Cornelius Castoriadis
on Social Imaginary and Truth[*]

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The idea that the problem of truth should be dealt with from within the framework created by the social constitution of a common world, of a universe of social significations, or, in other words, of a whole made up of social institutions and inherited meanings, is common to a number of contemporary philosophers like e.g. Habermas, Rorty[1] or Castoriadis. But Castoriadis' approach, is, I believe, of particular interest, since he provides the basis for the sketching of an intermediary, hermeneutic theory, which lies between the two theorists mentioned above, an approach beyond objectivism and relativism.[2] A radically anti-idealist and anti-positivist thinker, he gives in neither to relativism nor to skepticism, believing that the traditional philosophical

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[1] See Habermas 1984, 127-83, and more recently with critical references to Rorty: Habermas 1999; see also Rorty 1979.

[2] I use the terms "objectivism and "relativism" as defined by R.J. Bernstein: "By 'objectivism', I mean the basic conviction that there is or must be some permanent, ahistorical matrix or framework to which we can ultimately appeal in determining the nature of rationality, knowledge, truth, reality, goodness, or rightness. […] relativism is the basic conviction that when we turn to the examination of those concepts that philosophers have taken to be the most fundamental – whether it is the concept of rationality, truth, reality, right, the good, or norms – we are forced to recognize that in the final analysis all such concepts must be understood as relative to a specific conceptual scheme, theoretical framework, paradigm, form of life, society, or culture. […] the relativist […] challenges the claim that these concepts can have a determinate and univocal significance" (Bernstein 1991, 8). I refer to Habermas as an example of an "objectivist" and to Rorty as a "relativist", without the intention of criticizing their views, but in order to emphasize Castoriadis' intermediary position. In this respect it is interesting to see that in his critique of Castoriadis' theory Habermas stresses the elements which, in his opinion, could lead to relativism, whereas for Rorty Castoriadis' thought isn't relativist enough. See Habermas 1987; Rorty 1989. For an interesting critical assessment of Habermas' critique of Castoriadis see Bernstein 1989.

antitheses derive from a similarly erroneous understanding of knowledge and truth. In part (1) of this paper, I shall examine Castoriadis' theory of "social imaginary", and the problems that arise from it concerning the philosophical question of truth. In part (2) I will reconstruct the solution offered by Castoriadis to these problems. And finally, in part (3), I will draw a short conclusion about the significance of his contribution to our understanding of the problem of truth.

I. The "imaginary institution of society"

For Castoriadis the human subject cannot exist apart from a collective, which isn't simply a conglomeration of independent subjects placed side by side or an "intersubjective network", but that which constitutes, or in Castoriadis' terminology "institutes" these people or their "network", that which organizes the elements that make up society, and finally the social institutions (in a broad sense). Castoriadis calls this element social-historical, applying this term to the "anonymous collective whole" the "union *and* the tension of instituting society and of instituted society, of history made and of history in the making" (Castoriadis 1987, 108).[3] In order to grasp the way in which a society is within history, in other words what the social-historical is, Castoriadis attempts to construct a theory of social institution, which I shall examine briefly.

In *The Imaginary Institution of Society* Castoriadis gives a critical analysis of the two most prominent approaches concerning institutions in the '60's: the functionalist and the structuralist.[4] Both approaches attempt to explain institutions in a "rational" way. For Castoriadis, the *"functional-economic"* is the approach (a version of which he takes to be Marxism) which reduces the existence as well as the characteristics of institutions to the function they perform within the "overall economy" of social life (cf. Castoriadis 1987, 115-6). However, the functionalist analysis fails to define the "real needs", in view of which the social institutions should be "functional", since these needs are historical, and as such are always closely linked to a particular, symbolically mediated social world (cf. Castoriadis 1987, 116-7). And neither can this symbolism, which is fundamental for the social world, be reduced to the rational order of the whole system of social functions.[5] On the other hand, *structuralism* also fails in its attempt to explain this symbolic element rationally. For Castoriadis, language and every symbolic system are not (just) a logical organization of the world on the basis of the binary logic of oppositions (cf. Castoriadis 1997a, 11). So, this symbolism cannot be

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[3] See also Castoriadis 1987, 369-73.

[4] Concerning the double juxtaposition of Castoriadis with functionalism and structuralism see also Joas 1989, 591-4. See also Honneth 1985, 813-6.

