affiliation, etc.). Is the AI project a life project for you? What is its purpose and significance? You devote a great deal of attention to supporting it. Please, tell us a little more about the team and the inner workings.

D.A.C.: In plain sight of everyone, Agora International has quietly created for the Cornelius Castoriadis/Agora International Website a self-managed Bibliographers-Webographers Collective (currently in twenty-one languages, including Russian and Ukrainian, and soon Belarusian, Czech, Farsi, Hungarian, Polish, and Romanian).⁴ Each bibliographer-webographer is responsible for, and signs, his/her own work while also remaining responsible to the Collective. No censorship is exercised, so that everyone can know everything written in these languages by and about Castoriadis and/or his postwar revolutionary group *Socialisme ou Barbarie*⁵ and thus can reply, in full knowledge of the relevant material and as they see fit, to anything already published, with these new responses then added to the extant bibliographies/webographies. We currently have 2,650+ individual and organizational free subscribers who themselves share with our bibliographers-webographers new information about potential references and who may write to correct or supplement existing ones.⁶ In this way, a constructive and horizontal (nonhierarchical) international dialogue is

3 The trailer may be viewed at: <https://vimeo.com/kaloskaisophos/thoreau-henhawk-visits-mexico-trailer>

4 <https://www.agorainternational.org/bibliographies.html>

5 See also our sister websites: <https://soubscan.org> and <https://soubtrans.org>

6 For a subscription, people may write to: contact@agorainternational.org.

established, limited only by each person's linguistic capacities and internet access. Those who welcome a non-“spectacular” presentation of this project may view a 16-minute video I created for a CICC colloquium.⁷

Someone who once came from the Danish Ministry of Culture to the Agora International headquarters (in reality, our Paris apartment) was surprised/disappointed, given the evident breadth and depth of our work, to discover that there weren't dozens of paid research assistants working like little elves in small cubicles eight hours a day. All our CC/AI Website bibliographers-webographers are volunteers sharing information that informs and benefits themselves as well as others worldwide. Some have created major complementary projects conducted in their own languages, such as the aforementioned Cátedra Interinstitucional Cornelius Castoriadis (Spanish)⁸ and the Verein für das Studium und die Förderung der Autonomie (German).⁹

A.R.: What has Agora International organized or published to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Castoriadis? I know of 6 volumes of *Crossroads in the Labyrinth*. What other events or publications have you been involved in?

D.A.C.: Agora International does not publish anything on its own, besides actual bibliographical-webographical-videographical references/links and contributions from students and teachers to our “Teaching Castoriadis” section.¹⁰ On their own initiative, people associated with the CC/AI Website did organize Castoriadis 100th-birthday celebrations, for example in Greece. And in our “News” section,¹¹ we announced to our subscribers various other events that took place around the world about which we were informed (the strength of our website derives from the grassroots circulation of pertinent information, going from the bottom up instead of simply from the top down). And yes, all six volumes of Castoriadis's *Carrefours du labyrinthe* series (a large series of texts written to complement his 1975 *magnum opus*, *L'institution imaginaire de la société*) are now available together online in English translation, for the first time and free of charge, as *Crossroads in the Labyrinth*: <https://www.notbored.org/cornelius-castoriadis-crossroads-1-6.html>.

A.R.: *The Imaginary Institution of Society* was not translated into English until 1987. The translator was Kathleen Blamey, who specializes in translating Paul Ricoeur.

7 <https://vimeo.com/kaloskaisophos/david-ames-curtis-pregunta-2-agora-international> (in English with Spanish subtitles)

8 <https://www.agorainternational.org/cicc.pdf>

9 https://autonomieentwurf.de/?page_id=23

10 <https://www.agorainternational.org/teaching.html>.

11 <https://www.agorainternational.org/news.html>

Why was Castoriadis's magnum opus translated so late? Why didn't David Curtis do this translation? Is it difficult to translate Castoriadis in general?

D.A.C.: Blamey's IIS translation was already underway when I first contacted Castoriadis in 1984. And Ryle/Soper's English-language translation of the first volume in the *Carrefours* series had come out that same year from Harvester Press. On strike at Yale at that time, I wrote to Castoriadis to propose translating other writings of his and to edit for book publication existing translations done by my predecessor "Maurice Brinton," the co-founder of Socialisme ou Barbarie's sister organization, London Solidarity — his real name, Christopher Agamemnon Pallis, can now be revealed after his death. Cornelius and then Chris readily and generously accepted.¹² At Castoriadis's request, I later proposed extensive corrections, revisions, and bibliographical updates when Polity Press decided to reprint IIS as a paperback in 1997. Polity, however, was willing to incorporate only those changes that did not affect the existing typeset pagination, and they systematically ignored the new bibliographical information Castoriadis asked me to provide (my three volumes of Castoriadis's *Political and Social Writings* had been published in the meantime: 1988, 1988, and 1993).

As far as the level of difficulty involved in translating Castoriadis, his work is — despite a false projection spread by many who willfully or ignorantly confuse it with what he himself has called "the French Ideology" — actually much less arduous to translate than the unnecessarily arcane and convoluted constructions that characterize much of postwar French writing. It is always compelling to engage with this trenchant and plain-spoken work and a joy to render it into English, despite the minor challenge of a few ingenious Greek-based neologisms in French that are not that hard to translate into a relatively similar language (I wonder, though, how much trouble was involved in the task of, for example, the Chinese translator).

A.R.: Castoriadis is a special author for you. If I'm not mistaken, you were on friendly terms and have known each other since 1985. You were about 30 years old at the time. Castoriadis was 63. Did the age difference hinder your work?

