



FROM INNATE MORALITY TOWARDS A NEW POLITICAL ETHOS: SIMONE WEIL WITH CAROL GILLIGAN AND JUDITH BUTLER

DA MORALIDADE INATA PARA UM NOVO ETHOS POLÍTICO: SIMONE WEIL COM CAROL GILLIGAN E JUDITH BUTLER

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In 1943, Simone Weil proposed to supersede the declaration of human rights with a declaration of obligations towards every human being's balancing pairs of body and soul's needs, for engaging and inspiring more effectively against autocratic and populist currents in times of crisis. We claim that Weil's proposal, which remains pertinent today, may have been sidestepped because her notion of needs lacked a fundamental dimension of relationality, prominent in the 'philosophical anthropology' underlying the (different) visions for a new political ethos of both Judith Butler and Carol Gilligan. From the radical starting point of innate morality common to all three thinkers, we therefore indicate how an enriched notion of interlaced needs, encompassing both balance and relationality, may restore the viability of a declaration of human obligations as a robust source of inspiration. In this combination of balance and relationality, Butler's notion of aggressive nonviolence is key.

Keywords: rights; obligations; needs; aggression; care; concern.

Em 1943, Simone Weil propôs substituir a Declaração dos Direitos Humanos por uma declaração das obrigações para com o equilíbrio das necessidades físicas e espirituais de todos os seres humanos, que permitisse comprometer e inspirar mais eficazmente as pessoas perante as correntes autocráticas e populistas dos tempos de crise. Afirmamos que a proposta de Weil, ainda pertinente hoje, pode ter sido posta de lado por causa da falta de uma dimensão fundamental de relacionalidade na sua noção de necessidades, dimensão essa que é proeminente na 'antropologia filosófica' de Judith Butler e Carol Gilligan, e que subjaz às suas (diferentes) visões de um novo ethos político. Do ponto de partida radical da moralidade inata, comum às três autoras, indicamos aqui como uma noção enriquecida das necessidades entrelaçadas, abrangendo tanto equilíbrio como relacionalidade, pode restaurar a viabilidade de uma declaração das obrigações humanas como uma fonte robusta de inspiração. Para esta combinação de equilíbrio e relacionalidade, a noção de Butler de não-violência agressiva é essencial.

Palavras-chave: direitos; obrigações; necessidades; agressões; cuidado; preocupação.

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Introduction

More than 75 years before we have become comfortably numb with ‘alternative facts’ and ‘fake news’ as a supposedly inevitable part of our networked-world’s *realpolitik*, Simone Weil wrote on *The need for truth*:

There are men who work eight hours a day and make the immense effort of reading in the evenings so as to acquire knowledge. It is impossible for them to go and verify their sources in the big libraries. They have to take the book on trust. One has no right to give them spurious provender. What sense is there in pleading that authors act in good faith? They don't have to do physical labour for eight hours a day. Society provides for their sustenance so that they may have the leisure and give themselves the trouble to avoid error. A pointsman responsible for a train accident and pleading good faith would hardly be given a sympathetic hearing.

All the more reason why it is disgraceful to tolerate the existence of newspapers on which, as everybody knows, not one of the collaborators would be able to stop, unless he were prepared from time to time to tamper knowingly with the truth.

The public is suspicious of newspapers, but its suspicions don't save it. Knowing, in a general way, that a newspaper contains both true and false statements, it divides the news up into these two categories, but in a rough-and-ready fashion, in accordance with its own predilections. It is thus delivered over to error.

We all know that when journalism becomes indistinguishable from organized lying, it constitutes a crime. But we think it is a crime impossible to punish. What is there to stop the punishment of activities once they are recognized to be criminal ones? Where does this strange notion of non-punishable crimes come from? (Weil, 1943/2002, pp. 35–36)

Respect for freedom of expression unchecked by a *balancing* respect for truth, claimed Weil in 1943, enabled not only the rise of Hitlerism in Germany, but just as well the sheer collapse of France, with almost no resistance, vis-à-vis the Nazi onslaught in 1940. Moreover, she claimed, the spirit of the 1789 French revolution fell short of inspiring the French to resist and hold fast to their hard-earned Republic because that spirit was indeed fundamentally inadequate and insufficient. Human rights, as cherishable as they are, constitute only a middle-region notion, because

The notion of rights is linked with the notion of sharing out, of exchange, of measured quantity. It has a commercial flavour, essentially evocative of legal claims and arguments. Rights are always asserted in a tone of contention; and when this tone is adopted, it must rely upon force in the background, or else it will be laughed at. (...)

