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PhD Program in Philosophy taught in English

Re: THE EPISTEMOLOGY OF LIES WITHIN THE PUBLIC
SPHERE by Mr. Hans Krauch

Dear Colleagues,

The epistemology is a branch of philosophy that is primarily the study of knowledge, but in the context of the problem of lies within the public sphere it includes ethics and politics. In order to comprehend the problem of the epistemology of lies within the public sphere some very basic concepts ought to be understood entirely under what constitutes the public sphere, and how lies and the understanding of truth covers them. The overall theme of this thesis is disproving the notion of free-will under a nihilist framework and that illusions are a necessary and vital part of the human condition. Objectivity is narrowly defined and has much less to do with the human experience than we may have otherwise have understood it to be.

Krauch aims to reunite objectivity and subjectivity within the same sphere of truth but gives them clearly marked boundaries within that same sphere. He put much effort towards defining and explaining these concepts as it relates to human behavior and then we can get to understand

how we act *en masse* to deceive and manipulate others in a group environment.

In the first chapter Krauch aims to provide the introduction to the role of philosophy and epistemology with regards to belief, truth and justification. He covers the importance of the senses and the origin of our experiences and knowledge of the world around us. The purposes/definitions of philosophy are covered, including: epistemology, being, ideology, culture, belief, and knowledge. Introduction to the philosophical root of truth and lies is covered here too. Why lies are important philosophically, what is the public sphere and introduction to ethics of lying and the morality within lies is covered as well. Krauch goes over the Gettier problem and contemporary issues in epistemology along with an introduction to the concept of time and temporality - in addition to justified belief. Some of the main sources used here are Hegel, Bonjour, Sartre, Nietzsche, Erasmus, and Audi. This chapter is important because understanding human nature is fundamental in understanding why we need illusion and lies in our lives, and why in later chapters Krauch can freely discuss larger matters of societies as a whole. Here Krauch explains why he takes the approach to this dissertation like the crafting of a pyramid. Epistemology is certainly the base, then we can move upwards to figuring out why we act the way we do, then understanding lies – then finally those lies within the Public Sphere.

Chapter 2 is divided into 4 sub-chapters (Free-will, Concepts of infinity, Fractal behavior in humans, Subjectivity-objectivity paradox and Rational irrationality). It deals with the fundamentals of Human Nature and Behavior. Behavioral science within human beings is, in many ways, not so much a real science in that it can be reproduced in a lab, but relies on very narrow sample rates and ought to never give a direct cause/effect conclusion. Krauch discusses here free will and the mental concept of infinity and with it consciousness itself. An overarching theme in the dissertation which is introduced here is discussing why the Enlightenment failed. He discovers in this chapter that we are simple social animals and so many of the traits we exhibit can be understood within this frame. The

main question to be answered here is 'Are we meat robots?' The line from sensory input to actual decision making is discussed at length here. The main sources discussed here are the works of Pavlov, Bakunin, Hegel and Nietzsche. He states that Free-Will will be discussed as not existing and on that topic he discusses infinity because where one finds belief in one we find belief in the other. The more complex the world is with those with more knowledge, the more complex solutions to problems become.

In regards to fractal behavior in Human Beings Krauch claims that he is one of the first to see human behavior as such and certainly one of the first to try to incorporate it into philosophy. Here he asks what is fractal and why do we act this way? In order to do this he discusses complex network theory, memory, time and temporality. In this chapter he claims that globalization is not some new phenomena of the 20th and 21st centuries, but another spike in the pattern of human behavior. Globalization as it is known today has gone through many phases of spikes (trending toward unity and Globalization) and a steady deceleration (slow step of de-globalization – where we are beginning today, like Brexit). In this chapter he concludes that people are inherently irrational and that it makes economic sense to do so. Normally, with practice and the right incentives, people will eventually do things according to the expected outcome. If you are unable to switch your biases you will simply avoid situations where those biases cost you. The process of discovering false beliefs and overcoming pride and fear by accepting they are false takes a while. It needs to last long enough for they themselves to realize that their previously held beliefs were obviously false. He adds that beliefs are nothing but another mental habit – a 'go to' response to an input. Breaking a belief is no different than breaking a habit. It needs external pressure to a point where the individual genuinely wishes to dismiss it. The external pressure jump starts the internal motivators so that, eventually, a belief is silenced, but not forgotten. Beliefs cannot be cut out, but silenced into submission. Like they can be silenced, they can also be brought back to life. The triggering and suppression of beliefs is, certainly, an integral part

of our nature and others who know this can manipulate and direct our thoughts.