D.A.C.: I was in my 28th year and Cornelius would soon turn 63 when we first met at his Paris apartment in early January. He was kind, generous, and certainly indulgent of my inexperience, as he had already, by letter, authorized me to approach publishers for a multivolume project. He was always willing and enthusiastic to work with younger

12 It was Brinton/Pallis who kindly told me that I was the best person in the English-speaking world to pen the Castoriadis obituary you will read now in Belarusian translation in the present issue of the journal.

people — to the point where some older Socialisme ou Barbarie members reportedly had expressed concern or disbelief that he was devoting so much time with such politically neophyte kids in the early 1960s (when, however, a major youth movement was already underway). I, therefore, feel a lifelong obligation to pass forward to others all that I learned from him.

A.R.: All of Castoriadis's books seem to be very expensive if you buy them on Amazon (even in paperback). This makes them unaffordable to many, thus resulting in Castoriadis's ideas becoming inaccessible. Do you, as a translator, receive royalties from these sales?

D.A.C.: My yearly Blackwell/Wiley royalty check, for US\$69.05, arrived a few days ago. The other contracts I've signed are "work-for-hire" — that is, I'm paid only a (small) lump sum at the start. I have no control over the current pricing policies of trade and academic publishers, nor of the various platform booksellers, whose asking prices, I see, are significantly jacked up from the original paperback list prices. I did reject one contract offer for what became *A Socialisme ou Barbarie Anthology: Autonomy, Critique, and Revolution in the Age of Bureaucratic Capitalism* when the prospective editor proposed selling a hardback copy exclusively for two years at a +\$200 price point (that would have created too perverse an irony). When one consults our English-language Castoriadis "By" Bibliography,¹³ one can see that almost all Castoriadis volumes in English, including the electro-Samizdat ones, now have online links, making these books available to all online for free.

A.R.: The reader of Castoriadis's texts, compiled by you and containing your foreword, was published in 1997. As far as I know, a reader is rarely compiled while the author is still alive. Did you and Castoriadis agree on including these texts? How was the process organized? Were you shaken by the tragic coincidence of the reader's publication and Cornelius's death (that same year)? What would you change about the reader if you were compiling it today? Which texts would you add or remove?

D.A.C.: Blackwell's perhaps unusual *Reader* series offered readers collections for long-dead figures, like Hegel and Kierkegaard, then-recently-departed writers, like C. L. R. James, authors still alive at the time of publication, like Zygmunt Bauman and Castoriadis, and people who are still not yet deceased, like Angela Davis, Luce Irigaray, and Julia Kristeva. Feeling a responsibility to explain our joint editorial decisions to the public, my Translator's Foreword to *The Castoriadis Reader* offers an extended reflection on the reasons Castoriadis and

13 See <https://www.agorainternational.org/englishworks.html>

I made the choices we formulated while we were working closely together on the project from the start. I won't repeat here this in-depth exploration of what can, should, and did go into these determinations, except to say that they had their time and place: we combined "historic" greatest hits with several previously unpublished translations in what we concluded should be a chronological order.

Your interesting and valid question about what changes I might make today – absent now Castoriadis's living input – nevertheless remains abstract. Practically speaking, as a professional translator/editor I would ask: How many pages would this theoretical publisher allow? Would the company's editor unilaterally impose any rules of selection (prohibited or mandatory items?) or of the organization (chronologic, thematic, or otherwise?). What rights issues, if any, might be involved, including monetary considerations in relation to budget allotments? Or would I have *carte blanche* (with an adequate budget or no rights issues as well as final "passed-for-press" authorization: the publishing equivalent of Orson Welles's *Citizen Kane* contract)? If the latter, we begin to approach the realm of the *ideal*, with all its opportunities and illusions, as well as potential side effects (outside interference or outright sabotage). In his day, André Malraux's *Musée imaginaire* posited the mental comparability and availability, via memories of photographs, of all works. But the question of artworks' physical displacement, of which he was aware, and of one's own corporeal displacements (in space or at least of one's eyes) is already an old one: Does one see an African statuette or Tintoretto's series of paintings created for the Confraternity of San Rocco (so beloved by my friend and collaborator, the Icelandic artist Erró, that he paid Clara's and my flights to Venice as well as our accommodations there to see them) in the same way as when these works are removed from their original contexts in order for us, with our cultural backgrounds and interrogations, to view them elsewhere? Indeed, when one employs the term *museum* – a shrine for the Muses – should one as an ambulatory entity posit "up" and "down" (gravity), firmly fixed or infinitely flexible rooms, various openings, doors, and corridors situated in one area or another, one or several floors, and then, possible placements of staircases or elevators to allow walking or assisted passage from one set of prearranged work-presentations to another? Elevators, for example, already imply and entail, social-historically, all of electric-powered contemporary civilization – unless one has recourse, say, to mules, ropes, and pulleys (all of which, too, it is to be assumed, must already be created and reproducible). Any new Castoriadis Reader would be a "one-man show" in a space within which one could, physically or imaginarily, move about in certain restricted or relatively unobstructed ways. Should this visual-arts display perhaps combine text with sound and/or moving images (audio and audiovisual recordings of Castoriadis) and include or exclude commentaries/critiques or at least labels? (Should then *attention span* be taken into account? As of 2015, it has been widely reported, the average human

attention span has been reduced — by television and then the internet, among other factors — to 8.25 seconds, or three-quarters of a second less than that of a goldfish. In short, the *reader* — average or not — has to be taken into account when devising a Reader.) In the realm of the novel, narrations with multiple possible bifurcations and endings have been experimented with, on paper or electronically, for decades. Or one may simply mention, for example, any .html (HyperText Markup Language) file today, which allows the “reader” to navigate in any direction or sequence allowed by the programmed webpage or series of webpages, either internally or extending out to the World Wide Web (and even its “dark-web” mirror world and the “deep web”).