If someone tries to browbeat a farmer to sell his eggs at a moderate price, the farmer can say: ‘I have the

right to keep my eggs if I don't get a good enough price.' But if a young girl is being forced into a brothel she will not talk about her rights. In such a situation the word would sound ludicrously inadequate. (Weil 1943/1986a, pp. 81–83)

Consequently, during the 1942–1943 debates within *Free France*, De Gaulle's exiled government in London, over the constitutional principles for the future French Republic to be established after the (then not-yet-in-sight) victory, Weil opposed the idea of phrasing a renewed Declaration of Human Rights. She thought that such a renewed declaration of rights might, once again, be insufficient and therefore impractical for suffusing and sustaining *inspiration* in all parts of society, overarching ideological, ethnic or religious divergences, to oppose autocracy in future times of military or economic crisis. The motives underlying such inspiration would thus have to be genuine, very different from any superficial enthusiasm enkindled by propaganda.

To this effect, Weil composed and put forth a 'Fundamental declaration of *obligations* towards all human beings' (1943/2014, pp. 398–402),¹ where these obligations are concurrently towards one's own and everybody else's *balancing* pairs of needs of body and soul, vital for each person's physical existence and aspiration to the good.

Weil presented two basic characteristics of these needs. First, in contrast with fancies and whims that have no limits, truly fundamental needs are by definition *satiabile*:

A miser never has enough gold, but the time comes when any man provided with an unlimited supply of bread finds he has had enough. Food brings satiety. The same applies to the soul's foods. (Weil 1943/2002, p. 11)

Moreover, *complementary* needs are satisfied each in turn, in a pendulum-like back and forth motion:

(...) needs are arranged in antithetical pairs and have to combine together to form a balance. Man requires food, but also an interval between his meals; he requires warmth and coolness, rest and exercise. Likewise in the case of the soul's needs. What is called the golden mean actually consists in satisfying neither the one nor the other of two contrary needs. It is a caricature of the genuinely balanced state, in which contrary needs are each fully satisfied in turn. (Weil 1943/2002, p. 11)

These balancing pairs of needs are equality and hierarchy, consented obedience and

¹ Weil was subsequently asked by her superiors in *Free France* to elaborate upon her ideas. Following this request, she wrote several, lengthier versions of the declaration, one of them titled *Draft for a statement of human obligations* (Weil, 1943/1986b), and then also a book-length theoretical background for the declaration (Weil, 1943/2002).

liberty, truth and freedom of expression, privacy and social life, personal property and collective property, punishment and honor, disciplined participation in common tasks and personal initiative within them, security and risk.² A close reading of Weil's description of these needs (some of which, like consented obedience or punishment, may be astonishing at first blush), reveals how Weil indeed aimed at the bedrock of needs of the spirit for humane living, needs that run deeper than any ideological divide, just as the biological needs for oxygen and food are beyond dispute. At the same time, the declaration itself announced that "this study [of needs] is permanently open to revision" (Weil 1943/1986b, p. 207): Weil believed that every generation and every culture have to express the nature of these fundamental needs with their own voice.

Unlike rights which mark legislative boundaries not to be trespassed, and therefore rely on enforcement, inspiration cannot be legislated. Rather, a declaration of obligations towards our own and others' needs, announced in public but addressed first and foremost to *ourselves*, expresses an ethos with which we can potentially identify and engage; much more so than we can with an ideal of rights, which actually rely on power that one all too often lacks ("if a young girl is being forced into a brothel she will not talk about her rights", Weil 1943/1986a, p. 83).

But Weil's proposal was not heeded to, and a declaration of *obligations* towards all human beings was nowhere adopted as a political creed. What was missing in her proposed ethos? Why did it not strike a chord?

