

PUTTING DISORDER IN ORDER: A TYPOLOGY OF DISORDER

Ruth Lorand

Department of Philosophy, University of Haifa,
Haifa, Israel.

The popularity of the concept 'disorder' in various fields is undoubtedly influenced by scientific developments: The concept of entropy, Heisenberg's uncertainty principle and chaos theory. There is however a philosophical confusion concerning the relation between order and disorder and the distinction among various types of disorder and their significance.

I argue that there are more than one type of disorder, and that each type has its distinct characteristics. For instance, chaos, in its original (mythological) sense as the pre-creation state is the state of no distinctions, whereas randomness is the state in which distinct elements occur without submission to a known law. The typology I offer distinguishes among five types of disorder. Each type is related differently to order and has its own significance to human experience.