Thus now definitely dematerializing your question¹⁴ while nevertheless remembering that *human reading* still has a physical substrate as well as an ineliminable *cocreative* element and using the hypernovel as an analogy,¹⁵ a Castoriadis Reader taking advantage of current techniques and capitalist-forged technologies could involve many such hybrid options. But by the very definition of *options*, the problem of *choice* immediately arises: At what point(s) and with the aid of what cues — invented question(s), for example — might one help direct the surfer-reader to the next set of (textual/audio/visual) alternative landing sites? According to what, if any, preestablished Reader rules? And to what end(s)? (Castoriadis himself railed against the contemplative *museification* of the world.) Fixing a criterion or set of criteria at each stage immediately raises the question of the criterion/criteria for choosing particular next-steps criteria — which, in the abstract at least, creates an infinite regress. Might one virtuously stave off these inevitable questions by introducing, as operative solutions, *artificial intelligence* (a curious phrase; for, what kind of “intelligence” would be straightforwardly “natural”?) and its stepchild *machine learning* (perhaps an oxymoron, as well as a peculiar harking back to when the Machine Age, generally thought to have ended with the advent of the Atomic Age, had supplanted the more traditional labor of the dual working classes of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: “Farmers and Mechanics,” to employ then-contemporary English-language parlance) in order to generate nodes/switches that will lead the

14 In speaking of *dematerializations*, I leave aside for the moment such physical-mental hybrid forms as VR goggles (with or without touch-based interactivity) and augmented-reality mobile games that combine “virtuality” and (our impure, already virtuality-soaked) “reality” via GPS-enabled smartphones, the best known of which is perhaps *Pokémon GO* (2016).

15 I am also leaving aside various dystopian science-fiction projections, such as the hypnotic “learning” of history lessons in the sixth episode (“The General”) of Patrick McGoochan’s *The Prisoner* series (1967–1968) — where the mainframe computer self-destructs when fed the question “Why?” — or David Cronenberg’s 1999 film *Existenz* — where “game pods” connecting directly into players’ nervous systems via “bio-ports” successfully erase the distinction between reality and imagination.

reader, with an impression of autonomy, to his/her adjacent reading tasks? These two phrases are quite actual, yet still under elucidated, buzzwords that are *of a piece* with other such attempts to avoid reflection, deliberation, autonomous action, and individual and collective self-responsibility today, such as “cybercurrency” or “cryptocurrency” as well as their typical means of technological implementation, now projected as a possible “libertarian” organizing principle for society overall:¹⁶ the “distributed ledger” or “blockchain” technology that uses “consensus algorithms” to shortcircuit human choice-formation and social conflict as well as genuinely political oversight and intervention.¹⁷

Imagine, now, a bibliography — indeed, a series of them in as many languages as now exist where Castoriadis’s texts have been written and/or translated — and, moreover, a Webography — again, actually an extant linguistic set of them, containing references to not-physically-published yet posted-online textual and audio items — and, finally, a Videography — one combining online audiovisual records from all languages in which Castoriadis ever spoke and/or that contain foreign subtitles — that, with as many hyperlinks as exist for these text-, sound-, and image-based records, can lead one, at one’s will and according to one’s financial, mental, physical, and temporal capacities, from one place to another and to all such places, in many cases at no additional cost. We have here the virtual book-depository equivalent¹⁸ of the Lewis Carroll-inspired Borgesian 1:1 map of an entire expanse. As such comprehensive mappings prove inherently unwieldy and impracticable, some sort of (self-)guidance is required. Titles/descriptions in online bibliographies and webographies, as well as a single Videography (citing sometimes multilingual — spoken-and-subtitled — entries), can be word-searched to create a first set of guideposts for further reading/listening/viewing, based on one’s existent and evolving interests. Short of creating a keyword search that would already contain

16 Of late, an ideologically individualistic “libertarianism” (not to say sociopathy) of many “tech bros” and others is being replaced in part, or supplemented, by a primarily career-based “effective altruism,” which was championed and bankrolled, for example, by FTX founder Sam Bankman-Fried until his recent arrest and disgrace. The conveniently individualistic (not to say self-serving) idea, lacking in substantive socially and politically collective thought and action, is that the “greatest good” for others might be achieved within the present system, and via its “disruption,” by amassing power and money for oneself that, it is promised, will later be distributed to those negatively affected by this very same system and by its various “disruptions.” “Disrupters” become new guardians of a *status quo* to be modified by them for the supposed benefit of absent others, not by the disenfranchised, disaffected, and disempowered people they vow to “help.”

17 Visit <https://youtu.be/Pz8G5JR3CKI> for my online conversation, recorded March 15, 2021, with Michel Bauwens (P2P Foundation) and Rok Kranjc (Futurescraft), where I gently questioned their enthusiasm for such techniques as somehow a solution to contemporary economic and ecological problems.