In an interview with Judith Butler, Masha Gessen (2020) describes Butler's newly published book *The Force of Nonviolence* (Butler, 2020) as arguing that "our times, or perhaps all times, call for imagining an entirely new way for humans to live together in the world". Indeed, Butler writes there that "[t]he institutional life of violence will not be brought down by a prohibition, but only by a counter-institutional ethos and practice" (Butler 2020, p. 61). As constitutive of this new ethos, Butler puts forward the complementary tandem of *aggressive nonviolence* which is completely new relative to the tandems proposed by Weil. Aggressive nonviolence is also different from Weil's idea of *non-active action*³, which seeks to avoid an

² The final need that Weil lists, "to be rooted in several natural environments and to make contact with the world through them" like "a man's country, and places where his language is spoken, and places with a culture or a historical past which he shares, and his professional milieu, and his neighborhood" is a different type of need, most important yet auxiliary to the preceding pairs of complementary needs. See e.g. (Gabellieri, 2015, footnote 34). Gabellieri also correctly emphasizes that Weil's book title 'The need for roots', written in 1943 but published posthumously, was a misleading addition by the publisher, whereas the only title that Weil gave to her volume was 'Prelude to a declaration of duties towards mankind'.

³ (Weil 1941/1976, p. 96) Notice the reverse roles of adjective and noun in 'non-active action' vis-à-vis 'aggressive nonviolence'.

imposition of oneself on the world, and thus *defies* aggression and force.⁴

Furthermore, in sharp contrast with Weil, who championed the human over the personal, Butler's 'philosophical anthropology' is deeply relational, and it draws substantially *inter alia* on psychoanalytic scholarship (Butler, 2005). The realization that atomistic individualism is a fiction leads Butler (2020) to conclude that any act of violence is inextricably also an attack on the tissue of bonds with others that is part and parcel of the constitution of the very self who acts violently; and hence the basis for an ethos where forceful nonviolence is not altruistic but, rather the opposite, actually sustains oneself in virtue of preserving this tissue. Thus, in that interview, Butler says

We actually need to pose the question of violence and nonviolence within a different framework, where the question is not "What ought I to do?" but "Who am I in relation to others, and how do I understand that relationship?" (Gessen, 2020)

It is precisely this alternative question that Carol Gilligan too heralded ever since her 1982 book *In a Different Voice*. In fact, Gilligan's proposal dives even deeper, when she emphasizes how in the dynamics of relationships, the selves who take part in them are not only constituted, but also continuously *re-constituted*.

This is the tacit basis for the proposal made by 11 year-old Amy to the protagonists of the emblematic 'Heinz dilemma'. Amy proposed that Heinz, who considers stealing a medication he cannot afford in order to save his ill wife, the wife, and the druggist who invented the medication "should really just talk it out" (Gilligan 1982, p. 28). As they then forge their relationship, the one becoming aware of the others' financial distress and the wife's health condition, the others of the druggist propriety feelings towards his brain-child invention, they can create together previously-unforeseen solutions. As an outsider to the relationship, Amy is only willing to sketch or draft such potential solutions, like installment payments, or the druggist accompaniment of the wife along her illness, but Amy insistently resists formulating an extrinsically imposed moral prescription. The dynamic re-constitution of the partners to the relationship would emerge via "'paying attention' that implies a willingness 'to be there,' 'to listen,' 'to talk to,' 'to understand'." (Gilligan, 1988, p. 151).

At the political level, however, Gilligan's ethos of liberating democracy from

⁴ *Non-active action* is exemplified in Weil's proposal (1942/1965, p. 145–153) to form and lead a frontline unit of women nurses, which by providing first aid in the most dangerous battlefields would draw inspiration in the fighting French soldiers with a radical antithesis to the Nazi inhumanity. (De Gaulle vehemently rejected Weil's proposal, exclaiming: "but she's mad!").

attention-deficient patriarchy by an ethic of care (Gilligan, 2011, p. 177) lacks the sense of balance so emphasized by both Weil and Butler. Butler (2020) explicitly criticizes this lack when she writes

(...) neither vulnerability nor care can serve as the basis of a politics. (...) If, for instance, by an ethics or politics of care we mean that an ongoing and un-conflicted human disposition can and should give rise to a political framework for feminism, then we have entered into a bifurcated reality in which our own aggression is edited out of the picture or projected onto others. (Butler 2020, p. 186)

What we need instead, Butler says, is “to think about how to live together *given* our anger and our aggression” (Gessen, 2020, my emphasis). This aggression is, according to Butler, a balancing factor missing in Gilligan's notion of (nonviolent) care.

Can we have a simultaneously balanced (Weil and Butler) and relational (Butler and Gilligan) political ethos that would strike the chord that Weil missed, and be effective in inspiring against populism and autocracy for most if not all factions of society, even in times of crisis? If so, how should we imagine, when the sustainability of Western democracies is ever more at stake, an ethos that would neither edit out our own aggression, nor solely project it onto others? It is this *practical* question that we plan to explore in this short essay.