Chapter 3 considers the topic of what constitutes lies themselves before Krauch moves those lies into the public sphere in chapter four. This chapter contains four sub-chapters (Definitions and general concepts, Lie detections – art or science?, Propaganda, Raison d’etre). After first two chapters where Krauch provides a philosophical base to explore and understand how we behave and think, within the third chapter he goes further to understand lies themselves all under the blueprints set earlier. Krauch here looks closely at various devices and methods used to detect lies. Here he discovers that what contemporary science has to offer in terms of trying to objectively detect when people are lying. The conclusions are not surprising – they are no more than parlor tricks meant to elicit confessions from an interrogator or whatever other motive they want. Most of the sources here are from scientific journals, research papers on technology and drugs used in contemporary and modern police and government techniques, in their efforts to physically manipulate and control the human mind to suit their own purposes. In addition Krauch traces in this chapter the origins of propaganda and describes how it pervades every aspect of our lives. A brief description will show us that propaganda as we know it today begun after the First World War – where it became first obvious that the whims of the populace were important to keep along the party line if ever they were needed to pull together for their government and produce and fight for a war. Propaganda, in its contemporary understanding of the word (meaning, 'manipulation of public opinion through mass media') came about sometime before the Second World War. During the interwar period, propaganda still meant something a little less sinister. During this time it was known as a spreading of some kind of truth to the masses. If a person or institution was in possession of the truth, they ought to tell everyone just as if one was in the possession of the cure for cancer – it is understood to be a moral obligation to spread and speak only truth. I will suggest that propaganda is a need of the people – they desire it. They give power to

the state so they look to that state to answer their problems. They want to be told how to think or act in the same way they want state-sponsored education, wellness or health care. Krauch concludes that propaganda is only necessary to be used on people not already ideologically indoctrinated. Therefore, it only makes sense that it takes root in those already not willing to think or act in a certain way and to use whatever means necessary to do so.

In the last sub-chapter (*Raison D'être*) Krauch focuses the discussion on reason and why the lie exists at all. Some of the sources used here are Nietzsche, Huxley, Erasmus, Gray, Machiavelli, Milton, Voltaire and Kant. He takes a look at published practical manuals on how to effectively lie. Although we are naturally irrational, Krauch argues that lies fall within the realm of reason and rationality as well. A central theme is that we absorb the lie, incorporate it within our minds and then accept it as truth. Afterwards we then use reason to make the lie make sense to us and others. From there the lie may spread to other minds – much like how a virus or bacteria propagates itself.

Chapter 4 deals with the problem of Public sphere and it contains three sub-chapters (*Outlining concepts, Culture, Economics*). In this chapter Krauch primarily discusses ideology, culture and economics. Some of the most used sources include Zizek, Habermas and John Gray. The internet and the concepts of multiculturalism/globalism are discussed here. Krauch argues that the internet has isolated every single voice in the world, not united them. From this we can conclude that there is no viable difference between the public and private sphere. All are connected globally, making it public, but all are isolated and compartmentalized by IP addresses and physical locations – so we are actually private. Krauch states that we have moved beyond the modern mass society and into the post-modern global society – unified by technology and a consumerist ideology. This means the line between ideology and culture is a difficult one to differentiate. Krauch argues that the moment of death for the Enlightenment coincides with the collapse of the Soviet Union and with it the experiment with Communism. More accurately, the death of the Soviet Union should be

seen as a victory for Socialism, not defeat, because, arguably, the Soviet Union was more authoritarian/totalitarian than truly Communist. The argument he put forward in this chapter is that fundamental values in which contemporary western civilization is based is no longer respected. To say that things cannot regress back to a previous order is meritless. But, in addition he claims that to see the world through the scope of the Enlightenment would be in error. The Enlightenment and its values are indeed dead. Still, he argues that we should not abandon all of its thinking simply because the living is stupider today than of yesteryear. Like all paths to fresh thinking, it starts in the past then we can begin to formulate ideas for solutions that match the problems of today.