18 Jorge Luis Borges: “I have always imagined that Paradise will be a kind of library.”

in one place¹⁹ all Castoriadis's words in all the languages in which he has written/has been translated/is heard/is seen (the last two of these would require total transcriptions or sound-image computer analyses of all nontextual entries), and even then, given the analytical limitation of such discreet searches, further (self-)guidance may be required. As the CC/AI Website English- and French-language Bibliographer-Webographer, I – and also the other bibliographers-webographers in their respective languages – communicate with the website's subscribers and with other interested people. The first two questions for any new contact – after asking, “How did you discover the CC/AI Website?” – are: “How did you discover Castoriadis?” and “What is your interest in his work?” This provides a (risky) basis for making specific additional reading suggestions tailored to each person and eventually also for putting the subscriber in contact with others who have written on and/or are exploring the same subject(s). Thus do we implement a working method of creating a Reader for every individual who might want, and could benefit from, such detailed suggestions for pursuing greater knowledge and for engaging in further inquiry, while respecting the self-guiding autonomy of each.

A.R.: Karl Marx, Max Weber, Sigmund Freud, ancient philosophy, etc. are often mentioned among the origins of Castoriadis's thinking. From your point of view, who and what were Castoriadis's teachers and inspirations?

D.A.C.: This might be formulated better as follows: “the origins of many of the questions that occurred to Castoriadis, questions he (re) formulated in novel ways.” Here I would add Martin Heidegger – not as a “teacher” or “inspiration,” but as a thinker, in this case, someone Castoriadis found profoundly wrongheaded²⁰ but whose works nonetheless led Castoriadis to raise in his mind issues he might not have addressed in the same way without them. This can be read even in the similarity of certain titles, such as Heidegger's “Modern Science, Metaphysics, and Mathematics,” “The Question Concerning Technology,” and “The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking,” which have

19 With the kind volunteer initiative and technical assistance of “Laurent,” it is now possible to search any word or phrase appearing within the more limited scope of the forty issues of *Socialisme ou Barbarie* at our sister website: <https://soubscan.org>.

20 “Here we have the bizarre spectacle of a philosopher talking interminably about the Greeks, and whose thought draws a blank in the place of *polis*, *eros*, and *psyche*. But an ‘interpretation’ of Greek philosophy ignoring systematically the fact that philosophy was born in and through the *polis* and is a part of the same movement that brought about the first democracies, is bound to be irredeemably lame,” Castoriadis declared in his 1988 lecture, “The ‘End of Philosophy’?”, now in the third volume of the *Crossroads in the Labyrinth* series: <https://www.notbored.org/cornelius-castoriadis-crossroads-3-world-in-fragments.pdf>.

their counterparts in Castoriadis's texts "Modern Science and Philosophical Interrogation," "Technique," and "The 'End of Philosophy'?" And of course, Aristotle, to whom you allude. But also Agis Stinas (1900–1987), the leader of the most radical Greek Trotskyist group, which Castoriadis had joined well before departing from Athens for Paris in 1945; the two remained in touch until the former's death. As he was breaking from Marx and trying to widen the scope of the issues and ideas *Socialisme ou Barbarie* might address, Castoriadis wrote what for me is one of his most evocative and important, if schematic, texts: "For a New Orientation," a 1962 internal S. ou B. document arguing that the group should expand its areas of concern from traditional Marxist ones to such fields as urbanism, art history, and anthropology in order to bring out their revolutionary implications. He cites such writers as Lewis Mumford, Pierre Francastel, and Margaret Mead.²¹ He also mentions there the Chinese-American revolutionary "Ria Stone" (Grace Lee Boggs, 1915–2015), who was active in the Detroit labor movement and the African-American community. As much as and perhaps more than Grace's and Cornelius's former collaborator, the Trinidadian revolutionary C. L. R. James, she had a profound effect on his thinking.

A.R.: Psychoanalysis played an important role in Castoriadis's work. Unfortunately, in the Russian-speaking world, little is written about Castoriadis as a psychoanalyst. The topic of Castoriadis's psychoanalysis is simply not developed. The only exceptions are *The Imaginary Institution of Society* and some interpretative texts.

In your opinion, what are the specifics of Castoriadis's psychoanalysis? Why does he criticize Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan?

Again, note the repetition of history similar to his transitions from different Marxist organizations. Castoriadis abandons "the Freudian school", moves to Lacanianism and then founds his own group (organization).

D.A.C.: Castoriadis's criticisms of Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan are not fully comparable. He respected the former, despite many failings — such as Freud's reflecting the patriarchal views of his time or his neglecting, because of the prevailing scientism, to pronounce the word *imagination* in a substantive way in his work even as Freud was saying nothing but that — because in Castoriadis's view, Freud, unlike Karl Marx, continued to ask questions and fostered no definitive

21 "For a New Orientation," now translated in the third volume of his *Political and Social Writings* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993). A year later, in "Recommencing the Revolution," he wrote: "It is equally important to show the similar contents that appear in the most radical currents in contemporary culture (tendencies in psychoanalysis, sociology, and ethnology, for example), to the extent that these currents both complete the demolition of what remains of oppressive ideologies and are bound to spread within society" (*ibid.*, p. 49).

