

## Supervisor's report on the Master thesis

Author of the Master thesis: Hesameddin Hanafialamdari

Title: Egotistic Body-Brain versus Compassion (Who am i?)  
((Is peace only a fantasy?))

Supervisor: Alice Koubová

My report as a supervisor of Hesam's master thesis is a very particular one. I actually never served as a supervisor. Hesam addressed me couple of years ago to accept this role because, as he said, he found my lessons in philosophy quite inspiring for his way of reasoning. I accepted and told him to contact me shall he have any theme or text to discuss. One year later Hesam informed me that he would prefer to write his thesis individually, without any intense collaboration with me. I accepted that format with no problem as I had experienced these cases before with other students. They needed to develop their argument, style, and perspective without any intervention; the silent advisor was the most helpful one for their sake. However, with these independent students I anyway cooperated at the end of their creative process in order to help them clarify their arguments, offer another perspective and potentially improve the way of communicating their ideas. Hesam on the contrary uploaded his thesis into the system and subsequently informed me about having done so. This gesture evidently disabled all possible cooperation between us. My only task in these circumstances is to write this assessment. I am writing it rather from a position of a reviewer than a supervisor and I confirm hereby that Hesam's work was written 100% independently with no influence of mine.

In order to facilitate at least a very final discussion over the text – as a relevant instrument showing the quality of a master thesis - I would like to formulate the following questions and remarks.

First of all, I would like to say, that I experienced Hesam during my first year philosophy lessons where his contributions were always very insightful and bright. Hesam was an engaged person, with plenty of questions, readiness to discuss themes with his colleagues and me. He formulated complex problems and kept thinking about them. He was able to combine and to compare his own experience with various authors and thoughts. It was a pleasure when he took part in the course, he contributed with a critical support.

My next encounter with Hesam's thinking took place some days ago when I read his submitted master thesis. Here again, I can confirm, that Hesam is not afraid to be direct, to formulate explicit questions. He also developed a certain style of writing.

There are as well some issues, critical points or questions I would like to raise regarding the text, in order to let them clarify during the master thesis defence:

1. Hesam's point of departure is a vision of a peace. He asks, whether an individual or planetary peace is achievable or not. He proposes to envision a global peace in which „all competitiveness, ambitions, wars, starvation, hatred and conflicts between countries, different political groups, and humans, have stopped. ... tigers don't bite,

no one is slaving eight hours a day and there is food and shelter for everyone while the planet is at its peak of health.,,

Hesam believes that to suggest, that conflict is human nature, means “a withdrawal from facing the question fully, and honestly.”

My question is: what is Hesam’s own suggestion to his very initial question? Is this question a leading one in his master thesis? And how does it get clarified through the text? (And an additional question: How exactly the real global piece would look like in case we accepted that there was food for everyone including tigers, germs, viruses, parasites etc. – but they would anyway be not allowed to bite.)

2. In general, it seems to me that the thesis lacks a line of argumentation. I am not sure if the chain of different moments, experiences, short thoughts and phantasies shall represent arguments, claims, methods of thinking or something else. What is Hesam’s thesis claim and what is the method that he used to achieve the claim? What did he discover through his master thesis?
3. Hesam uses very often a particular duality: people empower or they desire to be empowered, they dominate or wish to be dominated, violate or are violated, they are masters or slaves, tyrants or begging dogs. Variants of the use of the duality are many, like for instance the claim that nearly all parents are either sadists or masochists. Is this duality Hesam’s own claim about the world and the claim he wants to propose as a Master thesis main idea? Where does it come from, how is it explained? Are there other options for human behaviour? Is there anything like human’s maturity – emotional, individual, mental? How are they achieved? Can we talk about the difference between Hesam’s vision and other accounts of human power relations and maturity in human life? What about the peace, Hesam proposes as a referential idea at the beginning?
4. Another duality: countries of the world can be labelled as cold or warm ones. Does Hesam really believe in this duality? I find it striking journalistic and not appropriate for a Master thesis. Master thesis is expected to develop a critical not radically simplified thinking about the world.
5. Hesam uses the financial argument. He writes about having paid a substantial amount of money for the studies. I think that this point opens a very interesting discussion on power relations. How could we grasp the relationship that is established at schools through direct personal money involvement? Who masters whom if someone pays a clear financial sum to undergo the studies? Who has what kind of power? Who dominates whom? What are Hesam’s observations of this problem?
6. Hesam is very suspicious to refer to any source, literature, expert. Where is exactly the difference between claims “I despise bibliography”, “I do not see genuine educational value in the act of repeating, like parrots, the results of other people’s study, although my ego does” and the populist propaganda? Populists also despise bibliography and experts/elites– but maybe in another way than Hesam. Communists in CR before 1989 for instance despised all bibliography and capable people, intellectuals, artistic elite, experts in economy, sport – they hated experts because it was not easy to dominate them. How does Hesam tackle the difference between despise of experts (in literature, art, psychology) in his sense and the despise of experts in the other, populist sense that chooses humiliation?

7. More formal question: Is it possible for the genre of Master Thesis, not to work with bibliography? Hesam mentions some titles with no reference, through *paraphrased* sentences. I trust that literary formats have different genres and that leaving their structure means to leave their way of communicating knowledge. *Master thesis requires referential modus vivendi that I did not find in the thesis.*
8. Hesam anyway refers to two persons that he however never questions, investigates or criticises: K. and Levine. K. is quoted without being given a name and sources of the quotations. When quoting what K. said at this or that occasion, Hesam has not a feeling of parroting anybody. So, with K. Hesam developed another relationship and trust. K. became a real authority. At the same time, the reader has no chance to trace K., his whole thinking, his personality, it is a secret, never questioned, admired source of knowledge.
9. Hesam also paraphrases Levine's somatic experiencing without questions and without an impression of parroting some damned authority (Hesam calls unaccepted authorities "his majesty"). Levine is another person, who is inspiring Hesam and then Hesam's denial of authorities transforms into acceptance. Why these sources of knowledge, these authorities have another status in the hierarchy of power? Why are they the islands of relief beyond masochism and sadism? Why exactly? What is defining their maturity? Where is the difference between mentioning Winnicott: „why mention Winnicott at all? to have verbal academic support for my sayings? to hide behind an authority? “ and mentioning K: „These sentences get repeated in K's teachings.“ .
10. Hesam also describes very often the interior state of mind of other people. He sees what they are deep down. Often they are idiots. What is the method that Hesam uses to understand, evaluate, and very often devaluate people's minds deep down? How shall the reader understand the discrepancy between Hesam's refusal of being evaluated, refusal of evaluation per se, and his tendency to evaluate and devaluate others?

Writing this report and following Hesam's reasoning, I have to ask as well what exactly represents my funny position of a dysfunctional supervisor in this dualistic distribution of social power between victims and tyrants. Under which conditions may I leave the fate to be either a victim or a dictator? What is my right and my duty? I was not given much space as a supervisor. Would reclaiming some space be already a violence, or arrogance? May I feel used or *even misused without being asked*? Can I be respected if saying something critical about the thesis, as a supervisor? Wouldn't this be already interpreted as a gesture of violent power, to say something? Or is there a space for mutual respect? On what basis do mature people establish respectful discourse?

At this point I am obliged to propose a grade. I believe, that it is inappropriate from me to evaluate Hesam as a supervisor and I am not the opponent either. I trust, that the discussion during the defence will lead to an adequate result. For this reason, I give a grade that makes the defence possible and ask the committee to decide.

Grade: E

Alice Koubová

In Prague, 15.9.2019