Concerning the culture the main questions Krauch put is how does this differentiate from ideology or economics? Main topics which are covered here are the 'cultured person', nihilism, religion, insanity, technology, sexuality, the concept of time and finally science. He requests the reader to think of culture as a type of plant and ideology the soil in which it grows. Certain plants flourish in certain climates and soils. Krauch points out that our own ethics and morality restricts our natural inclinations – for better or worse. There is some true to the matter that what defines us is how we attribute value to and organize things. Culture has thousands of facets so understanding it within a wide general sense is so difficult to understand. What we can do is present as many facets of it as possible, at least what is observable. To expand on what we think we know, rather than offer up a complete and final assessment on the subject listed. Culture is aware of its own value-systems and uses that as a benchmark to sell what it desires. Populism is one such thing because in western civilization the demands of the masses simply must be satisfied – regardless of its logic or effect on themselves or others.

In last sub-chapter (Economics) he looks at the basics of economics/cryptocurrencies/importance of money on influence of policy and deception. The idea behind this is that Epistemology covers the basics of what and how we obtain knowledge and truth, behavior is the topic on how we act out on all the inputs we process. Ideology is the framework of thought, culture is the wiring and plumbing. Culture gives us belief and

value systems and how we go about dividing categories of value is taken under the wing of economics and finance. Economics influences ideology as well as vice versa. If an economic system happens to work out then the power of ideology will take advantage of that and its resolve will be strengthened. The great deception is the deception of choice here along with other people's options. Libertarianism or communism are all a part of the same illusion. The point is that there only is what is. Therefore, economists are no different than the soothsayers of old and of course people do as they are trained. What philosophy ought to do is observe the world first then afterward form theories and arguments to explain it to fit objective reality. We can expand this out to describe the different from the kinds of people who are the agents of the Master – the one aiming to reinforce ideology and the status quo, and the ones trying to get us to better understand the human experience, instead of hiding ideology, it exposes it.

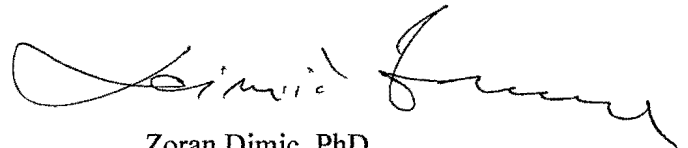
In his conclusion Krauch stresses that the main promotions to the field of philosophy is a greater understanding of the human condition – by understanding why we act the way we act we come closer to securely finding the limits of human perfection. The points put forward are varied and carry across several disciplines – but this is only because the need of philosophy is in need of a general overhaul of some of its points of view. We are living in an interesting time, one where there is a void of philosophical dogma – and this gives us the very rare opportunity to start anew and help lead humanity further towards the best we can be.

Critique: The reviewer finds this work to be pretty large in scope (303 printed pages). The author exhibits considerable knowledge and has adapted principles of philosophy with great facility. Krauch attempts to cover a complete overview on the matter of human behavior by incorporating various disciplines – from mathematics to social science and psychology, all under an umbrella of Continental Philosophy. He incorporates all the notions of fractals, infinity and economical theories like rational irrationality into the realm of the philosophy of human behavior. Although he started so many interesting questions in the

context of the problem of the lies within the public sphere, his flow of the thinking appears to be a little confusing here and there. It seems that he could better and clearer draw his conclusions without researching so many questions and mentioning so many examples.

By properly defining and classifying subjective and objective kinds of truth Krauch better dissects the two in topic matters wherever we find them. He is not placing one kind of truth above another, merely placing each kind where it belongs. He incorporated into philosophy and made sense of sciences attempts at lie detection. By understanding the science and philosophy of lying Krauch placed it exactly where it belongs – outside the realm of objectivity and within the realm of subjectivity. The concept of free-will was reviewed under a fresh perspective to give us an understanding that we do not enjoy a complete disconnection from agency, but there are strengths and strategies we can use to make the most of the situation we find ourselves in. Lies themselves are now better defined and understood by properly understanding concepts of belief, ideology and culture.

The reviewer concludes that the thesis from Mr. Hans Krauch satisfies the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree and hence I recommend the PhD in Philosophy to be awarded to him.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Zoran Dimic', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Zoran Dimic, PhD
Professor of Philosophy