closure to this thinking. Castoriadis did attend seminars of Lacan in the Sixties on account of the latter's attempt to revitalize Freud's thought at a time when "normalizing" tendencies within official Freudian circles were undermining the radical, innovative social questioning contained in Freud's writings. Yet Castoriadis had no illusions about Lacan being a positive inspiration for social thought and social change. As he wrote retrospectively, "No one in his right mind who was familiar, in the Sixties, with Jacques Lacan's writings and personality would have dreamed that he could ever have anything to do with a social and political movement."²² And as early as October 1968 — in his first article devoted explicitly to psychoanalysis: "Epilegomena to a Theory of the Soul That Has Been Able to Be Presented as a Science"²³ — he expressed skepticism of Lacan and Lacanianism. His critique of this particular variant of "the French Ideology" then turned highly explicit and incredibly hard-hitting in "Psychoanalysis: Project and Elucidation," his devastating 1977 text written against "the Lacanian syndrome" and what it more broadly represents.²⁴ The latter article first appeared in *Topique*, the review created by Piera Aulagnier, his wife at the time. Aulagnier co-founded the Organisation psychanalytique de langue française or "Fourth Group" that had broken in 1969 from Lacan's École freudienne de Paris or "Third Group" (i.e., distinct from the two internationally-recognized Freudian organizations), to which Castoriadis never belonged. In some of the "instituting" practices of this Fourth Group — which regularly revised its statutes and collectively reviewed its activity and which was reacting against the personality-cult arbitrariness of Lacan's Freudian School of Paris — one may glimpse perhaps an influence of Castoriadis's revolutionary ideas on ongoing self-institution. Yet he described himself only as "close to" this new group and not a member, despite being himself a practising psychoanalyst for the last quarter century of his life. Castoriadis's membership in the Greek Communist Party, which he joined at age 15 and within which he quickly formed an opposition group before joining the most left-wing Trotskyist faction, or his early postwar participation in the French Trotskyist Parti Communiste

22 In "The Movements of the Sixties" (1986); see now p. 30 in the fourth volume of the *Crossroads in the Labyrinth* series: <https://www.notbored.org/cornelius-castoriadis-crossroads-4-rising-tide-of-insignificancy.pdf>

23 Castoriadis was already making reference to the importance of psychoanalysis in the first part of "On the Content of Socialism" (1955; now in the first volume of his *Political and Social Writings* [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988]) — "alienation in capitalist society is not simply economic. It not only manifests itself in connection with material life. It also affects in a fundamental way both man's sexual and his cultural functions" — while praising Wilhelm Reich's work for bringing out "the profound relation between class structures and the patriarchal regulation of sexual relations."

24 Both of these texts are now available in the first volume of the *Crossroads in the Labyrinth* series: <https://www.notbored.org/cornelius-castoriadis-crossroads-1.pdf>

Internationaliste, where he formed an official opposition faction (named the Chaulieu-Montal Tendency, after the pseudonyms of its two leaders, Castoriadis and Claude Lefort), thus are, again, not fully comparable, this time with respect to his more limited psychoanalytic engagements. What can, however, be read as a similarity between his early Marxist/Trotskyist commitments and his later, looser associations with French psychoanalysis is his ever-deeper, autonomy-focused questioning of both ideas and institutions.

It would be impossible to summarize, in a response to one part of a single interview question, Castoriadis's groundbreaking elucidation of the psychical, let alone lay out his key differences with respect to Freud, Lacan, and other psychoanalytic thinkers and practitioners. I, therefore, refer the interested reader to an excellent synthetic presentation by Castoriadis's former student Fernando Urribarri: "The Psyche: Imagination and History. A General View of Cornelius Castoriadis's Psychoanalytic Ideas."²⁵ Nevertheless, one can mention here Castoriadis's crucial insight: "The true polarity is not between individual and society, but between psyche and society."²⁶ Castoriadis posits an original "psychical monad," irreducible to society, that is expressive of the hypertrophic growth, in the human being, of a *defunctionalized* imagination. Sublimation is the psychical side of the process that, via the "breakup" — though never the total elimination — of this monad and its transformation into a "monadic pole" ever rebellious to social reality, results in the "fabrication" of social individuals that internalize the "imaginary significations" of the each-time-different society in question. Along with pedagogy and politics, psychoanalysis is a "practicopoietic activity" (i.e., not a science) that aims at the *autonomy* of the other in a way that can achieve success only by drawing upon and helping to enact in embodied consciousness the as-yet-not-fully-realized autonomy, the virtual autonomy, of the other, in this case, the analysand. "In analysis," Castoriadis asserts, "it is a matter neither of rendering the subject totally 'transparent' to himself nor of instaurating a 'mastery' of the Conscious over the Unconscious; it is a matter of instaurating another relation"²⁷ between, on the one hand, oneself as a conscious being and, on the other hand, one's own phantasies as well as the imaginary significations that have been imposed upon one via the unavoidable, and always violent, process of socialization. A homology, though by no means an identity, is thus established here with true politics, whereby one aims at establishing "another relation" between instituting and the instituted than the heteronomous one that prevails in most societies.

25 Trans. Nora Stelzer and Veronica Chehtman, with additional editing by David Ames Curtis, *Free Associations*, 7:3 (1999): 374–96.

26 "Time and Creation" (1990), now in the third volume of the *Crossroads in the Labyrinth* series: <https://www.notbored.org/cornelius-castoriadis-crossroads-3-world-in-fragments.pdf>.

27 "Psychoanalysis: Project and Elucidation," first *Crossroads* volume, p. 82, n. 28.

A.R.: It is often said that Castoriadis was influential during the May 1968 students-workers rebellion. It has become a matter of course. Almost a cliché. However, how exactly did Castoriadis influence the protest movement? Has anyone researched/measured this influence? If they have, how?

D.A.C.: The French student leader Dany Cohn-Bendit and his older brother Gaby – who had attended Socialisme ou Barbarie meetings and who supplied Dany with back issues of the group’s review of the same name – wrote explicitly in their 1969 book *Obsolete Communism: The Left-Wing Alternative* that the “views we have been presenting are those of P. Chaulieu” while also directly mentioning the influence of Socialisme ou Barbarie. For his part, Castoriadis, referring to his major five-part *Socialisme ou Barbarie* text, “Marxism and Revolutionary Theory” (1964–1965), which became the first part of *The Imaginary Institution of Society*, reminds his readers that “long before May ’68, Structuralism had been criticized, notably by the author of the present article, both as to its content as such and as to its political implications. Those who lived through those times can testify that being a militant at the beginning of the Sixties in contact with certain student and university circles in Paris entailed taking a stand against Structuralism in general and Althusser in particular.” Some write histories of May ’68 that glaringly ignore Castoriadis and S. ou B. altogether, while others rightfully recognize their key, though generally subterranean, contributions.

