

KENARCHY JOURNAL VOL 1

An Introductory Editorial

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So here is our quandary. As I came to *introduce* this first volume of The Kenarchy Journal, I looked up the definition:

Introductory: (adj) (FIRST TIME)

Existing, used or experienced for the first time¹

I expected an introduction to refer to something exposed for the first time, but it appears it may also mean something we are used to, and which already exists. Certainly, had I begun by exploring the meaning of ‘*kenarchy*’, it would not be the first time, nor the last, that it has been explained as a self-conscious combination of the Greek words ‘*kenosis*’ and ‘*arche*’. But as such, I now introduce it happily as a self-aware “motivational structure of language.”² The name and the journal deliberately encourage us to question and explore a different way of knowing and to become self-conscious about the unspoken motivations of historical, early Hegelian, even Augustinian, hermeneutics in which we have, again and again, received ‘understanding’ in its complete, finished and unquestionable meaning. Today’s disrupted and disruptive society requires nothing less than “a dialogic of question and answer that conditions every proposition ... (and) that finally aims at a new self-conception of philosophy.”³ The hope is that the Journal’s forum will provide opportunity for such interaction. Without spaces of wide open questions, new and different listening and transformed receptivity, everything that seems to be introducing itself for the first time may simply reformat itself into our pre-existent mental frameworks, or the collective deep memory of latent social, and yes, even theological behaviours. Yet equally without an open and appreciative enquiry into our ‘thrownness’, Heidegger’s marvellous description of all that comes with us into any new present, we will be cast adrift without roots or any ‘archaeology’ of our inherent essence or ‘*arche*’: our beginning and command.⁴

¹ The Cambridge Dictionary <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/introductory>

² Jean Grondin, “On the Composition of Truth and Method” in *The Spectre of Relativism: Truth, Dialogue and Phronesis in Philosophical Hermeneutics*, ed. Lawrence K. Schmidt (Illinois: North Western University Press, 1995) 23-39.

³ Grondin, 36.

⁴ Giorgio Agamben, “What is a Command?” in *Creation and Anarchy*, trans. Adam Kotsko (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2019) 63.

Impacted as we are in this present moment by the global pandemic which is Corona virus, the dialectic is of how quickly and efficiently we “go back to a new normal” (how eloquently the language itself reveals the contradiction of that possibility) versus how can we *not* go back to such a failing system. It will either pull us fast into a traumatised synthesis, or, potentially more gradually, drive us further and further apart. In this disruption, this journal speaks into that emerging, gradual space. Before we increasingly scapegoat those with whom we disagree and fly violently apart, and/or before we settle for reformatted, already failing compromise, let’s value and hold the space and the questions it poses. It is desperately uncomfortable space, where an appropriate yet visceral response seems called for; it is political space involving every sphere in which peoples, nations, and communities may or may not act together. It is creational space, writ large by the re-balancing act of an invisible pathogen attacking a dominant species, and by the ever-clearer skies and re-energised ecosystem. It is philosophical space about justice and the margins of society, with the poor and the prisoners affected more fiercely as always. It is mythological space where meaning and magic shimmer in the half-light. Here, dominant narratives can be questioned by the “scraps of histories and stories” which connect us to an otherworld largely mediated by wo/men⁵ (consequently largely discredited in a patriarchal culture).

So this introductory editorial recommends the first volume of the Kenarchy Journal in a time of great disruption for its own self-aware ‘arche’, knowing where it begins, and the seven practical priorities it embraces in and through its progressive theology. So it pursues the newer enquiry into the implications of Trinitarianism as a potential illumination to our better social selves, not ‘interrogating’, in the typically adversarial language of courts and law, but inviting us to “eavesdrop on internal conversations of Godself” in a journey into dialogic exploration. And, in another ‘first time’ there is one substantive, long read, which, though unusual in a journal of this kind, opens up such fertile alternatives to our received understandings of both theology and the economics of Jubilee that it demands inclusion. In kenarchy’s commitment to instating women, feminine voices offer a consideration on lament as an emotive and essential response to our disruption which invites us to submit to a collective “desire to be re-shaped and re-designed in our un-knowing”, along with considerations of the hitherto ‘unseen’ women’s spaces in historically political, ‘spiritual’, as well as land-orientated involvement. Towards further re-integrating humanity with the more-than-human world, the history of land ownership and oppression is exposed in this volume, and a new ‘ecclesia’ is envisioned, one of servants *with* the poor, inclusive *of* those on the margins, called to cultivate this post-secular, political space and restore justice. We look forward to future submissions that will

⁵ See Article 3: Julie Tomlin “The Spiralling Dance of Wisdom”, 31 note 3.

highlight the gift and inclusion of children, the welcome of strangers and further develop the initial seven foci of kenarchic praxis.

In such a space, in a sense empty of everything but potential (to revert, reform or something other) we might think of Agamben's empty, or void, verbs⁶, 'can', 'will' and 'must', which of themselves convey nothing but a posture towards another 'doing word' or act. He suggests they have, however, become so "knotted together", so unbalanced in use and relationship, that, in Kant's "entirely delirious phrase: '*we must be able to will*' ... (they define) the space of modernity and, at the same time, the impossibility of articulating something like an ethics within it."⁷ He further identifies this knot as an "unacceptable, indeed scandalous consequence" of a theological position on divine omnipotence, a position received as dogma, but which is full of logical impossibility. It gives us further impetus urgently to examine our latent theological, social and psychological frameworks at this time of 'apocalyptic' disclosing of potential change, and fresh imperative to expose the alternatively conceived kenarchic understanding of a God who works *with* his creation. Untangled from their Gordian knot, these modal verbs can then help us rebalance ourselves from the subjugation of the modern, subjective era to the verb, 'I will', so as to mine the potential of the "motivational structure" of human beings and our moral imperative, in the clearer image of this God of love. A rebalancing from 'I' to 'we', includes the formerly excluded with different language, perspective and wisdom. It is then "we ourselves who must answer the questions that life asks of us..."⁸ It is space in which we rebalance our humanity with a deep and true consideration of what *can* be done, and what *must* be done, to which to tether our collective, considered, kenarchic will.

⁶ Agamben, 63.

⁷ Agamben, 63.

⁸ Viktor E. Frankl, "*Man's Search for Meaning*", trans. I. Lasch (Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press, 1992) 162.