[5] See the criticism of the functional explanation of religious symbolism in Castoriadis 1987, 118-9. At around the same time as Castoriadis, Habermas made a similar objection to the systems theory of Luhmann. See Habermas 1971.

reduced formalistically to the "structure of oppositions", to the "difference between signs", rather it refers to "a meaning that can never be given independently of *every* sign but which is something other than the opposition of signs, and which is not unavoidably related to *any particular signifying structure* [...]" (Castoriadis 1987, 137). The very recognition of such a meaning gives us the capacity to think of history as the birth of new and radically different systems of signifiers and signifieds, in other words, to grasp the indeterminacy of symbolic relationships and the creative nature of the development of symbolic systems.[6]

Castoriadis begins, then, from the conviction that the symbolic carries significations which take into account the real-rational (see Castoriadis 1987, 128), but also includes a further *imaginary component*, which ultimately stems "from the original faculty of positing or presenting oneself with things and relations that do not exist, in the form of representation (things and relations that are not or have never been given in perception)" (Castoriadis 1987, 127). Because of this symphysis between the perceived, the rational and the imaginary, the question "'what is it, in what we know, that comes from the observer (from us), and what is it that comes from what there is?' is, and will forever remain, undecideable" (Castoriadis 1997a, 4). That imaginary which, in the end, transcends every particular subjective representation, and is essentially social in character, is an "original social institution" and takes on its most characteristic form in those significations that do not refer to anything existent. Such is the case of "God", about whom Castoriadis notes that he "is neither a signification of something real, nor a signification of something rational, nor is he a symbol of something else again" (Castoriadis 1987, 140).[7]

Such "imaginary significations" play an organizing role in human behaviour and in social relations, and are an "imaginary creation" of the given society. Through the imaginarily created significations, each society gives "answers" to the basic "questions" which have to do with its own existence. The social-historical sets up, before any explicit rationality, a universe of significations, to which it owes its unity and coherence, the specific structure of its elements, a certain understanding of the external natural world and its relation to the society, the "choice" of a certain symbolic system rather than any other, a certain definition of the "real" social needs, which the functionality of the institutions must serve, etc. (cf. Castoriadis 1987, 145-64).

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[6] Castoriadis is referring critically to the work of Levi-Strauss; see Castoriadis 1987, 136-8.

[7] However, the religious symbols "presuppose" this signification, in the sense that "God" is "in every religion, that which makes these symbols religious symbols – a central *signification*, the organization of signifiers and signifieds into a system, that which supports the intersecting unity of both those components and which also permits the extension, multiplication and modification of this signification. And this signification, which is neither something perceived (real) nor something thought (rational), is an imaginary» (Castoriadis 1987, 140). Other examples given by Castoriadis are the conception of the slave as *animal vocale* in ancient times, and the conception of the worker as a "cog in the machine" in our modern era. See also Castoriadis 1987, 353-64.

That which is missing from the functionalist as well as from the structuralist theory of institutions is the recognition of the significance of the imaginary element, i.e. the element which determines the creativity of history, that which gives the *ultimate measure* of functionality, and determines a specific *specialization* of the dominant symbolic relations. However, any thought about human history is impossible without this category: "A *meaning* appears here [in history] from the very start, one that is not a meaning of the *real* (referring to what is perceived), one that is neither strictly rational nor positively *ir*rational, neither true nor false and yet one that does belong to the order of *signification,* and that is the imaginary creation proper to history, that in and through which history constitutes itself to begin with" (Castoriadis 1987, 160).

Every society, then, creates a shared universe of meaning for itself, which is not determined by necessity – history is characteristically the existence of a multiplicity of such worlds – but is not entirely contingent either, since it has to take into account the existent. As Castoriadis points out, "history is creation: the creation of total forms of human life. Social-historical forms are not 'determined' by natural or historical 'laws'. Society is self-creation. […] The self-institution of society is the creation of a human world: of 'things', 'reality', language, norms, values, ways of life and death, objects for which we live and objects for which we die – and of course, first and foremost, the creation of the human individual in which the institution of society is massively embedded" (Castoriadis 1997b, 269).[8]

