

Opening views against the closure of the world

Brij Mohan*

Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, United States of America

*Correspondence to: Brij Mohan, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, United States of America; Email: swmoha@lsu.edu

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The book in review is a brilliant critique. A touching dedication in memoriam to Charlie Hebdo (p.ix) reminds me of the infamous 9/11 when I was conducting a doctoral seminar in 326, HPL building. An ominous feeling overwhelmed my consciousness and I told the kids, “It’s the end of free society”. Professor Hermann has delivered a penetrating critique of modernity and the mainstream theories and facts of life that perpetuate euphemisms of progress.

In many ways, a new Dickensian era is upon us. The 21st century is markedly different — ubiquitous terror, ominous fear, and the specter of insecurity — from its earlier predecessors. Peter Hermann opens a new door of live paradoxes. In 7 brilliantly written chapters he unfolds realities relative to academic research, European theories of inclusions, social quality, anomie, environmental challenges and the nature of contemporary crises.

The composition of text is uniquely glued within a framework that merits serious attention from social theorists, policy makers, students, planners and practitioners of development and hope in a furiously desperate world. “Reconsidering globalization beyond global capitalism”, Hermann seems to emphasize a “relational approach” to the post-2015 Development Agenda.

The author’s hypothesis is that “the origin of many problems we discuss today as matter of freedom of science and the lack of it have to be understood as deeply rooted in the emerging ‘modern’, ‘capitalist’ society”. Since the assumption of “alienation of scientific work” and academic research, as pointed out on the outset (p.3), is inherently embedded in our (Western) societal DNA, any attempt to analyzing the clos-

ing of world is fraught with subjectivity and ambiguous objectivity.

The book is studded with numerous interpretive conceptual models which help visualize abstractions that punctuate the entire text. Evidently, varied contents — lectures, papers, discussions, and articles — of the book are welded within these formulations. The book is a stimulating read for intellectual and academics who would like to explore the complexity of globalized economies from the European vantage.

Freedom and development as well as science and values go far beyond Amartya Sen. Inanity of *Economics* and the pundits (of varied hues) have compounded the entire trajectory of what is called progress. One crisis leads to another. *Crisis or No End?* — that’s the question answered only by Nietzsche in a few words: “...the Will itself is a prisoner” (Marcuse, 1966a) Herbert Marcuse explains how civilization is implicated in this endless cycle:

“Repression and deprivation were thus justified and affirmed; they were made into masterful and aggressive forces which determined the human existence. With their growing social utilization, progress became of necessity progressive repression. *On this road, there is no alternative, and there is no spiritual and transcendental freedom can compensate for the repressive foundations of culture* (emphasis added). The ‘wounds of spirit’, if they heal at all, do leave scars. The past becomes master over the present, and life is a tribute to death:

“And now cloud upon cloud rolled over the Spirit, until at last madness preached: all things pass away, therefore all things deserve to pass away! And this

is justice itself, this law of Time, that it must devour its children: thus preached madness.” (Marcuse, 1966b)

The “End” is a new beginning (Mohan, 2016–2017, unpublished).

References

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- Marcuse H, 1966, *Eros and Civilization*, Boston: Beacon Press, 120. Quoted from Nietzsche F, 1883, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra, Part II*, trans, Walter Kaufmann, NY: Viking, 251.
- Marcuse H, *Ibid.* p.120.