A.R.: I am currently writing an article on the reception of Castoriadis’s ideas in Zygmunt Bauman’s theory of liquid modernity. Peter Beilharz wrote fragmentarily about their similarities. The Agora International website also mentions some references.

Do you know if Castoriadis knew Bauman? Did he read his books? Why did they never meet or correspond?

They were, after all, contemporaries forced to emigrate from their countries (Poland and Greece respectively). Both were fascinated by Marxism and broke with it. Both had the courage to describe autonomy, freedom and emancipation as one of the central themes of their work. They were even published in the same English-language journals (*Telos*, *Thesis Eleven*).

D.A.C.: Because I am relatively unfamiliar with this issue, I wrote to Peter Beilharz, *Thesis Eleven*’s book-review editor and author of *Intimacy in Postmodern Times: A Friendship with Zygmunt Bauman*,²⁸ who replied:

I do not think ZB had access to this in Poland in the Fifties or Sixties. But he becomes a great fan of CC I think after you arranged at my request to send him the *CC Reader*. The idea, or hope, was that he

28 See Beilharz, Peter (2020). *Intimacy in Postmodern Times: A Friendship with Zygmunt Bauman*. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press.

would review it in a prominent place. . . . Then, of course, CC died. I do not know if a correspondence had opened between them in this small window. No review appeared.

Beilharz kindly referred me to Jack Palmer, who, Beilharz informs me, is familiar with the Bauman archives. Palmer helpfully writes:

There's no evidence of correspondence in the archive. I do recall coming across this amusing line in a letter Bauman sent to Claus Offe in 1998, when the latter was putting together a laudatio for the Adorno prize ceremony: "Adorno and Horkheimer I never met (and good I did not try. Later, I intended to meet Levinas, Jonas, Castoriadis – my other heroes; the moment I decided to see them, I read about their death. So being obviously a postmodern version of typhoid Mary, I stopped trying!)" The intimation seems to be that he intended to write but never got the chance.

The influence of CC was made very clear on a number of occasions. In the *Conversations with ...* book that Bauman wrote with Keith Tester, he acknowledged the similarity of their life trajectories and how it shaped their intellectual concerns ...: "he [CC] has occupied a special place among my selected kinspeople since I was struck by the parallelity (*toutes proportions gardées!*) of our life itineraries, of the similarity of that curious and difficult to disentangle mixture of continuity and discontinuity." In one of his last interviews (conducted by Simon Tabet, author of one of the very few French books on Bauman), Bauman said that "in France, Cornelius Castoriadis is my main influence: he did not know that he was my teacher, but I read his work with great interest." I do not know if Z sent books to CC. And I would say there were sympathies, rather than similarities, between their thinking.

A.R.: On your Facebook page, you've published the following quote from Castoriadis's text *Facing the War*: "The sole remaining 'ideology,' the only one capable of remaining alive in Russia is Great-Russian chauvinism. The sole imaginary that retains historical efficacy is the nationalist – or imperial – imaginary. This imaginary has no need of the Party – save as a mask and, especially, via propaganda and action, as a way of gaining international penetration. Its organic bearer is the army" (Cornelius Castoriadis, *Devant la guerre*, 1981).

In this text, Castoriadis's reflections have their origin in conjunction with several events, including the Russian invasion and occupation of Afghanistan. Do you extrapolate this assessment onto the contemporary situation?

What is your position on the war in Ukraine, which began in February of 2022 and is still going on?

D.A.C.: This is what I hopefully have adequately, if briefly, addressed in my introduction, specially written for the present issue, to my Castoriadis obituary, translated here. I have tried to demonstrate the

continuing relevancy of Castoriadis's analyses of Russia's historical expansionism and of the consequences of what he called its imbalanced, two-tier (military/civilian) "stratocratic" economy and regime. These analyses, as you rightly point out, were occasioned by the Russian invasion and occupation of Afghanistan but were inspired by a longstanding conviction that Russia was, after Stalin's death and the failed Khrushchevian attempts at reform, no longer a true *totalitarian* regime, its ideology having already reached the state of "decomposition"²⁹ by the time of Khrushchev's "secret report" and even before the Russians invaded Hungary to put down a workers' revolt that had set up independent Workers' Council — just as S. ou B. had, in its very first issue (1949), predicted would happen in the Eastern-bloc countries.

I also note there a perhaps significant change, given Russia's current status as an authoritarian, extractionist petro-State unable, now in the absence of Western technology, to deploy on an actual battlefield a sufficient number of conventional weapons while becoming increasingly dependent on, for example, Iranian drones and driving abroad many who belong to what little Russia has of a modern economy.