I'll summarize briefly what I have covered so far: The "social imaginary" has an *open* and *creative* character. The indeterminacy of the signifying relations allows a continual alteration of the given meanings, and the innovation and change of significations. Further, being an institution of a "universe of meaning", the social imaginary has a *holistic* character, it is an "original institution".[9] In this sense, it is also a condition of rational thought, speech and action in general, which is why it is impossible to provide a complete, rational explanation or justification of it, since doing so would presuppose criteria which only it can provide us with. Finally, the social imaginary has first and foremost a *practical* character, in the sense that it is embodied in the whole of social life, in social practices and institutions, determining particular personal identities as well as the collective-social reality.[10]

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[8] On Castoriadis' theory of the social imaginary see Waldenfels 1989. For an interesting reconstruction and comparison of the theory of imaginary significations with Habermas' theory of communicative action see Arnason 1988, 187-306.

[9] Fabio Ciaramelli described this aspect as the "self-presupposition of the origin". "Origin of itself, society always presupposes itself: the social institutes itself only through the resumption of something instituted that is always already there. Its articulation as instituting and instituted is irreducible to anything else. The circle of the institution is, then, the originary complication of the origin of society starting from itself" (Ciaramelli 1997, 62).

[10] Cf. the positive evaluation of Castoriadis' views on the problem of truth in Wellmer 1993, 98-100.

The question concerning knowledge and theory can be posed only from within this primarily practical framework, which is determined by the social imaginary. What are the problems – concerning the question of truth – which this position entails? Given that, as we said, there has always been a fusion of the rational with the imaginary in the history of human societies, it is obvious that there is no point in trying to strictly separate the one from the other (an attempt which has, nevertheless, played a considerable role in our philosophical and scientific tradition), since it is clear that in attempting to acquire pure rational knowledge we run the risk of applying (without, of course, being conscious of it) "our own rationality" (which we now must presume to be connected to "our own" universe of imaginary significations) as the ultimate criteria by which we judge everything, in other words, as *rationality itself*.

Given that history is the sphere in which the creativity of the anonymous collective is realized, the sphere in which imaginary meanings are created, the project of constructing a complete theory of nature and history or a closed and exhaustive social theory is doomed to failure. Our access to the world will always be access *by us and for us*. Does that mean that, in the end, the emphatic conception of truth is nothing but a chimera? If our knowledge is always determined by the specific, particular universe of our imaginary significations, then truth can be nothing but relative. Nevertheless, as we shall see, Castoriadis' theory wants to transcend the following dilemma: Either we have a kind of knowledge which is absolutely true, which is not subject to spatio-temporal conditions, or, we have a socio-historically determined truth, which is thereby relative.

The reference to the theory of imaginary social meanings allows us now to pose the question of truth in new terms. As we have seen, each society institutes a world of imaginary significations for itself, which includes the criteria for correctness and truth and protects them from being doubted. As Castoriadis points out, "to be sure, there is in all societies a socially instituted 'truth', which amounts to the canonical conformity of representations and statements to what is socially instituted as the equivalent of 'axioms' and 'procedures of validation'. This 'truth' ought, properly speaking, to be called *correctness* (*Richtigkeit*)" (Castoriadis 1991, 160). However, this trivial conception of truth won't get us very far, since it is clear that this conception will not enable us to make comparisons between historical totalities of imaginary significations. If we stick to that which is considered "correct" within a certain social-historical institution, it is clear that we can no longer give a rational critique of e.g. the institution of slavery, in the name of a truth, which could overcome the fact that we happened to have been born in a society in which this particular institution happens to be considered ethically unacceptable. In light of this, Castoriadis contrasts this limited concept of "correctness" (which corresponds to the traditional concepts of *adequatio* and *coherentia*) – which within the theory of the imaginary institution of society can be nothing but partial and ethnocentric – with a wider and in the end *universal concept of truth* "as the interminable movement of thought which constantly tests its bounds

and looks back upon itself", in other words, that which he calls "reflectiveness" (cf. Castoriadis 1991, 160). Truth is the constant overcoming of closure, it is "open thought in motion" which reflects upon itself critically, it is that which leaves the authentic philosophical questions open forever, without however being afraid to face them here and now.