A starting point for such an enriched ethos may be an important idea shared by all three thinkers, namely that genuine morality is innate, whereas morality imposed from the outside is false and impinging. We first turn to this common ground in the next section.

1. On Innate Morality

Gilligan (1982) emphatically articulated how the ethics embodied in the *different voice* that she highlighted differs from universalist moralizing, be it e. g. deontological or utilitarian. Moreover, it transpires that Amy's reaction to the 'Heinz dilemma' mentioned above does not suggest that the involved partners solve the dilemma by appealing to some off-the-shelf abstract virtue labelled 'care', but rather calls them to engage with one another and find their way while they are themselves evolving within this engagement.

We find a similar rejection of external moralizing in Simone Weil. In an early essay (Weil, 1926/1988) she recounts the mythical story of Alexander the Great, thirsty with his army in the desert, when a soldier approaches Alexander with a helmet full of water that the

soldier brought from afar.⁵

[W]hen the soldier is close by, he [Alexander] finally takes the helmet, and stands motionless for a moment. The army stands motionless too, its eyes fixed on him; and the universe is filled with the silence and the tension of expectation of these men. Suddenly, at the necessary moment, neither too soon nor too late, Alexander pours out the water; and the tension toward it is as it were released. *No one, Alexander less than anyone, would have dared to foresee this astonishing action;* but once the action is accomplished, there is no one who does not feel that it had to be like this. (my emphasis)

Weil rejects utilitarian argumentation about Alexander's act:

Someone may say that he doesn't see what is beautiful in this act: Alexander would have better drunk; an army should better have a commander in good shape than a commander dying of thirst; and, if he wanted to appear generous, it would have been enough for him to give the water to one of his soldiers. To defend Alexander somebody else could reply that the action of pouring out the water was more useful for the army than the water itself could have been, because the act was appropriate for instilling courage. Well, would say the other, Alexander was a clever general; this is not yet beautiful. And the utility of the act of Alexander is in fact out of the question.

Weil also rejects an argument based on virtue ethics: "One could also claim that Alexander was courageous, since he was thirsty but didn't drink. But the soldier who found the water didn't drink it either, because it was his duty to bring it to his commander; and we approve of the soldier's action but do not admire it."

In a later essay Weil (1941/2015, p. 27) rejects 'cookbook' deontology too: "A man who is tempted to keep a deposit for himself will not keep from doing it simply because he has read *The Critique of Practical Reason*; he will refrain from it because it will seem to him, despite himself, that something in the deposit itself cries out to be given back." Instead, Weil advocates the resolution of the dilemma in the thick of interaction:

Even if a soldier, at the moment when Alexander pours the water, cried: Give us this water if you do not want it, the act of Alexander would look ridiculous. Moreover, even if a soldier communicated this thought to his neighbor, or even if he had that thought without saying it to anybody, the act of Alexander wouldn't be beautiful anymore; which can be surprising; because Alexander is not responsible for the thoughts of his men; and these thoughts do not change anything in the action of Alexander as far as it is accomplished by Alexander. The beauty of this act is therefore not in Alexander alone. And in fact, the soldier who brings the water and the army that watches renounce as well the water; they renounce it for Alexander; Alexander renounces it for them; each man is (...) at the same time an end and a mean. Had any of the soldiers coveted

⁵ Translation from French of the following paragraph is from von der Ruhr (2006, p. 58). Translations of subsequent paragraphs from (Weil, 1926/1988, pp. 67–69) are mine.

the water, the act of throwing it away wouldn't have been possible anymore. What would have changed, though? Nothing, except for the harmony between the men.

It is perhaps noteworthy here that Alexander's act is done by a man among men, so that the issue of gender as a potential factor does not arise. This is in tune with Gilligan's more recent claim that within a democratic framework, care should not be viewed as specifically feminine, but rather as a human ethic (Gilligan, 2011, p. 22).

At the same, there is also a stark difference here: the interaction that Weil describes takes place in complete silence. As a result, Alexander surprises himself ("No one, Alexander less than anyone, would have dared to foresee this astonishing action"), but in the absence of any explicit, positive exchange between him and his soldiers he does not change or evolve as a person in the course of this interaction.⁶ This is in sharp contrast to the interaction that Amy recommends ("they should really just talk it out"), with the promise of transforming their relationship and themselves within it.