In the Sixties, Seventies, and Eighties, some people on "the Left," disillusioned with the "Soviet Union" (in reality, *bureaucratic-capitalist* Russia) and tempted by (bureaucratic-capitalist) China's Maoist challenge to Russia's "social imperialism" as a viable "left-wing" alternative (which it was not), adopted a "Third Worldist" position that, while incoherently displacing Marxist millennialist hopes from the "proletariat" onto the peasantry and the "wretched of the earth," transferred their shameful "fellow-traveling" apologism for totalitarian States to various military and authoritarian dictatorships around the world, so long as the latter posed as "anti-Western" even as they were exploiting and oppressing their own peoples. Taking account of world realities, Castoriadis concluded his 1985 talk, "Third World, Third Worldism, Democracy," as follows:

So long as the present political resignation of the Western peoples continues, every attempt of ours at an *effective political* response to the problems of the Third World is, at best, utopian, at worst, an unconscious and involuntary cover for real policies unrelated to the interests of the Third World.

Since the Fall of the Berlin Wall and then what Castoriadis called "The Pulverization of Marxism-Leninism,"³⁰ some on "the Left" have

29 See "Khrushchev and the Decomposition of Bureaucratic Ideology," in the second volume of his *Political and Social Writings* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988); this text originally appeared in French in the July-September 1956 issue (no. 19) of *Socialisme ou Barbarie*.

30 The translation of this 1990 article now appears in the fourth volume of his *Crossroads in the Labyrinth* series: <https://www.notbored.org/cornelius-castoriadis-crossroads-4-rising-tide-of-insignificancy.pdf>

strangely returned to, or never departed from, or (because there are new generations) now adopted, under cover of a “leftist” “anti-imperialism” that targets exclusively the West, a position that reprises, for example, the “Unconditional Defense of the USSR” slogan (it is on this point that Castoriadis and S. ou B. broke from Trotskyism in 1948) – *in the absence of* Russian “Communism” (what Castoriadis more accurately had labeled “total and totalitarian bureaucratic capitalism”) and *in the face of* Russia’s current authoritarian and socially reactionary regime. Whether “tankies” – a term originally used to describe Stalinists who supported in 1956 the Russian tank invasion of Hungary (which Castoriadis and S. ou B. vehemently opposed) – or today’s descendants of various “Third Worldist” ideologies, such people continue to play out (in their heads) the “Great Game” of Anglo-Russian rivalry while, as the historian of the S. ou B. group Stephen Hastings-King has frequently stated, systematically ignoring, as a result, the actual (though fragmented) desires and interests of any mere people or region subjected to this Great Game. The sole coherent position, as our Athens-based CC/AI Website Bulgarian Bibliographer-Webographer Yavor Tarinski has argued, is to provide critical support, without falling into delusional thinking, to antiauthoritarian forces on all sides of any international, regional, or intranational conflict.

A.R.: In philosophy and social theory one often uses a link to a school, method or tradition of thought (e.g., one speaks of representatives of the Frankfurt School, Structuralism, the Habermasian, the Foucauldian, etc.). I know that you think that Castoriadisianism is impossible. Moreover, it contradicts the very idea of the infinite philosophical questioning of Castoriadis (the spirit of his philosophy). Nevertheless, I would like to ask you about it. Is it correct to use the conceptual apparatus of Castoriadis to analyze authoritarian and totalitarian societies (political regimes)? For example, authoritarian authorities (governments) would be understood as a heteronomy, while protest movements (like those in Belarus in 2020-2021) would be understood as a manifestation of creativity in pursuit of autonomy.

D.A.C.: Let us recall, first, that, for Castoriadis, “creativity” is not necessarily always positive: “Auschwitz and the Gulag are creations just as much as the Parthenon and the *Principia Mathematica*.”³¹ Moreover, as I have just alluded to, in our “world in fragments” (to cite the title of his third *Crossroads* volume) – and amid the “dual institution of modernity,” wherein an ongoing conflictual struggle of mind, body, and society is engaged and enacted between two opposing “central social imaginary significations”: the capitalist project of the “unlimited

31 “Intellectuals and History” (1987), now translated in the third volume of the *Crossroads in the Labyrinth* series: <https://www.notbored.org/cornelius-castoriadis-crossroads-3-world-in-fragments.pdf>.

expansion of pseudorational pseudomastery,” on the one hand, and the project of autonomy, on the other — every gesture of every person (who is simultaneously encouraged, by various monetary-and-ideological means, to “participate” in the present system and yet must have that same participation curtailed, excluded from consequential effect; for, otherwise, full individual and collective autonomy would ensue) is expressed in, and divided between, these two competing instituted sets of practices. That does not mean that one cannot or should not make choices — which are themselves an outgrowth and manifestation of, as well as the basis for, our potential for autonomy, which has indeed partially achieved, within history, certain institutional forms and practices. Yet one cannot map, in unambiguous and univocal, one-to-one relations, “authoritarian authorities” (your interestingly redundant formulation) as heteronomy and “protest movements ... as a manifestation of creativity in the pursuit of autonomy.” As Castoriadis pointed out in the aftermath of the 1989 popular protests in Central Europe that brought down the regimes there, an ingenious outpouring of creativity on the part of protestors *at the tactical level* — whereby those governments were deposed in short order and without major violence — was *not* accompanied by a comparable creativity when it came to a *strategic vision* for establishing (instituting) a new psychological, economic, social, and political order, an autonomous (i.e., *self-limiting*) one: in most cases, the people in these countries merely (though understandably) dreamed of escaping their then-present predicament under “Communist” rule by naively adopting, wholesale, existing Western institutions, i.e., the capitalist relations and the “representative democracy” that together make up what Castoriadis labels, more accurately, “liberal oligarchy” and that have already for decades been in a state of advanced *dilapidation* in the West (without even mentioning the increasingly dire *ecological* consequences).³²

Yes, for me, anyone who speaks of “Castoriadianism” or identifies as “Castoriadian” has no idea what you rightly call his “infinite philosophical questioning”³³ is really about. The Translator/Editor’s Forewords to the first and sixth volumes in the *Crossroads* series attempt to account for what this “infinite philosophical questioning” on his part involves and entails.