II. Beyond objectivism and relativism

We now have before us the problem that the theory of imaginary significations entails concerning the question of truth. I would now like to turn to the answer Castoriadis gives to this problem. I will confine my exposition to the answer he gives to the problem of *true knowledge concerning history and society*. I have already mentioned that in the social-historical sphere Castoriadis attempts to overcome the dilemma, in his opinion a deadlock, between objective and relative truth.[11] The third solution he offers is based on a hermeneutic reflection on the close link between theory and practice. We have already seen that the social imaginary has a primarily practical character, it directs and animates the practical relations of a given society with the world and with itself. The connection between knowledge (in a broad sense) and practice, between theory and praxis, therefore plays a central role in Castoriadis' approach.

For Castoriadis, "the historical world is the world of human *doing*" (Castoriadis 1987, 72). But only in marginal cases is this doing "purely rational", in the sense that it is based on a "practically exhaustive knowledge of its domain". These marginal cases are embodied in technical action, in which a (relatively) complete body of knowledge allows us to effectively apply appropriate means to reach given ends, to calculate the effects of certain causes etc. However, the vast majority of human actions are neither purely reflexive (absolutely unconscious) nor are they examples of "rational activity" ("technique" in a broader sense).[12]

It seems that "theoretical doing" belongs to this third category as does the "supreme or extreme form of theory – philosophy – the attempt to conceive of the world without knowing, either before or after the fact, whether the world is actually conceivable, or even just what conceiving of something exactly means" (Castoriadis 1987, 74). To what, then, do we owe this uncertainty about the meaning and the goals of theoretical activity? To the fact that theory is incapable of defining, "by itself", "purely logically", using rational thought alone, this meaning of itself.

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[11] For a very good reconstruction of Castoriadis' efforts to solve the tension between normative foundationalism and ethical relativism and to formulate the appropriate normative criteria for a democratic theory see Kalyvas 1998, 164-8. For a critique of every "objective" grounding of the "liberatory project" (a critique inspired by Castoriadis' thought) see Fotopoulos 1992.

[12] See Castoriadis 1987, 72-3. This formulation obviously applies to trivial human actions, but also to more "elevated" ones. See the exposition of examples of bringing up children or the therapeutic treatment of physical and mental illnesses in Castoriadis 1987, 73.

Theory, as a specific expression of human doing in general, is animated by a "project", an intention, a meaning and an orientation (cf. Castoriadis 1987, 77-8). As Castoriadis notes, the project is neither the plan, which determines technical action, nor the regulative idea of idealist philosophy, because it "regards its realization as an essential moment" (Castoriadis 1987, 78). The project mediates between doing and knowledge, so that the project itself is not justified exhaustively by means of theory, but, at all times, refers to the "primacy of practical reason"; it is connected to a radically practical or – in current terminology – performative moment. The project is ultimately a social-historical product, an imaginary signification that people undertake more or less consciously.

For Castoriadis, theory arises from a historical-social project that constantly maintains internal links with practice. Indeed, as Castoriadis often emphasizes, the Greco-Western tradition of "logon didonai" is connected to the emergence of the project of autonomy and the simultaneous creation of philosophy and democratic politics, in Greece initially and then, later in Western Europe after the end of the Middle Ages. This fundamentally practical root of all knowledge and, in particular, the knowledge of the social-historical field determines its fragmentary and provisional character. For us, human beings, there is no criterion outside history and social practice with which we could construct a theory of the social-historical, in an emphatic sense, independent of historically determined practical intentions and socially determined concepts and categories.

Indeed, especially regarding the knowledge of the social-historical field, this antinomy reaches a limit: "The discourse on history is included within history" (Castoriadis 1987, 33). And, in fact, this is the reason Castoriadis tends to replace the term "theory" with the term "elucidation", in order to describe precisely the essentially uncertain, insecure, historically determined and contingent character of our theoretical activity. Castoriadis once more traces a course beyond objectivism and relativism. The historicity of historical knowledge does more than determine the latter's inevitably incomplete and provisional character; in addition, it constitutes the quasi-transcendental condition of its existence, since only historical beings can experience history. Thus –for Castoriadis– to reflect upon society and history inevitably means: a) to reflect upon them on the basis of the historically relevant categories of our society and our era and b) to reflect upon them in relation to a historically situated practical intention or project (see Castoriadis 1987, 33).