Butler too rejects extrinsic standards, and warns against *ethical violence* (Butler, 2005) which takes place when a person is expected to account for herself and her deeds in a coherent form that can be intellectually comprehended and assessed by an external interlocutor:

judgment (...) tends towards violence. (...) To hold a person accountable for his or her life in narrative form may even be to require a falsification of that life in order to satisfy the criterion of a certain kind of ethics, one that tends to break with relationality. (...)

The relation between the interlocutors is [then] established as one between a judge who reviews evidence and a supplicant trying to measure up to an indecipherable burden of proof. We are then not that far from Kafka. Indeed, if we require that someone be able to tell in story form the reasons why his or her life has taken the path it has, that is, to be a coherent autobiographer, we may be preferring the seamlessness of the story to something we might tentatively call the truth of the person, a truth that, to a certain degree (...) might well become more clear in moments of interruption, stoppage, open-endedness – in enigmatic articulations that cannot easily be translated into narrative form. (Butler, 2005, pp. 63–64)

Evidently, in Gilligan's (1982) account, Amy repeatedly refused to be a 'supplicant trying to measure up' to the externally formulated moral echelon⁷ insinuated to her by the interviewer, according to which the highest level of moral development consists of explaining one's ethical positions in terms of universal principles. Butler would endorse Amy's seemingly

⁶ Indeed, later in the same essay, Weil describes how we could also imagine Alexander *alone* in the desert and still renouncing water he can do without, this time in a different myth, about forgoing glut as one characteristic of being human rather than animal.

⁷ The one formulated by Kohlberg (1973).

confused and vague reaction to the Heinz dilemma—“they should really just talk it out—as manifesting Amy’s truth, precisely *in virtue* of its open-endedness.

2. Relationality with Balance

Relationality and balance, as articulated above, can be viewed as two separate dimensions that break with the standard framework of distributive justice. Theories of distributive justice ask how to allocate ownable entities, physical and symbolic, that are in limited supply, among monad individuals whose interests and wishes are pre-defined. A prominent example of such ownable entities are Rawls’s (2001) *primary goods*—rights, liberties, powers, opportunities, income, and the social basis for self-respect.

Weil challenged the *scarcity* aspect of the distributive justice framework, by replacing ownable entities with needs of the body and soul, needs that may be satiated but defy hoarding,⁸ and therefore have the potential to break the zero-sum spell of possession. Gilligan challenged the *monadic* aspect of individuals with a fundamentally relational view of human beings. Taken together, these two challenges combined give rise to the following matrix in Figure 1:

What Who	Ownable entities	Balancing pairs of needs
Assembly of monads	The distributive justice framework	Simone Weil <i>Prelude to a declaration of duties towards mankind</i>
Individuals continuously re-constituted within relationships	Carol Gilligan <i>In a different voice</i>	?

Figure 1. Matrix of challenges to the distributive justice framework.

⁸ Thus, for example,

Personal property never consists in the possession of a sum of money, but in the ownership of concrete objects like a house, a field, furniture, tools, which seem to the soul to be an extension of itself and of the body. Justice requires that personal property, in this sense, should be, like liberty, inalienable. (Weil 1943/1986b, p. 209).

Could a stable ethos for democracy be established at the question mark in this matrix, where these two challenges to the political liberalism framework of distributive justice combine together? As we saw, Judith Butler takes part in this crossroad of challenges, and her thought may thus point at a key.

One of the psychoanalytic thinkers on whom Butler (2005) relies for laying down her relational human ontology is Donald Winnicott. For Winnicott, the baby's primary aggression, e. g. when he 'attacks' the mother's breast in his hunger, is ruthless but *not* spiteful. Rather, this aggression is constitutive of the baby's motility and vitality. Taming this aggression by the mother would not only leave the baby unsatiated; worse, it would induce the baby to develop a complying, false self to accommodate the mother's demands that impinge upon his *going-on-being*, a false self which is apparently well-behaved, while its real function is not 'ethical' but rather one of survival, namely shielding off the inner, true self. Such "unreal success is morality at its lowest ebb, as compared with which a sexual misdemeanour hardly counts." (Winnicott, 1962/1965, p. 102)

If, instead, the mother manages to tolerate and 'survive' her baby's ruthlessness without 'retaliating', to let herself be 'used' by her baby when he allows himself to feed without having to worry about her, then a *benign circle* can emerge: once the baby is satiated, he will wish to 'restore' his relational field with his 'attacked' mother, precisely *because* he is part and parcel of this relational field. As this benign circle—hunger, aggression, unimpinged feed, satiation, restitution—repeats itself over and over, the baby gets to reliably expect that within a few hours of his instinctual 'attack' on the mother he can 'make amends', that following digestion his bodily 'gifts' will be endorsed by the mother as such, i.e. as a reparative gesture of contributing to their relationship.