32 See “The Dilapidation of the West” (1995), now in the fourth volume of his *Crossroads in the Labyrinth* series: <https://www.notbored.org/cornelius-castoriadis-crossroads-4-rising-tide-of-insignificancy.pdf>, and “Ecology Against the Merchants” (1992), now in *A Society Adrift: More Interviews and Discussions on The Rising Tide of Insignificancy, Including Revolutionary Perspectives Today*, translated from the French and edited anonymously as a public service; electronic publication date: October 2010.

33 In a three-part 1979 interview with the French review *Esprit*, Castoriadis spoke of “Unending Interrogation”; the translation of this interview under that title now appears in the second volume of the *Crossroads in the Labyrinth* series: <https://www.notbored.org/cornelius-castoriadis-crossroads-2-human-domains.pdf>.

A.R.: Some of Castoriadis's texts may seem prophetic or even prescient. You've mentioned texts like "Dead End" (1987) and "Modern Science and Philosophical Interrogation" (1973). I would add "The Rationality of Capitalism" (1997), which, by the way, is also available to Russian-speaking readers.

But times are changing and so is capitalism.

Castoriadis caught just the beginning of globalization and virtualization in the contemporary world. What would his diagnosis be today? Has Western society become more autonomous and human individual lives less alienated and apathetic? Does the liberal oligopoly retain its hegemony? Does the dilapidation of the West continue? Does the unlimited expansion of rational mastery (pseudo-rational and pseudo-mastery) go on?

D.A.C.: Vast questions, ones that I have modestly attempted to address in a paper I have, since 2014, delivered, and/or had translated and presented/published, in English, French, German, Italian, Korean, and Spanish: "The Theme of 'The Rising Tide of Insignificancy' in the Work of Cornelius Castoriadis,"³⁴ which was drafted, for a Verein für das Studium und die Förderung der Autonomie colloquium, to create a diptych with my earlier paper for a Castoriadis *Festschrift*, "Socialism or Barbarism: The Alternative Presented in the Work of Cornelius Castoriadis."³⁵ I cannot recapitulate here the entire set of analyses, arguments, and descriptions presented in these two texts.

Here are two of its key ideas: (1) Against those who claim to see a clear break between an "early," "political" Castoriadis and a "later," mainly "philosophical" one, I have tried to bring out and examine the continuities as well as continuous changes in his six decades of work, whereby the initial theme of what I call a "*present contending alternative*" between "socialism or barbarism" (i.e., different from the various future-projecting formulations of this slogan in Marx, Engels, Luxembour, and Trotsky) was transformed into, though not simply replaced by, the theme of the "rising tide of insignificancy." (2) Against both Marxists and Foucauldians who speak and write as though "Neoliberalism" is unambiguously and fully our current situation, I argued in the later text:

What an understanding of capitalism as an imaginary institution of society shows – *when one takes into account the dual institution*

34 The latest version, which it was hoped would be fully translated into Korean, is now available here: kaloskaisophos.org/f.pdf.

35 This earlier text appeared in Giovanni Busino's *Autonomie et autotransformation de la société. La philosophie militante de Cornelius Castoriadis* (Geneva: Droz, 1989). It is now available here: https://www.academia.edu/13495706/Socialism_or_Barbarism_The_Alternative_Presented_in_the_Work_of_Cornelius_Castoriadis

of modernity and the hypertrophically destructive “crisis of social imaginary significations” it is now undergoing — is that there is no return to the *status quo ante*, nor is it (yet) plausible to believe that we are now living in a totally economic society, impenetrable to contestation and operating solely according to its own “logic.” The danger of taking Neoliberalism at face value is that, in gullibly accepting its premisses, we may be “taken in” by them, thereby noticing neither its incoherency nor its self-destructive tendencies (which can then be exploited for social change, but only through a renewal of the project of autonomy) nor its more mundane “real objectives” (a radical redistribution of wealth via an imposition of the money norm that is, however, self-undermining). One is even tempted to say that there is an objective concurrence among equally dogmatic and farfetched and superannuated ideologies, the “market fundamentalists” of Neoliberalism dourly telling us that “there is no alternative” coinciding with a hopeful “return to Marx” that would conjure away all that has intervened since 1848 or 1867 and deliver us an automatically guaranteed future.

However, as I also point out in the same text: “Less explored by Castoriadis than Neoliberalism’s incoherencies and its ideological screening of reality — and perhaps surprisingly so, given his longstanding interest in the relations of production — are the vast changes at *the point of production* that have been introduced in the course of the conservative counterrevolution.” Not being “Castoridian,” I readily acknowledge that there exist vast fields of inquiry for both activists and academics to explore, in order to discover realities and imaginaries Castoriadis did not elucidate, or did not elucidate fully, or did not anticipate, or did not anticipate fully, doing so while still guided — unslavishly, of course — by what Castoriadis thought and wrote.³⁶ Such endeavors, which one would undertake at one’s own new expenditure of effort and upon one’s own responsibility, can and, in my opinion, should be undertaken with a view not just toward general understanding but also toward contributing to the conditions under which the project of autonomy (simultaneously individual and collective self-questioning, self-transformation, and self-institution) may come to a more complete fruition.

36 See my discussion on pp. lii–lxiii of the Translator/Editor’s Foreword to the first volume in the *Crossroads in the Labyrinth* series <https://www.notbored.org/cornelius-castoriadis-crossroads-1.pdf>.