Transforming socio-centrism – or, to use more current terminology, ethnocentrism – into a quasi-transcendental precondition of possible historical knowledge constitutes one aspect of the two-pronged opposition to objectivism and relativism. The prerequisite for both is the contemplative ideal of knowledge, which alone entails the formulation of the following dilemma: There either is an absolute and complete theory of history and society or there is no theory at all and, while we think we understand, in reality we are arbitrarily projecting our own intentions, views, fantasies, power

claims, etc., onto the object. But this dilemma loses its essential meaning once we realize that the historical rootedness of our knowledge is not only its necessary ("logical") precondition, but constitutes, furthermore, its *positive* precondition.

What does this mean? For Castoriadis the universal is accessed only through the particular. "It is because we are attached to a given view, categorical structure, and project that we are able to say something meaningful about the past. It is only when the present is intensely present that it makes us see in the past something more than the past saw in itself" (Castoriadis 1987, 34). This paradox of historical knowledge is not only necessary but also productive: It makes us realize that there is no "truth specific" to each society, but that which "can be termed the truth of each society is its truth in history, for itself but also for all the others, for the paradox of history consists in the fact that every civilization and every epoch, because it is particular and dominated by its own obsessions, manages to evoke and to unveil new meanings in the societies that preceded or surround it" (Castoriadis 1987, 34-5).

This peculiar ethnocentrism transcends relativist socio-centrism because it does away with the idea of a specific and complete part-"truth" of a society or an epoch. The "truth" of any society or epoch is nothing but truth "for itself but also for all the others". Historical consciousness universalizes historical knowledge always through the prism of the present that is "intensely present". However this universalization does not aim to crush but to elevate the particular, the singular, precisely because it has no choice but to depend on "our" historically situated means. To this particularity we owe the fact that we can make the past have meaning for us, to discover within it new significations that function as links between past, present and intended future. Ultimately, particularity opens the road to universality in the additional sense that the realization of our singularity automatically entails its relativization. Becoming conscious of our own particularity leaves us, historical beings, no alternative than to accept the only form of universality possible to us. That is, the universality of the open interrogation, the continual criticism and questioning of every closed and completed system of thought. To reject the confinement within the given, the established, signifies being open to the possibility of the radically new. After what we have said, it should come as no surprise that Castoriadis sees this opening towards the new as a fundamental characteristic of both theory and praxis.[13]

III. Conclusion

In *The Imaginary Institution of Society*, Castoriadis provides strong arguments in favor of actively transcending the classic dilemmas that in our days have resurfaced as the

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[13] See Castoriadis 1987, 77. Castoriadis' emphasis on the "radically new" gave the focus for L. M. G. Zerilli's reflections on his work. See Zerilli, 2002.

conflict between universalism and relativism. We have already seen that in his exam-
ination of the "paradox of historical knowledge" Castoriadis bridges this antithesis by
arguing that whereas the particularity of our historical perspective is a quasi-tran-
scendental precondition of our knowledge, it also defines it positively, since it is only
through the singular/particular that we can access the universal. We also saw the way
universality is ultimately connected to the critique of our own particularity and the
consequent creation of new social meanings.

Thus – using current terminology – to develop a universalist standpoint on the ba-
sis of a formal concept of Reason, independent of the socio-historical determination
of our theoretical effort, would be as erroneous and ideological as the relativist per-
sistence on an ethnocentricity that views societies, civilizations or historical periods
through the prism of "incommensurability" and the consequent inability to make val-
ue judgements of intercultural validity. Today, at one antithetical pole one could place
a foundationalist like K. O. Apel,[14] and at the other one would place a relativist like R.
Rorty. However, these two positions obviously share the same erroneous premise: We
either have a formal criterion to judge society and history or we have no criterion and
simply receive arbitrarily the criteria of "our own" tradition.

Ultimately, Castoriadis intersects a broader tradition in European philosophical
thought, which is as much anti-relativist as anti-scientist and anti-objectivist, namely
the current of hermeneutic philosophy with its more contemporary aspects and off-
shoots. It is in this direction that the epistemological and methodological reflections
of Castoriadis on the issue of truth, and in particular on the possibility of historical
knowledge, initially move. The solutions he offers to circumvent the "objectivism vs.
relativism" dilemma are reiterations of commonplace hermeneutic arguments. Indeed,
for Gadamer (see Gadamer 1990, 270-384) as well as for Castoriadis, theory (of the hu-
manist and historical sciences) is always connected to a practical present with practical
intentions and projects that determine the particular prism through which our
hermeneutic appropriation of the past takes place. Every "rational explanation" of so-
ciety and history always presupposes such a broader understanding that aims to ap-
propriate an initially foreign "horizon of meaning" and to achieve the final "fusion of
horizons" via the "hermeneutic application" of extraneous meanings in our present sit-
uation. It is, furthermore, obvious that the "method" for understanding the historical
past of other societies is not the empirical-analytic method of the natural sciences or
the normative-analytic of some social sciences that try to emulate them, but a dialectic
movement from the hermeneutic present to the significatory contents of the past and
from there back to the present again, equipped with new means for understanding it
better and, perhaps, for constructing it more consciously. History itself is a sequence