It is the reliability of this benign circle that then enables the child to develop a genuine *capacity for concern* for his mother, one which is not obedient or altruistic. With concern, aggression does not disappear. Rather, it is relegated to *fantasy*. In the process of growing up and gradual separation from the primordial mother-infant field, the continuation of aggression in fantasy has a crucial function, namely "the objectivisation of the object" (Winnicott, 1968/1989, p. 239): in my excitement, devouring in fantasy what is actually not me simultaneously re-assures my independence from this not-me, and reinstates my conception of sovereignty in my personal realm. Fantasy then allows for play and creativity, where eros can get *fused* with aggression/vitality.

It is actually the absence of fantasized aggression that raises the threat of actual violence. If the baby gets repeatedly burdened with his mother’s sense of vulnerability while feeding, or if his bodily ‘gifts’ are rejected (as filthy or repulsive), the baby’s existential anxiety augments; the false self that he then develops while trying in vain to please the mother, by curbing his aggression and complying with her dictums, becomes a slim cover for undischarged aggression. Whether this Pandora box of rage eventually bursts is then only a matter of circumstances and chance.

Winnicott’s benign circle thus fleshes out Butler’s (2020) notion of *aggressive nonviolence* as an explicit pair of needs, each satisfied in turn, just like Weil’s complementary pairs. Aggression is a need because it constitutes vitality; concern/nonviolence is a need because it institutes and reinstitutes the relational field which never ceases to be the matrix of existence.

But here is also a crucial difference between Winnicott or Butler and Weil. Whereas Weil’s pairs of needs apply even to extreme introverts, whose pendulum of alternate need satisfaction need not be synchronized with anybody else’s, in the *benign circle* the mother and baby’s pendula of needs are *interlaced* in their timing. In coupled pendula of needs, satisfying a need of a party calls for and triggers the satisfaction of a corresponding need of a partner to the relationship. The need for aggression, for allowing oneself to be nourished upon and within the relationship without having to worry about its sustainability, is a vital need of the soul, which triggers the partner’s need to be used and to avail oneself, to survive the ruthless aggression. At the other end of the pendulum, the previously ruthless party now has a vital need to contribute-in to buttressing the relationship with concern, to be genuinely attentive to the partner, to make amends and to hold. This vital need triggers and is triggered by the partner’s need to be seen and heard.

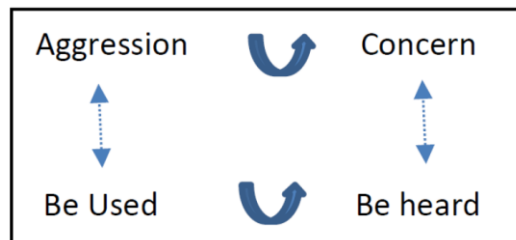


Figure 2. Coupled needs in the benign circle.

3. Conclusion

If indeed Weil's proposed ethos, of obligations towards balancing human needs, fell short of getting adopted because it neglected the relational dimension, then incorporating interlaced, synchronized needs that get satiated within relationships may restore the viability of a declaration of human obligations towards these needs as a robust source of inspiration for an engaging ethos. The above coupled pairs, of the needs to be aggressive and concerned/nonviolent *interlaced* with the needs to be used and to be heard may be one such example. Other relational pairs of needs would obviously pertain among spouses, and at different stages of the relationship. Yet others may involve interlaced pendula of needs of more than two partners to a relationship, as in the family, in the workplace, and beyond.

Analogous interlaced tandems apply in the political sphere as well. To the extent that climatic, pandemic or refugee crises naturally impel aggression, recognizing in public such aggression as human and vital rather than necessarily reprehensible, and championing the fundamental relational cadres in which aggression is prone to containment and relegation to fantasy, rather than engaging in futile attempts to oppress such aggression, would seem more fruitful than digging into partisan trenches of 'us' versus the despicable 'them', risking social disintegration and ineffective confrontation of such crises.

Thus, as Weil (1943/1986b, p. 207) wrote, "this study [of balancing human needs] is permanently open to revision." It remains a pertinent, ongoing challenge for forging a non-partisan political creed.

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