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[14] See Apel 1976, 155-435. As it is well known, Apel played a considerable role in the construction of
the transcendental-pragmatic paradigm, which was essential for the formation of Habermas' "uni-
versal pragmatics" and theory of truth.

of such interpretations of the past, a sequence that ultimately remains undetermined and not narrowly rational, forming an "effective-history" of ideas. The "effective-historical consciousness" (wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewusstsein) is precisely the dialectic consciousness of the continuity but also of the breaks that characterize the sequence of traditions, giving substance to the task of hermeneutically appropriating the past. However, effective-historical consciousness does not constitute a closed rational system, upon which we could ground an absolute historical truth. Continuity and discontinuity are two equivalent and irreducible elements; the two "dialectic moments" that make history exist in the true sense. An important difference between Castoriadis and Gadamer – which I cannot get into here – is that Castoriadis gives more weight to the moment of discontinuity (the alteration of significations, the break with tradition) while Gadamer tends to emphasize the moment of continuity within a tradition.[15]

With his death (December 1997), Cornelius Castoriadis became a part of history, which – as he was the first to show – we are obliged to hermeneutically appropriate, not so as to keep it reverently in the museum of ideas, but in order to critically transcend it projecting onto it our own intentions and current projects. This critical appropriation would be the greatest honor we could bestow upon the philosopher. For us it would be a small step towards shedding light on who we are and what we want in a "fragmented world", in which all our certainties appear to be in their death throes, leaving behind them not the "phronesis" of critical Reason, but the raw capitalist and bureaucratic reality.

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[15] Thus Castoriadis could be seen as an exponent of *critical* hermeneutics, moving in similar direction as e.g. R. J. Bernstein (see Bernstein 1991) and A. Wellmer (see Wellmer 1998a, 1998b)

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στη σκέψη του Κορνήλιου Καστοριάδη

ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΣ ΚΑΒΟΥΛΑΚΟΣ

Περίληψη

Σε όλο το έργο του ο Κορνήλιος Καστοριάδης επιχειρεί να ανοίξει έναν θεωρητικό δρόμο πέρα από τον αντικειμενισμό και τον σχετικισμό. Μας προσφέρει έτσι τις βασικές γραμμές μιας εναλλακτικής αντίληψης περί αλήθειας, η οποία θα πρέπει να συνδεθεί με την κοινωνική πρακτική και το κοινωνικό-ιστορικό πλαίσιό της. Εκκινώντας από την κριτική της λειτουργιστικής και της στρουκτουραλιστικής θεωρίας περί κοινωνικών θεσμών, ο Καστοριάδης συγκρότησε τη δική του θεώρηση του «κοινωνικού φαντασιακού» ως του κοινού κόσμου νοημάτων μια ορισμένης κοινωνίας που δεν είναι ούτε απολύτως αναγκαίος ούτε απολύτως ενδεχομενικός. Με αυτή τη θεωρία ο Καστοριάδης υπερβαίνει τον σχετικιστικό εθνοκεντρισμό με το διπλό επιχείρημα ότι η μερικότητα της ιστορικής μας προοπτικής αποτελεί αφενός έναν οιονεί υπερβατολογικό όρο κάθε γνώσης μας και, αφετέρου, την καθορίζει επίσης με θετικό τρόπο: Η συνειδητοποίηση της μερικότητάς μας μπορεί να μας οδηγήσει στην αυτοκριτική και στη συνακόλουθη δημιουργία νέων κοινωνικών φαντασιακών σημασιών. Εντέλει τα επιχειρήματα του Καστοριάδη μπορούν να θεωρηθούν ως μια σημαντική συμβολή στην ευρύτερη συζήτηση γύρω από τη δυνατότητα μιας κριτικής ερμηνευτικής.